



jeff@tpwc.com

# THE PERSONAL WEALTH COACH®

An SEC Registered Investment Adviser

Jeffrey W McClure CFP®



Jacob A McClure CIMA®

PO Box 1029 / 918 N. Main Street  
Salado, TX 76571

(254) 947-1111  
(800) 914-7526

Serving Investors Since 1982

www.tpwc.com



jake@tpwc.com

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## TPWC Market and Economic Update

### The Markets

It is Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, a traditionally unlucky day, and particularly if you happen to have been a Templar Knight in the year 1307. If you believe that Friday the 13<sup>th</sup> is indeed a harbinger of doom, then we are in for a rough decade. There will be two of them this year and every following year until we reach 2020. After that our bad luck should halve as there are only one per year until at least 2050.

The S&P 500 celebrated this bad-luck day by rising 4.20 points or 0.18%, resulting in the Index ending the week at 2,274.64, down 0.10% for the week. It has managed to hang on to a 1.60% gain year-to-date and remains up about 21% for 52 weeks (one year). In our tradition of measuring from recent highs and lows, the Index is up 24.36% from its lows last February, but only up 6.75% from May of 2015.

Again, it is critical to know the “when” of an investment. We are approaching two full years from that 2015 number, and the resultant return marked from that high point is only about 3% per year. The lucky, or highly disciplined investor who chose the point of maximum fear and decline in the market last year is approaching a one year return of over 24%. We, of course, simply advise a good diversification and the practice of just “being there.”

The benchmark 10-year Treasury traded at 2.39% at today’s close, pretty much where it has been since late December.

### The Economy

According to news released by the Census Bureau today, retail sales, excluding automobiles, rose 3.3% in the year 2016, while automotive sales rose 4.1%, both good, healthy numbers, but car sales, in doing so, hit a record high. Building material sales were up 5.9%, reflecting what may be the beginning of a building resurgence. A category the bureaucrats at the Census Bureau refers to as “Nonstore retailers” showed the most striking rise in sales at 11.%. Balancing that rise, sales fell 5.6% at department stores and 3.2% at electronics and appliance stores. We are indeed a nation going on-line. Overall retail sales were up 4.4% for the last three quarters of 2016 when compared with 2015.

New jobless claims at unemployment agencies across the country have declined to the lowest levels since 1973, suggesting that job creation and business expansion is robust in the United States.

The *Economist* reported that average the average American worker’s hourly wage has risen from just above \$20 per hour in 2007 to about \$26 per hour at the end of 2016 culminating in a 2.9% wage increase last year. As there is increasing evidence of a shortage of workers in these United States, expect to see that number continue to rise.

Until next week, we remain your faithful servants,

Jeffrey W. McClure CFP®  
M.S. Personal Financial Planning

Jacob A. McClure, CIMA®

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