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Alliance Collection Service, Inc. Newsletter

"Information you can use"

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[ACSI "A company large enough for what you need, small enough for what you want."](#)

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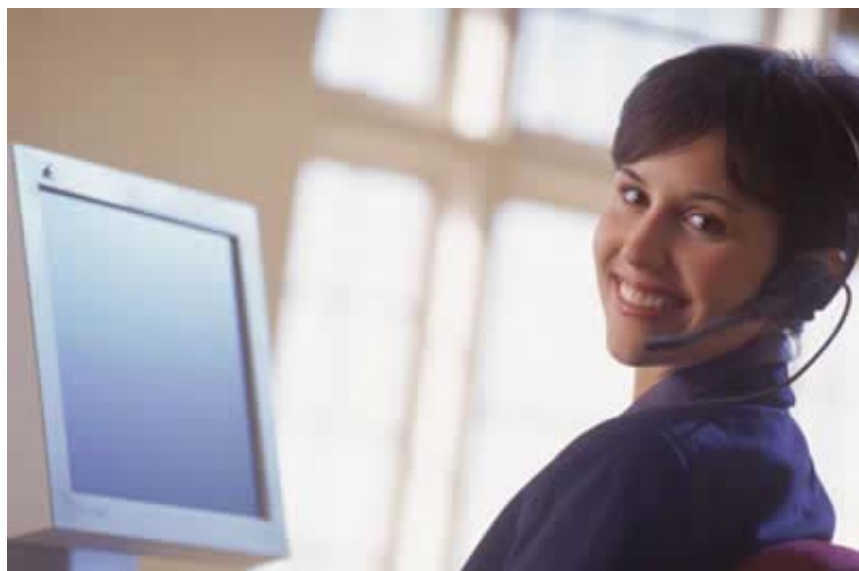
Consumers must watch

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A Word Of Inspiration



Welcome to Alliance Collection Service, Inc.

Consumers must watch for unregulated credit cards

NEW YORK (AP) -- The sudden interest-rate hikes, high fees and steep penalties that last year's credit card regulations were designed to eliminate are still lurking in one segment of the credit card market: cards designated for businesses.

As a result, consumers who don't carefully read the fine print on card applications may learn the hard way that when it comes to such practices, "It's just business, nothing personal."

The credit card law that took effect a year ago has been deemed successful at



How can the dead live?

In John, Chapter 5, we find Jesus having another "pleasant" conversation with the Jewish leaders concerning his authority and relationship to God, The Father. In it, He makes a claim that he possesses the power and authority to give life to whomever He chooses (verse 21). Raising the dead was something only "God" could do, and yet here was a "man" claiming he could do the same.

In chapter 11 we find out that



making personal credit easier to understand, while saving consumers millions in interest charges, late payment penalties and over-the-limit fees. But the law that restricts the way banks can change rates or charge fees doesn't apply to cards labeled for business or commercial use.

A study released Wednesday by the Pew Charitable Trust's Safe Credit Card Project says that consumers are still vulnerable to these practices, because more than 10 million offers for business cards are sent to U.S. households each month.

Pew examined business card offers from the nation's 12 largest credit card issuers, and found that many of the practices are still common. Only Bank of America, for example, has eliminated penalty interest rate increases -- the kind of automatic rate hike that comes as a result of a late payment. And BofA and Capital One now use payment policies for business cards that mimic those required for consumers and apply payments to the portion of a balance with the highest rate first.

Interest rate hikes on existing balances, barred under the consumer regulations, are a big concern. For someone carrying a high balance, it could mean a difference of thousands of dollars on just one card by the time the balance is paid off if they carry a business card rather than a personal card.

"Consumers have no idea how significant that change is in terms of their legal protection," said Nick Bourke, director of the Safe Credit Cards Project.

Pew wants policymakers to require that the credit card restrictions apply whenever an individual is personally liable for the balance on a card. Short of that measure, Bourke said, applications should at least make it clear whether consumer credit card regulations apply to it.

The concern is especially high because so many business card applications are sent to homes. That's largely because many small businesses, particularly start-ups, are operated out of residences.

[READ THE WHOLE ARTICLE](#)

Eileen Aj Connelly, AP Personal Finance Writer, On Wednesday May 18, 2011, 12:13 am EDT

Medicare Trust Fund to Run Out of Money Sooner Than Expected

Medicare's trust fund is expected to be depleted by 2024, five years earlier than anticipated, according to a report released Friday by the Social Security and Medicare boards of trustees.

The accelerated date for trust fund insolvency was blamed on reduced Medicare tax receipts stemming from the recession and from rising healthcare provider salaries. Just last year,



Jesus did in fact have the power to physically raise the dead, thus proving the point he was making with the Jews. The point was this: Only in the name of Jesus Christ is the miraculous power found that allows a living, condemned "dead man" to cross over from death to life; and, it is he who has ears who will hear the voice of the one who calls to his children "come forth" from the grave. I pray that all who live and read these words will wholeheartedly seek to hear these words from our risen Savior.

Live free in Christ,

Judge Kevin Crook

HEALTHY TIP



The Health Benefits of Marriage

Getting married benefits you physically and mentally. The statistics on what tying the knot can do for your health are remarkable.

By Kristen Stewart

Medically reviewed by Lindsey Marcellin, MD, MPH

We get married for many reasons: to share our triumphs, our failures, and our lives with someone else. We crave connection with others, and what better way to achieve that than through marriage and living happily ever?

As an added bonus, marriage

trustees predicted the Medicare trust fund would exhaust its funds in 2029.

"While the substantial improvements in Medicare's financial outlook under the Affordable Care Act are welcome and encouraging, expectations must be tempered by awareness of the difficult challenges that lie ahead in making health care for more cost efficient while ensuring high-quality care," the report said.

[READ THE REPORT](#)

Source: HFMA.org

New rule stops creditors from freezing bank accounts that have Social Security, other benefits

CLEVELAND, Ohio -- Five years ago, George Lexington of Ashtabula County had a \$1,200 past due credit card bill, which he paid on every month. Then suddenly, the creditor froze Lexington's only bank account.



The 56-year-old's money -- all he had and all from veterans benefits -- should have been off-limits to creditors, which is the case with legally protected Social Security and other federal benefits. But it wasn't.

It took him two weeks to get his account unfrozen and several more weeks to get back about \$200 in garnishment and overdraft fees Lexington incurred when checks he wrote bounced because the account couldn't be debited.

"It was awful," said his attorney, Anne Reese of the Ashtabula office of the Legal Aid Society of Cleveland. "He had no other income. He was without money during that time. He was pretty distraught."

Lexington did not want to be interviewed for this story, but he hopes that by publicizing his predicament, it will highlight a problem more common than many think.

It's a problem that could soon get resolved.

A new federal rule that took effect two weeks ago will better protect senior citizens, veterans and the disabled from having their bank accounts drained by creditors.

The mandate from the U.S. Department of Treasury severely limits the ability of creditors to freeze bank accounts and take money from them if the accounts contain Social Security, Supplemental Social Security, veterans' payments and other federal benefits.

may offer more than making us happier people - tying the knot can improve our health and our longevity.

Healthy Relationship: Key to a Longer Life

Can getting married actually help you live longer? Yes, according to Scott Haltzman, MD, clinical assistant professor in the department of psychiatry and human behavior at Brown University in Providence, R.I., and author of *The Secrets of Happy Families: Eight Keys to Building a Lifetime of Connection and Contentment*.

"Ninety percent of married women who were alive at age 45 make it to 65, vs. slightly more than 80 percent of divorced and never-married women," says Dr. Haltzman. "Mortality rates are 50 percent higher for unmarried women."

The results are even more remarkable in men. Men who were alive at 48 years old also had a 90 percent chance of reaching age 65 if they were married, but only a 60 to 70 percent chance if they were single - that's a 250 percent higher mortality rate.

Healthy Relationship: Good Physical Health

According to research, being married can significantly improve your health. "The health benefits of marriage are so strong that a married man with heart disease can be expected to live, on average, 1,400 days [nearly four years] longer than an unmarried man with a healthy heart," says Haltzman. "This longer life expectancy is even longer for a married man who has cancer or is 20 pounds overweight compared to his healthy but unmarried counterpart. The advantages for women are similar."

"This is a big deal. It is a wonderful rule," said Margot Saunders, an attorney with the National Consumer Law Center in Washington, D.C. While federal law has long made federal benefits immune from seizure by creditors, reality played out differently, consumer advocates and government officials say.

Creditors could obtain court orders to garnish wages, which would cause banks to freeze accounts even if they contained federal benefits. Consumers would be unable to get their money while it was frozen, and many times they couldn't file paperwork or hire an attorney to overturn the improper freeze.

[READ FULL STORY](#)

SOURCE: Collection Industry News & Cleveland.com

It's Never Too Early to Begin Building a Strong Financial Future

This being graduation season I thought it would be perfect timing to discuss how young people can prepare themselves for "real world" finances. Understanding the lessons of responsible financial behavior is not something most people are born with. For most of us, it takes years of experience, and more often than not, trial and error. However, there are some basic things we can all do to help make this path a little less rocky.



Today's youth are ill-equipped to deal with a future that offers greater employment challenges (the unemployment rate for workers in their 20s is 15 percent), higher college costs, less access to credit, and the tyranny of credit scores that can hinder their options. According to a recent Wells Fargo survey, only 5 percent of young people between 18 and 22 believe they have the know-how to be on their own financially!

Imagine how different the economic meltdown might have been if school-aged child were taught some basic economic skills, from learning how to earn, save and budget, to investing and donating money. This kind of education really should begin at home and the sooner the better.

Below are 10 tips on how parents can help their children become better prepared to make financial decisions

Other highlights of the health benefits of tying the knot include:

A married man who smokes more than a pack a day can expect to live as long as a divorced man who doesn't smoke. Unmarried people spend twice as much time in hospitals as married people. Cancer cures are 8 to 17 percent more successful when a patient is married; research showed being married was comparable to being in an age category 10 years younger.

Healthy Relationship: Good Mental Health

As goes the body, so goes the mind. "Marital status was the most important factor for predicting depression," says Haltzman. "Rates of major depression were nine times higher in unmarried men." Depression, and in particular dysphoria - a feeling of anxiety, depression, and unease - were also higher in single women compared to married women.

Other statistics include:

Divorce or marital separation more than doubles the risk of suicide in men. Tying the knot results in a decreased risk for substance abuse. Married men and women drink less alcohol and use less marijuana and cocaine than those who are not married. Divorced men are more likely to smoke, while married men are likely to quit. Seventy percent of chronic drinkers were divorced or separated, while only 15 percent were married.

There's no doubt that marriage requires give and take and good communication, but ultimately the benefits of companionship can keep you healthier, both physically and mentally, than going it on your own.

- Set up a budget that includes savings, and investing. Talk about the difference between wants and needs.
- Have them keep track of their spending for a week and suggest new ways they could have used the same money-Offer to match their savings to show them the benefit of drawing interest on savings.
- Urge them to allocate their money into spending, investing, and giving categories whether it is \$1.00 or \$100.
- Encourage entrepreneurial spirit when wanting to seek additional income. Paper Route, mow lawns, babysit, etc.
- Help them decide what their time is worth when they babysit, house sit, dog walk, mow lawns, and help out a neighbor. Make sure they don't say, "Well, pay me whatever you want."
- Show them how to balance a checkbook.
- Compare retail and sale prices. Put any money saved into a savings/investment account.
- Suggest they do their own research before donating to a worthy cause, starting a savings account, buying a large ticket item, such as a computer, or even stocks. Aid them as they become a savvy consumer and donor.
- Explain why they will have to pay taxes.
- Search the Internet for on-line money lessons.

This is just a place to start, not a comprehensive list. However, it is important to begin working with those young people in your life immediately. It is a matter of critical importance to them personally and to society as a whole. Believe me, they will thank you for it later.

Jesse Hamby
Tennessee Sales Director
Alliance Collection Service, Inc.
In collaboration with Jennifer Hamby and mcmf.net

Getting to Know the ACSI Team (Part 2)

In our last month's issue, we introduced you to 5 members of the ACSI team. It was hard to pry that picture out of them, and boy did I have to listen to everyone complain about their picture after it was taken! It takes a very special type of

<http://www.everydayhealth.com/family-health/understanding/benefits-of-tying-the-knot.aspx>

Suit against debt collector allowed to proceed

By Leslie Brooks Suzukamo
lsuzukamo@pioneerpress.com



A federal judge in Ohio is allowing Minnesota Attorney General Lori Swanson to proceed with a lawsuit against an outfit that filed "robo-signed" affidavits to collect bad debts.

Ohio Federal District Court Judge David Katz said a tentative class-action settlement involving Midland Funding LLC in his state did not bar Minnesota's lawsuit against the company and its sister company Midland Credit Management. The attorney general's office filed a complaint Thursday in Hennepin County District Court against both companies.

Swanson is accusing San Diego-based Midland of filing false and deceptive "robo-signed" affidavits to collect consumer debts from Minnesotans. Midland employees said in a similar case filed in Washington state that they signed hundreds of affidavits per day without either reading them or verifying the accuracy of the contents.

Minnesotans complained the

person to be in the debt collection industry. Most of the people/debtors we come in contact have had bad things happen to them, and this is the underlying factor in why they have an account with a collection agency. It makes it tough going into every call or transaction knowing you will be dealing with a problem. I listen to a lot of calls each month, and it never ceases to amaze me that there are many people who actually seemed relieved after talking to our folks. It's always a nice feeling when I hear one of our team work things out for someone and help guide them through the situation. So without further delay, here are 5 more members of the ACSI Team:



**Left to right:
Trecia, Chelsea,
Stephanie, Nicole,
Trey**

Trey Roberts- Started with ACSI in July of 2008 and became a certified collector in July of 2009 with ACA International. Trey is currently a collection supervisor and works hard to make sure his team treats all people they talk to with dignity and respect. When asked about why he has chosen collections as a career he said, "I started in the industry as a collector and found that I really clicked with the way the industry operated. I enjoy coming to work and having the opportunity to spend the day helping restore funds into the economy."

Stephanie Meriweather

- Started with ACSI in March of 2008 and serves as our Client Service Representative. Stephanie has built deep relationships with our client base and is always here with a smile on her face ready to help. When asked why she has chosen collections as a career she said, "I just love to help people. If I can fix a problem or help someone's workload become easier, then I feel that I have contributed to our clients and our company successfully."

Trecia Neal- Started with ACSI in November of 2010 and is one of our valuable part-time collectors. She is a great team member and seems to enjoy helping the newer collectors we just brought on board. When asked why she has chosen collections as a career she said, "I find it rewarding to be able to help people and have the opportunity to move up and get paid based on what you put into it."

Nicole Cox- Nicole has been with Alliance since July, 2010 and works in the front office. She is vital to our day to day activities by assisting clients on placements, helping enter payments, dealing with walk-in people, and working the phones. When asked why she has chosen ACSI as a career, she said, "I chose ACSI as a career path because I enjoy working for an amazing company and working with people. It's so rewarding to see debtors come in with a smile on their faces because they know we are here to help."

Chelsea McMillin- I started at Alliance on December 2, 2010 and I can honestly say "I love my job!" I have chosen collections as a career path for me because I enjoy helping others and just being able to come into contact with different people everyday. I work in the front office, so I actually meet and get to know everyone that comes in. I am a people person, so I guess this is the perfect job for me. Alliance is, in my opinion, a great place to work! Each person that works here is absolutely amazing!

Next month we will be bringing you 5 more members of our team who are instrumental in recovering money for our clients and the U.S. economy. Until then, thanks for reading our newsletter and for taking a little time out of your day to get to know our staff!

debt collection outfit hounded them for money they did not owe or paid off long ago.

Encore Capital Group, parent of Midland Funding and Midland Credit Management, has said the company changed its affidavit procedures two years ago. It was part of a settlement of a 2008 Ohio lawsuit that raised similar issues.

Source: Collection Industry News

[READ THE ARTICLE](#)

Alliance Collection Service Offers More



At ACSI, we pride ourselves in providing a necessary service without risking our client's good name by treating debtors with respect and dignity. We have added a number of services over the years and continue to build on a great foundation made possible by great leadership and great clients.

ACSI provides: Contingency
Collection Services
Pre-paid Collection Services (No minimums)
Skip Tracing
Legal Services
National Credit Reporting
Expanded Reporting on Demand
Trending Reports
Training Seminars FREE (on-site or online)
Online Account Access FREE
Secure Account Placement
FREE
Digital Call Records FREE
Hot Topic Research
Personal Service (No automated answering system to drive you crazy)

Tony Palmer
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