

# 2015 CUNA GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS CONFERENCE



**CREDIT UNION**  
MAGAZINE

WEDNESDAY



## Huffington: Address your stress

**A**rianna Huffington said she can remember the exact moment she began to reconsider the definition of success.

Burned out and exhausted, she collapsed one day. "I found myself coming to in a pool of my own blood," the editor-in-chief of *The Huffington Post* told Tuesday's packed General Session.

Huffington diagnosed Americans as perpetually stressed and sleep-deprived.

"We're living under the collective delusion that burnout is the key to success," she said.

Throughout her conversational hour-long talk—liberally sprinkled with asides and anecdotes from her life as an international new-media mogul—she characterized the 24/7 work ethos as macho, outdated, unscientific, and, ultimately, dangerous.

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Sleep deprivation, she said, undermines leadership abilities. She said coming to work dramatically sleep deprived is equivalent to coming to work drunk.

"[Former President Bill] Clinton said the most important mistakes he made, he made when he was tired," Huffington said. "No. He did not specify which mistakes, but we can all identify with that."

She attributed the 2008 financial collapse, in part, to a work culture of maximum stress where employees bragged about how little sleep they got.

"That's what happens when you're perpetually stressed," Huffington said. "You miss the icebergs until they hit the Titanic."

She said celebrities and business leaders, such as professional basketball star Kobe Bryant and Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, are embracing a lifestyle of restfulness and mindfulness, joking that in the last year more CEOs than ever have come out of the closet—as meditators.

"People are recognizing the importance of living this way, but have a really hard time doing it," Huffington said.

Some of her recommendations included sleeping 30 minutes more each

## A moment of boldness

**C**redit unions face their Alan Shepard moment, said new CUNA Board Chairwoman Susan Streifel.

In her introductory address at Tuesday morning's General Session, Streifel explained how the astronaut's bravery allowed him to become the first American to travel to outer space.

On May 5, 1961, NASA officials paused the countdown with less than three minutes left to assess a fuel pressure problem—the latest in a seven-month series of delays.

Shepard interjected, "Why don't you fix your little problem and light this candle?"

"What Shepard realized that morning is they could always find a reason to scrap the launch," Streifel said. "The rocket was ready. The astronaut was ready. They needed a moment of boldness, and he provided it."

Streifel, president/CEO of Woodstone Credit Union in Federal Way, Wash.,

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night, ending multitasking, focusing on the present, letting go of grudges, and—quoting the Persian poet Rumi—living “life as if everything is rigged in your favor.”

A less stressful, more fully engaged life, Huffington said, allows for deeper, more creative insights. She said the world’s leaders don’t lack intelligence—they lack wisdom.

“Ninety percent of all the world’s data was accumulated in the last two years,” Huffington said. “But how much of the world’s wisdom was accumulated in the last two years?”

**Streifel** >> continued from page 1

phoned her employees, after formally succeeding Dennis Pierce, to thank them for their support and let them share in the moment. Streifel will provide bold leadership, according to Pierce.

She inherits the challenge of guiding the board through potential changes in CUNA’s structure and governance. She envisions “a future in which all Americans choose credit unions as their best financial partner.”

“Like Shepard stuck in that rocket,” Streifel said, “it’s our time to press that button and launch.”



New CUNA Board Chairwoman Susan Streifel accepts the ceremonial gavel from outgoing Chairman Dennis Pierce during Tuesday morning’s General Session, signaling her ascension to the post. Streifel, CEO of Woodstone CU in Federal Way, Wash., led the search committee that brought aboard CUNA President/CEO Jim Nussle. “You’re blessed to have someone of Susan’s caliber and passion to lead CUNA in the year to come,” Pierce said.



Media mogul Arianna Huffington’s message of embracing a lifestyle of restfulness and mindfulness resonated with Matt Stratton, senior vice president of marketing for Tinker FCU in Oklahoma City. He—and dozens of other GAC attendees—purchased a copy of “Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Life of Well-Being, Wisdom, and Wonder.” Huffington signed copies of the book and chatted with attendees in the Exhibit Hall after her keynote address Tuesday morning. Her recommendations for a less stressful, more fully engaged life include sleeping an extra 30 minutes each night, giving up on multitasking, focusing on the present, and letting go of grudges.

## Setting the stage for economic growth

**P**resident Obama understands the critical role credit unions play in the broader U.S. economy, Jason Furman, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors at the White House, told attendees Tuesday.

“We know you provide better pricing and higher-quality service for members than many of the alternatives,” Furman said. “We also know that because of your strong [community] ties, your loan performance often holds up better than many of your competitors. That’s good for your members, your communities, and, from my perspective, for the overall economy.”

The administration acknowledges ongoing financial reform has affected credit unions, he said, and is also aware of CUNA’s ongoing efforts to address reform.

“We’d strongly oppose changes that threaten to undermine the fundamental protections achieved through financial reform but there might be room to work with credit unions on appropriate regulatory relief for small institutions,” he said.

Furman discussed the administra-



tion’s new economic policy: Middle Class Economics, which aims to complete the recovery and set the stage for stronger economic growth in the future.

He said the concept is about creating an economy that grows faster and allows more people to afford expenses such as college tuition, child care, retirement, and housing. “Many of you in this room play a role in many of the steps of that process.”

## LEGISLATORS

### Rep. Pete Aguilar, D-Calif.



A former Arrowhead Credit Union employee and newly elected representative, Aguilar declared he's "one of you" and is a lifelong credit union supporter and champion in Congress. Sharing lessons he has learned, Aguilar told attendees that if they make decisions with their communities in mind, things will fall in place. He noted the need to find the balance between too much regulation and safe and sound operations. Aguilar is "happy to co-sponsor important bills related to supplemental capital and raising the member business lending cap," and continues to work on legislative priorities that will keep credit unions healthy.

### Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Ore.



To Merkley, the tax system needs a lot of reforming, "but let's make sure the tax-exempt status of credit unions isn't challenged," he said. As GAC attendees prepare to make their Congressional visits, Merkley implored them to tell their legislators about the danger of regulatory creep. "Are we making sure the rules that were designed to take on the 'Wall Street casino' don't impinge on the effectiveness and efficiency of our credit unions?" he said. "I hope you can take that message to Capitol Hill and say, 'Make sure the rules written for predatory practices aren't misapplied and damage the credit union system.'"

### Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio



Underscoring that he was far from being alone in his support of credit unions, Brown said, "I want to be clear that any proposals to change the tax status will not win my support, and that of many others." He pledged to work on a bipartisan basis to make sure credit unions and other community financial institutions aren't encumbered by regulations that aren't aimed at them. "I want to continue to work across the aisle to make sure the rules put in place to rein in the largest financial institutions aren't having a chilling effect on our smaller institutions."

### Sen. Gary Peters, D-Mich.



Thanking credit unions for their early support in his Senate campaign, Peters said "you made a difference, showing the power of the credit union endorsement." You're the "heart and soul" of your communities, he said. Credit unions stepped up during the recession and made loans to members who needed them, he noted, adding "you work to keep Americans strong, and Congress needs to stand with you." Peters also says he staunchly defends the credit union tax exemption, supports legislation to lift the member business lending cap, and believes merchants should pay the costs of data breaches when they don't properly secure their systems.

## Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt.



A staunch credit union advocate, Sanders distrusts big banks, which relentlessly attack credit unions' tax status a few years after taking a government bailout and getting propped up by \$16 trillion from the Federal Reserve. "The banking lobby has the gall to question the safety and soundness of credit unions," he said. "It was the taxpayers of this country who bailed out the largest financial institutions that were too big to fail. Talk about subsidies." Sanders says his bill to raise credit unions' member business lending cap to 27% of total assets would create 140,000 jobs and lend \$13 billion to small businesses—at no cost to taxpayers.

## Rep. Brad Sherman, D-Calif.



Acknowledging the anniversary of the "bloody Sunday" march in Selma, Ala., Sherman said the flash points in the struggle for justice have changed some since the Civil Rights era. "The real battle is for economic rights and just trying to get a leg up and that's where you will be on the front lines and have been for decades," Sherman said. The tax-exempt status of credit unions is not a "loophole," he said. "It's there for a reason and we're going to keep it there." There will come a day, he added, when he drives through his district and sees more credit unions than payday lenders.

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## 'We owe our success to you'

**G**rzegorz Bierecki, chairman of the World Council of Credit Unions knows that American credit unions contributed greatly to the expansion of the credit union movement in his home country of Poland, and he believes that assistance can be extended worldwide.

Addressing attendees of yesterday's General Session, Bierecki brought with him the message that U.S. credit unions can and should take the lead in helping countries worldwide build their own credit union movements.

Credit unions have stretched into every corner of Poland thanks to the help and support provided by American credit unions, Bierecki said. "You, the excellent people of the credit union movement, shared with us your knowledge, experience, and dreams of what credit unions should be. We owe our success to you."

But the international work undertaken by U.S. credit unions can't end with Poland, Bierecki added. American credit unions can play a critical role in the development of the global credit union move-



ment in places such as Cuba and Ukraine.

"Not too long ago I saw a photo showing the managers of a credit union in Ukraine standing in the door of their office with guns in their hands and grenades in their belts." These people—who are willing to give their lives for their credit unions, their countries, and their freedom—need help. "Credit unions must do their part—we must share our knowledge, our experience, and our dreams," he said.

# Scenes from the GAC



Steven Levin, vice president of marketing for NIH FCU in Rockville, Md., happened upon the Unite for Good wall in the Washington Convention Center atrium while attending his daughter's dance competition in the same venue.



An overflow crowd listens intently during Monday's General Session. This year's conference attracted nearly 5,000 attendees.



Longtime GAC master of ceremonies Paul Berry chats with Ari Fleischer following the former White House press secretary's speech.



CUNA's Amy Jesse (right) helps a GAC attendee register Sunday afternoon for the CU movement's premier conference.



CUs donated nearly \$1,900 to Children's Miracle Network (CMN) Hospitals through the distribution of more than 25,000 Credit Unions for Kids calendars, according to Joe Dearborn (left), CMN senior director, development; and Greg Hill, CMN managing director, corporate partnerships. CUNA Strategic Services administered the calendar sales.



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# The power of CU members



It's a mantra for credit union advocates: Credit unions have members. Banks have customers. And credit unions' best weapon in the fight to stand up to banks is their 100 million-plus members.

Tony Budet, president/CEO of University Federal Credit Union, Austin, Texas, described an extensive research project launched to better understand the power of credit union membership and advocacy.

He explained how CUNA partnered with credit unions on the project to better

understand the impact of advocacy-related communications. Surveying more than 70,000 credit union members in 2014, CUNA found that advocacy communications not only succeeds in activating credit union members but also increases members' loyalty bond with their credit union.

CUNA's Member Activation Program (MAP) research project found that 82% of members who receive member advocacy messages from their credit union want to do more of their banking with their member-owned financial institutions.

Budet described how credit unions can attract more members and cement their current bond with current members by talking about the credit union model: credit unions are not-for-profit financial cooperatives that offer lower fees and better interest rates and dividends than banks. While big banks serve Wall Street, credit unions serve Main Street.

The MAP research found that nothing is more credible in delivering that message than each individual credit union brand that shares a personal history with each of its members.



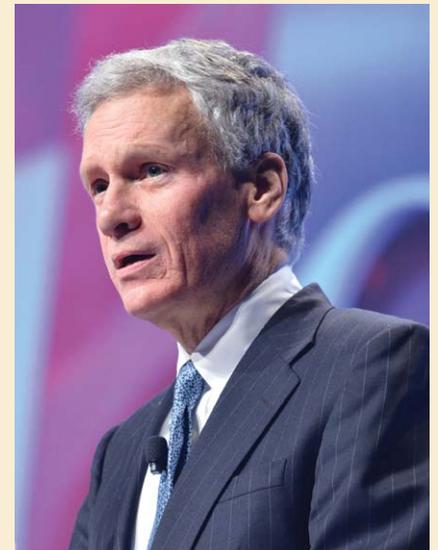
CUNA presents a resolution Tuesday honoring siblings Bill and Catherine Herring for extending their family's legacy of CU leadership. Their mother, the late Louise Herring, was a pioneer in the movement. She attended the 1934 meeting in Estes Park, Colo., that created CUNA, and she is credited with establishing 500 CUs. "We're part of a family with a combined CU service of more than 150 years," said Catherine Herring, president/CEO of Communicating Arts CU in Cincinnati. "I can only hope Bill and I have done our mother's legacy justice." From left: CUNA President/CEO Jim Nussle; Bill Herring, who in April will retire as president/CEO of Cincinnati Central CU; Catherine Herring; and outgoing CUNA Board Chairman Dennis Pierce.

# Cookies, coffee create awareness

This morning, representatives of America's credit unions are offering complimentary hot beverages and breakfast treats to congressional staff and the public near the Capitol. This is a unique opportunity to promote credit unions and to celebrate the thousands of conference attendees who'll make their way to the Hill this afternoon.



Five food trucks from four different vendors are participating on both sides of the U.S. Capitol building: Astro Doughnuts & Fried Chicken, Captain Cookie & the Milkman, Carmen's Italian Ice & Café, and Goodies Frozen Custard & Treats.



J. Mark McWatters, NCUA Board member, called for regulatory transparency and for "true regulatory relief" at his General Session address Tuesday morning. "True regulatory relief and protecting the safety and soundness of the share insurance fund are not mutually exclusive goals," he said. McWatters also called for the formation of three formal advisory committees to advise the NCUA Board about the agency's budget and budgetary process, its examination and appeals process, and areas where NCUA may expedite regulatory relief for CUs without compromising the safety and soundness of the National CU Share Insurance Fund. Channeling his inner Trekkie, McWatters left GAC attendees with this sentiment: "May the CU community live long and prosper."

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Last year, nearly 3,600 visitors arrived at Credit Union House—political figures, business leaders, government officials, and credit union people from across the country. Credit Union House-hosted events raise the national presence of the credit union movement, emphasizing credit unions' mission and creating partnership opportunities for leagues, credit unions, and CUNA with our nation's leaders.

Visit Credit Union House during its annual Open House from noon to 4 p.m. today. Stop by between Hill meetings for refreshments, or take a tour of the House. Consider hosting future board planning sessions at Credit Union House.

Credit Union House is located at 403 C St., NE, just a few blocks from the U.S. Capitol building.



## 2015 Hall of Leaders inductees

**T**he Credit Union House Hall of Leaders provides recognition at the Capitol Hill facility for a distinguished group of individuals whose leadership serves as a model for credit union leaders throughout the country.

The Credit Union House LLC congratulates the 2015 Hall of Leaders inductees. Their dedication to the credit union movement has made a significant impact:

- Steven Ahlness (MN)
- Eric Bruen (CA)
- Gary L. Janacek (TX)
- Mary Johnson (NE)
- Dan Kester (CO)
- Dennis Pierce (MO)
- William Raker (MN)
- Richard J. Rice (IN)
- Joe Schroeder (CA)
- Larry Scott (FL)
- Richard Vega (NJ)

Their names remind all visitors—including prominent members of Congress—of the many individuals dedicated to the founding mission and values of the credit union movement.

# Don't miss the premier event for future-focused CUs

**T**he knowledge to peer into the future and chart the right course for your credit union is mere months away.

CUNA and World Council of Credit Unions are teaming up to deliver America's Credit Union Conference and the World Credit Union Conference, July 12-15 in Denver. Together, CUNA and World Council combine forward-thinking drive with worldwide vision.

"This summer we'll take on the biggest issues facing credit unions, so together we can move forward," says Jim Nussle, CUNA's president/CEO. "We're delighted to welcome international credit unions to Colorado and co-host this premier event for future-focused credit unions."

"This is an opportunity to network with credit union leaders from more than 50 countries," says Brian Branch, World

Council's president/CEO. "We'll look at the challenges we all face in our daily operations and learn some of the innovative ways that countries from around the world address different challenges."

Credit union leaders will connect with each other and with innovative ideas relevant to progressive credit unions around the world. The event is designed to deliver a whole new level of ideas, energy, and action.

During the conference's four-day agenda, attendees will also:

- **Hear** from powerful global speakers from around the movement;
- **Take** part in keen discussions about top credit union issues;
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- **Connect** with the credit union movement and the world in new ways.



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