

**INVESTMENT FORUM AGENDA FOR
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2014, 11:50AM, TA-1**
The Forum will meet at 11:50AM through November 12

Market Perspective. All clear. It is once again safe to look at your portfolio balances.

The markets were up big this week: the DOW up 2.6%; the S&P up 4.1%; and the NASDAQ up 5.3%. The S&P is only 2.3% under its all time high, and is up 6.3% YTD. Strong third-quarter earnings seem to be the reason for the rally. (No, we are not all going to die from Ebola!) At the end of the day, stock prices are, first and foremost, a reflection of the profitability of the company.

So was this mild pullback (under 10%, so not a “correction”) like the other pullbacks since mid 2011? Short-lived and followed by new highs? Volatility remains elevated, so keep your seatbelts fastened.

Funds. I will discuss the fundamentals of funds - mutual funds, exchange traded funds, and closed-end funds: how they are set up; how they are traded, characteristics, tax efficiency, use of leverage, and premiums and discounts. Then I will talk about bond CEFs, which can generate good yields (over 6%) for those alert investors who understand them and their peculiar risks.

Oil. Tom Crooker will look at Big Oil, and how new technology, the current “oil glut,” and falling oil prices may impact various parts of the energy sector. His observations are also included in this week’s agenda.

Retirement Savings Portfolios and Withdrawals (continued.) The AAI (American Association of Individual Investors) program on October featured Christine Benz of Morningstar, “Strategies for Pursuing Your Retirement Paycheck.” It discussed retirement portfolios and withdrawal strategies - similar to what we discussed last week, but with a bit more detail. Her presentation is posted on the Forum website.

Panel Discussions.

- **November 12 - “Evaluating Mutual Fund Performance.”** How do you tell which mutual funds are performing well, and which are not? Morningstar and other services rate funds. Are these reliable? What metrics do you use? Lou Coglianesse will serve on the panel; we need one or two additional panel members.

These panels will have two to four participants, each of whom will give five to ten minutes of comments, followed by panel and member discussion.

Buys and Sells (week ending 10/22/2014)

Buys

Gilead (GILD)
Concur Technologies (CNQR) - employee travel expense systems. MC: \$7.3B
Noodles and Co (NDLS)
Oxford Lane Capital (OXLC) - CEF that invests in high yield debt. MC: \$239M
Morgan Stanley (MS)
(SLO) - ? perhaps Soitec, produces micro-processor parts. MC: \$468M
Noble Energy (NBL)
Chipotle (CMG)
Vanguard S&P 500 (VOO)

Sells

Chipotle (CMG)
Leggett & Platt (LEG)
McDonalds (MCD)

Thinking About . . .

Intrexon Corp (XON) - biotech. MC: \$2.1B
Alibaba (BABA)

Al Smuzynski
Investment Forum Moderator
asmuzynski@verizon.net