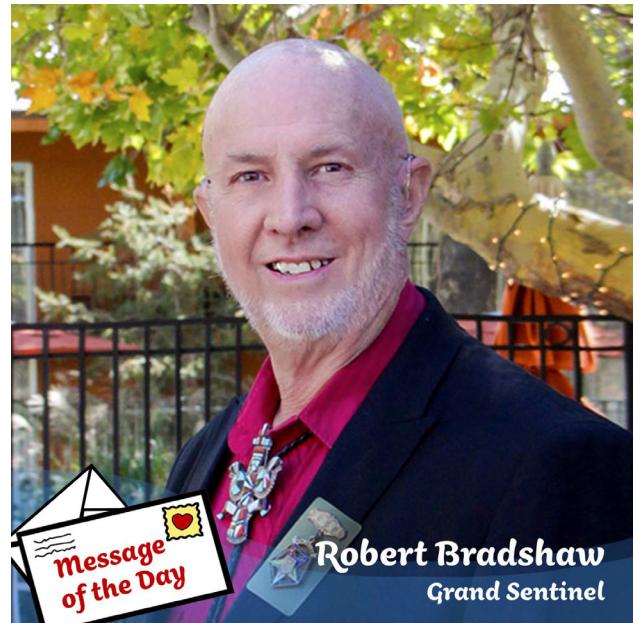


Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Greetings from southern New Mexico! I hope you all are well. Obviously, as we go through life, we have our "ups and downs". Since the Covid problem appeared, mostly we have had "middles", rather than "ups and downs".

There is a possible "down" that should be brought to your attention – scams! For whatever reason, scammers are hitting the public with alarming frequency! There seems to be no end of ways to separate us from our money. A recent article in American Association of Retired Persons magazine talked about why scammers are successful. A 72-year-old retired California Professor, who had lost \$900,000 to investment scams, talked about trusting those we deal with. He thought his vulnerability to swindlers came about because he had dealt with truthful honest people during his entire professional career. Therefore, he assumed other people to be honest. We, in Eastern Star, are also used to dealing with truthful honest people. That can make us vulnerable. We dislike not being able to trust. So, we gravitate to those people who are worthy of our trust; family, friends and organizations like Order of Eastern Star and Masons. We feel more comfortable in their company. However, scammers know this. They study environments in which we are comfortable. Then, deceitfully using that knowledge, will present unsuspecting individuals or groups with "situations" or "opportunities" that will separate them from their money.



As an example of the previous paragraph, I give you one newly elected Grand Sentinel (GS) who was contacted by his Worthy Matron (WM), (he thought), who was in a bind for time. An Official Visit (OV) was scheduled in two days' time close to the GS's home. A late acceptance of out-of-state dignitaries to attend that OV required gifts and lodging to be available. Would the GS be able to provide those gift cards in the allotted time? "It was not absolutely necessary, but surely would help out in this situation". The person asking for those gift cards was not the WM. They knew of the Deming OV time and date. They knew the names of Grand Officers. They knew about meeting protocol and gifts being presented during "good of the order". And they knew to single out new additions to the Grand Officers. Scammers are not stupid, just dis-honest and have no qualms about taking advantage. Please be sure you know who you are talking to. Be very leery of situations requiring gift cards. Requests for help may be real, but by all means, check thoroughly! Also, the old adage still applies, "If it sounds too good to be true, then it probably isn't!".

Respectfully, your Brother
Robert "Bob" Bradshaw
Grand Sentinel