

STERLING FINANCIAL CORP /WA/  
Form SC 13G  
June 30, 2008

SECURITIES & EXCHANGE COMMISSION  
Washington, D.C. 20549  
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SCHEDULE 13G\*  
(Rule 13d-102)

INFORMATION TO BE INCLUDED IN STATEMENTS FILED PURSUANT  
TO RULES 13d-1(b), (c) AND (d) AND AMENDMENTS THERETO FILED  
PURSUANT TO 13d-2(b)

Sterling Financial Corporation  
(Name of Issuer)

Common Stock  
(Title of Class of Securities)

859319105  
(CUSIP Number)

June 20, 2008  
(Date of event which requires filing of this statement)

Check the appropriate box to designate the rule pursuant to which this  
Schedule 13G is filed:

- Rule 13d-1(b)
- Rule 13d-1(c)
- Rule 13d-1(d)

(Page 1 of 14 Pages)

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\*The remainder of this cover page shall be filled out for a reporting  
person's initial filing on this form with respect to the subject class of  
securities, and for any subsequent amendment containing information which would  
alter the disclosures provided in a prior cover page.

The information required in the remainder of this cover page shall not be  
deemed to be "filed" for purposes of Section 18 of the Securities Exchange Act  
of 1934 ("Act") or otherwise subject to the liabilities of that section of the  
Act but shall be subject to all other provisions of the Act (however, see the  
Notes).

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(1) NAMES OF REPORTING PERSONS  
I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NO.  
OF ABOVE PERSONS (ENTITIES ONLY)  
Tontine Financial Partners, L.P.

(2) CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP \*\*  
(a)  [X]  
(b)  [ ]

(3) SEC USE ONLY

(4) CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION  
Delaware

NUMBER OF (5) SOLE VOTING POWER  
SHARES -0-

BENEFICIALLY (6) SHARED VOTING POWER  
OWNED BY 1,293,434

EACH (7) SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER  
REPORTING -0-

PERSON WITH (8) SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER  
1,293,434

(9) AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED  
BY EACH REPORTING PERSON  
1,293,434

(10) CHECK BOX IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT  
IN ROW (9) EXCLUDES CERTAIN SHARES \*\*  [ ]

(11) PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED  
BY AMOUNT IN ROW (9)  
2.49%

(12) TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON \*\*  
PN

\*\* SEE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FILLING OUT!

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(1) NAMES OF REPORTING PERSONS  
I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NO.  
OF ABOVE PERSONS (ENTITIES ONLY)  
Tontine Management, L.L.C.

(2) CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP \*\*  
(a)  [X]  
(b)  [ ]

(3) SEC USE ONLY

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(4) CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION  
 Delaware

-----

NUMBER OF (5) SOLE VOTING POWER  
 SHARES ----- -0-

BENEFICIALLY (6) SHARED VOTING POWER  
 OWNED BY ----- 1,293,434

EACH (7) SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER  
 REPORTING ----- -0-

PERSON WITH (8) SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER  
 ----- 1,293,434

-----

(9) AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED  
 BY EACH REPORTING PERSON  
 ----- 1,293,434

-----

(10) CHECK BOX IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT  
 IN ROW (9) EXCLUDES CERTAIN SHARES \*\* [ ]

-----

(11) PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED  
 BY AMOUNT IN ROW (9)  
 ----- 2.49%

-----

(12) TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON \*\*  
 ----- IA

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\*\* SEE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FILLING OUT!

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(1) NAMES OF REPORTING PERSONS  
 I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NO.  
 OF ABOVE PERSONS (ENTITIES ONLY)  
 Tontine Overseas Associates, L.L.C.

-----

(2) CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP \*\*  
 (a) [X]  
 (b) [ ]

-----

(3) SEC USE ONLY

-----

(4) CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION  
 Delaware

-----

NUMBER OF (5) SOLE VOTING POWER  
 SHARES ----- -0-

BENEFICIALLY (6) SHARED VOTING POWER  
 ----- 446,107

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OWNED BY -----  
 EACH (7) SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER -0-  
 REPORTING -----  
 PERSON WITH (8) SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER 446,107  
 -----  
 (9) AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED  
 BY EACH REPORTING PERSON 446,107  
 -----  
 (10) CHECK BOX IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT  
 IN ROW (9) EXCLUDES CERTAIN SHARES \*\* [ ]  
 -----  
 (11) PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED  
 BY AMOUNT IN ROW (9) 0.86%  
 -----  
 (12) TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON \*\* IA, OO  
 -----

\*\* SEE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FILLING OUT!

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-----  
 (1) NAMES OF REPORTING PERSONS  
 I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NO.  
 OF ABOVE PERSONS (ENTITIES ONLY) Tontine Capital Partners, L.P.  
 -----  
 (2) CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP \*\*  
 (a) [X]  
 (b) [ ]  
 -----  
 (3) SEC USE ONLY  
 -----  
 (4) CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION  
 Delaware  
 -----  
 NUMBER OF (5) SOLE VOTING POWER -0-  
 SHARES -----  
 BENEFICIALLY (6) SHARED VOTING POWER 1,335,600  
 OWNED BY -----  
 EACH (7) SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER -0-  
 REPORTING -----  
 PERSON WITH (8) SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER 1,335,600  
 -----  
 (9) AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED

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BY EACH REPORTING PERSON

1,335,600

(10) CHECK BOX IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT  
IN ROW (9) EXCLUDES CERTAIN SHARES \*\* [ ]

(11) PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED  
BY AMOUNT IN ROW (9)  
2.57%

(12) TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON \*\*  
PN

\*\* SEE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FILLING OUT!

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(1) NAMES OF REPORTING PERSONS  
I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NO.  
OF ABOVE PERSONS (ENTITIES ONLY)  
Tontine Capital Management, L.L.C.

(2) CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP \*\*  
(a) [X]  
(b) [ ]

(3) SEC USE ONLY

(4) CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION  
Delaware

NUMBER OF (5) SOLE VOTING POWER  
SHARES -0-

BENEFICIALLY (6) SHARED VOTING POWER  
OWNED BY 1,335,600

EACH (7) SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER  
REPORTING -0-

PERSON WITH (8) SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER  
1,335,600

(9) AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED  
BY EACH REPORTING PERSON  
1,335,600

(10) CHECK BOX IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT  
IN ROW (9) EXCLUDES CERTAIN SHARES \*\* [ ]

(11) PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED  
BY AMOUNT IN ROW (9)  
2.57%

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(12) TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON \*\*

OO

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-----  
(1) NAMES OF REPORTING PERSONS  
I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NO.  
OF ABOVE PERSONS (ENTITIES ONLY)

Tontine Capital Associates, L.P.

-----  
(2) CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP \*\*

(a)

(b)

-----  
(3) SEC USE ONLY

-----  
(4) CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION  
Delaware

-----  
NUMBER OF (5) SOLE VOTING POWER

-0-

SHARES

-----  
BENEFICIALLY (6) SHARED VOTING POWER

1,335,600

OWNED BY

-----  
EACH (7) SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER

-0-

REPORTING

-----  
PERSON WITH (8) SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER

1,335,600

-----  
(9) AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED  
BY EACH REPORTING PERSON

1,335,600

-----  
(10) CHECK BOX IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT  
IN ROW (9) EXCLUDES CERTAIN SHARES \*\*

-----  
(11) PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED  
BY AMOUNT IN ROW (9)

2.57%

-----  
(12) TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON \*\*

IA, PN

-----  
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(1) NAMES OF REPORTING PERSONS  
I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NO.  
OF ABOVE PERSONS (ENTITIES ONLY)  
Tontine Capital Associates GP, L.L.C.

-----

(2) CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP \*\*  
(a)  [X]  
(b)  [ ]

-----

(3) SEC USE ONLY

-----

(4) CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION  
Delaware

-----

NUMBER OF (5) SOLE VOTING POWER  
SHARES -0-

BENEFICIALLY (6) SHARED VOTING POWER  
OWNED BY 1,335,600

EACH (7) SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER  
REPORTING -0-

PERSON WITH (8) SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER  
1,335,600

-----

(9) AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED  
BY EACH REPORTING PERSON  
1,335,600

-----

(10) CHECK BOX IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT  
IN ROW (9) EXCLUDES CERTAIN SHARES \*\* [ ]

-----

(11) PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED  
BY AMOUNT IN ROW (9)  
2.57%

-----

(12) TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON \*\*  
OO

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\*\* SEE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FILLING OUT!

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(1) NAMES OF REPORTING PERSONS  
I.R.S. IDENTIFICATION NO.  
OF ABOVE PERSONS (ENTITIES ONLY)  
Jeffrey L. Gendell

-----

(2) CHECK THE APPROPRIATE BOX IF A MEMBER OF A GROUP \*\*  
(a)  [X]  
(b)  [ ]

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|                                  |  |           |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------|
| (3)                              | SEC USE ONLY   |           |
| (4)                              | CITIZENSHIP OR PLACE OF ORGANIZATION<br>United States                      |           |
| NUMBER OF<br>SHARES              | (5) SOLE VOTING POWER  | -0-       |
| BENEFICIALLY<br>OWNED BY         | (6) SHARED VOTING POWER  | 3,075,141 |
| EACH<br>REPORTING<br>PERSON WITH | (7) SOLE DISPOSITIVE POWER   | -0-       |
|                                  | (8) SHARED DISPOSITIVE POWER   | 3,075,141 |
| (9)                              | AGGREGATE AMOUNT BENEFICIALLY OWNED<br>BY EACH REPORTING PERSON            | 3,075,141 |
| (10)                             | CHECK BOX IF THE AGGREGATE AMOUNT<br>IN ROW (9) EXCLUDES CERTAIN SHARES ** | [ ]       |
| (11)                             | PERCENT OF CLASS REPRESENTED<br>BY AMOUNT IN ROW (9)                       | 5.93%     |
| (12)                             | TYPE OF REPORTING PERSON **  | IN        |

\*\* SEE INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE FILLING OUT!

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Item 1(a). Name of Issuer:

The name of the issuer is Sterling Financial Corporation (the "Company").

Item 1(b). Address of Issuer's Principal Executive Offices:

The Company's principal executive offices are located at 111 North Wall Street, Spokane, Washington 99201.

Item 2(a). Name of Person Filing: This statement is filed by:

(i) Tontine Financial Partners, L.P., a Delaware limited partnership ("TFP") with respect to the shares of Common Stock directly owned by it;

(ii) Tontine Management, L.L.C., a limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of Delaware ("TM"), with respect to the shares of Common Stock directly owned by TFP;



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- (iii) Tontine Overseas Associates, L.L.C., a limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of Delaware ("TOA"), which serves as investment manager to Tontine Capital Overseas Master Fund, L.P. ("TCO"), a Cayman Islands partnership, with respect to the shares of Common Stock directly owned by TCO, and as investment manager to TFP Overseas Fund, Ltd. ("TFPO"), a company organized under the laws of the Cayman Islands, with respect to the shares of Common Stock directly owned by TFPO;
- (iv) Tontine Capital Partners, L.P., a Delaware limited partnership ("TCP") with respect to the shares of Common Stock directly owned by it;
- (v) Tontine Capital Management, L.L.C., a Delaware limited liability company organized under the laws of the State of Delaware ("TCM"), with respect to the shares of Common Stock directly owned by TCP;
- (vi) Tontine Capital Associates, L.P., a Delaware limited partnership organized under the laws of the State of Delaware ("TCA"), with respect to the shares of Common Stock directly owned by TCP;
- (vii) Tontine Capital Associates GP, L.L.C., a Delaware limited liability company, organized under the laws of the State of Delaware ("TCGP"), with respect to the shares of Common Stock directly owned by TCP;
- (viii) Jeffrey L. Gendell, a United States citizen ("Mr. Gendell") with respect to the shares of Common Stock directly owned by each of TCO, TCP, TFP and TFPO.

The foregoing persons are hereinafter sometimes collectively referred to as the "Reporting Persons." Any disclosures herein with respect to persons other than the Reporting Persons are made on information and belief after making inquiry to the appropriate party.

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Item 2(b). Address of Principal Business Office or, if None, Residence:

The address of the business office of each of the Reporting Persons is 55 Railroad Avenue, Greenwich, Connecticut 06830.

Item 2(c). Citizenship:

See Item 2(a) above.

Item 2(d). Title of Class of Securities:

Common Stock, \$1.00 par value (the "Common Stock")

Item 2(e). CUSIP Number:

859319105

Item 3. If this statement is filed pursuant to Rules 13d-1(b) or 13d-2(b) or (c), check whether the person filing is a:

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- (a) [ ] Broker or dealer registered under Section 15 of the Act,
- (b) [ ] Bank as defined in Section 3(a) (6) of the Act,
- (c) [ ] Insurance Company as defined in Section 3(a) (19) of the Act,
- (d) [ ] Investment Company registered under Section 8 of the Investment Company Act of 1940,
- (e) [ ] Investment Adviser in accordance with Rule 13d-1 (b) (1) (ii) (E),
- (f) [ ] Employee Benefit Plan or Endowment Fund in accordance with 13d-1 (b) (1) (ii) (F),
- (g) [ ] Parent Holding Company or control person in accordance with Rule 13d-1 (b) (1) (ii) (G),
- (h) [ ] Savings Association as defined in Section 3(b) of the Federal Deposit Insurance Act,
- (i) [ ] Church Plan that is excluded from the definition of an investment company under Section 3(c) (14) of the Investment Company Act of 1940,
- (j) [ ] Group, in accordance with Rule 13d-1(b) (1) (ii) (J).

Not applicable.

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Item 4. Ownership.

- A. Tontine Financial Partners, L.P.
  - (a) Amount beneficially owned: 1,293,434
  - (b) Percent of class: 2.49% The percentages used herein and in the rest of Item 4 are calculated based upon the 51,885,447 shares of Common Stock issued and outstanding as of May 1, 2008 as reflected in the Company's Form 10-Q for the quarterly period ended March 31, 2008.
  - (c) (i) Sole power to vote or direct the vote: -0-
    - (ii) Shared power to vote or direct the vote: 1,293,434
    - (iii) Sole power to dispose or direct the disposition: -0-
    - (iv) Shared power to dispose or direct the disposition: 1,293,434
- B. Tontine Management, L.L.C.
  - (a) Amount beneficially owned: 1,293,434
  - (b) Percent of class: 2.49%
  - (c) (i) Sole power to vote or direct the vote: -0-
    - (ii) Shared power to vote or direct the vote: 1,293,434
    - (iii) Sole power to dispose or direct the disposition: -0-
    - (iv) Shared power to dispose or direct the disposition: 1,293,434
- C. Tontine Overseas Associates, L.L.C.
  - (a) Amount beneficially owned: 446,107

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- ..
- (b) Percent of class: 0.86%
  - (c) (i) Sole power to vote or direct the vote: -0-
  - (ii) Shared power to vote or direct the vote: 446,107
  - (iii) Sole power to dispose or direct the disposition: -0-
  - (iv) Shared power to dispose or direct the disposition: 446,107
- D. Tontine Capital Partners, L.P.
- (a) Amount beneficially owned: 1,335,600
  - (b) Percent of class: 2.57%
  - (c) (i) Sole power to vote or direct the vote: -0-
  - (ii) Shared power to vote or direct the vote: 1,335,600
  - (iii) Sole power to dispose or direct the disposition: -0-
  - (iv) Shared power to dispose or direct the disposition: 1,335,600
- E. Tontine Capital Management, L.L.C.
- (a) Amount beneficially owned: 1,335,600
  - (b) Percent of class: 2.57%
  - (c) (i) Sole power to vote or direct the vote: -0-
  - (ii) Shared power to vote or direct the vote: 1,335,600
  - (iii) Sole power to dispose or direct the disposition: -0-
  - (iv) Shared power to dispose or direct the disposition: 1,335,600
- F. Tontine Capital Associates, L.P.
- (a) Amount beneficially owned: 1,335,600
  - (b) Percent of class: 2.57%
  - (c) (i) Sole power to vote or direct the vote: -0-
  - (ii) Shared power to vote or direct the vote: 1,335,600
  - (iii) Sole power to dispose or direct the disposition: -0-
  - (iv) Shared power to dispose or direct the disposition: 1,335,600

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- G. Tontine Capital Associates GP, L.L.C.
- (a) Amount beneficially owned: 1,335,600
  - (b) Percent of class: 2.57%
  - (c) (i) Sole power to vote or direct the vote: -0-
  - (ii) Shared power to vote or direct the vote: 1,335,600
  - (iii) Sole power to dispose or direct the disposition: -0-
  - (iv) Shared power to dispose or direct the disposition: 1,335,600
- H. Jeffrey L. Gendell
- (a) Amount beneficially owned: 3,075,141
  - (b) Percent of class: 5.93%
  - (c) (i) Sole power to vote or direct the vote: -0-
  - (ii) Shared power to vote or direct the vote: 3,075,141
  - (iii) Sole power to dispose or direct the disposition: -0-
  - (iv) Shared power to dispose or direct the disposition: 3,075,141

Item 5. Ownership of Five Percent or Less of a Class.

Not applicable.

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Item 6. Ownership of More than Five Percent on Behalf of Another Person.

TM, the general partner of TFP, has the power to direct the affairs of TFP, including decisions respecting the disposition of the proceeds from the sale of the shares of the Company owned by TFP. TCM, the general partner of TCP, shares the power to direct the affairs of TCP, including decisions respecting the disposition and voting of the shares of the Company owned by TCP. TCA, the management company to TCP, shares the power to direct the disposition and voting of the shares of the Company owned by TCP. TCGP, the general partner of TCA, has the power to direct the affairs of TCA. TOA, the management company to TCO and TFPO, has the power to direct the disposition and voting of the shares of the Company owned by TCO and TFPO. Mr. Gendell is the managing member of TM, TCM, TOA and TCGP, and in that capacity directs their operations.

Item 7. Identification and Classification of the Subsidiary Which Acquired the Security Being Reported on by the Parent Holding Company.

Not applicable.

Item 8. Identification and Classification of Members of the Group.

See Item 2.

Item 9. Notice of Dissolution of Group.

Not applicable.

Item 10. Certification.

Each of the Reporting Persons hereby makes the following certification:

By signing below I certify that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the securities referred to above were not acquired and are not held for the purpose of or with the effect of changing or influencing the control of the issuer of the securities and were not acquired and are not held in connection with or as a participant in any transaction having that purpose or effect.

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SIGNATURES

After reasonable inquiry and to the best of our knowledge and belief, the undersigned certify that the information set forth in this statement is true, complete and correct.

DATED: June 30, 2008

/s/ JEFFREY L. GENDELL

-----  
Jeffrey L. Gendell, individually, and as  
managing member of  
Tontine Management, L.L.C.,  
general partner of  
Tontine Financial Partners, L.P., and as  
managing member of  
Tontine Capital Management, L.L.C.,  
general partner of  
Tontine Capital Partners, L.P. and as

managing member of  
Tontine Capital Associates GP, L.L.C.,  
general partner of  
Tontine Capital Associates, L.P. and as  
managing member of  
Tontine Overseas Associates, L.L.C.