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'Tis The Season: Cons and Flim-Flams

By David Hamrick
View News Staff

"It makes a body feel real bad," said a recent victim.

The victim, an elderly man, let two young strangers into his home. The men were there on the pretense of selling him discount carpeting. In fact, they robbed him.

This is a crime police call a "flim-flam." Flim-flams occur year 'round, but particularly at Christmas, police say, when people are more likely to have money on hand. The victims often are elderly.

The term "flim-flam," according to the Cleveland sheriff's office, covers a wide variety of schemes, but the bottom line is always money. Minimal services may be provided for exorbitant fees, but more often than not the victim gets nothing but taken.

Among types of flim-flams in Cleveland County are:

- Flim flim artist often pose as medical examiners from Medicare or Medicaid. The victim is told to lie down and is "examined" by one member of the team, while the other searches the house for cash and valuables.
- Con men may pose as representatives from the power company. They tell the victim that they are there to check the wiring, or to make sure the freezer isn't drawing too much current. While one engages the victim in conversation, the other goes to check on
- In a common scheme, con men pose as executives of banks or savings and loan institutions. The victim is urged to cooperate in helping to catch a dishonest bank employee by withdrawing savings.
- Sometimes goods and services will be offered at "once in a lifetime savings"; or at "senior citizen discounts." These include spraying for termites--often done with water and ordinary garden sprayers; asphaltting or

painting--where \$50 of materials will be sold for 5 or 600 dollars.

Why aren't people more wary? According to Sgt. George Skinner of the sheriff's department, "They're just not prepared. Some of these people are damn good at it. They have these people convinced that they are offering a great service."

The best defense, according to Sgt. Skinner, is to "keep your elderly people educated to what's happening, let them know what's going on. Forethought is better than hindsight. It's amazing how they can take money from these people." Added one detective: "You just can't figure out a crook."

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The Foothills View

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THURS., DECEMBER 3, 1981

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Area Briefs

The 1982 edition of Who's Who Among Students in American Universities and Colleges will carry the names of 32 students from Gardner-Webb College who have been selected as being among the country's most outstanding campus leaders.

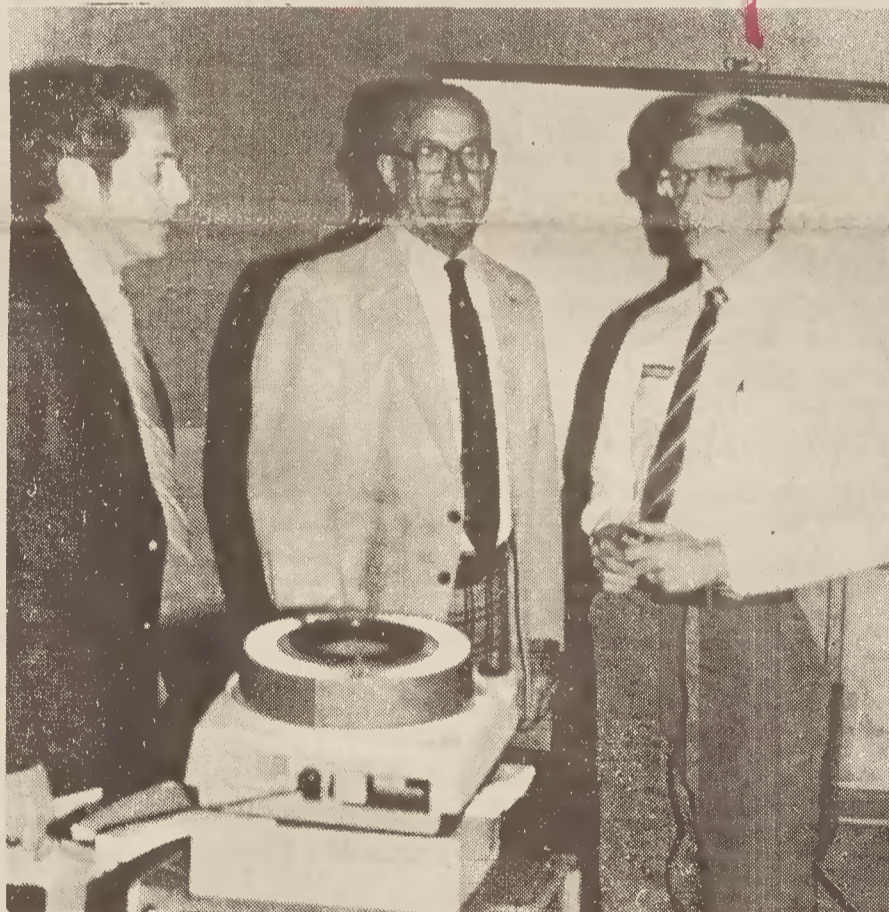
Outstanding students have been honored in the annual directory since it was first published in 1934.

Those on the list include area students: Kenneth Graig Harris, son of Dr. and Mrs. Bernard Harris of Lee St., Shelby; Roger Derrick Mack, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles E. Mack, Jr., Boiling Springs; Lillian Elizabeth Phillips, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. Gene Phillips of Triangle, Zimbabwe; and Raymond Frank White, son of Doris H. White of North Myrtle Beach, S.C.

The Gardner-Webb Chamber Chorus will give two area Christmas concerts Sunday, Dec. 6, 1981. These will be at Union Grove Baptist Church, Lenoir, N.C. at 3:30 p.m. and Mount Zion Baptist Church, Hudson, N.C. at 7 p.m. The Christmas concert will consist of favorites such as: "O Come All Ye Faithful," "Beautiful Savior," "Lo, How A Rose E'er Blooming," and "Of the Father's Love Begotten." Buxtehude's "Magnificat" will also be sung. The concerts are open to the public with no admission charge.

Dr. J. Allen Queen, a native of Lincolnton, N.C., and a current resident of Boiling Springs, N.C., has been elected to serve as a member of the Executive Council of the North Carolina Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. The executive council serves as a policy making body for the organization.

The Cleveland County Historical Association/Museum has just formed a special Long Range Planning Committee to formulate goals for the Association and Museum. The committee headed by Edwin Ford includes Grace Hamrick, Elva Gheen, Betty Burton, W.K. Mauney, Coleman Goforth and Henry L. Weathers, Sr.



Approximately 125 Dover Textiles employees participated in a tax seminar on Tuesday, November 17. Representatives from Ernst & Whinney accounting firm of Charlotte explained President Reagan's Economic Recovery Act of 1981 as it pertains to personal income tax. Pictured [L to R] are Odus Wease, a Dover Textiles Cost Accountant; Dan Moore, Director of Gardner-Webb College's Broyhill academy program; and Robert Frazer, a representative from Ernst & Whinney, a national accounting firm. Ernst & Whinney and Gardner-Webb College sponsored the seminar in Malcolm Brown Auditorium in Shelby. [Photo by John Mark Adams.]

Three Sworn In Rezoning For City

"Orderly growth" meant divided opinion Tuesday night at the first town council meeting since the Nov. 3 election.

Minutes after Mayor Jimmy Greene and two councilmen took their oaths to terms won in last month's election, council began discussion on a rezoning request that led to over an hour's debate on what constitutes desirable growth for Boiling Springs.

Janie Clary requested council to rezone about five acres of her property from R-15, which prohibits trailers and duplexes, to R-15, which allows them. She wanted the rezoning, Mrs. Clary told the council, so that her daughter could live in a trailer on the property.

Her request prompted criticism from about half of the 18 people present of council's decision last month to rezone property for a proposed factory of Artex, Inc.

"With a factory going in it will encourage a trailer park for employees of that factory," said Les Brown. "I thing it (rezoning) is turning into a detriment to the quality of life."

"If a factory is compatible with the growth of Boiling Springs, they'll rezone it," said Tony Eastman. "That scares me, gentlemen."

"There is no stability, no assurance of property value if we rezone as we do," he told the council.

"Look at the town as a whole before rezoning," said Sonya Jones.

Greene defended the Artex rezoning as broadening the town's tax base. "Municipalities," he said, "like our own households, cost money to run."

"I'll stand with anyone to keep our town from becoming an industrialized area with smokestacks" he said.

Councilman John Washburn then moved that council accept the Clary rezoning, and the councilmen unanimously approved the change.

Break-In Reported

In what police term "a pretty big time operation," nine microwave ovens valued at about \$4500 were stolen over the weekend from G.T. McSwain's store on Highway 150.

Police Officer James Clary anticipates an arrest, but asked the View to withhold details of

the investigation until he serves war- Road. rants on all suspects. The department Monday two of the put out the fire, ovens were recover- started by grease in ed out of state as a the kitchen, within result of police work ten minutes.

In other action, Rural Fire reported City Fire and the answering a house Boiling Springs Res- fire Monday at 6:30 cue Squad reported p.m. at the Charles no emergency calls Ramsey home on this week.

Responses were quick and hot in this week's mail to complaints about police protection and rezoning in last week's Letters to the Editor. Rebuttals to Tom Rash and to police response time are printed on this week's Commentary page. See the inside VIEW.