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North end stung again

By Carol Johnstone

Wheelchair bound Joanne Coffey couldn't believe it when the same woman who'd conned her out of \$20 for a taxi Jan. 8 was back a week later to try again.

"She rang my bell, and the upstairs people's bell, and the woman upstairs got down faster than me and she just shooed her away and I heard her say, 'Nope, nope, sorry. I won't give you any money for a taxi,'" Coffey says.

"I thought this is her. So I... grabbed the door and looked outside and I started yelling after her. I said, 'Tracey, Tracey, Tracey . . . where's my \$20?' She said, 'Look, I'm on my way to the store to get

change.' I said 'Great, I'll see you in a few minutes.' And then I called the police right away." But the woman was gone by the time they arrived.

Northwood Manor senior director Rah Naugler says she's received six reports of similar incidents in the last four months and has posted warnings at the seniors' home on Gottingen Street.

Naugler says the woman is very confident and well-dressed. She knocks on seniors' doors saying she's a dietary worker who has lost her purse and needs money for a taxi. Sometimes she's accompanied by a child or children.

Coffey describes her as a five foot five, light-skinned black woman. She's about 25 years old, pigeon toed and knock kneed,

with short, curly black hair.

In November, the *North End News* reported a similar scam by a woman described as very dark-skinned, tall, thin and with a skin problem.

Const. Cedric Upshaw of Charlie Zone says police are aware of the problem and urges anyone who is approached to call the police immediately.

Even if the person is no longer at your house, you can give a description and report to an officer, who can then canvas the neighborhood.

Upshaw advises people not to let anyone in your house you don't know and ask for ID from door-to-door solicitors.

"Just say no," he says. "They're predators, these con people."