

Wealth Strategies Group, LLC

The markets had a short week with the Good Friday closure yet managed a small increase. The S&P 500 rose 0.24% for the week, up 10.56% YTD¹. The University of Michigan's Consumer Confidence Poll hit a new 2.5 year high in March helping to ease concerns about inflation and the economy¹. On Friday, Fed Chair Powell noted inflation figures are coming in-line with what they want to see². The closer we get to the Fed target for inflation, the sooner we can hope to see rate cuts. However, Fed Governor Waller notes he's in no rush to start cutting rates but doesn't rule

them out for this year³. CME Groups Fed Watch Tool is pointing to no hike at the May meeting and just over 50% odds of a cut in June⁴.

Happy Spring, the warmer weather looks to finally be settling in and sunny days are ahead. I hope you had an enjoyable weekend, and not too many family disagreements occurred at holiday gatherings. Now that the Easter weekend is over, I'm excited for Thursday, April 4th. You may have seen a few weeks ago that my favorite live blues artist in Nashville is visiting Michigan this week. Stacy Mitchhart is performing at the Roxy Rochester on Thursday, and I have 12 seats booked 1st row center stage for the performance. If you're looking for something to do, and enjoy the blues, I suggest you check him out, there are still some seats available! <https://theroxyrochester.com/events>

----Chuck

This Week's Inspiration/Activity:

"People hear what we say but they see what we do. And seeing is believing."

Author, Al Lucia

Your activity for this week is to lead by example.

This Week in History:

April 4, 1974 -- Opening Day of the 1974 Major League Baseball season, 39-year-old Hank Aaron sends the very first pitch he sees over the wall, tying the all-time home run record set by Babe Ruth⁵.

¹ see update below

² <https://www.foxbusiness.com/economy/key-fed-inflation-gauge-consumer-spending-rise-february>

³ <https://www.reuters.com/markets/us/feds-waller-still-sees-no-rush-cut-rates-amid-sticky-inflation-data-2024-03-27/>

⁴ <https://www.cmegroup.com/markets/interest-rates/cme-fedwatch-tool.html?redirect=/trading/interest-rates/countdown-to-fomc.html>

⁵ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/hank-aaron-ties-babe-ruths-home-run-record>

MARKET INSIGHTS



YCHARTS

Weekly Market Insights (WMI)

April 1, 2024:

Stocks were narrowly higher for the week as investors digested mixed economic news about consumer confidence. All three of the major averages posted gains for Q1 2024.

Stocks Finish Strong

Markets slipped for the first half of the four-day week as investors took a breather after the prior week's gain. Conflicting economic news on Monday and Tuesday contributed to the slide.

New home sales in February slipped 0.3 percent over the prior month but increased by 5.9 percent from the prior year. Durable goods orders—everything from washing machines to helicopters—rebounded 1.4 percent in February, beating expectations and recouping some of January's 6.9 percent drop.^{1,2,3}

Stocks rallied on Wednesday, including a fresh record close for the Standard & Poor's 500. An upward revision to consumer sentiment on Thursday helped the rally along. The markets are closed on Friday when the much-anticipated inflation report called the Personal Consumption and Expenditures (PCE) is released, which could set up a volatile Monday.⁴

Source: YCharts.com, March 30, 2024. Weekly performance is measured from Friday, March 22, to Thursday, March 28. ROC 5 = the rate of change in the index for the previous 5 trading days.

TR = total return for the index, which includes any dividends as well as any other cash distributions during the period.

Treasury note yield is expressed in basis points.

Major Index Return Summary

Name	5D TR	1M TR	YTD TR	1Y TR
Dow Jones Industrial Average	0.07%	2.38%	6.14%	25.49%
MSCI EAFE	-0.09%	3.40%	5.93%	17.97%
Nasdaq Composite	-0.14%	2.78%	9.31%	40.93%
S&P 500	0.24%	3.78%	10.56%	34.42%

S&P 500 Daily Close



10-Year Note Review

Indicator Name	Latest Value	1M Ago	1M Change
10 Year Treasury Rate	03/28/24	4.27%	-1.64% ▼
		3.84%	9.38% ▲
		3.55%	18.31% ▲

Doubters & Believers

Getting a straightforward read on consumers this week was challenging. The Conference Board reported on Tuesday that its Consumer Confidence Index remained essentially unchanged—as it has for the past six months—showing consumers were generally pessimistic about the future. But on Thursday, the University of Michigan's consumer-sentiment survey showed consumer confidence hit a 2½-year high in March. It suggested that consumers had gained more confidence that inflation would drop and alleviate some pressure on household finances. Friday's PCE report may give some additional insights into consumer confidence.^{5,6}

This Week: Key Economic Data

Monday: ISM Manufacturing Index. PMI Manufacturing Final. Construction Spending.

Tuesday: Motor Vehicle Sales. Factory Orders. JOLTS.

Wednesday: ADP Employment Report. EIA Petroleum Status Report. ISM Services Index.

Thursday: Jobless Claims. International Trade in Goods & Services. Fed Balance Sheet. Natural Gas Report.

Friday: Employment Situation. Consumer Credit.

Source: Investors Business Daily - Econoday economic calendar; March 27, 2024

The Econoday economic calendar lists upcoming U.S. economic data releases (including key economic indicators), Federal Reserve policy meetings, and speaking engagements of Federal Reserve officials. The content is developed from sources believed to be providing accurate information. The forecasts or forward-looking statements are based on assumptions and may not materialize. The forecasts also are subject to revision.

This Week: Companies Reporting Earnings

Tuesday: Paychex, Inc. (PAYX)

Wednesday: Levi Strauss & Co. (LEVI)

Thursday: Conagra Brands (CAG)

Source: Zacks, March 27, 2024

Companies mentioned are for informational purposes only. It should not be considered a solicitation for the purchase or sale of the securities. Investing involves risks, and investment decisions should be based on your own goals, time horizon, and tolerance for risk. The return and principal value of investments will fluctuate as market conditions change. When sold, investments may be worth more or less than their original cost. Companies may reschedule when they report earnings without notice.

TAX TIP



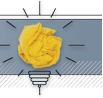
IRS Offers Free Tax Prep Option for Military Personnel

Each year, the Internal Revenue Service takes a moment to remind active duty military personnel that the “IRS Free File” offers them multiple choices for free federal tax preparation.

“The IRS takes special steps to help military members and their families with their taxes, and the Free File program is part of that effort,” said IRS Commissioner Chuck Rettig. “Almost 10% of the IRS workforce are veterans. We greatly appreciate the service to the nation of every veteran and their supportive families, and we will do all we can to assist them.”

**This information is not intended to be a substitute for specific, individualized tax advice. We suggest that you discuss your specific tax issues with a qualified tax professional.*

Tip adapted from IRS.gov⁷



"Be courteous to all, but intimate with few."
– **George Washington**



Yoga for Stability

You don't have to pull out the yoga mat and get your designer leggings on to enjoy this relaxing practice's many benefits. Even if you've never done yoga before, these poses may help you improve your balance and stability:

- **Knee to chest:** Start by standing with your feet hip-width apart and your hands on your hips; this is called mountain pose. Now, lift your left knee to hip height so your upper leg (thigh) is parallel to the floor. Flex your left foot and hold this pose for three deep breaths. Repeat on the other side.
- **Tree pose:** Start with the same mountain pose as the first movement. Now, shift your weight into your left foot and allow your right knee to turn out to the side as you bring your right foot in to rest at your left ankle, shin, or thigh, depending on what's comfortable. Make sure you're not putting your foot directly on a joint.
- **Dancer pose:** Start in mountain pose. Bend your right knee and slowly lift your right foot off the ground. As you do that, lift your left arm to balance yourself. Hold for three breaths and repeat on the other side.

Tip adapted from SilverSneakers.com⁸



They have not flesh, nor feathers, nor scales, nor bone. Yet they have fingers and thumbs of their own. What are they?

Last week's riddle: Which positive whole number can you add 1.5 to and get the same result as multiplying it by 1.5? Answer: 3.



Nauta, Loreto, Peru

Footnotes and Sources

1. The Wall Street Journal, March 28, 2024
2. CNBC.com, March 25, 2024
3. Reuters, March 26, 2024
4. CNBC.com, March 26, 2024
5. MarketWatch.com, March 28, 2024
6. The Conference Board, March 26, 2024
7. IRS.gov, October 23, 2023
8. SilverSneakers.com, December 21, 2023

Investing involves risks, and investment decisions should be based on your own goals, time horizon, and tolerance for risk. The return and principal value of investments will fluctuate as market conditions change. When sold, investments may be worth more or less than their original cost. The forecasts or forward-looking statements are based on assumptions, may not materialize, and are subject to revision without notice.

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The Dow Jones Industrial Average is an unmanaged index that is generally considered representative of large-capitalization companies on the U.S. stock market. Nasdaq Composite is an index of the common stocks and similar securities listed on the NASDAQ stock market and is considered a broad indicator of the performance of technology and growth companies. The MSCI EAFE Index was created by Morgan Stanley Capital

International (MSCI) and serves as a benchmark of the performance of major international equity markets, as represented by 21 major MSCI indexes from Europe, Australia, and Southeast Asia. The S&P 500 Composite Index is an unmanaged group of securities that are considered to be representative of the stock market in general.

U.S. Treasury Notes are guaranteed by the federal government as to the timely payment of principal and interest. However, if you sell a Treasury Note prior to maturity, it may be worth more or less than the original price paid. Fixed income investments are subject to various risks including changes in interest rates, credit quality, inflation risk, market valuations, prepayments, corporate events, tax ramifications and other factors.

International investments carry additional risks, which include differences in financial reporting standards, currency exchange rates, political risks unique to a specific country, foreign taxes and regulations, and the potential for illiquid markets. These factors may result in greater share price volatility.

Please consult your financial professional for additional information.

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