

# Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for Feb. 17, 2011

Carl Bulger presided.

New Member:

Ken Horner

Presentation by:

Lisa Walsh, Manager of the Fairwood Branch of Old Line Bank in Glenn Dale (intersection of Routes 193 and 450). She has 25 years experience in banking; the last two years at Old Line Bank, founded in 1989. Its headquarters is in Pointer Ridge. It has eight more branches in Prince Georges, Charles, and Anne Arundel Counties. After the upcoming merger with Maryland Bank and Trust, the new bank will have 20 branches in five counties and be the sixth largest independent commercial bank in Maryland with over a billion dollars in assets. The name of the new bank will be announced shortly.

Mrs. Walsh's presentation concentrated on security with electronic, online, and ATM banking. Online bill-paying can be more secure than writing checks. A check has your name, address, bank name, routing number, and account number, AND your signature. Sophisticated thieves can wash all the information off your check except your signature and account number and re-write the check with their name and any amount they want. Furthermore, online banking transactions don't get lost in the mail. Transactions that occur at regular intervals can be automated so you avoid forgetting to make a payment. In that

way, you avoid late payment penalties.

For banking or financial transactions of any sort, Lisa recommends avoiding public wireless hotspots. If possible, use only your home computers. If they are connected to a wireless home network, establish a unique key code and WPA2 encryption on it and have an up-to-date firewall. She also recommends turning off peripherals such as printers if they are connected to the wireless network. (I forgot to ask, "How do you print confirmation codes, invoices, and statements if your printer is turned off?")

When entering sensitive information, including your password, make sure that the URL begins with <https://>. The "s" indicates an encrypted site.

If you are paying for wireless access (Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, etc.), you'll get more security than you would get at a free wireless hotspot.

When paying for gas, groceries, and other purchases, pay with a credit card rather than a debit card or check card. If your credit card is stolen you're liable for only the first \$50 of losses if you notify the credit card company or issuing bank promptly of your loss. If your debit card is stolen, thieves can deplete your bank account before you know it.

When paying for gas with either kind of card, hit the cancel button

immediately after taking your receipt. This will prevent the clerk from printing out or copying your card number, name, and expiration date.

So far thieves have not taken advantage of Radio Frequency ID (RFID) devices in smart cards, such as credit cards, metro cards, and passports. Lisa Walsh expects that as thieves become familiar with the technology it will be a problem. RFIDs broadcast your personal information for short distances even when they are in your pocket.

She recommends that you be cautious when using ATMs. Be aware of people watching your transactions. Look for card skimmers laid on top of the card slot. There are now skimmers made that duplicate the appearance of every commercial ATM machine and gas pump. Also look for tiny pinhole cameras that can monitor your keystrokes as you enter your pin number. They are typically hidden above or to the side of the keypad. One way to prevent observation is to hold your other hand or a book or handbag close over your hand while you enter the pin number to block the view.

She said that she checks her bank and credit card entries and balances daily to be able to catch a theft or error quickly. When traveling, it may be safer to check by telephone rather than at an unsafe wi-fi spot. Also, get your annual free credit report from each of the three credit agencies.

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