Recap Of The Financial Markets

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Week Ended February 19th, 2010

Stocks continued to rebound for the second week off its nearly ten percent correction as investors shrugged off a hotter than expected rise in the Producer Price Index as well as an unexpected increase in the Discount Rate by the Federal Reserve. Sounding like a broken record, we again note that that calendar year 2010 would be one marked by enough positive data to support stocks at current levels, but also enough negative data points to prevent them from going much higher. We will revise that to read at least for the first half. You name it, health care reform, financial re-regulation, tax increases, China reigning in their economy, high unemployment, low wage growth, a contracting private sector, municipal debt woes, all will weigh on investor sentiment. On the flip side, the economy is improving, inventories are low and corporate earnings are rebounding in a major way. A digestion of last year's gains is in order and that will hopefully be accomplished in somewhat of a sideways move for stocks. That this point we believe that from the calendar year 2009 close, the downside to the market is probably limited to ten percent as is the upside.

Index	**Weekly Change**	**Closing Value**	**% Change Prior Week**	**Year-to-Date % Change**	**Trailing 12 Mo. % Change**
Dow Jones Ind. Avg.	+303.21	10402.35	+3.00%	-0.25%	+41.23%
S&P 500	+33.66	1109.17	+3.13%	-0.53%	+44.04%
NASDAQ Comp.	+60.34	2243.87	+2.76%	-1.11%	+55.69%
DJ Wilshire 5000	+350.14	11499.54	+3.14%	+0.02%	+47.39%
Russell 2000	+20.90	631.62	+3.42%	+1.00%	+53.69%
Dow Utilities	+12.55	377.10	+3.44%	-5.25%	+12.27%
Dow Transports	+142.96	4060.52	+3.65%	-0.95%	+50.45%

Index	***Closing Record High***	***Date of Closing Record High***	***% from Prior Record High***	***March 9th, 2009 Closing Low***	***% From Closing Low Mar 9, 2009***
Dow Jones Ind. Avg.	14164.53	9-Oct-2007	26.56%	6547.05	58.89%
S&P 500	1565.15	9-Oct-2007	29.13%	676.53	63.95%
NASDAQ Comp	5048.62	10-Mar-2000	55.55%	1268.24	76.93%
DJ Wilshire 5000	15806.69	9-Oct-2007	27.25%	6858.43	67.67%
Russell 2000	855.70	13-July-2007	26.19%	343.26	84.01%
Dow Utilities	552.74	10-Dec-2007	31.78%	290.68	29.73%
Dow Transports	5446.49	19-July-2007	25.45%	2146.89	89.13%

Index	***Close on Dec 31, 1999***	***Post Attack Low Sept 21, 2001***	***Year End 2007 Close***	***Year End 2008 Close***	***Year-End 2009 Close***
Dow Jones Ind. Avg.	11497.12	7926.90	13,264.82	8,776.39	10,428.05
S&P 500	1469.25	944.75	1,468.36	903.25	1,115.10
NASDAQ Comp.	4069.31	1387.06	2,652.28	1,577.03	2,269.15
DJ Wilshire 5000	13812.70	8900.45	14,819.58	9,087.17	11,497.41
Russell 2000	504.75	378.89	766.03	499.45	625.39
Dow Utilities	283.36	316.19	532.53	370.76	398.01
Dow Transports	2977.20	2054.84	4,570.55	3,537.15	4,099.63

Index	***Post-Attack Closing High***	***% from Post Attack Close High***	***Post-Attack High to March 9th Closing Low***	***Post Bear Market Closing High***	***% from Post Bear Market Closing High***
Dow Jones Ind. Avg.	14164.53	26.56%	53.78%	10725.43	3.01%
S&P 500	1565.15	29.13%	56.78%	1150.23	3.57%
NASDAQ Comp.	2859.12	21.52%	55.64%	2320.40	3.30%
DJ Wilshire 5000	15806.69	27.25%	56.61%	11865.49	3.08%
Russell 2000	855.70	26.19%	59.89%	649.15	2.70%
Dow Utilities	552.74	31.78%	47.41%	406.72	7.28%
Dow Transports	5446.49	25.45%	60.58%	4262.86	4.75%

MARKET INTERNALS						
	Friday	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
Date	Feb 12th	Feb 15th	Feb 16th	Feb 17th	Feb 18th	Feb 19th
Dow Change	-45.05	00.00	+169.67	+40.43	+83.66	+9.45
NYSE Volume	1.427 b	0.000 b	1.067 b	1.020 b	961 mm	1.121 b
S&P500 Volatility Index	22.73	00.00	22.25	21.72	20.63	20.02
NASDAQ Close	**2183.53**	**2183.53**	**2214.19**	**2226.29**	**2241.71**	**2243.87**
NASDAQ Change	+6.12	00.00	+30.66	+12.10	+15.42	+2.16
NASDAQ Volume	2.263 b	0.000 b	2.041 b	2.072 b	2.065 b	2.144 b
NASDAQ Vol Index (^vxn)	22.97	00.00	21.92	21.40	20.65	20.81
S&P 500 Close	**1075.51**	**1075.51**	**1094.87**	**1099.51**	**1106.75**	**1109.17**
S&P 500 Change	-2.96	00.00	+19.36	+4.64	+7.24	+2.42
Russell 2000 Close	**610.72**	**610.72**	**620.84**	**624.83**	**629.32**	**631.62**
Russell 2000 Change	+5.56	00.00	+10.12	+3.99	+4.49	+2.30
Wilshire 5000 Close	**11149.40**	**11149.40**	**11344.95**	**11398.25**	**11469.99**	**11499.54**
Wilshire 5000 Change	-8.63	00.00	+195.55	+53.30	+71.74	+29.55
Dow High (a)	10137.39	00000.00	10279.54	10320.13	10406.58	10438.55
Dow Low (a)	9983.82	00000.00	10100.81	10261.48	10294.51	10339.17
Dow at 10:00 a.m.	10020.17	00000.00	10164.06	10299.72	10339.02	10346.50
Dow 1 Hour Before Close	10081.54	00000.00	10231.40	10306.14	10390.11	10404.39
Dow Close	***10099.14***	***10099.14***	***10268.81***	***10309.24***	***10392.90***	***10402.35***
Variation	153.57	000.00	178.53	58.65	112.07	99.38
Variation vs. Prior Day Close	1.51%	0.00%	1.77%	0.57%	1.09%	0.96%
Close Off Low	115.32	00.00	168.00	47.76	98.39	63.18
Close Off High	38.25	00.00	10.73	10.89	13.68	36.20
Dow first ½ hr	-124.02	00.00	+64.92	+30.91	+29.78	-46.40
Dow Close v. 10:00 am Price	+78.97	00.00	+104.75	+9.52	+53.88	+55.85
Dow Last Hour	+17.60	00.00	+37.41	+3.10	+2.79	-2.04
NYSE Advances	1622	0000	2559	2084	2122	1825
NYSE Declines	1415	0000	526	991	956	1245
Unchanged	111	00	95	123	105	109
New Highs	63	00	122	146	177	193
New Lows	7	00	3	2	1	1
NYSE Up Volume	650 mm	000 mm	964 mm	679 mm	711 mm	621 mm
NYSE Down Volume	759 mm	000 mm	97 mm	331 mm	238 mm	438 mm
NASDAQ Advances	1573	0000	1939	1576	1555	1403
NASDAQ Declines	1070	0000	762	1059	1080	1243
Unchanged	137	000	122	169	143	145
New Highs	54	00	98	113	93	131
New Lows	17	00	9	9	7	9
NASDAQ Up Volume	1.304 b	000 mm	1.691 b	1.335 b	1.367 b	1.044 b
NASDAQ Down Volume	807 mm	000 mm	298 mm	682 mm	630 mm	1.053 b

Yields Of Selected United States Treasury Obligations (Bloomberg Key Rates)						
	Feb 19th, 2010	***Feb 12th, 2010***	***Feb 5th, 2010***	***Dec 31st, 2009***	***Dec 31st, '08***	***Dec 28th, '07***
3 month T-bill	0.09%	0.09%	0.09%	0.06%	0.08%	3.14%
6 month T-bill	0.18%	0.17%	0.15%	0.19%	0.26%	3.42%
12 month T-bill	0.36%	0.33%	0.27%	0.44%	0.34%	
2 year T-note	0.92%	0.83%	0.76%	1.14%	0.76%	3.11%
3-year Treasury Note	1.49%	1.39%	1.26%	1.67%	0.97%	
5 year Treasury Note	2.45%	2.33%	2.23%	2.68%	1.55%	3.50%
7-year Treasury Note	3.22%	3.10%	3.00%	3.38%		
10 year Treasury Note	3.77%	3.69%	3.57%	3.83%	2.21%	4.08%
30 year Treasury Bond	4.70%	4.65%	4.52%	4.63%	2.68%	4.50%
Current Prime Rate	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	3.25%	7.25%
Current 1-mo LIBOR	0.23%	0.23%	0.23%	0.23%	0.44%	4.63%
Current 3-mo LIBOR	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	0.25%	1.42%	4.73%
TED-Spread	16 bps	16 bps	16 bps	19 bps	134 bps	
Spread b/t 10 & 2 Yr. T-Note	285 bps	286 bps	281 bps	269 bps	145 bps	97 bps
1 mo. LIBOR v. Fed Funds	11 bps	10 bps	13 bps	22 bps	19 bps	38 bps

Investor Sentiment (AAII Index, Barron's)			
	Last Week	*Two Weeks Ago*	*Three Weeks Ago*
Bulls	35.9%	36.8%	29.2%
Bears	35.2%	41.9%	43.1%
Neutral	28.9%	21.4%	27.7%

	Current	*1-month Prior*	*3-months Prior*	*6-months Prior*	*1-Year Prior*	*Year-End 2009*	*Year End 2008*	*Year End 2007*
1-Year Adjustable	3.71%	3.79%	3.93%	4.13%	5.27%	5.65%	5.65%	5.11%
15-Year Mortgage	4.53%	4.65%	4.49%	4.76%	4.86%	5.07%	5.12%	5.38%
30-Year Mortgage	5.16%	5.23%	5.02%	5.29%	5.26%	5.26%	5.30%	5.57%

Pertinent Weekly Financial Data						
	Feb 19th	*Feb 12th*	*Feb 5th*	*Jan 29th*	*Dec 31st, 2009*	*Dec 31st, 2008*
NYSE Total Issues	3229	3232	3231	3233	3219	
NYSE Advancing Stocks	2599	2238	1109	894	1214	
NYSE Declining Stocks	587	937	2061	2284	1947	
NYSE Unchanged Stocks	43	57	61	55	58	
NYSE New Highs	342	129	190	188	592	
NYSE New Lows	7	26	35	22	5	
NYSE Total Weekly Volume	4,168,899	5,732,125	6,279,232	6,127,124	2,668,023	
NASDAQ Total Issues	2920	2917	2923	2927	2941	
NASDAQ Advancing Stocks	2022	1977	1042	895	1253	
NASDAQ Declining Stocks	821	877	1820	1966	1614	
NASDAQ Unchanged Stocks	77	63	61	66	74	
NASDAQ New Highs	236	117	107	125	333	
NASDAQ New Lows	28	75	90	52	43	
NASDAQ Total Weekly Volume	8,321,788	10,745,650	12,767,474	13,176,008	5,038,818	
Unleaded Gasoline Prices Per Gallon	$2.608	$2.652	$2.661	$2.705	$2.607	$1.613
West Texas Intermediate Crude Futures	$79.81	$74.13	$71.19	$73.15	$79.36	$44.60
Natural Gas Futures Per mm BTU	$5.044	$5.468	$5.515	$5.275	$5.572	$5.622
Copper Futures Per Pound	$3.38	$3.10	$2.86	$3.02	$3.35	$1.41
Soybean Futures Per Bushel	$9.54	$9.54	$9.14	$9.15	$10.48	$9.80
Corn Per Bushel	$3.72	$3.73	$3.52	$3.56	$4.15	$4.07
Price of Gold Per Ounce	$1122.10	$1090.00	$1052.80	$1080.90	$1096.20	$884.30
Price of Silver Per Ounce	$16.44	$15.45	$14.83	$16.21	$16.85	$11.29

**Every $0.01 move downward in the price of a gallon of gas saves consumers $1.4 billion. At the close of 2007, the average price of a gallon of gasoline was $3.05. At the close of 2008, the average price of a gallon of gasoline was $1.78.*

Value of U.S. Dollar versus the World's Other Major Currencies (Bloomberg.com). Dollars to buy one…							
	Feb 19th, 2010	*Feb 12th, 2010*	*Feb 5th, 2010*	*Jan 29th, 2010*	*Dec 31st, 2009*	*Dec 31st, 2008*	*Dec 28th, 2007*
US $ Index (DX-Y.NYB)	80.549	80.218	80.202	79.386	77.860		
Euro	1.3613	1.3632	1.3678	1.3899	1.4324	1.3978	1.4724
British Pound	1.5472	1.5702	1.5641	1.5884	1.6151	1.4648	1.9966
Japanese Yen	0.0109	0.0111	0.0112	0.0111	0.0107	0.0110	0.0089
Canadian Dollar	0.9623	0.9521	0.9331	0.9335	0.9499	0.8170	1.0186
Swiss Franc	0.9297	0.9298	0.9323	0.9441	0.9660	0.9350	0.8880

First Call/Thomson Financial Projected 2009 Earnings & Price to Earnings Ratios For Dow Jones Industrial Average. (Barron's MW 49)							
	Feb 19th	*Feb 12th*	*Feb 5th*	*Jan 22nd*	*Jan 15th*	*Jan 8th*	*Dec 31st*
Projected Earnings	$785.71	$786.70	$786.02	$641.12	$640.89	$640.82	$640.51
P/E Ratio	13.2	12.9	12.7	16.2	16.7	16.6	16.5

SECTOR WEIGHTINGS – Sector Weightings of the iShares S&P 1500 Index Fund								
Industry	***Dec 31st, 2009***		***Sept 30th, 2009***	***June 30th, 2009***	***Mar 31st, 2009***	***Dec 31st, 2008***	***Dec 31st, 2007***	***Dec 31st, 2006***
Financials	14.88%	-0.49	15.37%	14.02%	11.68%	13.86%	21.04%	20.90%
Information Technology	19.36%	+1.11	18.25%	18.02%	17.77%	15.17%	14.69%	15.08%
Industrials	10.82%	+0.13	10.69%	10.54%	10.30%	11.50%	11.58%	12.27%
Health Care	12.61%	-0.56	13.17%	13.84%	14.66%	14.54%	11.86%	11.99%
Consumer Discretionary	10.13%	+0.31	9.82%	9.66%	9.49%	8.94%	11.08%	10.72%
Energy	10.86%	-0.13	10.99%	11.64%	12.23%	12.47%	9.81%	10.14%
Consumer Staples	10.47%	-0.45	10.92%	11.04%	11.81%	11.95%	8.82%	8.76%
Utilities	3.94%	0.00	3.94%	4.31%	4.49%	4.56%	4.11%	3.79%
Basic Materials	3.85%	+0.10	3.75%	3.57%	3.66%	3.24%	3.42%	3.28%
Telecom Services	2.88%	-0.01	2.89%	3.16%	3.65%	3.44%	3.36%	2.94%

Sector Performance Week Ending Feb 19th v. Week Ending Feb 12th v. Feb 5th			
	Trailing Week	**Year-to-Date**	**Trailing Twelve Months**
Pos/Neg Last Week	96 / 2	56 / 42	96 / 2
Pos/Neg Last Week	83 / 15	26 / 72	94 / 4
Pos/Neg Last Week	36 / 62	17 / 81	94 / 4

Dow Jones U.S. Total Market Industry Groups for the Week Ended February 19th *(Barron's MW 45)*							
Past Week Top Performing Industry Groups				**Past Week Worst Performing Industry Groups**			
1	Steel	+9.62%	BM	98	Gambling	-0.62%	CS
2	Travel & Tourism	+8.23%	CS	97	Home Construction	-0.06%	CG
3	Mobile Telecom	+7.98%	TEL	96	Specialty Finance	+0.86%	FINL
4	Paper	+7.60%	BM	95	Fixed Line Telecom	+0.925	TEL
5	Mortgage Finance	+6.44%	FINL	94	Health Care Providers	+1.67%	HC
6	Heavy Construction	+6.36%	IND	93	Recreational Products	+1.76%	CG
7	Industrial Machinery	+6.24%	IND	92	Pharmaceuticals	+1.775	HC
8	Waste & Disposal Services	+5.95%	IND	91	Broadline Retailers	+1.91%	CS
9	Brewers	+5.78%	CG	90	Medical Supplies	+1.94%	HC
10	Food Retailers & Wholesalers	+5.74%	CS	89	Restaurants & Bars	+1.97%	CS

Dow Jones U.S. Total Market Industry Groups for the Week Ended February 12th *(Barron's MW 49)*							
Past Week Top Performing Industry Groups				**Past Week Worst Performing Industry Groups**			
1	Airlines	+10.00%	CS	98	Brewers	-5.19%	CG
2	Consumer Electronics	+9.37%	CG	97	Real Estate Investment Trusts	-1.28%	FINL
3	Home Construction	+7.34%	CG	96	Specialized Consumer Services	-1.02%	CS
4	Commercial Vehicles	+4.13%	IND	95	Banks	-0.81%	FINL
5	Coal	+6.92%	BM	94	Electricity	-0.64%	UTIL
6	Tobacco	+5.82%	CG	93	Insurance Brokers	-0.44%	FINL
7	Platinum & Precious Metals	+5.79%	BM	92	Paper	-0.40%	BM
8	Nonferrous Metals	+5.17%	BM	91	MultiUtilities	-0.39%	UTIL
9	Steel	+5.08%	BM	90	Diversified Industrials	-0.36%	IND
10	Semiconductors	+5.03%	TECH	89	Specialty Finance	-0.36%	FINL

Dow Jones U.S. Total Market Industry Groups for the Week Ended February 5th *(Barron's MW 49)*							
Past Week Top Performing Industry Groups				**Past Week Worst Performing Industry Groups**			
1	Gold Mining	+7.49%	BM	98	Transportation Services	-5.76%	IND
2	Platinum & Precious Metals	+6.14%	BM	97	Marine Transportation	-5.20%	IND
3	Nonferrous Metals	+4.53%	BM	96	Publishing	-4.63%	CS
4	Furnishings	+4.47%	CG	95	Heavy Construction	-4.52%	IND
5	Mortgage Finance	+4.14%	FINL	94	Tires	-4.20%	CG
6	Electronic Equipment	+3.82%	IND	93	Drug Retailers	-3.92%	CS
7	Real Estate Investment & Services	+3.67%	FINL	92	Trucking	-3.65%	IND
8	Aluminum	+3.36%	BM	91	Distillers & Vintners	-3.31%	CG
9	Insurance Brokers	+3.36%	FINL	90	Consumer Finance	-3.08%	FINL
10	Hotels	+2.49%	CS	89	Footwear	-2.98%	CG

Dow Jones U.S. Total Market Industry Groups or the Week Ended February 19th (Barron's MW 45)									
	Past Week			**Year-to-Date**			**Trailing 12 Months**		
1		Basic Materials	+5.02%		Consumer Goods	+2.73%		Basic Materials	+82.90%
2	+4	Industrials	+4.51%	+2	Industrials	+2.15%	+1	Financials	+79.95%
3	+6	Financials	+4.01%		Consumer Services	+1.52%	-1	Technology	+64.90%
4	+6	Utilities	+3.67%	-2	Health Care	+1.30%	+1	Industrials	+53.95%
5		Consumer Services	+3.44%		Financials	+0.47%	-1	Consumer Services	+51.52%
6	-2	Oil & Gas	+3.41%	+1	Basic Materials	+0.46%		Consumer Goods	+38.44%
7	-4	Technology	+2.99%	-1	Oil & Gas	-0.15%	+1	Oil & Gas	+26.24%
8	-6	Consumer Goods	+2.91%		Technology	-3.25%	-1	Health Care	+22.60%
9	-2	Health Care	+2.11%		Utilities	-3.62%	+1	Utilities	+13.95%
10	-2	Telecom	+1.43%		Telecom	-9.22%	-1	Telecom	+11.71%

Dow Jones U.S. Total Market Industry Groups or the Week Ended February 12th (Barron's MW 49)									
	Past Week			**Year-to-Date**			**Trailing 12 Months**		
1		Basic Materials	+3.21%	+1	Consumer Goods	-0.05%		Basic Materials	+59.54%
2	+1	Consumer Goods	+2.01%	-1	Health Care	-0.80%	+1	Technology	+48.19%
3	-1	Technology	+1.87%	+1	Consumer Services	-1.85%	-1	Financials	+45.08%
4		Oil & Gas	+1.70%	+1	Industrials	-2.26%		Consumer Services	+40.15%
5	+2	Consumer Services	+1.61%	-2	Financials	-3.40%		Industrials	+35.89%
6	-1	Industrials	+1.38%		Oil & Gas	-3.44%		Consumer Goods	+30.27%
7	+1	Health Care	+0.42%	+1	Basic Materials	-4.34%		Health Care	+16.25%
8	-2	Telecom	+0.14%	+1	Technology	-6.02%		Oil & Gas	+14.30%
9		Financials	-0.05%	-2	Utilities	-7.03%		Telecom	+4.93%
10		Utilities	-0.59%		Telecom	-10.43%		Utilities	+3.20%

Dow Jones U.S. Total Market Industry Groups or the Week Ended February 5th (Barron's MW 49)									
	Past Week			**Year-to-Date**			**Trailing 12 Months**		
1	+9	Basic Materials	+0.97%		Health Care	-1.21%		Basic Materials	+54.97%
2	+4	Technology	+0.90%	+5	Consumer Goods	-2.02%	+1	Financials	+47.17%
3	+2	Consumer Goods	-0.33%		Financials	-3.34%	-1	Technology	+45.96%
4	+5	Oil & Gas	-0.69%	+1	Consumer Services	-3.41%		Consumer Services	+36.72%
5	+2	Industrials	-0.90%	-3	Industrials	-3.60%		Industrials	+32.39%
6	-3	Telecom	-0.92%	-2	Oil & Gas	-5.05%		Consumer Goods	+26.25%
7	-5	Consumer Services	12048%	+1	Utilities	-6.48%		Health Care	+15.45%
8	-7	Health Care	-1.64%	-2	Basic Materials	-7.32%		Oil & Gas	+7.80%
9	-1	Financials	-1.78%		Technology	-7.74%	+1	Telecom	+1.85%
10	-6	Utilities	-2.04%		Telecom	-10.56%	-1	Utilities	-0.81%

Economic Releases

Majority of Economic Data found at www.haver.com

Friday, February 19th

Prices at the retail level as represented by the **CONSUMER PRICE INDEX** rose 0.2% during January, this after rising 0.1% during December Over the past year the CPI has risen 2.7%, this following calendar year 2008 when the CPI rose just 0.1%. The y/y decrease four months ago had been 1.9%, the steepest drop since 1950. The **core CPI,** which is represented by the CPI excluding food and energy, fell 0.1% during January, this after rising 0.1% during December. Over the last twelve months, the core-PPI has risen 1.5%, below the 1.8% increase recorded during 2008. Finally, the **chained CPI**, which measures inflation, but adjusts for shift in the mix of consumer purchases, rose 0.4% in January and by 3.6% y/y while the **core chained CPI** fell 0.0% in January, but has risen 1.5% over the trailing twelve months.

Thursday, February 18th

The Conference Board reported that its **INDEX OF LEADING ECONOMIC INDICATORS** rose by 0.3% during January, this comes on the heels of an upwardly revised gain of 1.2% during December. The index has risen during each of the past ten months and by 9.8% over just the past six. Five of the ten components rose, including, in order, the interest rate spread, the index of supplier deliveries (vendor performance), average weekly manufacturing hours, stock prices and the index of consumer expectations. Subtracting from the index in order from largest to smallest negative contributor was real money supply, average weekly initial claims for unemployment insurance (inverted), building permits and manufacturers' new orders for non-defense capital goods. According to Ataman Ozyildirim, Economist at the Conference Board, "the U.S. LEI has risen steadily for nearly a year, led by an improvement in financial markets and a manufacturing upturn. Consumer expectations and housing permits have also contributed to these gains over this period, but to a lesser extent – especially in recent months."

Prices at the wholesale level as measured by the **PRODUCER PRICE INDEX** jumped 1.2% during January as energy costs screamed 5.1% (21.5% y/y) higher and food costs rose 0.4% (1.5% y/y). Gasoline 10.4% (69.5% y/y), fuel oil 11.0% (28.4% y/y) and natural gas prices 2.4% (-12.5% y/y) also rose. Over the past year the PPI has risen 5.0%. Excluding food and energy, the so-called **core PPI** remained rose 0.3% during January, was flat during December and has risen just 1.0% y/y.

INITIAL CLAIMS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS for the week ended February 13th rose 31,000 to 473,000 from 442,000 one week prior, *numbers consistent with an economy in recession as well as an indication that despite the recent pick-up in economic activity, the labor market has yet to benefit in any substantial manner.* The four-week rolling average decreased by 1,500 to 467,500 from a revised level of 469,000 one week prior. Continuing claims for the week ended February 6th were unchanged at 4,563,000 from the prior week. The continuing claims four-week average decreased 24,000 to 4.586 from 4.610 million.

Wednesday, February 17th

INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION, a measure of strength of the manufacturing, factory and utility sectors, rose by 0.9% during January, the fifth consecutive monthly gain, as the demand for consumer goods rose 1.1%. Prior to these increases Industrial Production had fallen every month since December 2006. Year-Over-Year Industrial Production has risen 1.1%, rebounding off its record 13.6% decline recorded during May, the steepest since the latter part of 1946 when the United States Factory Sector was winding down its production capacity increased for World War II. Overall **CAPACITY UTILIZATION** rose to 72.6% from 71.9% while utilization in the factory sector held steady at 69.4% during January, but has fallen from a near 80% peak back in 2007.

U.S. Import Prices surged 1.1% during January, this after remaining unchanged during December, which in turn ended what had been seven increases over the past eight months as petroleum costs rose 4.8% and have nearly doubled over the past year. Import Prices have risen 11.5% y/y. **Export prices** rose 0.8% in January and by 3.4% y/y. **Agricultural export prices** rose 1.4% during January and by 4.5% y/y while **Non-Agricultural Export Prices** rose 0.7% during January and by 3.3% y/y.

The Commerce Department reported that **HOUSING STARTS** rose by 16,000 during January to 591,000 from 575,000 one month prior. Of note is the fact that there must be approximately one million housing starts per year just to replace those lost to natural causes, man-induced causes or by the growing U.S. population. **Single-family** housing starts rose 1.47% or 7,000 to 484,000 in January from 477,000 in December. From the peak during January 2006, single family housing starts have fallen by more than 75%. **Multi-family** housing starts held edged up 9,000 to 107,000 during January. **SINGLE FAMILY BUILDING PERMITS**, a preview of future housing starts, slipped 4.9% to 621,000 in January from 653,000 one month prior, but have risen 16.9% y/y. According to MarketWatch, "for all of 2009, an estimated 554,000 homes were started, down 39% from 2008's total and the lowest on record. Starts of single-family homes dropped 29% to a record-low 444,000 in 2009."

Friday, February 12th

RETAIL SALES rebounded 0.5% during January, this after a revised 0.1% drop (orig. -0.3%) recorded during December, in line with the consensus estimate. Over the past year Retail Sales have risen 4.7%. Of note was the 1.6% (+12.4% y/y) increase in **catalogue and internet purchases. EXCLUDING AUTOMOBILES AND GASOLINE** and perhaps illustrative of the tendency of the consumer to truly spend, Retail Sales rose 0.6% during January (2.0% y/y) while **excluding autos**, they rose 0.6% (+4.6% y/y).

BUSINESSES INVENTORIES fell 0.2% during December, thus ending two consecutive months of fractional gains, which incidentally had come after a string of thirteen consecutive contractions. According to the Associated Press, "the 13 consecutive declines in overall inventories was the longest stretch of weakness since a record 15 straight drops during a period that covered the last recession in 2001. But the total decline of 13.9% in the current slump is larger than the 7.6% drop that occurred during the last slowdown." This pace of inventory reduction has not been witnessed since 1980 and perhaps signaling that when the economy just stabilizes businesses will have to ramp up production. In fact, **BUSINESS SALES** rose 0.9%, the sixth increase over the past seven months. The combination of declining inventories and rising sales pushed the **INVENTORY-TO-SALES RATIO** to 1.26 months from 1.28 months, historically a very low level.

The University of Michigan reported that **PRELIMINARY FEBRUARY READING OF CONSUMER SENTIMENT** slipped to 73.7% from a final January report of 74.4%, but rose from a mid-January level of 72.8%. The **expectations component** slumped to 66.9% from 70.1% at the end of January and from 67.5% mid-January. Finally, the preliminary February **current conditions component** rose to 84.1% from a final January level of 81.1% and from a mid-January reading of 81.0%. *Of note and what we believe is having and will most likely continue to have a substantial negative impact on the labor market as well as consumer expectations is the fact that contained within this report is that only 16.0% of respondents that that a good job was being done by the government, this in contrast to the 40% who thought a poor job was being done, the latter marking a twelve month high.*

Wednesday, February 10th

The **U.S. Trade Deficit** during December widened 10.45% to $40.2 billion from $36.4 billion during November as the value of **imports** rose 4.8%, due to a rebounding U.S. economy as well as higher energy prices. The consensus estimate projected the deficit to slip to $35.5 billion. Oil rose to $73.20/bbl during December from $72.54/bbl during November and has risen from a cycle low of $39.22/bbl recorded this past February. The increase in the deficit was also exacerbated by the 14.3% (-17.5% y/y) rise in the quantity of petroleum imports during December as well as the 3.3% (+3.3% y/y) rise in non-oil imports, its' fifth increase in the past six months. **Imports** rose 4.8% during December to $182.9 billion from $174.5 billion while **exports** rose 3.3% to $142.7 billion from $138.1 billion. The increase in the trade deficit is reflective of strengthening economies both here and abroad.

Friday, February 4th

NON-FARM PAYROLLS fell by 20,000 during the month of January, a slight disappointment for many which had expected an actual increase in payrolls of 13,000. Since the recession began in December 2007 employers have shed nearly 8.4 million workers while **private sector employment** has fallen to its lowest level since 1998. The **UNEMPLOYMENT RATE** fell to 9.7% from 10.0% as this is calculated from a separate household survey which saw job gains of 541,000 the most in nearly five years. Furthermore, if laid-off workers who have given up looking for new jobs or are working part-time out of necessity were included, the unemployment rate would have been 16.5% during January, down from 17.3% one month prior. The **labor force participation rate** remained steady at around 64.7% during January, a twenty-three year low. **Average hourly earnings** rose by $0.05 to $18.89 from $18.84 while over the past year, AHE have risen 2.5%. **Hours worked** rose to 33.3 from 33.2, slightly off a series low 33.0 hours recorded during November. The combination pushed **average weekly earnings** up $3.55 or 0.57% to $629.04 from $625.49. Average weekly earnings have risen by 2.5% over the past year, in large part due to declines in the length of the average workweek. *As noted last month, at this particular time it is difficult to envision the labor market making consistent gains while the average workweek is near historic lows, capacity utilization remains low and the unemployment rate remains high.*

The Federal Reserve reported that **CONSUMER CREDIT** fell d $1.8 billion during December, a record eleventh consecutive monthly decline, since the data began being tracked backed in 1943. It is also the fifteenth decline over the past seventeen months. Over the past year Consumer Credit has fallen by 4.0% as high unemployment and a bottoming housing market has put them on the shelf. According to Haver Analytics, "annualized, credit growth averaged 8% during the fifteen years ended 2007. Over an even longer time period that increase does not loom particularly large. However, against an average 5% growth in disposable income during those years, it precipitated a rise in the ratio to disposable income to 24% from a longer term norm of 17%." **Non-revolving credit** (automobiles, consumer durables and student loans), which accounts for nearly two-thirds of total consumer credit, rose by $6.8 billion, but over the past twelve months it has fallen 0.7%, the first decline since 1992r 2.8%. Finally, **revolving credit** (credit cards) outstanding fell $8.5 billion during December, a record fifteen consecutive declines, this according to the Federal Reserve. Over the past year revolving credit has fallen a record 9.5%.

Thursday, February 4th

FACTORY ORDERS during the month of December rose by 1.0%, this after rising 1.0% during November while **FACTORY INVENTORIES** fell by 0.1%. This combination of rising orders and falling inventories should at some time result in a pick-up in manufacturing. Finally, this combination pushed the **INVENTORY-TO-SALES RATIO** down to 1.29 months from 1.32 months one month prior, historically a low level.

FOURTH QUARTER PRODUCTIVITY slowed to a still blistering 6.2% from 7.2% during the third quarter and a 6.9% increase recorded during Q2. Over the past year Productivity has jumped 3.0%, the strongest jump since 2003. **HOURLY COMPENSATION** rose at an annualized rate of 1.5%, the slowest pace of growth since 1994. Over the past year, Hourly Compensation has risen by just 2.2%. **LABOR COSTS** (defined as output per hour of work and can be determined by dividing hourly labor costs by output per hour) fell at a revised annualized rate of 4.4% during Q4 and by 2.8% y/y. The sharp increase in productivity was a result of sharper cost cutting by employers in the form of hours worked and the number of employees when compared to output.

Wednesday, February 3rd

The Institute for Supply Management's **composite index of non-manufacturing (service) sector activity** edged up above the breakeven point to 50.5% during December from 49.8% one month prior. Of note, was the rise in **Employment** (44.6% v. 43.6%) and **New Orders** (54.7% v. 52.0%) as well as the declines in the negatively correlated **Inventory Component** (46.5% v.51.5%), **Backlog of Orders** (45.5% v. 48.0%), and **Imports** (47.0% v. 52.5%). **Employment** rose slightly (44.6% v. 43.6%) as did the **Prices Paid Component** (61.2% v. 59.6%).

Monday, February 1st

The Institute for Supply Management's **composite index of manufacturing sector activity** rose to 58.4% during January from 54.9% during November and in so doing notched its highest level since April 2004. The ISM hit a low of 32.9% during December 2008. Generally speaking, "a reading above 50% indicates that the manufacturing economy is generally expanding; below 50% indicates that it is generally contracting." Of note was the jump in the **New Orders** (65.9% v 64.8%); **Production** (66.2% v. 59.7%); **Imports** (56.5% v. 55.0%); **Exports** (58.5% v. 54.5%); and **Employment** (53.3% v. 50.2%). An inversely correlated component, **Customers'** Inventories fell to 32.0% from 35.0%, an indication that inventories are too low. Finally, the **Prices Paid Component** surged to 70.0% v. 61.5%).

The Bureau of Economic Analysis reported that **PERSONAL INCOME** rose 0.4% during December, matching the gain recorded during November. For all of calendar year 2009, personal incomes have fallen 1.4%, the first such decline on record. **DISPOSABLE PERSONAL INCOME** (personal income less taxes) rose 0.4% during December and by 1.5% during 2009. **PERSONAL CONSUMPTION**, which represents approximately 70% of economic activity, rose 0.2% in December, but fell by 0.4% last year. **PERSONAL SAVINGS (**Disposable Personal Income Less Outlays) rose to 4.8% during December from 4.5% during November. The **PCE CHAIN PRICE INDEX**, one of the Fed's favorite measures of inflation rose 0.1% during December (+2.1% y/y) while the **core PCE Chain Price Index** also rose 0.1% during December and by 1.5% y/y.

U.S. CONSTRUCTION SPENDING during December slumped 1.2%, twice the consensus estimate and twice the pace at which it declined during November. Of concern, over the past year Construction Spending has fallen 9.9%. **Private Construction Spending** fell 1.2% in December and by 14.9% y/y while **Private Residential Construction Spending** slipped 2.8% in December and by 10.9% y/y. **Private Nonresidential Construction Spending** rose 0.2% (-27.7% y/y) and finally, **Public Construction** fell 1.2% during December, but has risen 1.3% y/y.

Friday, January 29th

The Commerce Department reported that **FOURTH QUARTER GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT,** a tally of the output of all goods and services in the United States, rose at an annualized rate of 5.7%, up from a pace of 2.2% recorded during Q3, above the 4.6% Consensus Estimate and the most rapid rate of growth since Q3-2003. This increase marks the first time since 2007 that GDP rose for two consecutive quarters, increases that broke the string of four consecutive declines, the longest such stretch since 1947. The majority of the increase can be attributed to 3.4% **effect from an increase in inventories.** That said, **domestic final demand** moderated to an annual pace of 1.7% during Q4 from 2.3% recorded during Q3. The **PCE Chained GDP Price Index** rose 0.6% (0.7% y/y).

The **EMPLOYMENT COST INDEX**, according to the Department of Labor, a "measure of quarterly changes in compensation costs, which include wages, salaries, and employer costs for employee benefits for civilian workers (non-farm private and state and local government)" rose by 0.4% during the fourth quarter. Over the past year the ECI rose just 1.2%, the slowest pace of growth on record (the series dates back to 1980). The **wages & salaries component** (70% of ECI) rose by 0.5% (1.3% y/y) during the fourth quarter, this following the 0.5% gain during the third quarter. The **cost of benefits** rose by 0.4% over the past quarter, by 0.3% during the third quarter and by just 1.0% over the past twelve months.

Thursday, January 28th

ORDERS FOR DURABLE GOODS (those expected to last at least three years) rose 0.3% during December, rebounding from the 0.4% drop recorded during November. Over the past year, Orders for Durable Goods have fallen 3.1%. **Excluding transportation, orders for durable goods** rose 0.9%, this after rising 2.1% during November. Over the past year, they have risen 0.5% y/y. Finally, **inventories** fell for the twelfth consecutive month, during December, by 0.2% while **shipments** rose 2.1%, the biggest gain since March 2008.

Wednesday, January 27th

The Commerce Department reported that **SALES OF NEW HOMES** fell 28,000 or by 7.6% during December to an annualized rate of 342,000 units from a revised 370,000 (orig. 355,000) during November, a slide that should be halted by the recent extension of the government's homebuyers' tax credit. Sales of New Homes have fallen 8.6% y/y and by nearly 75% since the peak in July of 2005. The **length of time it would take to sell the current inventory of unsold homes** rose to 8.1 months from 7.9 months, down from 12.4 months recorded during January 2009. The **median price of a new home** rose 5.23% during December to $221,300 from $210,000 during November, but have nonetheless fallen 3.6% from over the past year. Of note, the **S&P CASE-SHILLER HOME PRICE INDEX**, an index of twenty metropolitan markets, rose by 0.2% during November to 146.28 from 146.00 one month prior (January 2000 = 100), the fourth consecutive monthly increase. However, despite this, the index remains down 5.3% y/y.

Tuesday, January 26th

The **CONFERENCE BOARD'S CONSUMER CONFIDENCE INDEX** rose to 55.9 during January from an upwardly revised 53.6 (orig. 52.9) during December. Encouragingly, the **present situation** index surged to 25.0 from 20.2, a twenty-six year low (Index 17.5, Feb. 1983) while the **expectations index** bounced back to 76.5 from 75.9 during December. Those surveyed that said that **jobs are "hard to get"** decreased to 47.4% from 48.1% while those claiming that **jobs are "plentiful"** rose to 4.3% from 3.1%. Those **expecting business conditions to improve** decreased to 20.9% from 21.2% in December. Of note, was the increase of respondents claiming that **business conditions are bad** to 46.1% from 45.7% as well as the move to 9.0% from 7.5% of the respondents that are claiming **business conditions are good.**

Monday, January 25th

SALES OF EXISTING HOMES fell 16.7% during December to an annualized rate of 5.450 million units from 6.450 million units during November as the first-time homebuyers' tax credit expired. Sales of Existing Homes have now risen 15.0% over the past twelve months. The **inventory of unsold homes** fell to 7.2 months during December while the **inventory of unsold single-family homes** fell to 6.9 months, the lowest since March 2007. Finally, the **median existing-home sales price** rose by $8,300 or 4.88% to $178,300 during December from $170,000 during November and have risen 1.5% over the past year. The recent decline in the median existing home sales price has helped pushed home affordability up by approximately 2/3 from the 2006 low.

Economic & Investment Definitions

Strength of Dollar

A Weak Dollar increases exports while a Strong Dollar decreases exports. The reasoning is that a Weak dollar makes goods and services cheaper abroad while a strong dollar makes exports more expensive abroad. A strong dollar also helps keep inflation at bay by making imports cheaper, thereby helping keep wage and other inflationary pressures below the boiling point. It also provides foreign Treasury buyers two ways to profit – through bond price and dollar appreciation.

A weak dollar can be inflationary since it makes imports more expensive. This, in turn, gives domestic companies room to increase prices. Conversely, a strengthening dollar makes imports more competitive on a price basis.

"Let's imagine the dollar quickly dropped by a further 25% against each major world currency, roughly parallel to housing's unprecedented 30% decline. That would mean it would take $2 to buy a single euro. On the good side, U.S. manufacturers would find it easier to compete globally, and foreign tourism would boom in the U.S. On the bad side, inflation in the U.S. would zoom because of the rising cost of imported products. Americans would have even more trouble getting a loan as foreign buyers pull out of the debt market. Abroad, the cheap dollar would make it harder for other nations to export to the U.S., hurting their growth. China could face social unrest. Trade wars could break out." (Business Week, *What Happens If The Dollar Crashes*; October 26, 2009)

Trade Deficit

An expanding trade deficit (imports exceeding exports) hurt the dollar because more dollars are held by foreigners. Some fear that foreigners will tire of holding declining dollars and sell them for other currencies putting added pressure on the greenback. In addition, foreign investors with U.S. assets are seeing those holdings decline as the dollar falls. As these investors sell these holdings and move to investments in other countries, it adds to selling pressure of the dollar.

Employment Cost Index

Compiled by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, is considered the most accurate measure of wages, salaries and benefits, measuring compensation per hour, including wages, salaries and the cost of benefits - from health insurance to Social Security contributions. Wages and salaries account for approximately seventy percent of the employment cost index with benefits (health insurance and pension benefits) accounting for the rest.

Put/Call Ratio

The put-to-call ratio measures the sentiment of options traders. When the number of puts compared to calls is high, that means that many traders think the market will go down. When call volume outnumbers puts, many think the market is going to rise. Many use this as a contrarian indicator meaning that if options traders are too bullish, the market may actually fall.

Put option buyers bet that stocks will fall while call buyers bet that stocks will rise. Conversely put option sellers bet that stocks will rise while call sellers bet that stocks will fall. Options buyers and sellers are subject to expiration dates. Buyers of call options bet that a stock will be worth more than the price set by the option (the strike price), plus the price they pay for the option itself. Buyers of put options bet that the stock's price will drop below the price set by the option. When the number of puts compared to calls is high, that means that many traders think the market will go down. When call volume outnumbers puts, many think the market is going to rise. Many use this as a contrarian indicator meaning that if options traders are too bullish, the market may actually fall.

Volatility Indices (^vix and ^vxn)

According to the Chicago Board of Options Exchange, the Volatility Index, "known by its ticker symbol "vix," was introduced by CBOE in 1993, and measures the volatility of the U.S. equity market. It provides investors with up-to-the-minute market estimates of expected volatility by using real-time OEX index option bid/ask quotes."

The CBOE NASDAQ Volatility Index, known by its ticker symbol "vxn," is the "benchmark of "tech stock" volatility based on the implied volatility of the NASDAQ 100 Index options. Calculated using the same methodology as the CBOE Market Volatility Index, the VXN is constructed so that, at any given time, it represents the implied volatility of a hypothetical at-the-money NDX option with thirty calendar days to expiration."

Arms Index (^sti.n)

A contrarian index that indicates the bullishness or bearishness of investors. A reading below one indicates more action in rising stocks and a figure above one indicates more action in declining stocks. As a contrarian indicator, a reading above one is bullish for investors while a reading below one indicates bearishness.

Advancing Stocks / Declining Stocks + Advancing Volume / Declining Volume = The result is the Arms Index

Federal Reserve Data, Dates, Releases & Definitions

2010 Scheduled FOMC Meetings:

March 16; April 27-28; June 22-23; August 10; September 21; November 2-3; December 14.

Federal Funds Rate

The rate set by the Federal Reserve and that banks charge each other to borrow money overnight (the overnight inter-bank lending rate). The Fed Funds target rate currently is between 0.00% and 0.25%; the most recent rate change being a 75 to 100-basis point rate cut on December 16th, 2008. This was the tenth rate cut after the Fed Funds Rate peaked at 5.25% on June 29th, 2007.

Discount Rate

The interest rate charged to commercial banks and other depository institutions on loans they receive from the Federal Reserve. Currently at 0.75%. Most recent change was a 25-basis point rate hike on February 18th, 2010 intra-meeting. This was the first hike in the Discount Rate since June 29th, 2006 when the Fed hiked from 6.00% to 6.25%.

Money Supply

The Federal Reserve controls the supply of money in the economy through open market operations with banks. If the Fed is buying U.S. Treasuries from banks, the banks receive cash, which they then can lend out. The Fed required banks to maintain reserves of ten percent of deposits. Therefore, for every dollar they receive by selling Treasuries to the Fed, $9.00 can be lent out to borrowers. Therefore, new dollars are entering the economy. The Fed therefore drains liquidity from the economy through selling U.S. Treasuries to member banks.

M1-A	currency plus demand deposits
M1-B	M1-A plus other checkable deposits
M2	M1-B plus overnight repos, money market funds, savings and time deposits less than $100,000,000
M3	M2 plus large time deposits and term repos
M4	M3 plus all other liquid assets

Statement by The Federal Reserve following the Hike in the Discount Rate on February 18th, 2010

The Federal Reserve Board on Thursday announced that in light of continued improvement in financial market conditions it had unanimously approved several modifications to the terms of its discount window lending programs.

Like the closure of a number of extraordinary credit programs earlier this month, these changes are intended as a further normalization of the Federal Reserve's lending facilities. The modifications are not expected to lead to tighter financial conditions for households and businesses and do not signal any change in the outlook for the economy or for monetary policy, which remains about as it was at the January meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC). At that meeting, the Committee left its target range for the federal funds rate at 0 to 1/4 percent and said it anticipates that economic conditions are likely to warrant exceptionally low levels of the federal funds rate for an extended period.

The changes to the discount window facilities include Board approval of requests by the boards of directors of the 12 Federal Reserve Banks to increase the primary credit rate (generally referred to as the discount rate) from 1/2 percent to 3/4 percent. This action is effective on February 19.

In addition, the Board announced that, effective on March 18, the typical maximum maturity for primary credit loans will be shortened to overnight. Primary credit is provided by Reserve Banks on a fully secured basis to depository institutions that are in generally sound condition as a backup source of funds. Finally, the Board announced that it had raised the minimum bid rate for the Term Auction Facility (TAF) by 1/4 percentage point to 1/2 percent. The final TAF auction will be on March 8, 2010.

Easing the terms of primary credit was one of the Federal Reserve's first responses to the financial crisis. On August 17, 2007, the Federal Reserve reduced the spread of the primary credit rate over the FOMC's target for the federal funds rate to 1/2 percentage point, from 1 percentage point, and lengthened the typical maximum maturity from overnight to 30 days. On December 12, 2007, the Federal Reserve created the TAF to further improve the access of depository institutions to term funding. On March 16, 2008, the Federal Reserve lowered the spread of the primary credit rate over the target federal funds rate to 1/4 percentage point and extended the maximum maturity of primary credit loans to 90 days.

Subsequently, in response to improving conditions in wholesale funding markets, on June 25, 2009, the Federal Reserve initiated a gradual reduction in TAF auction sizes. As announced on November 17, 2009, and implemented on January 14, 2010, the Federal Reserve began the process of normalizing the terms on primary credit by reducing the typical maximum maturity to 28 days.

The increase in the discount rate announced Thursday widens the spread between the primary credit rate and the top of the FOMC's 0 to 1/4 percent target range for the federal funds rate to 1/2 percentage point. The increase in the spread and reduction in maximum maturity will encourage depository institutions to rely on private funding markets for short-term credit and to use the Federal Reserve's primary credit facility only as a backup source of funds. The Federal Reserve will assess over time whether further increases in the spread are appropriate in view of experience with the 1/2 percentage point spread.

Statement by The Federal Reserve following the January 27th, 2010 Meeting

Information received since the Federal Open Market Committee met in December suggests that economic activity has continued to strengthen and that the deterioration in the labor market is abating. Household spending is expanding at a moderate rate but remains constrained by a weak labor market, modest income growth, lower housing wealth, and tight credit. Business spending on equipment and software appears to be picking up, but investment in structures is still contracting and employers remain reluctant to add to payrolls. Firms have brought inventory stocks into better alignment with sales. While bank lending continues to contract, financial market conditions remain supportive of economic growth. Although the pace of economic recovery is likely to be moderate for a time, the Committee anticipates a gradual return to higher levels of resource utilization in a context of price stability.

With substantial resource slack continuing to restrain cost pressures and with longer-term inflation expectations stable, inflation is likely to be subdued for some time.

The Committee will maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 0 to 1/4 percent and continues to anticipate that economic conditions, including low rates of resource utilization, subdued inflation trends, and stable inflation expectations, are likely to warrant exceptionally low levels of the federal funds rate for an extended period. To provide support to mortgage lending and housing markets and to improve overall conditions in private credit markets, the Federal Reserve is in the process of purchasing $1.25 trillion of agency mortgage-backed securities and about $175 billion of agency debt. In order to promote a smooth transition in markets, the Committee is gradually slowing the pace of these purchases, and it anticipates that these transactions will be executed by the end of the first quarter. The Committee will continue to evaluate its purchases of securities in light of the evolving economic outlook and conditions in financial markets.

In light of improved functioning of financial markets, the Federal Reserve will be closing the Asset-Backed Commercial Paper Money Market Mutual Fund Liquidity Facility, the Commercial Paper Funding Facility, the Primary Dealer Credit Facility, and the Term Securities Lending Facility on February 1, as previously announced. In addition, the temporary liquidity swap arrangements between the Federal Reserve and other central banks will expire on February 1. The Federal Reserve is in the process of winding down its Term Auction Facility -- $50 billion in 28-day credit will be offered on February 8 and $25 billion in 28-day credit will be offered at the final auction on March 8. The anticipated expiration dates for the Term Asset-Backed Securities Loan Facility remain set at June 30 for loans backed by new-issue commercial mortgage-backed securities and March 31 for loans backed by all other types of collateral. The Federal Reserve is prepared to modify these plans if necessary to support financial stability and economic growth.

Voting for the FOMC monetary policy action were: Ben S. Bernanke, Chairman; William C. Dudley, Vice Chairman; James Bullard; Elizabeth A. Duke; Donald L. Kohn; Sandra Pianalto; Eric S. Rosengren; Daniel K. Tarullo; and Kevin M. Warsh. Voting against the policy action was Thomas M. Hoenig, who believed that economic and financial conditions had changed sufficiently that the expectation of exceptionally low levels of the federal funds rate for an extended period was no longer warranted.

Statement by The Federal Reserve following the December 15th-16th, 2009 Meeting

Information received since the Federal Open Market Committee met in November suggests that economic activity has continued to pick up and that the deterioration in the labor market is abating. The housing sector has shown some signs of improvement over recent months. Household spending appears to be expanding at a moderate rate, though it remains constrained by a weak labor market, modest income growth, lower housing wealth, and tight credit. Businesses are still cutting back on fixed investment, though at a slower pace, and remain reluctant to add to payrolls; they continue to make progress in bringing inventory stocks into better alignment with sales. Financial market conditions have become more supportive of economic growth. Although economic activity is likely to remain weak for a time, the Committee anticipates that policy actions to stabilize financial markets and institutions, fiscal and monetary stimulus, and market forces will contribute to a strengthening of economic growth and a gradual return to higher levels of resource utilization in a context of price stability.

With substantial resource slack likely to continue to dampen cost pressures and with longer-term inflation expectations stable, the Committee expects that inflation will remain subdued for some time.

The Committee will maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 0 to 1/4 percent and continues to anticipate that economic conditions, including low rates of resource utilization, subdued inflation trends, and stable inflation expectations, are likely to warrant exceptionally low levels of the federal funds rate for an extended period. To provide support to mortgage lending and housing markets and to improve overall conditions in private credit markets, the Federal Reserve is in the process of purchasing $1.25 trillion of agency mortgage-backed securities and about $175 billion of agency debt. In order to promote a smooth transition in markets, the Committee is gradually slowing the pace of these purchases, and it anticipates that these transactions will be executed by the end of the first quarter of 2010. The Committee will continue to evaluate the timing and overall amounts of its purchases of securities in light of the evolving economic outlook and conditions in financial markets.

In light of ongoing improvements in the functioning of financial markets, the Committee and the Board of Governors anticipate that most of the Federal Reserve's special liquidity facilities will expire on February 1, 2010, consistent with the Federal Reserve's announcement of June 25, 2009. These facilities include the Asset-Backed Commercial Paper Money Market Mutual Fund Liquidity Facility, the Commercial Paper Funding Facility, the Primary Dealer Credit Facility, and the Term Securities Lending Facility. The Federal Reserve will also be working with its central bank counterparties to close its temporary liquidity swap arrangements by February 1. The Federal Reserve expects that amounts provided under the Term Auction Facility will continue to be scaled back in early 2010. The anticipated expiration dates for the Term Asset-Backed Securities Loan Facility remain set at June 30, 2010, for loans backed by new-issue commercial mortgage-backed securities and March 31, 2010, for loans backed by all other types of collateral. The Federal Reserve is prepared to modify these plans if necessary to support financial stability and economic growth.

Statement by The Federal Reserve following the November 3rd-4th, 2009 Meeting

Information received since the Federal Open Market Committee met in September suggests that economic activity has continued to pick up. Conditions in financial markets were roughly unchanged, on balance, over the intermeeting period. Activity in the housing sector has increased over recent months. Household spending appears to be expanding but remains constrained by ongoing job losses, sluggish income growth, lower housing wealth, and tight credit. Businesses are still cutting back on fixed investment and staffing, though at a slower pace; they continue to make progress in bringing inventory stocks into better alignment with sales. Although economic activity is likely to remain weak for a time, the Committee anticipates that policy actions to stabilize financial markets and institutions, fiscal and monetary stimulus, and market forces will support a strengthening of economic growth and a gradual return to higher levels of resource utilization in a context of price stability.

With substantial resource slack likely to continue to dampen cost pressures and with longer-term inflation expectations stable, the Committee expects that inflation will remain subdued for some time.

In these circumstances, the Federal Reserve will continue to employ a wide range of tools to promote economic recovery and to preserve price stability. The Committee will maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 0 to 1/4 percent and continues to anticipate that economic conditions, including low rates of resource utilization, subdued inflation trends, and stable inflation expectations, are likely to warrant exceptionally low levels of the federal funds rate for an extended period. To provide support to mortgage lending and housing markets and to improve overall conditions in private credit markets, the Federal Reserve will purchase a total of $1.25 trillion of agency mortgage-backed securities and about $175 billion of agency debt. The amount of agency debt purchases, while somewhat less than the previously announced maximum of $200 billion, is consistent with the recent path of purchases and reflects the limited availability of agency debt. In order to promote a smooth transition in markets, the Committee will gradually slow the pace of its purchases of both agency debt and agency mortgage-backed securities and anticipates that these transactions will be executed by the end of the first quarter of 2010. The Committee will continue to evaluate the timing and overall amounts of its purchases of securities in light of the evolving economic outlook and conditions in financial markets. The Federal Reserve is monitoring the size and composition of its balance sheet and will make adjustments to its credit and liquidity programs as warranted.

Statement by The Federal Reserve following the March 16th-17th, 2009 Meeting

Information received since the Federal Open Market Committee met in January indicates that the economy continues to contract. Job losses, declining equity and housing wealth, and tight credit conditions have weighed on consumer sentiment and spending. Weaker sales prospects and difficulties in obtaining credit have led businesses to cut back on inventories and fixed investment. U.S. exports have slumped as a number of major trading partners have also fallen into recession. Although the near-term economic outlook is weak, the Committee anticipates that policy actions to stabilize financial markets and institutions, together with fiscal and monetary stimulus, will contribute to a gradual resumption of sustainable economic growth.

In light of increasing economic slack here and abroad, the Committee expects that inflation will remain subdued. Moreover, the Committee sees some risk that inflation could persist for a time below rates that best foster economic growth and price stability in the longer term.

In these circumstances, the Federal Reserve will employ all available tools to promote economic recovery and to preserve price stability. The Committee will maintain the target range for the federal funds rate at 0 to 1/4 percent and anticipates that economic conditions are likely to warrant exceptionally low levels of the federal funds rate for an extended period. To provide greater support to mortgage lending and housing markets, the Committee decided today to increase the size of the Federal Reserve's balance sheet further by purchasing up to an additional $750 billion of agency mortgage-backed securities, bringing its total purchases of these securities to up to $1.25 trillion this year, and to increase its purchases of agency debt this year by up to $100 billion to a total of up to $200 billion. Moreover, to help improve conditions in private credit markets, the Committee decided to purchase up to $300 billion of longer-term Treasury securities over the next six months. The Federal Reserve has launched the Term Asset-Backed Securities Loan Facility to facilitate the extension of credit to households and small businesses and anticipates that the range of eligible collateral for this facility is likely to be expanded to include other financial assets. The Committee will continue to carefully monitor the size and composition of the Federal Reserve's balance sheet in light of evolving financial and economic developments.

Statement by The Federal Reserve following the December 15th-16th, 2008 Meeting

The Federal Open Market Committee decided today to establish a target range for the federal funds rate of 0 to 1/4 percent.

Since the Committee's last meeting, labor market conditions have deteriorated, and the available data indicate that consumer spending, business investment, and industrial production have declined. Financial markets remain quite strained and credit conditions tight. Overall, the outlook for economic activity has weakened further.

Meanwhile, inflationary pressures have diminished appreciably. In light of the declines in the prices of energy and other commodities and the weaker prospects for economic activity, the Committee expects inflation to moderate further in coming quarters.

The Federal Reserve will employ all available tools to promote the resumption of sustainable economic growth and to preserve price stability. In particular, the Committee anticipates that weak economic conditions are likely to warrant exceptionally low levels of the federal funds rate for some time.

The focus of the Committee's policy going forward will be to support the functioning of financial markets and stimulate the economy through open market operations and other measures that sustain the size of the Federal Reserve's balance sheet at a high level. As previously announced, over the next few quarters the Federal Reserve will purchase large quantities of agency debt and mortgage-backed securities to provide support to the mortgage and housing markets, and it stands ready to expand its purchases of agency debt and mortgage-backed securities as conditions warrant. The Committee is also evaluating the potential benefits of purchasing longer-term Treasury securities. Early next year, the Federal Reserve will also implement the Term Asset-Backed Securities Loan Facility to facilitate the extension of credit to households and small businesses. The Federal Reserve will continue to consider ways of using its balance sheet to further support credit markets and economic activity.

In a related action, the Board of Governors unanimously approved a 75-basis-point decrease in the discount rate to 1/2 percent. In taking this action, the Board approved the requests submitted by the Boards of Directors of the Federal Reserve Banks of New York, Cleveland, Richmond, Atlanta, Minneapolis, and San Francisco. The Board also established interest rates on required and excess reserve balances of ¼ percent.

Statement by The Federal Reserve following the September 16th, 2008 Meeting

Joint Statement by Central Banks

Throughout the current financial crisis, central banks have engaged in continuous close consultation and have cooperated in unprecedented joint actions such as the provision of liquidity to reduce strains in financial markets.

Inflationary pressures have started to moderate in a number of countries, partly reflecting a marked decline in energy and other commodity prices. Inflation expectations are diminishing and remain anchored to price stability. The recent intensification of the financial crisis has augmented the downside risks to growth and thus has diminished further the upside risks to price stability.

Some easing of global monetary conditions is therefore warranted. Accordingly, the Bank of Canada, the Bank of England, the European Central Bank, the Federal Reserve, Sveriges Riksbank, and the Swiss National Bank are today announcing reductions in policy interest rates. The Bank of Japan expresses its strong support of these policy actions.

Federal Reserve Actions

The Federal Open Market Committee has decided to lower its target for the federal funds rate 50 basis points to 1-1/2 percent. The Committee took this action in light of evidence pointing to a weakening of economic activity and a reduction in inflationary pressures.

Incoming economic data suggest that the pace of economic activity has slowed markedly in recent months. Moreover, the intensification of financial market turmoil is likely to exert additional restraint on spending, partly by further reducing the ability of households and businesses to obtain credit. Inflation has been high, but the Committee believes that the decline in energy and other commodity prices and the weaker prospects for economic activity have reduced the upside risks to inflation.

The Committee will monitor economic and financial developments carefully and will act as needed to promote sustainable economic growth and price stability.

Voting for the FOMC monetary policy action were: Ben S. Bernanke, Chairman; Timothy F. Geithner, Vice Chairman; Elizabeth A. Duke; Richard W. Fisher; Donald L. Kohn; Randall S. Kroszner; Sandra Pianalto; Charles I. Plosser; Gary H. Stern; and Kevin M. Warsh.

In a related action, the Board of Governors unanimously approved a 50-basis-point decrease in the discount rate to 1-3/4 percent. In taking this action, the Board approved the request submitted by the Board of Directors of the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston.

Statement by The Federal Reserve following the September 16th, 2008 Meeting

The Federal Open Market Committee decided today to keep its target for the federal funds rate at 2 percent.

Strains in financial markets have increased significantly and labor markets have weakened further. Economic growth appears to have slowed recently, partly reflecting a softening of household spending. Tight credit conditions, the ongoing housing contraction, and some slowing in export growth are likely to weigh on economic growth over the next few quarters. Over time, the substantial easing of monetary policy, combined with ongoing measures to foster market liquidity, should help to promote moderate economic growth.

Inflation has been high, spurred by the earlier increases in the prices of energy and some other commodities. The Committee expects inflation to moderate later this year and next year, but the inflation outlook remains highly uncertain.

The downside risks to growth and the upside risks to inflation are both of significant concern to the Committee. The Committee will monitor economic and financial developments carefully and will act as needed to promote sustainable economic growth and price stability.

Limits, Limitations, Data & Dates

Social Security Data (www.ssa.gov/pressoffice/colafacts2004.htm)

• New York Tax Freedom Day for 2009	May 5th
• 2010 Social Security Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA)	0.0%
• Average Monthly Benefit	$1,153. (+$63.)
• 2008 Social Security Wage Base	102,700. ($97,500.)
• Social Security Recipients Under Age 65 in 2008 Can Earn	$13,560. ($12,960.)
• Social Security Recipients At Full S.S. Retirement Age	Unlimited

Re-characterization of Roth IRA back to Traditional IRA

The Internal Revenue Service gives you up to October 15th of the year following the year of the Roth conversion to re-characterize that conversion. So for 2005 Roth conversions, the re-characterization deadline is October 15, 2003. The re-characterization treats the funds as if the conversion had never occurred. Should you re-characterize, don't forget to file an amended return and claim a refund for any tax paid on the conversion.

Retirement Savings Facts

- 2010 401(k) limits are $16,500 for individuals under fifty years of age.
- 2010 401(k) limits for over age fifty are an additional $5,500 as a catch-up provision.

- 2010 IRA limits are $5,000 for individuals under fifty years of age.
- 2010 IRA limits are $6,000 for individuals over fifty years of age.

- 2010 Roth IRA contributions phased out for Joint Filers w/ AGI between $167,000 and $177,000.
- 2010 Roth IRA contributions phased out for Individual Filers w/ AGI between $105,000 and $120,000.

Estate Tax Exclusion Limits

- 2009 Federal Estate Tax Exclusion increases to $3.5 million.
- 2010 Federal Estate Tax Exclusion decreases to $0.
- 2011 Federal Estate Tax Exclusion increases to $1 million.

CORPORATE NEWS & EARNINGS REPORTS
(Please note that all opinions are as of the date indicated and are not meant to e a specific recommendation on your particular situation, but just a general opinion on the appreciation potential of the stock at its current price.)

Common Stock & Equity ETF Portfolio Holdings** Ranked by Market Value as of January 31st, 2010.					
Percent of Common Stock	***Company Name***	***Symbol***	***As of Jan 31st, 2010***	***As of Dec 31st, 2009***	***As of Nov 30th, 2009***
6.05%	Hewlett Packard	HPQ	1	1	1
5.16%	Apple Computer	AAPL	2	2	2
4.26%	General Electric	GE	3	4	3
3.82%	McDonald's Corporation	MCD	4	5	5
3.77%	JP Morgan Chase	JPM	5	3	4
3.04%	MasterCard, Inc.	MA	6	6	8
2.97%	Nike, Inc.	NKE	7	8	7
2.89%	Exxon Mobil	XOM	8	7	6
2.63%	Conoco Phillips	COP	9	9	9
2.58%	Intel Corp.	INTC	10	10	11
2.53%	Pepsico, Inc.	PEP	11	11	10
2.41%	Johnson & Johnson	JNJ	12	12	12
2.23%	S&P 500 ADR's	SPY	13	13	13
2.12%	Cisco Systems, Inc.	CSCO	14	14	14
1.73%	iShares DJ Select Divd Index	DVY	15	15	17
1.72%	Ford Motor Company	F	16	19	24
1.70%	Emerson Electric Co.	EMR	17	16	15
1.68%	Pfizer, Inc.	PFE	18	17	16
1.48%	Celgene Corp.	CELG	19	18	18
1.34%	Bank of America	BAC	20	20	19
1.17%	Foster Wheeler	FWLT	21	21	20
1.17%	Alpha Natural Resources	ANR	22	23	27
1.16%	Mosaic Companies	MOS	23	22	28
1.16%	Diageo, PLC ADRs	DEO	24	24	23
1.14%	Oracle Corporation	ORCL	25	26	26
1.13%	Microsoft Corp.	MSFT	26	25	22
1.00%	Suncor Energy	SU	29	27	21
0.94%	Dell Computer	DELL	32	28	25

Portfolio Concentration: Top 25 holdings represent 61.92% of the common stock portfolio, as of January 31st, 2010.

Largest Mutual Fund Holdings as of January 31st, 2010.		
Domestic Equity Funds	***International Equity Funds***	***Hybrid/Fixed Income/ Muni Fund/ETF***
AF Capital Income Builder	William Blair International Growth	Payden GNMA Fund
Schwab 1000 Select Fund	Tweedy Browne Global Value	Loomis Sayles Bond Fund
Baron Asset Fund	BLDRS Asia 50 ADR Index	PIMCO Total Return
Parnassus Equity Income Fund	Janus Overseas	iShares Lehman Bros TIPS
Marsico Focused Fund	Harbor International	MetWest Total Return Bond Fund

*Common Stock & Equity ETF Portfolio Holdings** Ranked by Share Balance as of January 31st, 2010.*							
Notes & Stock Splits; Avg. Cost Per Share			***Company Name***	***Symbol***	***As of Jan 31st, 2010***	***As of Dec 31st, 2009***	***As of Nov 30th, 2009***
$23.37	1	1	General Electric	GE	119,478	120,561	132,817
$7.63	2	4	Ford Motor Company	F	71,725	61,490	55,495
$19.36	3	3	Intel Corporation	INTC	60,041	59,176	56,418
$42.87	4	2	Hewlett Packard Co.	HPQ	57,981	59,036	59,276
$40.17	5	5	JP Morgan Chase	JPM	43,594	45,594	45,181
$23.78	6	6	Cisco Systems	CSCO	42,633	41,843	39,488
$17.40	7	7	Pfizer, Inc.	PFE	40,594	41,234	41,225
$21.18	8	8	Bank of America	BAC	39,729	40,259	39,973
$10.40	9	9	First Niagara Financial	FNFG	34,381	34,686	35,086
$12.16	10	10	Dell Computer	DELL	32,840	34,185	34,185
$12.84	11	13	Duke Realty Corp.	DRE	28,330	27,650	27,520
$14.40	12	11	iPath DJ-AIG Natural Gas	GAZ	28,225	28,225	28,225
$41.69	13	12	McDonalds Corp.	MCD	27,603	27,928	27,372
$46.05	14	14	Conoco Phillips	COP	24,675	24,515	24,110
$8.55	15	15	TrustCo	TRST	23,039	23,011	22,745
$13.14	16	16	China Green Agriculture	CGA	22,895	22,970	20,620
$19.83	17	17	Oracle Corporation	ORCL	22,299	21,964	21,669
$59.94	18	18	Nike, Inc.	NKE	20,977	20,692	20,467
$36.68	19	19	Exxon Mobil	XOM	20,222	20,222	19,407
$63.47	20	21	Pepsico, Inc.	PEP	19,103	19,098	19,208
$15.79	21	22	SPDR Select Tech	XLK	19,075	18,955	19,295
$21.99	22	20	Foster Wheeler	FWLT	18,900	19,470	19,340
$41.62	23	25	Emerson Electric	EMR	18,465	18,405	18,120
$23.19	24	24	Ebay Inc.	EBAY	18,415	18,620	18,410
$49.80	25	29	iShrs DJ Dividend Index	DVY	18,276	17,891	16,775
$15.43	26	23	Mylan Labs	MYL	18,245	18,750	18,750
$28.08	27	26	Microsoft Corp.	MSFT	18,030	17,930	17,754

**Please note that all data listed on this and the preceding page are for general information purposes only and are not meant to be specific recommendations. Any change in ranking by either market value or share balance are not meant to conclude that Fagan Associates recommends a purchase or sale of the referenced security. Please consult with your financial advisor prior to making any changes to your portfolio.

"Try The Irrational"
<u>*The Record, 03.29.2009*</u>

As human beings, most of us are rational. We don't run in front of moving cars or put our hands on hot stovetops. Quite often becoming a successful investor requires that you take a seemingly irrational step. The more rational you are the less likely you are to buy low and sell high and the less likely you are to have faith that it's not different time. It is for this reason that, after talking to many investors, clients and non-clients alike, that we thought within the body of this column we would, in no particular order, present some thoughts and questions for the readers regarding investing.

If the entire objective of investing is to buy low and sell high, why then when investors have the chance to actually buy low and sell high very few do?

If it has never been "different this time" before regarding the stock market, why then do investors think it is different this time and investing will never again be profitable? If you do think it is different this time and it is not then you may also be making a life changing decision.

At the top of a bull market there are few pessimists. At the bottom of a bear market there are few optimists.

From top to bottom the S&P 500 dropped more than fifty-six percent. Sounds to us like it priced in a pretty severe recession.

Sometimes you can do everything right and still not be rewarded. That doesn't mean you aren't making the right choices. We recognize that stocks have gone nowhere in more than a decade. We recognize that this is very frustrating. We recognize that you are feeling somewhat insecure. However, whenever we think of this we are reminded of the author of "The Complete Book of Running," James Fixx, a picture of health who was very instrumental in converting millions of Americans during the 1970's, including ourselves, into avid runners. Unfortunately, Mr. Fixx died at the age of fifty-two from a heart condition while running in Vermont. Is the moral of this story that Mr. Fixx should have not exercised and not eaten healthy or is it that sometimes things just don't work out as planned? We would suggest the latter.

We often get the claim that "I'm going to get back into the market once the economy looks better." To that we respond that the stock market is a discounting mechanism and it therefore bottoms approximately six to nine months ahead of economic turns for better and for worse.

This is the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Pure rhetoric. Who says? During the 1970's the national unemployment rate peaked above nine percent; inflation was above ten percent and mortgage rates were above fifteen percent. Despite the fact that things may get worse, as of today unemployment is just over eight percent; inflation is near two percent and mortgage rates are at a forty year low, 4.85%.

Gold is a hedge against inflation and not an asset class.

At the current time, investors are experiencing the worst ten-year stretch since the ten years ending 1938. Sounds like investors over the next ten years might be amply rewarded for their pain they have endured over the prior ten.

At the bottom of the bear market most investors will be severely under allocated to stocks.

This is just some food for thought. We all have different goals and objectives. We all have different sources of income leading up to and in retirement so that we must all plan accordingly. However, over the past century, for the average American the surest way to achieve wealth has been through investing in the stock market. Oh, we forgot. It's different this time.

"Perform Your Own Stress Test"

<u>*The Record, 03.01.2009*</u>

Beginning this past Wednesday and continuing through the end of April, U.S. Federal Bank and Thrift Supervisors will be conducting an extensive analysis of banking institutions with assets greater than $100 billion to determine if such banks have sufficient capital buffers to withstand "the impact of an economic environment that is more challenging than is currently anticipated." According to this agency, this assessment will test financial institutions under a "baseline scenario [that] reflects a consensus expectation among private forecasters and the more adverse scenario [that] reflects a deeper and longer recession." The more adverse scenario includes unemployment rates above ten percent and a housing market that continues to decline.

With this in mind, we believe that investors should conduct their own "stress test" to determine whether or not the current allocation of their assets can withstand a stock market that continues to decline. The question that this stress test should answer is "if the stock market declines another twenty percent from its present level of approximately 7,270 on the Dow Jones Industrial Average and remains at this subdued level of approximately 5,800, will my standard of living be impacted, and, if so, to what extent?"

When performing the above referenced stress test, be careful to include all of your assets that can produce income such as a Defined Benefit Pension Plan, Social Security, and the values of your 401(k), 403(b) or other Employer-Sponsored Defined Contribution Plan. If you are already retired, include a conservative value of your home for a potential reverse mortgage. On the liability side, don't forget your daily living expenses as well as entertainment costs and gifts in addition to housing costs, insurance costs, energy costs and the cost of your automobile.

If the outcome of your own stress test indicates that your life will not change, then ignore the noise coming out of the financial markets and focus on what is really important, your life. If, however, a decline to this extent would impact your standard (quality) of life, then perhaps you should make some changes to your investment portfolio. Or, if you are retired, perhaps what you will leave to your heirs might need to be adjusted. If such an unanticipated "adverse scenario" becomes a reality, tough choices, like this, might be necessary to preserve your standard of living.

The probability of such a scenario is relatively low, less than twenty-five percent, but if you were to conduct such a stress test, it may allow you to invest more appropriately for your needs without the mental highs and lows that are part and parcel of a bear market.

Finally, if you pass your own stress test, be patient and let time heal our economic woes. We realize that this may be difficult because we live in a media-saturated country, a country where instant gratification is the rule rather than the exception, in a country where solutions such as liposuction and diet pills garner attention rather than diet and exercise. Once again, we ask that should you pass your own stress test, be patient and tune out the daily noise.

"Goldman Sachs Is Right on Target"

<u>*The Record, 01.14.2008*</u>

This past Wednesday, in a note to clients, economists at renowned investment bank Goldman Sachs, the brokerage firm that was brilliantly shorting and therefore profiting from fixed-income products that were related to the subprime mortgage mess, predicted that the U.S. economy would enter into a modest recession during 2008. We couldn't agree more.

Most economists define a recession as two consecutive quarters of negative growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which, also by definition, measures the expansion of contraction of the economy of a nation. Goldman Sachs predicts that "the recession is likely to last two to three quarters and should be relatively mild by historical standards, with a cumulative decline in GDP of only about a half percent," this according to Goldman Sachs economists' Jan Hatzius and Ed McKelvey. For all of 2008, Goldman Sachs expects GDP to rise by 0.8%. According to the two economists, keeping the recession "relatively mild" is the assumption that the Open Market Committee of the Federal Reserve, the body that determines the direction of short-term interest rates, will aggressively lower rates in order to provide liquidity to the credit markets and ease the credit crunch. Ultimately, the impact of this mild recession will be an increase in the unemployment rate from its current level of 5.0% to 6.25% by the end of this calendar year.

All of the above loudly begs the question, **"fine, but what does this mean for my investments?"** Simply put, we believe that the during the fourth quarter of 2007 the U.S. economy entered a period of slow to somewhat stagnant economic growth that will most likely last throughout the majority of 2008. Whether this is the slight majority or vast majority of 2008 has everything to do with just how aggressive the Fed is when it responds to interest rates. Thus far, we believe that the Fed has not acted aggressively enough when regarding interest rates and that the downturn in the economy, if one thinks of it as a moving car or other vehicle, has maintained its distance over the Fed. The Fed must do something to close this gap and to eventually move ahead of the economic downturn. It is with the efforts of the Fed, perhaps along with fiscal (tax) policy relief coming from congress and the Bush Administration that the economy will eventually turn for the better.

The Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Ben Bernanke, in a recent luncheon speech in Washington, D.C., stated that the Fed stands "ready to take substantive additional action as needed to support growth and to provide adequate insurance against downside risks." The jury is still out as to what Chairman Bernanke defines as "substantive" when it comes to the action required to stem the economic downturn that is facing America.

To determine where the stock market may go one must look back at historical data. We did just that and found that during economic downturns when the Federal Reserve has lowered interest rates at three consecutive meetings, the stock market has responded favorably as measured by a time frame of one year. In fact, there have been thirteen times in which the Fed has cut interest rates at three consecutive meetings and the stock market has been higher one year later on every occasion, save one. That was during the early 1930's when the United States was on the verge of the Great Depression. Therefore, if you believe as we do, that we are not entering into an era of depression, stock investors have a golden opportunity to add to their holdings and reap capital gains one year hence. Unfortunately, during times like this it is very uncomfortable to invest in stocks, but we cannot see anything other type of investment that we would rather be in than equities. That said, maintain a disciplined investment approach and always have a plan for selling a position after making the purchase.

"Secular vs. Cyclical Bear Market"
The Record, 05.11.2003

There is a great debate raging in the investment community over whether we have entered a **secular** bear market or have we, since early 2000, merely been correcting the excesses of the late 1990's in a **cyclical** bear market within a bull market that began in 1982. For the purposes of this article, secular can be defined as the general trend (or climate) that lasts for a long period of time. Typically, the secular pattern is dotted with abnormalities that run counter to the overriding trend, but are relatively short in nature. For example, the Dow Jones Industrial Average rose from a closing level of 776.90 on August 12, 1982 to 11,723.00 on January 14, 2000 for a gain of more than 1400%! However, within this long-term or secular bull market there were four cyclical or short-term bear markets including one that lasted approximately three months in 1987; one that lasted approximately four months during 1990; one that lasted ten months during 1994; and one that lasted a mere two months during 1998.

Prior to the beginning of **this bear market that has now lasted nearly forty months**, the longest bear market since the beginning of the secular bull that dates back to 1982, was the bear of 1994 that lasted ten months. *Keep in mind that it is not only the depth of a bear market, but the length of one that determines an investor's appetite or lack of appetite for stocks!*

Having analyzed a secular bull market, one that perhaps concluded in early 2000, let us now turn our attention to the most recent secular bear market, one that peaked on February 9, 1966 at Dow 995.20 and one that, fifteen years later, on February 9, 1981 closed at Dow 947.20, obviously below the prior high set one and one-half decades ago! It is interesting to note that within the secular bear, there were no less than four cyclical bull markets; one that lasted twenty-six months, from October 7, 1966 to December 3, 1968 when the Dow rose from 744.30 to 985.20 representing a gain of 32.37%; one that lasted more than thirty-one months, from May 26, 1970 to January 11, 1973 when the Dow rose from 631.20 to 1051.70 representing a gain of 66.62%; a cyclical bull that lasted twenty-two months, from December 6, 1974 to September 21, 1976 when the Dow rose from 577.60 to 1014.80 representing a gain of 75.69%; and a move that lasted nearly three years, from March 6, 1978 to February 9, 1981 when the Dow rose from 742.70 to 947.20 representing a gain of 27.53%.

It is safe to conclude from the above paragraph that it is possible to make money in a flat, secular bear market. (Please note that the data utilized above does not include dividends.) The heavy nature of this article hopefully reflects the importance of the following question and the impact that this question will have upon your financial future. Is this a long-term bear or a pause amidst the bull that began in 1982?

Despite the fact that it is too early to tell whether this is a cyclical bear market or a secular bear market, it is important to note that regardless of which type of market we are in, the Dow has risen more than 17.70% off its recent lows; the S&P 500 close to 20% while the NASDAQ Composite has risen more than thirty-five percent indicating a bullish pattern. It will be interesting to see how the bears react if the Dow rises more than twenty percent from its closing low of 7286.27 set on October 9, 2002. A close above twenty percent is the definition of a bull market trend. This will happen if the Dow closes at or above 8743.52 and will put the pressure on the bears.

Despite the question of whether we may be about to embark on a new secular bull market or a cyclical bull within a secular bear, investors should have upside and downside targets for their stocks and utilize stop/loss provisions to protect their capital. Stay tuned.

"China, A Country to Reckon With"
<u>*The Record, 05.02.2004*</u>

As investors receive and then open their April statements sometime later next week or early the following week and see the slight decline in their portfolio values, it will probably occur to only a few of them that the Chinese economy may be to blame.

Late this past week, in an effort to slow down an economy that had grown at an annualized rate of 9.7% during the first quarter of 2004, Chinese economic officials told banks to stop lending to certain industries, including the aluminum, cement, real estate and steel industries, fearing that their economy was in danger of overheating. Furthermore, the People's Bank of China has decided to raise interest rates for the first time since 1955 also indicative of their intention to slow the economy to a more sustainable pace.

Given the fact that many, including us, attribute a good portion of the run-up in commodity prices to soaring demand from China, we thought it would be a good idea to familiarize readers of our column to some of the demographics and demand emanating from the Chinese.

China is the most populous country in the world with over 1.29 billion people inhabiting an area slightly smaller than Canada, but larger than the United States. This represents approximately one-fifth of the global population. According to the State Statistical Bureau for the People's Republic of China and noted in a Prudential Research report, "the percent of the population living in rural areas fell to 61% last year, down from 79% in 1982 and 88% in 1952. This trend toward urbanization is very similar to the experience in the United States during the 1800s and through the 1970s. In 1800, 94% of the U.S. population resided in rural areas. By 1900, this percentage declined to 60%. It fell to a record low of 26% in the 1970s." The result is an average annual increase of urban population of approximately 20 million people!

China's main source of energy comes from coal, which they mine themselves. China consumes approximately 5.4 million barrels of oil per day, a number which should increase to approximately 7 million barrels per day by 2010. By contrast, the United States consumes over twenty million barrels per day. China now imports approximately 30% of its oil consumption.

There are ten million cars, trucks, and buses in all of China. This compares with 134 million registered cars, trucks, and buses in the United States.

China consumes approximately 50% of the world's cement, and 36% of its annual production of steel.

The average hourly earnings of a Chinese manufacturing worker is $0.61 compared with the average hourly earnings of a United States worker of $16.14! Despite being the largest country in terms of population, there are more than one hundred countries in the world with higher per capita incomes!

Agriculturally, China's annual grain output is approximately 500 million tons, not enough to feed the billion-plus people. Therefore, China is a net importer of grain. With the United States, this amounted to over 800 million bushels of soybeans during 2003. All this with only 7% of the world's farmable land.

With China's population increasing by approximately ten million people per year and with average hourly earnings well under $1.00, the economic potential is mind boggling. However, thinking back to the trials and struggles of the United States over the past two centuries and one realizes that this potential will not be easily realized. Investors in China must be patient. However, we believe this patience will be well-reward over the next three to five years.