

Check Your Checks

By Charlotte Jones

Shown on the right are several examples of how sloppy check writing can cost you money if your checks should happen to fall into the wrong hands.

Some check-writing tips: When writing a check, write the figure amount as near the dollar sign (\$) as possible and write the cents amount in smaller print and underline it. Begin writing the amount in words as far to the left as possible, and draw a line through any remaining space so the amount can't be altered. Don't leave space between words or letters. When writing the word "and" between the dollar amount and the cents, slant the word and underline it.

If you write a check for "Cash", don't fill it out until you're ready to present it for payment since anyone can cash such checks.

Don't get into the habit of using a scrawled or printed signature, as these are easily forged. Keep blank checks away from anything showing your signature, such as your cancel-

MARY ALLEN		1110
Pay to the Order of	MAY 12, 19 81	
Linda Lawrence	\$ 71 29	
Seventy-One and 29/100		DOLLARS
For	Mary Allen	

Example A: Leaving too much empty space made the above check an easy mark for altering by a forger.

HENRY WARTMAN		110
Pay to the Order of	JUNE 23, 19 81	
Rich Rhodes	\$ 290 08	
Two Hundred Forty and 08/100		DOLLARS
For	Henry Wartman	

MARY ALLEN		1110
Pay to the Order of	MAY 12, 19 81	
Linda Lawrence	\$ 671 29	
Six Hundred Seventy-One and 29/100		DOLLARS
For	Mary Allen	

HENRY WARTMAN		110
Pay to the Order of	JUNE 23, 19 81	
Rich Rhodes	\$ 1290 08	
Twelve Hundred Forty and 08/100		DOLLARS
For	Henry Wartman	

Example B: Sloppy penmanship, space left between words, plus not "crowding" the dollar sign (\$) made alterations on this check a simple matter.

JAMES BLACKMAN		1101
Pay to the Order of	JULY 12, 19 81	
Phil Green	\$ 2	
Two and 00/100		DOLLARS
For	James Blackman	

JAMES BLACKMAN		1101
Pay to the Order of	JULY 12, 19 81	
Phil Green	\$ 2000	
Two Thousand and 00/100		DOLLARS
For	James Blackman	

Example C: Too much space left between words, in addition to making a dash mark instead of "00/100" made it easy to alter this check from two dollars to two thousand dollars.

led checks, or from your identification cards or other articles containing your signature.

Hide unused new checks so thieves

can't find them. A common practice with burglars is to take two or three check books from the bottom of a full box, then stuff paper into the space to

make the box look full and undisturbed, giving the thief extra time to "rip off" your account before you discover anything's wrong.

THE "RHEA" LAYS 60 BIG ONES A YEAR

Rare Bird's Big Eggs "Selling Like Hotcakes"

Today's popular art form of decorating eggs has brought a demand, especially for large eggs. It has opened up an unusual sideline for Indiana farm couple Kenneth and Martha Caldwell, of Milton.

The Caldwells, for the past seven years, have been raising a South American species of bird, the rhea, that lays eggs 5 to 6 in. long. These eggs, which far exceed turkey and goose eggs in size, are a valuable commodity for the art market.

Mrs. Caldwell sells the eggs for \$12 each and has developed markets for them in Pennsylvania, New York, California, Colorado, Michigan and other states. They are especially popular on the West Coast.

The source of some 150 to 200 of these eggs per year is the rhea "flock" of one male and three female birds. Each female lays about 60 eggs between March and September. The newly laid egg is a buff color which lightens with age.

The rhea is a bird you'll usually find only in a zoo. It's a grey and white, non-flying, fast-running bird related to the ostrich.

The Caldwells got interested in these birds in 1974 when their daughter began egg decorating and was looking for bigger eggs. They bought a male and two females from a hobbyist and had to wait a while for the first eggs because the females don't start laying until 2 years old.

The rhea lives to be 18 to 20 years old and keeps laying every year. The Caldwells have the original male but



Ostrich-related Rheas sell for \$150 or more per pair.

have replaced some of the females.

"At first we tried to save some eggs and raise our own replacements, but we didn't have any luck," says Mrs. Caldwell. "Now when we need a new bird, we go back to the original seller who raises them in an incubator."

For the farm family that might like to raise rheas, a breeding pair 4 to 6 weeks old will cost at least \$150. Beyond that cost, the expenses are minimal.

"Rheas need no housing," says Mrs. Caldwell. "In fact, they won't go inside in even the coldest weather. We don't provide any nesting place for them, as the male finds a depression in the grass for the nest. If the female lays an egg outside the nest, the male rolls it in. He also is the one who sits on the eggs and guards the nest."

Rheas like grass and leafy vegetables such as lettuce, and they are



Photos courtesy Hoosier Farmer

Martha Caldwell sells the 5 to 6 in. long Rhea eggs for \$12 each.

fed a mixture of shelled corn and rabbit pellets, in addition to what they graze. In the laying season they get a mixture of laying mash and dry dog food.

The Caldwells will gladly share

their experience with egg buyers and persons interested in raising rheas.

For more information, contact: FARM SHOW Followup, Kenneth & Martha Caldwell, Rt. 1, Box 65, Milton, Ind. 47357 (ph 317 478-3913).