

## Ongoing Problems – Bob Mattsson

I am going to repeat a few things here. First because I am running out of topics and second, it seems that some of the things I write about does not stick. First I will go over GFI's or Ground Fault Interrupters. I have had a few people call me recently about an outlet that does not work in their bathroom. Don Brodie was charging his shaver in the second bathroom until he could call an electrician because his outlet was not working in the main bath. Linda Koretzky was going to call an electrician because her hair dryer outlet in the main bath was not



working. In both cases they checked the circuit breakers in the garage and none were tripped. A



GFI was located in the other bathroom and was tripped. They didn't realize it because another outlet in the second bathroom was working. A Ground Fault Interrupter will open a circuit almost instantaneously when it detects current going to anywhere other than through it, so as to prevent injury. That is why they are required in wet places like kitchens, bathrooms and garages. Your outside outlets should also be on a GFI. When a GFI senses about a 5 milliamp (.005 of one amp) difference, it will trip. If you are the reason this happened, you may feel a tingle or your arm may jerk but you will not be seriously hurt. You may not see a GFI outlet in the bathroom or kitchen but the outlets are protected by one. A single GFI outlet can be wired to protect many outlets down stream of it. GFI's should be tested occasionally by pressing the test button and then the reset button. While you are doing this, plug something like a light or can opener into the outlets you think should be protected and see what happens when you trip the GFI. Don't take it for granted that they are protected, test them. This may come as quite a shock but not everything was done perfectly when these houses were built. The bathrooms should definitely be protected as well as the outlets above the kitchen counters and on your kitchen island. The refrigerator, stove, dishwasher and sink disposal unit are *not* on GFI

circuits. Some GFI outlets have a little light indicating it has tripped, others don't. Lynn Buechler's bathrooms were protected by a GFI that was located in the garage behind a shelf. It took her a week to locate it. She had lights but no outlets, which meant no curling iron.

The second thing that has happened recently is a complaint about smoke detectors going off even though the batteries were changed. Bob Levine had an incident where the detector was going off even after changing the battery and then disconnecting it from the wiring in the ceiling. It turned out to be his carbon monoxide detector that was just below the smoke detector and under a table. It is very difficult to discern where the chirp is coming from when you are near it. Carbon monoxide and smoke detectors wear out after a while and will start to chirp to let you know something is wrong with the unit. Of course a constant chirping or alarm sound is something else and you should be prepared to leave or locate the source of the problem. Not all carbon monoxide detectors have battery back up but you should check yours and if it has one, put it on your battery change list.

The third thing is scams again. Bob Levine reminded me of a couple that I missed.

Across your computer screen while on the web comes....."you are the 10,000th viewer...and you won a: "blah, blah, blah" "PARTICIPATION REQUIRED TO WIN PRIZE.". Of course if you click you are asked to purchase, join, give all kinds of personal information or give your credit card number. If you close out and reopen you will see the same "Congratulations, you are the 10,000<sup>th</sup> viewer", But now you should be at least the 10,001<sup>st</sup>.

Then there are the Ads on television and the Internet which give you a price... then....PLUS S & H (the shipping and handling price being almost as much or as much as the item itself.)

Also: "We'll give you a second one absolutely free...no additional charge... ALL YOU PAY FOR THE SECOND ONE IS THE SHIPPING AND HANDLING. And it is the same thing, the shipping and handling will cost you at least as much as the item. You have to stay sharp. The one that really got me was one from what I thought was a reputable company. Some time back I

bought a battery operated nail trimmer for my dog from Pedi Paws. A few months later I got a check in the mail from Pedi Paws for \$5.00. I thought it was a rebate although I didn't really remember sending one out. But, hey, a check is a check, right? But on the back was a box with some small print and a place to sign. Upon closer examination this is what the small print was; *"I authorize Shoppers Advantage to bill the annual membership fee after my risk free trial. I agree to a thirty-day trial offer in Shoppers Advantage. I understand that the \$129.99 annual membership fee will be automatically charged to my credit card on file with PediPaws unless I cancel my membership by calling 1-866-709-6290 before the end of the trial period. My membership will be automatically renewed and I will also be charged every year thereafter at the then-current fee unless I call to cancel for a refund of the unused portion of the current year's fee. By cashing this check I authorize PediPaws to securely transfer my credit card information to Shoppers Advantage for enrollment, billing and benefit processing."* What gall!

When I did a search on the web for Shoppers Advantage, this is one of the things I found. - Whether you see a charge for 'Just for Me', 'Travelers Advantage', 'Shoppers Advantage', 'Hotline', or whatever, it is all the same company. Simply a different product, and a different 800 number that routes to different representatives. None of the products are worth the cost, and most products are just mixes and repackages of the other benefits of the other products. So Travelers Advantage didn't sell your info to Just for Me. It's the same company, and they decided that if you signed up for one product, you are likely to sign up for another. TLG's marketing practices are deceptive in my opinion (such as small print on some form you fill out), and whatever company helps them get another customer gets a percentage of the membership fees for one or more years. This is usually a bank or hotel or something. Tom, Milford, Connecticut. So, stay sharp, don't get scammed!