

Pre-Paid Legal Services Representative Tells About Fines, and Steps For 'Identity-Theft'

Jerry Arthur, a Durant "independent associate" of Pre-Paid Legal Services, Inc., told us last week about fines for "improper" handling of records that would allow "identify theft," and how to guard against the problem.

Under part of the Fair and Accurate Credit Transaction Act, (FACTA,) which went into effect two and one-half years ago, any employer who uses Social Security or other personnel information, can be fined, and sued in civil court, for the loss of such information. Even if you shred all potential employee information, you still might have to prove you were not responsible for this information becoming public, he said.

Information from Arthur said there are many things your business can do to "minimize liability." Among these are developing rules for handling such information, document shredding, locking file drawers with sensitive information, and setting up firewalls on computer equipment.

Arthur said that federal fines under FACTA, can be up to \$2,500, and state fines can be up to \$1,000 per employee. HIPAA laws and the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act make the fines up to \$1 million per person. And Business Week says that the average civil damages for Identity Theft victims are \$92,000 per person.

He showed several news stories that showed the growing

expenses involved.

One was when the Department of Veterans' Affairs lost some personal information on several thousand veterans. A class action suit by several veterans' groups resulted in an expensive loss.

Wells Fargo "wrongly disclosed private consumer information to third parties," and settled a class action suit for \$9.6 million.

A suit against B.J.'s Wholesale disclosed FTC guidelines and a Better Business guide which showed that security programs do not have to be perfect—only "reasonable."

Pre-Paid Legal Services offers an "Identity Theft Shield," to an individual or group of employees.

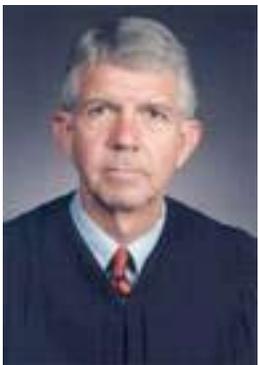
It gives the member and their spouse "daily monitoring of their names."

Pre-Paid Legal Services will notify them of any change occurring to their name, through what the company calls

"Experian." If they recognize the change as something "legitimate," they ignore the notification. But if they feel the change is fraudulent, Pre-Paid Legal "completely restores" their records in all five areas of identity theft, Arthur says.

The cost is "about 85 cents per day," he adds.

Taylor Said He Knew Nichols Could Get A Fair Trial Here



Justice Steven Taylor

State Supreme Court Justice Steven Taylor knew that Oklahoma City bomber Terry Nichols would get a fair trial in Pittsburg County. That is why he brought the trial here, he told us Dec. 18.

Many people said that Nichols could not get a fair trial in Oklahoma. But the prosecutors said Nichols got a fair trial, and Nichols did not appeal the verdict, so he must have agreed.

"I knew if there was any chance of having a fair trial, it would be right here in Pittsburg County," Taylor stated. The McAlester jurist said he is a product of McAlester and still makes his home here, driving back and forth between here and Oklahoma City every weekend.

The justice said he reviews "Cert Petitions" and accepts them or rejects them for the court to review. A "full opinion" is written on the ones the court accepts.

The full court is a "very formal, ritualistic group," he said.

No one is allowed in or out of their meetings.

No first names are used. It is a "tradition," and "a matter of respect for the law," Taylor reported.

The Supreme Court Justice said most of the other justices have apartments in Oklahoma City. "But I chose to live here," he related. "This is my home. I lived here all my life." He said he drives home every weekend.

McAlester is "by history," a leading city in the state. Having Nichols' trial here brought statewide attention on McAlester,

See Taylor on Page 2

Scifres Tells About Main Street Program



Karl Scifres

Karl Scifres told us Dec. 4, about the Main Street Program, which he said is to revitalize the Commercial District.

Karl introduced Shaun Lindley, president of the Downtown Merchants' group.

The Main Street Program was started 25 years ago. It has provided over \$12 million to downtown areas and has created 331,417 jobs, Karl said.

For about five years it was inactive, but today, there are 42 active Main Street Communities, Karl related.

The program has a four-point approach. First is organization. Second is promotion and marketing, from banners to newsletters,

and retail events.

Third is design, which includes window displays. Fourth is economic restructuring.

Linda Burnet is state director.

In McAlester, a \$75,000 annual budget has been adopted. The area to be included is from Adams to Wyandotte and from Main to Sixth, plus approximately three blocks in "Old Town," or North McAlester.

A lot of information is collected on the number of employees in the area, Karl related. A fund-raising drive is held.

Wilburton has done a lot in the program, Karl reported. Durant has erected a lot of signs. Many communities have had cleanups and have planted flowers. One southern Oklahoma town has a decorator on its staff.

Recommendations are being made for McAlester's Main Street Program.

Basketball Coach Gives Program On Team, and Season



Pat Dotson

Picture by George Lampton

under construction.” He explained that success is “surrounding yourself with good people who are knowledgeable about basketball and aren’t afraid to work hard.”

Dotson introduced senior Lee Boyle, and managers Rachael Helmer, Tabitha Hill and Stacey Curry.

Dotson said he is “very proud” of Boyle, “our only senior.” Boyle is second or third “in whichever statistical category you want to look at.” He said Boyle has a “strong work ethic, is always dependable,” and “always understands how to finish what he starts.”

The managers are “hard-working girls who keep stats, do laundry, keep water available and run errands.”

This year’s team, he said, has “one senior, three juniors, and seven sophomores.”

McAlester High School Basketball Coach Pat Dotson told us last week about the local basketball program and introduced people involved in this year’s program.

He introduced Coaches Zike and Holloman, and Coach David Holt introduced three members of his Girls’ Team.

Coach Dotson told us the “road to success is always

Cory Anderson is a 6-foot 7-inch junior, who is leading scorer and rebounder and “is doing a great job for us in the post.”

Don Brown and Jordan Lane are first string juniors. Jordan Lane is lost for the season with an ankle injury.

“Zathan Simpson is doing a great job at guard and is a great effort guy,” the coach said.

Guards Prevon Erving, David Degiacomo and Jacob Engleman “continue to get better,” Dotson said. Jeff Williams, six-foot, five, is “coming around and being more consistent.” Cameron Curry and William Patton are sophomores, and are “getting better all the time,” the coach related.

He said the team is a “great group of guys” who “work hard.” They are “concerned about and play for the team’s success. They are good students and great representatives of our school and our community,” he said.

The team has “faced much adversity this year,” being a young team with a tough schedule, and “losing three guys to injury... But we have a strong sense of unity and are keeping a great attitude, about where we are as individual players and how we have to remain committed to playing our best basketball” during January and February.

Coach Holt introduced Ashton Santine, Felicia Henderson, and Porsha Green.

Holt said there “is a great opportunity for us...(we can) take it to the next step...We play hard.”

Taylor from Page 1

Taylor said.

“I chose to move it to my hometown. But I knew that the trial had to be done right.... We proved to the world we are fair.”

Nichols and McVeigh both “hated this government. “But I looked him (Nichols) square in the eye and said, ‘You’re going to get a fair trial... The government that you hated is big enough’” to do that, he told the federal defendant.

The justice said in the past “two or three years there has been some darkness.” The darkness ends when “you can tell the difference between an olive tree and a fig tree... When you can look in the face of a stranger and know he is your brother... When you can look in the face of everyone and know he is your brother...”

“Rotary plays a part in that.”

Taylor has been a Rotarian for 29 years. “Rotary is part of what formed me,” he said.

Attendance at Rotary has been “great” in the past and “I hope it will continue,” he said he hoped.

“Rotary is important... ‘Service above self ‘ takes a lot of work.”

Taylor said he likes the “Four-Way Test” best. In the “Four-Way Test,”

The “key word is ‘all,’” he emphasized.

The test “applies to our country. It applies to the world.”

Although there has been “darkness” in the community and this area, he said, “There’s nothing about the city or the community that some light won’t cure.”

Attendance, Visitors, Handshakers *and the Club Drawing*



New Member - Stephanie Swinnea, who is Rector of the All Saints Episcopal Church in McAlester
Picture by George Lampton

member, Stephanie Swinnea.

She said she was happy to be a member and that she liked McAlester because it is like a “big city with a small town attitude.”

HANDSHAKERS-Last week, Karl Scifres was the handshaker,

Last week there were 57 present, including several basketball coaches and players.(Visitors are listed in the story on page 1.) On Dec. 18, there were 58 present. Brett Cable was a guest of Karl Scifres. Dick Wheeler was a guest of Helen Wheeler. Will Corley was a guest of Jim Thompson, and Nick Harris was a guest.

On Dec. 11, there were 38 at the meeting. No guests were reported. On Dec. 4, there were 50 present. Wayne Hanway presented as a new

but the winner left, so Karl kept it and bought a \$1 ticket to the drawing. He won passes to a basketball tournament. But he didn’t win the \$300 which reportedly are in the pot for the club drawing.

On Dec. 18, Helen Wheeler had the dollar, and gave it to Bob Thornton. On Dec. 11, John Freeman gave the buck to Ted Welch. (Still no big winner.)

And on Dec. 4, Noble Miller gave the \$1 to George Lampton. Roi Nelson drew the card in the drawing, but it was not the joker. (The bankers are not in charge of the club drawing.)

Parker Students

Sang Christmas Carols

The young singers from Parker Intermediate School brought us their Christmas carols on Dec. 11. Mrs. Amanda Karch is the Parker Music Teacher.

The songs were called Christmas Sock Rock, Wacky March (with “Boomwhackers” and Kazoos,) and “Blitzen’s Boogie.”

The singers were from Mrs. Misti Vicars and Mrs. Amiee Owens’ Fifth Grade Classes.