

NELSONCORPNEWS

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2024

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Avoid scam artists trying to take advantage of you over the phone or online. p6

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YOUR NELSONCORP TEAM



DAVID NELSON



EUGENE KRUEGER



VALERIE HILL



AMY CAVANAUGH



KENNETH NELSON



JACOB WOODCOCK



NATE KREINBRINK



JAMES NELSON



JOHN NELSON



ANDY FERGURSON



JAMIE HUGUNIN



MICHELLE EVERSOLL



AUSTIN ECK



TRAVIS MOREHEAD



MIKE VANZUIDEN



AMANDA SCHAVER



TABATHA WESTPHAL



MIKE STEIGERWALD



HANNAH VAN HYFTE



ISABEL HANSEN



Thank
You

I AM SO GRATEFUL

November has a lot of big days on the calendar and they all remind me of how much there is to be grateful for.

Election Day gives us the ability to shape our government and society and voting is a privilege and a right essential to a healthy democracy. Many people around the world do not have the opportunity to choose their leaders freely. I'm so thankful I can make my voice heard in this way and I appreciate this right and take it seriously.

Veterans Day honors the men and women who have served in the U.S. armed forces. Originally called Armistice Day to commemorate the end of World War I, the day now recognizes all veterans who have defended the country and its values. I cannot express enough gratitude for those that made or are currently making sacrifices and the freedoms they protect. Veterans Day reminds us that many have risked their lives to ensure that we enjoy security and peace, which is not to be overlooked.

And of course, Thanksgiving is a time to appreciate and focus on the blessings in our lives, from family and friends to health and shelter. It's a reminder to pause and appreciate the small blessings that we often take for granted, recognizing that not everyone is so fortunate.

With all of these reminders to pause and say thank you, I want to take the time to express my gratitude for my blessings: my family, my friends, my health, and all of you, our clients that allow us to do what we love to do and help you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

David Nelson

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THINGS TO NOTE

Thank you to the construction team and City of Clinton engineers for doing such a great job on the Springdale Road replacement. And thank you to our clients for being patient and working with us while our parking lot was closed.

SUPPORT OUR LOCAL CHARITIES & BUSINESSES

Check out what's happening at our area charities, businesses, and communities:

- Game Nights at the DeWitt Library
- Victory Center, Clinton, IA
- Festival of Trees, Davenport, IA
- Visit Clinton www.clintoniowatourism.com
- Visit Quad Cities www.visitquadcities.com

NelsonCorp Nuggets

The average Social Security retirement benefit in February 2024 was \$1,862 per month, or about \$22,344 per year.

Source:

cbpp.org/research/social-security/top-ten-facts-about-social-security

LESSONS FROM GEESE

Chances are that sometime over the last few weeks, you've seen a gaggle of geese flying south for the winter. (And yes, "gaggle" is the correct term – I looked it up to make sure!)

But have you wondered why geese fly in a V formation? I recently looked that up, too – and the answer was both interesting and inspiring. Particularly now, just before the holidays. In fact, it made me realize what I'm most grateful for as we prepare for a new Thanksgiving.

You see, as each goose flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds at least 71% greater flying range than if each bird were to fly on its own.

As I look at the faces gathered around the Thanksgiving table, I'll think to myself that it's because of them – family, friends, neighbors, colleagues – that I've been able to make it this far in life. Their support, their friendship, their time, their talents, their love – all of it has lifted me up and helped me get to where I want to be.

The V formation has other advantages, too. Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it feels the drag and resistance of trying to fly alone – and quickly gets back into the V, to take advantage of the lifting power of the birds in front.

As I share my home and food with those gathered around the Thanksgiving table, I'll think to myself how much harder life would be without them. The things I've done, the places I've been, the goals I've accomplished...it simply would not have been possible alone. Because none of us can get to where we want to be solely on our own.



By the way, the same is true for you. In fact, without you and my other clients, I wouldn't even have a business!

Of course, the V formation starts with a lead goose. The one who sets the pace, chooses the direction, and flies *without* the benefit of other geese in front of it. But when the head goose gets tired, it rotates back into the wing and allows another goose to fly point.

As I sit at the Thanksgiving table and give thanks for all the things my business has enabled me to afford, I'll also give thanks to my amazing team. As a financial advisor, I strive to be the "lead goose" in the gaggle – setting the pace and choosing the direction. But it's my team that keeps the business aloft. They do what I cannot, take point when I cannot, bear the burdens I cannot. I rely on them, depend on them, need them, and treasure them.

You may often hear geese honking as they fly in a V formation. That's because geese in the rear honk to urge those in front to keep up their speed. But they don't honk in anger – they honk in encouragement!

As I listen to the voices laughing and chatting around the Thanksgiving table, I'll think how often they have encouraged me. How often they've told me, "You can do this," or "I believe in you." How often they've pushed me to fly just a little longer, a little faster, a little further.

And I'll think, too: What do I say to the people that I stand behind? How can I communicate in a way that helps those in front of *me* to do all they can and be all they can be?

Finally, when a goose gets sick or injured and falls out of formation, two other geese will also drop out and follow it down to help and protect it. They will stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly, or until it dies. Only then do they return to the rest of the group.

As I hold hands, break bread, and count blessings with the people around the Thanksgiving table, I'll think how we all should stand by each other like that, in good times and bad, for better or for worse...if we but have the sense of a goose.

As you can see, there is so much to learn from geese. By following their example, we can fly higher, faster, and further...*together*. And that is what I'm truly thankful for. I'm thankful for all those in *my* gaggle, in my flock. Thankful for the lift they provide, the support they give, and the love they share.

I'm thankful for my family, my friends, my team...and for you.

May your holiday be filled with good friends, good food, and good cheer...with great memories the result. And may we always continue to fly in a V formation!

NO HESITATION

September 11, 2001. At a time when nearly every plane in the sky was landing at the nearest airport, two others were about to take off.

They were a pair of F-16 fighter jets. Their mission? Find the last plane to be hijacked — and bring it down.

The call had come directly from the White House: United Flight 93 had made a dramatic U-turn and was headed towards Washington. The pilots weren't responding. The nation needed someone in the air to stop it, and it needed to be *now*.

As soon as Lieutenant Colonel Marc "Sass" Sasseville got the message, he didn't hesitate. He didn't ask what he was supposed to do about it. And he didn't assign the mission to anyone else. Instead, he immediately pulled on his flight suit and told the nearest pilot — Lieutenant Heather "Lucky" Penney — to follow him. In just a few minutes, they were airborne, streaking across the sky to where they thought the hijacked plane would be. As they ascended, they could see the Pentagon burning outside their cockpit windows...and smell the fumes of burning jet fuel.

Normally, it takes F-16 pilots about thirty minutes to complete the pre-flight checklist. On September 11, Sass and Lucky had to scramble their jets so fast, there was no time to load any missiles. Their guns were stocked with dummy bullets for training missions. It was impossible to shoot down the plane. That left only one option: They had to ram it instead.

Theirs was a suicide mission.

Both had good reasons for saying, "No, I can't do this, ask someone else." Sass had had a wife

and two young children waiting for him at home. And Lucky's father was also a pilot — for United Airlines. For all she knew, her own father was on the very plane she was preparing to hit.

Nevertheless, there was no argument. No hesitation. As Lucky later said, "We don't send our service members on suicide missions. But it was clear what needed to be done that morning."¹

Said Sasseville, "We didn't have any other choice. And we weren't going to be caught on the ground watching America get hit again."¹

It was an operation neither pilot had ever been trained for, with a target neither had ever imagined. But this was what both had signed up for: To save lives, even at the cost of their own.

So, when Sasseville quietly said, "I'm going to go for the cockpit," Penney's response was instantaneous: "I'll take the tail."²

As fate would have it, these two Air Force pilots did not have to sacrifice their lives that day. The passengers of Flight 93 had done that for them, by storming the cockpit and crashing the plane before it ever reached Washington. Naturally, both Sasseville and Penney refer to these courageous men and women as the real heroes of 9/11, which they were. Neither are inclined to give themselves any credit. But that does not make what these two pilots did — and what they were prepared to do — any less heroic. They were willing to give their lives for our country without orders or a moment's hesitation. Because that was what they had signed up to do.

"People have asked me, who ordered you to ram your aircraft? The answer is no one. We knew

*what needed to be done. Once we had authorization to get airborne, our duty was simple, clear, and unspoken: To protect. And since we had no weapons capable of taking down an airliner, we'd do it by the only means we had."*³ — Major Heather Penney

I think about people like Sass and Lucky every Veterans Day. I think about how incredible it is that every day, there are over a million members of our Armed Services — and millions of veterans — willing to lay down their lives for us. How blessed we are to have their loyalty, their courage, and their example.

"I've been called a hero for what I was willing to do. But I'm not special. I just happened to be standing at the Ops Counter when we finally got the call. The truth is, any one of us would have made the same decision, would have been willing to do exactly what I was prepared to do — and what the passengers on Flight 93 did do."

*Why? Because...we belong to something greater than ourselves. As complex, diverse, and discordant as it is, this thing, this idea called America binds us together in citizenship and community and brotherhood."*³ — Major Heather Penney

Everyone knows that Veter-

ans Day is for paying tribute to those who serve. But it's more than that. It's an opportunity to remember one outstanding pilot's words: That we *all* belong to something greater than ourselves. That America is both a country *and* an idea.

The veterans of our country have done their job, protecting and fighting for that idea. It's our job as citizens to always make it a country worth fighting for.

May we never lose sight of that mission.

¹ "Fighter pilots recall mission to take down Flight 93 on 9/11," CBS, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/september-11-flight-93-fighter-pilots-mission/>

² "F-16 pilot was ready to give her life on Sept. 11," The Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/f-16-pilot-was-ready-to-give-her-life-on-sept-11/2015/09/06/7c-8cddbc-d8ce-11e0-9dca-a4d231df-de50_story.html

³ "Heather Penney, the 9/11 fighter pilot, says celebrating normalcy is a way to honor heroes," The Washington Post, https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/heather-penney-the-911-fighter-pilot-says-celebrating-normalcy-is-a-way-to-honor-heroes/2013/09/13/a97a4bc8-1c8f-11e3-8685-5021e0c41964_story.html



PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SCAMMERS



It's Saturday afternoon, and you are watching a movie at home or running errands, and your phone vibrates.

You take a peek and see a text from a phone number and area code you don't recognize. "Hey Jackson, when are you coming to my house to fix my a/c? It's hot in this place."

Or the message may read, "Let's get together tomorrow for a cup of coffee."

There are no typos. It seems friendly, but you don't know the person or simply assume the sender mistakenly entered your phone number.

The temptation may be to kindly inform the person that he/she has the wrong number. Or you sheepishly reply and ask if this is someone you know. Both responses seem harmless, right?

Wrong!

According to consumer advice from the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), it's not rude to ignore "Hi, how are you?" text messages from strangers.

A scammer could be sending the message, hoping you'll answer and take the bait.

According to the FTC, scammers will probably apologize and then engage you in friendly and playful banter to keep the conversation going because they want to gain your trust.

Once they have your trust, they'll offer advice on investing in cryptocurrency or some other investment...for a fee. But it's a scam. If you take the bait, it will turn into a costly lesson.

In other instances, scammers may send a photo of "themselves" from a unique location. Be careful. The photo contains malware.

Download the picture, and hackers can gain access to your phone, keystrokes (including passwords), financial information, and more.

Even if you quickly break off the conversation, scammers now know they have a live number and are likely to ramp up fraudulent and annoying attacks. **If you see such a message, it's best not to open it. Just hit "block and report SPAM."**

Never call an unknown number back, even if it looks like a local or U.S. phone number. In what's called the one-ring phone scam, fraudsters use international numbers that look like American

numbers to trick you into returning the call. They'll do their best to keep you on the line, leaving you with huge charges.

Nowadays, it may be best not to answer calls from numbers you don't recognize. If it's important, they will leave a voicemail.

Impersonation

Have you ever received a text that claims to be from Netflix or PayPal? Most of us have.

The message alleges something is wrong with the account, and you must click on a link to re-establish service. But do you notice the link is simply a long string of nonsensical characters? It's a message designed to defraud you.

Messages claiming to be from FedEx or UPS inform you that a package is being held at a warehouse because they don't have your address. Again, scammers want you to click on a nefarious link that will only lead to heartache.

Meanwhile, the grandparent scam tugs at your heartstrings, which is the scammer's goal. You may receive a phone call from a scammer posing as the victim's grandchild, purportedly in jail. Money is needed immediately.

Even if scammers insist you keep it a secret, the FBI recommends that you first verify the story with a family member.

The romance scam

Scammers prey on those of any age, including the elderly. According to the FBI, a criminal uses a fake online identity to gain a victim's affection and trust. The

scammer then uses the illusion of a romantic relationship to manipulate and steal from the victim.

Scammers may discuss meeting in person, but that won't happen. Eventually, when you are most vulnerable, they will ask for money. At its worst, victims have willingly given hundreds of thousands of dollars to these criminals.

The bottom line: Never send money to anyone you've communicated with online or by phone.

How to recognize phishing

According to the FTC, scammers use emails or text messages to steal your passwords, account numbers, and Social Security number. Scammers launch billions of phishing attacks every day—and they're successful more often than you think.

Otherwise, they wouldn't take the time if such activities weren't profitable.

Despite the official appearance, here are signs that can help you spot fraudulent messages.

- The email has a generic greeting. It doesn't address you by name.
- It's from an unknown email address that doesn't reflect the company's name.
- The email says your account is on hold due to a billing problem.
- The email requires that you click on a link to update your payment details.

Be careful! With the advent of AI (artificial intelligence), emails may appear legit and devoid of

typos and misspelled words, which are obvious signs of a scam.

If in doubt, call the company. **But don't use a number provided in the email.** Be sure to find a statement or obtain the phone number directly from the company's website.

Play defense

Let's explore several FTC recommendations that will help you avoid being victimized.

1. Protect your computer and phone using security software that automatically updates.
2. Protect your accounts using multi-factor authentication, which requires additional credentials to access your account. These can fall into three categories:
 - A passcode, a PIN, or the answer to a security question.
 - A one-time verification passcode you get by text, email, or from an authenticator app.
 - A scan of your fingerprint, your retina, or your face.
 Multi-factor authentication makes it harder for scammers to log in to your accounts if they obtain your username and password.

If you receive a phone call from someone asking for the PIN or passcode, HANG UP! No one from your bank, financial institution, or legitimate company will EVER call you and ask for this information.

After hanging up, immediately change your password and user ID and speak to someone at that company so you may report your encounter.

3. Protect the data on your phone and computer by saving data to an external hard drive or in the cloud.

4. Limit the amount of personal information on social media. It's best not to share family and personal information. Major platforms, including Facebook, have hundreds of millions of users. Any one of them in the U.S. or overseas can follow and target you.
5. Don't let your guard down and use common sense.

What if...

We're human. We make mistakes. What if you slip up and provide the requested information?

1. Change your password and always use strong passwords. Better yet, use a unique password for each account.
2. Check your financial statements and call your financial institution.
3. If you have not frozen your credit report with the three credit bureaus, do so now. What is a credit freeze? A credit freeze prevents creditors from accessing your credit report, preventing a scammer from taking out a loan or credit card in your name.

It's easy to do, and you may temporarily lift a credit freeze when applying for credit.

Final thoughts

We want you to stay safe online. Much of what we've discussed may sound like common sense, and it is. But in the moment that we least expect it, mistakes can occur.

Hackers are becoming increasingly sophisticated, but knowledge and common sense are a strong defense. Keep your security software updated and stay alert; you'll greatly reduce the odds of being victimized.

NELSONCORP MEDIA APPEARANCES

Be sure to catch our weekly educational content featured locally on television, radio, and the newspaper. You can get this and more at www.nelsoncorp.com/blog.

This month on 4 Your Money, David Nelson explained the meaning behind the phrase, "Don't Fight the Fed" and looked at charts showing market performance when interest rates are cut in over 50% of the Feds around the world versus when interest rates are raised in over 50% of the Feds around the world. With the recent interest cuts, it could mean good news, but investors need to be cautious of the markets overreacting. On another segment, David discussed how margin debt, or borrowing money to buy securities, is something that investors need to watch carefully. It can be a warning signal when it starts hitting all-time highs. James Nelson was on to look at the housing market, mortgage rates, and whether now could be a good time to refinance.



4 Your Money airs Tuesday mornings on FOX 18 News at 8am and on WHBF CBS Local 4 News at around 6:10pm and is a paid appearance.

On Financial Focus, Nate Kreinbrink and Mike Steigerwald sat down to talk about Medicare and the term IRMAA, which stands for Income-Related Monthly Adjustment Amount. The Social Security Administration looks at what you make to determine what you pay for your Part B premium and if there was something two years ago that artificially increased your income, you can appeal their decision. David Nelson joined Gary Determan and discussed in detail the Fed's rate cut, the jobs report, as well as the events happening around the world that could all impact the markets. Nate was back on another show reviewing inherited accounts and how quickly that money needs to be distributed.



Financial Focus airs every Wednesday at 9:00 am on KROS FM 105.9 and AM 1340.

YOUR PURPOSE IN RETIREMENT

Over the last few editions we've been focusing on the question, "I'm retired...now what?" The decisions to make and opportunities to consider in the immediate aftermath of retirement to ensure a smooth transition...and a high quality of life.

This month, we're finishing up that series by looking at three topics that will either need to be addressed at some point during retirement or that can help enrich your retirement lifestyle.

I hope you've enjoyed this series of articles! Most people work, save, and plan for years in order to retire. You deserve to "hit the ground running" when your retirement day comes, so you can check items off your bucket list and live life to the fullest. So, as you move further down the Road to Retirement, please let me know if you ever have any "Now what?" questions you would like help with! We are always here for you.

What's Around the Bend: Being a Caregiver

When we plan for retirement, we often plan for the activities we imagine we'll spend the most time doing: Travel, golf, gardening, seeing the grandkids, etc. But there's one activity that many retirees don't plan for that they will find themselves doing the most: Being a caregiver.

A caregiver is a family member who regularly looks after a sick, elderly, or disabled person. Millions of Americans work as unpaid caregivers in the United States. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, at least 15% of those providing eldercare are age 65 or older, and 21% are

older than 55.¹ Many retirees unexpectedly find themselves thrust into the role of caregiver, either for a spouse, a sibling, a child/grandchild, or even their parents.

Most people want nothing more than to ensure their loved ones are safe, happy, and looked after. But being a caregiver – especially a full-time one – can be an enormous weight on your retirement. For one thing, it can be extremely costly, especially if the person you are caring for has major health issues or medical needs. That can drain much-needed retirement savings that were probably earmarked for other things.

It can also be an enormous demand on your time. Some retirees, expecting to finally take that trip to Europe or focus on volunteering, find themselves unable to be away from home for any length of time.

It can also have an effect on your own wellbeing. According to one study, 23% of caregivers "say that providing care has made their own health worse."²

Now, none of this is to discourage you from being a caregiver, if that's what your personal situation requires. Being a caregiver is a noble calling, and it can also be extremely rewarding! But it *does* require extensive planning to ensure that it doesn't derail your retirement dreams or drain your retirement savings. Specifically, potential caregivers should take time to:

- Calculate expenses. As part of your retirement plan, factor in the potential costs of caregiving and make sure those costs can be covered.

- Inventory your resources. Your retirement plan should factor in any and all funds you have that can be allocated toward caregiving *without* interrupting your own personal retirement goals. This also involves researching whether there are any state or federal resources you can tap into. Take time to review your non-financial resources, too, like determining if there are other family members who can assist you with caregiving.

- Review your family's insurance needs other than Medicare. Disability insurance, critical illness insurance, and even long-term care insurance can be very valuable for caregivers.

- Develop a budget. This can help keep caregiving costs from spiraling.

Being a caregiver may never be an issue for you, or at least not for a long time. But if you do need to function as a caregiver in retirement, it's important to factor that possibility into your

plan so that you can still live the lifestyle you want while doing the most important thing anyone can do: Care for the people you love.

What's Over the Next Hill: Setting Your Withdrawal Strategy

Regardless of your asset allocation, every retiree should have a strategy for *when* they will withdraw money from their accounts, *which* accounts they will draw from first, and *how much* they should withdraw every month, quarter, and year. There are many potential strategies to choose from, and a near-infinite number of ways to customize each strategy for you. Over the last few editions of this newsletter, we've broken down a few of the more common. This month, let's look at:

The Guardrails Strategy

This strategy is based on the concept of changing your withdrawal rate based on how the market is performing. If the markets are in a long-term decline, you would decrease your withdrawal rate. During a long-term bull market, your rate



would increase.

Under this strategy, retirees set specific “guardrails” for their target withdrawal rate — a high guardrail and a low guardrail. If your actual withdrawal rate rises above your high guardrail, you reduce the amount you withdraw. If it falls below your low guardrail, you increase that amount.

This approach is helpful if the value of your portfolio fluctuates dramatically due to how the markets are performing. For example, let’s say your portfolio is worth \$1 million, and your target withdrawal rate is 4%. Your rate will vary, but in this example, your guardrails would become 5% and 3%, respectively. So, in a normal year, you would withdraw \$40,000. But the next year, the markets decline, and the value of your portfolio drops to \$800,000. Taking out \$40k would be more than 4% — it would be 5% of your portfolio. You’ve hit the upper guardrail, so you reduce the actual amount you withdraw for that year.

If the value of your portfolio increased to, say, \$1.25 million, then withdrawing \$40,000 would be a little over 3% of your portfolio. That means you’ve hit the lower guardrail, so you would *increase* the amount you actually withdraw.

That’s a lot of numbers I just threw at you! It’s important to keep in mind that your numbers will be very specific to you and your situation. The overall point is that the guardrails strategy is a dynamic way to withdraw money in retirement that adapts to market conditions rather than ignoring them. That definitely makes it a strategy worth considering!

What’s On the Horizon: Your Local Legacy

One of the biggest “Now what”

questions that retirees ask is, “What is my purpose?”

Now, people rarely think of the question in those words, of course. It’s more of a nagging feeling that, with children grown and their careers completed, they are no longer as productive. That they are no longer playing an active role in shaping the world around them.

But retirement doesn’t have to be that way. Retirement can be the stage of life when you do the most good for the most people. When you can be the most productive you have ever been, in a way that lasts long after you do!

In my experience, one of the best ways to make retirement as productive, rewarding, and fulfilling as possible is to focus on your legacy within your immediate community.

Here are a few simple ways to build your own local legacy:

1. **Random Acts of Kindness:** Small gestures like helping an elderly neighbor with groceries, holding the door open for someone, or waving to everyone can brighten someone’s day and foster a sense of community.
2. **Community Clean-up:** Organize a local clean-up event to keep your streets, parks, and public spaces tidy and beautiful.
3. **Volunteer Work:** Offer your time and skills to local charities, schools, or organizations. It’s a great way to give back and connect with your community.
4. **Community Garden:** Start or join a community garden project. It not only promotes sustainability but also brings people together.
5. **Organize Events:** Plan community events, such

as neighborhood picnics, holiday celebrations, or local fairs, to bring people together and foster a sense of belonging.

6. **Environmental Initiatives:** Advocate for eco-friendly practices, like recycling programs, energy-saving campaigns, or tree planting in your area.

Watching the Weather: Market Conditions on the Road to Retirement

Despite beginning the month with a sharp dip, the S&P 500 closed at a record high at the end of September, finishing up 2.2% for the month.³

When September began, many investors were worried about the prospect of rising unemployment and whether the Fed had waited too long to lower interest rates. (Higher interest rates tamp down on consumer spending and borrowing, forcing businesses to cut costs. This can lead to either a slowdown in hiring, a surge in layoffs, or both. Either way, with more people looking for jobs than there are openings, the unemployment rate goes up.)

Some investors were also expressing concern about AI companies. The hype over artificial intelligence has been one of the biggest drivers of the current bull market, but some of that hype has begun to cool recently as investors wonder whether the technology will actually return enough value to justify the costs.

Things quickly turned around in the markets, however, when the August jobs report came in. It showed that the jobless rate was essentially the same as the month before, suggesting that, while unemployment is ticking up, it’s not running out of control. This relief turned to exuberance as the month went on when the Federal Reserve cut interest

rates for the first time in four years. From there, it was mostly smooth sailing in the markets for the rest of the month.

What We’re Keeping an Eye On

While the markets’ recent performance has definitely been something to smile about, there are some potential storm clouds on the horizon. Violence in the Middle East may lead to increased turbulence for the oil markets. The unemployment rate will continue to be a main storyline. And there’s always the possibility of volatility surrounding the presidential election. For these reasons, it’s important that we remain vigilant and prudent with our investment decisions in the short-term...while always keeping the majority of our focus on the long-term.

1 “Who is providing eldercare?” U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, <https://www.bls.gov/blog/2023/celebrating-national-family-caregivers-month-with-bls-data.htm>

2 “The Impact of Caregiving on Retirement,” Caregiver Resource Centers, <https://www.caregivercalifornia.org/2024/04/09/how-does-caregiving-impact-retirement-the-real-costs-of-caregiving/>

3 “S&P 500 ekes out record closing high; declines briefly after Powell,” Reuters, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us/wall-st-eyes-lower-start-data-loaded-week-powells-comments-awaited-2024-09-30/>

END OF YEAR CHECKLIST

Now that we are in the fourth and final quarter of the year, it's time once again to talk about checklists. Because if there's any time to use them, it's *definitely* now! After all...

*He's makin' a list
and checkin' it twice
He's gonna find out if you're
naughty or nice.*
"Santa Claus is Comin' to Town"
— J. Fred Coots & Haven Gillespie

Now, I apologize for putting Christmas music into your head when we're still a month and a half away from it. But I do it to make a point:

First - I love my checklists and rely on them every day. Second - checklists are so important, even Santa Claus uses them! And if they're good enough for Kris Kringle, they're definitely good enough for us.

As the year winds down, there are many things we can do to strengthen our finances and move closer to our long-term goals. So, to help you close out 2024 with a flourish and build momentum to next year, I've created a short "Q4 Financial Checklist." It contains five tasks to accomplish before the end of the year.

Now, don't worry! None of these items are difficult. One or two may not even apply to you; others you may have done already. But if you put them all together, I think you'll find they will go a long way to making your finances — and your holidays — just a little more merry and bright.

As always, please let me know if you need help or have questions about any of these. In the meantime, I wish you a great fourth quarter, a wonderful year's end, and a happy holiday season!

Q4 Financial Checklist for 2024

Tip: Print this out and stick it on the fridge or somewhere else it will be seen. That way, you can check off the items one by one as you complete them!

☐ Budget your holiday expenses

The upcoming holiday season is a great boost for morale as the days get shorter and the weather gets colder. But they can also be a huge drain on our wallets. In fact, the average consumer spends \$1,650 to celebrate the winter holidays!

From presents to food to decorations, holiday expenses can pile up quickly, eat into savings,

and even cause people to take on more debt. But all of that can be avoided with just a little planning.

Take time to budget exactly how much you want to spend on each holiday by determining what your needs will be well in advance.

Begin by looking at last year's spending to figure out if there are ways to save or cut back. Next, start determining how many people are coming to Thanksgiving dinner. And be sure to check that one box in the garage before buying yet *another* set of holiday lights.

You get the idea.

Then, decide exactly *how* you'll pay for each holiday expense. Will you pull money from savings? Use a credit card? From there, you can set a specific spending limit for each expense, keeping costs down while also spending more on the things you *truly* care about around the holidays.

☐ Review your insurance needs

November is Open Enrollment season in the U.S. That means it's a good time to review your current insurance coverage and examine if you have any gaps in coverage that need to be filled or if there are less expensive alternatives out there.

For those nearing retirement, this is also an opportunity to look at additional types of coverage beyond standard health insurance, like Disability and Long-Term Care Insurance.

We are also here to help you review your current coverage or select the best Medicare coverage for your situation. We have a team of Medicare specialists if

you want someone to help decipher all the mailings you may be receiving and navigate the policies available.

☐ Check for opportunities to harvest your tax losses

As we approach the end of the year, it's wise to look back and see all the ups and downs we experienced in the markets this year — and the ups and downs you've probably experienced in your portfolio. As you know, when you sell an investment that has increased in value, you must pay taxes on your **capital gains**.

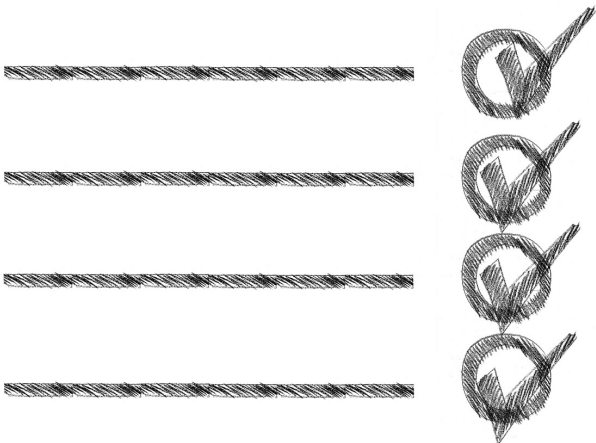
But when you sell an investment that has *decreased*, you can declare a **capital loss**. A loss can often be used to offset the taxes you pay on your capital gains, thus reducing your overall tax bill. This is known as **tax-loss harvesting**, and when done accurately and consistently, it can increase your after-tax returns by 1%.² Over time, this can make a big difference!

So, as the year winds down, take time to review your outside investments for opportunities to harvest your tax losses. Again, let me know if you need any help looking at accounts that we don't already take care of for you.

☐ Consider your charitable contributions

These days, more and more people are starting to think of investing not just as a way to help themselves, but to help their communities. That's especially true around the holiday season. But charity isn't *just* about giving back (though that's a big deal). But it can bring tax benefits, too!

In fact, there are several charitable gifting strategies that investors can take advantage of. But





it's important to start thinking about this sooner rather than later if you want to be savvy about it. A few things for you to consider:

1. Have you maxed out your charitable donations for the year?
2. Are you planning on contributing cash, stock, or other assets?
3. Can you take advantage of a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)?

If you have any questions about this or need help game-planning your own charitable contributions, please let me know. I would be happy to help.

☐ Review this year's goals and plan for next year's

It's crazy to think that we're only one quarter away from a new calendar year! Where has the year gone?

Because 2025 is just around the corner, now is the time to review how you've progressed on your goals this year so you can accurately plan for what needs to be done *next* year.

What goals are you behind on at that need to be reprioritized? What new goals do you have? By doing this now, you can finish 2024 strong and start 2025 hot out of the gate.

1 "2023 Deloitte holiday retail survey," Deloitte, www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/retail-distribution/holiday-retail-sales-consumer-survey.html

2 Shomesh Chaudhuri, Terence Burnham, Andrew Lo, "An Empirical Evaluation of Tax-Loss Harvesting Alpha," Financial Analysts Journal, <https://rpc.cfainstitute.org/en/research/financial-analysts-journal/2020/0015198X-2020-1760064>

NelsonCorp Nuggets

The Census Bureau forecasts that by 2030, there will be more than 73 million people aged 65 and over, comprising about 21% of the country's population.

Source:
2024 Retirement
Confidence Survey by
the Employment Benefit
Research Institute

THIS MONTH'S FEATURED CHARITY IS RSVP OF CLINTON COUNTY



Retired & Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Clinton County is an organization that helps engage individuals 55 and up in volunteer activities. These volunteer opportunities serve Clinton County in various ways. Our volunteers and organization serve our community through programs such as Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP), AARP taxes (free service), Holiday Network, Plarn group, and Mobile Meals. Volunteers also help out around our office during busy times by answering phones, helping out with appointments, and entering data.

SHIIP: Counselors help individuals navigate their Medicare options for when they turn 65 and during open enrollment.

AARP Taxes: Free tax service.

Holiday Network: Provides disadvantaged individuals in the community with food box and gifts for the holiday season.

Plarn: Plastic Yarn. This group takes strips of plastic and creates sleeping bags and bath bags that go to individuals experiencing homelessness. Some of our members in this group also make hats and scarves that are used for Holiday Network as well.

Mobile Meals: Through a partnership with Mercy One our volunteers deliver meals during the lunch hour to elderly individuals who live in Clinton

There are so many ways to get involved in RSVP, I would encourage anyone interested in volunteering to reach out and discuss all our opportunities. For anyone wishing to donate to RSVP, checks can be made out to Retired & Senior Volunteer program and should be mailed to 1900 N 3rd Street, Clinton, IA 52732.

JEANS FOR CHARITY

Every Friday, the team at NelsonCorp Wealth Management wears "Jeans for Charity". In exchange for getting to wear jeans to work, we each pay a \$5 weekly fine. At the end of the month, the fines are donated to a charity. NelsonCorp will match the fines that are collected, up to \$250.



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