

Consumer News & Views

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CONSUMER COUNCIL



In This Issue

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----|
| ELECTION RESULTS | P2 |
| IS BIPARTISANSHIP DEAD? | P2 |
| TRIFECTA ILLNESSES | P3 |
| IS A RECESSION COMING? | P5 |
| BONE/JOINT HEALING FOODS | P6 |
| CREDIT MEMBERS SAVE MORE \$ | P7 |
| BEST DECEMBER ACTIVITIES | P8 |
| PREVENT IDENTITY THEFT | P9 |
| RESOLUTIONS FOR 2023 | P10 |
| AMERICU FCU, ROME, NEW YORK | P12 |
| COMMONWEALTH ONE FCU, ALEXANDRIA, VA | P13 |
| ACC WRAP-UP | P14 |

Consumer Confidence Decreases in November

The Conference Board's consumer confidence index fell to 100.2, the lowest reading since July, from 102.2 in October.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast the index to come in at 100.0. The index remains above its COVID-19 pandemic lows.

- Consumers' 12-month inflation expectations increased to a four-month high of 7.2% from 6.9% in October, which the survey blamed on rising gasoline and food prices.
- Fears that the economy could experience a sharp slowdown in growth or a mild recession in the first half of 2023 has halted large purchases and flagging a slowdown in demand for goods.
- The Conference Board survey showed fewer consumers also planned to purchase a house over the next six months.
- Job openings remaining elevated in November.

The **Present Situation Index**—based on how consumers weigh current business and labor market conditions, to 137.4 from 138.7 in October.

The **Expectations Index**—based on consumers' short-term outlook for income, business and labor market conditions, fell to 75.4 from 77.9 prior.

POST-ELECTION RESULTS ON P. 2

Bipartisanship May Be a Thing of the Past

A trend of increasing governing trifectas may point to a decrease in bipartisanship across the country at the state level. Close to 40 states have one party commanding a governing trifecta after the 2022 midterm elections, the most since 1947. After New Hampshire Republicans emerged with a majority in the state House of Representatives,

New Hampshire became the 39th state to hold a governing trifecta, wherein the governor's mansion and both legislative chambers are held by the same party.

Democrats hold 17 state trifectas, and Republicans hold 22. This year, the Democrats flipped legislative chambers in Minnesota and Michigan and governorships in Massachusetts and Maryland to create four trifectas. The GOP flipped Nevada's governorship, ending the Democratic trifecta.

This election cycle, Democrats made history in several gubernatorial contests. In Massachusetts, Gov.-elect Maura Healey became the first woman to be elected governor in the state and also the state's first openly lesbian chief executive.

In Maryland, Gov.-elect Wes Moore was elected to be the state's first black governor, beating Republican challenger Dan Cox with 64.7% of the vote. Now, Republicans and Democrats only share power at the legislative or gubernatorial levels in 11 states spread across the West, Midwest, and Northeast.



The majority of Southern states are under Republican trifectas, similar to Democrats' majority in the Northeast. Republicans hold a slight majority in the Midwest. Trifectas are important for redistricting opportunities because the legislatures create the district maps and the governors approve them. Republicans controlled redistricting in 20 out of the 35 states where legislatures oversaw redistricting, and analysts have determined that the GOP has had an advantage in redistricting since 2021.

Republican officials in a rural Arizona county refused Monday to certify the 2022 election despite no evidence of anything wrong with the count, a decision that was quickly challenged in court by the state's top election official. The refusal to certify by Cochise County in southeastern Arizona comes amid pressure from prominent Republicans to reject results showing Democrats winning top races.

Secretary of State Katie Hobbs, a Democrat who narrowly won the race for governor, asked a judge to order county officials to canvass the election, which she said is an obligation under Arizona law. Lawyers representing a Cochise County voter and a group of retirees filed a similar lawsuit Monday, the deadline for counties to approve the official tally of votes, known as the canvass.

The two Republican county supervisors delayed the canvass vote until Friday, when they want to hear once more about concerns over the certification of ballot tabulators, though election officials have repeatedly said the equipment is properly approved. State Elections Director Kori Loric wrote in a letter last week that Hobbs is required by law to approve the statewide canvass by next week and will have to exclude Cochise County's votes if they aren't received in time.

The two Republican county supervisors delayed the canvass vote until Friday, when they want to hear once more about concerns over the certification of ballot tabulators, though election officials have repeatedly said the equipment is properly approved. State Elections Director Kori Loric wrote in a letter last week that Hobbs is required by law to approve the statewide canvass by next week and will have to exclude Cochise County's votes if they aren't received in time.

That would threaten to flip the victor in at least two close races — a U.S. House seat and state schools chief — from a Republican to a Democrat.

Although it has been called, results are still pending...

Trifecta of Illnesses on the Rise--Influenza, RSV, and COVID



The United States has already plunged into one of the roughest seasons of winter illnesses in decades. After nearly three years of being sequestered, children and adults are back out in crowds, with no masks, no distancing, and viruses waiting with open arms. Well, open RNA strands, at least.

With what's now being called a tripledemic, which includes SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19), influenza (flu), and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) already spreading rapidly, the winter ahead could be worse.

Young children, especially those who are not vaccinated, have been hospitalized at record rates with influenza, Covid-19, and RSV infections. RSV infections surged unexpectedly in late spring and early summer 2022, with babies, toddlers and older children being sickened and hospitalized. It settled a bit in the summer and returned with a vengeance in the early fall.

One surprising twist has been that more adults have developed RSV as well. While most adults who have RSV have symptoms of a minor cold, more adults than in years past have been quite ill and hospitalized for RSV infections. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the rate of adult hospitalizations for RSV is 10 times that of prior years.

What Is RSV?

RSV, or respiratory syncytial virus, is not new. Children typically develop anything from cold-like symptoms to more severe cough or even trouble breathing. The highest risk infants are eligible to receive RSV prophylaxis called palivizumab. This is not a vaccine, but an antibody therapy offered in limited supply to specific groups of infants at higher risk of RSV-related hospitalization.

As I reported for Forbes, the American Academy of Pediatrics has expanded eligibility for palivizumab this year, as we are seeing massive surges of RSV infections, months earlier than in prior years. Despite the expanded use of palivizumab, hospital beds are filled with previously healthy, "low-risk" children suffering from complications due to RSV infections.

The one piece of positive news on the tripledemic front is that hospitalizations appear to have peaked for children with RSV complications. But while the daily new hospitalization rate has dropped in much of the U.S., pediatric hospital beds, both in the intensive care units and general units, remain packed with children still recovering from RSV. An infant or child may remain hospitalized anywhere from two to 21 days for an RSV infection, so available beds won't open up, even as new hospitalizations decline.

The Rising Risk of Flu

Nationwide, just over 35% of children ages 6 months to 17 years have been vaccinated against the flu, which is similar to last winter flu season. The difference this year is that, with nearly all Covid mitigation measures lifted, flu infections are significantly higher than in the past two winter seasons.

Continued



Influenza-related hospitalizations have risen sharply for children and adults over the past weeks, to rates much higher for this time of year compared to prior flu seasons. Through late November, seven children have died from influenza in the United States so far this season.

We have yet to see how Thanksgiving travel will affect our respiratory tracts; More Americans traveled this year than in decades as we're in an already tough period when it comes to infectious viruses. Some states in the Southwest are already seeing pre-winter surges in Covid-19 infections. And while new RSV-related hospitalizations may have reached a peak, the sharp rise in flu-related illness, coupled with low vaccination rates, may not bode well for the months ahead.

Influenza is certainly not a novel virus, and in years past, prior to 2020, the United States would typically see anywhere from 20,000 to 60,000 annual deaths due to complications of the flu. Vaccines to protect against influenza are tailored each season, based on the prior season's flu strains, to minimize risks of infections, complications, hospitalizations and flu-related deaths. Most years, fewer than 50% of the population receives a flu shot, which is approved and recommended for all ages 6 months and up.

What's the Difference Between Covid, Flu, and RSV?

The symptoms of these three respiratory infections can look quite similar. According to UC Davis Infectious Disease specialist Dr. Dean Blumberg, there are several differences to look out for in these three illnesses:

Covid-19 Symptoms:

- Fever or chills
- Respiratory symptoms (cough, sore throat, runny nose)
- Loss of taste and smell
- Fatigue
- Sore throat
- Muscle or body aches
- Headache

Flu Symptoms:

- Sudden onset fever or chills
- Respiratory symptoms (cough, sore throat, runny nose)
- Muscle aches and pains
- Headaches

RSV Symptoms:

- Runny nose
- Coughing
- Fever
- Wheezing
- Decrease in appetite

What Can You Do To Reduce Risks of Illness?

Short of sounding like a broken record, the means to reduce risks of illness remain the same as in years past. Keeping up to date on Covid vaccinations clearly reduce risks of complications from Covid infections. This includes the newest bivalent Covid booster vaccine.

All people over age 6 months should receive an annual flu vaccine. This is especially critical for pregnant women, whereby protection from flu can be transmitted to their newborn in the baby's first six months, before they are eligible to be vaccinated themselves. This transmitted protection also applies to Covid-19. Pregnant women who are vaccinated against Covid-19 transfer antibody protection to the fetus. This protection continues in the first months of a baby's life.

As for RSV protection, there is no vaccine for RSV protection, although Pfizer recently released promising data on RSV vaccine administration to pregnant women, which will provide protection to vulnerable newborns.

The other means of protection continue to include consideration for masks in indoor environments this winter. Masks have clearly been shown to reduce risk of transmission of viruses, thereby reducing risk of illness. For those who remain skeptical of masking, thank your healthcare professionals for keeping their masks on while caring for sick people, not getting sick themselves, and showing up to care for the sick during this surge, during ones past, and during ones to come.

Is a Recession on the Horizon?

Many economists, including luminaries Larry Summers and Nouriel Roubini, anticipate a recession next year.

And so does Beth Ann Bovino, chief U.S. economist at S&P Global Ratings.

"Continued high prices through most of next year and the Federal Reserve's decision to aggressively raise interest rates ... are leading households to pull back on spending and businesses to cut costs in response to slowing demand," she wrote in a commentary.

"We continue to expect the U.S. will fall into recession in 2023. We expect GDP growth to weaken to negative 0.1% in 2023." And she expects GDP will slip 0.8% from its peak to its trough, "a mild recession in line with the 1969/1970 recession."

Purchasing Power

Rising prices and interest rates eat away at private-sector purchasing power, Bovino noted. And only one of nine leading indicators that are part of S&P's Business Cycle Barometer was in positive territory through October. The inverted Treasury yield curve also points to recession, she said. An inverted yield curve occurs when short-term Treasuries have higher yields than long-term Treasuries. The 10-year yield recently stood at 3.75%, compared to 4.72% for the one-year yield.



"Economic momentum has protected the U.S. economy this year," Bovino said. But in addition to rising inflation and interest rates, "with the Russia-Ukraine conflict ongoing, tensions over Taiwan escalating, and the China slowdown exacerbating supply-chain and pricing pressures, the U.S. economy appears to be teetering toward recession," she said.

Continued supply-chain disruption and rising inflation may result in the Fed continuing to lift rates into mid-2023, "damaging household purchasing power," Bovino said.

Bulging Inventories

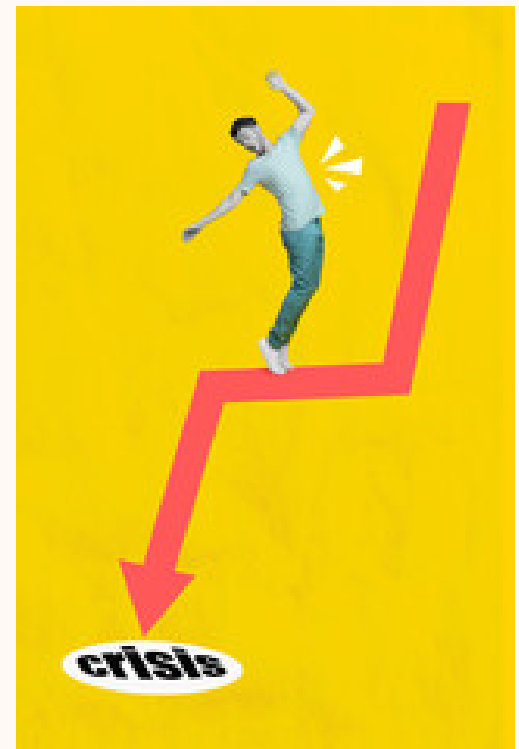
"As households shut their pocketbooks, businesses that built up inventory to meet surging demand will be left with full shelves."

That means "the Fed will ultimately get its wish of lower inflation, and businesses will be forced to sell at a discount, bringing down prices," Bovino said.

Like most other economists, she expects another Fed rate increase this year, predicting the federal funds rate will reach 5% to 5.25% by second-quarter 2023. Fed funds now stand at 3.75% to 4%.



The Fed will ultimately lower rates late next year on signs prices are stabilizing, Bovino said. She doesn't expect inflation to not approach the Fed's 2% target until late 2024. The Fed's favored inflation indicator, the personal consumption expenditures price index, soared 6.2% in the 12 months through September.



Top 6 Foods that will Boost Your Bone Strength and Joint Health



A balanced diet focused on key nutrients is the first step in promoting healthy bones and joints. Getting the recommended amount of calcium, vitamin D, collagen, vitamin C, omega-3s, magnesium and vitamin K on a daily basis can protect your joints in the long run. Incorporate these 10 foods into your diet for long-term bone and joint health:

Turmeric

This vibrant yellow spice contains Curcumin, which has potent anti-inflammatory properties. Curcumin has been studied for its joint health potential and research suggests it may relieve the symptoms associated with arthritis. You can add turmeric to everything from scrambled eggs to roasted veggies!

Bone Broth

Because bone broth is made by boiling bones, it's rich in collagen and protein. Many people use it as a base for soups or sauces, and some even choose to drink it like hot tea.

Prunes

These purple gems contain potassium and magnesium, as well as vitamin K. Research shows that eating five to six prunes daily may help prevent bone loss. Try eating them as a snack or using them to sweeten baked goods.

Tofu

A half-cup serving of tofu has a little less than half of your daily calcium needs. And as a bonus, some research suggests eating soy may reduce joint pain. Tofu is easy to cook and flavor! Try a tofu rice bowl, tofu stir fry, or add tofu to your dish the next time you order out. Tofu Pad Thai, anyone?

Blueberries

Blueberries are packed with two beneficial nutrients—polyphenols and vitamin C. First, research suggests the polyphenols in blueberries may reduce joint pain from osteoarthritis. Also, a serving (a handful or a cup) of blueberries provides 16% of your daily vitamin C, which is needed for collagen production.

Bell Peppers

Vitamin C is usually synonymous with citrus, but one bell pepper contains more than a day's worth of vitamin C! In addition to stimulating collagen, vitamin C is also an inflammation-fighting antioxidant. Those two things combined make these veggies great for joints.

Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes are loaded with both magnesium and potassium, both important for bone health. Magnesium activates vitamin D, so low levels can affect bone health. Potassium helps neutralize acids in the body that cause calcium to escape from bones.

Bok Choy

Bok choy are a great way to get more calcium! Plus, leafy greens like bok choy are excellent sources of vitamin K, which aids bone growth. Bok choy is delicious cooked in soups or stir fry, steamed over grains, fresh in salads, and more.

Sardines



5 Top Ways Credit Union Members Can Budget for the Holiday Season

The holiday season is finally upon on! There is a nip in the air, family and friends gather to enjoy togetherness, and we near a new year.

However, all the extra holiday expenses can put a toll on people this time of year. Credit union members can now save even more and budget successfully for the upcoming holiday season.

Follow these tips to save even more money this year:

Prepare for the unexpected

Nothing can cut into a holiday budget like emergency expenses. Remind your members to carry out regular maintenance on their cars and regularly check major appliances like furnaces to avoid expensive repairs cropping up in the middle of the holiday season. Health expenses are costly too, so you might also consider reminding members to go for regular check-ups to help avoid any unexpected health costs. Of course, no one can plan for everything, so most of all, encourage your members to create or build emergency funds.

Focus on economical ways to celebrate

Help your members save money by notifying them of free or low-cost community events. You could also consider hosting a holiday event at your credit union. Also, share creative gift ideas such as acts of kindness in place of bought gifts.



Start planning and saving ahead of time:

What savings plans do you offer? Does your credit union have a Christmas club or other program to help members save for the season? If you do, be sure to remind them about it year round so they can build up the funds they need.

Consider all holiday expenses

A survey by Deloitte reveals only 34% of holiday spending goes for gifts. The rest goes towards holiday get-togethers. The same study shows that 78% of people spend holiday money on themselves, mostly for food, liquor and clothes. Other holiday expenses include donations, entertainment, eating out, travel costs, and home items.

Help members address these costs by sharing tips on social media or in emails highlighting the different expenses they should consider in their budgets. If your credit union offers prepaid cards, remind members how they can use the cards to keep their spending in line with their budgets. A gift card can work as both a budgeting tool for special holiday expenses and as a popular gift that allows members to easily stay within their budgets. With gift cards, members know exactly what they are spending.

Bring the community together

Dealing with holiday expenses can be difficult, but a fresh perspective helps ease the strain. Encourage your members to share the ways they get financially ready for the holidays on your social media page. You can even share some of these suggestions on your website, bulletin board or lobby screen to reach members who are less active on social media.

Be sure to check with your credit union for extra savings this season.

Have a safe and happy holiday!



Best Things To Do in December

December is one of the merriest times of the year. Friends and family get-togethers enshrine love, warmth, and coziness as we embark on the journey into the new year.

The weather is cooler, the days are shorter, and the nights are longer. December is the perfect time to start new adventures.

Here are the best things to do in December this year:

Decorate cookies

What better way to celebrate the holidays than to bake and decorate your own cookies! You can do with friends or with kids—or both. Start with simple sugar cookies or festive gingerbread shapes, set out colorful icing, sprinkles, and candy, and spend an afternoon decorating.

Finish last-minute holiday shopping

If anyone is still left on your list, get to it! Don't wait until mid-December to get started on holiday gift shopping. Not sure what to get? Be inspired by amazing gift guides.

Go on a wintry getaway

It's cold, it's dark, it's busy—a long weekend somewhere warm might sound pretty enticing right now. If you're looking for inspiration, consider warm-weather destinations (and a few cool options, if you're into the wintry weather).

Go on a sunny getaway

If the cold is not your thing, plan for a sunny getaway. Many places on earth are summer all year long. Embark on a trip to paradise. Who says Santa doesn't visit the beach?

Embrace the outdoors

Embrace the Scandinavian concept of *friluftsliv*, which literally means "free air life."

Depending on where you live and your preferred activity intensity, take advantage of the first truly cold and snowy month to go ice skating, sledding, skiing, cross-country skiing, winter hiking, tubing, or snow-shoeing. Getting outside in the cold air can be as invigorating as the summer time.



Donate old winter gear

'Tis the season of giving. Dig through overstuffed closets for gently used coats, jackets, vests, and winter gear you can donate to someone in need, whether it's through work, a house of worship, or a local coat drive. While it's always a great idea to give gently-used items away year-round, winter is an especially crucial time to help those in need stay warm.

Toys are another fantastic thing to donate during the holidays. Think of all the trucks, stuffed animals, dolls, and sports equipment you and your family no longer use. If they're still in good condition, it's probably time to give them a second life—and there's someone out there who will really appreciate them.

DIY Christmas decorations

Deck the halls with all the beautiful greenery, lights, tinsel, and paper snowflakes you can muster. Spend a cozy afternoon as a family listening to holiday music, sipping hot cocoa, and crafting your own decor (you'll love making homemade ornaments or pinecone place cards).

Go on a holiday lights drive

Does your block go all-out with Hanukkah or Christmas decorations? Is there a designated street in town known for its festive displays? Stroll or drive through the neighborhood with your kids to admire the show of lights, trees, wreaths, candles, and other seasonal installations.

Whatever you choose to partake in this December, do it with great cheer! Winter only comes once a year so you may as well enjoy it. Getting outside, giving back, and remembering how thankful you are is a great way to wrap up the year—just like a present.

Preventing Identity Theft During the Holidays



Although it is the season of giving...some people can be a true Grinch. Hackers and scammers prefer taking rather than giving this time of year.

During the holidays this year, be extra careful to make sure that you're keeping your finances safe from these shady people! Here are four tips for protecting your identity during this holiday season.

Keep your eyes peeled

If checking your credit report isn't something you do regularly, you should change that. If a thief opens up an account in your name, this will be an easy red flag to detect. Although it used to be a hassle, there are a few sites that provide free credit reports these days.

Shred then toss

When you take your trash to the curb every week, make sure you're not throwing anything away that a fraudster could find valuable. Anything that contains account numbers, banking information, or social security numbers would be highly desirable to a thief. Make sure anything that qualifies gets put in the shredder before your toss it.

Be cautious online

One of the ways cybercriminals get sensitive information is by phishing, or posing as a legitimate company that you trust. Don't click a link in an email that's asking for your personal information. Anything that looks fishy (no pun intended) should be verified with the company first. Also, make sure you're not doing things like logging into your online banking from a random, unsecured Wi-Fi.

Carry Only What You Need

Some of us have a tendency to carry all of our credit cards in our purses or wallets in addition to our social security card. This might seem convenient, but it is the perfect set up for identity theft. Keep the number of items you carry to a bare minimum. Use the rule of three: one credit card, your driver's license or identity card, and your debit card. Never carry your social security card or any information that may have your social security number on it with you unless you will need it.

Update your passwords

Querty123 isn't a password I'd go with. It's time to do better. Think of a phrase or question like, "I am really looking forward to the 2022 World Cup!" Then use the initials, symbols, and numbers to create your password. That would look like this: "Iarlftt2022WC!" No one is going to guess that one. According to Security.org, it would take a computer about 2 hundred million years to crack it!

Take Precautions Online

There is a relatively new form of identity theft on the rise called formjacking. Formjacking involves cybercriminals hijacking credit card information from online forms. Making purchases, paying bills, and filing taxes online is commonplace today. Here are a few steps you can take to boost your privacy and help in preventing fraud:

- Keep your software up-to-date.
- Never install unidentified software.
- Download only from trusted sites.
- Always use up-to-date anti-spyware and anti-virus software, and run weekly scans.
- Use firewalls on your network.
- Regularly update passwords/passphrases, and make each one unique and challenging to crack.

Be sure to stay aware during the holidays. Now is the perfect time for scammers and hackers to zone in on you. Paying attention can mean the difference of enjoying the holidays...or paying the price for many years to come.

Proven Ways to Make Your NYE Resolutions Actually Work in 2023

To make the "new year, new me" concept actually come true, there are several tricks of the trade. It is easy to fall into the new resolution for several weeks--and then give up.

When you change your approach and perspective on NYE resolutions, you are more likely to succeed. As a bonus, you will feel incredible knowing you achieved your goal.

Here are the top proven ways to make your NYE resolutions actually work in 2023:

Small Goals

Your goal is not your resolution. Let's say your goal is to lose 100 pounds. If that becomes your resolution, it won't work. Instead, take your goal and chop it up into bite-sized chunks. Make those chunks action items. Now you have some resolutions: find a diet, join a gym and lose 10 pounds. Those are resolutions!

No Waiting

You can make resolutions all year long. Only amateurs wait for the New Year. When you have small actionable resolutions, you can just keep replacing them with new ones. If you want to get more fit, you may start out joining a gym, then sign up to run a 5K, and then keep progressing until you reach a marathon or even an IronMan.

Friends

Remember...your goals and resolutions have friends. For example, let's say my goal is to be a better money manager. And let's say my resolution is to spend less money at the mall this January. My normal January shopping habits are supported by a whole network of behaviors: my love of retail therapy, my frequent visits to the mall, and the fact that my three best friends are all shopaholics. If my resolution is to spend less on shopping this January, that may mean fewer trips to the mall, less contact with the three shopping buddies, and ways to handle stress that don't involve a credit card.



Ditch the Accountability Buddy

Do not get an accountability buddy. I know most people will tell you the opposite, but let's face it. The only reason you want an accountability buddy is to have somebody to blame when you fail. Resolutions work when you can make them work. Friends are great, but hold yourself accountable.

Phrases

Phrase your resolution into something that you can actually do. "Be a better person" is a terrible resolution (although a noble sentiment) because how do you know when you're done? A resolution has to be something that is doable and measurable. "Work out more" is a bad resolution; "go to the gym three times a week" is a good resolution. "Go to the gym every Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday" is a great resolution.

Think Small...NOT Big!

You do not need to achieve the unthinkable. Think small. Smaller. Most resolutions are grandiose. We all want to be model-thin, Navy-Seal fit, and Suzy Orman money smart. Make your resolutions into baby steps. Even if you have a lot of weight to lose, make a resolution for 10 pounds or less.

Keep Going

Keep going. When you run a marathon, coaches tell you to set your sights on something in the distance—a sign or a tree perhaps—and then just push yourself till you reach that landmark. Once you get there, find your next object—perhaps a house—and keep going to that. That's how resolutions should be. Keep them small but once you hit one, set the next one. And keep going. Don't stop.

CONTINUED ON P.11

CONTINUED**Start Now**

Do not set a start date. How many people want to start their diet Monday (so they can binge on Sunday)? When you set a resolution, start your action plan the very instant you set it. No waiting. No preparation. If it's important and urgent enough to be a resolution, why wait? Get there faster by starting NOW.

Take Action

Stack the deck. Did you know that there are ways that you can improve your chances of keeping a resolution? Weight Watchers says that members who attend regular weekly meetings are much more likely to lose weight than members who do not attend meeting. So if you want to lose weight with that program—attend the meetings. If you want to change habits, you may have to do some reading or learning. You may need to join a support group, make new friends, get a membership somewhere, or change your routine. Do everything you reasonably can to insure your success. For example, if you know that chocolate is a weakness and you want to lose weight, do not let chocolate into your house.

Celebrate

Celebrate your achievements. Many ardent self-helpers achieve goal after goal without really sitting down and enjoying what happened. No, you don't get to celebrate by overindulging (how many people want to celebrate their weight loss victories with ice cream?) You should take some time to think about what you did, why you succeeded, and how you can take that information and make your next goal happen even faster and more easily. Recognize that you accomplished something major. You don't need to buy yourself a present. But you should recognize that you achieved something that most people don't! New Year's resolutions generally are too big, too vague, and too overwhelming for most of us to do. But make resolutions this way, and you can—little by little—achieve some amazing goals.

You Can Do This!

Whether you think you can or can't--you're right! Shift your mindset to truly believing in yourself. It does not matter if you have not fulfilled your previous resolutions; it is going to be a new year. Make this year about sticking to your goals in an effective, doable way. You can do this!

As we enter a new year, lead it with gratitude, self-love, and thanks. We have made it to a new year, new chapter.

Let's make this year the best one yet!

Happy New Year 2023!



Welcome one of our credit union partners!

As a nonprofit consumer education organization, ACC has developed partnerships with credit unions across the country. These partnerships allow ACC members eligibility with our credit unions. If approved, our members gain access to a member-owned financial institution, with products and services designed to make banking more affordable, simple and convenient, and to offer additional resources that can help our members identify and achieve their financial dreams.

AmeriCU Credit Union
1916 Black River Blvd.
Rome, NY 13440

+++

At AmeriCU, we provide our members the right financial services to live life, dream big, and achieve financial success!

As a credit union, we are a not-for-profit financial institution owned by members like you. We provide you with all the products and services you need – often with low or no fees, and better rates. We’ve been serving the local community for over 65 years and, in that time, have grown to more than 150,000 members and 19 locations! Open an AmeriCU account with just a penny if you live, work, worship, or attend school in Central or Northern New York or you or a member of your family is on active-duty, in the reserves, or a veteran of the U.S. military. Just [click here to open an account and join](#), call our Member Service Center at 800.388.2000, or stop by any of [our 19 locations](#).

Local. Since 1950.

Our local roots run deep. We’ve been a part of the community since 1950 and we’re here to stay. AmeriCU is dedicated to improving the communities we serve through philanthropy, financial education, volunteerism, and more.

Proud to serve members of the Armed Forces & their families.

AmeriCU was founded on Griffiss Air Force base in 1950. Today, we still have a Financial Center in the Griffiss Business Park, and another on Fort Drum. Many of our employees are former or retired members of the military, and many have spouses who are currently serving so we understand and appreciate the unique demands of military life. Every day, we help thousands of military members all over the world with their financial needs.



Our History

Founded in 1950 at Griffiss Air Force Base, AmeriCU is a member-owned credit union. We have grown to over \$2 Billion in assets and more than 150,000 members throughout Central & Northern New York and the world. AmeriCU offers our members the most convenience, services and value, all while continuing to provide outstanding service.

AmeriCU is part of the American credit union movement and works to embody the principles of “people helping people” and cooperative ownership. Everything we do is for our members and our communities. It’s why we have lower loan rates, higher deposit rates, and support local charities and not-for-profit organizations. After all, we exist to provide our members the right financial services to live life, dream big and achieve financial success.

Our credit union was chartered in 1950 as the Griffiss Employees Credit Union. We operated out of a desk in the Headquarters Building at Griffiss Air Force Base in Rome, NY and serviced only civilian members. As we grew, our charter was amended to include military personnel and an expanded field of membership. We also increased the variety of products and services offered. We then became Griffiss-Oneida Federal Credit Union.

In 1985, Griffiss-Oneida Federal Credit Union merged with DeWitt First Federal Credit Union in Syracuse and our name was changed again to Up State Federal Credit Union. In 1988, we merged with Fort Drum Federal Credit Union. Finally, in 2000 we transitioned from a federal charter to a New York State community-chartered credit union and changed our name to AmeriCU Credit Union. And the rest...is history.

We look forward to serving you!

For more information, call toll-free: 800.388.2000 or visit our website at: <https://www.americu.org/>

Welcome one of our credit union partners!

As a nonprofit consumer education organization, ACC has developed partnerships with credit unions across the country. These partnerships allow ACC members eligibility with our credit unions. If approved, our members gain access to a member-owned financial institution, with products and services designed to make banking more affordable, simple and convenient, and to offer additional resources that can help our members identify and achieve their financial dreams.

CommonWealth One Federal Credit Union
P.O. Box 9997,
Alexandria, VA 22304



+++

At CommonWealth One FCU, we offer personal and commercial banking solutions including personal checking accounts, personal savings accounts, mortgages, share certificates, business checking accounts, business savings accounts and much more.

A legacy of people helping people

The community-focused credit union you know today was established in the midst of World War II with an all-volunteer staff to serve 94 members. That was 1944 when we were chartered as Army Air Force Annex #1 Credit Union. Since then, we have grown into a full-service financial institution supporting more than 37,500 members and holding more than \$440 million in assets with branches in Alexandria, VA, Washington, D.C., and Harrisonburg, VA.

Through the decades, we have remained committed to our mission of helping members achieve their long-term financial goals and enjoy a better way of life. We're here to be your lifetime financial partner, providing loans, savings plans, special services and so much more.

Our Commitment to You

CommonWealth One Federal Credit Union is a full-service, member-owned, not-for-profit financial cooperative committed to being the lifetime financial institution of its members.

Help the youth build a foundation

There's a lot for your child to learn during the school day. And we're committed to providing real-life financial lessons once the bell rings. As parents, you want your children to develop good habits they'll take with them through life. Some of the most important habits involve managing money, and you can help your children start learning here. We offer several accounts, events and educational experiences for young people that set the tone for a lifetime of financial responsibility and smart savings practices.

College Student Services

Heading off to college is a major milestone in a young person's life. We're glad to provide financial services and assistance that make the transition a little easier. Term papers, science labs, and final exams. To succeed at any college, you need to stay focused on academics. And that's a lot easier to do when you have a firm handle on your finances. We offer fee-free Student Checking Accounts, low-cost loans to support your financial aid package, and credit cards you can use to buy the snack food that fuels those all-night study sessions.

Financial Counseling

Setting financial goals is a great start. But sometimes it's not quite clear how to reach them. At CommonWealth One, our people can help put you on the right path.

Let's draw up a blueprint for your financial future

Everyone wants to make the most of their money. To gain the necessary knowledge, you can read lots of books, take some complicated classes - or simply turn to an expert for common sense advice. As a CommonWealth One member, you have free access to our friendly Certified Financial Counselors. Just use the form below to schedule a meeting. Counseling services include:

- Examining your income and expenses
- Establishing a realistic budget and savings plan
- Help in resolving debt and improving credit
- Referrals to external sources that may be of additional benefit

These are only a few of the many services we offer.

We look forward to serving you!

For more information, call toll-free: 800.424.3334 or visit our website at: <https://www.cofcu.org>

ACC Wrap Up

THE OFFICIAL MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN CONSUMER COUNCIL



Green C Certification

If your company or organization would like to increase its credibility with consumers, you should consider applying for ACC's **"Green C" Certification**.

Applications for the **Winter** cycle are now being accepted through **December 16th**.

It's a proven fact that consumers prefer to do business with eco-friendly companies, implement green initiatives and that practice Corporate Social Responsibility. The process is straight-forward, and all applicants are recognized by the ACC and the Green USA Institute.

All applicants should review the criteria, then complete and submit their applications to ACC's Green Consumer Council for review, assessment and feedback. Program details and the Green C Certification criteria can be viewed online at bit.ly/3d45Con.

For more information, call 1-800-544-0414 or visit ACC's website [here](#). ▲

Friend of the Consumer

Is your business consumer-friendly?

Does your business deserve greater recognition for its service to consumers?

If so, you should apply for the American Consumer Council's Friend of the Consumer Award.



Each year, ACC awards numerous "Friend of the Consumer" awards to deserving manufacturers, retailers, and other businesses that produce or sell products in the United States, and which meet or exceed federally mandated standards, and have "demonstrated a commitment to American consumers by providing products or services that foster consumer confidence and market acceptance."

To apply, complete the online application at: www.americanconsumercouncil.org/awards.asp and return it to ACC with the application fee.

Applicants will be notified within five days of receipt of their application. Thereafter, a panel of independent judges will review your application and make a formal recommendation within 20 days of your submission.



Financial Education

ACC is honored to have a partnership with Nicole Middendorf. Nicole is a money maven, a knowledge junkie, and a born coach. She is an entrepreneur who left Morgan Stanley in 2003 to run her own wealth management firm. Nicole is the author of five books, a world traveler, philanthropist, and an accomplished public speaker.

As a Wealth Advisor and Certified Divorce Financial Analyst with Prosperwell Financial, her main focus is to help people create wealth from the inside out. She is able to accomplish this through one-on-one client meetings, writing books, presenting at conferences, and appearing on TV, radio, and other media.

Nicole shares financial advice and a real-life perspective on saving, planning, and investing with audiences across the country. Her primary goal is to take complicated subjects and make them easy to understand. She works hard to empower her audience to make crucial and positive changes in their own lives. Nicole's books have received local and national press coverage, where she has become known for her thoughtful concise quotes, relaxed on-air presence, and articulate delivery.

ACC is committed to promoting and providing financial education to the public. Nicole Middendorf has collaborated with us to create a new 6-part video series that promotes financial literacy for youth. Check it out here: <https://qcashfinancial.com/are-we-failing-our-kids-in-financial-literacy/>

— — — — —
ACC
11251 Rancho Carmel Dr.
#503016
San Diego, CA 92150-3016
800-544-0414