



From the back porch...

A bit of trivia...

In the four major US professional sports, (Baseball, Basketball, Football, and Hockey), there are only eight teams whose nicknames do not end with an "S"
Basketball: The Miami Heat, The Utah Jazz, The Orlando Magic. **Baseball:** The Boston Red Sox, The Chicago White Sox. **Hockey:** The Colorado Avalanche, The Tampa Bay Lightning, The Minnesota Wild. **Football:** None.

Joke of the Day...

An out-of-towner drove his car into a ditch in a desolated area. Luckily, a local farmer came to help with his big strong horse named Buddy.

He hitched Buddy up to the car and yelled, "Pull, Nellie, pull!" Buddy didn't move.

Then the farmer hollered, "Pull, Buster, pull!" Buddy didn't respond.

Once more the farmer commanded, "Pull, Coco, pull!" Nothing.

Then the farmer nonchalantly said, "Pull, Buddy, pull!" And the horse easily dragged the car out of the ditch.

The motorist was most appreciative and very curious. He asked the farmer why he called his horse by the wrong name three times.

The farmer said, "Oh, Buddy is blind and if he thought he was the only one pulling, he wouldn't even try!"

Food for Thought...

"Do not look where you fell, but where you slipped." - African proverb. ■

Got a Clue?

Each issue of The Front Porch features a puzzle to challenge your mind. When you play "Got a Clue?" and you select the right answer, your name will be entered in a raffle to win one month's mortgage payment courtesy of the McCue Mortgage Company. Raffle to be held November 3rd. Winners will be notified and published in The Front Porch. You must be a McCue Mortgage customer to win. See our web site for rules.

Email your answer to:

puzzle@mccuemortgage.com and include your name, loan number, address, and phone number.

This Issue's Puzzle:

I have Cities, but no houses;

I have forests, but no trees;

I have rivers, but no fish.

What am I?

You Don't Need To Be 'Rich' To Plan

In the past, financial planning was often thought of as a service to help wealthy investors manage large sums of money. However, in today's economy, financial planning has become a necessary tool for anyone working to pay off debt, budget earnings, plan for retirement, save for college, buy a new home or invest in the stock market. In fact, less wealthy people who need to make every dollar work to meet their financial goals require as much, or often more, financial advice and assistance than wealthy investors.

According to a joint report by the Consumer Federation of America, the National Credit Union Foundation and the Credit Union National Association, one fourth of U.S. households have net assets under \$10,000. The report also found that these same households are more likely than other American families to plan for the next few months, rather than years, to spend more than their incomes while not saving regularly.

Although many people believe that you need a bundle of investment dollars before you should see a financial planner, most people actually start seeing a financial advisor when they are addressing a lifestyle goal, such as buying a home, getting married or having a child. Furthermore, many of those people are concurrently dealing with complex issues, such as debt reduction, protection planning and building an emergency cash reserve.

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Welcome to The Front Porch

Welcome to the first issue of The Front Porch, a quarterly newsletter published by the McCue Mortgage Company.

Since 1949 McCue Mortgage has helped thousands of Connecticut families realize the American dream and improve their quality of life through home ownership. However, we believe our relationship doesn't end at the closing table. In fact, that is where it starts. This newsletter is intended to serve as a vehicle to continue our interaction with you and provide relevant information to help you manage the asset you call home.

In The Front Porch you'll find useful information that will help you live more comfortably; be it attractions to visit in Connecticut, tips on home improvement, hints on managing your wealth, or ways to improve home safety and security. We call it the Front Porch because, as I reflect back over the years, it was on the porch where some of the most meaningful communication took place with friends and family.

I hope you find this newsletter helpful, informative and fun. Please don't forget to play our puzzler. If you get the correct answer you'll be entered into a drawing to win one month's mortgage paid, courtesy of your friends at McCue.

At McCue Mortgage, it is our interaction with you, not our competitive rates, that differentiates us from the rest.

I hope you and your family have a prosperous 2003!

Bill McCue
President
The McCue Mortgage Company

Don't Neglect Your Smoke Detector



Before you read another sentence of this newsletter, please put it down, go over and test your smoke alarms. Did they all work?

Home fires are a serious threat to your family's safety. Having properly installed

and maintained smoke detectors is the best and least expensive way to provide early warning when a fire begins.

There are basically two types of smoke detectors: photoelectric and ionization detectors. **Photoelectric detectors** use a beam of light and a special sensor to detect smoke. When smoke free, the beam of light is allowed to pass straight through a special channel in the detector and misses the sensor. When smoke is present, smoke particles deflect some of the light so it hits the sensor, activating the alarm. These detectors are good for sniffing out very smoky fires, such as a smoldering sofa.

Ionization detectors on the other hand use an ionization chamber and radiation to detect smoke. These detectors are the most popular because they are inexpensive and are best for sensing small amounts of smoke produced by hotter, flaming fires. In ionization detectors, a small amount of a radioactive element called Americium-241 is used to generate alpha particles. The chamber consists of

two plates with voltage running across them, as well as a source of ionizing radiation (the Americium). In the chamber, oxygen and nitrogen atoms are ionized, meaning that an electron is knocked off the atom creating a free electron (with a negative charge) and the atom, missing the electron, becomes positively charged. The negative electron attaches to the plate with a positive charge, and the positive atom attaches to the plate with the negative charge. The electronics in the smoke detector sense the small amount of electrical current that these electrons and ions moving towards the plates represent. When smoke enters the chamber, it disrupts this current as smoke particles attach to the ions and neutralize them. The smoke detector senses the change in current between the plates and ...BEEP...BEEP...BEEP. The detector goes off.

There, now you know everything you need to about smoke detectors. But the most important thing to know is that yours

To Better Serve You...

- If you plan to change to a new company for homeowners' insurance, it is important to notify your loan servicer at least one month prior to the change.
- If you receive a request from your Mortgage servicer for a copy of your homeowners' insurance policy number, it is important that you reply immediately.
- Include your mortgage account number on checks or money orders when submitting your mortgage payment.
- If you escrow for taxes, and you receive your real estate tax bill, it is important to forward it to your mortgage servicer immediately.

Romance, Connecticut Style!



The Dutch Iris Inn

For Valentine's Day this year do something unexpected – get away! Surprise your loved one with more than cards, teddy bears and roses and treat yourselves to the gift of quality time together.

Luckily, Connecticut is filled with romantic getaways that are both affordable and easy to find. Just visit www.ctbound.org, and look under the "specials" section for a statewide list of wonderful getaways at discount rates. Here are some highlights for Valentine's Day Weekend:

Angels Watch Inn in Westbrook will greet guests with strawberries dipped in chocolate, chilled champagne and flowers. Relax on Saturday evening with a fabulous "Inn Amongst Friends" Valentine Dinner. Wake up each morning through Monday to

a delicious gourmet breakfast.

Deacon Timothy Pratt B&B in Old Saybrook is offering a Romance Package that includes 2 nights in an elegant room with a Queen bed, a fireplace and/or Jacuzzi tub, complimentary champagne or wine, chocolate truffles and fireside breakfast on fine china.

Dutch Iris Inn in Granby has an all-inclusive package with overnight accommodations, an intimate dinner for two at The Chart House, a beautiful fresh floral arrangement for you to take home, a complimentary chilled bottle of champagne and delicious chocolate covered strawberries. Enjoy a delicious breakfast in the morning served by candlelight!

Time for Two
Need more ideas?
Visit www.ctbound.org where the Connecticut Office of Tourism has dedicated the first 17 of its 52 Connecticut getaways as "Time for

You Don't Need To Be 'Rich' To Plan... *Continued from page one*

Debt Management

One of the issues you may need to address during financial planning is debt management. There are many things to consider when managing debt, including consolidating your debt or deciding which of your debts to pay off first. You must also determine how you can change your behavior to decrease or stop debt accumulation.

Budgets and Emergency Planning

It may seem relatively straightforward to create and manage a budget if you are living paycheck to paycheck and don't have many alternatives and choices. But how do you handle larger expected bills, such as a car payment, or unexpected items such as major home repairs, or even a layoff? Creating a separate savings account for those larger expenses

and then making monthly deposits is one way to get there. Building a cash reserve for emergencies that equals three to six months of your income is also recommended.

Protection Planning

With smaller cash reserves and less of a cushion to fall back on, less wealthy people typically have a greater need for the right insurance. For example, if you are living day-to-day off your earnings, have you considered what you would do if you were disabled and unable to work? Disability insurance is an important component of comprehensive protection planning. Remember that when purchasing any type of insurance, your deductible should match your cash reserve. For example, if you don't have \$1,500 in your cash reserve available at all times, you should not be buying insurance policies with a \$1,500 deductible.

Long-Term Planning

When it comes to long-term savings, more money may be at risk when you are wealthy, but you can also afford greater losses without significantly affecting your lifestyle. For the less wealthy, especially in a down market, it is important that you know your level of risk tolerance, have a long-term plan and implement and adjust it as necessary. Typically, with little money available for long-term savings, the less wealthy investor should first access employer-sponsored 401(k) plans, allocating a relatively small portion of your salary, which can be deducted from your paycheck automatically. 401(k) programs are often matched by the employer, which can significantly increase and possibly, even double, your return without any associated risk. You should also consider mutual funds that have a relatively low minimum monthly requirement, such as \$50 or \$100 per month, and allocate this monthly payment

as part of your long-term planning.

Put Time on Your Side

You may not be able to solve your debt or savings problems overnight, but you can solve them over time. Not only will a combined debt reduction and savings strategy begin to lighten the load now, it will help you feel better about your future.

Get Help from a Professional

Financial advisors can provide other creative tips and tools to increase cash flow and build emergency funds while assessing your long-term and short-term savings needs.

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Winner of Email Raffle

McCue Mortgage is pleased to announce the winner of its email contest, Marie Tramontana of Old Saybrook. Marie received a check worth one month's mortgage payment courtesy of McCue Mortgage. We thank all who participated. Look for other contests we'll be running including our referral contest and "Got a Clue" contest in this issue of The Front Porch.

The Front Porch is a quarterly publication of the McCue Mortgage Company. Comments or inquiries can be sent to the publisher via mail at:

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