OUT & ABOUT

By Gayle VanVooren, Mascot Editor

It’s spring and another crime on the rise is scamming. It’s time to take a closer look at this way into your private life and, perhaps, your bank account.
A local resident informed me last week of a telephone call she received. Our resident elected to remain anonymous.
The call came from a young man who claimed to be her grandson. It was the typical, “Hi, grandma, how are you?”
When the resident asked who was calling, the scammer claimed it was “her favorite grandson”.
When our resident answered “I don’t have a favorite grandson” there was a bit of quiet on the other end of the phone.

Our resident then made a big mistake. She asked the caller if it was Michael (made up name).
The caller coughed, said yes, and admitted he had a cold.
Realizing the mistake she had just made, our resident then asked where this “Michael” was calling from. There was a long lapse on the other end — and a long-distance operator interrupted the call.
It was then that our resident realized that there was no grandson on the line, but a scammer who was about to dupe her. The call was terminated, and I was called at my home phone.
We trust too easily. If you don’t recognize the voice, you do not have to listen. Hang up.
The Minneapolis area has been hit hard with men who are selling home security systems, going so far as to claim they are representing the police department.
What an easy way to gain entrance to a home, check out the surroundings, find easy ways in and out, and then

return at a later date. Once again, people are too trusting.
We have very little privacy any more. Our names, addresses and much information about each of us is easily gathered on the Internet. I don’t like it, but that’s the way it is.
But our very private information — social security numbers, bank account numbers, and other necessary information can only be kept safe by you. Do not give this information out until you are sure it is being used by creditable systems. Do not give it out randomly.
So many in this great country of ours are looking for the easy way out. People are without jobs, and desperation sets in. Don’t be an easy target. Be vigilant.
At the same time, remember that it is good for all of us to share with others. Give to the local food shelf, support the folks in the community who are hurting, share with the charities that affect you the most.
It feels good to give — but not to be robbed!