

# Scam by the San Jose Mercury-News



**There is a scam run by the San Jose Mercury-News. The source of the scam is their home delivery subscription model with a few special tweaks. This will be a fun ride.**

We have been long-time subscribers to the Merc. But when **they raised their home delivery rates to \$600 a year**, we decided to switch to electronic only (\$16 per month, \$192 per year). This is on top of the change they made about a year ago. **Subscriptions are now billed for one year, full price up front, no refunds if you cancel before the year has expired.**

So I **marked my calendar for November 12 to cancel the subscription**. That should have given me a week. Imagine my surprise when **I received an e-mail from subscriptions that our subscription would have been automatically renewed October 29. Luckily, the credit card they had on file had expired.** So we were asked to update it.

What followed was a **long series of phone calls to subscriptions**. We were first informed that **the subscription date had been advanced from November 19 to October 29 because we had been billed for six special editions during the year.** Rather than charging us for those mailings, they simply shortened the duration of our subscription.

But there was a problem. The only way to cancel those six special mailings was to call. I have distinct memories of **spending quite a bit of time on the phone cancelling the specials. I informed the agent of that fact. After a few heated exchanges (including one disconnection that seemed to be deliberate), I got the subscription canceled.**

But the story continues. The other day **I received this in the mail.** (Personal information has been removed).



This is an interesting letter for a number of reasons. **There is no mention of the nature of the subscription.** Was this our new subscription or the old one (now canceled)? **The only way to tell is by spotting the little note in the red box: "Declined Amount \$."**

But nowhere in the main body of the letter about the duration of the subscription, the price, or anything else.

i headed for the Customer Service area of the Merc website. I immediately noticed we had two subscriptions listed. One was the now-canceled subscription. The other was our new digital-only subscription.

**I took a look at the canceled subscription.** Again, I've blurred the subscriber information formerly in the red box and two other places. **No mention of the price, what I would be signing up for, no nothing.**



**It sure looks like the Merc is trying to prey on us old folks. I wonder how often they succeed?**