

# INSTITUTE FOR FINANCIAL LITERACY®



SUMMER 2006 VOL 1, ISSUE 1

[www.financiallit.org](http://www.financiallit.org)

866-662-4932

## LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It is with great pleasure and excitement that the Institute for Financial Literacy (IFL) publishes its first quarterly newsletter. This continuing expansion of our mission, which is to make effective financial literacy education available for all American adults, could not happen without you!

Staff at the IFL work diligently to find the latest and best information to share with our readers regarding personal financial education. Without your desire to continue to learn and expand your knowledge of how to successfully manage your money, there would be no reason for this publication.

There are many different newsletters on varying topics. Our goal is to create something so special and unique that not only will you look forward to its arrival, but you will want to share it with others. To that end, I wish to extend an invitation to you. Tell us what you think, tell us what you would like to see covered, become our informal community editorial board. If you are thinking about a certain financial topic, there is a good chance hundreds of others are also. We want to hear from you.

We also would like to share your successes. How has financial literacy education helped you? What have you learned that has made a difference in your life? We would like to share your stories so that others can be inspired (after all you just don't want to hear from me every three months, do you?)

As always, we are available to answer questions and respond to comments from you. Please feel free to contact us at [newsletter@financiallit.org](mailto:newsletter@financiallit.org). I look forward to working together to make this the best publication it can be!

Sincerely,

Leslie E. Linfield, Esq.  
Executive Director/Founder  
Institute for Financial Literacy  
Portland, ME  
July 2006

---

## SAVING AT THE PUMP

We're all feeling the pain of high gasoline prices these days, but there are some basic ways to help save on fuel costs – without sacrificing your summer vacation plans!

- Follow posted speed limits and avoid unnecessary stopping/starting.
- Don't idle your car; turn off the engine for periods of waiting.
- Remove excess weight from trunk and roof racks when driving locally.
- Follow suggested routine maintenance on your car, including oil changes and checking/replacing air filters.
- Keep tires properly inflated and aligned.
- Use the gasoline octane level recommended for your car (according to the owner's manual); in most cases, this is regular octane.

## TIPS FOR SUMMER TRAVEL ABROAD



If you're traveling abroad this summer, there are several ways you can protect yourself from potential theft and prevent unnecessary finance charges. For more tips on travel safety, visit [www.fdic.gov](http://www.fdic.gov).

**Don't Take Much Cash** Stolen cash cannot be replaced, so take only a small amount for emergencies, tipping and local transportation. Consider taking a prepaid debit card for the bigger expenses. With a prepaid debit card, you can load a specific amount of money on the card to use for purchases or cash withdrawals at ATMs (automated teller machines). If the debit card is stolen, you are only responsible for the value of the card since it's not tied to another account. Be sure to check out the fees associated with these cards, however, and whether there are restrictions on where they can be used. Traveler's checks can also be used instead of cash, but be aware that not all businesses accept them and there may be fees involved. Also, be sure to follow the instructions carefully for completing traveler's checks so they can't be improperly used by others.

**Find Out if Your Debit Card Can Be Used Abroad** A regular debit card allows you to make purchases without cash by automatically deducting the amount from your bank account. As with credit cards, there may be some restrictions (such as a daily limit on how much you can access) and transaction fees to use the card in a foreign country, so be sure to check with your banking representative before you leave. Never keep your PIN number near your card.

**Take a Spare Credit Card** Credit cards are widely accepted in most countries and having at least two can protect you in the event that one is lost or stolen. If you are the victim of theft, keep in mind that your maximum liability for unauthorized use of your credit card is \$50 according to U.S. law. Be sure to contact your credit card issuer before you leave to find out if there are fees for foreign transactions (typically they're from one to three percent) and use the card with the lowest fee.

**Safeguard Your Valuables** Foreign travelers can be easy targets for thieves. Protect yourself by keeping your cash and bank cards in a safe place, such as in a money belt or pocket with buttons or a zipper. Don't store all your money in one place and keep valuables, such as jewelry and passports, in a hotel safe.

## MEET THE COUNSELOR: KATHERINE R.

Katherine – better known as Tina to her friends, coworkers and clients – is a warm, friendly person who loves to have fun. Tina has a six-year-old daughter and when she's not working or parenting, she likes to spend time on her many interests, including crocheting, sewing, shopping and dancing. But her favorite past time is sitting quietly and writing down her thoughts.

Tina enjoys being a credit counselor because she loves meeting and talking to people. She thanks all of her clients for trusting her with their personal stories. She truly believes that at the end of the day, if she has helped even just one person, she has done her job well.

## NEWS AND TIPS

### **Opt-Out List for Pre-screened Credit Card Offers**

Did you know that you can opt out from receiving pre-screened credit card offers? All it takes is a phone call to stem the tidal wave of solicitations for two years. The three major credit bureaus offer a toll-free number that allows you to opt out of all pre-approved credit card offers. That phone number is 1-888-5-OPTOUT (1-888-567-8688). You can also contact the bureaus directly as follows:

[Options  
Equifax, Inc.](#)

P.O. Box 740123  
Atlanta, GA 30374-0123

[Experian  
Consumer Opt-Out](#)

701 Experian Parkway  
Allen, TX 75013

[Trans Union  
Name Removal Option](#)

P.O. Box 97328  
Jackson, MS 39288-7328

## DRAWING QUESTION

In every newsletter we will be presenting a question related to financial literacy education to give our readers the opportunity to win one of our financial literacy education programs. This newsletter's question is as follows:

*What percentage of your gross income should you put into savings?*

Please mail answer along with your name, address and email address to:

Drawing Question  
Institute for Financial Literacy  
PO Box 1842  
Portland, ME 04104

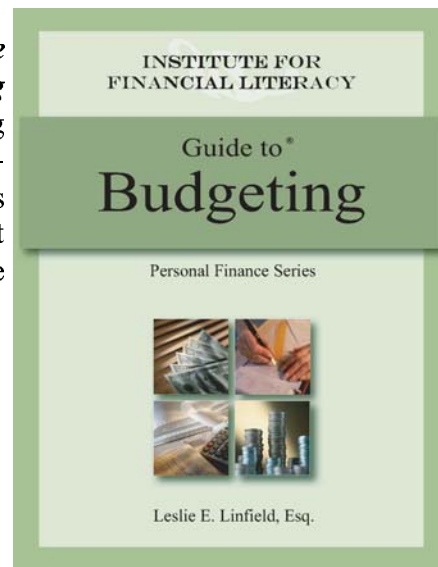
Answers must be received no later than August 16, 2006. This newsletter's drawing winner will receive a copy of the **Guide to Budgeting** program. Void where prohibited.

---

OTHER EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES  
GUIDE TO BUDGETING

The first program in the IFL's Personal Finance Series, *Guide to Budgeting* was released in 2004. *Guide to Budgeting* shows readers that budgeting doesn't have to be brutal, boring or burdensome, and demonstrates that net worth and a personal budget are the foundation upon which financial goals are built. In a conversational tone and user-friendly format designed for busy lives, *Guide to Budgeting* will help the reader:

- Learn the fundamentals of personal budgeting
- Determine their current personal budget
- Identify areas of their personal budget where improvements can be made
- Determine their Net Worth and explain its importance
- Set attainable financial goals



INSTITUTE FOR FINANCIAL LITERACY  
PO Box 1842  
Portland, ME 04104