



# WVASFAA NEWS

WINTER 2007

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-WVASFAA Spring Conference in Huntington, WV

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## Elaine Chiles Retires from AES

### CONGRATULATIONS ELAINE !!!

Congratulations to Elaine Chiles on her recent retirement from American Education Services.

A reception honoring Elaine was held on January 26, 2007 in the AES Charleston office with family, friends and colleagues in attendance. At the reception, Elaine was presented with a plaque from WVASFAA in honor of being awarded Lifetime Membership in our organization.

A letter to Elaine from Lake Tackett, current WVASFAA President, was read during retirement festivities at the AES Harrisburg office the following week. The text

of this letter follows:

"It is truly one of the greatest joys of my tenure as President to be able to congratulate you on your retirement and thank you for all you have done for WVASFAA, financial aid administrators, and most especially the students of West Virginia.

Your professionalism and work ethic, combined with your passionate advocacy for needy students, has inspired and will continue to inspire me and everyone who has had the opportunity to work with you.

While I, along with many others, will miss knowing that you are here for ad-



vice, counsel, or to share a funny story, I am

thrilled that you and Fred will have more time to enjoy each other and your family.

Again, thank you and congratulations – I'm sure the best is yet to come!"



## WVASFAA Spring Conference Update

The Spring Conference will be held at the Pullman Plaza Hotel in Huntington, WV from March 28-30, 2007.

The conference theme will be "We Are WVASFAA!" as we celebrate the

associations 40th anniversary.

Members should be watching their email for information on registration and hotel reservations.

The program and site

committees are working hard to provide us with a conference that will be beneficial to all.

Wednesday night will be our awards ceremony for special recognitions and retirements.

# **Don't Be a Victim...**

## **Simple Tools You and Your Students Can Use to Prevent Identity Theft**

Identity theft has become an all too common term in today's world. It has become the latest catch phrase and one of the last things you want to have happen to you or your students. Simply open the morning newspaper or the latest news magazine and you are certain to find an article on someone who has become a victim of this growing crime. So, what can you do to protect yourself and what do you do if it happens to you? Keep reading to find out simple techniques to keep you on guard. And, don't forget to pass this important information on to your students as well. College campuses provide the perfect environment for identity thieves to strike on unsuspecting students.

Identity theft happens every 79 seconds when a thief steals someone's identity, opens accounts in the victim's name, and goes on a spending spree. ID theft is the unauthorized use of personal information to establish or assume credit under someone else's name. Identity theft manifests itself primarily in two ways: 1) Fraudulent Applications – establishing a new credit relationship using someone else's personal information 2) Account Takeover – assuming an existing credit relationship using someone else's personal information.

According to the Federal Trade Commission's 2003 statistics, there were 7 million victims of ID theft in the US. 70% of ID thieves were unknown to the individual, 13% were from an employee of a business that had the persons information, 11% were relatives of the victim, 10% were friends or roommates, 5% were coworkers of the victim, 4% of thieves were former spouses or significant others, and 2% of ID thieves were caregivers of an elderly or disabled person.

Identity theft can occur through various means in which thieves steal your personal information. Common ways that identity theft occurs:

**Dumpster diving** – Ever receive a credit card statement in the mail and after taking a brief look at it, toss it in the garbage? Think twice before doing this again. Identity thieves often rummage through your garbage looking for just that, or other personal information that you may have discarded without a second thought.

**Phishing** – Identity thieves will pretend to be a legitimate financial institution and send email spam to get you to reveal your personal information. Any legitimate financial institution will never ask you for personal information through an email.

**Changing your address** – Identity thieves will simply fill out a change of address form at the post office and have your mail diverted to another location.

**Stealing** – Identity thieves will steal your purse, wallet, mail, social security card, and any other personal information they can get a hold of. Never carry your social security card with you. This is just asking for your identity to be stolen! This is one number you should commit to memory and keep the card in a safe place. Having a locked mailbox is also critical. Identity thieves can simply go through your mail, come across a bank statement, or other personal information, and you have just gotten yourself into months - and hundreds of hours - of trying to recover from becoming a victim.

What can you do? Take the following precautions to prevent an identity thief from striking:

- Protect your mail
- Safeguard your wallet and personal information
- Buy a shredder...and use it! This is one of the most simple and vital ways to avoid identity theft. All personal identifiable information should be shredded before being thrown away. All pre-approved credit card offers should also be shredded.
- Monitor and review your credit report to ensure that it is up-to-date and reflects accurate information. Any inaccurate information could signal identity theft.
- Sign your credit cards immediately

- Never loan your card to anyone
- Notify your bank directly when you change your address
- Report all lost or stolen cards immediately
- Never put your account number on the outside of an envelope. Any account numbers you have are generally identifiable (by your creditors, not ID thieves) by the last four digits.
- Photocopy all credit card and bank account information.
- Always keep credit card receipts to verify against the statement
- Place a fraud alert on all credit reports
- Contact the card issuer if new credit cards do not arrive on time
- Keep passwords safe and not easily identifiable – don't use the last four digits of your social security number, mother's maiden name, birth date, or pets name – these are all too obvious to identity thieves.
- Check social security earnings statements each year for fraud
- Install a firewall on your computer

Encourage students to log onto Citi Cards' free, comprehensive website: [www.Students.UseCreditWisely.com](http://www.Students.UseCreditWisely.com) for information on how to protect themselves from credit card fraud and identity theft, as well as ways to manage their credit wisely.

What to do if identity theft happens to you:

- Place a fraud alert on all credit cards by calling the credit reporting bureaus (Equifax, Experian, TransUnion)
- Review reports from all three agencies and report any discrepancies directly to the agencies
- File a police report and get a copy of the report
- File a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission

Citi offers Identity Theft Solutions –free- to both Citi card members and also to those that have student loans through Citibank. ID Theft Solutions teams victims of ID theft with a Citi Cards personal representative to help them through the process in a timely and efficient manner.

Every new semester for college students means new classes, new textbooks, and new professors. For identity thieves it can also be a time to steal a new identity – that of an unsuspecting student. Consider the information above as your shield of defense against identity theft. Don't let yourself or your students become a victim of this growing crime - know the facts and arm yourself upfront!

*Allyson Wynne is a Professional Development Manager with Citibank – The Student Loan Corporation. She regularly presents seminars for financial aid office personnel. Please feel free to contact Carmen Sears, your Citibank Account Manager if you would like to set up a presentation at your school.*



# Expect Changes to Legislation Lowering Student Loan Interest Rates



Washington, D.C. (January 2007) – The House of Representatives overwhelmingly passed legislation to cut the interest rate on subsidized Stafford loans in half over the next five years, but it is unlikely that a Senate companion bill will look much like the bill passed by the House on Jan. 17.

The legislation passed by the House, the College Student Relief Act (H.R. 5), was a scaled down version of House Democrat Leaders' campaign promise to cut interest rates on all student loans in half. In order to comply with budget limitations, Democrats were forced to (1) limit the interest rate cuts to subsidized Stafford loans, (2) gradually reduce the rates over a five year period, and (3) return rates to 6.8 percent when the bill expires only six months after the rates are reduced to 3.4 percent. Democrats have indicated they plan to extend the 3.4 percent rate with subsequent legislation. House Republicans begrudgingly voted for the bill after accusing Democrats of using "bait and switch" tactics to secure votes in the 2006 elections.

House Republicans are the first in a long list of vocal critics who disapprove of the bill, including the Bush Administration, which issued a statement opposing the bill. Opponents of the bill all argue that lowering interest rates will do little to increase college access because it only helps college graduates and not students who are trying to decide if they should, or can, go to college. They also argue that the money spent reducing interest rates could be better spent on grant aid for needy students.

The good news for opponents of the bill is that there is little chance that the bill will make it to President Bush's desk without being drastically altered.

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA), the chairman of the Senate's education committee, has already announced that the College Student Relief Act will be included in his legislation that will include a wide array of student aid changes. Kennedy said his bill will include provisions that increase the maximum Pell Grant to \$5,100, cap student loan payments to 15 percent of a borrower's discretionary income, and reform the student loan programs to encourage the use of the Direct Loan program, which he claims is less expensive.

Because Democrats only hold the slimmest majority in the Senate, Senate Republicans will have a greater opportunity to influence the bill. House Democrats were able to pass H.R. 5 without holding committee hearings or allowing the bill to be amended, it is unlikely this will happen in the Senate. Senate Democrats will likely amend the bill in order to secure enough Republican support to pass the bill.

Additionally, Democrats in Congress will likely have to change the bill enough to appease the Bush Administration to ensure that it will not be vetoed by the President.

All this makes the College Student Relief Act much like the weather across the country this year: If you don't like it, wait a little and it will change.

By Haley Chitty, Assistant Director for Communications, National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA). Comments may be addressed to the author at [ChittyH@NASFAA.org](mailto:ChittyH@NASFAA.org).

# Financial Aid Awareness Month

## January 15 - February 15, 2007

Financial Aid Awareness Activities				
LOCATION	DATE	TIME	CONTACT PERSON	PHONE NUMBER
Cultural Center - Grand Hall Capitol Complex	2/17/2007	10:00 - 3:00 pm	Nina Morton	304/345-7211
Alderson-Broaddus College	2/19-2/23/2007	Extended Hours	Brian Weingart	304/457-6354
Buffalo High School	2/5/2007	6:00 p.m.	High School Counselor	
<b>Clarksburg Area</b>				
Robert C. Byrd High School	1/22/2007	6:00 PM	High School Counselor	
Lincoln High School at Shinnston	1/29/2007	6:00 PM	High School Counselor	
<b>Eastern Panhandle</b>				
Berkeley Springs High School	2/6/2007	6:00 PM	High School Counselor	
Hedgeville High School	2/1/2007	5:30 PM	High School Counselor	
Musselman High School	1/24/2007	6:00 PM	High School Counselor	
<b>Elkins High School</b>	1/30/2007	6:30 PM	High School Counselor	
<b>Glenville State College -</b>				
Robert F. Kidd Library	2/11/2007	2:00 - 4:00 pm	Karen Lay	304/462-4103 ext. 5
Robert F. Kidd Library	2/15/2007	3:00 - 5:00 pm	Karen Lay	304/462-4103 ext. 5
<b>Poca High School</b>	2/12/2007	6:00 p.m.	High School Counselor	
<b>West Virginia University</b> On-Campus Activities	1/29 - 2/2/2007	All Week	Financial Aid Office	304/293-5242
<b>WVU Institute of Technology</b>	2/17/2007	10:00 - 3:00 pm	Sue Beaver	304/442-3140



# Fall 2006 Conference - Keeping On Track In Financial Aid

The Fall 2006 Conference was held at Mountaineer Race Track and Gaming Resort in Chester, WV October 25-27, 2006.

Special guests included Dr. Brian Noland, Chancellor of West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission; Vickie Crupper, 2007 MASFAA President; and Al Martine, Principal- Meadow Bridge High School.

Dr. Noland spoke at the opening luncheon and his topic was "The Future of Financing Higher Education in WV". He also expressed an interest in supporting the association in its goals and objectives.



Vickie Crupper is the Associate Director of Financial Aid at the University of Michigan. She spoke at Thursday's luncheon about "Maintaining the Access Gateway" which is her theme during her presidency of MASFAA.. She also presented a session call "Creating Your Own Full House - Finding the Right Staff".



Al Martine spoke at dinner on Wednesday night. He described his journey from childhood to being a business owner and then eventually becoming a high school principal. One distinction Mr.

Martine holds is being the first student in the country to participate in the Work Study Program while a student at West Virginia University.



Conference attendees were provided with informative and interesting sessions. They also had a great time exploring the variety of entertainment offered at the resort.



## WVASFAA Member News

Karen Lay, Director Of Financial Aid, Glenville State College, Glenville, West Virginia has been awarded the MASFAA Leadership Award for the State of West Virginia at the 2006 annual conference of the Midwest Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (MASFAA).

MASFAA, which was organized in 1962 and now has 1287 members, is the regional professional association for financial aid administrators from the states of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, West Virginia, and Wisconsin.

The MASFAA Leadership Award is presented annually to recognize the outstanding leadership of a member from each of the 9 states within MASFAA. The recipients, who must be current MASFAA members, must have made outstanding contributions to the financial aid profession at the state and regional levels over a sustained period of time, i.e., seven years or more. Leadership at the regional level is not the only criterion for this award, and the selection process will not be limited to current state elected leaders. The individuals selected for this award must: exhibit high integrity and character; have shown creative leadership; have inspired and encouraged others to participate actively in professional development activities; have sustained active involvement in professional organizations, and have supported the goals and objectives of MASFAA.

Karen Lay has been a member of MASFAA since 2004 and in the financial aid profession since 1988.

- Elaine Chiles has retired from American Education Services after 16 years of service. See the article on the cover.
- Nina Morton has replaced Elaine Chiles as the new Director-American Education Services WV.

## HERA Training at WVSU May 9, 2007

The Department of Education has once again agreed to hold a one-day training session on the implications and provisions of the Higher Education Reconciliation Act. This training will give us updated information and guidance concerning all issues including ACG and SMART Grant, loan limits, Return of Title IV and much more.

The training is scheduled to be held on the campus of West Virginia State University on Wednesday, May 9, 2007. The trainer will be Greg Martin. There is no cost for these one-day training sessions. Special thanks to AES and Sallie Mae who will be providing a continental breakfast and lunch for the day. Please mark you calendars for the date and plan on attending so that The Department of Education can continue to be able to offer these training sessions locally.

Be watching for more details and registration information through the WVASFAA listserv.

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**Please contact us with any information you would like to see in future newsletters.**