

Volume 2, Issue 2

February 2004

UHS Employees'
Federal Credit Union

607.763.6565

www.uhsefcu.org

Dollars & Dreams

A Newsletter for UHS Employees'
Federal Credit Union

WHO'S WHO at your C.U.

- **Jack Ewald (WMC)**
Chief Executive Officer
- **Shirley Okoniewski (WMC)**
Office Manager
- **Karen Thurber (BGH)**
Senior Loan Officer
- **Darlene Tronkowski (BGH)**
Branch Manager
- **Carolyn Kolba (WMC/BGH)**
Member Service Rep.
- **Darcy Morgan (WMC)**
Member Service Rep.
- **Colleen Stiner-Collins (WMC)**
Member Service Rep.

You can reach any of your Credit Union Staff by calling 763.6565.

Wealth of Info Online!

If you haven't checked out your Credit Union online lately, type in www.uhsefcu.org & take a look! It's your quickest way to contact us, keep posted on the latest and greatest on our News Ticker, check out current rates, print out a loan application, re-order checks, and even read *Dollars & Dreams* online a couple of hours before it hits newsstands!

Once you're signed up for E-Banking, you can even click on the E-Banking button and check out your finances, transfer money between your accounts, make loan payments, and even request a withdrawal check to be sent to you at home.

Quick C.U. Quiz

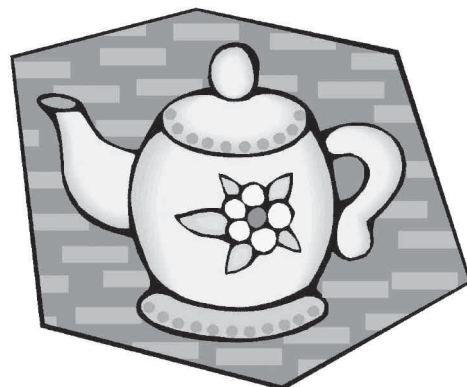
Test your C.U. Knowledge.

1. What is your Credit Union's Web address?
2. How much does it cost to open a Credit Union checking account?
3. Name at least two organizations that your Credit Union supports through charitable donations or volunteerism.

(answers on page 2)

We're In This For Each Other... Not the Coffee Pot

Sometimes a large community credit union in our area will offer very low introductory rates on a home equity loan. Sometimes a regional bank with a branch nearby may offer a free coffee pot or lawn chair for opening a checking account. So, what's wrong with taking the teaser rate, brewing a cup of coffee, and sitting out on the lawn dreaming of the coming spring? Nothing really, but consider this:



Your Credit Union is the only financial institution in the world to focus only on employees of United Health Services. That is because it is owned exclusively by its members, all of them employees of United Health Services and their family members. These employees have elected a volunteer Board of Directors, who in turn hired Credit Union staff to take and protect their hard earned money, to use it to both provide them with free services such as checking accounts, debit cards, ATM access, etc., and to also to lend some of that money back to them and their colleagues and families at a reasonable rate when they need it for anything from cars, to consolidating debt, to remodeling homes, spur of the moment vacations, medical emergencies, college educations, and more! No profit or income tax is ever taken out of the Credit Union, as it would at a bank, and every dollar goes back to the members in service or dividends.

Understanding that, it becomes pretty clear that when more members keep their deposits with their credit union, that money stays closer to home and under their control. The same logic says that if more checking accounts are kept with your Credit Union, the checking product will be able to be continually upgraded (improved accessibility and transaction speed, expanded no-fee ATM access, ability to do more transactions, and eventually pay bills, online), all without charging fees. Expand that thinking to loans, and you'll see that the more existing employee loans (car loans/personal loans/home equities) that are refinanced and kept at your Credit Union, the more we can lower the rate we all pay on our own loans. That also means being able to hire more member service representatives so you don't have to stand in line as long at a branch, and decreasing hold-time to speak with someone on the phone. It means hiring more loan officers so you get your loan application answered faster. It may mean new products like IRAs, tax preparation assistance, and debt counseling. No matter what, it means that YOU get to decide what happens, how it happens, and how much it should cost YOU.

The bottom line is: UNITED we are strong and decide what happens with our hard earned money right here where we live. Divided, we are just customers, or members at another credit union that is so massive that they don't know who we are.

The loyalty, feedback, and involvement of our Credit Union members have been the key to your keeping your Credit Union strong, independent, and focused exclusively on employees and family members of United Health Services for almost 40 years. It is that same energy that we see in our members today that will keep us strong and focused on our United Health Services family for the next 40 years.

Jack Ewald, Credit Union CEO

Jack can most often be found roaming the halls of Wilson and BGH, and is always available to members at 763-5069 or john_ewald@uhs.org.

Board Member Spotlight...

Marion Stratton, UHSEFCU Board Member

Marion Stratton says she's been retired from her work at the United Health Services Employees' Federal Credit Union for about two years. But in fact, she never really left.

"I worked for so many years on the other side of the (UHSEFCU) desk," the Credit Union Board of Directors member said recently. "People may not realize that I'm still working for them."

The fact is that Marion has been working in one way or another for most of her adult

life. A Johnson City native, she found work right out of high school at the old Endicott Johnson offices. A few years later, she married Jim Stratton and settled down to the hard work of raising their family, two boys and a girl. All three still live in the area and have made Marion a proud grandmother of five.

"While my kids were growing up I did a lot of volunteer work," she said, including the Boy and Girl Scouts. She's especially proud of her work with the Johnson City Music Booster Club. "I think we were the first to have the annual Florida orange and grapefruit fundraisers," she said.

As her children got older and began to start their own lives, Marion became interested in re-entering the workforce. She laughed, "When I finally grew up I didn't know what to do!" Never one to just wait and see, she began taking part-time classes at Broome Community College. From there she landed a job at Horizons Federal Credit Union. Fortunately for us, she made the move to USHEFCU some years later. Marion worked that "other side of the desk" for eight years until her "retirement". The best part of her work, she said, was getting to know the members and working to help them in any way she could.

A Credit Union Board Member for two years, Marion now sees her work from a different perspective. "As an employee (of UHSEFCU), I knew and understood the concerns and goals of our members," she said. "As a Board Member, I'm much more involved with planning and administration. The Board is very dedicated. We want to make it as good a Credit Union as we can possibly make it for our members. I've enjoyed seeing how this Credit Union has really grown, and all the services we offer now."

Marion strongly believes UHSEFCU is a viable alternative to the larger banks and credit unions. "I want people to go out and do some checking, then come in and talk to our loan officers. There's a lot you can do with a home equity loan, for example. We can help in a lot of ways. And we make it easy for members with the benefit of payroll deduction. Some people don't even realize we offer this."

She also continues to keep in close touch with her former colleagues on the front lines – the Credit Union staff. "The staff is very concerned for our members needs and wants," she said. "They really work hard to give extra-special service that's a cut above and beyond what you'll find anywhere else. They honestly care about our members."

Marion has never stopped caring for Credit Union members, either. It's good that some things don't change.



BEWARE OF "GET OUT OF DEBT FREE" SCAMS

The Federal Reserve Bank recently warned consumers, about scams that claim to "eliminate debt" by using specially prepared documents that must be paid for up-front. Some scammers claim that they've found "loopholes" in debt law, or that they can tell you some invaluable information that will make all your debt disappear. Some scammers are more sophisticated than others, and there have been reports of some consumers paying, and losing, up to \$2,500 to these scammers.

If you have been solicited for any form of debt reduction and think that it may be a scam, or that it may simply not be the best way for you to reduce your debt, please call your Senior Loan Officer, Karen Thurber, at 762-2297. On top of Karen's 18 years of lending experience, she knows the laws and the real-world truths about debt. She can be an invaluable guide in your journey out of debt, even if you're not using Credit Union products to get there.

Keep in Mind

Credit Union members never pay any surcharges for using their Credit Union Debit Card at any ATMs on the Wilson or BGH campus. On top of that, you can also swipe your card **surcharge-free** at any BSB Bank & Trust, Visions Credit Union, Horizons Credit Union, or GHS Credit Union ATM. You work too hard for your money to pay just to get to it! What have you been swiping lately? Maybe we need to talk?

Quick C.U. Quiz Answers

1. www.uhsefcu.org
2. \$0.00
3. A few include: Mom's House, UHS Foundation, Fairview Recovery, Boys & Girls Club of Binghamton, CHOW, Handicapped Children's Association, Opportunities for Broome, SOS Shelter, Wyoming Conference Children's Home, Opportunities for Delaware, Opportunities for Otsego, Mental Health Association of Broome County, the Broome County Fair, Sidney Head Start, BGH Pediatrics, Kids Unlimited After School, Opportunities for Chenango Literacy, The Danielle House, many local PBAs, & more...