

IRS EMAIL SCAMS

The dreaded tax time is upon us, with less than a month to go until you have to file your taxes. But this is also the season for scammers of all sorts to try stealing your identity and your money. Innocent taxpayers have been victimized all over the country to the tune of millions of dollars, dating back to at least 2013. To fight this epidemic of scammers, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) reminds taxpayers that it does NOT:

- Initiate contact by email, phone, text, or social media asking for your personal or financial information
- Call about taxes owed without first sending a bill
- Call to demand immediate payment
- Require payment in a certain way, e.g., debit card
- Ask for debit or credit card numbers on the phone
- Threaten local law enforcement action for nonpayment of taxes

If you get a suspicious-looking “phishing” email, don’t reply to it or click any links in it or open any attachments in it. This kind of email may infect your computer with malware if you answer it or click anything in it. Just forward it unchanged, including headers and subject lines, to phishing@irs.gov and then delete it. If a scammer calls you demanding payment, hang up and report it to the IRS at 800-829-1040.

GREYBALL

It is against the law for a licensed taxi driver to refuse to pick up a legitimate fare, but some ride-hailing services such as Uber have been accused of using a tool called Greyball to “hide” from certain customers. This tool can render a driver invisible to a customer who uses the Uber app to summon a ride whom the driver wants to avoid. Critics of Uber have accused the company of actively greyballing certain people, including law enforcement officials trying to catch Uber in the act of greyballing. (Source: Ben Zimmer, “Word on the Street” column, Wall Street Journal, March 18)

IS YOUR BABY MISSING?

A shocking item in “Police Beat” (Pacifica Tribune, March 15) said that “respondent found a baby in the middle of the street” at Manzanita Drive and Alicante Drive on March 8. Without any further information available, we can only hope that the respondent and/or the police were able to return the lost baby to its rightful owners.

DON'T TRUST SPELLCHECKERS

“Another year, another Avatar postponement. James Cameron says the long-gesticulating sequel to his

science-fiction epic will not be released next year.”
(Associated Press story in the Honolulu Star-
Advertiser, March 11)

THE BLEACH BOYS

Puerto Rico’s team in the World Baseball Classic showed off a new fashion look: bleached blond hair. They made quite a show of it during their games, taking off their caps and rubbing their strangely yellow locks, most of them favoring a modified Mohawk look. You’ll be relieved to know that the new hairdo does not resemble Donald Trump’s.

SWAMI SEZ

“Some people hear voices. Some see invisible people. Others have no imagination whatsoever.” (Perry Prosdokian)

MAYBURRITOVILLE

- Email: Mayburrito@Goofbuster.com
- Blog: PacificaRiptide.com
- Copy Editor: Goofbuster.com