

Business

Ticker

Two elected to college board of trustees
 Andrew J. Reilly, of Middletown Township, and Garry Maddox, of Narbeth, were elected to Neumann College's board of trustees earlier this month.

Reilly is a graduate of the Widener University School of Law and a managing partner in the law firm of Swartz and Campbell in Media. He is also vice chairman of Delaware County Council.

Maddox was a center fielder for the Phillies from 1975-1986. He is currently president of World Wide Concessions, Inc., and chief executive officer of A. Pomerantz Co.

Larson named to chamber board

R. Alan Larson, president and chief executive officer of Mercy Fitzgerald Hospital, was appointed to a three-year term on the Delaware County Chamber of Commerce board of directors last week.

Larson, a Utah native, had previously served as CEO of several hospitals and medical centers around the country and was most recently a member of the board of directors for the Chester County Chamber of Business and Industry.

Sweigart's 1934 Ford to be in calendar

Dan Sweigart's 1934 Ford Deluxe 3-Window Coupe was chosen to represent the month of November in an upcoming Customer Car Calendar published by Snap-on Tools.

Snap-on invites its customers to send in photos of their project cars for the calendar and Sweigart, of Glen Mills, was one of only 12 car owners to be chosen. The 2005 calendar is available from local Snap-on Tools representatives.

Delco chamber to host 'Buyer's Fair'

The Delaware County Chamber of Commerce will host its 19th annual "Meet the Buyers Fair" at the Ramada Inn, Philadelphia Airport in Essington, on Sept. 28.

The fair, sponsored by Boeing, Aqua Pennsylvania, Sunoco, Inc., and Krispy Kreme Doughnuts, runs from 1-4 p.m. Representatives from the area's largest corporations, government agencies, colleges, and universities will be available for one-on-one meetings.

Registration will be \$30 for Chamber members and \$40 per non-members. For more information, call Dolores McCabe at (610) 565-3677, ext. 110, or e-mail to doloresm@delcochamber.org.

New technology used at kid's show store

A "Fun and Fancy Foot Festival" Saturday marked the kick-off of OLLY Shoes at the Marple Crossroads Chopping Center in Springfield.

OLLY is a children's shoe store offering a state-of-the-art computerized foot measuring system called OLLYSCAN. The OLLYSCAN measures a child's foot as he or she rides a train around the store, matching the size and shape of feet to shoes from over 20 brands.

The system is expected to remove the stress and tedium of shoe shopping for both children and parents, and offers a perfect fit for feet of all shapes and sizes.

The Exton-based shoe company also carries socks, shoe accessories, games, dolls, and unique gift items. OLLY is expected to open 10 stores in the Delaware Valley area within the year.

Bosha Design wins Philly Gold Award

Upper Darby-based Bosha Design has won a 2004 Philly Gold Award for a promotional piece at Ursinus College called "In Celebration of Women of Ursinus."

The piece was created to increase alumni support with a focus on female graduates, and includes the story of Minerva Weinberger, the first woman, and in 1880, the only woman to attend Ursinus College.

DeFino made an associate at RatnerPrestia

Dennis DeFino, a former Delaware County public defender, has been made an associate at RatnerPrestia, an intellectual property law firm in the Philadelphia region.

DeFino will work in electrical, computer, and electronic patent application preparation and prosecution. He is currently studying at Temple for a degree in electrical engineering, where he has already earned a bachelor's degree in political science.

He is also a member of the Pennsylvania Bar Association and the Philadelphia Intellectual Property Law Association.

Sellers run risk of identity theft when selling on eBay

By JUDY THOMAS

Special to the Times

A rhinestone jewelry reseller from West Grove treasured the significant sales she was making on eBay until an identity thief trashed her account.

They dragged her rhinestone reputation through the mud by selling a John Deere tractor for \$19,000, among other things, under her screen name.

As a powerseller, the woman, who did not want to be identified, said she was popular with customers.

"Rhinestones are hot right now," she said. The eBay site suited her lifestyle, and afforded her the best of two worlds: She could stay at home with her children, while enjoying a healthy income.

Unfortunately, her positive screen presence also caught the attention of identity thieves. They prey upon powersellers, she said, because they can use their pristine account feedback and ratings to facilitate bogus sales.

Someone sent her a fraudulent e-mail last November, the woman explained, that was identical to one she received from eBay when she first started selling. The message requested she resubmit her account information for the coming year. She happily obliged, as the e-mail looked official.

Shortly thereafter, her password was changed, and she was locked out of her own account. She watched help-

lessly while an identity impostor sold items under her screen name and tarnished her stellar, power-seller status by not sending the items they promised.

Buyers started posting negative feedback, and canceling payment. eBay security noted the suspicious activity, and e-mailed her immediately, but the damage had already been done.

She attempted to contact eBay repeatedly, hoping they could help her locate the person that racked up \$800 worth of sellers fees in her account, and caused her to lose three months worth of sales. Although eBay apologized via e-mail and adjusted her fees and negative feedback ratings, she was frustrated that she "never got to live chat with anyone" about her predicament.

Although Hani Durzy described identity theft as only a "small problem" on eBay, he said the woman's story fits the profile. He explained that thieves typically target sellers with a good reputation, and "list something that will draw a lot of attention from other eBay users," like a motorcycle.

Durzy explained that eBay is making an effort to encourage users through its nationwide universities and a protective Account Guard feature on the eBay toolbar, to "recognize, reject, and report spoof e-mails back to us."

The eBay security center, he emphasized, can be accessed from any page on eBay or PayPal, its payment system, and contains "an anti-spoof tutorial, and information on how to protect yourself." He stressed that users should "never respond to an e-mail that asks for your password" or credit card, or wire money to a seller, because it can't be tracked.

Upon notification of a takeover, he said eBay disables the account in question to prevent fraudulent transactions. eBay is also willing to "share information with law enforcement if they are pursuing a case," and has implemented an online form, designed "specifically for use by law enforcement," to encourage this type of communication, he said.

Despite her unpleasant experience, the seller has gotten back into the rhinestone saddle. Equipped with a new screen identity and awareness, she said she is willing to try again.

"There are risks in every job," she reasoned. "I love doing it. I was making really good money all over the world," she exclaimed.

Kassab also cherishes his career, saying he "wouldn't change it for the world." He is optimistic about a future with eBay. The online marketplace, he believes, will retain its popularity as long as there is memory-producing merchandise, and people to purchase it.

Everyday Cheapskate

Be wary of extended warranties

Last week I was standing in line in an office supply store. The customer in front of me purchased a \$39 calculator. I couldn't help but hear the clerk offer her an extended warranty.

The woman hesitated then they went back and forth a bit. The saleslady was persistent, suggesting it would be expensive to repair this \$39 calculator. I had to look the other way to keep myself from blurting, "Don't do it! Keep your nine bucks!" Clearly she couldn't read my mind because she went for the bait, swallowed the hook and the clerk reeled her in.

If you've ever wondered why retailers are so persistent in offering extended warranties, I have the answer. It's all about — now here's a real shocker — money. Extended warranties offer retailers a whopping 70 percent profit on average, as opposed to about 10 percent profit on the product itself.

Extended warranties benefit the company issuing the warranty more than the person buying the warranty. Companies wouldn't sell extended warranties if that weren't the case. Such warranties are rarely a good investment because these days most appliances and electronics are very dependable.

In general, here's the problem with extended warranties: They don't cover the most trouble-prone years of an appliance's life. If an item is going fail, statistically it is most likely to do so either in the first six months or much later, long after an extended warranty is not available. The time between six months and five years is the time when the fewest problems occur. Most manufacturers give a one-year warranty on their appliances to cover any early failures,

which in most cases is sufficient. Extended warranties usually aren't offered for the entire life of an appliance — only that mid-term.

There are exceptions. If you know a big-ticket item is notorious for failing during the initial three years, an extended warranty may be a wise choice. That is why I purchased extended warranties for both my treadmill and my laptop computer — both have a high rate of failure. And I'm glad I did, because both extended warranties have more than paid for themselves by covering big repair bills.

If you have had miserable experiences in the past with appliances breaking down, the peace of mind you'll get with an extended warranty may be well worth the price. But that's a decision you need to make on a case-by-case basis. Just keep in mind that unless it's a treadmill or laptop computer, the odds are heavily stacked against you.

Here's an idea: Instead of buying extended warranties, set up a "Repair & Maintenance" savings account and make payments to your own extended warranty program every month. That way, if you do need major repairs, you have the money and also the interest. On the other hand, if it turns out you never require major repairs (more likely), the extended warranty fund will be for your benefit, not a retailer's.

Mary Hunt is the creator of The Cheapskate Monthly newsletter, which can be ordered online at www.cheapskatemonthly.com/um. You can e-mail questions or tips at cheapskate@unitedmedia.com or Everyday Cheapskate, P.O. Box 2135 Paramount, CA 90723. All correspondence becomes the property of Cheapskate Monthly.



By Mary HUNT