

Senior News

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*Let's Celebrate
This Month
With Family
and Friends!*

Story on page 5

December 2019
Vol. 33, No. 12

Taking Care

Handling the holidays when you're hurting... Seek moments of joy to help ease pain!

by LISA M. PETSCHÉ

Many people are filled with joyful anticipation and festive good cheer at this time of the year. But some are filled with anxiety and dread, and wish to get the holidays over with as quickly and uneventfully as possible.

They may have lost a loved one or experienced some other upheaval, such as physical or mental illness, unemployment or financial problems, involuntary relocation or the breakdown of an important relationship.

Their emotions put them completely out of step with those

around them, further intensifying their sense of grief and isolation.

More than any other time of the year, the holiday season embodies family togetherness and is steeped in ritual and tradition. It's a time of reaching out to others in a spirit of caring and generosity. But how can you embrace this spirit when you are hurting or feel empty inside?

Coping skills: The following is some advice.

Acknowledge that this year is different; don't try to act as if nothing has changed. Be prepared to lower your expectations.

Accept your feelings, including ups and downs from one moment or day to the next. Face your heartache and allow the tears to come, knowing they are a necessary part of healing.

Resist the urge to isolate yourself. It's important to stay connected to people who care. But do let loved ones know your limitations.

Evaluate the meaning of the season in your life. Decide what is most important to you, focus on it and forget the rest this year. Some people find it comforting to continue with familiar traditions, while others prefer to start new ones or mix old and new. Do what feels right for you.

Keep in mind that traditions are especially important to children during times of upset, providing them with much needed comfort and security. So although certain practices might now be a source of discomfort or hold little meaning for some of the adults in your family, they may still be worth continuing, perhaps with modifications.

Plan ahead to help reduce anxiety and stay focused. Whatever holiday-related tasks you decide to take on, ask for help and delegate responsibilities. Make lists to keep organized. Grief saps energy and affects concentration, and you don't want to create more stress for yourself.

Set aside quiet time each day. Nurturing your spirituality in this way will help keep you grounded.

One day at a time

If you accept an invitation, do so on the condition that you may back out at the last minute if you don't feel up to the occasion. Since it's impossible to predict how much energy you will have, be flexible and give yourself an out. Take things one day, and one event, at a time.

Guard your health

Overindulging in food or alcohol or getting insufficient sleep will only make you feel worse. Regular exercise, on the other hand, will help you feel better.

Express your emotions

Find someone who will listen and empathize, or write down your thoughts and feelings in a journal.

If applicable, turn to your faith for comfort, whether it's through private prayer, reflective reading, listening to hymns or attending worship.

Try to focus on the spiritual aspects of the season rather than those you find stressful or can't relate to.

Consider doing something nice for someone. Many people find it helps take their mind off their own situation for a while.

Take responsibility for your well-being by doing something nice for yourself.

Look for moments of joy and laughter, and relish them. Don't allow feelings of self-pity, bitterness or guilt to get the upper hand and rob you of the ability to feel pleasure. It's okay to experience enjoyment.

If you take time now to anticipate events and your reaction to them, and plan some coping strategies, you will make it through the Christmas season – perhaps even better than you expected. Just remember that there is no right or wrong way to do things.

Since everyone responds differently to loss and stress, be gentle with those around you who may also be hurting.

Lisa M. Petsche is a social worker and a freelance writer specializing in life transitions and caregiving.



Lisa Petsche



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Five ways to avoid delivery scams and package thefts this holiday season

by **KELVIN COLLINS**

President/CEO, BBB of Central Georgia & the CSRA, Inc.

For holiday shopping, most consumers love the convenience of making purchases online and having them shipped straight to their doorstep. But with millions of packages delivered each year, con artists and thieves have developed many ways to steal from shoppers. Fortunately, there are also many ways to protect yourself from their shady tactics.

Popular Delivery Scams

Delivery scams and theft are particularly prevalent at the holidays, when more packages are being shipped. Scammers are hoping shoppers are busy or distracted and will act without thinking.

The first scam to look out for are phishing emails that pose as official notices from delivery companies. These either contain a "tracking link" or a message that the shipper is having difficulty delivering a package to you. Clicking the link either takes you to a form that asks for personally identifying information, or to a site that downloads malware onto your computer.

Another delivery scam involves fake "missed delivery" tags. Scammers place a note on your door that claims they are having challenges delivering a package to you. They ask you to call a phone number to reschedule your delivery, but it's really a ruse to get your personal information.

Another issue holiday shoppers face is package theft. Many consumers have had their packages stolen before they arrive home from work. Thieves snatch packages from doorsteps or lobbies of apartment or condo complexes. Criminals even follow delivery and postal trucks. When the truck leaves, the crooks move in and grab the parcels.

How to Avoid Delivery Scams

Take precautions to ensure a safe delivery: If you are having a valuable or fragile item delivered to your home, purchase shipping insurance. In addition, always get tracking numbers for your purchases and check the shipping progress periodically.

Watch out for calls or emails about a missed delivery. Legitimate delivery services usually leave a "missed delivery" notice on your door. If you receive a missed delivery notice, examine the form carefully to make sure it is authentic and only then follow their instructions. Keep track of what you've ordered so you have a better idea of what is coming and when.

Request a Signature: Chances are this feature may come with a price tag, but it may be worth the extra fee. Requesting a signature means that a delivery service won't be able to drop a package on your doorstep unless someone is around to sign for it.

Don't leave packages sitting on your doorstep. Packages left sitting outside are particularly vulnerable to theft. To ensure safe delivery, have your package delivered to your workplace, or to a trusted friend or neighbor

who will be home to accept delivery. Some delivery companies now have lockers where your packages can securely wait for you to pick them up using a one-time code to open the locker.

Open your delivery upon receipt to check for damage or signs of tampering. Contact the seller immediately if you believe something is wrong with the shipment or if it's not what you ordered. Also, be sure to review the seller's return policy for damaged or unwanted items.

For More Information

To learn more about how to avoid scams, visit BBB.org/AvoidScams. If you've been the victim of a delivery scam, please report it at BBB.org/ScamTracker. Your report can help others avoid falling victim to similar scams.

Kelvin Collins is President/CEO of the Better Business Bureau serving the Fall Line Corridor, serving 77 counties in East Alabama, West Georgia, Southwest Georgia, Central Georgia, East Georgia and Western South Carolina. This tips column is provided through the local BBB and the Council of Better Business Bureaus. The Better Business Bureau sets standards for ethical business behavior, monitors compliance and helps consumers identify trustworthy businesses. Questions or complaints about a specific company or charity should be referred directly to the BBB at Phone: 1-800-763-4222, Web site: www.bbb.org or E-mail: info@centralgeorgia.bbb.org.

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Senior News & Views of Georgia

Opinion

"What A Wonderful World!"

by DANIEL W. GATLYN, USN Ret.
Minister/Journalist

When one views the massive ruins and oblique condition of this planet, it is difficult to agree with Louis Armstrong's song:

What a wonderful World! "I see trees of green, red roses too, I see them bloom for me and you, and I think to myself, what a wonderful world."

Skies of blue, clouds of white, the bright blessed day, the dark sacred night, and I think to myself, What a wonderful world!!!"

There is more (Rainbows, faces, friends); but, you get the idea.

There is evidence that the world was created in a much better condition than we view today. When composing those words, and more correctly, singing those phrases with feeling, you would have to know that Mr. Armstrong was viewing something beyond the shadows of fear, bedlam hate, and despair. Perhaps through some distant spiri-

tual scene, the original plan of God was momentarily presented to the occupants of the globe, while words and melodies warmed the occasion.

Obviously, the song paints an abstract scene from that which is on our doorstep; for the Twenty-First Century transports a throng of misplaced, disenchanted, dysfunctional characters who awake each morning with the expressed desire to cause as much havoc as possible. The original garden was only a foretaste of the world at large, saturated with an ample supply of food, fauna, and flowers; graced with opportunity and potential for every soul passing this way.

No question, the emanation of our "home place" was fully furnished. The day before us (as in every day) is a view to become transfixed in our vision; and, the success on the horizon is predicated upon what (and how) we scan the scope.

This Song Title (and heading for my column) also brings to mind another... "If I could see the world through the eyes of a Child," written by Sammy Masters, and made famous by Patsy Cline... for it speaks in concert with the theme of

a Wonderful World.

If I could see the world through the eyes of a child, smiling faces would greet me all the while; and like a lovely work of art, it would warm this weary heart, just to see through the eyes of a child! I could see right, no wrong, I could see good, no bad. (and more).

I am not suggesting, in any manner, that one closes out the realities of conditions before us; but, do keep in mind that the drastic and vile conditions with which we are confronted are inventions brought about by an ill mannered persona; and, are far from the intent of an omnipotent Creator. We are quartered with an indiscreet population who have chosen to separate themselves from a virtuous following, but we are not forced to become an unethical and immoral subject. Through faith, a promise, and absolute practicality; we can become a credible Ambassador for positive values and a purpose driven existence.

So sing the song of a brighter day... casting your eyes upon fertile ground for a Wonderful World!

Vietnam Transformed: The Art of Richard J. Olsen

Special to Senior News

Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1935, Richard J. Olsen began his journey in art in his youth. He attended the University of Wisconsin, where he earned a bachelor of science degree in 1958 and a master of fine arts degree (with a concentration in painting and print-making) in 1966.

He was a child during World War II and a teenager during the Korean War. At Wisconsin he signed up for ROTC, the Reserve Officers' Training Corps, and he graduated a commissioned officer at the beginning of America's involvement in the Vietnam War. He became a helicopter pilot, serving tours of duty over the next few years in Vietnam. He returned to school on the completion of his service obligation to get his graduate degree.

In 1969 he joined the faculty of what has become the Lamar Dodd School of Art at the University of Georgia, Athens, as an instructor. Over the years, he rose through the ranks, first as an assistant professor (1973-1978) and associate professor (1978-1994), before being named a full professor. He held the General Sandy Beaver Teaching Professorship from 1998 until his retirement in 2001, when he was

named professor of art emeritus.

Since 1965 his work has been included by invitation in more than one hundred group exhibitions and has been the subject of numerous solo exhibitions. It is included in public, private, and corporate collections around the world. He is the recipient of many honors and awards.

The exhibition *Vietnam Transformed*, organized by guest curators Hatha and Andrew Hayes, is rich with allegory, symbolism, and allusion, and comes out of Olsen's *Wall Series*. Begun in 1976 the series now includes more than

two hundred paintings, conceived and executed on a monumental scale.

His work is as much concerned with process as product; and, as he has noted, "there is always the 'trying to make a painting' element in it."

Vietnam Transformed: The Art of Richard J. Olsen; through February 16, 2020.

Venue: Morris Museum of Art, 1 Tenth Street, Augusta, GA; 706-724-7501; Website: <https://www.the-morris.org>.



On the Cover

Let's Celebrate This Month With Family and Friends!

by CAROLYN BRENNEMAN

This year, we can enjoy many activities with our children and grandchildren throughout the month of December in our hometown and surrounding neighborhoods. We have many fabulous events to attend in December, to celebrate the joy of the holidays and develop gratitude for our blessings we have in life and we can share it all with our families and friends.

One of the most popular events is the Columbia County Holiday Market at Evans Towne Center, this December 6th and 7th. There is the tree lighting, a showing of "The Grinch That Stole Christmas" and gorgeous fireworks to watch. The park will showcase a 1,000 foot light tunnel where we can walk through it, and we can view the manger scene and an animated 12 days of Christmas display. Carolers will entertain us and we will certainly enjoy the homemade crafts and goodies for sale in the market. Want to go on a hayride with the family? How fun it is to take a stroll around the lake in an horse-drawn carriage. There is a hot chocolate bar, and a campfire to roast s'mores in an open pit fire. We will enjoy a cup of hot chocolate and roast those giant marshmallows while being regaled with winter stories. This is one of the most popular events in Evans and we will not want to

miss out! And then on Sunday, we can enjoy the Martinez-Evans Christmas Parade in Evans Towne Center!

Another must see, the 28th Annual Christmas in Hopelands, will take place from December 14 to 23, and on the 26th, from 6 pm to 9:30 pm. At the Hopelands Gardens, we can take our family and friends and stroll through the area enjoying the exhibits of lighted pathways and illuminated displays. There are over 100,000 twinkling lights in the gardens showcasing beautiful scenes! Also, the Thoroughbred Racing Hall of Fame, The Doll House, The Clifford S. Gerde Carriage Museum, the Rye Patch, and the Rye Patch Stables will be open and decorated for us to enjoy. Along the way, we can enjoy free beverages and S'more kits. What fun it is to roast marshmallows at the s'mores pit with the kids!

And our grandkids can visit with Santa Claus and make a gift at the craft station next door to Santa. Caroling will delight us with traditional Christmas songs throughout the evening as we take in the beauties of the gardens. The event is free and there is complimentary shuttle service. Let's not miss this. Visit their website at Hopelands Gardens, 1060 Banks Mill Road SE, Aiken or call 803-642-7631.

So this holiday period let's all share in the fun, activities and joy and take a moment to express our gratitude for all that we have in life.

Happy holidays everyone!



Gorgeous Christmas tree display



Lights for the Evans Festival



Columbia County Holiday Market



Martha and John enjoying some of the crafts on display

Social Media Gift Exchange is a Pyramid Scheme

by KELVIN COLLINS

President/CEO, BBB of Central Georgia & the CSRA, Inc.

A "Secret Santa" around the office, friends and family can be fun. A gift exchange among online friends you haven't met, well, that's a little different and carries a heavier consequence. These gift exchanges, while they look like innocent fun, are really pyramid schemes – and are considered illegal.

The "Secret Sister" gift exchange campaign quickly became popular in 2015 through Facebook posts promising participants would receive up to 36 gifts, in exchange for sending one gift. Each holiday season the scheme pops back up. A newer version of this scam revolves around exchanging bottles of wine.

The scheme starts with a convincing invitation, either by email or social media to sign up for what seems like a great, fun program. All you must do is provide your name and address and personal information of a few additional friends and tack this information on to a list that's already started of people you've never met on the Internet. Next, it's your turn to send an email or social media invitation to send a modest gift or bottle of wine to a stranger along with their friends, family and contacts.

The cycle continues and you're left with buying and shipping gifts for unknown individuals, in hopes that the favor is reciprocated by receiving the promised number of gifts in return. Unfortunately, it doesn't happen. Just like any other pyramid scheme, it relies on the recruitment of individuals to keep the scam afloat. Once people stop participating in the gift exchange, the gift supply stops as well, and leaves hundreds of disappointed people without their promised gifts.

This "gift exchange" is the latest version of a hoax that's been around for years. It's the same premise as a pyramid scheme and the pre-Internet chain letters. The idea is that you send money (or a gift) to the person at the top of the list, cross them off, add your name to the bottom and send the list to more friends. Eventually, you hope, your name will be at the top, and you will receive all the money/gifts. However, the scheme relies on constantly recruiting new participants, making it mathematically impossible to sustain.

This may seem like a harmless hoax but just like any other chain letter that asks for money or items of value: they're against the law. The U.S. Postal Service considers them illegal gambling. That applies whether you get the request via postal mail, email, or social media. And another thing, some social media sites specifically prohibit users from engaging in such schemes. That means it could cause problems with your account and have your page removed.

Protect Yourself from Social Media Scams:

Take the following steps to protect yourself and others from scam links shared through Facebook, Twitter and other social media:

- Don't take the bait. If it sounds too good or outlandish to be true, it's probably a scam. Stay away from promotions of anything "exclusive," "shocking," or "sensational."
- Be careful of shortened links. Scammers use link-shortening services to disguise malicious links. Don't fall for it. If you don't recognize the link destination, don't click.
- Never give your personal information to strangers. This will open you up to identity theft and other scams.
- Be wary of false claims. Some pyramid


schemes try to win your confidence by claiming they're legal and endorsed by the government. These imposter schemes are false as the government will never endorse illegal activity. No matter what they claim, pyramid schemes will not make you rich. You will receive little to no money back on your "investment" or gift exchange.

• Report suspicious links to the site. Whether on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, report any suspicious posts or activity to the site by going to their help link. Your action might save someone else from losing out.

The holidays bring out a lot of cheer and goodwill, but they also bring out scams and schemes that tend to separate you from your hard-earned money. Take the time to check out anything that sounds too good to be true.

For more trustworthy tips, go to BBB.org and report scams at BBB.org/ScamTracker.

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New research shows low financial literacy, social isolation increase scam risk

by KELVIN COLLINS

President/CEO, BBB of Central Georgia & the CSRA, Inc.

New fraud research shows that people who live alone or have low financial literacy levels are more likely to lose money to fraudsters. The research also shows that the highest engagement and victimization rates involve online purchases and social media – outpacing telephone, mail and email fraud.

The report, “Exposed to Scams: What Separates Victims from Non-Victims,” comes from the BBB Institute for Marketplace Trust, the FINRA Investor Education Foundation, and the Stamford Center on Longevity and was released in recognition of World Investor Week (September 30-October 6).

During the study, researchers surveyed more than 1,400 Americans and Canadians who were targeted by scammers and reported the fraud to the Better Business Bureau via BBB Scam Tracker. Nearly half of those surveyed did not engage with the fraudster. However, nearly a quarter did, losing an average of \$600.

Some key findings include:

When phone and email were used by scammers to target consumers, relatively few consumers engaged with the scammer or lost money. However, when exposed to a scam on social media, 91 percent engaged and 53 percent lost money. Similarly, 81 percent of consumers who were exposed to a fraud via a website said they engaged with the scammer, and 50 percent lost money.

Consumers were more likely to be victimized if they did not have anyone to discuss the offer with. Consequently, those who engaged scammers and lost money were less likely to be married and more likely to be widowed or divorced. Generally, those who engaged, and those who lost money, reported significantly higher feelings of loneliness. Social isolation appears to play a role in fraud victimization.

The likelihood of victimization for this sample is greater for individuals who are under financial strain, are younger adults, or have low levels of financial literacy.

Research showed that 51 percent of people who reported a third-party intervention were able to avoid losing money. Cashiers, bank tellers, employees of wire trans-

fer services and other financial services companies where consumers were about to send money to a scammer, served as an important last line of defense.

Nearly half of those surveyed said the news media was their primary source of information about scams. Word of mouth was the next best form of protection and awareness.

Prior knowledge of fraud helps decrease the chances of victimization. One-third of consumers who were targeted by a scammer, but did not engage, already knew about the specific type of scam. In addition, consumers who understood the tactics and behaviors of scammers did not engage with the fraudsters.

For the full study, go to BBB.org/ExposedtoScams. To learn how to avoid scams, go to BBB.org/AvoidScams. To report a scam, go to www.BBB.org/ScamTracker.

Your experience can help others to recognize suspicious behavior and stop scammers in their tracks.

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Wreaths Across America at Andersonville National Cemetery call for Volunteers

Annual ceremony scheduled for Saturday, December 14, 2019

Special to Senior News

Submitted by Charles Barr
Cemetery Administrator, Andersonville
National Historic Site, 496 Cemetery Road
Andersonville, GA; charles_barr@nps.gov

ANDERSONVILLE, Georgia

Andersonville National Historic Site invites you to remember and honor our military veterans during this winter season by participating in our Wreaths Across America event on Saturday, December 14, 2019.

At 12:00 pm the Civil Air Patrol will conduct a brief ceremony in Andersonville National Cemetery to honor America's armed forces. This ceremony is open to the public. Attendees are encouraged to bring a wreath for placement on a veteran's grave. After the ceremony, attendees can help remember our fallen veterans by placing wreaths sponsored through Wreaths Across America on graves in the national cemetery.

Andersonville National Cemetery would like your help in placing the wreaths from Wreaths Across America this year. Park entrance and the event are free, and we encourage everyone to come out and be a part of this special opportunity to remember the military men and women who are buried in our cemetery and in national cemeteries across the nation.

Wreaths Across America is a national program that encourages individuals, community groups, and families to sponsor wreaths for placement in national cemeteries throughout the United States. These wreaths may be placed on specific graves, or left undesignated to place on one of thousands of unvisited veterans' graves. Each year, between 1,000 and 10,000 wreaths are donated through this program for placement at Andersonville National Cemetery.

Our goal is to ensure that each of the more than 20,000 gravesites in the cemetery is decorated with a wreath at least once. To accomplish this, undesignated wreaths are placed sequentially and rotated from one cemetery section to the next each year. For 2019, undesignated wreaths will be placed in Sections A, B, C, R, D, E, and F and in the Memorial Section.

Beginning December 1, 2019, wreaths no larger than 20 inches and floral blankets no larger than 2 feet by 3 feet are permitted in the cemetery. Wreaths should be brought in person, or delivered by a florist, directly to the gravesite. To find the location of a specific grave, please visit <http://gravelocator.cem.va.gov>, or call or stop by the National Prisoner of War Museum for assistance.

"For more than 240 years, the men and women of our nation's armed forces have spent countless holidays away from loved ones, protecting our freedom," said Acting Superintendent Barbara Hatcher. "Placing a wreath on these veterans' graves is a touching and beautiful way to honor all those who have sacrificed so much in service to our country."

Andersonville National Historic Site is located 10 miles south of Oglethorpe, GA and 10 miles northeast of Americus, GA on Georgia Highway 49. The national park features the National Prisoner of War Museum, Andersonville National Cemetery and the site of the historic Civil War prison, Camp Sumter. Andersonville National Historic Site is the only site within the National Park System to serve as a memorial to all American prisoners of war. Park grounds are open from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. The National Prisoner of War Museum is open 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., daily. Admission is free. For more information on the park, call 229 924-0343, or visit our website at www.nps.gov/ande/. Visit us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/Andersonville.

NPS



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