



The markets closed out the year with a final week of positive numbers as the S&P 500 rose 1.43% (including returns on Friday January 2), +16.26% YTD ¹. The vaccines are being distributed and news of more individuals becoming eligible for the shots are hitting the press weekly. Unemployment claims last week fell below 800,000 for the first time in a month² but with infections still raging and the time lag for inoculations for everyone, who knows if the trend will continue.

Welcome to 2021! Hopefully, this will be a better year than last, and we can return to a somewhat more normal life. With the New Year thoughts to turn to resolutions (that can be usually expected to last a couple of weeks before being broken). I've learned not to set too high expectations for myself to accomplish but spending some time to set some goals for the year is always beneficial. One thing I've found that can be helpful is to focus on a word to dictate my actions for the year. In 2019 that word was Accountable, 2020 was Engaged, and my word for 2021 is Effective. I find that focusing on the word of the year is helpful in guiding my daily life and easier to keep than a resolution. And, sharing that word with other also helps you keep that focus as you can rely on others to keep you accountable (my 2019 goal). If you were to focus on a word for 2021, what would yours be? Feel free to give me a call to discuss and let me know how I can help.

We will be gearing up in the next couple of weeks for Year-End investment reviews and planning updates. If you have questions regarding your investments and plans, give me a call to discuss.
---Chuck

This Week's Inspiration/Activity:

You've achieved success in your field when you don't know whether what you're doing is work or play.

Warren Beatty

Your activity for this week is to find the enjoyment in whatever task or job you have at hand.

This Week in History –

January 8, 1835 -- President Andrew Jackson achieves his goal of entirely paying off the United States' national debt. It was the only time in U.S. history that the national debt stood at zero³. Current debt outstanding as of Fiscal Year End 2020? \$21 Trillion⁴!

¹ see update below

² <https://www.marketwatch.com/story/jobless-claims-dip-below-800-000-but-layoffs-still-elevated-after-record-coronavirus-outbreak-11609422330?mod=economic-report>

³ <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/andrew-jackson-national-debt-reaches-zero-dollars>

⁴ <https://www.crfb.org/blogs/closer-look-record-3-1-trillion-deficit-fy-2020>

In this week's recap: Happy New Year! Stocks hit record highs and have varied reactions on stimulus checks and another potential vaccine.

Weekly Economic Update

Presented by Charles D. Vercellone, ChFC, January 4, 2021

THE WEEK ON WALL STREET

Stocks moved higher during a holiday-shortened week of trading, capping off a turbulent, but otherwise strong year for equity investors.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 1.35%, while the Standard & Poor's 500 increased by 1.43%. The Nasdaq Composite index, which led all year, added 0.65%. The MSCI EAFE index, which tracks developed overseas stock markets, rose 2.02%.^{1,2,3}

STOCKS END 2020 ON A POSITIVE NOTE

Stocks established fresh record highs last week, propelled by the signing of a COVID-19 relief bill, which delivered on a long-awaited, new round of economic stimulus and served to prevent a government shutdown in the near term.⁴

After pulling back on disappointment that the Senate was not able to increase individual stimulus payments to \$2,000, stocks reversed direction as the approval of another vaccine by the U.K. lifted investor sentiment.

Ahead of the New Year holiday, stocks surged higher, leaving the Dow Jones Industrials Average and the S&P 500 Index to close 2020 at record highs.

THE UNEXPECTED IPO BOOM

Companies raised over \$167 billion in initial public offerings this year, blowing past the record of \$107.9 billion set in 1999.⁵

This explosion in capital raising was one of the biggest surprises this year, especially considering the flight to safety in March and April. The introduction of unprecedented monetary easing played a critical role helping this flood of new issuance.

Also playing a role was the popularity of SPACs (Special Purpose Acquisition Corporations). A SPAC is a company that is formed to raise capital through an initial public offering (IPO) for the purpose of acquiring an existing company. SPACs accounted for almost half of the fundraising in the IPO market.⁶

FINAL THOUGHTS

We join all Americans in happily drawing the curtain on 2020. Though it was a challenging and tragic year for so many, there are good reasons to believe that 2021 will be a year of progress in returning to our pre-pandemic normal. We wish you and your family a healthy and happy new year!

TIP OF THE WEEK



If you're thinking about selling a business, consider contacting a business broker, one that represents companies similar to yours. It may make finding an appropriate buyer easier.

THE WEEK AHEAD: KEY ECONOMIC DATA

Tuesday: Institute for Supply Management (ISM) Manufacturing PMI (Purchasing Managers Index).

Wednesday: Automated Data Processing (ADP) Employment Change, Factory Orders.

Thursday: Initial Jobless Claims, ISM Non-Manufacturing PMI.

Friday: Employment Report.

Source: Econoday, December 31, 2020

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.

THE WEEK AHEAD: COMPANIES REPORTING EARNINGS

Thursday: Micron Technologies (MU), Constellation Brands (STZ), Walgreens Boots (WBA), Conagra Brands (CAG).

Source: Zacks, December 31, 2020

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.

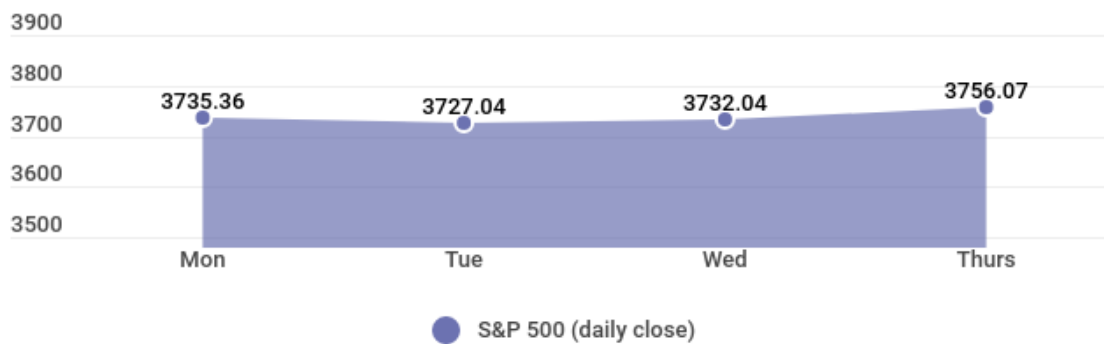
QUOTE OF THE WEEK



“To succeed in life, you need three things: a wishbone, a backbone, and a funny bone.”

REBA McENTIRE

Market Index	Close	Week	Y-T-D
DJIA	30,606.48	+1.35%	+7.25%
NASDAQ	12,888.28	+0.65%	+43.64%
MSCI-EAFE	2,161.48	+2.02%	+6.11%
S&P 500	3,756.07	+1.43%	+16.26%



	Treasury	Close	Week	Y-T-D
	10-Year Note	0.93%	-0.01%	-0.99%

Sources: The Wall Street Journal, December 31, 2020; Treasury.gov, December 31, 2020
 Weekly performance for the Dow Jones Industrial Average, Standard & Poor's 500 Index, and NASDAQ Composite Index is measured from the close of trading on Thursday, December 24, to Thursday, December 31, close. Weekly performance for the MSCI-EAFE is measured from Thursday, December 24, open to the Wednesday, December 30, close. Weekly and year-to-date 10-year Treasury note yield are expressed in basis points.

THE WEEKLY RIDDLE



The railings on a 60-yard-long walkway have ornamental sculptures every 12 yards on both sides, starting at the east and west ends of the walkway. How many total sculptures are there on the walkway?

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE: What number logically comes next in this series: 2, 3, 5, 9, 17, ___.

ANSWER: 33. (The difference between the two numbers is progressively multiplied by 2 and added to the next number.)

Know someone who could use information like this?

Please feel free to send us their contact information via phone or email. (Don't worry – we'll request their permission before adding them to our mailing list.)

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The forecasts or forward-looking statements are based on assumptions, may not materialize, and are subject to revision without notice.

The market indexes discussed are unmanaged, and generally, considered representative of their respective markets. Index performance is not indicative of the past performance of a particular investment. Indexes do not incur management fees, costs, and expenses. Individuals cannot directly invest in unmanaged indexes. Past performance does not guarantee future results.

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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CITATIONS:

1. The Wall Street Journal, December 31, 2020
2. The Wall Street Journal, December 31, 2020
3. The Wall Street Journal, December 31, 2020
4. FoxBusiness.com, December 29, 2020
5. The Wall Street Journal, December 30, 2020
6. The Wall Street Journal, December 30, 2020

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