

The **411** On Maintaining A Checkbook Register

Did you know it is important to maintain your checkbook register, even if you don't write checks? It's true. Your checkbook register is an important tool that helps you keep track of more than just which checks you have written.

If you're not sure where to start here are a few tips:

- **Write down EVERY transaction**, including ATM withdrawals, debit card purchases, deposits, and of course, checks.
- **Keep a running balance** by adding or subtracting each item carefully. A calculator is a great tool to use in order to ensure accuracy!
- When you receive your statement, **check off each item that is listed on the statement**. Now, start with your most recent balance. Add in any checks that have not cleared yet, and subtract any deposits that did not show up on the statement. The result should match up with your statement's final balance.
- If your balance is off, **go back through your register looking for errors**. More often than not, the problem is a simple error in addition or subtraction.
- When you check your balance through Online Banking, remember that **you might have outstanding checks**. Outstanding checks can make your available balance lower.

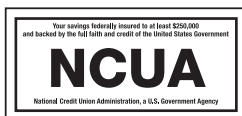
Remember, the friendly staff at United Financial Credit Union is always here to help if you have any questions about maintaining your check register or about managing your checking account.



**Locations in Bridgeport, Saginaw,
Chesaning, Freeland and Auburn**

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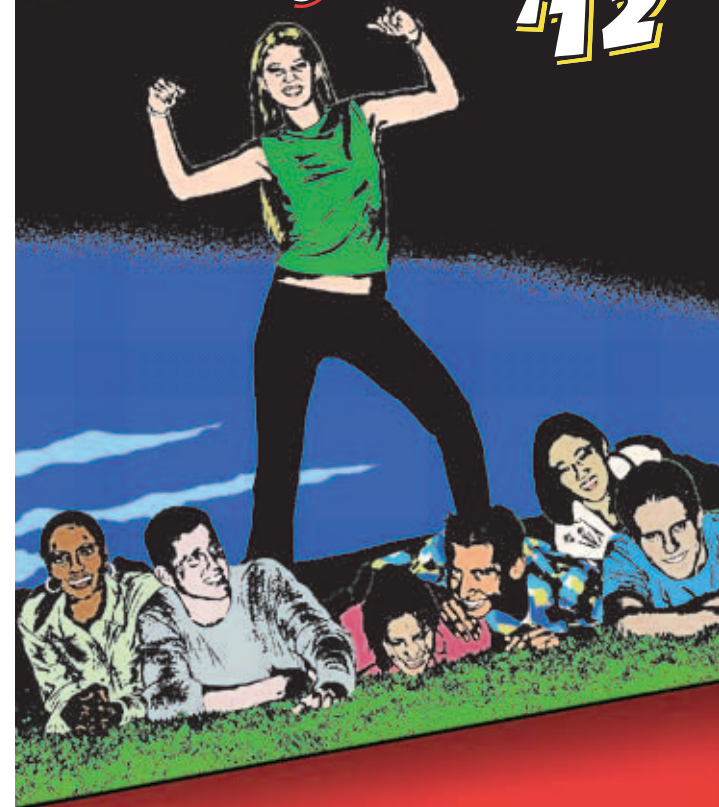
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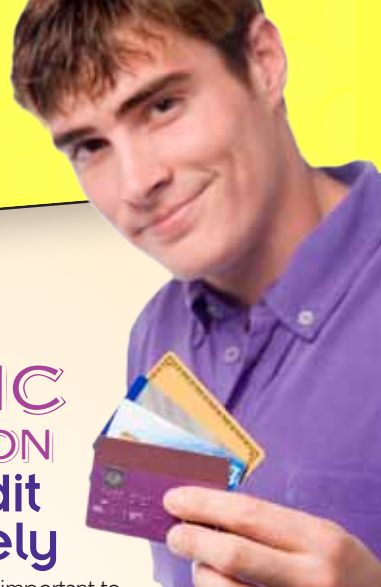


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FINANCIAL BEGINNINGS

JANUARY '12





PLASTIC PERFECTION Using Credit Cards Wisely

As you near adulthood, it's important to understand how your credit history can impact your future—not only will it determine whether a financial institution will lend you money, but it may also affect your ability to rent an apartment, your car insurance premiums, and even whether or not you will be hired for a job.

Obtaining and using a credit card can do a lot for your credit history—whether it hurts it or helps it will be up to you. Here are a few tips to help you use a credit card wisely and build your credit in a way that will benefit you now and in your future:

- **Only spend what you have.** Never use a credit card for a purchase that costs more than you can afford to pay with cash.
- **Be organized.** Paying your bills late will quickly damage your credit score. Consider setting up automatic payments from your checking or savings account to ensure a timely payment every month.
- **Pay off your balance.** You don't have to carry a balance on your credit card in order to build a credit history. By paying your balance in full every month you can build a good history while avoiding expensive finance charges.

Have questions about credit cards? Stop by United Financial Credit Union. We'll be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Are You Thinking About Heading To College? BEWARE OF ONLINE SCREENING.

As we enter a new year, you may find yourself thinking about what the next 12 months may hold for you. Are you graduating from high school, starting a new career, or heading to college? If you foresee college applications in your near future, there's something you may like to know about online screening.

A survey taken by Kaplan Test Prep shows the number of college admission officials using Facebook to learn more about applicants has quadrupled in the past year, and nearly as many admission officials concede to Googling. This rise underscores the effect social media has on American culture and academic life.

Of the survey takers who used either Facebook or Google to research their applicants, over ten percent say what they found had a negative impact on the applicant's chance of admission. What do they look for? Misrepresentation of one's self, vulgarities in blogs, underage drinking in videos or photos, even essay plagiarism.

Sharing pictures, videos and status updates is a great way to stay connected with friends and family, but it's important to remember, if you have a public profile on a social network site, it is exactly that – public. Don't share things you wouldn't want a college admission official, even a future employer, to see.



HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS: It's time to apply for our college scholarship!

As you make plans to attend college, we understand that paying for college may be one of your top concerns. That's why we are excited to offer four (4) scholarships to our young members once again this year! The scholarships will be worth \$500 each.

Criteria for awards: *Since the motto of credit unions is "People Helping People," we will ask you to answer the question: "What do I do to help those in our community?" The selection process will not be based on how wonderful an essay you can write, but on what you do to help the community.*

Application information: *Any members who are high school seniors planning on attending college or graduate school after graduation may apply. Applications will be available on January 16 and must be submitted by April 2.*

You can download an application from our website at www.unitedfinancialcu.org, stop by the Credit Union, or call us and we will send one to you. Good luck to all of our applicants! Please let us know if you have any questions.



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