

**TOM CROOKER INVESTMENT FORUM
AGENDA FOR FEBRUARY 29, 2012, 10:00AM**

The Forum will meet on Wednesdays at 10:00AM through March 14, 2012.
It will then start meeting at 11:45AM for the Spring Session

Program

The Week that Was. The S&P was up 0.33% for the week. This story is getting boring. The S&P is up 8.6% YTD; closed at its 52 week high of 1,366 on Friday, and is up 24.25% since early October. Bull Market. And the DOW has crossed 13,000 several times, though not through the end of any trading session. Yet. (Ed Swoboda will bring in a sheet cake for DOW 13,000.)

On the other hand . . . we all know that a pullback/correction/bear is out there, sometime, and how bad? The S&P high was 1,565 on 10/9/2007. And the DOW first crossed 13,000 in May, 1998. The Forum then celebrated that milestone with a sheet cake, also courtesy of Ed Swoboda. Do any pictures exist of that event fourteen years ago? Probably not, since Smartphones with cameras were not around.

Fixed Income: Funds vs. Individual Bonds. I have moved this topic up a few notches, so we will get to it. I will talk about bond funds vs. individual bonds. In particular, I will walk through bond ETFs, and how they change (yield and price) through their life cycle and as they grow and shrink. And whether the Guggenheim Bullet Shares ETFs actually give the best of both worlds of bond funds' diversification, with individual bond's maturity certainty.

Pet Stocks. Many pet owners spend lavishly on their pets, in good times and bad. Petsmart (PETM) has turned in an impressive performance over the past three years. Bill Brewster, pet lover, will discuss PETM and some other hot stocks in the pet industry.

Maximum Return, Minimum Risk. Maury will conclude his series by discussing the last chapter of the book and an alternative concept called the "7Twelve."

Food for Thought.

Alzheimers' Drugs. Now there is a word sure to send shivers down the spines of Forum members. But this week's Barron's reports that two new drugs to treat Alzheimers are in Stage II and III testing at FDA, and could come on market in 2013 to 2017. While effectiveness is not certain, if they work, it could be the "next Lipitor" for the drugmakers. Those are Eli Lilly (LLY), Pfizer (PFE), Johnson and Johnson (JNJ), Elan ((ELN) with other Big Pharma getting a piece of the action.

Profit motives aside, let's hope . . .

Cardinal Bank 2.01% Checking Account. Last week, a member mentioned a checking account offer by Cardinal Bank, a local bank, that pays 2.01% for account balances up to \$100,000. A great deal on its face. The obvious play would be to open an account, and move Money Market funds, currently yielding near zero, into the Cardinal Bank checking account.

I checked it out -- see www.cardinalbank.com. Here are the catches: The offer can be withdrawn at any time. You have to either make one direct deposit or make at least ten Checkcard purchases per month, to get the 2.01% rate.

Cardinal Bank is looking to lure "core" deposits, from people who will have their household checking account, direct deposits, debit cards, at the bank, which will then try to cross-sell other bank products. But individuals willing to go through the hassle of opening an account, setting up a direct deposit of some small amount, and the likelihood of the 2.01% rate ending, can benefit from income of an additional \$150 per month over their current money market rate on a \$100,000 account, for as long as it lasts.

Forum website: www.olligmu.org/~finforum/. Posted last week is an article comparing the various yield definitions: 12-month yield, dividend yield, SEC yield, yield to maturity. Understanding the differences is important comparing yields in various investment categories.

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