

"Fear, Hope & Greed"

I had a very interesting request from one of our Financial Advisors (FAs) last week. He asked me, "Jeff, have you heard of anyone who has gone through the exercise to see what would have happened if you dollar cost averaged every month from the October 2007 stock market high until now?" "Wow," I responded, "That's a really good question and not all that hard to check." Recall that dollar cost averaging is an investment strategy whereby participants invest equal amounts of money over specific time periods, say \$100 monthly, in a particular investment. That strategy allows investors to buy more shares when prices are low and fewer shares when prices are high. With that concept in mind, we begin. On October 11, 2007, the S&P 500 recorded an intraday high of 1576.09. Seventeen months later it would bottom with an intraday low on March 6, 2009, of 666.79. In 2010, the S&P 500 closed out the year at a December 31 price of 1257.64 and currently changes hands around 1283 (SPX/1283.35). Hence, if an investor began buying \$1's worth of the SPX at the end of September 2007, and continued to purchase \$1's worth of the SPX at the end of each month until yearend 2010, the dollar cost averaged performance is ~15.4% (excluding commissions) over that 40-month period (see the nearby chart). This compares to roughly an 18% loss over the same time frame for the investor who "rode it out" with no dollar cost averaging. That's a whopping 33% out-performance if our fictional investor had been able to conquer his fear and had employed a dollar cost averaging strategy. Regrettably, there's the "rub."

Ladies and gentlemen, while it's true over the long term that it is all about earnings, in the short to intermediate term the stock market is fear, hope and greed only loosely connected to the business cycle. This Fear, Hope and Greed cycle can be seen in the attendant chart. Beginning at the lower left of the chart we have Optimism with the chart rising to Excitement, Thrill and Euphoria where the bullish psychological environment peaks and turns down. You can liken this ascending pattern to what occurred following the Long Term Capital Management, and Russian default, back in 1998. Said debacles pressured the SPX from its July 1998 high of ~1167 into its Despondency low of ~957 in October of that year. At those lows, Fear reigned supreme. From there, however, stocks bottomed and traveled higher into their late 2000 highs, accompanied by the aforementioned ascent into the Euphoria region. Subsequently, stocks peaked and turned down. Over the next two years the SPX would shed some 49% of its value causing investors' mindsets to travel down the other side of our psychological chart (Anxiety, Denial, Fear, Depression, Panic Capitulation, and Despondency) with the SPX bottoming in October 2002. At that point investors were despondent; ergo, they were liquidating their stock portfolios just in time for stocks to bottom and begin a rally that would again cause investors' psyches to rise into the stock market's October 2007 peak.

I revisit the Fear, Hope and Greed cycle this morning not because I think we are approaching the Euphoric zone, but because I continue to believe we are near the Optimism level and therefore due for anywhere between a 3% - 10% correction. Still, any pullback is probably for buying as scribed in last Tuesday's strategy report:

"Since 1940 there has never been more than one 10% (or more) correction in an ongoing bull market. And yes Virginia, according to Dow Theory this is a bull market. A fair question, however, would be 'Is this a tactical, or a secular, bull market?' Personally I think it is tactical within the context of the broad trading range we have been experiencing since the turn of the century, but that's a discussion for another time."

Indeed, since entering 2011, I have been cautious; and except for the 14-point, first day of the year "yippee" (to 1273), the SPX hasn't really done all that much. Moreover, I have been commenting that the number of warning flags is rising with the Volatility Index (VIX/18.47) touching "complacency levels" last seen in April 2010 right before a correction. Ditto, Investors Intelligence data shows advisory sentiment approaching the bullish extremes of October 2007. Meanwhile, stock market leadership has been narrowing, internal momentum waning, and every macro sector except Utilities is overbought. Additionally, correlations between various asset classes are decreasing, implying investors are becoming increasingly selective. I further opined that if a 90% Downside Day was registered, a cautionary stance would become even more important. Well, last Wednesday turned out to be a 90% Downside Day with 90% of the total volume, and 90% of total points, coming on the downside. The result caused the SPX to experience its first loss of more than 1% since November 23, 2010. Yet, Wednesday's Wilt was worse than the official figures suggest because strength in a few high priced stocks masked just how weak the market's internals actually were. Last Wednesday also showed a change in the recent daily trading pattern in that morning weakness was not greeted with buyers. In fact, looking at

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last Wednesday's minute-by-minute trading chart saw a decided pickup in selling when the previous day's intraday low was violated. Plainly, all of this leaves me believing caution is still warranted.

For those not wanting to adhere to my near-term cautious strategy, I offer a risk adjusted investment idea from Raymond James' research universe. As readers of these missives know, I have been an energy "bull" for a long time. Of course, that includes coal, which has garnered increased attention recently given the flooding in Australia that has shuttered 75% of their coal mines. In addition to the coal names I have previously mentioned, this morning I would have you consider Rhino Resources (RNO/\$23.65/Outperform). Rhino is a diversified met and steam coal producer with proven and probable reserves of 273 million tons of steam coal and 13 million tons of met coal. Rhino also owns a 51% interest in Rhino Eastern, which controls 22 million tons of met coal. One of the benefits of such a substantial reserve base is the ability to boost production through internal expansion projects. While Rhino current pays no dividend distribution, our energy analysts expect a distribution to begin soon at roughly a 7% annualized distribution rate. That would compare favorably with the MLP universe of stocks' 6.6% rate, implying a higher share price.

The call for this week: Sometimes me sits and thinks and sometimes me just sits. Currently, me just sits, believing the evidence for a pullback is mounting. In addition to the aforementioned warning flags, since September 1, 2010, every time the Russell 2000 (RUT/773.18) has closed below its 20-day moving average (DMA), buyers have showed up the very next day. Not so last week. In fact, last week was the first down week for the SPX in eight weeks as the divergences in the stock market continue to grow (the DJIA was the only major index to register a new high on Friday; most of the other averages peaked on Tuesday). As legendary Dow Theorist Robert Rhea observed, mounting divergences suggest stocks are being distributed (read: sold) by smart money. In conclusion, it is worth considering that my notes indicate there is a tendency for the equity markets to "top" coincident with the State of the Union address (Tuesday night). Consistent with these thoughts, I am currently "just sitting;" or as Warren Buffett is fond of saying, "In this game the market has to keep pitching, but you don't have to swing. You can stand there with the bat on your shoulder for six months until you get a fat pitch."

P.S. – I am on the road again this week.

Fear, Hope, and Greed



Source: Raymond James research

*Assume investing		Average Dollar Cost:	\$ 1,102.12
\$1 per month		Avg \$ Cost Performance:	15.37%
		1/7/2011	\$ 1,271.50
Start	9/30/2007	Total Dollars Spent:	40
End	12/31/2010	Total Shares Purchased:	0.036294

.SPX-UT

Date	S&P Close	Shares/\$1
9/28/2007	1526.75	0.000655
10/31/2007	1549.3772	0.000645
11/30/2007	1481.1399	0.000675
12/31/2007	1468.355	0.000681
1/31/2008	1378.5499	0.000725
2/29/2008	1330.6299	0.000752
3/31/2008	1322.7	0.000756
4/30/2008	1385.5899	0.000722
5/30/2008	1400.3799	0.000714
6/30/2008	1280	0.000781
7/31/2008	1267.3799	0.000789
8/29/2008	1282.8299	0.000780
9/30/2008	1166.3614	0.000857
10/31/2008	968.75367	0.001032
11/28/2008	896.23707	0.001116
12/31/2008	903.25489	0.001107
1/30/2009	825.8816	0.001211
2/27/2009	735.09205	0.001360
3/31/2009	797.8667	0.001253
4/30/2009	872.80713	0.001146
5/29/2009	919.13965	0.001088
6/30/2009	919.32374	0.001088
7/31/2009	987.4751	0.001013
8/31/2009	1020.6246	0.000980
9/30/2009	1057.0799	0.000946
10/30/2009	1036.1944	0.000965
11/30/2009	1095.6299	0.000913
12/31/2009	1115.0999	0.000897
1/29/2010	1073.8692	0.000931
2/26/2010	1104.49	0.000905
3/31/2010	1169.43	0.000855
4/30/2010	1186.69	0.000843
5/28/2010	1089.4	0.000918
6/30/2010	1030.71	0.000970
7/30/2010	1101.5999	0.000908
8/31/2010	1049.3299	0.000953
9/30/2010	1141.2	0.000876
10/29/2010	1183.2598	0.000845
11/30/2010	1180.5499	0.000847
12/31/2010	1257.6399	0.000795

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