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MARKETING PRO

In this week's recap: retail sales impress again, groundbreaking suddenly tails off, stocks tread water, and more tariffs might be in store for China.

Weekly Economic Update

Presented by «RepresentativeName», July 23, 2018

ANOTHER GOOD MONTH FOR RETAIL SALES

Americans are spending freely, as new Census Bureau data confirms. Retail sales advanced 0.5% last month, matching the consensus forecast of economists surveyed by Reuters, in the wake of a revised 1.3% May gain. (May was the best month for buying since last September.) The only negative note: core retail sales were flat in June. (Core sales exclude food, fuel, auto, and home improvement purchases.)[1]

HOUSING STARTS SINK TO A 9-MONTH LOW

Taking their biggest monthly fall since November 2016, starts unexpectedly dropped 12.3% in June. New Census Bureau data showed building permits declining 2.2% in June as well. In May, groundbreaking reached an 11-year peak.[2]

ARE MORE TARIFFS COMING ON CHINESE GOODS?

The possibility has just been raised. During a CNBC *Squawk Box* interview Friday, President Trump noted that perhaps all Chinese imports should face U.S. tariffs, explaining that he was "ready to go to 500" – a reference to the $505.5 billion total in Chinese products that came to America in 2017. The U.S. exported $129.9 billion of goods to China last year.[3]

A FLAT WEEK ON WALL STREET

While earnings and headlines certainly impacted market sectors, the major indices were little changed from where they began the week at Friday's closing bell. Up 0.15% across five trading days, the Dow Jones Industrial Average concluded the week at 25,058.12. Moving north but 0.02% last week, the S&P 500 reached 2,801.83. Losing 0.07% on the week, the Nasdaq Composite settled at 7,820.20, Friday.[4]

TIP OF THE WEEK

*Are you a self-employed professional or a small business owner? You should seriously consider **disability insurance**. As your salary may be your household's main (or only) source of income, an extended interruption in your earnings could disrupt your lifestyle and prove financially disastrous.*

THIS WEEK

Monday, earnings announcements emerge from Alphabet, Halliburton, Hasbro, Kaiser Aluminum, Lennox International, Netgear, TD Ameritrade, Whirlpool, and Zions Bancorp; Wall Street also looks at June existing home sales. | 3M, Ameriprise Financial, AT&T, Avery Dennison, Biogen, Chubb, Eli Lilly, Harley-Davidson, JetBlue, Kimberly-Clark, Lockheed Martin, Peabody Energy, Quest Diagnostics, Smith Micro, Stryker, Texas Instruments, TransUnion, UBS Group, and Verizon present earnings, Tuesday. | On Wednesday, the earnings roster includes Anthem, Boeing, Citrix, Coca-Cola, Corning, Dolby Labs, Equifax, Extended Stay Hotels, Facebook, Fiat Chrysler, Ford Motor Co., Freeport-McMoRan, General Motors, General Dynamics, Gilead Sciences, GlaxoSmithKline, GrubHub, Hilton Worldwide Holdings, Ingersoll-Rand, Mattel, Mondelez, NextEra Energy, Norfolk Southern, Northrop Grumman, O'Reilly, Owens Corning, PayPal, Qualcomm, Raymond James, Rockwell Automation, Ryder Systems, Sempra Energy, Sirius XM, Six Flags Entertainment, Smart & Final, T. Rowe Price, Trivago, Universal Health Services, UPS, Visa, and Waste Management; in other news, a June new home sales report appears. | Data on June hard goods orders and initial jobless claims surfaces Thursday, along with earnings news from Aflac, Alaska Air, Allergan PLC, Ally Financial, Altria Group, Amazon.com, American Airlines, Amgen, Anheuser-Busch, Beazer Homes, Bristol-Myers, Celgene, Chipotle, CME Group, Comcast, Conoco-Phillips, D.R. Horton, Daimler AG, Del Taco, Discover, Dunkin' Brands, Edison International, Electronic Arts, Expedia, GNC, Hershey, Intel, International Paper, Live Nation, Marathon Petroleum, Mastercard, McDonalds, NCR, Nokia, Penske, Praxair, Pulte Group, Raytheon, Royal Dutch Shell, SkyWest, Spirit Airlines, Spotify, Starbucks, SuperValu, The Hartford, Under Armour, Valero Energy, Verisign, Western Digital, W.R. Grace, and Xerox. | On Friday, the first estimate of Q2 GDP arrives, plus the final July University of Michigan consumer sentiment index and earnings from Chevron, Colgate-Palmolive, Exxon Mobil, Merck, Phillips 66, Twitter, and Weyerhaeuser.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*"**It is wise to remember** that you are one of those who can be fooled some of the time."*

LAURENCE J. PETER

% CHANGE	Y-T-D	1-YR CHG	5-YR AVG	10-YR AVG
DJIA	1.37	15.95	12.24	11.85
NASDAQ	13.28	22.38	23.60	24.31
S&P 500	4.80	13.28	13.12	12.24

REAL YIELD	7/20 RATE	1 YR AGO	5 YRS AGO	10 YRS AGO
10 YR TIPS	0.78	0.50	0.28	1.80

Sources: wsj.com, bigcharts.com, treasury.gov - 7/20/18[5,6,7,8]

Indices are unmanaged, do not incur fees or expenses, and cannot be invested into directly. These returns do not include dividends. 10-year TIPS real yield = projected return at maturity given expected inflation.

THE WEEKLY RIDDLE

*Scott has math 4 times a week. If he has math at 8:00 Monday, 9:00 on Tuesday and Wednesday, and 8:00 on Friday, **when** does he have math on Thursday?*

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE: How many times can you subtract 100 from 1,000?

ANSWER: Just once, because after that, you will be subtracting 100 from 900, 800, and so on.

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Please feel free send us their contact information via phone or email.
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Retirement in Sight

MONTHLY NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE RETIREES

PRESENTED BY «REPRESENTATIVENAME» - JULY 2018

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Nothing is a waste of time if you use the experience wisely."

AUGUSTE RODIN

WHY TAKE ON DEBT TO HELP YOUR KIDS WITH COLLEGE?

An unsettling trend is emerging among pre-retirees and retirees. Parents are picking up a greater share of college education costs, and in doing so, they may risk damaging their retirement prospects.

A new analysis of higher education debt patterns by SavingforCollege.com finds that the average college loan debt shouldered by parents rose approximately 6% this year, topping $35,000. College is so expensive today that some students are hitting the ceilings on federal student loans, which allow them to borrow as much as they might make their first year after graduation. This year, those lending limits are set at $31,000 for dependent students and $57,500 for independent students. To some undergraduates, that seem low – and parents are opting to help.

Unfortunately, there is no such thing as a retirement loan (unless a reverse mortgage counts). With running out of money a prime retirement concern among baby boomers and Gen Xers, it seems financially perilous to tap savings accounts, IRAs and other retirement plans, or whole life insurance policies to help young adults whose peak earning years are presumably ahead of them. The desire to help sons and daughters deal with this debt is understandable, but it may backfire: if parents cannot fund their retirements adequately as a consequence of this generosity, their children may end up with another financial burden decades later – the burden of their impoverished elders moving in with them. The bottom line: put retirement saving first.[1]

TRAVEL TIP

Remember liquid and gel limits before you leave the ground

If you plan to carry liquids or gels onto a commercial flight, they need to be in 3 oz. or smaller containers and carried in a 1 qt., zip-top bag, which must be screened separately at a TSA checkpoint. Larger quantities of liquids and gels should be packed in checked baggage.

FAMILY & FRIENDS MAY PLAY A CRUCIAL ROLE IN SUCCESSFUL AGING

We all want to live independently for as long as we can. We may assume the keys are diet, exercise, and wealth, but we may be overlooking something very important – the degree of community and caring provided by our neighbors, friends, and loved ones.

A high-touch environment may be just as important as the high-tech devices that support "aging in place." This is especially true since so many women live alone during retirement, and since many men and women see their circle of friends contract as they age. Birthrates have declined, which leaves fewer children and grandchildren to turn to for assistance with errands, yardwork, or help around the house. Living alone can be hazardous for those developing dementia: about 60% of such seniors wander at least once from their homes into unfamiliar or inhospitable environments.

Checking in on the elders we know is the kind and right thing to do: in doing so, we may help them stay engaged and active. We might even save them in an emergency. As we age, we should welcome our friends, neighbors, and children and grandchildren to check in on us and maintain those all-important close ties.[2]

ON THE *BRIGHT SIDE*

Retirement plan balances have almost doubled in the past decade. According to Vanguard's *How America Saves 2018* report, the average amount in an employer-sponsored retirement plan account was $103,866 in 2017, compared to $56,030 in 2008.[4]

DID YOU KNOW?

In one place on earth, there is lightning practically every other night.

In northwest Venezuela, lightning storms commonly hover over the mouth of the Catatumbo River as it empties into Lake Maracaibo. The *Relámpago del Catatumbo* ("eternal lightning") appears anywhere from 140-300 nights per year. The storms are intense, with strikes averaging 280 per hour.[3]

BRAIN TEASER

An algae growth in a pond doubles in size each day. In 28 days, it will cover the entire pond. In how many days will the pond be half covered?

STUMPED? CALL «REPRESENTATIVEPHONE» FOR THE ANSWER!

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Essential FINANCIAL FIGURE$

KEY INFORMATION AND FINANCIAL DATA FOR 2018

PRESENTED BY «REPRESENTATIVENAME»

Important Dates & Deadlines

Date	Importance
Jan 16	Due date for 4th installment of last year's estimated taxes.
Jan 29	Date IRS will begin accepting returns.
April 17	2017 contribution deadline for Health Savings Accounts (HSAs).
April 17	Deadline to correct excess contributions to IRA and/or qualified plans.
April 17	2017 contribution deadline for Roth IRA, Traditional IRA.
April 17	2017 contribution deadline for Keogh, SEP.
April 17	"Tax Day" – Deadline to file or to request extension.
April 18	First installment of estimated taxes due for 2018.
June 15	Second installment of estimated taxes due for 2018.
Sept 17	Third installment of estimated taxes due for 2018.
Oct 15	Deadline to file taxes for those who requested extension.
Oct 15	Deadline to recharacterize* a 2017 Roth conversion or IRA contribution.
Dec 31	2018 employee contribution deadline for employer-sponsored 401(k) plans.
Dec 31	Deadline for itemized deduction expense payments.
Dec 31	Deadline to complete capital loss or gain transaction.
Dec 31	Deadline to establish/fund a 2018 Solo 401(k).
Dec 31	Deadline to establish a 2018 Keogh plan.

** Roth IRA conversions made in 2017 may be recharacterized through October 15, 2018. Roth IRA conversions made in 2018 and years forward cannot be recharacterized.*

Estimated Income Tax Brackets and Rates

Rate	Single	Married Joint	Head of Household
10%	$0 to $9,525	$0 to $19,050	$0 to $13,600
12%	$9,525 to $38,700	$19,050 to $77,400	$13,600 to $51,800
22%	$38,700 to $82,500	$77,400 to $165,000	$51,800 to $82,500
24%	$82,500 to $157,500	$165,000 to $315,000	$82,500 to $157,500
32%	$157,500 to $200,000	$315,000 to $400,000	$157,500 to $200,000
35%	$200,000 to $500,000	$400,000 to $600,000	$200,000 to $500,000
37%	$500,000+	$600,000+	$500,000+

Standard Deductions

Filing Status	Standard Deduction
Single	$12,000
Head of Household	$18,000
Married Filing Jointly	$24,000

ADDITIONAL DEDUCTIONS: If you are over age 65 or blind, you can claim an additional $1,600 deduction if single, $1,300 if married.

Note: Personal exemptions eliminated 2018 through 2025 as part of the Tax Cuts & Jobs Act (TCJA)

Alternative Minimum Tax Exemptions

Filing Status	Exemption Amount	Exemption Amount Phases Out At	28% Tax Rate Applies For Income Over
Single	$70,300	$500,000	$191,500
Married Filing Jointly	$109,400	$1,000,000	$191,500
Married Filing Separately	$54,700	N.A.	$95,750
Qualifying Widow(er)s	$109,400	$1,000,000	$191,500
Trusts, Estates	$24,600	$82,050	$191,500

Qualified Dividends and Long-Term Capital Gains

Bracket	Single	Married Filing Jointly
0%	$0-$38,600	$0-$77,200
15%	$38,600-$425,800	$77,200-$479,000
20%	$425,800 and up	$479,000 and up
Bracket	**Married Filing Separately**	**Head of Household**
0%	$0-$38,600	$0-$51,700
15%	$38,600-$239,500	$51,700-$452,400
20%	$239,500 and up	$452,400 and up

3.8% Net Investment Income Tax (NIIT)

Filing Status	Threshold Amount
Single	$200,000
Head of Household*	$200,000
Married Filing Jointly	$250,000
Married Filing Separately	$125,000
Qualifying Widow(er)**	$250,000

** With Qualifying Person*
*** With Dependent Child*

Education Deductions, Credits

	Benefit	Income Phase-Outs Begin at
Education Savings Bond Program	Cash in bonds tax-free (limited to amount of qualified expenses)	$78,150 MAGI*** (or $117,250 MAGI if married filing jointly)
American Opportunity Tax Credit	Credit of $2,500 (max) per eligible student*	$80,000 MAGI (or $160,000 MAGI if married filing jointly)
Lifetime Learning Credit	Credit of up to $2,000**	$65,000 MAGI (or $131,000 MAGI if married filing jointly)****
Coverdell Savings Account	Tax-Free earnings for qualified education expenses (contribute up to $2,000 annually)	$110,000 MAGI (or $220,000 MAGI if married filing jointly)

** If credit brings tax you owe to $0, you can have 40% of remaining amount of the credit (up to $1,000) refunded.*
*** The amount of the credit is 20 percent of the first $10,000 of qualified education expenses.*
**** Modified Adjusted Gross Income* ***** If MAGI is between $55-65K ($111-131K, MFJ) your credit is reduced.*

Estate Tax Rates

Amount of Taxable Estate	Estate Tax Amount	Plus This % on Amount in Excess of Lower Limit
$0 - $10,000	$0	18%
$10,000 - $20,000	$1,800	20%
$20,000 - $40,000	$3,800	22%
$40,000 - $60,000	$8,200	24%
$60,000 - $80,000	$13,000	26%
$80,000 - $100,000	$18,200	28%
$100,000 - $150,000	$23,800	30%
$150,000 - $250,000	$38,800	32%
$250,000 - $500,000	$70,800	34%
$500,000 - $750,000	$155,800	37%
$750,000 - $1,000,000	$248,300	39%
$1,000,000 +	$345,800	40%

Estate and Gift Tax Exclusions, Exemptions

	Amount
Unified Estate and Gift Tax Exclusion	$11,200,000
Generation-Skipping Transfer (GST) Tax Exemption	$11,200,000
Annual Exclusion Amount (AEA) for Gifts	$15,000
AEA for Gifts to non-U.S. Citizen Spouse	$152,000

Social Security

Maximum Possible Monthly Benefit (Est.)	$2,788
Full Retirement Age (Depending on Year Born)	65-67
Retirement Earnings Exempt Amounts Based on Normal Retirement Age (NRA)	$17,040/yr under NRA $45,360/yr NRA reached No limit after NRA

Social Security Taxable Benefits

Filing Status	Provisional Income*	S.S. Amount Subject to Tax
Single, HOH, Qualifying Widow(er) **	$0 - $25,000	$0
	$25,000 - $34,000	Up to 50%
	$34,000 +	Up to 85%
Married Filing Jointly	$0 - $32,000	$0
	$32,000 - $44,000	Up to 50%
	$44,000 +	Up to 85%
Married Filing Separately (living together)	$0 +	Up to 85%

** Provisional income is derived by adding the individual's Adjusted Gross Income, tax-free interest, fifty percent of Social Security benefits, and any other tax-free benefits.*
*** Also married filing separately and living apart from spouse.*

Data collected as available by January 8, 2018

Retirement Plan Contribution Limits

	Contribution Limit	Catch-Up Contribution** Limit
401(k), 403(b), 457, Thrift Savings Plan*	$18,500	$6,000
IRA and Roth IRA contributions	$5,500	$1,000
SIMPLE IRA	$12,500	$3,000
Solo 401(k)	$55,000	$6,000
Simplified Employee Pension	$55,000	$6,000

** Not including employer contributions.*
*** For workers 55+.*

Income Limits

	Limit or Phase-Outs for Individual Filers	Limit or Phase-Outs for Married (Joint) Filers*
Traditional IRA	$63,000 - $73,000	$101,000 - $121,000
Roth IRA	$120,000 - $135,000	$189,000 - $199,000
Retirement Savers Credit***	$31,500 ($47,250 if HOH)	$63,000

** If one spouse has a workplace retirement account and the other doesn't, the other can claim the full deduction on their IRA contribution until couple's income exceeds $189,000.*

*** If the contributing spouse has access to a workplace retirement plan.*

****Per IRS, "The amount of the credit is 50%, 20% or 10% of your retirement plan or IRA contributions up to $2,000 ($4,000 if married filing jointly), depending on your adjusted gross income."*

Medicare Costs

	Premium
Part A	$422/month*
Part B	$134/month**
Part C	Varies by plan
Part D	Varies by plan/income

** If applicable.*
You usually don't pay a premium for Part A coverage if you or your spouse paid Medicare taxes while working.
*** Or higher, determined by income*

Deductibles and Coinsurance

	Amount
Part A Deductible (per benefit period)	$1,340
Coinsurance, Days 1-60	$0
Coinsurance, Days 61-90	$335*
Coinsurance, Days 91+	$670**
Part B Deductible (per year)	$183***

** Per day of each benefit period. | ** Per each "lifetime reserve day" after day 90 for each benefit period (up to 60 days over your lifetime). | *** After deductible is met, you typically pay 20% of the Medicare-approved amount for most doctor services.*

Health Savings Accounts, High Deductible Health Plans

	Individual	Family	Catch-Up Contribution *
HSA Contribution Limit	$3,450	$6,900	$1,000
HDHP Minimum Deductible	$1,350	$2,700	n/a
HDHP Max. Out-of-Pocket Amount	$6.650	$13,300	n/a
ACA Out-of-Pocket Limit for HDHPs	$7,350	$14,700	n/a

** Age 55 or older*

Long-Term Care Deductibility Limits

Age (Reached prior to close of tax year)	Max. deduction for year*
Up to 40	$420
40 - 50	$780
50 - 60	$1,560
60 - 70	$4,160
70+	$5,200

**Premiums for "qualified" LTC policies are tax deductible to the extent that they, along with other unreimbursed medical expenses (including Medicare premiums), exceed 7.5% of the insured's adjusted gross income. (This applies retroactively to 2017.)*

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The HORIZON

MONEY TIPS & TOOLS TODAY

TO HELP PLAN FOR YOUR TOMORROWS

IN THIS ISSUE

WINTER 2017

NOTABLE QUOTE:
"Honesty is the first chapter of the book of wisdom."
- Thomas Jefferson

QUICK TIP:
If you use your own car or truck for business purposes, that vehicle should be insured under a business policy.

Generation Z Enters the Workforce

A new batch of job hunters has arrived, fresh-faced and clutching diplomas – in 2016, the first graduating class of Generation Z, post-millennials born sometime circa 1995-2005, have entered the workforce. In some ways, they will fit right in with their older cousins, but in other ways they may be more appealing to employers. Gen Zers grew up during the Great Recession and may be seeking job security in ways that their predecessors have not. These new workers are also the first all-digital generation, who might have a much different frame of reference that makes them technologically and culturally savvy.

On the other hand, Gen Z is also more likely to simply start their own business. While 11% of millennials aspire to be their own boss, 17% of this new crop wants to make a go of entrepreneurism.

Millennials are also becoming managers, and while they were victims of many preconceived notions about lazy or entitled behavior, there are indications that they and others are directing the same hostility toward Gen Z. The best thing is, naturally, to reach out to new and vital team members, foster their talents, and encourage teamwork and innovation rather than antagonism and resentment.[1,2]

Budgeting with a Baby in Mind

It's a scenario that bears considering: You have a healthy and happy home life, and you want to have a baby, but your financial situation doesn't leave much room to help you meet the needs of a newborn, much less as the child grows. This means that some hard choices are ahead.

If you are a two-income household, you may have more options, but not all of them are necessarily ideal. One parent staying at home offers the child full-time care, but can mean tightening the budget in extreme ways. Two incomes mean more money to pay for quality childcare, but that means sacrificing quality time with a child or infant.

One scenario that many new or growing families may consider is moving to a less-expensive neighborhood or area. While this may not diminish your costs for childcare, preschool, and other baby costs, it may offer you opportunities to cut back on your overall living expenses as you adjust to factor in the baby. A different neighborhood or area may also allow you to buy a home rather than rent, which could be a financial boon to the entire family in the longer term.[3]

The Market in a Minute

All four key Wall Street indices gained 2% or more for November. The Dow Jones Industrial Average advanced 22.8% year-to-date (YTD) and finished the month at 24,272.35. Meanwhile, the S&P 500 rose 18.3% YTD and settled at 2,647.58 on November 30. The Nasdaq Composite closed November at 6,873.97, adding 27.7% YTD.[4,5]

The Russell 2000 gained 13.78% YTD; that benchmark closed November at 1,544.14. Volatility saw some change: the CBOE VIX ended the month at -19.66% YTD.[6,7]

November saw the thirteenth monthly gain in a row for the S&P 500, a new record. There was also another big Dow milestone: for the first time, the blue chips closed above the 24,000-level on November 30, the result of a 1.3% single-day advance.[8]

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«RepresentativeName» presents:

perspectives

MONTHLY LIFESTYLE BUZZ, TRENDS, TIPS, AND INSIGHT

SMART TIP:

Do you love cooking with olive oil? Chronic exposure to light and heat may cause olive oils to lose their pleasing aromas and become rancid tasting more quickly. Store your oils inside a dark or opaque container and in a cool, dry cabinet or the refrigerator to maintain freshness for as long as possible.

WHO SAID IT?

"No one has ever made himself great by showing how small someone else is."

[GET THE ANSWER]

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

Q: According to the Internal Revenue Service, what percentage of federal tax refunds are delivered within 21 days of filing?

A) 10%
B) 50%
C) 65%
D) 90%

[GET THE ANSWER]

March, 2018

The Case for Clean Eating

Will it help us live better and longer? Or are its virtues overblown?

[CLICK TO READ]

50%, 15%, 5%

Some households manage their finances according to these percentages.

[CLICK TO READ]

Leaner May Mean Smarter

Recent studies find that slimming down may be good for your brain.

[CLICK TO READ]

Recipe of the Month

Breakfast Frittata Bites

[CLICK TO READ]

The Case for Clean Eating

Will it help us live better and longer? Or are its virtues overblown?

Increasingly, those who want to lose weight and reduce health risks are being advised to eat clean: whole grains, more fruits and vegetables, less meat, no refined sugar, and little or no processed foods. Clean eating essentially fuses wellness principles and dieting principles together – a worthy goal, considering the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's finding that 76% of Americans fail to eat enough fruit each day, while 87% consume inadequate vegetables. More produce increases good gut bacteria and may reduce risk for type 2 diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure, and certain cancers. Limiting sugar and sodium are also keys in this food philosophy.

The root idea of clean eating is to consume mostly plant-based foods. That is a good goal for anyone. Clean eating should not be taken to such extremes that you cut proteins or entire food groups out of your daily diet. In addition, keep in mind that not all "clean" foods are actually very good for you, while some packaged foods can be very nutrient dense.[1,2]

50%, 15%, 5%

Some households manage their finances according to these percentages.

The 50/15/5 rule presents an easy-to-remember guideline for household budgeting and saving. It is easily explained: each month, you assign 50% of your take-home pay to essential expenses, 15% of your pre-tax income to saving and investing for retirement, and 5% of the money you take home to an emergency fund.

For affluent households with ambitious retirement savings goals, the 50/15/5 rule may be a great financial tenet to follow. If you live in such a household and have the financial ability to live below your means, limiting essential expenses to 50% of your paycheck may be within your capabilities. More and more retirement savers are being urged to direct 15% of their total incomes into qualified retirement plans rather than 10%, which has long been the common teaching. As the nation's personal saving rate is under 5% today, some people risk finding themselves short on cash in a jam, so saving 5% each month is a reasonably painless way to build an emergency reserve. If this seems like a big budgeting and saving commitment, remember that the 50/15/5 rule still leaves 30% of household income for "everything else."[3]

Leaner May Mean Smarter

Recent studies find that slimming down may be good for your brain.

When you try to lose weight, you challenge your body – and if you stick to your diet and exercise plan, you may improve your mind along the way. Research from the Department of Psychological Sciences at Kent State University finds a strong correlation between weight loss and improved brain function.

As you lose pounds in the first week of a diet, your metabolism adjusts to make dropping additional pounds harder. Additionally, when you eat less, fat cells release less leptin into your bloodstream. Lower levels of this hormone are linked to increased appetite. The lack of leptin, however, boosts activity in areas of the brain that regulate appetite. When excess weight is shed, blood circulation to and from your brain is enhanced, resulting in less strain on veins and arteries. Memory, concentration, and other cognitive skills are positioned to improve. This can also happen as a byproduct of radical weight loss methods: multiple studies have found the same positive effects in people within three months of undergoing weight loss surgery.[4]

Recipe of the Month
Breakfast Frittata Bites

6 Eggs (large)
3 Cups spinach (chopped roughly)
1/2 Cup Onion (diced finely)
1/4 Cup Red Bell Pepper (diced finely)
1/4 Cup Diced Ham
1/4 Cup Milk
2/3 Cup Sharp Cheddar (shredded)

1 tsp. olive oil
Sea Salt & Black Pepper (to taste)

Preheat oven to 365.

In a large mixing bowl combine eggs, cheese, milk, sea salt, and pepper. Whisk together, then pour into a greased (with non-stick cooking spray or butter) 12-cup muffin tin. (Pour mixture to approximately 1/2 full.) Set aside.

In a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium to high heat; then, add onions and peppers. Sauté about 4-6 minutes, add spinach and ham and cook until spinach is wilted. Turn off heat and use tongs to add evenly to the tops of the egg mixture within muffin cups.

Bake at 365 until your frittata bites are golden brown and puffy (approximately 25 minutes). Let the bites cool in the muffin tin for 5-6 minutes before serving.

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WHO SAID IT?
Erwin Leo Himmel, Austrian automobile designer

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE ANSWER:
A: D, 90%.[5]

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News by the Numbers

Five noteworthy figures from the previous week

213,000

June's net job gain.

This number beat expectations: economists polled by Bloomberg saw payrolls expanding with a net gain of 195,000 hires. As it issued its June employment report, the Department of Labor also revised May's increase up to 244,000. The economy added 211,000 jobs per month during the second quarter.

Source: Bloomberg [1]

60.2

The reading on the Institute for Supply Management's June manufacturing PMI.

ISM maintains two purchasing manager indices, one tracking the country's manufacturers, the other tracking service businesses. The Arizona-based firm polls purchasing managers at large companies monthly to gauge the pace of activity and growth in these sectors. A reading above 50 indicates sector expansion for the month. When an ISM PMI tops 60, the sector is thriving.

Source: Institute for Supply Management [2]

$34 billion

The amount of Chinese and American goods now being hit with import tariffs.

Friday, the two nations placed import duties on $34 billion worth of each other's products. President Trump talked of imposing tariffs on more than $500 billion of Chinese goods last week; China shipped about that much in exports to the U.S. last year.

Source: Reuters [3]

28%

The percentage of renters who want to buy a home in the next 12 months.

This finding comes from a new CoreLogic survey. Can they realize their ambitions? CoreLogic says that home prices rose 7.1% across the 12 months ending in May. Wages are rising less than 3% annually. On the bright side, mortgage rates just declined for a third consecutive week.

Source: Bloomberg, MarketWatch [1,4]

$3.5 million

What the Postal Service must pay out to a sculptor who won a copyright lawsuit.

During 2010-2014, the Postal Service used a stock photo image of Lady Liberty on its "Forever" stamps that was not actually an image of the national monument. Rather, it was a photo of a replica standing outside the New York-New York Hotel and Casino in Las Vegas, created by sculptor Robert Davidson. A federal judge ruled in Davidson's favor last week, finding that the Postal Service had infringed on his copyright.

Source: NPR [5]

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SPRING 2018

LEGISLATIVE INSIDER

Presented by «RepresentativeName». Tracking legislation that may impact your business, your estate, your retirement, or your wallet.

Recent Developments

Tariffs on imported metals, Chinese imports. The federal government has officially imposed excise taxes of 25% on foreign steel and 10% on imported aluminum. Some nations are initially exempt from these tariffs. Testifying before the Senate Finance Committee on March 22, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer said steel and aluminum from Canada, Mexico, Argentina, Brazil, Australia, and the nations of the European Union will not presently be hit with the tariffs. On the same day, the Trump administration announced tariffs on $60 billion worth of Chinese goods arriving in the U.S., across numerous product classes.[1]

DoL fiduciary rule reversed in three states. To the surprise of many consumer advocates, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decided 2-1 in March to vacate the new "fiduciary rule" requiring financial services industry professionals who serve as retirement advisors to adopt a fiduciary standard. The rule, which demands that advisors put the client's interest first regarding retirement accounts, now no longer applies in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. It still applies in the rest of the country, however, and some legal analysts think that a Supreme Court ruling may be needed to address the inconsistency.[2]

Internal Revenue Service extends filing deadline for some Hurricane Maria victims. Residents of any of the 78 municipalities of Puerto Rico and the islands of St. Croix, St. John, and St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands now have until June 29 to file their 1040s and pay taxes due on their returns, the I.R.S. announced March 22.[3]

Federal Tax Law Adjustments

Congress fixes the "grain glitch." As part of the omnibus appropriations bill approved in March to keep the federal government funded, legislators addressed a provision in Section 199A of the TCJA that wound up delivering an advantage to farm co-ops over corporate-owned producers of feed. The "grain glitch", as it was dubbed, let farmers who sold crops to co-ops deduct 20% of their gross sales. If they sold their crops to other types of businesses, they could only deduct 20%

of net income. Corporate interests in agribusiness had been lobbying for a fix, and they got it. Now, farmers and ranchers may receive the 20% pass-through deduction for business income, as other business owners do.[4]

No tip pooling. At the end of 2017, the Department of Labor proposed giving restaurateurs and other owners of businesses where employees are tipped the option to pool worker tips and dispense them as they wish, even to themselves. The omnibus appropriations bill just passed in Congress states that tip pooling is not allowed.[5]

Looking Ahead

A trade war on the horizon? China has cautioned the U.S. that it will take "all necessary measures" in response to the wide-ranging $60 billion in tariffs the Trump administration imposed in late March, which will affect slightly more than 10% of its exports to America. Its response could be major indeed: the P.R.C. is America's largest creditor, possessing more U.S. government bonds than any other nation. It is also a major buyer of U.S. crops. China could announce its own tariffs on U.S.-made goods in the coming weeks.[1,6]

Internal Revenue Service may audit even fewer tax returns in 2018. Worried about being audited? Well, Joy Taylor, who covers taxes for Kiplinger.com, notes that the I.R.S. took a fine-tooth-comb to less than 1% of TY 2016 returns in 2017, and she thinks the percentage may be lower this year.[7]

This year, executive bonuses could be affected by tax reform. Upper-tier corporate leaders may find their compensation packages altered by the Tax Cuts & Jobs Act. Since the TCJA nullified a deduction companies once used for performance-based bonuses of more than $1 million, employers may provide their high-level employees with incentive stock options (and increased base pay) in response.[8]

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A look back at 2017 thus far

Presented by «representativename»

The year in brief. Investors have had much to celebrate in 2017. Halfway through November, the S&P 500 had gained more than 15% since the start of the year; the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up more than 18% year-to-date; the Nasdaq Composite, more than 25%. The Dow topped 20,000 for the first time in 2017, and the S&P made history by reaching 2,500. Many foreign equity benchmarks also rallied strongly. Prices of key commodity futures such as copper, oil, silver, and gold rebounded from 2016. The Federal Reserve, the European Central Bank, and the Bank of England all took steps toward normalization of monetary policy. America's pace of economic expansion improved and so did consumer confidence. Only the housing market showed signs of slowing. All in all, this has been a very good year economically.[1]

Domestic economic health. In terms of GDP, a subpar first quarter was again succeeded by more productive quarters. In Q1, the economy expanded 1.2%, but that was followed by growth readings of 3.1% in Q2 and 3.0% in Q3.[2]

Unemployment and underemployment lessened as 2017 progressed. The headline jobless rate ticked up to 4.8% in January, but it was at 4.1% by October. The Department of Labor's U-6 rate, which takes the underemployed into account, also hit its 2017 peak in January (10.1%); by October, it had dropped to a YTD low of 7.6%.[3,4]

September brought a 1.0% rise in personal spending – the biggest monthly advance recorded by the Bureau of Economic Analysis since August 2009 – as consumers rushed to replace cars, trucks, and other goods damaged by summer hurricanes and floods.[5]

Consumer confidence gauges have been at remarkably high levels all year, buoyed by news of record-breaking settlements on Wall Street and a better jobs outlook. The University of Michigan's consumer sentiment index hit a YTD peak of 100.7 in October, its best mark in nearly 14 years. The Conference Board's monthly index reached 125.9 in October, more than 12 points above its final 2016 mark. (Four years ago, the index was under 80.) [6,7]

The national purchasing manager indices maintained by the Arizona-based Institute for Supply Management also rose. ISM's service sector PMI was at 56.5 in January; in October, it hit a YTD high of 60.1, indicating rapid industry growth. ISM's manufacturing PMI reached 60.8 in September and fell to 58.7 in October; it began the year at 56.0.[8,9]

As economic activity picked up, the inflation rate fell. (This may have been the year's biggest economic mystery.) Consumer prices were rising at a yearly rate of 2.7% in February, but just 1.6% by June. By September, the Bureau of Labor Statistics discerned only 2.2% yearly inflation; core consumer inflation (minus food and energy prices) had been stuck at a two-year low of 1.7% for five straight months.[10]

The Federal Reserve raised interest rates twice during the first 11 months of 2017; many analysts expect a third quarter-point hike in December. In early November, President Donald Trump nominated current Fed Governor Jerome Powell to succeed Janet Yellen as Chair of the central bank. As Q3 ebbed, the Fed made moves to gradually unwind its huge securities portfolio amassed during years of quantitative easing.[11,12]

Global economic health. The World Trade Organization forecasts that global trade will rise 3.6% for 2017 – nowhere near the yearly gains seen earlier in this century, but an improvement nonetheless. Demand for semiconductors has sent exports soaring in Asia: at this writing, they are up 6% year-over-year in China, 18% YOY in South Korea, 20% YOY in Vietnam, and 12% YOY in Singapore. China's economy surprised to the upside in 2017, approaching 7.0% yearly expansion; manufacturing PMIs in the Asia-Pacific region, including China's, indicated moderate factory sector growth in the fall.[13,14]

The European Central Bank held interest rates steady in 2017, and in Q4, it decided to extend its bond-purchase campaign through at least next summer. Eurostat, the European Commission's statistics bureau, stated that euro area GDP was growing at an annual rate of 2.4% by the end of Q3; yearly inflation was running at 1.4%, with core inflation at just 0.9%. As the United Kingdom prepared for its Brexit, its central bank made headlines in November by raising interest rates for the first time in a decade.[15,16]

World markets. By mid-November, all but one newsworthy foreign benchmark was positive YTD. (That was Israel's Tel Aviv index, down 3.6%.) Some of the YTD advances by marquee indices were striking indeed: 60.1% for Argentina's Merval, 32.4% for the Hang Seng in Hong Kong, 25.5% for South Korea's Kospi, 25.1% for India's Sensex, 19.8% for Brazil's Bovespa, and 18.7% for Japan's Nikkei 225.[17]

Other notable YTD gains included advances of 17.3% for Italy's FTSE MIB, 17.1% for the Global Dow, 14.3% for the German DAX, 10.7% for France's CAC 40, 10.6% for China's Shanghai Composite, 7.9% for Spain's IBEX 35, 7.5% for the Stoxx Europe 600, 4.9% for Canada's TSX Composite, and 4.1% for the United Kingdom's FTSE 100.[17]

Commodities markets. After eleven-and-a-half months of 2017, palladium had emerged as this year's standout, displaying a 45.9% YTD jump. Copper was up 23.0%; heating oil, 12.2%; gold, 10.8%. There were also YTD gains of 9.3% for unleaded gasoline, 5.9% for WTI crude, 5.7% for both wheat and silver, and 4.1% for cocoa. By mid-November, an ounce of gold was worth about $1,275 on the COMEX; an ounce of silver, slightly less than $17. On the NYMEX, a barrel of WTI crude was worth nearly $57.[1,18]

The notable year-to-date retreats when the same snapshot was taken: 7.0% for coffee, 7.5% for the dollar (as measured by the U.S. Dollar Index), 14.7% for natural gas, and 23.3% for sugar.[18,19]

Real estate. A red-hot housing market started to cool. In late October, the National Association of Realtors found the pace of existing home sales down 1.5% from 12 months earlier. New home buying, while representing only a sliver of the residential real estate market, looked great by comparison; the Census Bureau measured a 17.0% yearly improvement through September, when sales hit a 10-year peak.[20,21]

The NAR's pending home sales index began trending downward in April and declined in five of the six months ending in September, to the point where housing contract activity had slowed 3.5% year-over-year. Again, the news was more positive when it came to new construction: in September, the Census Bureau was noting an annualized retreat of 4.3% for building permits, but a 6.1% yearly gain for housing starts.[22,23]

By November, average interest rates on all mortgage types were higher than they were a year before – but they were beneath where they were when 2016 ended. The November 9 Freddie Mac Primary Mortgage Market Survey showed the average interest rate on a 30-year FRM at 3.90%; that was 0.33% higher than on November 10, 2016, but 0.42% lower than on December 29, 2016. Year-over-year through November 9, the average interest on a 15-year mortgage rose from 2.88% to 3.24%, while the mean interest rate for a 5/1-year ARM increased from 2.88% to 3.22%.[24]

Looking back...looking forward. Wall Street benchmarks have been amazingly stable for most of this year. Just how stable? Entering November, the S&P 500 had gone 20 months without a 10% correction and 16 months without a 5% drop. Across its long history, the S&P has fallen about 5% every three months. The major indices are still showing significant momentum at this writing, and there is always the chance that we may be seeing a historic period of prosperity as Wall Street gains unfold: the current U.S. economic expansion is now the third-longest on record since 1900, and this bull market is a few months away from its ninth birthday.[25]

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How the Tax Reforms Will Take Effect

Some of the impact of the Tax Cuts & Jobs Act will be felt later than January 1.

Provided by «representativename»

President Donald Trump signed the Tax Cuts & Jobs Act into law on December 22, and on January 1, some key details of the Internal Revenue Code will abruptly change.[1]

There will be night-and-day change, both figuratively and literally. On January 1, the federal estate tax exemption will double; the standard federal income tax deduction will nearly double. The top corporate income tax rate will fall from 35% to 21%. Most business owners who make pass-through income will be able to deduct the first 20% of that income tax-free.[2,3]

Workers may not see changes to their paychecks until February. This is because the Internal Revenue Service needs to release new withholding tables. Those tables are slated to appear in January.[2]

Two provisions of the TCJA may also apply retroactively for some taxpayers. A larger federal tax deduction for out-of-pocket medical expenses is allowed not just for 2018, but also for 2017. Taxpayers who itemize may write off qualifying medical expenses exceeding 7.5% of income in 2017, instead of 10% of income. Businesses that bought new capital equipment after September 27, 2017 will be permitted to fully and immediately expense those purchases for the 2017 tax year.[2]

Two other changes will not happen until January 1, 2019. On that day, the individual health insurance mandate is scheduled to be repealed; no taxpayer will face a penalty for not having health coverage. Another delayed change pertains to divorcing couples. Taxpayers who divorce in 2019 and succeeding years will not be able to deduct alimony payments.[2]

Many of the changes authorized by the passage of the TCJA could expire after 2025. Congress may or may not renew them at the end of that year. The reduction of the corporate tax rate to 21% is a notable exception – that change is permanent.[2,3]

This is a good time to plan your 2018 tax strategy. Talk to your CPA or tax preparer soon, to see how you might take advantage of the adjustments to federal tax law.

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Bad Money Habits to Break In 2018

Behaviors worth changing for the New Year.

Provided by «representativename»

Do bad money habits constrain your financial progress? Many people fall into the same financial behavior patterns year after year. If you sometimes succumb to these financial tendencies, the New Year is as good an occasion as any to alter your behavior.

#1: Lending money to family & friends. You may know someone who has lent a few thousand to a sister or brother, a few hundred to an old buddy, and so on. Generosity is a virtue, but personal loans can easily transform into personal financial losses for the lender. If you must loan money to a friend or family member, mention that you will charge interest and set a repayment plan with deadlines. Better yet, don't do it at all. If your friends or relatives can't learn to budget, why should you bail them out?

#2: Spending more than you make. Living beyond your means, living on margin, whatever you wish to call it, it is a path toward significant debt. Wealth is seldom made by buying possessions; today's flashy material items may become the garage sale junk of 2027. That doesn't stop people from racking up consumer debts: a 2017 study conducted by NerdWallet determined that the average U.S. household carries $15,654 in credit card debt alone.[1]

#3: Saving little or nothing. Good savers build emergency funds, have money to invest and compound, and leave the stress of living paycheck-to-paycheck behind. If you can't put extra money away, there is another way to get some: a second job. Even working 15-20 hours more per week could make a big difference. The problem of saving too little is far too common: at the end of 2017, the Department of Commerce found the U.S. personal savings rate at 2.9%, a low unseen since 2007.[2]

#4: Living without a budget. You may make enough money that you don't feel you need to budget. In truth, few of us are really that wealthy. In calculating a budget, you may find opportunities for savings and detect wasteful spending.

#5: Frivolous spending. Advertisers can make us feel as if we have sudden needs; needs we must respond to, needs that can only be met via the purchase of a product. See their ploys for what they are. Think twice before spending impulsively.

#6: Not using cash often enough. No one can deny that the world runs on credit, but that doesn't mean your household should. Pay with cash as often as your budget allows.

#7: Gambling. Remember when people had to go to Atlantic City or Nevada to play blackjack or slots? Today, behemoth casinos are as common as major airports; most metro areas seem to have one or be within an hour's drive of one. If you don't like smoke and crowds, you can always play the lottery. There are many glamorous ways to lose money while having "fun." The bottom line: losing money is not fun. It takes willpower to stop gambling. If an addiction has overruled your willpower, seek help.

#8: Inadequate financial literacy. Is the financial world boring? To many people, it is. The *Wall Street Journal* is not exactly *Rolling Stone,* and *The Economist* is hardly light reading. You don't have to start there, however: great, readable, and even entertaining websites filled with useful financial information abound. Reading an article per day on these websites could help you greatly increase your financial understanding if you feel it is lacking.

#9: Not contributing to IRAs or workplace retirement plans. Even with all the complaints about 401(k)s and the low annual limits on traditional and Roth IRA contributions, these retirement savings vehicles offer you remarkable wealth-building opportunities. The earlier you contribute to them, the better; the more you contribute to them, the more compounding of those invested assets you may potentially realize.

#10: DIY retirement planning. Those who plan for retirement without the help of professionals leave themselves open to abrupt, emotional investing mistakes and tax and estate planning oversights. Another common tendency is to vastly underestimate the amount of money needed for the future. Few people have the time to amass the knowledge and skill set possessed by a financial services professional with years of experience. Instead of flirting with trial and error, see a professional for insight.

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The Major Retirement Planning Mistakes

Why are they made again and again?

Provided by «representativename»

Much has been written about the classic financial mistakes that plague start-ups, family businesses, corporations, and charities. Aside from these blunders, there are also some classic financial missteps that plague retirees.

Calling them “mistakes” may be a bit harsh, as not all of them represent errors in judgment. Yet whether they result from ignorance or fate, we need to be aware of them as we plan for and enter retirement.

Leaving work too early. As Social Security benefits rise about 8% for every year you delay receiving them, waiting a few years to apply for benefits can position you for greater retirement income. Filing for your monthly benefits before you reach Social Security’s Full Retirement Age (FRA) can mean comparatively smaller monthly payments. The FRA varies from 66-67 for people born between 1943-59. For those born in 1960 and later, the FRA is 67.[1,2]

Some of us are forced to make this “mistake.” The Center for Retirement Research at Boston College says 56% of men and 64% of women apply for Social Security before full retirement age. Still, if you can delay claiming Social Security, that positions you for greater monthly benefits.[1]

Underestimating medical bills. In its latest estimate of retiree health care costs, Fidelity Investments says that a couple retiring at 65 will need $275,000 to pay for future health care costs. That estimate may be conservative, as Fidelity’s calculation does not include eye care, dental care, or long-term care expenses.[3]

Taking the potential for longevity too lightly. Actuaries at the Social Security Administration project that around a fourth of today’s 65-year-olds will live to age 90, with about one in ten living 95 years or longer. The prospect of a 20- or 30-year retirement is not unreasonable, yet there is still a lingering cultural assumption that our retirements might duplicate the relatively brief ones of our parents. The American College New York Life Center for Retirement Income recently polled people about longevity, and 47% of respondents over age 60 underestimated the remaining life expectancy for an average 65-year-old male.[4]

Withdrawing too much each year. You may have heard of the “4% rule,” a popular guideline stating that you should withdraw only about 4% of your retirement savings annually. Many cautious retirees try to abide by it.

So, why do others withdraw 7% or 8% a year? In the first phase of retirement, people tend to live it up; more free time naturally promotes new ventures and adventures and an inclination to live a bit more lavishly.

Ignoring tax efficiency & fees. It can be a good idea to have both taxable and tax-advantaged accounts in retirement. Assuming your retirement will be long, you may want to assign this or that investment to its “preferred domain” – that is, the taxable or tax-advantaged account that may be most appropriate for it as you pursue a better after-tax return for the whole portfolio.

Many younger investors chase the return. Some retirees, however, find a shortfall when they try to live on portfolio income. In response, they move money into stocks offering significant dividends or high-yield bonds – which may be bad moves in the long run. Taking retirement income off both the principal and interest of a portfolio may give you a way to reduce ordinary income and income taxes.

Fees have an impact. The Department of Labor notes that a 401(k) plan with a 1.5% annual fee will eventually leave a participant with 28% less money than one with a 0.5% annual fee.[5]

Avoiding market risk. Equity investment does invite risk, but the reward may be worth it. In contrast, many fixed-rate investments offer comparatively small yields these days.

Retiring with big debts. It is hard to preserve (or accumulate) wealth when you are handing portions of it to creditors.

Putting college costs before retirement costs. There is no "financial aid" program for retirement. There are no "retirement loans." Your children have their whole financial lives ahead of them. Try to refrain from touching your home equity or your IRA to pay for their education expenses.

Retiring with no plan or investment strategy. An unplanned retirement may bring terrible financial surprises; the absence of a strategy can leave people prone to market timing and day trading.

These are some of the classic retirement planning mistakes. Why not plan to avoid them? Take a little time to review and refine your retirement strategy in the company of the financial professional you know and trust.

«representativename» may be reached at «representativephone» or «representativeemail». «representativewebsite»

Citations.

1 - cnbc.com/2017/06/02/how-married-couples-can-maximize-their-social-security-benefits.html [6/2/17]
2 - ssa.gov/planners/retire/retirechart.html [1/8/18]
3 - cbsnews.com/news/how-to-cope-with-health-care-costs-in-retirement/ [9/12/17]
4 - fool.com/investing/2017/06/07/dont-make-this-big-social-security-mistake.aspx [6/7/17]
5 - cnbc.com/2017/04/06/what-you-dont-know-about-401k-fees-can-cost-you-plenty.html [4/6/17]

Dear «GreetingName»,

This week, the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped in a way that it never had before. Monday, the benchmark fell 1,175 points, taking the greatest tumble in its long history. At one point, it was down 1,500 points during the trading day.[1,2]

While Monday's Dow loss was indeed severe, it was not as catastrophic as certain headlines trumpeted.

The index fell 4.6%, which is today's equivalent of a 652-point dive back in October 2007 when the Dow reached its pre-recession closing peak of 14,164.43. For some recent perspective, consider that the Dow took a 610-point dive the day after the United Kingdom voted for the Brexit in 2016 – and over the following 20 months, it ascended to record heights.[1,2,3]

The Dow actually witnessed an intraday correction Monday. At the bottom of the plunge late in the trading session, it was at 23,923.88, which was 10.1% beneath its last record close of 26,616.71 on January 26. It finished Monday's trading day off 8.5% from that January peak.[1,3]

The S&P 500 finished Monday at 2,648.94, about 7% below its last record close of 2,872.87.[1,2,4]

Corrections happen. It has been so long since the last one (early 2016), many investors have forgotten the frequency with which they normally occur. Corrections can counteract irrational exuberance, and bring some rationality back into the market, which can be good for Wall Street's collective health.[2]

Fundamental economic data is still strong: as an example, the Institute for Supply Management's service sector purchasing manager index just came in at 59.9 for January, a 13-year high. Just one of many recent strong indicators.[2]

Pullbacks and corrections will always occur on Wall Street, and sometimes the bulls turn tail and run. It is part of the long-term story of the market. This Dow pullback was extraordinary in its four-digit depth, which was to be expected someday with the index above 26,000.

This is a moment in stock market history – and thankfully, not the norm in that long history, as any glance at stock market cycles will reveal. At times like these it's a good idea to avoid making hasty decisions, keep the long term in perspective, and realize that corrections are part and parcel of stock market investing.

Sincerely,

«representativename»
«representativetitle»

«RepresentativeDisclosure»

1 - cnbc.com/quotes/?symbol=.DJI [2/5/18]
2 - marketwatch.com/story/us-stocks-poised-for-fresh-selloff-as-dow-futures-slide-120-points-2018-02-05 [2/5/18]
3 - thebalance.com/dow-jones-closing-history-top-highs-and-lows-since-1929-3306174 [2/5/18]
4 - fedprimerate.com/s-and-p-500-index-history-chart.htm [1/31/18]

Dear «GreetingName»,

Entering a new year, you naturally have things you want to do: goals to strive for, tasks to accomplish. How many of them should be financial?

Before 2018 goes much further, can you plan some positive financial moves to help yourself this year and in years to come? Maybe you want to:

- Reduce your debt
- Direct the extra money you save from debt reduction into retirement accounts
- Look for 2018 tax savings
- Start preparing your 2017 tax return
- Adopt a household budget
- Shop for insurance
- Take advantage of insurance discounts
- Create a college fund

With your interest in improving your financial future, you have likely thought about one or more of these moves. Now is the right time to make them, while the year is young, and you have that drive that the new year brings to get your financial house in order.

So, please call me or email me today. I would like to help you plan and make these moves and follow up throughout the year to see how you are doing. I look forward to meeting with you and assisting you in 2018.

Sincerely,

«representativename»
«representativetitle»

«RepresentativeDisclosure»

Dear «GreetingName»,

It's not too late to make your 2017 IRA contribution!

Just a quick reminder – it's not too late to make your 2017 IRA contribution, if you haven't already done so. **The deadline is April 17, 2018.**[1]

You can contribute up to $5,500 into your IRA for the 2017 tax year. If you were 50 or older in 2017, the limit is $6,500. Those limits are for total IRA contributions – so if you have multiple IRAs, that limit is the maximum you may contribute to all of them for 2017.[2]

Make sure to make your 2017 contribution by the deadline! If you have any questions, please call our office at «representativephone», or e-mail me at «representativeemail».

Sincerely,

«RepresentativeName»
«RepresentativeTitle»

«RepresentativeDisclosure»

1 - smartasset.com/retirement/ira-contribution-limits [1/18/18]
2 - tickertape.tdameritrade.com/retirement/2017/12/financial-start-new-year-81999 [12/13/17]

Sample Social Media Text-Based Posts

The average 65-year-old retiree couple could spend $280K on health care, USA TODAY reports: https://tinyurl.com/yda3kwvm

Investors.com shows you easy steps to making an estate planning checklist: https://tinyurl.com/ybyulfe7

Forbes breaks down the changes to Social Security and Medicare for 2018 @ https://tinyurl.com/yat9auzp

Behind on your retirement savings? CBS Moneywatch talks about your options @ https://tinyurl.com/y7pdo26a

CNBC looks at how women can address a retirement saving shortfall: https://tinyurl.com/y9z8b8v2

Who will inherit your digital assets? As Kiplinger notes, you should consider this estate planning question: https://tinyurl.com/y772g8z9

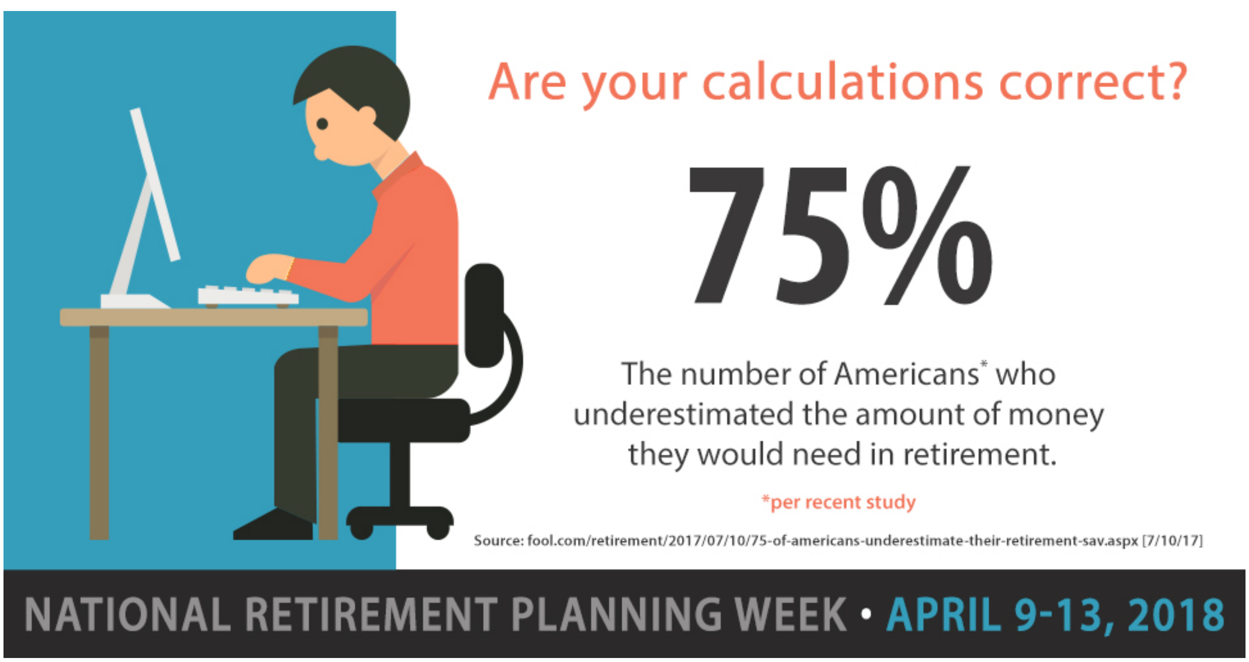
This Forbes article shows you why health insurance should be part of your retirement planning: https://tinyurl.com/y8gjow5r

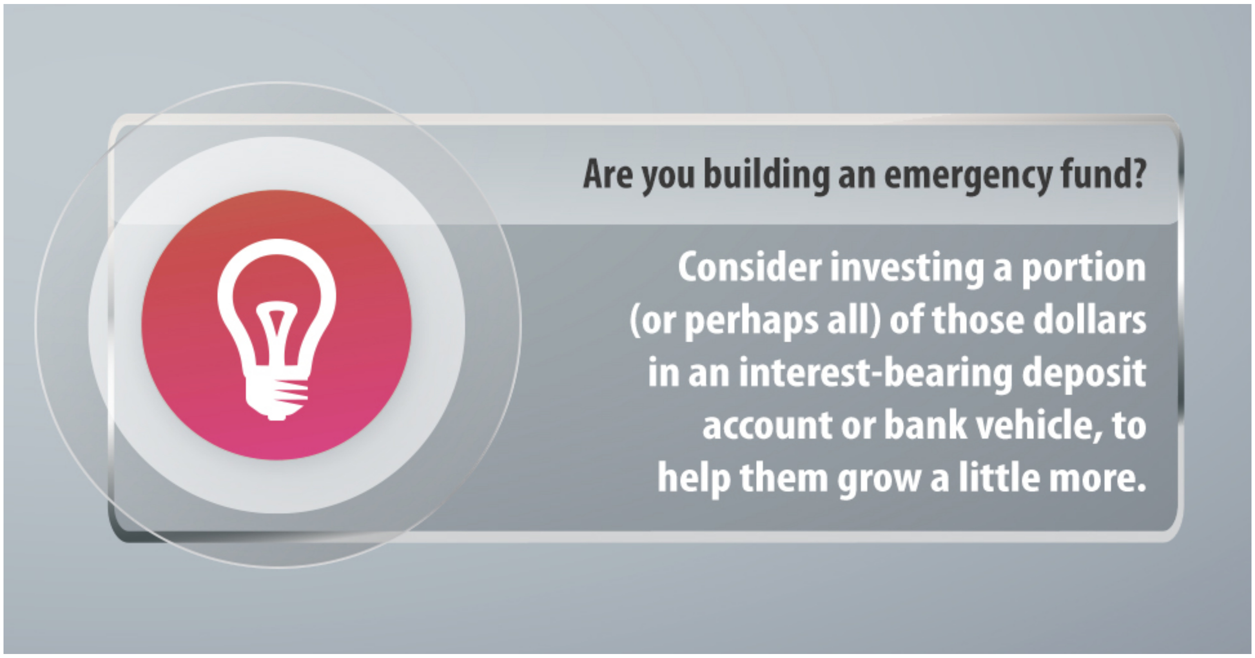
A new TD Wealth poll of estate planners suggests family drama is the #1 threat to estates: https://tinyurl.com/yc8ryvd7

Your kids, friends, co-workers; why do they put off saving for retirement? Forbes cites the reasons: https://tinyurl.com/y8sh6q5t

Wise Bread explains why financial planning matters for the middle class: https://tinyurl.com/y83g9pdd

Sample Social Media Image Posts




Are you building an emergency fund?
Consider investing a portion (or perhaps all) of those dollars in an interest-bearing deposit account or bank vehicle, to help them grow a little more.

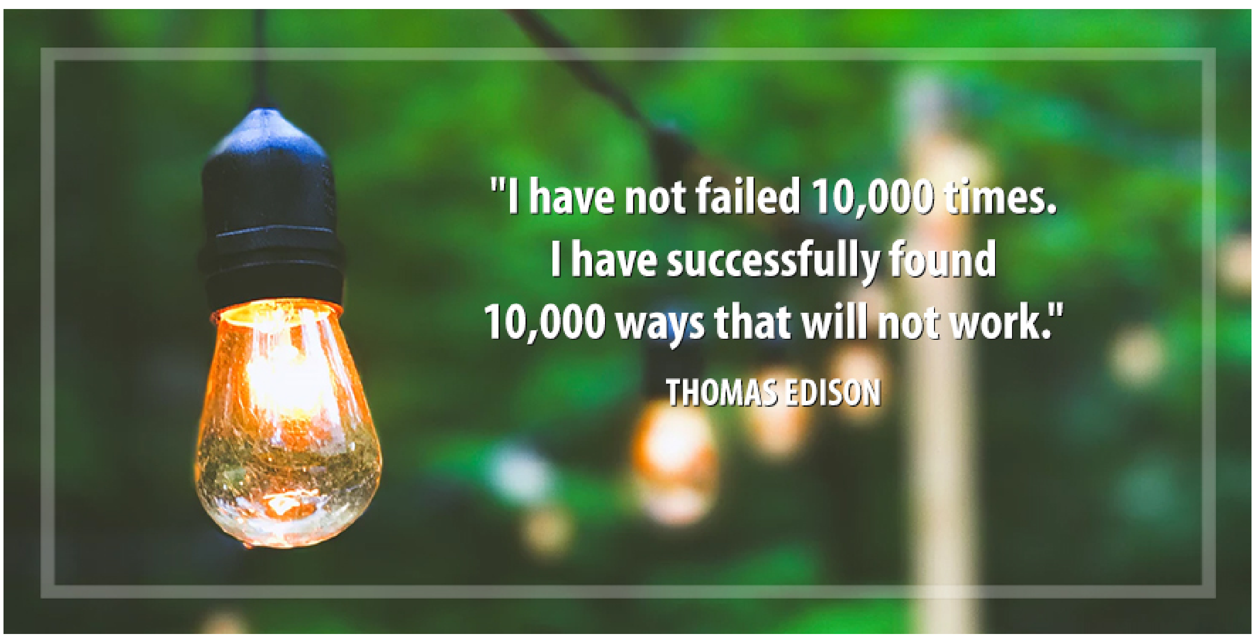

THINK BIG
SHOP SMALL
SMALL BUSINESS SATURDAY
One small purchase can make a big difference. Support your local neighborhood stores.
WE LOVE COFFEE
SPECIALS

WARREN BUFFETT: BETTER "STUFF" IN THE FUTURE

"This game of economic miracles is in its early innings. Americans will benefit from far more and better 'stuff' in the future. The challenge will be to have this bounty deliver a better life to the disrupted as well as to the disrupters."

Warren Buffett, CEO, Berkshire Hathaway,
from "Warren Buffett Shares the Secrets to Wealth in America," TIME.com

TIME.COM/5087360/WARREN-BUFFETT-SHARES-THE-SECRETS-TO-WEALTH-IN-AMERICA/ [1/4/18]



IRA CONTRIBUTIONS - DID YOU KNOW?

YOU CAN MAKE A 2017 IRA CONTRIBUTION UP TO APRIL 17, 2018 (TAX DAY).

2018 CONTRIBUTIONS CAN BE MADE UNTIL APRIL 15, 2019.

FOR 2017 AND 2018 THE CONTRIBUTION LIMIT IS $5,500; IF YOU ARE AGE 50 OR OLDER, YOU CAN CONTRIBUTE AN ADDITIONAL $1,000.

FOOL.COM/RETIREMENT/2017/10/22/HERES-THE-2018-IRA-CONTRIBUTION-LIMIT.ASPX [10/22/17]

Did you know?

Taking a break from work after a big windfall might be tempting, but it could affect your Social Security earning calculations. Investing a bonus or inheritance for retirement may be a smarter move.

Source: money.usnews.com/investing/investing-101/articles/2017-10-16/5-ways-to-invest-a-financial-windfall [10/16/17]

A GOOD PLAN BEGINS WITH A GOOD CONVERSATION. CALL OR EMAIL ME TODAY.