



Happy Friday once again.

How many of you have said this week, "I cannot believe that February is almost over?" We even received an extra day this year. I believe that this wonderful weather has something to do with this because the temperatures make us feel like we should be in April or May.

The past two weeks have provided us with some volatility, but in the end the DOW and S&P are up about 1%, and the NASDAQ is flat during this time. Inflationary worries still dominate the headlines when there are reports released which show that our economy is still growing. I believe that these reports should be viewed as positive, especially when they are backed up with good corporate earnings and positive job numbers. I believe that consumer spending will begin to slow down as the higher rates continue to work through the credit card cycles. Although tax returns may soften that slow down as people seem to have those returns earmarked for something, hopefully that something will be to reduce the credit card balance. I still believe that consumer spending will eventually slow down which will hopefully reduce the inflationary concerns.

As I stated two weeks ago; unless there is a major halt in home and auto sales, I do not see a rate decrease coming until September/October. There is a lack of inventory for homes, but I think that has more to do with people wanting to keep their 3% mortgage. I am hopeful that supply and demand in the real estate market as well as an indication of when rates will decrease will help jump start home sales again. Americans will soon have to realize that we will most likely not see a 3-4% mortgage rate for an exceptionally long time.

So, I am content with keeping most portfolios as is. There have been some who have been able to take advantage of the higher rates to increase their guaranteed lifetime income. I do not believe that one should be concerned with securing market gains at this time, because I foresee a long-term (12-18 months) gradual upward trend with the major indexes.

Roy Hummel, who most of you have met, shared some wonderful news with me yesterday. Beginning April 1st, we will have a Medicare Supplement available which will have dental, vision and Silver Sneakers benefits available. We will begin contacting all existing Medicare Supplement owners within the next two weeks to explain the great news. If you want to call us sooner to get information or a quote, please feel free to do so, but the coverage cannot take effect until April 1st, 2024.

I hope that you get to enjoy the wonderful weather this weekend.

As always, call me anytime if you have a question or concern.

Take care,

Brett