

1. **For Your Kind of Life**
More about "Check 21"
2. **Executive Forum**
Ringing our Bell
2. **For Your Financial Health**
Prevent Home Repair Scams and Disputes
3. **For Your Financial Health**
Medicare Rx Drug Discount Cards
3. **Customer Spotlight**
Theatre Cedar Rapids
4. **Net Worth**
Hacks, Viruses, Scams and Spam
4. **New Products**
Making the Grade is Easy!

Dialog

For Your Kind of Life More about "Check 21"

Thought for the day

In three words I can sum up everything I've learned about life. It goes on.

—Robert Frost

Thinking about moving or building a new home?

Let our mortgage lenders pre-qualify you.

Call 286-6200 for details!



In our last issue of the Guaranty Bank Dialog, we brought you information about the Check Clearing for the 21st Century Act or simply "Check 21" which will go into effect October 28, 2004. With this issue, we would like to touch on a couple other check payment, or conversion, practices which folks are confusing with Check 21. Both of these practices use the automated clearinghouse, or "ACH", system.

What check 21 isn't

The first scenario is where a retail merchant converts the check you just wrote to them into an electronic ACH payment right before your eyes. They accept your check and insert it into a small tabletop reader. This machine captures the information on your check: bank name, your

account number and check amount. It then transforms the information into an electronic file and your payment to the merchant is on its way through the system for processing. The reader machine stamps VOID on your check and the merchant returns the check to you! This speeds the payment process up because your check starts to clear the bank while you are still standing at the merchant's counter.

In the second example, companies you receive regular bills from (e.g., cable company, credit card providers, utilities, telephone companies) take the checks you've submitted through the mail and convert them to ACH payments. The new electronic check is cleared and the check you mailed the vendor is destroyed. The payment however, will show up as a line item on your monthly bank statement as a legally accepted proof of your payment.

Substitute checks

The above examples should not be confused with substitute checks that will be created in conjunction with "Check 21". A substitute check is a paper reproduction of your original check that will be produced from a digital image of your original check. These substitutes will be the legal equivalent of the original check and will include all the information contained on the original. Banks will be required to accept substitute checks as if they were original ones.

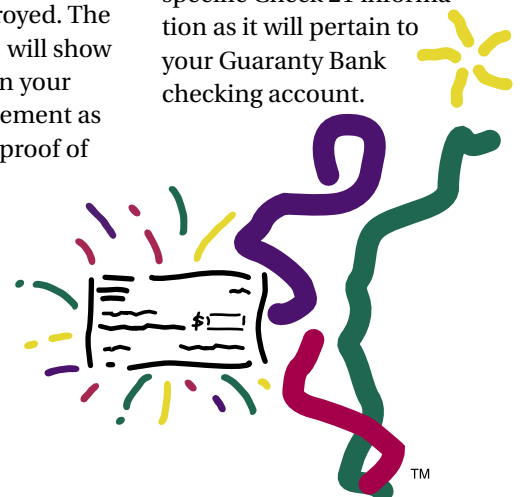
These new payment processing systems will benefit you through faster check clearing, decreased fraud and increased security. Our next Dialog newsletter will contain specific Check 21 information as it will pertain to your Guaranty Bank checking account.

Thanks!

Customers speak up

"Thank you so much for a great year with Guaranty Bank. You all made everything so easy. We look forward to the years ahead."

—Kim Moore, All Saints Church



Executive Forum

A message from our President

I have to toot our horn, or in this case, I should say “ring our bell.” My father, Chairman of the Board Harold Becker, and I have always been proud of the amount of community service to which our employees commit. They give their time to countless organizations throughout the year and are quite often overheard brainstorming on a “how can we make an impact” situation.

One such “think tank” resulted in Guaranty Bank receiving The Salvation Army’s prestigious Bell Ringer award at their recent banquet. And as Paul Harvey says, “here’s the rest of the story.”

Through employee Dave Lodge’s board involvement with The Salvation Army (the same person who took a week of his vacation time to help with disaster relief efforts in the tornado stricken town of Utica, Illinois), the staff began talking about how the money from the holiday

Red Kettle drive is processed. Their previous bank made it **VERY** cumbersome for them to process and even deposit the proceeds from their kettles. In addition, the Army staff members would spend six nights a week during the drive up until after midnight sorting and counting the kettle money collected. Our staff knew there was an opportunity for us to alleviate some of that burden. Minds

started racing, wheels began to turn and a plan was born.

Every night of the six week Red Kettle drive, numerous Guaranty Bank employees volunteered to be at the bank. They would quickly empty the kettles delivered by The Salvation Army and secure the money for the night. The next morning in between our normal banking activities, every available employee would meet behind the teller line to process the previous day’s donations (approximately 30 kettles each day full of coin and folded up bills that were quite often soaking wet from the snow). Reports were run and deposits finalized—all in a fraction of the time it took the Army staff to do the same. After all, money *is* our business.

This was an enormous win/win situation for both of us. The Salvation Army staff no longer had to spend valuable hours processing money during their busiest time of year and the Guaranty Bank employees that helped with this project were well-rewarded . . . not with a monetary bonus from the bank, but with the overwhelming satisfaction each of them got from helping such an vital community organization as The Salvation Army.

I can’t tell you how proud my father and I are of our Guaranty Bank employees.



Robert D. Becker
President & CEO

This was an enormous win/win situation for both of us.

For Your Financial Health Prevent Home Repair Scams and Disputes

Spring is prime time for home repairs—and that makes it prime time for outright scams or frustrating disputes. You can take action to avoid both problems.

Home repair scams by traveling con-artists work like this: Con-artists stop at your door, give you a hard sell, and offer sensational low prices. It might be for roofing or painting, tree-trimming, or asphaltting your driveway with material supposedly “left over” from a job nearby. The con-artists insist that you pay in advance—but they do little or no work and never return. Remember, legitimate contractors very rarely solicit door-to-door. Be skeptical.



The main rules are to check out a contractor, and never pay large sums in advance to a contractor you don’t know. Help older neighbors who might be pressured or intimidated into paying traveling con-artists.

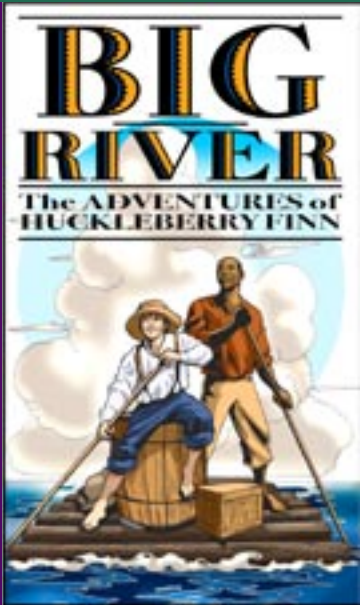
A few ‘bad-apple’ local contractors also take large advance payments but fail to do the work, or do just part of a job or very shoddy work. This is hard to prove as fraud, but it’s costly and frustrating. Follow these tips to protect yourself when you hire a contractor:

Beware of high-pressure sales tactics such as “today-only” discounts, offers to use your home as a “display home” for replacement siding or windows, and “lifetime warranty” offers that only last for the life of the company. Always get several written estimates—shop around for the best deal before making such a large investment.

Check out a contractor before you sign a contract or pay any money. Request local *references*—and check them out. Contact the Attorney General’s Office to see if it has *complaints* (call 515-281-5926.) Contact your county clerk of court for instructions on how to see if a contractor has been sued by unsatisfied customers.

Get it in writing. Before any work begins, agree on a written contract detailing work to be done, responsibility for permits, costs, and any other promises. Ask for a copy of the contractor’s liability insurance certificate. Put start and completion dates in writing, and consequences if the contractor fails to meet them (example: the contract could be nullified if the contractor doesn’t start on time.) If you sign a contract at your home, in most cases you have three business days to cancel.

Avoid paying large sums in advance if you don’t know the contractor. If you have to make a partial advance payment for materials, make your check out to the supplier and the contractor. Insist on a “mechanic’s lien waiver” in case the contrac-



If you are a Guaranty Bank customer and would like your business to be considered for a spotlight article, submit your request to: Guaranty Bank Attn: Chris Crosby, PO Box 1807, Cedar Rapids, IA 52406-1807. Please include your name, the phone number you can be reached at and details about your business.

Customer Spotlight Theatre Cedar Rapids

Among the region's oldest community theatres, Theatre Cedar Rapids is located in the magnificently refurbished Iowa Theatre in the heart of downtown Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Nearly 30,000 patrons attend TCR in the course of an 8-show mainstage season. With a professional staff of 12, a volunteer base of more than 900, and a Youtheatre education program serving nearly 300 youth, Theatre Cedar Rapids has evolved to become one of the twenty largest community theatres in the country.

The Roots of Theatre Cedar Rapids

The setting was 5 Turner Alley, studio apartment of regionalist artist Grant Wood. The year was 1925. A small group of theatre enthusiasts produced the fantasy *Cardboard Moon* for a capacity audience of thirty. They enjoyed cookies and coffee afterwards and asked each other rhetorically, "Why don't we have a the-

atre?" and the "Little Theatre" movement was born in Cedar Rapids. In 1929 a young woman, Catherine Hunt, returned home from dramatic school and sought out others interested in organizing a little theater. This small band of approximately 30 was the seed from which our current Cedar Rapids Community Theatre was born.

Volunteers + Musicals = FUN!

Currently running (May 14-29) is the Kander and Ebb classic, *CABARET*.

Starting July 9-31 the foot-stompin music of Roger Miller propels you down the mighty Mississippi in *BIG RIVER—The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*. With a cast and crew of 60 volunteers, this family hit is a theatrical celebration of pure Americana.

For tickets—or to become a TCR volunteer—call 366-8591 or go online at www.theatreocr.org.

tor fails to pay others for materials or labor.

Be very cautious of credit or financing arranged by a contractor. This is an area of serious abuse by a few contractors in Iowa who arrange credit with high-cost lenders. Such loans may have high interest rates, steep up-front fees, hidden costs, and even costly brokers' fees. Be wary of offers to incorporate credit card debt or other debt into a second mortgage. Check first with your attorney or a local lender you can trust.

For more information or to file a complaint, contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. Call 515-281-5926. The Attorney General's web site is: www.IowaAttorneyGeneral.org.

Medicare Rx Drug Discount Cards:

Check 'em out—but Beware of Scams

The Federal Medicare program has approved certain prescription drug discount cards that may help some people reduce their drug costs starting in June. Cards cost up to \$30 and may be purchased in May. There should be a lot of information reported about the program, but it may be confusing—and that often is where we see con-artists try to take advantage of victims.

"Do's and Don'ts" on Medicare prescription drug discount cards:

- **DO look into it.** Medicare-approved drug discount cards are completely voluntary and are for people on Medicare. Medicare officials estimate people may save 10% to 15% on their total drug costs, and it has approved

28 private "sponsors" to provide the drug discount cards. (The program also offers a *credit* up to \$600 per year for low-income persons—persons whose 2004 income is under \$12,569 single, or \$16,862 married. This federal subsidy waives the \$30 card enrollment fee and can pay 90% to 95% of drug costs up to \$600 per year in 2004 and 2005.)

- **DO "shop" for the card that makes the most sense for you.** People only can get one Medicare-approved card, so they will want to choose the one with the best prices for the drugs they use and the best choice of pharmacies. Contact Iowa's "SHIIP" or Senior Health Insurance Information Program for free, one-to-one advice on what card will work best for you. (Go to www.shiip.state.ia.us. Call 1-800-351-4664, or TTY 800-735-2942.) The SHIIP Program, part of the Iowa Insurance Div., has very good information about the card program, and there are SHIIP

counselors across the state. You can also go to www.medicare.gov, or call 1-800-MEDICARE.

- **DON'T give your Social Security, Medicare, credit card, or bank account numbers to anyone who calls or stops at your door to sell the cards.** Some con-artists are using confusion about the program to steal identities and cheat victims. Legitimate information will come by mail—not by phone or door-to-door. Watch for the official logo: "Medicare-Approved." Don't pay large sums in advance (the maximum cost for a card is \$30.) Contact Iowa's SHIIP Program or Medicare to be sure a card covers the drugs you take and your pharmacist accepts the card.

For more information on this topic, go to www.IowaAttorneyGeneral.org or contact SHIIP. To file a complaint, contact the A.G.'s Consumer Protection Division, Des Moines, Iowa 50319. You also may call 515-281-5926 or go to the A.G. web site.

New Products Making the grade is Easy!

Take the test . . .
Select licensed Guaranty Bank employees are now able to offer an exciting new product. The Graded Death Benefit Whole Life Policy takes the hassle out of buying life insurance associated with funding funeral expenses, medical bills, or other costs associated with death.

- Just one health question
- No physical exam
- Guaranteed rates & coverage
- Affordable rates

If you would like to score with Guaranty Bank and this product, please contact Judy Cheney at (319) 286-6247 or Tony Tomash at (319) 286-6210.

This product is NOT A DEPOSIT, NOT FDIC INSURED, NOT INSURED BY ANY FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY, NOT GUARANTEED BY THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTION. Underwritten by Pekin Life Insurance Company

Fun Fact

Thomas Edison, “the Wizard of Menlo Park”, established an “invention factory,” the first industrial research laboratory, with the hope of producing a new invention every ten days. In one 4-year period, he obtained 300 patents, or one every five days. In his lifetime, he patented 1093 inventions which included the phonograph, incandescent light bulb, alkaline battery, sound recorder and the kinetoscope (a small box for viewing moving film). He also holds patented improvements on the original design of the stock ticker, telegraph and Alexander Graham Bell’s telephone.



Net Worth Hacks, Viruses, Scams & Spam

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) is receiving complaints from consumers who have received emails that have the appearance of being sent from the FDIC.

These emails either falsely claim that the FDIC has collaborated with credit card providers to develop a secure online transaction network, or they falsely indicate that bank accounts are temporarily closed and that the recipient is under investigation for fraudulent activity.

In the first case, the fraudulent email presents the recipients with an opportunity to secure their credit cards against fraud and to apply to be a part of a secure online network launched by the FDIC in collaboration with various credit card providers. By accessing an embedded link, the email claims that the recipient can sign up for a free trial membership,

which provides shopping coupons for some of the more popular online retail outlets.

In the second case, the email informs the recipient that his or her bank account has been temporarily closed because of fraudulent activity. The email directs the recipient to review the contents of an embedded attached file for details related to the fraudulent activity as well as for information on how to contact the FDIC.

These emails were not sent by the FDIC and may be a fraudulent attempt to obtain personal information from consumers or to implant a computer virus onto the recipient’s computer. Financial institutions and consumers should NOT access the link or attached files provided within the body of the email and should NOT under any circumstances provide any personal information to unknown sources.

Fun Fact

Composer Irving Berlin never learned to read music or write it. He hummed or sang his songs to a secretary, who wrote them down in musical notation. A few of these famous creations are: *White Christmas*, *Alexander’s Ragtime Band*, *There’s No Business Like Show Business* and *God Bless America*.

Locations

302 3rd Avenue SE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52401

1819 42nd Street NE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402

191 Jacolyn Drive NW
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52405

700 25th Street
Marion, Iowa 52302

Intercity
1195 Boyson Road
Hiawatha, Iowa 52233

Wal-Mart Supercenter
3601 29th Avenue SW
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52404

Wal-Mart Supercenter
2645 Blairs Ferry Road NE
Cedar Rapids, Iowa 52402



For your kind of life.

www.guaranty-bank.com

P.O. Box 1807
Cedar Rapids, IA 52406

Ph. (319) 286-6200
Fax (319) 362-7894

MEMBER FDIC

