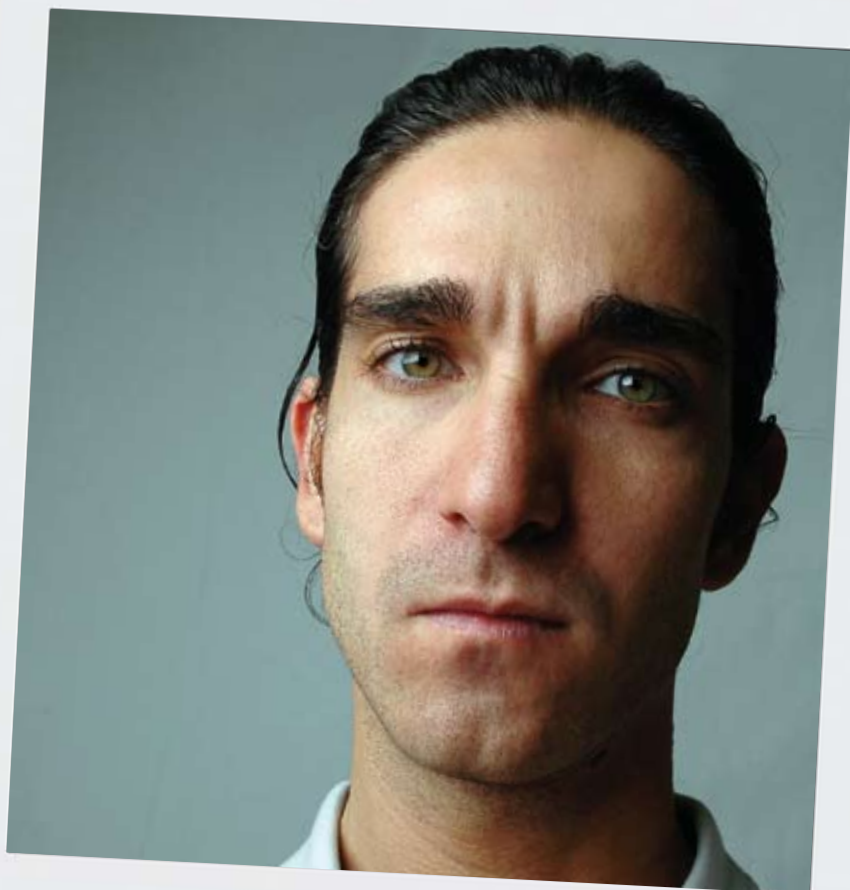


# THE AMERICAN ECONOMY

*How it is  
touching and  
changing lives*

By DIANA HYLAND



**I**N THE LAST FEW MONTHS, a great tornado has swooped in and changed the financial landscape. Free-falling stock prices roar thunderous warnings that have us trembling and worried about what to do next. Now if stock prices were our only concern that would be enough, but men and women are also losing their jobs, their homes, and to some extent, their nest eggs – not to mention rising inflationary concerns that are eating into our paychecks.

Investment banks are being bought and absorbed on the edge of bankruptcy, with the government jumping in to bolster solvency and keep creditor and client assets from crumbling. And while that action offers promise for the financial institutions at stake, the bailout is no free pass and will likely have far-reaching effects on our economy. How Americans react and respond to the current crisis is a big part of how this will play out. It's no longer just the complex financial system doing its dance, but everyday American taxpayers shuffling their assets and their lives hoping to find a solution that will weather the storm.

While still short of a panic, Americans are taking action. Some watch pensively, looking for signs of optimism amongst all the angst. Others are selling and buying and moving their resources to create larger, stronger safety nets. Many are putting off retirement as long as they can. They're downsizing not just their homes but also their lives, living more frugally, saving more and keeping more of their assets in cash and gold.



The following are typical stories as they relate to gold. Each illustrates a unique situation where gold offered added security and asset-building potential.\*

**CATHY** – *Early 30's*

Drew and I tied the knot last year, just two years out of business school. Though we both have great jobs, our combined debt is nearly \$130,000. Plus, we pay nearly \$1,900 a month for our downtown apartment. With the economy down, we're trying to save more strategically and have been purchasing small amounts of gold every quarter. With another 30 or 40 years before retirement, we've got plenty of time to build our nest egg and know that the market will eventually improve.

\* For the privacy and security of the customers providing testimonials, their last names and geographic locations have been omitted.



**ERIC** – *Late 30s*

Sharon and I worry about everything—having enough savings to buy a larger home, start a family and someday retire. Though we are putting money aside, we've lost nearly 15% of our retirement fund in the last 6 months. We recently met with an investment advisor who said we were too heavily invested in stocks. We asked about including gold bullion and have spent a lot of time gathering information. We transferred some of our IRA stock funds into Gold Eagles, but we are also looking at other options. Taking action and working with professionals has lessened our anxiety.



**SARAH** – *Early 40's*

Sarah left her non-profit employer more than a decade ago in exchange for a job raising our two children. She runs the household while I work long hours at the office. With the economy slowing, Sarah has decided to return to work since the kids are in school. Now we're earning and investing more. As the market heads south, we've decided to invest in gold and rare coins, which we keep safe in our basement. I now consider myself a budding collector, but more importantly, we're now prepared should the market slip further. For now, it looks like we'll both keep on working and saving as long as we can – that's the one thing we know for sure.



**PHIL** – *Early 50's*

My wife Anna and I invested in gold more than ten years ago and have seen our assets multiply exponentially. I'm a self-employed architect and Anna does the books. She tracks every cent to the last penny and knows exactly how much is in the bank and how quickly it dwindles. As soon-to-be empty nesters with four girls heading for college, we're using some of the gold to cover college costs, but the lions share will remain under lock and key. Eventually the gold will pass to our children, but it's good to know we can sell at anytime if we need the money.



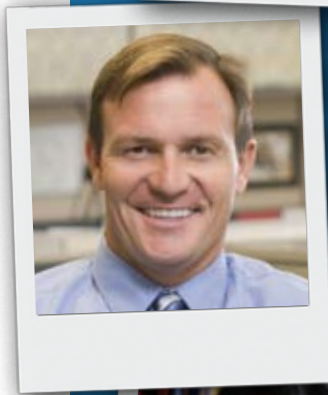
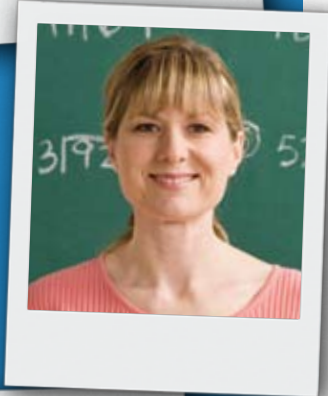
**RITA** – *Late 60's*

My husband and I were high-school sweethearts and just celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary. Now we're living the good life, playing golf, traveling and enjoying our grandchildren. However, over the last few months we've been worried as our retirement dollars slipped lower than expected. Alex decided to buy silver and gold coins, relinquishing a good amount of our rental properties and a few low-performing index funds. With the recent drop in housing prices and a glut of rentals in our area, it looks like a good move.



**MARIA** – *Mid-30's*

Earlier this year, my husband Marco lost his job as a hotel manager and was out of work for nearly four months. As a school teacher, I usually take the summers off, but this year I accepted a temp position to help with expenses. With hotel occupancy down in our area, Marco was fortunate to get an offer at an ocean-side resort 60 miles away. We relocated immediately and have completely turned our lives around, including a smaller home and a detailed investment plan with stocks, bonds, mutual funds and gold. I got a job too. Starting over is looking good.



**CHUCK** – *Mid-50s*

As parents of two college graduates, my wife and I look forward to retirement. We have savings, investments and my 401(k), which keeps shrinking. As soon as we put money in, 10 percent seems to vanish in smoke. Like most couples our age, we have a lot of concerns about whether we will have enough money saved for retirement. Should we downsize? Will we be able to travel? Is our nest egg invested properly? To add an extra level of safety, we recently transferred some of our investment assets into CDs and gold, and we'll likely put off retirement for as long as we can.

**LAURA** – *Early 40's*

With three children and a home in the suburbs, we look like the stereotypical TV family. However, life is not always as it seems. Mark, my husband, commutes two hours every day, adding enormous stress to his day. Plus, the commute is expensive, not to mention the rising cost of home upkeep, the boat, and the plasma TV. Mark earns good money but we save almost nothing. Recently, Mark inherited a moderately large collection of rare coins – giving us a big boost and fallback should our finances slip downward. Deciding where to keep and store the coins forced us to think about how little we have saved. We're finally realizing it's time to cut back, though I doubt Mark will give up the TV.

**BRAD** – *Mid-40's*

This is a second marriage for both of us. Maureen and I came together with two children from previous marriages and struggled with difficult divorces. Not only did we deal with custody and property disputes, but there have been endless financial issues. The entire process, coupled with the current state of the market, forced us to think more seriously about our future, and that's when we decided to add gold to our portfolio. Our investment advisor handled the details, so it was all very easy and has helped restore our peace of mind.

**DOROTHY** – *Late 60's*

After selling our restaurant several years ago, Bert and I took the earnings from the business and invested in stocks and gold. The plan was to live off the stock's interest, and if the market took a nose dive we would have the gold. With the market down, we've cut down on our travel and eat out less, trying to stretch our retirement dollars. So far we haven't sold any gold, but we have it if needed. I only wished we had started earlier.

**ROSEMARY** – *Late 50's*

We're retired military and accustomed to frequent travel, so two years ago my husband and I sold our home and bought an RV. Though Al receives a generous pension and has invested well, costs were starting to add up, especially gas. Because our investment in gold coins skyrocketed this last decade, we have a large nest egg that has allowed us to purchase a small home on the lake without giving up the RV. Now we have the best of both worlds.