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## Media Adbusters

by Susan Ryan-Vollmar

You'd think that someone willing to pay the Boston Globe \$25,000 to place an ad that merely publishes information already available to any Fleet Bank customer would find himself fighting off ad reps. Well, think again.

Bruce Marks, chief executive officer of the nonprofit Neighborhood Assistance Corporation of America (NACA), tried to do just that -- and the Globe refused to run the ad. Titled "Fleet's Outrageous Fees," the NACA advertisement lists the circumstances that could trigger bank charges for Fleet customers. It encourages readers to join NACA and mentions Fleet's annual meeting -- scheduled for this past Tuesday, April 18. (Marks wanted the ad to run April 13, 14, or 17 so it would appear before the meeting.)

"Yes, we did turn it down," says Globe spokesman Rick Gulla. "We could not come to some accommodation." Specifically, Gulla says, the Globe had concerns about the accuracy of the "fee structure" listed in the ad. A Fleet representative was consulted, Gulla says, and "what Fleet told us led us to believe that some of the language in the ad was misleading."

The ad notes that fees will be levied for using Fleet ATMs, writing checks, talking to a teller, maintaining an account, and talking to a Fleet service representative. An asterisked line notes that the fees "may be waived if you keep thousands of dollars in Fleet accounts or if you make a limited number of transactions, service calls, or have certain types of accounts."

All of which is true, according to a chart provided in *Introducing Fleet: Your Guide to Fleet Products and Services*, a 28-page booklet recently sent out to BankBoston customers whose accounts now belong to Fleet following the merger of the two banks.

"It's outrageous," Marks says. "They never gave us the opportunity to address the issues that Fleet raised [about the fees]."

Could it be that the \$25,000 the NACA ad would have generated for the Globe wasn't worth the trouble that could have been caused by irritating a major advertiser such as Fleet? Gulla says no. "We have to be sure here at the Globe that an ad of this nature is accurate and not misleading," he says. "This is not an ad that appears in the Globe every day. This is an ad that is attacking a company in Boston. We have to make sure that the content of the ad is accurate."

Marks, though, thinks differently. "We talk about corporate money controlling politicians," he says. "Well, now you're seeing corporate

money determining who can put an ad in the Boston Globe and what that ad can say."