

Wealth Strategies Group, LLC

Tech companies continued to push the markets higher with the NASDAQ exchange hitting new highs for the week. The S&P 500 rose 0.95% while the NASDAQ jumped 1.74% (+7.97% / +8.55% respectively YTD)¹. Additionally, one of the Fed's most closely watched inflation indexes came in as expected. The Core Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) Index rose 0.4% to a 2.8% year-over-year increase (Headline PCE rose to a 2.4% year-over-year level)^{2,3}.

I've been talking about taxes the past few weeks and I want to point out a couple of things today to keep in mind. As tax season continues to race to conclusion, IRA scams also proliferate. Be on the lookout! The IRS does not communicate via phone unless multiple written notices have gone unanswered so don't respond to any voice messages or calls that come out of the blue purporting to be the IRS. The IRS will never ask for payment immediately, ask for payment in the form of a gift card, or threaten with a visit from law enforcement. Check with your tax professional if you believe the contact is authentic before providing any information. And don't send any sensitive information in an email.

Looks like spring is here. We have a forecast of 70% today here in Michigan and mid 50's the rest of the week. I also saw an article today that said that this may go down as the warmest winter on-record. Guess we can count this as a win for Punxsutawney Phil.
----Chuck

This Week's Inspiration/Activity:

***Even if you're on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there.
Will Rogers (1879 - 1935)***

Your activity for this week is to get moving on the activities you need to address to move forward on a goal or project.

This Week in History:

March 9, 1959 -- 64 years before the Barbie Movie premiers, the first Barbie doll goes on display at the American Toy Fair in New York City. Eleven inches tall, with a waterfall of blond hair, Barbie was the first mass-produced toy doll in the United States with adult features⁴.

¹ see update below

² <https://www.cnbc.com/2024/02/29/pce-inflation-january-2023-.html>

³ <https://www.cnn.com/2024/02/29/economy/pce-inflation-spending-january/index.html>

⁴ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/barbie-makes-her-debut>

MARKET INSIGHTS



March 4, 2024

Stocks extended their tech-led advance last week as signs of a resilient and still-enthusiastic consumer boosted momentum.

Nasdaq Sets New High

Stocks traded in a narrow band early in the week but ended the five-trading sessions with a powerful advance.

While the Dow dipped lower, artificial intelligence (AI) names powered the gains in the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq Composite. The Nasdaq bobbed around the 16,000 level for most of the week before posting consecutive record highs on Thursday and Friday, surpassing its 2021 record. It was the last of the three major stock benchmarks to reach a record high this year.¹

Economic news also helped boost markets. The Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) Index, the Fed's preferred inflation gauge, rose 0.3 percent in January versus December—and 2.4 percent on a 12-month basis. Both were in line with expectations. Stocks ticked up on Thursday following the release of the report.²

Source: YCharts.com, March 2, 2024. Weekly performance is measured from Monday, February 26, to Friday, March 1.

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.

YCHARTS

Weekly Market Insights (WMI)

Major Index Return Summary

Name	5D TR	1M TR	YTD TR	1Y TR
Dow Jones Industrial Average	-0.11%	1.76%	4.09%	22.24%
MSCI EAFE	0.68%	3.45%	3.25%	15.82%
Nasdaq Composite	1.74%	6.05%	8.55%	44.19%
S&P 500	0.95%	4.87%	7.97%	32.12%

S&P 500 Daily Close



10-Year Note Review

Indicator Name Date	Latest Value	1M Ago	3M Ago	1Y Ago	1M Change	3M Change	1Y Change
10 Year Treasury Rate 03/01/24	4.19%	3.87%	4.22%	4.01%	8.27% ▲	-0.71% ▼	4.49% ▲

Consumers Remain Upbeat

With all the excitement over AI, it's easy to overlook some key economic indicators that also speak to the underlying strength of the economy—specifically, consumer data.

In addition to the closely watched PCE report, an end-of-week consumer survey revealed that while sentiment softened in February, it remained near a 32-month high. Fresh data this week also showed an unexpected jump in personal income.

Finally, the PCE report also reflected an ongoing consumer shift from goods to services—a sign the economy continues to normalize after the pandemic. Since two-thirds of gross domestic product comes from consumer spending, these consumer-related metrics helped support the narrative that the economy appears to be gathering momentum.^{3,4}

This Week: Key Economic Data

Monday: Motor Vehicle Sales.

Tuesday: Factory Orders. ISM Services Index.

Wednesday: ADP Employment Report. JOLTS. Beige Book.

Thursday: Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell Speech. Jobless Claims. International Trade in Goods & Services. Productivity and Costs.

Friday: Employment Situation.

Source: Investors Business Daily - Econoday economic calendar; February 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: Target Corporation (TGT)

Wednesday: Dollar Tree, Inc. (DLTR), Campbell Soup Company (CPB)

Thursday: Costco Wholesale Corporation (COST), Broadcom Inc. (AVGO), The Kroger Co. (KR)

Source: Zacks, February 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.



"When there is freedom from mechanical conditioning, there is simplicity."

– **Bruce Lee**



Owe the IRS Money? Here's How to Pay

If you owe federal taxes, you must pay by the April deadline. Remember, if you get an extension to file your taxes, payment is still due by the April deadline. If you can't pay the total amount you owe now, you may be able to set up a payment plan.

Here are some choices for making your payment:

- Use Direct Pay: IRS Direct Pay is a free and secure way to pay directly from your checking or savings account.
- Pay by debit or credit card: If you don't want to link a bank account, you can use your credit or debit card. Remember that you'll have to pay a processing fee and may incur interest charges.
- Pay when you e-file: If you file your federal tax return electronically, you can pay directly from your bank account using electronic funds withdrawal.

**This article is for informational purposes only and does not replace real-life advice, so consult your tax, legal, and accounting professionals before modifying your tax strategy.*

Tip adapted from IRS.gov⁵



Eat This, Not That: Easy Food Swaps Anyone Can Do

Eating healthier doesn't have to be hard! You might not have to make any significant changes in your current diet. You can cut calories and still enjoy your meal by swapping out unhealthy options for healthier picks. Here are some of our favorite food swaps:

- Mustard instead of mayonnaise (0 calories vs. 90 calories)
- Scrambled eggs with green onions instead of cheese (170 calories vs. 275 calories)
- Sparkling water instead of soda (0 calories vs. 140 calories)
- Fresh fruit instead of dried fruit (69 calories vs. 325 calories)
- Greek yogurt instead of sour cream (28 calories vs. 60 calories)
- Olive oil spray instead of a tablespoon of olive oil (5 calories vs. 120 calories)
- Corn tortillas instead of flour tortillas (100 calories vs. 280 calories)
- All-bran cereal instead of granola (80 calories vs. 200 calories)
- Goat cheese instead of brie cheese (70 calories vs. 100 calories)

Many healthy swaps like these can help you reduce caloric intake, consume less sugar, and create more balanced meals.

Tip adapted from EatThis.com⁶

WEEKLY RIDDLE



You can't outrun it or hide from it. You only notice it when there is light, but it shows only darkness. What is it?

Last week's riddle: Kristi and David live at opposite ends of a metro area but attend the same college. David left for campus 30 minutes before Kristi, and they met at a coffee house. Who was closer to campus when they met? Answer: They were both at the same distance from campus when they met each other, as they met at the same location.

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



Gherkin, Financial District, London, UK

Footnotes and Sources

1. The Wall Street Journal, February 29, 2024
2. CNBC.com, February 29, 2024
3. MarketWatch.com, March 01, 2024
4. CNBC.com, February 27, 2024.

5. IRS.gov, December 1, 2023

6. EatThis.com, December 18, 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.

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