



August 9, 2007

This is going to be a really quick update since I have to get up at 5:00 AM for my annual WIMATH Golf Classic in Mass. To me, there's not much worse than getting up at the insane hour, except now, the weather forecast is for rain with highs in the low 60s.

It's no secret that we're seeing some of the most volatile times in many, many years. People get way too complacent when the stock market goes up strong with each and every little dip being a buying opportunity. It's only when the tide suddenly turns and they see a river of red in their portfolios do they stand up and take note.

What's been very interesting during this correction is the amount of high profile, supposed "smart money" folks who got caught. Last night I read about Goldman's Global Alpha fund which was labeled "Master of the Universe" in 2005 after earning 40%+ returns.

Almost as soon as the public became aware of it, thanks to an excellent Wall Street Journal article, the fund fell flat on its face, losing 9% in 2006 and another 16% so far in 2007. The key point here is the managers of this fund were supposed to be the greatest and smartest in the world! Did they drink the Kool-Aid and believe the headlines?

I picked on the Goldman fund because of the positive press it received right at its peak. But there were many more in July, like Paul Tudor Jones' flagship Raptor fund losing 9% in one month. Last summer, we witnessed Amaranth implode and this summer it was the former Harvard geniuses at Sowood Capital along with venerable Bear Stearns string of funds collapse.

All of these well publicized blow ups, in my opinion, have a few things in common; the lack of sound risk management and poor management of client expectations. As my wife will attest, I am FAR from perfect, but in all of our strategies, I have a very good notion of what our maximum downside risk should be.

And I communicate that several times to prospects before they sign as clients. I also send warnings after strings of good performance to make sure people are aware that the downside is lurking somewhere out there!

What I can't understand is how professionals do not have mechanisms in place to gauge and assess risk. Not that it's always right, because it's not. I remember getting caught in one strategy earlier this year and that led to a challenging quarter, but the I am shocked at the extent of the current blow ups.

Anyway, the stock market has been behaving very favorably for our strategies this quarter. While the market sold off very hard in July, we were busy clocking another month of strong returns.

Last week, we exited positions that would profit from a downside move and were fortunate enough to re-establish them again during the day on Wednesday. Today, while the Dow was in total collapse, we had several strategies making money! That's when the business is truly fun.

A few hours ago the nation's largest mortgage company, Countrywide, announced some fairly bad news about liquidity and access to funds. I would expect to see some more ugliness at the open tomorrow. From there, it becomes very interesting, once again.

The vast, vast majority of the time, the stock market, in this scenario, will open lower, stabilize and try to close firmly. That's the model for tomorrow. However, and this is a big one, if we, once again, are on the verge of a mini crash like 1998, tomorrow will be another total rout in equities. While that path is much less likely, it is possible.

I have a lot more comments, especially about our short-term indicators, so you can expect another update over the weekend. Either scenario, our clients' money is in good hands and we have a very nice cushion so far this quarter.

The stock market is setting up for another strong bounce, but it's too early to tell if that starts tomorrow at the open or we will have to wait until next week.

A few weeks ago, I mentioned buying the Japanese Yen as a possible hedge at the right time. Yesterday (Wednesday) was that time around the 84 level. I will discuss this more in the next update, but this could end up being a longer-term trade as it's possible that the yen is in the early stages of a very powerful rally.

Hopefully, you have been closely following us and your portfolio has weathered the storm without much damage.

If we haven't had a conversation about investing, I urge you to call or email me right away to schedule a meeting. This is yet another instance of why active investing is the way to go. I can't wait to hear from all the "buy and holders" on how you should just sit tight every time we decline and look over the long-term. Those comments just make me laugh!

Have a good Friday and safe and enjoyable weekend!

To Your Financial Success,



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