



Berkshire

DIVIDEND STRATEGY

Berkshire Asset Management
46 Public Square, Suite 700
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701
570.825.2600

"Casual Friday" Commentary

Casual Friday: Inflation Game Changer? + "Tell Him The Good Part Mortimer" – November 11th, 2022

#TGICF!

Is the inflation report a game changer?

It's hard to say but I'm sure many will welcome the reprieve – growth strategies which seem to benefit from lower rates rallied huge on the news. Investors who got careless with fixed income with excessive, duration, credit, leverage have likely experienced a walloping this year. But yesterday's huge bond rally (approx 33 bps on the ten year!) will surely alleviate some pressure for those brave enough to hang in. Sustainable? Well, let's call it all a catch-up rally from extreme pessimism mixed with a positive catalyst the market thinks changes the narrative in a meaningful way. Given the voracity of the news and ensuing rally, perhaps this alone can propel positive sentiment through year end. Berkshire clients also benefiting, and our strategy is now flirting with positive territory for the year. We have a number of new names under review that could diversify our financial health care and consumer cyclical sectors. The market's recent pounding has opened the door to some names we've liked for a while but felt needed to be added at lower levels. We see some opportunity to diversify away a bit from banks, add to consumer or telecommunication services.

Stay tuned!

FTX disaster and "Trading Places?"

After 37 new crypto's were launched last December (including a "Santa Crypto") we casually yet sarcastically commented: "Gee what could go wrong there?" Well now we know. We didn't waste too much brain power getting into the intricacies, but the FTX / Binance disaster actually follows a familiar pattern.

Who can forget Randolph and Mortimer Duke from the movie Trading Places? Recall the scene when Randolph and Mortimer are explaining to Billy Ray how the Duke and Duke commodities brokerage firm operated.

"Tell him the good part, Mortimer!" Mortimer says: "No matter whether or not our clients make money or lose money...the Duke and Duke get the commission.

Billy Ray (Eddie Murphy) says: "Sounds to me like you guys are a couple of bookies." Billy Ray captures the essence of agency vs. principal business in a heartbeat! "I told you he'd understand! Says Mortimer!

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gu74l4LNL_c

What could go wrong with such a winning business for the Dukes? Well, acting simply as “agent” for client trades wasn’t enough for Randy and Morty. Greed takes over and they begin speculating/using firm capital to bet on frozen orange juice concentrate. Their efforts create a myriad of hi-jinks. And despite their efforts to obtain an illicit crop report from the one and only Clarence Beeks, the principal trades go all wrong and the Duke’s end up in ruin. One of the funniest movies ever but pedagogical for investors...and those who run exchanges!

At the risk of oversimplifying apparently FTX wasn’t content simply being a crypto “bookie.” They felt they too could profit from “prop trading” --- speculating on digital assets with borrowed money-- some of which was its client’s assets. Gee what could go wrong? “Tell em the WORST part Mortimer” Not only are the assets they bought down, the collateral pledged apparently was a speculative digital asset itself which is plummeting in value! Who is the counterparty that accepted THIS collateral? Turns out it was a sister company to FTX global! What a mess.

Different actors. Same movie, except this one is real life. New paradigm-speculation-leverage-blow-up-margin call-'how could this happen? Hopefully we don’t add on the word “contagion” to the script. And safe to say advisors won’t have to worry about pressure to answer client questions about “crypto” anymore. So good riddance to this discussion...and like the song "Good Riddance" by Green Day says: "Its something unpredictable but in the end is right...I hope you had the time of your life. Crypto investors surely are not having the time of their life right now.

In contrast to this volatility and crypto mayhem, we trust dividend investors are “Looking good Billy Ray!”

Have a good weekend!

Gerard Mihalick, CFA
Dividend Strategy Portfolio Manager/Partner
Berkshire Asset Management, LLC

Office (570) 825–2600

Berkshire Dividend Growth SMA is available through various custodians, broker-dealers and UMA providers. This email is Intended for Institutional and advisor use only. This email may make information of third parties available via website links. The Third Party Content is not created or endorsed by Berkshire nor any business offering products or services through it. The delivery of Third Party Content is for general informational purposes only and does not constitute a recommendation or solicitation to purchase or sell any security or make any other type of investment or investment decision. In addition, the Third Party Content is not intended to provide tax, legal or investment advice. the Third Party Content provided to is obtained from sources believed to be reliable and that no guarantees are made by Berkshire or the providers of the Third Party Content as to its accuracy, completeness, timeliness.

Any companies referenced, have been done so, solely for illustrative purposes and not based on investment performance or attribution to the overall performance of the strategy. The companies identified herein do not represent all the securities purchased, sold or recommended for client accounts, and you should not assume that an investment in the companies identified was or will be profitable. Berkshire retains the right to revise or modify portfolios and strategies if it believes such modifications would be in the best interests of its clients. Model portfolios may or may not contain any specific security at any time, and decisions to invest should not be made based on the presumed or current composition of any model portfolio - A complete list of holdings in the Berkshire Dividend Growth Strategy.

Berkshire Asset Management, LLC claims compliance with the Global Investment Performance Standards (GIPS®). GIPS® is a registered trademark of CFA Institute. CFA Institute does not endorse or promote this organization, nor does it warrant the accuracy or quality of the content contained herein. To receive GIPS-compliant performance information for the firm's strategies and products, contact Jason Reilly, CFP® Tel: 570-825-2600 or info@berkshiream.com.

Definitions: The S & P 500 Index is a market capitalization weighted index of the largest 500 U.S. stocks. It is a market-value weighted index (stock price times # of shares outstanding), with each stock's weight in the index proportionate to its market value. The index is designed to measure changes in the economy and is representative of most major industries. Russell 1000 Growth Index measures the performance of those Russell 1000 companies with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values. The index was developed with a base value of 200 as of August 31, 1992. Russell 1000 Value Index measures the performance of those Russell 1000 companies with lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values. The index was developed with a base value of 200 as of August 31, 1992. You cannot invest directly in an index. BEst (Bloomberg Estimates) Earnings Per Share (EPS Adjusted) estimate returns Earnings Per Share from Continuing Operations, which may exclude the effects of one-time and extraordinary gains/losses. Beta is a measure of volatility vs. an index. Upside/Downside capture ratios refer to a portfolio's performance as a percentage of either positive returns (upside) or negative returns (downside) vs. an index. Standard Deviation is a measure of total risk. Alpha, Beta and capture ratios are represented as calculated by Morningstar.

Risks: Past performance does not guarantee future results. Different types of investments involve varying degrees of risk, and there can be no assurance that any specific investment will either be suitable or profitable for an individual's investment portfolio. Dividends are subject to change, are not guaranteed, and may be cut. Investing based on dividends alone may not be favorable as it does not include all material risks. There is no guarantee any stated (or implied) portfolio or performance objective mentioned by Berkshire can be met. Berkshire's equity style may focus its investments in certain sectors or industries, thereby increasing potential volatility relative to other strategies or indices. The dividend strategy may include bundled services also known as a "wrap fee program". Because there is typically a low turnover in the strategy, this may be more costly for some investors. No one should assume that any information presented serves as the receipt of, or a substitute for, personalized individual advice from a qualified advisor or any other investment professional.

Market Commentary, Aggregate Holdings, Securities, Sectors, Portfolio Characteristics Mentioned: No statement made in this presentation shall construe investment advice. This presentation is for informational purposes only. Views, comments or research mentioned is not intended to be a forecast of future events. The mention of any security or sector is not deemed as a recommendation to buy or sell. Any reference to any security or sector is used to explain the portfolio manager's rationale for portfolio decisions or philosophy. Research or financial statistics cited regarding securities or sectors do not contain all material information about them. Any securities mentioned represent a partial list of holdings whereas Berkshire portfolios typically contain approximately 30-40 securities in percentage weightings ranging from 1-5%. A complete list of holdings from a representative account is available upon request. Overall portfolio characteristics mentioned are from a representative account deemed representative of the strategy; data may be compiled from Bloomberg, Baseline or Berkshire estimates. Individual holdings, performance and aggregate characteristics of actual portfolios may vary based on a variety of factors including market conditions, timing of client cash flows and manager discretion. This presentation contains Berkshire opinions and use of Berkshire estimates which are subject to change at any time. Berkshire employees may have personal positions in any securities or sectors mentioned. Charts, presentations or articles may be obtained from third parties and Berkshire does not guarantee their accuracy. *Platform restrictions may apply. Preliminary returns are based on composite estimates only. Individual accounts will vary.
Copyright © 2023 Berkshire Asset Management, LLC, All rights reserved.