

WEEKLY MARKET COMMENTARY

For the Week of March 16, 2015

THE MARKETS

Stocks fell for the third consecutive week on Friday after volatile sessions that included the S&P posting both its biggest one-day gain since February and biggest one-day loss since January. The dollar continued to rise last week, hitting a 12-year high against the euro. The climb has investors looking to the Federal Reserve for information on when the first potential interest rate increase will occur. For the week, the Dow lost 0.52 percent to close at 17,749.31. The S&P fell 0.80 percent to finish at 2,053.40 and the NASDAQ dropped 1.13 percent to end the week at 4,871.76.

Returns Through 03/13/15	1 Week	YTD	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year
Dow Jones Industrials (TR)	-0.52	0.16	12.77	13.22	13.69
NASDAQ Composite (PR)	-1.13	2.87	14.35	17.02	15.52
S&P 500 (TR)	-0.80	0.19	13.51	16.19	14.69
Barclays US Agg Bond (TR)	0.54	0.69	4.58	2.74	4.19
MSCI EAFE (TR)	-1.72	2.70	-1.38	8.31	5.90

Source: Morningstar.com. *Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Indexes are unmanaged and cannot be invested into directly. Three- and five-year returns are annualized. The Dow Jones Industrials, MSCI EAFE, Barclays US Agg Bond and S&P, excluding "1 Week" returns, are based on total return, which is a reflection of return to an investor by reinvesting dividends after the deduction of withholding tax. The NASDAQ is based on price return, which is the capital appreciation of the portfolio, excluding income generated by the assets in the portfolio in the form of interest and dividends. (TR) indicates total return. (PR) indicates price return. MSCI EAFE returns stated in U.S. dollars.

College Costs — The cost of tuition, fees, room and board at an average in-state public college has increased 5.6 percent per year over the past 30 years, reaching \$18,943 for the 2014-2015 school year. If college costs had instead risen only by the rate of inflation (using the Consumer Price Index) over the past 30 years (2.8 percent per year), then a year of college would cost \$8,381 during the current school year (source: College Board, Department of Labor, BTN Research).

Not Much Inflation — The Federal Reserve's target annual rate of inflation is 2 percent. Inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index, has failed to reach 2 percent on a trailing one-year basis 30 times in the past 33 months through Jan. 31, 2015 (source: Department of Labor, BTN Research).

Most Still Renting — The homeownership rate of 18-33 year olds dropped to just 34 percent in 2013, the lowest percentage ever for this age group (source: Federal Reserve, BTN Research).

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WEEKLY FOCUS – Tying the Financial Knot

Wedding season is right around the corner, and if your summer plans include exchanging vows with the love of your life – or celebrating with a child or grandchild who's getting married – it probably comes with a hefty price tag. The average cost of a wedding in 2014 was \$31,213, an all-time high recorded by The Knot's annual Real Weddings Study. *And that's not including the honeymoon!*

But there is much more to consider beyond just the costs of the ceremony, reception and honeymoon. Once the wedding to-do list wraps up, couples need to turn to getting their house – especially their financial house – in order. Even if you said "I do" years ago, the following checklist can help couples work through the financial red tape of a marriage to ensure their lives together are in financial unison.

1. Check the withholding on your paychecks. You may need to adjust one or both.
2. Consider the impact of your combined income on contribution limits for your IRAs.
3. Change the beneficiary on your IRA, 401(k), bank accounts and insurance policies. Putting your spouse's name on the forms helps ensure assets transfer directly rather than going through probate.
4. Make a will. No, it's not romantic, but it's necessary.
5. Evaluate life and disability insurance amounts, particularly if you own or will be purchasing a home, so mortgage payments can be made if one of you dies or can't work.
6. Compare health care insurance to determine who has the most complete and cost-effective coverage.
7. Consider changing auto insurance to a single underwriter, which may qualify you for a multi-car discount. You may get even greater discounts if the same company underwrites your life, disability, homeowners and/or renters insurance.
8. Request and compare your credit scores. If one is significantly lower, that may impact how you title accounts and property.
9. Keep one credit card in your name only for emergencies. Otherwise, if you or your spouse has additional accounts, consider closing accounts or combining balances to reduce fees.

If you or someone you know has recently become engaged or married, give a gift that's not on the department store registry – a financial consultation. Or even if you've been married for a long time now, we'd still love to help you or a loved one renew your financial plans together. Call our office to schedule an appointment.



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* The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general. The Dow Jones Industrial Average is a price-weighted index of 30 actively traded blue-chip stocks. NASDAQ Composite Index is an unmanaged, market-weighted index of all over-the-counter common stocks traded on the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation System. The Morgan Stanley Capital International Europe, Australia and Far East Index (MSCI EAFE Index) is a widely recognized benchmark of non-U.S. stock markets. It is an unmanaged index composed of a sample of companies representative of the market structure of 20 European and Pacific Basin countries and includes reinvestment of all dividends. Barclays Capital Aggregate Bond Index is an unmanaged index comprised of U.S. investment-grade, fixed-rate bond market securities, including government, government agency, corporate and mortgage-backed securities between one and 10 years. Written by Securities America. SAI# 1149631.1