



## Senior Moments

with Emma Edwards

### Perils of a deal that's too good

My mind is always alert to information I can research.

So, research I did – again -- on the saying “Your actions speak louder than your words.” I had never heard the expression attributed to anyone, let alone one of my favorite authors, Ralph Waldo Emerson.

The way Emerson worded it is slightly different, but the meaning is the same: “What you are speaks so loudly in my ears I cannot hear what you say.”

On the same subject, I found a 16th century French writer, Michel deMontaigne, who is generally credited with the phrase “Saying is one thing and doing is another.”

Once you get me started, it's hard to quit. What would I do without access to my Google? I spend enough time with “him” that sometimes I think if I saw him on the street, I would know him! Or, is “he” a “she”?

That reminds me of something one of our seniors shared with me recently about the narrow escape she had from a financial scammer.

Let me tell you the story as I remember it. She saw some ads while on her computer of everyday things that appeared to be amazingly good buys.

This sweet little lady was excited and ordered a few things. Best thing about it was that they didn't ask for any money or credit card. Pay when you receive them, they said. She awaited the arrival, thinking of how smart she was to make such a find!

The items arrived and she wrote a check for them and sent it off.

Meanwhile, she received a letter announcing that she'd won a large amount of money.

In the letter was a check substantial enough to get her excited, but nothing compared to the larger amount she supposedly had won.

They suggested she take it right to the bank and put it in her account. She hastily took it over to her bank and deposited it.

Long story short, the check was worthless, as you may have guessed by now.

She called the company that issued the check and was told that, since they were a new company, this often happens.

So, could she please send eight postal money orders to them for \$1,000 each and immediately send it to cover the processing fee for her larger win.

Fortunately, this was when red flags came up and she vowed to never order from that company again.

Meanwhile, her advice to us is simple: “If anybody asks you for money, don't send it!”

Some may remember an article in this newspaper many months ago covering a senior gentleman who lost his life savings through a similar scam. It's too bad such evil continues to plague us seniors, but it is best to be totally aware and seek counsel if in doubt.

Isn't there something in the Bible about avoiding “a wolf in sheep's clothing”?



## Mayor's Message

by Henry Balensifer III

### We should honor volunteers, not offend them

As your mayor, I have strived to focus on political items when they're within my purview.

The city doesn't have a hand in setting public health policy as it relates to the pandemic. Mask mandates, business closures or restrictions, quarantine rules, vaccination requirements — those are the purview of federal, state and sometimes county government. However, there is, on occasion, a policy outside of the city's power that directly affects the entire town. This is one such occasion.

The pandemic has undeniably become a political issue as much as a public health issue. The other reality is that the city of Warrenton relies on citizen volunteers to provide lifesaving emergency medical services (EMS). They are *not* employees and respond to calls as they are willing and able. It would be a major mistake to confuse the issue by comparing them to soldiers or employees.

Recently, the governor issued a mandate that all health care professionals be vaccinated by Oct. 18 or be terminated and potentially lose their certifications/licenses.

At first, we thought this would only apply to hospital, nursing home and ambulance personnel. After the state of Oregon clarified its mandate, we realized that this also applied to volunteer firefighters providing EMS. Federal mandates being drafted right now do not pertain to our volunteers.

To date, the brave men and women of our fire department have been on the front lines of responding to COVID-19. When a person with respiratory distress and COVID-like symptoms needs emergency medical services, our firefighters suit up in full PPE and stabilize the patient until they can be transported.

The system works, and it is safe. Our volunteers have taken

precautions and have braved the pandemic for more than a year already. Unlike employees, where there are laws and contracts that control the employer/employee relationship, volunteers join of their own free will and leave at their own free will. There are no economic considerations that drive their participation.

Furthermore, the state and federal certification standards require volunteer firefighters to meet the same training criteria as paid professionals.

As a result, the city cannot simply select people at random and put them to use on the force. Before a dedicated individual can respond to any fire or EMS calls, there is training and certifications that can take six months to a year for someone to complete. Diabetic episodes, trouble breathing, heart attacks, or strokes — those are just a few examples of EMS calls.

Ensuring that Warrentonians receive prompt care to stabilize them is critical to ensuring people survive medical emergencies. It is also a core function of our Fire Department.

Recently, I received news from city staff that we could lose over half our volunteer firefighter force, and most of our EMS responders. For those who may be unaware, the Warrenton Fire Department has three paid and 20 volunteer firefighters, not all of whom are certified to respond to EMS calls. There is no conceivable way that the city of Warrenton could provide fire services, or emergency medical services, without volunteers.

Fire Chief Brian Alsbury held a meeting with his department, outlined the new mandate and solicited input on whether folks would get vaccinated, leave or continue until terminated under the governor's order.

I'll skip the details, but essentially after you factor in training/

certification status, availability due to day job employment requirements, and actual call-response levels, the Warrenton Fire Department will be decimated. A mere 6 percent of its force will be available to provide EMS call support for the entire city and the Warrenton Rural Fire District. Simply put, while it's just over half on paper, the actual availability is much less — and EMS responses are the most frequent type of call for our fire department.

Whether you believe the government should force everyone to get vaccinated, or if you believe the government needs to end medical mandates, the reality is people — especially volunteers — have a choice and are exercising that right to choose.

There was a volunteer firefighter shortage before the pandemic and we are headed straight into a full-blown crisis, one I'm doing all I can to avoid.

Many other towns use emergency declarations as a means of political messaging. However, just like when the tourist hordes descended on our town last year, I will not be declaring an emergency until one exists.

However, the issue is so clear and problematic that I am actively ringing alarm bells to the governor and to you, the citizens. If we are unable to get the mandate lifted on firefighting volunteers, or the volunteers choose not to get vaccinated, our city will be in grave danger. Citizens who need emergency medical care will pay for it with permanent damage to their health or even death. That is the cold, hard reality. I don't like it, I don't want this to be reality — but there is no wishing this away.

We're headed for a deadline and something has to give or we all suffer the consequences. We'll keep working the problem, but this is where we are right now.