

ATA article for October 2016

Greetings from Ontario, Canada.

The trap shooters and families of Ontario extend their sincere condolences to the family and friends of the late Glenn Lash. His untimely passing is a great loss to the shooting fraternity and he will be missed.

For Ontario trap shooters who made it to Sparta this year, thank you for attending and I hope you will include the Grand American in your shooting plans for next year. For those who couldn't make it, please consider attending in 2017. The facilities are excellent but, more importantly, the Grand American is the premier tournament each year. Never discount your ability or chances to achieve a "best ever personal performance". For example, a relatively new shooter from Connecticut shot 100 straight in one of the preliminary handicap events from 19 yards. This was his first 100 straight of any event and he couldn't have shot it at a better time. His delegate Richard Latouf introduced him to me and for all I know he is still bouncing with enthusiasm. Let's put it this way – if you don't attend the result is certain. If you do attend you give yourself the opportunity to have a favourable outcome. I know there are challenges with the economy, distance, etc., etc., but please consider it -- you just may be pleasantly surprised.

Now for a "heads up". My office is receiving increasingly more and more calls by people who have been defrauded by con artists. At first the victims are in denial but gradually come to the realization that they have been duped. Frequently these victims are too embarrassed to talk about it. They report the fraud to the authorities only to find most often they get an automated response encouraging them to send in full particulars. That is law enforcement code for "sorry about your misfortune but there is nothing we can do about it so learn your lesson and don't fall for this sort of thing again".

And that is the purpose of this article – as trap shooters you have lots of connections and should help not only yourselves but others who are vulnerable and who may get defrauded. From the victims who have talked to me there are certain common approaches taken by fraudsters – they usually call them by name and they always create a sense of urgency where immediate action is necessary to either avoid certain peril that will befall the victim or, on the other hand, the loss of an opportunity (too good to be true). The caller identifies him or herself with impressive credentials (such as Canada Revenue Agency inspector, badge # ____, leaves a telephone number...). Of course if the telephone number is called, the person answers and identifies himself with the same credentials. A sceptic will probe the individual or not call back at all. But for those that call they do so with trepidation because they have been told there is (for instance) an arrest warrant out for him or her, and for that person's spouse, for non-payment of certain obligations, that attempts have been made to visit them personally in the past and now the only way this enforcement can be derailed is if immediate payment is made.

How is the payment to be made? – if you can imagine, one victim I talked to was instructed to go to the local supermarket, buy \$2,000 worth of \$100 gift certificates, call back to the "officer", and read the identification numbers from the back of each card which can be ascertained when the protective cover is scratched off. This particular victim thought it odd to have to do this but was terrified and simply complied. By the time I was consulted (within an hour of this fraud) nothing could be done – money gone. I even talked to the thug on the phone who was demanding more money from my client if you can imagine. The person spoke English very well and was very confident and very demanding.

My research indicates that a lot of these calls are re-routed and the perpetrator may very well be in places like Nigeria which makes tracking and prosecution virtually impossible. The gift certificates in this particular instance got cashed with no way to track who benefitted. Ironically, the victim of this fraud was a professional that in hindsight should have known better. But if such a person is scammed, think how much easier it is to scam a vulnerable person. All I ask of trap shooters is to be vigilant and help protect those you know. CRA (and I assume IRA) don't enforce this way. When victims report their loss to the authorities, nothing happens. They are a statistic. Prevention is the only solution. The types of scams are far too many to report here – there are very innovative crooks out there.

Another example is when a client called me to look into something for him. His wife had received a telephone call advising her she had won a new car but before it could be delivered to her she had to send money for taxes and shipping. The mechanism of sending the money was communicated and my client's wife was so excited about this windfall she had already secured the funds and was rather annoyed that my client wouldn't let her send it until he called me. I called the telephone number provided and believe me, the character was very convincing. The vehicle was in Quebec, I was told, and was ready to go to my client's wife the moment funds were received. An excuse was given as to why a face-to-face meeting could not be arranged where the vehicle and the keys were exchanged for the money. He gave the make and model of the vehicle. But when I probed further asking for the name of the registered owner, and the serial number so that I could conduct a Personal Property Security Act search, there was a pause and then the phone went dead. My client thanked me but I still think his wife felt deprived of an opportunity too good to be true. [That it was.]

Don't fall for the sympathy ploys – where money is asked to be sent to a child (for instance) of a relative or friend of yours because the person needing the money didn't want mom or dad to find out about the mess the person was in. Don't return telephone calls to area codes you don't recognize [look up the area code online]. [Lots of scams out there.] Don't fall for the online suiter that is madly in love with you. A recent widow, went to an online "Christian" dating site never suspecting that some on that site were anything but Christian. She sent over \$150,000 by way of a temporary loan to this thug who promised to pay her back when he came to Canada to see her. She was devastated to learn the new love of her life was a con artist (whoever this person was) and a good part of her life savings were irretrievably lost. These bandits have no scruples and no conscience.

Enough said – you get my point.

Good shooting as you pursue the late fall clays.

Paul Shaw
Ontario Delegate

P.S. Since dictating this article one of my own staff members (the receptionist) received a call from a 718 area code demanding to know the receptionist's first and last name so that information could be pulled up on this employee. My receptionist was astute enough to say that if the caller knew who he was calling he would already have the first and last name. The caller threatened to arrest my receptionist unless there was immediate compliance. The fact that he called a law firm did not phase this conman. My receptionist just hung up and reported to me.