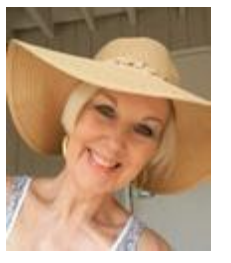


Editorial page

Nolia's Notes

Black and Blue

by NOLIA BIGGERSTAFF



Well, for the most part, I am finished with this COVID thing. I was a real trooper and spent my hours staring at the walls and sheltering in place but now, as my friend Helene says, "I am free as a bird!" I have been shot twice, hopefully protecting myself from the dreaded bug and can now get with friends and family.

Dwaine and I received a beautiful wedding invitation from a dear friend. However, the date of the wedding was smack dab in the middle of this pandemic. The couple decided to have a very small ceremony and then a larger reception when the COVID scare subsided.

So, we have received another beautiful invitation, this time, for a fancy wedding party celebration. I am sure a lot of couples whose wedding plans were interrupted by the plague are doing the same thing.

Going to this party requires Dwaine to wear something other than his usual Georgia Bulldog shirt and pants! So, I went into the closet and got out one of his suit coats, dark and formal looking, just the thing. It fit, another plus.

Then I went back to get the matching suit pants. Got them. They fit! But... were they blue or were they black? Whatever the color they did not seem to match the coat.

What color was the coat anyway? Was it black or navy? Inside it was black, but closer to the window it seemed to be a dark blue. The pants had this same magical quality of changing colors as the coat.

I thought about all possible ideas.

Could Dwaine just stay in dark areas at the party? What kind of lighting would there be anyway? You see this is a true fashion emergency.

Well, Dwaine needed a new suit anyway so we went shopping. We were in the store and Dwaine picked out a suit jacket, plain black, and perfect. It fit!

There was a rack of pants right there so we found his size. Good so far, but then... were those pants black or blue? All of a sudden the coat looked a bit navy but not the same black/blue navy as the pants.

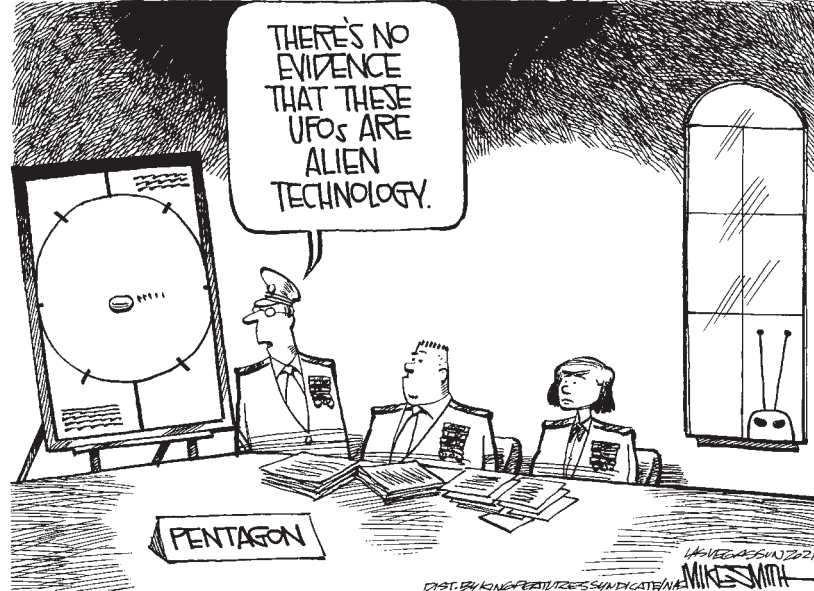
It was time to get a salesperson. There was a spiffy young man working there. He was decked out in a dashing white sport coat with black flowers embroidered all over it. Dwaine would have definitely worn that coat back in the 60's.

This young man was delightful. He asked, "Are y'all looking for anything special?"

We said, "Do you have a black suit, with a coat and pants, which are the same color, anywhere in this store that will not turn navy?"

He smiled as if he were looking at his grandparents and said there were more selections in another section of the store. We found Dwaine's size and then we took the coat and pants all around the store to make sure they did not change colors. Woohoo!!!! Success!!!! I swear I am gonna take a magic marker and write a code on these pants and coat to make sure they do not get mixed up.

Now, let me go get my dress and shoes and see if they change colors!!!!!!



This weeks tips from the BBB

Sweepstakes and lottery scams resulted in higher financial losses during the COVID-19 pandemic compared to the previous three years, particularly for older people, according to new research from Better Business Bureau (BBB). BBB warns consumers never to pay money to claim a prize. If anyone asks for money before delivering a prize, it is likely a scam.

The research is an update of BBB's 2018 in-depth investigative study, Sweepstakes, Lottery and Prize Scams: A Better Business Bureau Study of How "Winners" Lose Millions Through an Evolving Fraud. Since the study's publication, there has been a 16% decrease in complaints to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the FBI's Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3) and the Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre (CAFC). However, financial losses reported to all three agencies rose dramatically in 2020 with the COVID-19 pandemic, with FTC logging an increase of more than 35% in reported dollar losses.

The updated research highlights how these scams work and the importance of educating consumers, particularly those who may be susceptible to a specific scam.

According to Steve Baker, BBB International Investigations Specialist, "This updated research highlights how these scams work and the importance of educating older adults and other people who may be susceptible to these people. Because these scammers are so good at what they do, anyone could be a victim."

People over the age of 55 continue to be the primary target of sweepstakes, lottery, and prize scams, representing 72% of fraud reports for this type of scam received by BBB Scam Tracker during the last three years. Of the older consumers who were targeted, 91% reported that they lost money. Adults over 55 lost an average of \$978 while those 18-54 lost an average of \$279, according to Scam Tracker reports.

The confinement and isolation many older people experienced during COVID-19 may have helped fuel the increase in losses. Other factors that may contribute to some older people's particular vulnerability include mental decline and relative financial stability, as reported in BBB's 2018 study.

Recent BBB interviews with repeat victims of sweepstakes scams, however, found few to be the stereotypical "frail shut-in" that many people envision," according to Baker, the author of the 2018 study. Instead, Baker noted that the victims interviewed were ordinary people more interested in using the imagined winnings to help their families or communities than spending it on themselves.

Debbie Deem, a retired FBI Victim Assistance Specialist explains, "They may believe the winnings will enhance their role in the family, as well as the ability to financially help their younger relatives. It may feel good to be financially helpful again, especially if this was their former primary role in the family."

Quarantine isolation helped the scammers sell the scam

Confinement during the pandemic, along with powerful social influence tactics, help lottery scammers sell the scam, according to Anthony Pratkansis, Professor Emeritus of the University of California. "After profiling the victim, they take any role -- friend, authority, someone in need -- to best work their crimes," Pratkansis told BBB. "Scammers often talk to victims every day, grooming them and building trusting relationships. They take careful notes of the victim's family and other aspects of their lives, and like romance frauds, try to isolate victims from their traditional support structure. Scammers also employ different voices, sounding authoritative at one point, speaking as a partner at others, or even acting as a supplicant asking for help to make the prize finally appear."

Lottery scammers use social, email, phone

According to BBB Scam Tracker data, sweepstakes scammers reach out through a variety of channels: phone calls, email, social media, notices in the mail, and text messages. They may impersonate well-known sweepstakes such as Publishers Clearing House or a state or provincial

lottery. The "winner" is told to pay taxes or fees before the prize can be awarded. The FTC notes that people increasingly are asked to buy gift cards to pay these fees -- its use is documented further in BBB's 2021 in-depth investigative study on gift card fraud -- but they also may be asked to pay via wire transfer or bank deposit into a specified account, or even cash sent by mail.

In reality, the prize does not exist, something the people may not realize before paying thousands of dollars that cannot be recouped. However, the harm suffered by lottery fraud victims can far exceed the loss of that money. The losses can put severe strains on family trust, and victims have even committed suicide. In addition, repeat victims may have difficulty ending their involvement in a lottery scam, and they may become money mules who receive and forward money from other lottery fraud victims.

Shortly after his wife died in 2020, one man in his 80s was contacted by scammers who told him he had won second place in a popular sweepstakes, winning \$2.5 million, a brand-new luxury car, and gold medallions. He subsequently began talking to the scammers daily on the phone, reaching out to them even after his daughter changed his phone number. He withdrew money from his retirement account and opened a separate account, sending a total of \$72,000 in cash to an address in Mississippi before his daughter cut off contact between him and the scammers.

Don't be a money mule
Lottery scammers also often use victims as "money mules" to receive money paid by other victims and then transfer the money to the scammers. This makes it harder to trace victim funds and find the actual scammer. Some victims do this without realizing that the money is coming from other fraud victims; others may believe that this is a way to recover some of the funds they have lost. Still others may become mules because of threats from the scammers. The U.S. Department of Justice has cracked down on these money mules with a major enforcement initiative announced in December 2019, but officials often do not prosecute unwitting mules as a first course of action, instead warning them that prosecution may result if they continue.

One woman reported losing at least \$35,000 over the course of three years after receiving a letter from "Mega Millions" that told her she had won \$5.5 million and a Mercedes Benz. The woman said the scammer, with whom she spoke on the phone daily for several years, initially requested \$9,500 in fees, but more requests for money followed. The woman paid the "fees" by wire transfer and gift cards. She also cashed a counterfeit cashier's check sent by the scammers, which resulted in criminal charges against her. Later, the woman acted as a money mule on several occasions and fraud victims subsequently began contacting her directly. She believed all of these tasks were necessary for her to receive her winnings. When the woman complained to the scammer with whom she had been speaking, he threatened her and her son.

As described in BBB's 2018 study, sweepstakes and lottery fraud frequently originates from Jamaica, with the U.S. ambassador to that country estimating in August 2020 that such fraud is a \$500 million to \$1 billion industry there. The U.S. and Jamaica have partnered in an international law enforcement effort known as Project Jolt, resulting in numerous prosecutions. Reports also have implicated Costa Rican and, most recently, Nigerian nationals.

Always remember that true lotteries or sweepstakes don't ask for money. If someone wants money for taxes, themselves, or a third party, they are most likely crooks. To win a lottery, you must buy a lottery ticket. To win a sweepstakes or prize, you must have entered first. If you can't remember doing so, that's a red flag. Keep in mind that federal law prohibits the cross-border sale or purchase of lottery tickets by phone, mail, or online.

Finally, always talk to a trusted family member or your bank. They may be able to help. You also can call your local BBB office for help in identifying a scam

Consumers get answers from Dept. of Agriculture

Consumer Q's is a weekly question-and-answer column by Arty Schronce at the Georgia Department of Agriculture. Please share your thoughts, questions and suggestions with him by phone, mail or email.

Q: I love the brown thrasher, our state bird. I love listening to its song and watching it dig in the leaves. What can I do to attract brown thrashers to my garden?

A: Brown thrashers like to eat berries and fruits, so plant some of its favorites. Here are a few suggestions: blueberry, blackberry, elderberry, muscadine, American beautyberry (Callicarpa americana), wax myrtle (Myrica cerifera), blackgum or tupelo (Nyssa sylvatica), blackhaw viburnum (Viburnum prunifolium), rusty blackhaw (Viburnum rufidulum), flowering dogwood (Cornus florida) and alternate-leaf dogwood (Cornus alternifolia). Pokeberry (also known as pokeweed and poke salet) is another favorite, but this large perennial may not be a good choice for all landscapes because of its propensity to seed itself around. Brown thrashers like dense shrubs for nesting, especially thorny or spiny ones, so include some of them. Include areas of leaf mulch where the brown thrashers can thrash about for insects, worms and grubs. A shallow birdbath low to the ground is another draw.

Q: I am having a Fourth of July cookout at my house, and I want to plant a patriotic garden of only red, white and blue flowers. Do you have some suggestions?

A: If you try for the red, white and blue color scheme, please note that there really aren't any flowers that actually match the blue in Old Glory. Some people are disappointed when their final creation appears more like red, white and purple, with a healthy dose of green.

The most common flowers used to achieve the patriotic effect are petunias. There are petunia varieties that are clear red, pure white and a violet that substitutes for blue. Combining petunias with dusty miller with its bright silver leaves increases the contrast between the flower colors and makes them more effective. Mealycup salvia is sometimes used for its lavender-blue or silvery blue flowers. It can be combined with the petunias as well. Scarlet sage has varieties with flowers of red or scarlet, white or cream and deep purple. These are sometimes used together or with other flowers to

achieve a red-white-blue effect.

You may want to reconsider planting your entire garden in this restrained color scheme and instead plant only a couple containers of red, white and blue by the entry way or in another prominent location to serve as focal points. You may also think about planting red, white and blue flowers along with other colors of flowers throughout your garden and then cutting them to create a patriotic flower arrangement for the main table. If you choose to do this, plant some aniscented salvia (Salvia gauranatica). It is a tall perennial with violet-blue flowers. Other good choices for cut flowers are tall red and white zinnias.

Planting a wide variety of colors and flowers may make a more successful design than limiting yourself to only a few plants in three colors. Think of your garden as a patriotic show of floral fireworks and display the American flag itself in a place of honor over them all.

Q: Should fresh blueberries be washed prior to freezing? What containers are best for freezing them?

A: Some claim that washing the blueberries before freezing causes the skins to toughen, while others claim the opposite. Whether you wash them or don't wash them before freezing, they should be dry when put into the freezer so they don't stick together and freeze into a solid mass. Some people say that even when the washed blueberries are dried they are still more likely to stick together because the washing removes some of the coating that keeps the berries from sticking together. Georgia's blueberry season begins in May and runs into August. Freezing is a good way to preserve Georgia blueberries for use throughout the entire year. Blueberries can be frozen in ziplock bags or freezer containers.

If you have questions about agriculture, horticulture, food safety or services or products regulated by the Georgia Department of Agriculture, write Arty Schronce (arty.schronce@agr.georgia.gov) or visit the department's website at www.agr.georgia.gov.

Planning, zoning meetings

The City of Lincolnton Planning & Zoning Board meetings for 2021 are scheduled as follows: June 29, July 27, Aug. 31, Sept. 28, Oct. 26, Nov. 30, Dec. 28. These meetings will be held in City Hall at 5:30 p.m. each month if there is an agenda.

Home Orchard Pest Management
By Robyn Stewart
Lincoln County Extension Service

Extension folks use the term "home orchard" quite loosely - generally, we are talking about anyone who is not producing fruit on a commercial scale. Per that definition, you might have one or two trees, or you could have several acres of them, and still fall into a "home orchard" producer category. One of the most common issues in home orchards, and the one I've gotten the most calls on lately, is disease and insect damage. There are several things home orchard producers can do to help improve their tree health and fruit quality.

The first thing to consider is getting out there for early identification of any issues. Unfortunately, when I get calls in June about fruit with extensive damage, there's little we can do to save the crop. The best way to reduce insect and disease problems is to get ahead of them via scouting.

There are two parts to scouting for pests and diseases - understanding WHEN a pest or disease is likely to be an issue and understanding WHAT that pest or disease is. As an example, a recent orchard I visited was having some insect damage issues. There were a variety of trees, including plum, peach, apple, pear, all at different points in the "fruit set" stage of development, where fruit is present and maturing. The majority of the fruit on the trees had been damaged, exhibiting crescent shaped blemishes and occasionally the presence of an insect larvae in the fruit itself. The culprit was one of the most common pests of fruit trees, the plum curculio beetle. Earlier recognition of this pest may have allowed us to get on an appropriate spray program to reduce losses, as we know the plum curculio typically needs control starting right at petal fall through harvest.

Scouting to identify the problem and then implementing a targeted spray program are the best defense against insect and disease related losses. There are generally four types of spray you will find on the market. I do want to note here that one of the biggest challenges for home orchard folks will be getting adequate coverage of the spray without specialty equipment, especially for larger trees. That is also why we recommend an appropriate pruning program to help keep trees a manageable size (and pruning also reduces pest and disease issues).

Dormant spray is applying horticultural oil on trees during the winter or dormant period of growth. This spray is useful for pests on the bark of the tree like aphids, mites, scale insects, and so on. Typically, dormant oils are used once per year.

The second type are insecticidal

Scholarship fund

The 10th Annual Jennie L. Garnett Scholarship Fund Program of Newberry Missionary Baptist Church will not be held this year. However, contributions may be made to Newberry Missionary Baptist Church, P.O. Box 173. The program is sponsored annually by the Jennie L. Garnett Inspirational Choir.

The late Jennie L. Garnett was a strong supporter of education. She often shared with others her struggle to get an education.

We appreciate your support and generosity. Willie J. White, pastor.

sprays targeted for a specific insect. These sprays kill pests that feed on foliage, bore into the tree, or feed on the fruit. Most fruits need multiple insecticide sprays through the growing season to protect against insect pests. You should not use insecticidal sprays when trees are flowering as they will kill pollinators and beneficial insects.

Fungicidal sprays are used to control the spread of fungal and bacterial diseases - again, identification of what fungal or bacterial disease is essential for proper use. Depending on the issue, multiple applications may be needed in a season.

Finally, homeowners can use a general-purpose spray. These sprays are used at a regular interval during the growing season and can help control our most common pests and diseases. The major benefit is that the orchard owner does not need any specialized knowledge of plant diseases or insects in order to use these "home orchard sprays." However, downsides of these products are that they are often a lower concentration than is needed to control some pests, they have to be used more frequently than targeted products, and they increase pesticide exposure.

If you have a pest issue in your home orchard, or if you would like help getting more information on scouting and spray programs, please let us know at uge3181@uga.edu.

Sunday services

Blessed Hope Bible Baptist meets at the Presbyterian Church on Sundays at 11 a.m. and Wednesdays at 7 p.m. for prayer meeting. Come join us. For more information call 706-359-6759.

Sit, Sew classes

The American Legion is hosting additional classes: "Sit & Sew" classes, meet monthly on the 2nd & 4th Tuesday morning, from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

"Quilting Classes" are monthly, on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday, 7-9:30 p.m. Call Linda Buesching/Instructor at (706) 359-1572.

Sewing and quilting stations are appropriately spaced and masks are required.

All levels of quilting welcome. The cost is a "donation" to the American Legion.

Soccer registration

Lincoln County Recreation Department will hold registration for fall soccer June 14-July 15, for ages 5-7 and 8-10. Cost is \$50 per child. There will be no late registration. Season starts Aug. 24. Pictures will be made Mon., Aug. 23 only.

Contact LeTrellis Glaze at 706-359-2236 for more information.

Super Crossword

Answers												
ALPS	ERA	ALBOM	TRIADS									
SERA	VET	LEROI	REDDIT									
KNOCKED	OUT	GOLD	ADOREE									
SID	GROMMET	ALTIM	ICE									
NUMB	PROBLEMS	SULFUR										
MICE	TIA	IANS	LETTIS									
ASTARIS	BORON	GAEELS										
EMS	BELLARUS	ATVS	AGO									
PIRATES	OF	THE	CARBON									
SEMI	SISE	SAO	DEFEATS									
WRAPS	DOC	DNA	TASTE									
ANGELIC	BOA	NIK	CHAT									
MINDY	OUR	ROWN	ISMUTH									
PEA	TREE	NOCANDO	SIP									
THARP	BATH	ROOM	ZINC									
ALANA	AURA	ITS	ADDS									
PORTLAND	DARGON	EPEE										
LOD	FETID	EGOTISM	SCI									
ONETWO	ANDERSON	COPPER										
MINOAN	TERSE	UFO	GINA									
BETSY	S	ERIE	ROIT									
ANTS												

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