

# Timeshare resale scams surging

By Claudia Buck, Sacramento Bee

Hey, buddy. Wanna sell your timeshare?

Here and nationwide, that pitch is increasingly hitting thousands of timeshare owners trying to unload their unused or unwanted properties. Frequently, they're getting swindled, part of a recurring scam that takes \$2,000 or more in upfront fees for timeshare sales that never happen, say local, state and federal officials.

Doug and Armelita Stoddard are among them. The Yuba City couple spent about \$15,000 for a one-bedroom, one-week timeshare in the Napa Valley years ago. They've rarely used it.

So last summer, when Doug was laid off from his home health nursing job, he started looking online for a place to sell his Napa timeshare. Stoddard figured the \$10,000 or so he'd likely get would help with the couple's bills and mortgage payments while he looked for a new job.

After searching online, he got a call from AAA Timeshare Inc., an Orlando, Fla.-based company. Within weeks, a company salesman announced he'd found a buyer but needed \$3,000 – in two cashier's checks – to cover “paperwork and processing fees.”

Stoddard sent the checks by overnight delivery. “They were so convincing,” recalls the 58-year-old nurse.

“They had an answer for every skeptical question I had.”

But as soon as the checks went out, the company essentially disappeared. The salesman stopped answering emails or calls.

Repeated phone messages to the company went unreturned. The company's website was unresponsive.

**Read the whole story**