



By Russ Pankonin
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Kara and John Engbrecht of Imperial thought they were probably victims of a hoax when Kara got a call last Tuesday telling her they'd won a trip to this year's Super Bowl.

The caller told her she was the grand prize winner of a Super Bowl drawing held by SiriusXM Radio.

As a SiriusXM Radio subscriber, Kara remembers getting an e-mail from the company, urging people to enter the contest.

Frankly, Kara said she can't remember for sure whether she entered. Nonetheless, her name had been drawn as the grand prize winner.

The couple said this week there's all kinds of sweepstakes and drawings but you never hear or know of someone who's actually won one. Until now.

While it seemed legit, John said he became suspicious when the company representative said they needed a signed W-9 tax form with Social Security numbers before they could award the prize.

Over the next two days, he and Kara spent time trying to verify that the call was legitimate.

They called the State Patrol for advice on how to verify whether the call was legit.

John said they advised him to carefully inspect the address of the e-mail they'd received, outlining details.

They told him to make sure there were no extra extensions or periods in the address that could indicate a fraudulent address.

John said they went online to the SiriusXM site and went to the “contact us” area to see if the e-mail domain addresses matched up.

They even e-mailed some of the names listed on the site. Just minutes later, they got a call back from the SiriusXM representative, acknowledging the e-mails. The rep reassured John the offer was real and asked him to stop being so suspicious.

John said he also called their accountant, asking why the need for a W-9 with Social Security numbers.

When the accountant said that’s normal procedure with something like this, they began to think the prize was for real.

After they provided the information, they realized it was true when they learned plane and hotel reservations had already been made in their name.

Off to New York

The couple flew out of McCook Friday morning and arrived in New York Friday night.

They had already been provided with a gift card to pay for a ride to their hotel. Once they checked in, they got an instruction packet on what would follow over the next two days.

Their only obligation Saturday was to be at the hotel at 4 p.m. to pick up their tickets. That gave them plenty of time to see the city of New York.

Their hotel was located in the Upper East Side, just blocks from the United Nations.

They were able to walk to such Midtown landmarks as Grand Central Station, Times Square, Broadway, Fifth Avenue, Rockefeller Center, Radio City Music Hall and, of course, Central

Park.



Going to the big game

When they picked up their tickets at the hotel Saturday afternoon, they realized they had won the grand prize, which included all expenses.

They said others came to get tickets given away by SiriusXM and all they received were the tickets.

On Sunday afternoon, when it came time to go to the game, SiriusXM provided bus and van transportation to the game and back.

That meant the couple didn't have to take the mass transit system to the game.

Only buses, vans and limousine were allowed through the Lincoln Tunnel to New Jersey. When they got to the stadium, the parking lots were nearly empty since no auto or taxi traffic was allowed through the tunnel.

Security was extra heavy to get into the stadium. Every person got a full pat-down by security personnel, along with a trip through metal detectors.

The couple arrived to the field early, so they could take it all in.

Their seats were five rows up in the second deck. "They were great seats," John said.

Each seat in the stadium had some Super Bowl swag awaiting the ticket holder. The items

included a seat cushion and a bag filled with a hat, gloves, hand-warming mitts, a radio with earphones, among other things.

The hat was a special stocking hat to be worn during the halftime show. Kara said the hat had lights on it that were battery operated.

The hat lights proved to be part of the show. Somehow, the hats were controlled so that the color of the light changed from white, to red, to blue.

While they'd hoped for a better game as Denver Bronco fans, they each said it was an experience they'll always remember. Plus, Kara said it was something they'd have never done on their own.

The couple returned home Monday night but their swag and luggage didn't make it back with them.

They were delayed about four hours getting out of New York due to weather. After they got to Denver, they were forced to fly back to North Platte instead of McCook.

Looking back, Kara had a hard time singling out one thing as her highlight of the trip. "It was all amazing," she said.

For John, his highlight was a one-hour carriage ride through Central Park Saturday evening.