

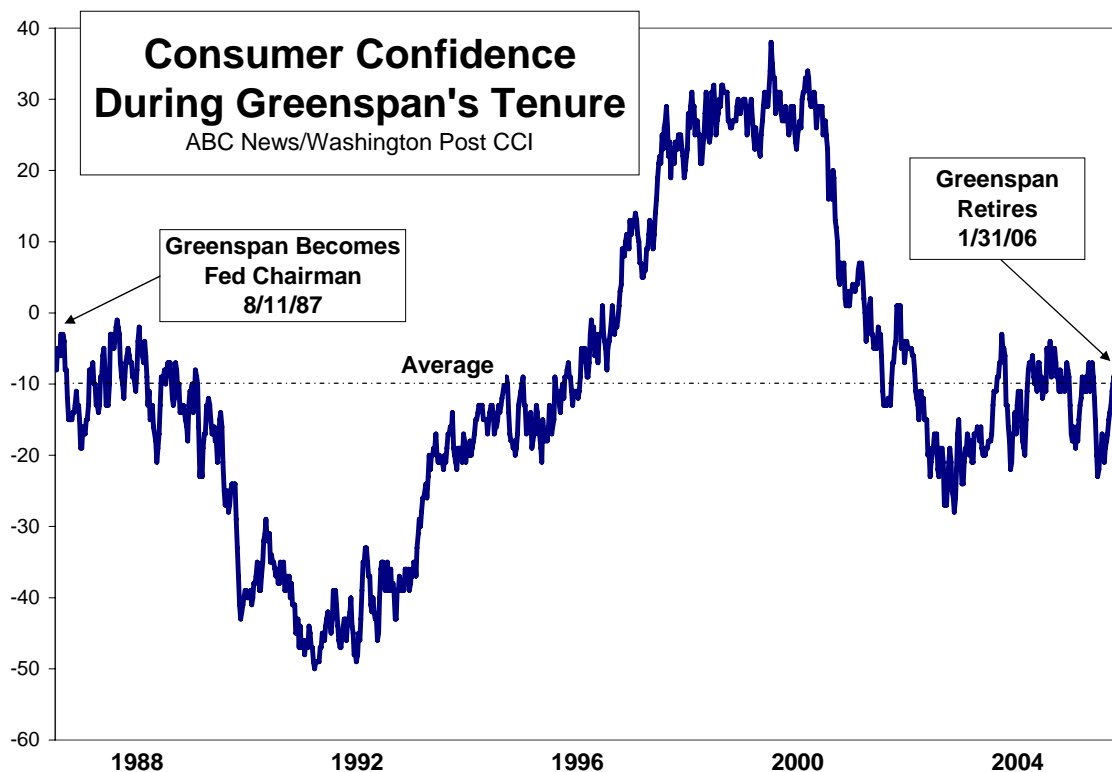
## **Greenspan Adieu: Confidence Stabilizes**

Consumer confidence closed a wild month by holding steady this week, stabilizing at its level a month ago – and about the same as it was when Alan Greenspan became chairman of the Federal Reserve back in August 1987.

The ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index stands at -9 on its scale of +100 to -100, unchanged from last week and exactly matching its long-term average in more than 20 years of weekly polls. The index steadied after a steep five-point drop two weeks ago, followed by a four-point rebound last week.

The CCI is near what it was, -6, when Greenspan became chairman more than 18 years ago. It's run the gamut since then, from a high of +38 in January 2000 to a low of -50 in February 1992.

In retrospect it all must look pretty good: A separate ABC/Washington Post poll released today finds Greenspan with a 72 percent job approval rating. Remarkably, even among those who say the economy's in poor shape, 55 percent approve.



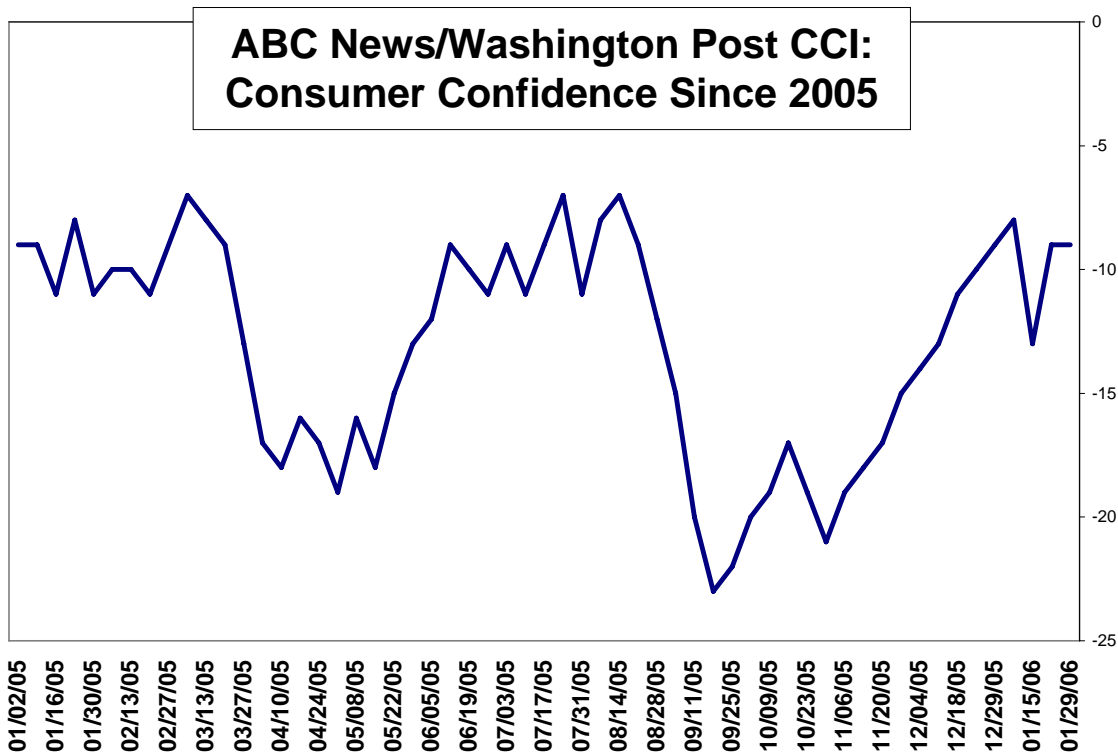
With some inflation indicators up, the Fed today raised interest rates at Greenspan's last meeting, its 14<sup>th</sup> straight rate increase.

INDEX – The ABC/Post index is based on Americans' ratings of the current national economy, the buying climate and their personal finances. This week 41 percent rate the economy positively and 38 percent call it a good time to buy things. As usual, many more, 57 percent, say their personal finances are in good shape.

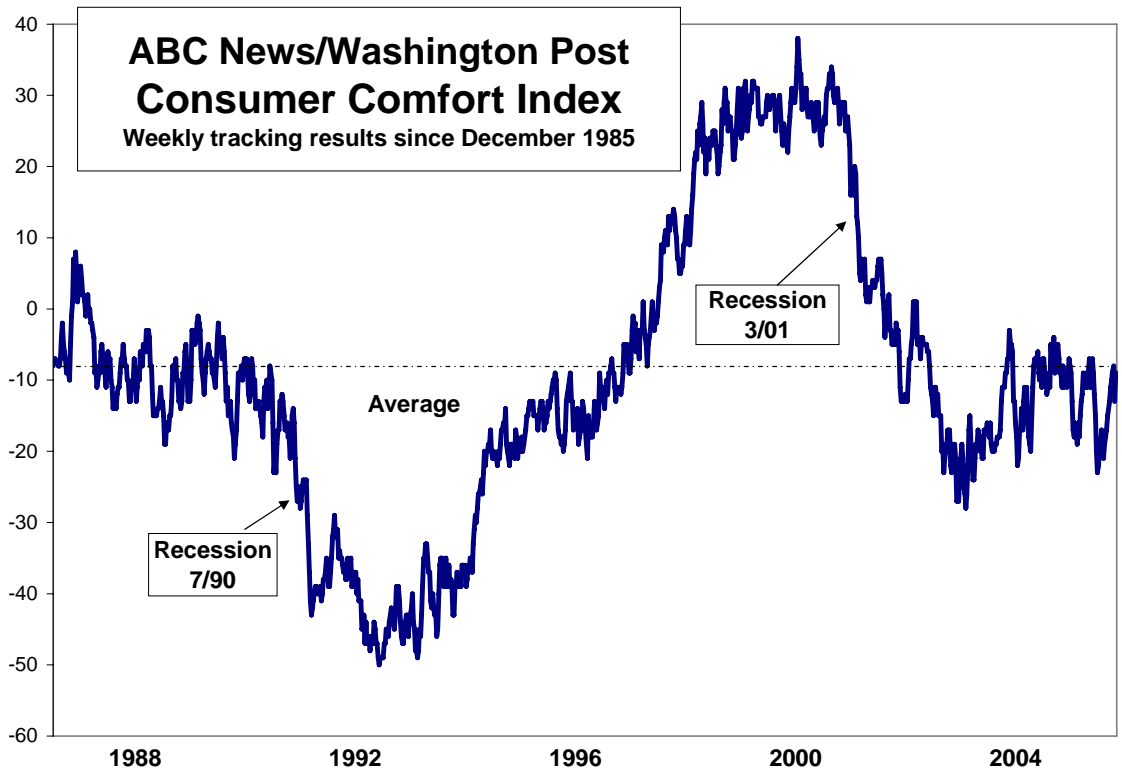
Positive ratings of:	ABC News/Washington Post CCI			
	This week	Last week	2005 avg.	20-yr.avg.
National economy	41%	41	37	40
Buying climate	38	40	36	38
Personal finances	57	56	58	57
Consumer Comfort Index	-9	-9	-13	-9

TREND – As noted, the CCI now matches its long-term average, -9 in weekly polls since December 1985; it's up 14 points from its 2005 low on Sept. 18, when gas prices spiked after Hurricane Katrina.

The index's ups and downs the last two weeks occurred mainly in the West, where recent heavy rains caused significant damage in California, with states of emergency called in 34 counties. This week, though, the index is best in the West, at +3, compared with -16 in the Northeast and the Midwest and -10 in the South.



	ABC/Post CCI	
Today	-9	
Last week	-9	
Last month	-9	
2005 high	-7	Aug. 14, July 24, March 6
2005 low	-23	Sept. 18
2005 average	-13	
2004 average	-11	
2003 average	-19	
2000 average	+29	Best full year
1992 average	-44	Worst full year
Jan. 16, 2000	+38	Record high
Feb. 9, 1992	-50	Record low
Average since 12/85	-9	



GROUPS – As usual, confidence is higher among better-off groups. The index is +36 among higher-income Americans but -56 among those with the lowest incomes, +9 among college graduates while -44 among those who haven't finished high school, -3 among whites but -51 among blacks and -4 among men while -15 among women. It's higher among Republicans (+32) than among independents (-11) or Democrats (-34).

Here's a closer look at the three components of the ABC/Post CCI:

**NATIONAL ECONOMY** – Forty-one percent of Americans rate the economy as excellent or good, also the same as last week. The highest was 80 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The lowest was seven percent in late 1991 and early 1992.

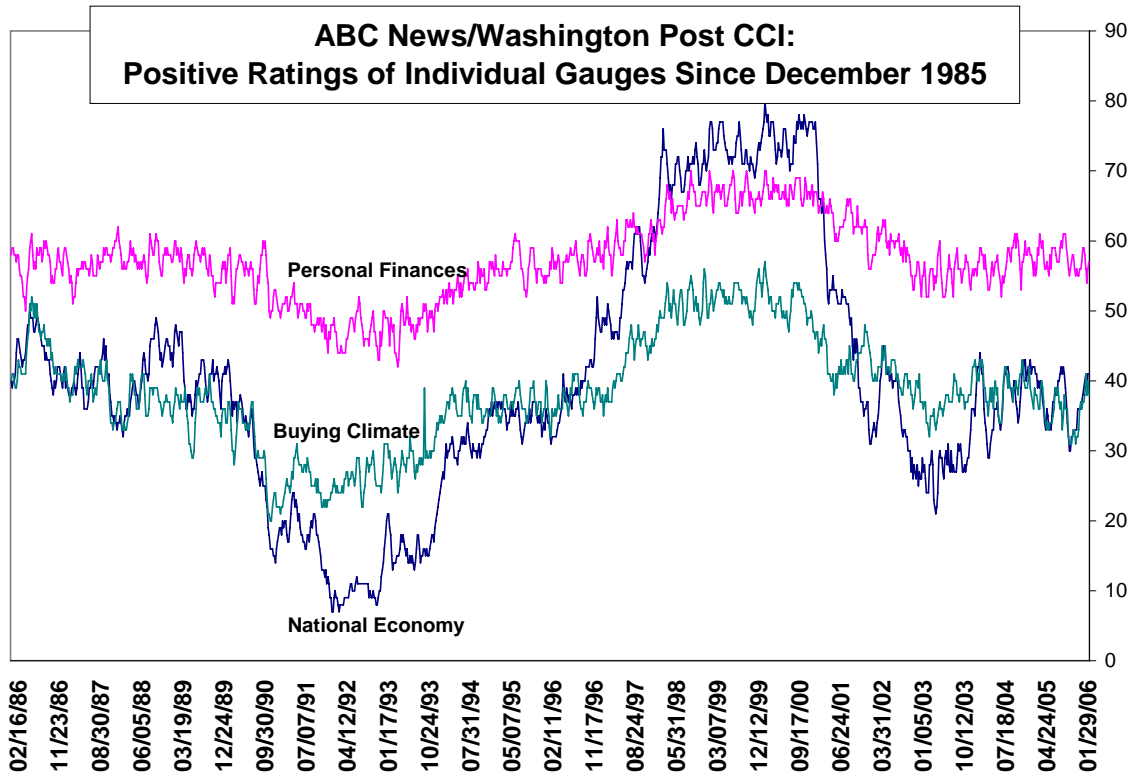
	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	41	3	38	59	40	19
Avg. since 12/85	40	3	37	60	40	20

**PERSONAL FINANCES** – Fifty-seven percent say their own finances are excellent or good; it was 56 percent last week. The best was 70 percent on Aug. 30, 1998, matched in January 2000. The worst was 42 percent on March 14, 1993.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. NET	Not good	Poor
This week	57	6	51	43	28	15
Avg. since 12/85	57	5	52	43	30	13

**BUYING CLIMATE** – Thirty-eight percent say it’s an excellent or good time to buy things; it was 40 percent last week. The best was 57 percent on Jan. 16, 2000. The worst was 20 percent in fall 1990.

	Pos. NET	Excel.	Good	Neg. net	Not good	Poor
This week	38	2	36	62	42	20
Avg. since 12/85	38	3	36	62	41	21



METHODOLOGY – Interviews for the ABC News/Washington Post Consumer Comfort Index are reported in a four-week rolling average. This week’s results are based on telephone interviews among a random national sample of 1,000 adults in the four weeks ending Jan. 29, 2006. The results have a three-point error margin. Field work by ICR-International Communications Research of Media, Pa.

The index is derived by subtracting the negative response to each index question from the positive response to that question. The three resulting numbers are added and divided by three. The index can range from +100 (everyone positive on all three measures) to -100 (all negative on all three measures). The survey began in December 1985.

Analysis by Drew Allen.

ABC News polls can be found online at <http://abcnews.com/pollvault.html>.

Media contact: Cathie Levine, (212) 456-4934.

1/29/06	This Week	Last Week	4 Wks Ago	3 Mo. Ago	1 Yr. Ago	12 Mo High	12 Mo Low	12 Mo Avg
Group								
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GENERAL POPULATION:								
Overall Index	-9	-9	-9	-21	-11	-7	-23	-13
State of Economy	-18	-18	-20	-34	-18	-16	-40	-26
Personal Finances	14	12	16	10	10	22	8	15
Buying Climate	-24	-20	-24	-38	-24	-18	-38	-29
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OVERALL INDEX BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUPS								
Sex:								
Men	-4	-1	6	-3	1	9	-16	-3
Women	-15	-16	-24	-36	-20	-14	-36	-22
Age:								
18 - 34	-15	-17	-1	-17	-2	-1	-28	-11
35 - 44	5	5	-12	-27	-16	5	-27	-11
45 - 54	-19	-10	-13	-12	-6	-5	-34	-16
55 - 64	-2	-9	-19	-28	-15	-2	-36	-16
65+	-11	-8	-9	-18	-19	-1	-32	-15
Income:								
Under \$15K	-56	-62	-54	-41	-55	-41	-75	-56
\$15K To \$24.9K	-51	-41	-46	-51	-38	-13	-65	-42
\$25K To \$39.9K	-28	-31	-29	-42	-12	-8	-44	-27
\$40K To \$49.9K	-4	3	24	-23	-29	26	-37	-10
Over \$50K	25	24	15	4	24	25	4	17
\$50K To \$74.9K	17	15	0	-14	13	17	-14	4
\$75K To \$99.9K	25	20	10	-1	30	37	-1	18
Over \$100K	36	40	38	30	36	50	18	35
Region:								
Northeast	-16	-18	-19	-35	-27	2	-41	-18
Midwest	-16	-6	-11	-27	-3	-3	-27	-15
South	-10	-15	-12	-18	-9	3	-27	-12
West	3	5	4	-4	-4	7	-20	-8
Race:								

White	-3	-3	-6	-18	-4	-1	-18	-9
Black	-51	-50	-30	-42	-46	-24	-56	-43
Politics:								
Republican	32	30	34	9	38	42	9	26
Democrat	-34	-32	-39	-36	-38	-27	-46	-37
Independent	-11	-12	-18	-31	-16	-9	-31	-19
Education:								
< High School	-44	-31	-35	-42	-34	-24	-63	-41
High Sch. Grad.	-23	-25	-16	-27	-22	-12	-35	-23
College +	9	9	1	-9	6	10	-9	2
Home:								
Own	0	2	-1	-16	1	4	-17	-5
Rent	-39	-37	-30	-32	-35	-20	-49	-34
Marital Status:								
Single	-24	-28	-9	-20	-19	-8	-31	-19
Married	6	7	-2	-14	5	7	-14	-1
Sep/Wid/Div	-37	-29	-25	-38	-33	-22	-49	-35
Employ. Status:								
Full-Time	-1	-1	3	-11	2	4	-13	-3
Part-Time	-8	-15	-11	-23	-11	-1	-35	-18
Not Employed	-22	-18	-26	-32	-24	-15	-43	-24

\*\*\*END\*\*\*