

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Only The Name and City Will Be Printed.

The enlightenment of the credit card industry

Letter to the Editor:

The last couple of years the United States economy has encountered a severe recession. Major corporations have found new ways to cut costs, sports franchises have laid off office staff and credit card companies have devised new ways of inventing revenue streams.

Over the past year, I have had two stand-offs with credit card companies. Chase credit card services refused to reverse frivolous fees until I sent them a certified letter with a return receipt simply asking "please explain my charges in detail." The next letter was a credit for each and every meaningless charge (late fee, finance charges, etc...). Earlier this year, I had a similar run-in with Juniper credit card services (backed by Barclay Bank). From the end of May until today, it is still up in the air (I have been told my account balance will be eradicated and returned to a -0- balance) but I have steadfastly demanded these outlandish charges be wiped off the books. I have been told three times it has/will be but as of yet, they are still up to their tricks.

I would like to share some tips I learned on how to combat credit card companies and to be aware of their "new wave" tactics. I first called the Federal Trade Commission (www.ftc.gov/ftc/contact.shtm). I called the main office in Washington D.C. and the regional Office in Atlanta. After two weeks, I received a call. The person stated, "The FTC does not regulate banks" but offered another institution to call.

The person at the FTC recommended I call the Office of Comptroller of Currency (1-800-613-6743). Thankfully they were very easy to get a hold of but were of no help. The informant said, "We do not regulate banks but I can tell you who does. It is the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC). The FDIC both regulates and insures the banks in the United States." (And credit card branches if they are tied in with an American bank; which a vast majority are.) This person was correct. When I called the FDIC (1-877-275-3342, www.fdic.gov hours: 8am-8pm EST) Sabrina confirmed what I was told. The FDIC indeed insure and regulate the banks in America. I explained my quandary and they directed me to a complaint form to send in (<https://www2.fdic.gov/starsmail/index.asp>). They told me to "send your information/complaint in and we will call you for any further documentation which would be needed." My complaint is currently in this stage.

The reason why I am writing this is I know I am not the only one who is trying to be railroaded by credit card companies. If you feel you are being unfairly treated, I recommend the steps mentioned. If you wish to write the credit card company and dispute charges be sure not to send it to the P.O. Box address you send your payment. You will have no proof it arrived. Send it to the home office (it is easier than you think to search for their home address on-line; you will not be given the home office address by just calling the 1-800 or 1-877 number) certified mail and return receipt. That gives proof it was sent and received. That would be very important documentation if/when you file a complaint with the FDIC or are forced to appear in a court of law to dispute garnishments.

In my opinion, I do not think most credit card companies desire to take a client to court; especially, if the client is in the right. Scare tactics may be applied hoping to scare you into paying something. They may claim your non-payment has affected your credit rating. If that actually comes to pass, tell them to take it off. They may claim they can not but whoever applied it, can also remove it. Standing up to them scares them. The reason one person can scare them is an old fashioned "word-of-mouth." If one person can inform 1,000 others how to complain and to not put up with negative treatment... how many can those 1,000 tell?

In closing I would like to pose a few questions for the readers to ponder. If the FDIC insures and regulates the banks... who regulates the FDIC? Is the FDIC looking out for the banks benefit more than the American public's benefit? Does the FDIC have a special interest as playing on both ends of the spectrum with banks? I will depart with a quote from C.S. Lewis, "If you see through everything, then everything is transparent. But a wholly transparent world is an invisible world. To 'see through' all things is the same as not to see".

- Jerry Keys, Cleveland, TN

How to pay for single-payer national health insurance

Letter to the Editor:

So, how would we pay for a single-payer national health care plan? Easy. For starters, roll back the enormous tax cuts given to the wealthiest of Americans during the Reagan and Bush Administrations and increase the tax on unearned income from the present 15% to 25%.

How about rescinding the provision in the Medicare Modernization and Improvement Act that prohibits Medicare from negotiating drug prices with pharmaceutical companies?

That provision alone incurs countless billions of dollars in additional costs to Medicare.

And why not plug up tax loopholes that allow American corporations to avoid paying U.S. taxes through outsourcing?

The resulting increase in revenue would leave enough money left over to investigate and prosecute all of the criminals responsible for the banking and mortgage meltdown.

- Paul G. Jaehnert, Vadnais Hts., MN

Where has the news gone?

Letter to the Editor:

What can the American populace expect from news sources during an era of looping newscasts over and over. Twenty-four hours a day we are subjected to non-news. News stations seem to have become a new form of tabloidism. Yellow Journalism. News tainted to get the viewer in front of the TV.

I am a baby boomer and proud to say I remember a time when we turned on the news in the evening to hear pertinent information for our daily lives. Where has the news gone?

Now I must try to glean what tidbits I can from worthless information. Not only is the information worthless, but apparently the means of obtaining worthless information is encouraging individuals to do activities in which they normally wouldn't participate.

Look at Octomom, a wanna be Angelina Jolie. All those kids, but it paid her to be irresponsible. Look at Anna Nicole Smith, dead, her son dead, and her daughter living without a mother. Look at Michael Jackson, and the hordes of people getting on TV to stake their claim to five minutes of fame. Look at Casey Anthony, a dead daughter, but selling her pictures to the media. Look at Haleigh Cummings and the circus her dad and his wife are putting on the news media. And the latest with the fake UFO and a horrible two and a half hours wondering if a small child would fall to his death.

For me, this news frenzy for the absurd, just to fill up time on the TV news channels, is in itself a dangerous game to be playing with people's lives. And the worst part for me, is the exploitation of children to gain the fame and money. I know I am not the only one in newsland that is sick and tired of the looping and bogus news. I would like to see, just one news channel to take a stand against this insanity and do the right thing, report the news, not sensationalism. Wouldn't you like to hear the news again?

- Valerie Gamblin, Cleveland, TN

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So talk away, we'll be listening.

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