



Florida Credit Union News

A publication of the Florida Credit Union League

March 2004 • Vol. 13- No. 2

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FCUL at GAC: An award-winning experience

A total of 123 Florida credit union professionals and volunteers descended on Washington, D.C. in record numbers for the 2004 CUNA Governmental Affairs Conference. And, it turned out to be a platform to showcase the best of what credit unions have to offer.

Credit unions heard many excellent speakers, ranging from Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan to MSNBC's political pundit Chris Matthews. Forecasts on everything from the outlook of the economy to predictions on the winners in this year's political contests proved to be extremely popular with the Florida attendees.

The conference was organized somewhat differently this year, with visits to congressional offices scheduled for the

final morning. Working through the FCUL Governmental Affairs Department meetings, luncheons or dinners were arranged with nearly every Florida congressman and the two United States Senators. Senator Bill Nelson even arranged for a morning coffee to meet and greet credit union volunteers and staff in the Capitol.



**Fifty stars.
One future.**

Three Florida credit unions received their due acclaim at the conference when they received national awards recognizing their local efforts. **JM Associates Federal Credit Union** and **Insight Financial Credit Union** were both awarded first-

prize plaques in the Dora Maxwell Social Responsibility Award program. Both credit unions were recognized as the best in their asset classes for their efforts in community projects on the local level. **Gold Coast Federal Credit Union** received a first place award in the Louise Herring Philosophy in Action competition. Gold Coast FCU was deemed the best in its asset class for developing a program for its members that was particularly unique in incorporating credit union philosophy.

The League itself was recognized on the final day of the conference for its outstanding efforts in fundraising for the Credit Union Legislative Action

Council (CULAC). The League received a Vanguard Award for having exceeded its fundraising goal by a wide margin. The League raised \$95,000 on behalf of CULAC during calendar year 2003, exceeding its goal by \$30,000.

CULAC is part of the Florida Credit Union League's overall political action program contained



Guy Hood receives an award honoring FCUL for exemplary performance in fundraising on behalf of CULAC.

— continued on page 4

Congratulations to Dan Walker of N. Broward Hospital Dist. FCU!!

He was the winner of the third of four Compliance InfoSight *Online* contests, receiving an Olympus digital camera.

The fourth and final postcard (shown below) has been sent out. Read the question, find the answer on the compliance site (www.fcul.org), and send it in an email to billb@fcul.org. You could be the next winner!

Missed the boat?



A group of Florida credit union volunteers and officials visit with Senator Bill Nelson during the GAC.

Florida Credit Union League Board of Directors

Greg Blount, Chairman
At Large Director

Tropical Financial CU

John Hirabayashi, 1st Vice Chairman

At Large Director

Educational Community CU

Jace Reyes, 2nd Vice Chairman

District #7 Director

Miami Postal Service CU

Chris Brooks, Treasurer

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Mary Wood, CCUE, Secretary

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The *Florida Credit Union News* is a monthly publication of the Florida Credit Union League. For business information or subscriptions, write the Florida Credit Union League, call 800.342.1266, or e-mail amy.jowers@fcul.org.

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www.fcul.org

"United we stand..."

"First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out — because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out — because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out — because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me — and there was no one left to speak for me."—Attributed to Pastor Martin Neimoller, as stated in Franklin H. Littell's forward to Exile in the Fatherland, Martin Miemoller's Letters from Moabil Prison, edited by Hubert G. Locke(Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdman's Publishing Company, 1986). p. viii.

I saw the above quote at the United States Holocaust Memorial in Washington, D.C., having the chance to tour the memorial the day after the Governmental Affairs Conference ended last month. The quote made me think of how we protect our personal freedoms and liberties in this country. We do that by sticking together. Something our banking friends are trying to disrupt.

It should be very clear by now that the strategy of the bankers in their latest quest to destroy credit unions that they are attempting to suggest that some credit unions are okay and those credit unions have nothing to fear from bankers. "The Longshoreman's Credit Union in Miami [sic] and the St. Paul AME Church Credit Union [sic] in Jacksonville [sic] are examples of real credit unions serving a field of membership that is limited to a core group," says Alex Sanchez, CEO of the Florida Bankers Association. "That is what credit unions are meant to be."

By clearly defining who in the bankers' minds the good guys are, the FBA cleverly implies that "true" credit unions have nothing to worry about from the bankers over any issue, particularly the issue of taxation of credit unions. The FBA only wants to see credit unions that have "lost

their mission" taxed.

In advancing their argument in this manner, the FBA is expecting that smaller credit unions will decide to stay out of the debate or to even support the FBA's proposals because they "are not a large credit union." By dividing the credit union movement, the FBA's goals are clearly to weaken the one true strength that credit unions have always enjoyed in these disputes.

As Pastor Neimoller so vividly pointed out, if the entire group does not react to this threat collectively, the entire group will be separated and eventually weeded out and made irrelevant. Should the bankers succeed in convincing policy makers that only large credit unions should be taxed, how long do you think it will be before they start suggesting that since some credit unions are being taxed, why not tax them all? We already have an example of this in Canada. Canadian credit unions lost the taxation issue when the Canadian government started taxing credit unions at a reduced rate. Now bankers in that country are pushing for the same tax rate as banks pay.

This whole dispute is about the survival of the credit union movement. If bankers succeed in getting credit unions taxed, the countdown will begin on the elimination of credit unions from the scene. And, if that happens, then consumers will be forced to deal with an ever growing group of megabanks that exist only for profit and not for service.

Our very survival depends on our unity. If we "balkanize" the credit union movement we will sow the seeds of our very elimination.

When they come for the last credit unions, who will be left to fight for them?



Guy M. Hood
President/CEO

CUNA Mutual

Credit union UBIT coalition stresses need to work together

Industry leaders responding to IRS audits of state-chartered credit unions have formed a coalition to confront the tax issue posed by the Unrelated Business Income Tax. CUNA Mutual, CUNA & Affiliates, NASCUS and the American Association of Credit Union Leagues (AACUL) are addressing concerns and developing strategies on how to deal with UBIT.

"We are working together to address recent developments and ensure systemwide coordination, and have formed a series of strategies to help resolve this issue," says Larry Blanchard, chairman of the UBIT Coordinating Group's steering committee.

Most tax-exempt organizations, including state-chartered credit unions, are subject to tax on their "unrelated business income." UBIT is designed to tax non-profits for income they derive that is not "substantially related" to their exempt purpose. Concern has grown as credit unions in various states have received UBIT-related inquiries from the Internal Revenue Service.

Blanchard, CUNA Mutual senior vice president of corporate and legislative affairs, emphasizes the importance of keeping the credit union system together and "moving in the same direction" on UBIT. He said the coalition is examining all possible avenues of action, which consist primarily of

administrative channels, litigation or legislation. "This is not a part-time endeavor for anyone in the group. We're all putting a lot of muscle into this."

Credit unions should contact their respective leagues if the IRS makes a UBIT inquiry or if they have other questions about the issue, says Rob Rusch, vice president and deputy general counsel for CUNA Mutual. "Be responsive and cooperate if contacted by the IRS, but rather than blindly follow an IRS agent's advice, check with your state credit union league, which is coordinating the distribution of information for the coalition," says Rusch. "Don't go it alone. It's important to work together as a system and integrate into the national strategy."

Federal credit unions are not subject to UBIT because they are federal instrumentalities granted a broad tax exemption in the Federal Credit Union Act. But they might ultimately have a major stake in the outcome of this issue, too. Though the current focus of UBIT is on state-chartered credit unions, Rusch adds, "If state credit-union income is made subject to UBIT, we could anticipate a banker-led legislative effort to extend UBIT's reach to federally chartered credit unions as well."

For more information on UBIT, contact Mark Landreth at the League, ext. 1012.

Tallahassee Chapter's 9th Annual Golf Tournament

When:

Tuesday, April 20, 2004
11 a.m. registration*
12:30 Shotgun Start

Where:

Summerbrooke Golf Course
7505 Preservation Road
Tallahassee

Why:

To benefit Florida CUPAC

Sponsorship
opportunities
available!!

For more information, contact Deb Enfinger at 850.487.3495 ext. 2 or visit www.tallahasseechapter.org.

* Lunch will be provided at 11:00 and a dinner and awards program will follow the tournament (5:30).

CU's should offer full "menu" of mortgage products to members

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan urged credit unions to expand their offerings of mortgage products so that members can take advantage of lower rates offered on adjustable rate loans. "American consumers might benefit if lenders offered a higher degree of mortgage products in alternative to fixed-rate mortgages," he stated.

Steve Browne, Eastern U.S. Regional Manager of CU Members Mortgage says, "Credit unions can make a full menu of adjustable rate mortgage loan products

available, which, in many cases, can be extremely beneficial to their members. We make dozens of low rate adjustable products available to credit union borrowers. The members choose these products when they realize the advantages they offer over regular 15-20-30 year fixed rate loans." Browne adds, "As we change to a purchase market (from a heavy emphasis on rate reduction refinancing) the adjustables help members qualify for more money and to tailor the financing to meet the specific needs of the borrowers in purchasing a first

home or in upgrading to a newer or larger home."

For more information about expanding your mortgage offerings, contact Steve Browne at CU Members Mortgage by email www.easthomeloanacu.com or phone 800.635.7128.

 **CU MEMBERS
MORTGAGE**

A DIVISION OF COLONIAL SAVINGS, F.A.

Credit Union Political Action

GAC

— continued from front page

within the Credit Union Political Action Committee. CULAC funds are individual contributions given on behalf of CUPAC. During calendar year 2003, CUPAC raised more than \$472,000.

Accepting the award on behalf of the League, President/CEO Guy Hood thanked all of Florida's credit unions and individuals that had helped CUPAC achieve numerous goals and objectives

"Without the dedicated efforts of many credit unions, their boards and staff, and the staff of the League, it would be impossible to achieve the level of success we have achieved in funding our political involvement," said Hood. "To the Governmental Affairs Committee and to our Executive Vice President for Governmental Affairs, Aletta Shutes and her staff, my thanks to a job well done and now recognized nationally."

During this year's conference, the

League also tried something new. A "Florida Night Dinner at the GAC" was arranged. The dinner event brought more than 90 of the attendees together. Their treat that night was hearing from former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development and current candidate for the United States Senate Mel Martinez. Martinez used the occasion to highlight his efforts escaping from Cuba at a young age and how through hard work and dedication, he had been able to achieve success at the professional level. FCUL Board Chairman Greg Blount surprised Martinez by presenting him with personal note from a boyhood friend who knew Martinez in Cuba and now works at Tropical Financial Credit Union. Martinez seemed deeply moved by the note.

As the conference ended, Florida's credit union leaders packed up and departed after an especially successful conference.



(L to R) FCUL Contract Lobbyist Jim Smith, former HUD Secretary Mel Martinez, FCUL Executive VP Aletta Shutes and FCUL President/CEO Guy Hood after hearing Martinez' comments to Florida attendees to the GAC.



Ted Krysty (l), Business/Community Development Director, Eastern Financial Florida CU, discusses the GAC with Chris Brooks, Board Member, Gulf Winds FCU during the FCUL reception.



Tom Embree of Fairwinds CU presents a check for \$8000 on behalf of CUPAC to Aletta Shutes at the GAC.

Pictured right: Greg Blount (l), Chairman of the FCUL Board and President of Tropical Financial CU, delivers a note to former HUD Secretary Mel Martinez from an employee of Tropical Financial who attended school with Martinez when both lived in Cuba.



Nat'l award recognition at GAC



Karen Potesta (l) and Ramona Gonzalez (r) receive the Dora Maxwell Award for their credit union, JM Associates FCU, from a representative of CUNA. JM Associates was awarded a first place in the competition.



(L to R) Maurice T. Webber, Chairman; Jody Walls, VP, Communications and Business Development; Lynn Owen, President/CEO from Insight Financial display their first place award in the Dora Maxwell competition.



Dr. Harold Brake, First Vice Chairman of Gold Coast FCU receives the Louise Herring Award from a representative of CUNA.

Various FCUL GA committees team up to take on Tallahassee



*Aletta Shutes,
Executive VP,
FCUL*

In early February, members of the League's Governmental Affairs Committee, CUPAC Trustees and CU Preservation Task Force gathered at FCUL contract lobbyist Jim Smith's home for a barbecue with members of the Florida legislature. Nearly a dozen legislators joined the League and enjoyed the evening, despite cool weather.

The legislators in attendance were: Rep. Don Davis (R-18), Rep. Carl Domino (R-83), Rep. Greg Evers (R-1), Rep. Ken Gottlieb (D-105), Rep. Gayle Harrell (R-81), Rep. Bob Henriquez (D-58),



(L to R) Rep. Tim Ryan (D-100), Aletta, and House Minority Leader Rep. Chris Smith (D-93)

Rep. Will Kendrick (D-10), Rep. Dick Kravitz (R-19), Rep. Nan Rich (D-97), Rep. Tim Ryan (D-100), and House Minority Leader Rep. Chris Smith (D-93). Jeff Ryan of the Florida Democratic Party also attended.

All legislators were invited, but the FCUL committee members were responsible for contacting their legislator to follow up with a personal invitation. A lesson learned was that just because the event is "on the calendar" it doesn't necessarily mean the legislator will attend. It takes a great deal of coaxing to convince a legislator to ignore all the other events the legislators might have on his or her calendar on one night. We are appreciative of those legislators who came and

the credit union leaders felt the event was a success for a first try and have encouraged the League to do a similar event in the future.



(L to R) Bill Cox from Pen Air FCU, Rep. Greg Evers (R-1), and Chris Brooks, FCUL and Gulf Winds FCU Board Member



(L to R) Jim Wagy with Tropical Financial CU, Nan Rich (D-97), and Brian Warful with Power 1 Credit Union

Hunting here...

Grace Potter Freni, FCUL Director of Political Action, had company with her on one of her annual legislative quail hunt adventures this year. Henry Prior, President/CEO of Power 1 Credit Union in Pembroke Pines traveled to Washington County, Florida to attend Sen. Doc Peaden's Quail Calcutta.

Mr. Prior seemed to enjoy the event based on his humorous comments about the hunting trip. He said, "what better way to get the attention of your legislator than when holding a 12 gauge shotgun in

your hands." He also said, "when there is confusion over who shot the bird, a good lobbyist will always say 'That is your bird Senator.'" Mr. Prior was definitely a good lobbyist on behalf of Florida's credit union at this event.



Sen. Alex Diaz De La Portilla and Prior

Sen. Durell Peaden (R-2) invites legislators from across the state to attend, and Grace and Mr. Prior were able to spend time with Senate President Jim King (R-8), Senate Pro Tempe Alex Diaz De La Portilla (R-36), Sen. Charlie Clary (R-4); Rep. Don Brown (R-5), Rep.

Greg Evers (R-1), Rep. Sheri McInvale (D-36), Rep. Dave Murzin (R-2), Rep. Joe Spratt (R-77), Rep. Dwight Stansel (D-11), and a host of State Government leaders, lobbyists and local community leaders.



(L to R) Sen. Jim King, Prior, Sen. Durell Peaden

and there...



Grace and Rep. Don Brown

Grace Potter Freni recently attended "Don's Duck Hunt," a fundraiser organized by Rep. Don Brown (R-5). Grace networked with Rep. Brown, several other Panhandle legislators and other local leaders.

More GA on next page....

New initiatives to stop fake CU fraud

Recently, CUNA, NCUA, the Justice Department, the FBI, and the National Association of State CU Supervisors (NASCUS) met concerning scams in which con-artists pose as credit unions. New ideas, resources and initiatives were discussed on how to assist credit unions in protecting themselves and their members.

"We're working hard to preserve the integrity of credit unions by stomping out these scams," said CUNA General Counsel Eric Richard. "Our meetings resulted in many new avenues that will help credit unions and their members learn about these scams and recover from their ill effects. The Justice Department, NCUA and CUNA also pledged to share key information among each other as part of a cooperative effort to fight these crimes."

CUNA's Regulatory Advocacy staff met with officials from the Fraud Section of the Justice Department's Criminal Division,

NCUA's Office of General Counsel, and the Financial Institution Fraud Unit Financial Crimes Section in the FBI's Criminal Investigation Division. NASCUS and CUNA Mutual contributed new evidence in pre-meeting discussions.

The Justice Department promised to review any submitted information, and other information it gathers, for possible prosecutable cases and to pursue discussions with officials in Canada where some of these activities appear to be based. CUNA was advised on how to assist the FBI and Justice in tracking and analyzing the instances that occur.

NCUA had already been participating in an interagency Bank Fraud Working Group with the Justice Department. CUNA will be working with NCUA in developing a spreadsheet of credit union members who fell victim to these scams and will share it with the FBI. The FBI, in turn, intends to

use the spreadsheet to develop a national strategy for investigating these crimes.

There have been numerous incidences since July in which organizations pose as credit unions and defraud credit unions and members by illegally using their names. Many consumers have unknowingly provided personal information to these con-artists believing they are doing legitimate business with a credit union.

CUNA also plans to issue a new tool kit for credit unions to use in preventing scams and recovering from them if they are victimized. More information may be obtained from CUNA Associate General Counsel Mary Dunn (mdunn@cuna.coop) or CUNA Assistant General Counsel Michelle Profit (mprofit@cuna.coop).

A thank you from the family of Bernie Arvin...



Mr. Hood,

My name is Nanci Johnson. I am one of Bernie & Nancy Arvin's daughters. I am writing to you on behalf of my mother and sisters.

We wanted to thank you for spreading the information along about my fathers' passing, as well as posting it in the CU League Newsletter. The outpouring of cards, flowers and donations have been overwhelming. So many in fact, we're struggling to get all of our thank you responses out. We were hoping we could impose on you once again for a favor of extending our thank you to the CU family on our behalf.

I would like to thank everyone for all the lovely cards, flowers, donations and prayers that have been sent our way not only in light of Bernie's passing, but throughout this past year. My family and I are touched by all the kind words, sentiments and thoughts you have shared with Bernie and with us over this past year. Thank you again.

Mrs. Nancy Arvin & Family

Thank you again Mr. Hood.

Nanci Johnson

SE Corporate FCU holds CUPAC participation contest for staff

Recognizing the significance of political action, Southeast Corporate set a 2004 CUPAC participation goal of 70 percent for Tallahassee employees. An information session was held to educate employees on the role legislation plays in the credit union industry. Employees were also given the opportunity to voice their support and volunteer at political functions. If employees meet the 70 percent goal, the office will be rewarded with a bowling party. Tallahassee employees are currently at 77 percent participation and plans for the party are in the works!



(L to R) Amber Peterson, Communications Specialist; Jim Gallager, Senior Vice President of Business Services; and Carly Lindsey, Financial Accounting Specialist.

Regulatory Update



B

ill Berg, CCUE, CUCE, Vice President of Compliance, brings regulatory changes to your attention through this column. If anyone has questions or suggestions for additional topics, call 800.342.1266 or 850.576.8171 ext. 1028, FAX to 850.558.1029 or e-mail billb@fcu.org.

Treasury will issue rules that address Health Savings Accounts (HSAs)

President Bush recently signed into law a Medicare prescription drug legislation that greatly expands the former Medical Savings Accounts into new and innovative Health Savings Accounts.

“Health Savings Accounts provide an important and welcome option for many Americans to fund their health care expenses,” said Treasury Secretary John Snow. “Treasury is committed to ensuring that taxpayers get the full benefit of HSAs as quickly as possible. We will be releasing basic information and guidance about HSAs shortly, and will request suggestions about how the rules should be applied.”

The legislation creates new HSAs to help individuals save for qualified medical and retiree health expenses on a tax-free basis. Beginning Jan. 1, individuals under the age of 65 are eligible to contribute to an HSA if they have a qualified health plan.

Some of the features of the new HSAs:

- For self-only policies, a qualified health plan must have a minimum deductible of \$1,000 with a \$5,000 cap on out-of-pocket expenses (indexed annually).
- For family policies, a qualified health plan must have a minimum deductible of \$2,000 with a \$10,000 cap on out-of-pocket expenses (indexed annually).
- Preventive care services, as well as coverage for accidents, disability, dental care, vision care, and long-term care is not subject to the deductible.
- Individuals may contribute up to 100% of the health plan deductible. The maximum annual contribution is \$2,600 for self-only policies and \$5,150 for family policies (indexed annually).
- Individuals age 55 to 65 may make additional “catch-up” contributions of up to \$500 in 2004, increasing to \$1,000 annually in 2009 and thereafter. A married couple can make two catch-up contributions

as long as both spouses are at least 55.

Contributions may be made by individuals, family members and employers and are tax deductible, even if the account beneficiary does not itemize. Employer contributions are made on a pre-tax basis and are not taxable to the employee. Employers will be allowed to offer HSAs through a cafeteria plan.

Investment earnings accrue tax-free if they are used to pay for qualified medical expenses. Qualified expenses include prescription drugs, qualified long-term care services and long-term care insurance, COBRA coverage, Medicare expenses (but not Medigap), and retiree health expenses for individuals age 65 and older.

Distributions made for any other purpose are subject to income tax and a 10% penalty, but a waiver may be granted in the case of death or disability and for individuals age 65 and older against the penalty.

Upon death, HSA ownership may transfer to the spouse on a tax-free basis.

Interest rates for the year 2004

Section 55.03(1), Florida Statutes, requires the Chief Financial Officer, on December 1 of each year beginning in 1994, to set the rate of interest that shall be payable on judgments and decrees for the year beginning the following January 1. Additionally, Sections 215.422(3)(b), 337.141(3) and 687.01, Florida Statutes, were amended to require the use of interest at the rate established in Section 55.03(1), Florida Statutes, for the payment of interest applicable to the late payments to vendors for goods and services purchased by the State, for late payments on applicable construction or maintenance contracts administered by the Department of Transportation, and for cases where a rate of interest is not specified in a contract. The interest rate for payments to health care providers pursuant to Section 215.422(13),

Florida Statutes, remains at 1% per month or .0003333 per day. Rule 3A-25, Florida Administrative Code, establishes the procedures for computing the interest rate on an annual basis.

The year 2004 interest rate established pursuant to Section 55.03, Florida Statutes, has been set at 7.0% per annum or .0001918 per day.

PRIOR YEAR RATES

YEAR	PER ANNUM	DAILY RATE
2003	6%	.0001644
2002	9%	.0002466
2001	11%	.0003014
2000	10%	.0002740
1999	10%	.0002740
1998	10%	.0002740
1997	10%	.0002740
1996	10%	.0002740
1995	8%	.0002192
10.1.81		
thru 12.31.94:	12%	.0003333

Effective 1994, legislation passed granting authority to the Chief Financial Officer, DFS to set the interest rate before December 1 of each year and published annually in the Florida Administrative Weekly at least once between the period December 1 and January 1. If additional information is needed, please call the Vendor Ombudsman section within the Bureau of Auditing at (850) 410-9724, or Suncom 210-9724.

The NCUA said the credit union board must have written policies that address the parameters of any reimbursements to officials.

2004 Convention



70TH ANNUAL CONVENTION SCHEDULE AT-A-GLANCE

Wednesday, June 16, 2004

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Convention Registration

Thursday, June 17, 2004

6:45 a.m.
Golf Tournament(s)

8 a.m. – 6 p.m.
Convention Registration

Begins at 8 a.m.
Delegate Registration

2:30 p.m.
Annual Business Meeting

5 p.m. – 6 p.m.
Exhibit Preview (*Invitation Only*)

6 p.m. – 7 p.m.
Exhibit Opening Reception

6:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
ICCUE Reception

8:30 p.m.
"Saturday Night Fever"
(Silent Auction, Disco and Dessert)

Friday, June 18, 2004

8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
Convention Registration

8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
Exhibits Open – Continental Breakfast

8 a.m. – 10 a.m.
Governmental Affairs Breakfast

10:15 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.
General Session –
Keynote, Awards Presentation

Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Exhibits Open with Lunch

2 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.
**Governmental Affairs
Breakout Sessions**
Federal Regulatory Update - NCUA
State Regulatory Update – Office of
Financial Institutions

2 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Concurrent Education Sessions
Session 1: An Introduction to Check 21 Act
Session 2: Lending Success Strategies
of the Top 100 Credit Unions
Session 3: The Amish and Technology
Lessons for Credit Unions
Session 4: 9 Critical Pathways to
Revitalizing Your Credit Union
Session 5: Inspiring Performance
Excellence
Session 6: Updated Compliance Issues
for Supervisory Committee
Members
Session 7: Identity Theft: Getting Easier
Every Day
Session 8: Succession Planning for
Directors
Guest Session: Don't Forget Memory
Workshop

3:45 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.

Concurrent Education Sessions
Session 1: How to Offer International
Money Transfers – the \$32 Billion
Dollar Question
Session 2: Investment Trends
Session 3: Reinventing Your Leadership
Style with New Courage, New
Measures and Bolder Actions
Session 4: Lending Success Strategies
of the Top 100 Credit Unions
Session 5: Succession Planning for CEOs
Session 6: Coaching - The Art of
Teambuilding
Session 7: An Introduction to Check 21 Act
Session 8: 9 Critical Pathways to
Revitalizing Your Credit Union
Session 9: Changes and Challenges in
Wage and Hour Law

5:30 p.m. – 7 p.m.
CUES Reception

6 p.m. – 7 p.m.
CUPAC Reception (*Invitation Only*)

7 p.m.
Annual Dinner and Entertainment

Saturday, June 19, 2004

8:30 a.m. – 10 a.m.
Directors' Institute
Session A: Business Recovery Plans and
Policies (V418)
Session B: CEO Compensation (V419)
Session C: Growth Strategies –
Pathways to Success (V420)

IMPORTANT DATES

Wednesday, May 26, 2004

Wyndham Palace Resort & Spa cut-off
date – Rooms reserved after this date may
not be available at the \$150 group rate.

Wednesday, June 2, 2004

Convention pre-registration closes
— After this date, registration
arrangements must be made onsite
at the Wyndham Palace Resort & Spa/
FCUL Convention registration desk.

Thursday, June 17, 2004

The Florida Credit Union League's 70th
Annual Convention and Exposition
begins at the Wyndham Palace Resort
& Spa.

Fees and Extra Tickets

Discount Package: \$255
Includes: Education Day, Thursday
Night Fever, and the Annual Dinner
and Entertainment

Purchased Separately:

Annual Dinner and
Entertainment: \$70
"Caddyshack" Golf Tournament: \$125
Directors' Institute: \$50
Education Day: \$195
Expo Luncheon: \$20 (if not registered
for Education Day)
Governmental Affairs Breakfast: \$50
Spouse/Guest Session: \$25
Thursday Night Fever: \$20
(*Silent Auction, Disco and Dessert*)

Two new VAP releases for 2004

Political Involvement

Course: V421M This new release will be available mid-year 2004.

Course Overview: Favorable legislation and regulation are at least as important to credit unions as day-to-day operations and services. In this critical area, directors and volunteers help ensure a long-term strategic future. This course describes leadership roles in political involvement and regulatory advocacy, and it shows each credit union how to make political involvement a top priority.

Contents

- Importance of political involvement
- Elections: Money and votes are the keys
- Grassroots activity and lobbying
- State governmental affairs
- Communications

CEO & Board Succession Planning

Course: V422M This new release will be available mid-year 2004.

Course Overview: Succession planning has taken on more importance during the past few years. Nearly half of all credit union CEOs plan to retire in the next 10 years, about one quarter of them in the next five years. A good succession plan charts a plan of action for the board and employees that covers a variety of situations including the death of a CEO, accidents, disability, termination or retirement. Boards play a critical role in succession planning by ensuring that the credit union will serve members effectively even if key staff or directors are unable to continue in their positions.

Contents

- Board's role in succession planning
- CEO & management's role
- Ingredients of an effective succession plan
- Succession planning for the board
- Maintaining effective board leadership

If you have questions about the content of these modules, contact Jjerving@cuna.com

STAR, VAP and MERIT Certificates

Congratulations to the following individuals who have earned certification levels in the Staff Training and Recognition (STAR), Volunteer Achievement (VAP), Volunteer Leadership (VLP) and Mid-Manager's Enrichment Training (MERIT) Programs. Additionally, we salute these credit unions who have recognized the importance of investing in their most important assets... their staff and volunteers.

VAP CERTIFICATES:

Florida Commerce CU: Austin Neal

Gulf States CU: King Halikman

McCoy FCU: Richard Albert

Miami Postal Service CU: Barbara Bowers

Sarasota Coastal CU: Janet Cantees

STAR CERTIFICATES:

Broward Schools CU: Christine Palermo
Central CU of Florida: Teddra Biggs, Kristine Upshaw

Central Florida HealthCare FCU: Chellbie Bryant, Mari Ani Camchong, Hilda Feliciano, Judy Keith, Yesennia Larrazabal, Petra Miskova, Onassis Nyariri

Community Educators CU: Michelle Boyce, Jennifer England, Shelly King, Ruby Speed

Duval FCU: Tammy Crenshaw, Qshawn Smith

Escambia County ECU: Debra Hynes

Fairwinds CU: Lourdes Morales, Michelle Russell

Florida Central CU: Sabrina Drzal, Shirley Littleton

GTE FCU: Kimberly Ballansaw, Steven Bare, Joseph Beck, Theresa Carter, Johnnie Collins, Jane Fitzpatrick, Belinda Floyd, Lorena Flowers, Jackie Garofolo, Lisette Gonzalez, Bonnie Henry, Carolyn Hills, Holly Hindman, Frances Hopkins, Sharyn Kunkel, Deborah Larson, Deborah McCoy, Terri Munsey, Sandra Ostrander, Deborah Peetz, Tracy Peterson, Meta Signorelli, Mary Stevens, Melissa Tremel, Susan Weits,

Harvesters FCU: Janet Barnes, Aleta Emmons, Nellwynne Robinson

Insight Financial CU: Melina Depedro-Otto, Patricia Ruiz, Lydia Tikasingh, Alice Vorachek

MacDill FCU: Kathryn Goethe, Christine Sharp

Pen Air FCU: Cynthia Thornton

Pinellas County Teachers CU: Estella Baggett, Wesley Brown, Patricia Leach, Richard Robertson, Jennifer Sgro

Suncoast Schools FCU: Sylvia Alcaraz, Anitra Artz, Jennie Ayers, Ashley Berg, Tina Brown, Linda Calafiore, Erika Christensen, Karen Cogswell, Heather Cudworth, Deborah Gallagher, Christina Gardner, Peggy Gascot, Joyann Grochowicz, Dianna Loudermilk, Karen Marcellin, Dianne McDaniel, Deborah Nodine, Judy Patten, Alisha Pellegrini, Bekki Rayer, Marlyn Sanders, Tonya Simpson, Kathleen Straub, Stacey Suggs, Diane Thompson, Betty Tom, Christi Wadsworth, Susan Willacker

Tyndall FCU: Susan Downs, Susan Hepner, Diana Johnson

VyStar CU: La Ponda Addison, Christopher Berthold, Irene Burke, Vicenta Cole, Christina Crews, Leonila Dapar, Odessa Grissett, Linda Grubb, Shailandra Haynes, Jennifer Jones, Katrinra King, Franchesca Martin, Emily Ross, Brandon Rowe, John Silliman, Christie Townsend, Todd Vanbebber, Thomas Weigand, Heather Yingling

MERIT CERTIFICATES:

Florida Central CU: Sabrina Drzal

Educational Community CU: Andria Langston

Suncoast Schools FCU: Belinda Johnson

VyStar CU: Karen Bean, Irene Burke, Rebecca Williams, Jennifer Worthington

The STAR, VAP, VLP and MERIT Programs are nationally recognized standards of professionalism for credit union staff and volunteers. These staff and volunteers have expanded their capabilities for the benefit of their credit union. For additional information on any of these programs, call the League Education Department at 800.342.1266 or 850.576.8171, ext. 1040.

Note: Judy Melcher has retired from the League. Contact Tammy Shotwell for questions concerning these programs.

NCUF fund achieves record \$1 million distribution



Connie Stoutamire

For the first time ever, the National CU Foundation (NCUF) has exceeded \$1 million distributions to participating state foundations and leagues in a single year through a unique endowment fund.

This distribution was possible because deposits in NCUF's Community Investment Fund (CIF) more than doubled to \$319 million by the end of 2003—up from \$155 million at the beginning of the year.

Participating organizations invest in a special fund at U.S. Central CU in Lenexa, Kan., through their corporate credit union. The income derived from these investments is shared among the depositor, the NCUF and each participating state credit union foundation or league.

These funds are earmarked specifically for development initiatives that increase credit unions' capacity to impact the financial lives of consumers in projects

such as education, small-credit-union programming, community outreach and international development.

Increased deposits from many credit unions helped make this milestone possible. They include recent \$5 million investments from both Corporate One FCU in Columbus, Ohio, and CenCorp CU in Southfield, Mich. Also, Georgia Central CU in Duluth, Ga. joins 37 other investor states with a first-time deposit during the fourth quarter of 2003.

"We are so pleased with the year's record disbursements—made possible by so many generous donors," said Gary Officer, executive director of the NCUF. "The Community Investment Fund truly highlights the cooperative spirit of the credit union movement."

The CIF was started in 1999 and to date has generated nearly \$4 million for local, state, national, and international credit union development initiatives.

Florida Credit Union Foundation

Florida has a total of five credit unions that have invested in the Community Investment Fund (CIF) for a total of \$17,140,000. The credit unions are:

- Suncoast Schools FCU - \$11 million
- GTE FCU - \$5 million
- Fairwinds CU - \$1 million
- Gold Coast FCU - \$100,000
- The CU of Palm Beach County - \$40,000

Dividends are paid quarterly to the Florida Credit Union Foundation. Currently we are receiving around \$15,000 each quarter. It is easy to invest in the future of Florida Credit Unions by investing in the CIF Fund. For more details contact Connie Stoutamire, Director of Horizons at 800.342.1266 ext 1052 or email connie.stoutamire@fcu.org.

Survey finds teller retention for small credit unions is rooted in the simple phrase: "Show us the money!"

Teller turnover is a challenge for credit unions large and small, but full-time teller turnover does vary to a great extent across salary levels regardless of asset ranges of credit unions, according to the latest results of a CUNA staff salary survey.

The recently released "E-Scan's 2003 Small Credit Union Staff Salary Survey" from CUNA's Center for Research & Advice, designed specifically for use by credit unions under \$20 million in assets, shows that teller turnover (i.e., the replacement rate) decreases as average salaries increase.

Remaining fairly static over the last three years, turnover of "tellers" (including also member service representatives and cashiers) averaged 28 percent during 2002 among small credit unions. At a typical credit union, at least one out of every four full-time tellers was hired to replace someone who left during the year.

Through the analysis of full-time teller positions at small credit unions in 2002, the survey found:

- * One in every two tellers who left their jobs had a salary averaging less than \$15,000;
- * Close to 40% of tellers with average salaries of \$15,000 to \$19,999 departed; however,
- * There was only a 22% turnover for teller positions whose salaries averaged \$20,000 to \$24,999.

"Although the survey does not analyze the specific causes of teller turnover," says Vicki Joyal, vice president of Research Services for CUNA, "given the derived information, it seems plausible that credit unions would decrease turnover by bumping up their average teller salaries to \$20,000 or more."

In addition to base salaries and ranges, the report details other types of compensation such as incentives, bonuses

and total cash compensation for the 15 positions most commonly found in small credit unions. New this year, the survey provides hourly wage and variable pay data for eight part-time positions as well.

Compared to the full salary report, a more narrow asset category breakdown is provided and displays results organized by region, number of full-time employees, number of services offered, number of members and by the total amount of loans outstanding at the credit union.

The report also includes job descriptions and salary adjustment worksheets, at a price that is affordable for small credit unions.

For more information or to order E-Scan's 2003 Small Credit Union Staff Salary Survey online, visit advice.cuna.org and type stock #25130 in the search box. To order by phone, call 800.356.8010, press 3, and use the stock number as a reference.

“Bad” Turnover

By Anita Stoumbelis, FCUL Vice President, Human Resources

As discussed in last month’s article, the annual turnover percentage is one benchmark by which to measure how well your credit union is managing its employees. However, as also discussed, the percentage alone does not tell the whole story. You must ask more questions to uncover the reasons why employees are leaving and whether the employees you are losing are good-performing or marginal-performing employees.

If you are losing good-performing employees for reasons other than “normal” turnover, then by our definition, you are experiencing “bad” turnover. “Bad” turnover costs organizations billions of dollars every year in both lost productivity and in real dollars.

What should you do? Pay more? Provide additional benefits? Offer more training opportunities? Have more parties at work?

There have been many studies and much research done looking for these answers, but none quite as extensive as The Gallop Organization’s two mammoth research studies on workplace health. Gallop surveyed over a million employees from a

broad range of companies and industries over a period of 25 years. They asked the employees questions on all aspects of their working life and then dug deep into their answers to discover the most important needs demanded by the most successful employees.

What makes this study so unique is that Gallop not only surveyed employee satisfaction on many different subjects, but they were able to link the degree of satisfaction in key areas to four business outcomes—productivity, profit, retention and customer service. This is the first research project to investigate the link between employee opinion and business unit performance.

On the subject of turnover, Gallop discovered that the following five questions link most strongly to retention:

1. Do I know what is expected of me at work?
2. Do I have the materials and equipment I need to do my work right?
3. Do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. Does my supervisor, or someone at work,

seem to care about me as a person?
5. At work, do my opinions seem to count?

What you may notice is that these five questions are most directly influenced by an employee’s immediate manager. What does that tell us? It tells us that **people leave managers, not companies**. So much money has been spent on trying to keep good people—more money, more perks and better training opportunities. What the Gallop studies tell us, however, is that if you are having turnover problems, first look to your managers.

Next month we will explore some more findings from this important research project.

Serving New Americans

By Dick Radke

The more than 33 million New Americans currently participating in U.S. society are shaping our country and its institutions in new and dramatic ways. The impact of immigrants on the U.S. economy promises tremendous opportunities for organizations that are able to recognize and respond to their needs.

The implications of the growing numbers and influence of immigrants in the U.S. are explored in a new report sponsored by the Filene Research Institute, *Serving New Americans: A Strategic Opportunity for Credit Unions*. The report is based upon a colloquium of immigration experts and credit union CEOs sponsored by the Filene Research Institute and the Center for Credit Union Research, and hosted by the Center for Comparative Immigration Studies at the University of California, San Diego.

Renowned migration expert Alejandro Portes, director of the Center for Migration and Development at Princeton University, reports that second generation immigrant youths face significant challenges as they become acculturated to American society. Portes urges business and community leaders to understand the immense differences in financial needs and resources among various immigrant groups. Credit unions must segment the various groups that make up the overall immigrant community if they are to serve this population effectively. Portes suggests the use of market research tools, including focus groups, to measure the attitudes of specific immigrant populations before implementing programs to serve them.

In framing immigrant issues, Steven A. Camarota, Director of Research at the Center

for Immigration Studies in Washington, D.C., points out that the number of immigrants in the U.S. currently stands at 11.5 percent of the total population, and has risen by more than two million over the past 10 years. Of the total foreign born population, Mexico contributes 29 percent; East Asia 18 percent; Europe 14 percent; and the Caribbean region 10 percent. Camarota says the size of the immigrant population presents big opportunities to financial institutions willing to invest the time and resources necessary to serve it. For example, about 10 percent of immigrants identify themselves as self-employed or entrepreneurs – essentially the same percentage as among the native born population. That presents opportunities

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Send submissions for the "News From You" section to the League by the first of each month.



Leggett

First Coast Community Credit Union in Palatka has hired Chris A. Leggett as its new President/CEO. Chris brings 20 years of credit union industry experience to First Coast.

Leggett served in various capacities, including Vice-President/Branch Operations, Systems Manager and CFO, for more than 16 years with First Florida Credit Union in Jacksonville. He joined Payment Systems for Credit Unions Financial Services, Inc., the nation's largest Credit Union Service Organization, in July 2000 as its Eastern Regional Director and most recently served as their Director of National Sales.

Leggett is from Jacksonville. He and his wife have twin sons.

Quilt donation raises funds for CUPAC

Linda Kelley, VP of Operations for NCSC Federal Credit Union donated the quilt pictured below to NCSC FCU. The credit union raffled the quilt to raise funds for CUPAC. With help from the Gulf Coast Chapter, a total of \$570 was raised.



The winners, Mr. and Mrs. J.C. Newsome, display quilt made by Linda Kelley, VP Operations of NCSC FCU.

Tallahassee credit union joins with local law enforcement to shut down fraud scheme

Four individuals have been arrested and charged with operating a fraud scheme meant to defraud a Tallahassee credit union. SCORE Federal Credit Union said that by working with investigators with the Leon County Sheriff's Office that the scheme was halted and the individuals now face charges that could send them to prison for a long time.

According to SCORE's Senior Executive Vice President Timothy Cook, two of the fraud scheme's operatives joined the credit union at the main branch. Immediately, the pair then drove across town and attempted to cash a third party check on a closed account from a local bank. The check was presented to a teller at the remote branch that had just begun employment at the credit union. The check was cashed and the credit union learned after the fact that it was fraudulent. This led to a call to the Leon County Sheriff's Office and the Fraud Unit was dispatched to the credit union.

Flushed with success, the scheme's mastermind, who disguised himself as a woman in the first appearance at SCORE, returned on another day with a different individual and opened a second account. Then, as before, this pair high tailed it to the remote branch to attempt the same fraud.

This time, SCORE was on the alert and the Sheriff's Fraud Unit placed the individuals under surveillance as the credit union stalled and placed a hold on the check.

Once again, the mastermind, this time with yet another individual opened a third account at SCORE's main branch and then immediately traveled to the remote branch. But, when the pair presented another third party check for cashing, the Sheriff's unit placed the two under arrest. The other two individuals were also quickly found and arrested.

Cook said the mastermind was an individual that was much older than the other three, all of whom were either in their late teens or early twenties.

Cook said that the quick work by the Sheriff's Fraud Unit, particularly lead investigator David Knight, was instrumental in putting an end to the scheme before the credit union could suffer any further losses.

Cook said procedures have been reviewed and new procedures implemented to help prevent further problems. He advises all credit unions, particularly those that are community based to review their operations and procedures to protect themselves from this type of fraud schemes.

FAIRWINDS CU sets sail with new logo

FAIRWINDS Credit Union sets sail into the new year with a new logo. Growth, advancements in technology and a continued presence in its community were a few of the many reasons that **FAIRWINDS** chose to update the company logo. Within the new logo the sailboat is moving forward, symbolizing **FAIRWINDS'** continuous goal to move forward in its efforts to provide unparalleled service to its members.

The new logo preserves the credit union heritage by maintaining a sailboat which represents its naval affiliation and by using

the same corporate colors as the old logo. Introducing the new logo came after much thought and planning. Crewmembers, members and non-members were polled for their opinions and the new logo was agreed upon unanimously.





McCoy Federal Credit Union proudly celebrates 50 years of service in 2004. Chartered in 1954 as an Air Force credit union, McCoy Federal is now a community credit union serving all of Orange County, Florida. McCoy Federal has six offices and a full range of financial services.

This will be a year long celebration with contests, prizes and special offers and incentives for members and employees. The contests/incentives will extend to all venues of service including the website at www.mccoyfcu.org, the ATMs, in branch merchandising and the newsletter, "The Financial Planner."

Escambia County Chapter presents check to CMN

The local Escambia County Chapter of the Florida Credit Union League proudly presented Sacred Heart Foundation with a check for \$18,000 for the Children's Miracle Network. The funds were raised from candy sales and various fund raising projects by each of the local credit unions.

In memory...

Margaret Stringfellow passed away February 11, 2004. Margaret was the President/CEO of the old Garage and Parks Credit Union in Jacksonville for 20 years. She was very active as a board member of the former Gateway Chapter of CU's and served as its Chairman of the Board in the mid eighties. She also served on the Credit Union Education Advisory Committee at Florida Junior College in the late seventies.

Ms. Stringfellow served her credit union, her chapter and the League with dignity and distinction. She will be missed by all her colleagues in the credit union movement.

Sweepstakes winner drives home Mini Cooper

To celebrate its 50th Anniversary, Envision Credit Union gave away a brand new Mini Cooper automobile.

The winner, Roderick Pigott, a member who joined in 1976, said he had submitted four entries in the sweepstakes which ran during the month of January.

According to Envision President / CEO Ray E. Cromer, Jr., several thousand entries were submitted at the five credit union financial centers and several hundred more were mailed in.

"We certainly received great participation from our members," Cromer said. "Our goal was simply to focus attention on a small event that took place 50 years ago and has had a positive influence on the

lives of so many members. By giving away the car, running TV spots, hanging banners and giving gifts to our members, we acknowledge the vision of the 10 original founders."



Envision CU President / CEO Ray E. Cromer, Jr. hands over the keys to winner Roderick Pigott and his wife, Linda.

Envision Credit Union will continue during 2004 to honor the volunteers, employees and members who have played a part in the 50 year history of the member owned financial cooperative.

Pigott remembers joining the credit union when checking accounts were just being introduced. His wife Linda, who will be driving the Mini Cooper, is a 30 year member, having joined in 1974.

Pen Air FCU holds grand opening of Pace office with US and State Representatives present

Pen Air Federal Credit Union is proud to announce the Grand Opening of the much waited for Pace Office on 4586 Highway 90. The office officially opened for business in mid-January of 2004. Special guests included U.S. Rep. Jeff Miller and State representatives Greg Evers and Dave Murzin and other community representatives. Also present was the Pace Area Chamber of Commerce, which conducted the ribbon cutting ceremony. The opening of the Pace Office marks the 13th full service office of Pen Air Federal Credit Union.



(Left to Right) Representative Greg Evers (R-1), and U.S. Rep. Jeff Miller (R-1) congratulate John Davis, Pen Air FCU President/CEO on Grand Opening.

Pen Air FCU presents \$5,000 to CMN

Pen Air FCU proudly presented Sacred Heart Foundation with a check for \$5,000 for the Children's Miracle Network. Funds raised go towards medical services and research for children's health issues and pick up some of the expenses to keep costs down for children with major medical needs.

"We are happy to help such a worthy cause and also partner with one of our select employee groups (Sacred Heart Hospital) who allows us to offer credit union services to their employees," said John A. Davis, Jr., President/ CEO of the credit union.

Letters (to the Editor) get out the facts...and your credit union's name

By Gregory D. Storey

Gregory D. Storey is a New York-based financial editor. He previously was the editorial-page editor of *The Journal of Commerce*, and has also worked in government affairs in industry.

One way for directors to act as credit union ambassadors is to write to newspapers and politicians. Letters can communicate everything from an opinion on a current issue to a credit union philosophy, but they can also be important for another reason: They get the credit union's name in front of the public, lawmakers and opinion leaders. Contrary to a popular notion, your opinions do carry weight with politicians. And your thoughts are also important to newspaper editors, who often are eager to print them. Ed Koch, New York City's mayor 20 years ago, used to ask a question of virtually everyone he met in the streets and on the subways: "How'm I doing?" Most politicians aren't that blatant. But all want to know the same thing, especially when it comes to issues of importance to the voters they're responsible to.

Newspaper editors, for their part, relish public debate. They're pleased to print a reader's view on a key issue in the hope it will attract letters that take differing stances. Their objective is to explore all sides of an issue, not just the version detailed in press releases from public officials.

How much competition will you face? That depends. A small, local weekly may publish almost every letter it receives. In contrast, it's tough to get a letter printed by *The New York Times*. The *Times* says it gets

at least 1,000 submissions every day. It publishes an average of 15 letters a day—so many excellent letters never see print.

There are a few conditions to writing an effective letter to a politician or editor, of course. But there aren't very many, and none of them should prevent you from expressing your point of view. Here are the basics:

Don't use a form letter. A form letter can help you frame your thoughts, but put your point of view in your own words. Politicians and editors easily recognize "canned" letters—especially after the third or fourth copy—and don't put much weight in them. Editors call them "astro-turf" and e-mail copies to colleagues at other newspapers to alert them that such material may be coming their way.

Be specific. Don't beat around the bush. Say that such and such an issue concerns you, and why. If you support or oppose a particular action, say so and briefly explain why. End by saying what you think ought to be done. And if possible when writing to editors, refer by date and headline to an article or letter the paper has already run on your subject (often newspapers will not run a letter unless it concerns something that has appeared in the paper).

Be timely. When responding to a newspaper story, write by the next day; e-mailing the same day is even better. Like the rest of the paper, the letters page must be timely.

Be personal. As you're being specific about your issue, note that you're a credit union

director. (And when writing to a politician, be sure to use the lawmaker's name: Dear Congresswoman Brown, Dear Assemblyman Smith; get the names and addresses from your newspaper, your League of Women Voters or the Internet.)

Be polite. Focus on issues, not personalities. Don't be insulting. And avoid sarcasm; it's too easily misinterpreted.

Be legible. Type your letter, if at all possible, and double-space it.

And keep it short. Try to keep it to one typed page (about 250 words) or less. This is important when writing to politicians, but it's vital when writing to newspaper editors. Local papers may take letters 400 to 500 words long, but most daily newspapers will take no more than 200 to 300 words—and prefer less. *The New York Times* asks for about 150 words. (If you think that's not enough space, Thomas Fever, the paper's letters editor, has noted that the Gettysburg Address was only about 250 words.)

What about telephoning the office of an elected representative? It never hurts, especially on a yes-or-no matter. But a letter, even at 250 words, lets you say more about an issue. And letters—whether mailed at the post office or sent over the Internet—take time, thought and effort to write. Politicians know that, and the good ones respect it.

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New Americans

for services such as business lending to groups currently underserved by the banking industry.

California League Vice President of Credit Union Development Kim Bannan says language continues to be the number one barrier to immigrant use of traditional financial service organizations in this country. Bannan urges credit unions to staff branches serving immigrant populations with individuals who speak and understand

not just the conversational language of the immigrants they serve, but also the business and financial language necessary to make financial transactions.

David Grace, Financial Services and Regulatory Manager for the World Council of Credit Unions, outlines the International Remittance Network, or IRnet, through which credit union members can send money internationally and domestically in a safe and economical way. In Mexico

alone, IRnet funds can be received at more than 5,000 locations at competitive exchange rates. The potential market for international remittance services is large and growing. Over \$9 billion in remittances was sent from the U.S. to Mexico during 2001.

Dick Radtke of Dick Radtke Public Relations works with the Filene Research Institute on research reports as writer and editor. For more information call 608.274.2220 or email bigwords@sbcglobal.net.

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Avoid using weak, wimpy words (or why you might want to think about not using these type of words)

Pop quiz time: Which of these two statements do you find to be more effective? "I think you might like this new service we offer." Or, "You're really going to like this new service we offer."

What's in a word?

The difference in wording is fairly subtle but the influence communicated to your customer [member] can be profound.

Reread both sentences. The first one contains a weak, wimpy word. In this case, it's the word "think". Naturally, there are times to use the word "think" as in when you're really thinking about something. But in the example above, it makes the speaker appear unsure or insecure with what they're saying. Some people inadvertently use weak, wimpy words because they think it sounds less combative while in reality, it sounds indifferent and ineffective.

Notice how the second example sentence above is confident and strong? That's a statement from someone who believes in what he/she is saying!

Weak, wimpy words make you appear less confident about the message you're trying to get across to coworkers or customers [members]. While they may seem harmless on their own, weak, wimpy words will subtly undermine the effectiveness of your business communication.

It all starts out naturally!

Don't feel bad. Weak, wimpy words gained a foothold into our personal vocabulary long ago before we even knew we were using them. But once you start to pay attention to weak, wimpy words you'll begin to catch yourself using them and more importantly, begin to construct more confident sentences. You'll also begin to notice how often others use them.

Examples of weak, wimpy words.

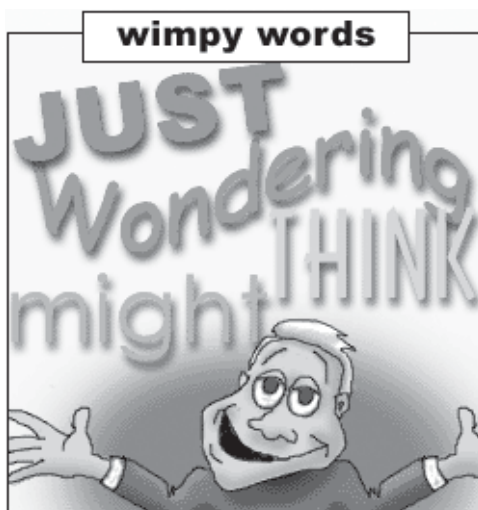
- **Just**, as in "I was just calling to tell you about the new communication course we're offering."

Replace it with, "I'm calling to tell you about the new communication course we're offering!"

- **Think** as in "I think this sentence will be much stronger without those first two words."

Replace it with, "This sentence is much stronger without those first two words!"

- **Wondering** and **might**, as in "I was wondering if you might want to go to dinner



and a movie with me this weekend."

Replace it with, "Would you like to go to dinner and a movie this weekend?"

You can probably think of many more examples such as possibly or maybe. The definition of a weak, wimpy word is any modifying word or phrase that a) makes you sound less confident and b) can easily be removed and make your original sentence stronger.

We're all in sales— be confident!

It doesn't matter if you sell widgets or assist customers [members] with their challenges, we are all in sales. Some of us directly sell products and others "sell" assistance, good treatment or ideas. And no matter what type of customer [member] interaction we engage in, it's important that we express ourselves in a confident manner.

Be confident in your company's offerings and abilities. Don't be afraid to be an advocate for your company. Customers [members] want to do business with organizations and people who believe in what they do and exude confidence and strength. As consumers, we all want to feel like we've made the right decision.

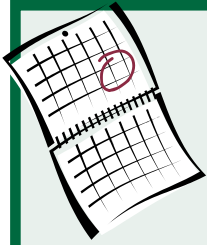
In closing, you just might want to possibly think about maybe not using weak wimpy words in the future.

Put another way, removing weak, wimpy words from your vocabulary will help you communicate with greater confidence!

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*David Friedman is Vice President and General Manager of Telephone Doctor.

This article was provided by Telephone Doctor, Inc. For more information call Cassandra Grayson, 800.342.1266, ext. 1036 or cgrayson@knowmore.net.



FCUL Calendar of Events

April 2004

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
20	9th Annual Tallahassee Chapter Golf Tournament Summerbrooke Golf Course - Tallahassee

CHAPTER MEETINGS

For further information, please refer to the League website
www.fcul.org

Broward Chapter
April 17

Escambia Chapter
March 30

Northeast Chapter
April 22

Tallahassee Chapter
April 20
Golf Tournament

Tampa Chapter
March 16 - April 6

The *Florida Credit Union News* is a monthly publication of the Florida Credit Union League (www.fcul.org). For business information or subscriptions, write the Florida Credit Union League, P.O. Box 3108, Tallahassee, FL 32315-3108, call (800) 342-1266, or e-mail amy.jowers@fcul.org. Two copies are supplied free to each affiliated credit union in Florida. Additional copies may be purchased for \$3 per issue or \$36 for a single one-year subscription. Articles may be submitted to the editor for publication and are subject to editing and approval.

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