



Taylor's Produce participated in the parade at Brodhead.



Larry Taylor gives State Representative Danny Ford a ride in this year's Headwaters of the Dix River Festival's parade held at Brodhead last weekend. Ford was the Grand Marshal and is shown here with his grandson, Ben Allen.



Doug Proctor brought along his Hot Rods for the parade.

Internet auction fraud

By: Hazel Jackson

Internet auction fraud is currently the number one fraud committed over the Internet. A market research company, eMarketer, in a recent study estimated auction fraud entailing 87% of all online fraud in 2000. The Internet Fraud Complaint Center (IFCC) alone has received over 4,000 complaints from January 2001 through April 2001 on auction fraud. The average loss per complaint amounts to \$776. This number may be much higher from the victims that do not report the fraud. Internet auction fraud takes several forms:

*Non-delivery - the item is never delivered to the buyer after he/she purchases the item. Additionally, if the buyer pays by credit card, the seller obtains their name and credit card number.

*Misrepresentation occurs when the seller's purpose is to deceive the buyer as to the true value of an item.

*Triangulation involves three parties: the perpetrator, a consumer, and an online merchant. The perpetrator buys merchandise from an online merchant using stolen identities and credit card numbers. Then, the perpetrator sells the merchandise at online auction sites to unsuspecting bidders. Nest, the

perpetrator has the buyer wire transfer him the money and then sends the merchandise to the buyer. Later, the police come, question the unsuspecting buyer, and collect the stolen merchandise to keep for evidence.

*Fee stacking involves the seller adding hidden charges to the item after the auction is over to obtain more money. Instead of a flat rate for postage and handling, the seller adds separate charges for postage, handling, and the shipping container.

*Subjects are also offering black-market goods for sale on Internet auction sites. These goods include copied software, music CD's, videos, etc.

*Some subjects use multiple bidding to buy an item at a lower price. This occurs when a buyer places multiple bids (some high and some low) on the same item using different aliases. The multiple high bids scare off other potential buyers from bidding. In the last few minutes of the auction, the same buyer withdraws their high bids, only to purchase the item with their much lower bid.

*Finally, shill bidding is intentional-fake bidding by the seller to drive up the price of his/her own item that is up for bid. This is accomplished by the sellers themselves making bids on their own items, and/or someone that is paid by the seller.

Look in next weeks column for suggestions to help you avoid the pitfalls of Internet auction bidding.

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ALEXANDER JULIAN AT HOME

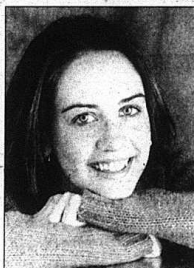
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Congratulations to Lindsey and Amy Parsons on their recent graduations



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