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FRAUD ALERT!

THE FIGHT ISN'T OVER SO DON'T HANG UP THE GLOVES YET



Just when you think you have the scammers knocked out, one of them scrambles up and tries to go another bout with you. Such was the case this weekend when I received an automated phone call alleging that there was a problem with my (non-existent) credit union account. You know the call, we have all received it several times throughout the past year. The automated voice speaks about a problem with your account which has required the financial institution to freeze your assets until the problem is solved — which the voice can help you with as long as you provide your account number, social security number, debit card number, or some other personal identifying information.

With all of the information distributed by businesses, the media and fraud alerts such as this one, some people may ask themselves: why is this scam still in the ring; why must I go another round with these thieves?

The answer to that question is this: the scam is still around because people keep falling for it. It is the same reason the infamous Nigerian letter scam is more than 20 years old (variations of that scam actually date back to the mid-1900s, in fact).

Think about it, if a thief takes a few minutes to send 100 voicemails, emails or letters, asking for money or personal information and just one person responds with that information, then the thief has had a successful day. If two people respond — even better. The scam is successful until no one responds.

Please share accurate information about scams and frauds with your family and friends so that these scams can be knocked out for good. Remember, all frauds (most of which start with no contact initiated by you) have three elements: to establish a relationship with you (company name, position, title, etc.), create a sense of urgency (there is an immediate problem with your account, someone needs your help now), and a solution which always includes you giving the thief your money and/or personal information. Examine each cold-contact suspiciously, and never react to a problem without thinking it through and researching the issue first.