□First Trust

TALKING POINTS

Data through April 2017

Open-End Net Fund Flows (\$)	3/17	2/17	YTD (Mar)				
Equity	-15.62B	3.02B	-21.22B				
Taxable Bond	28.22B	21.59B	67.26B				
Municipal Bond	0.85B	2.10B	7.07B				
Hybrid	-2.63B	-0.80B	-6.19B				
Taxable Money Market	-18.36B	0.54B	-66.07B				
Voy Interest Dates	4/20/17	12/20/16	4/20/16				
Key Interest Rates		12/30/16					
Federal Funds Target Rate	1.00%	0.75%	0.50%				
LIBOR (3-Month)	1.17%	1.00%	0.64%				
2-Year T-Note	1.26%	1.19%	0.78%				
10-Year T-Note	2.28%	2.45%	1.83%				
Bond Buyer 40	4.21%	4.25%	3.94%				
Commodities/U.S. Dollar	4/17	YTD	12 Mo.				
U.S. Dollar Index (DXY)	-1.30%	-3.09%	6.41%				
TR/CC CRB Commodity Index	-2.23%	-5.60%	-1.56%				
Crude Oil (Barrel)	-2.51%	-8.17%	7.43%				
Natural Gas (per million BTUs)	2.82%	-11.83%	50.46%				
Gold Bullion (Ounce)	1.68%	10.12%	-1.72%				
Total Return Performance							

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Total Return Performance								
U.S. Stock Indices	4/17	YTD	12 Mo.					
S&P 500	1.03%	7.16%	17.91%					
DJIA	1.45%	6.71%	20.90%					
NASDAQ 100	2.76%	15.18%	30.22%					
S&P 400	0.84%	4.81%	20.45%					
Russell 2000	1.10%	3.58%	.58% 25.60%					
Russell 3000	1.06%	6.86%	18.57%					
U.S. Styles/Market Caps	4/17	YTD	12 Mo.					
S&P 500 Growth								
	1.95%	10.65%	19.15%					
S&P 500 Value	-0.07%	3.22%	16.12%					
S&P MidCap 400 Growth	1.64%	6.81%	20.25%					
S&P MidCap 400 Value	-0.03%	2.63%	20.02%					
Russell 2000 Growth	1.84%	7.28%	24.03%					
Russell 2000 Value	0.39%	0.26%	27.16%					
Foreign Stock Indices (USD)	4/17	YTD	12 Mo.					
MSCI World NET (Ex-U.S.)	2.13%	9.08%	10.75%					
MSCI Emerging Markets NET	2.19%	13.88%	19.13%					
MSCI Europe NET	3.53%	11.24%	10.93%					
MSCI BRIC NET	1.86%	13.65%	22.92%					
MSCI EM Latin America NET	0.00%	12.06%	16.31%					
Nikkei 225	1.42%	5.95%	14.10%					
Barclays Bond Indices	4/17	YTD	12 Mo.					
U.S. Treasury: Intermediate	0.53%	1.08%	-0.16%					
GNMA 30 Year	0.49%	0.77%	0.47%					

Sources: Bloomberg, Barclays, Investment Company Institute

Municipal Bond (22+)

Intermediate Corporate

U.S. Corporate High Yield

EM Hard Currency Aggregate

U.S. Aggregate

Global Aggregate

2.49%

1.59%

2.00%

3.89%

2.91%

4.69%

0.74%

0.77%

0.83%

1.15%

1.13%

1.41%

0.08%

0.83%

2.41%

13.30%

-2.10%

6.94%

Climate

Last month, we noted that U.S. CEOs are feeling more optimistic about the climate for doing business and plan to spend more of their capital as well as hire more employees looking out six months. In addition, a recent survey of 2,300 senior corporate executives from EY revealed that 79% of U.S. executives plan to pursue a mergers and acquisitions (M&A) deal in the next 12 months, surpassing the survey's average of 47% since its inception eight years ago, according to Yahoo Finance. Of those polled, 54% believe the Trump administration's policies have the potential to create more M&A opportunities, particularly its proposed changes to the corporate tax code.

Stock Market

The S&P 500 Index closed at 2,384.20 on 4/28/17, 0.49% below its all-time high of 2,395.96, established on 3/1/17, according to Bloomberg. The S&P 500 Index posted a total return of 1.03% in April. Eight of the 11 major sectors that comprise the S&P 500 Index were up on a total return basis. The top-performer was Information Technology, up 2.52%, while the worst showing came from Telecommunication Services, down 3.31%. YTD thru April, the S&P 500 Index posted a total return of 7.16%. Nine of the 11 major sectors were up. The top-performer was Information Technology, up 15.41%, while the worst showing came from Energy, down 9.38%. From 11/8/16 (date Donald Trump was elected 45th President of the United States) through 4/28/17, the S&P 500 Index posted a total return of 12.49%, according to Bloomberg. Ten of the 11 major sectors were up. The top-performer was Financials, up 18.69%, while the worst showing came from Energy, down 1.24%. While the S&P 500 Index closed April just below its all-time high, many stocks stood well below their respective 52week highs. The following breaks down where the average stock in each sector stood relative to its 52-week high as of 4/28/17 (Bloomberg): Information Technology (-4.86%); Utilities (-5.53%); Financials (-7.26%); Industrials (-7.63%); Materials (-8.44%); Health Care (-8.63%); Consumer Staples (-9.61%); Consumer Discretionary (-12.06%); Real Estate (-13.08%); Telecommunication Services (-13.34%); and Energy (-19.62%).

Bond Market

The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note (T-note) stood at 2.28% on 4/28/17, down 11 basis points (bps.) from 2.39% on 3/31/17, according to Bloomberg. It was 45 bps. higher than a year ago (1.83% on 4/29/16), but 46 bps. lower than the 10-year average of 2.74%. The dip in interest rates in April was well-received by investors as all of the major bond categories posted healthy gains for the month (see Barclays Bond Indices table). Investors continue to pour large amounts of capital into bond mutual funds. Bond funds reported net inflows totaling \$74.33 billion in Q1'17, up from net inflows totaling \$17.36 billion in Q1'16, according to the Investment Company Institute. In 2016, net inflows totaled \$106.65 billion.

Takeaway

Part of the fallout from the 2008-2009 financial crisis for some investors was the issue of trust, or faith, in the markets. After all, the crisis was in essence a systemic meltdown. In our opinion, perhaps one of the best ways in which to assess the viability of the securities markets these many years later is to see if the risk-reward relationship is intact. In other words, the greater the risk assumed by the investor, the greater the return expected/required by said investor. On this front, we have good news to report. With respect to equities, from 3/9/09-4/28/17 (current bull market), small-capitalization (cap) stocks outperformed mid-cap stocks and they in turn outperformed large-cap stocks. The cumulative total returns were as follows: S&P SmallCap 600 Index (+419.26%); S&P MidCap 400 Index (+384.45%); and the S&P 500 Index (+318.69%), according to Bloomberg. With respect to bonds, from 3/9/09-4/28/17, high yield corporate bonds outperformed investment grade corporate bonds and they in turn outperformed U.S. Treasury bonds. The cumulative total returns were as follows (BofA Merrill Lynch Bond Indices): U.S. High Yield Constrained (+185.72%); 7-10 Year U.S. Corporate Index (+98.84%); and the 7-10 Year U.S. Treasury Index (+36.90%), according to Bloomberg.

Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Historical performance figures for the indices are for illustrative purposes only and not indicative of any actual investment. Indices are unmanaged and an investor cannot invest directly in an index.



High/Low Snapshot

Data as of 4/28/17

Index	10-Yr. High Value	Date	10-Yr. Low Value	Date	Month-End Value	% Off High Value	YTD Return (USD)	Month-End Yield
S&P 500	2395.96	3/1/2017	676.53	3/9/2009	2384.20	-0.49%	7.16%	1.96%
S&P 500 Growth	1346.40	4/28/2017	363.99	3/9/2009	1346.40	0.00%	10.65%	1.62%
S&P 500 Value	1057.51	3/1/2017	307.16	3/9/2009	1025.64	-3.01%	3.22%	2.37%
S&P MidCap 400	1758.27	3/1/2017	404.62	3/9/2009	1732.76	-1.45%	4.81%	1.70%
S&P MidCap 400 Growth	793.77	4/27/2017	174.44	11/20/2008	787.58	-0.78%	6.81%	1.28%
S&P MidCap 400 Value	609.68	3/1/2017	144.98	3/9/2009	593.08	-2.72%	2.63%	2.17%
S&P 100	1061.21	3/1/2017	322.13	3/9/2009	1054.86	-0.60%	7.14%	2.13%
DJIA	21115.55	3/1/2017	6547.05	3/9/2009	20940.51	-0.83%	6.71%	2.33%
NASDAQ 100	5583.53	4/28/2017	1036.51	11/20/2008	5583.53	0.00%	15.18%	1.08%
Russell 2000	1419.43	4/26/2017	343.26	3/9/2009	1400.43	-1.34%	3.58%	1.44%
Russell 2000 Growth	843.67	4/27/2017	190.73	3/9/2009	835.67	-0.95%	7.28%	0.93%
Russell 2000 Value	1825.27	3/1/2017	469.32	3/9/2009	1775.13	-2.75%	0.26%	1.93%
Russell 3000	1422.33	3/1/2017	389.61	3/9/2009	1414.84	-0.53%	6.86%	1.89%
MSCI World Net (ex U.S.) (USD)	5496.51	7/3/2014	2131.84	3/9/2009	5361.88	-2.45%	9.08%	3.02%
MSCI Emerging Markets Net (USD)	473.36	10/29/2007	164.51	10/27/2008	432.58	-8.62%	13.88%	2.44%
Ibovespa/Brazil (USD)	44638.24	5/19/2008	9077.09	1/21/2016	20450.66	-54.19%	10.65%	3.05%
RTS/Russia (USD)	2487.92	5/19/2008	498.20	1/23/2009	1114.43	-55.21%	-3.19%	4.39%
S&P BSE 500/India (USD)	226.04	1/7/2008	57.52	3/9/2009	201.93	-10.67%	24.82%	1.27%
Shanghai Composite/China (USD)	832.07	6/12/2015	249.66	11/4/2008	457.63	-45.00%	2.39%	1.73%
KOSPI/South Korea (USD)	2.29	10/31/2007	0.63	11/20/2008	1.94	-15.14%	15.62%	1.67%
Hang Seng (USD)	4082.25	10/30/2007	1420.72	10/27/2008	3164.59	-22.48%	12.13%	3.33%
MSCI Euro (USD)	1985.51	10/31/2007	682.47	3/9/2009	1296.64	-34.69%	13.21%	3.08%
S&P 500 Consumer Discretionary	719.81	4/27/2017	125.72	3/9/2009	716.73	-0.43%	11.09%	1.40%
S&P 500 Consumer Staples	572.03	4/25/2017	199.80	3/9/2009	566.54	-0.96%	7.45%	2.60%
S&P 500 Energy	737.09	6/23/2014	304.81	3/5/2009	498.95	-32.31%	-9.38%	2.78%
S&P 500 Utilities	269.14	7/6/2016	113.81	3/9/2009	262.16	-2.59%	7.23%	3.41%
S&P 500 Financials	508.86	6/1/2007	81.74	3/6/2009	390.76	-23.21%	1.66%	1.72%
S&P 500 Banks	408.00	5/18/2007	49.02	3/5/2009	285.12	-30.12%	0.99%	1.95%
FTSE NAREIT All Equity REITs	725.61	8/1/2016	163.57	3/6/2009	665.68	-8.26%	2.98%	3.97%
S&P 500 Health Care	892.26	7/20/2015	252.84	3/5/2009	872.26	-2.24%	10.04%	1.65%
S&P 500 Pharmaceuticals	647.69	8/1/2016	214.50	3/3/2009	610.93	-5.68%	6.46%	2.55%
NYSE Arca Biotechnology	4431.87	7/17/2015	541.77	3/9/2009	3636.28	-17.95%	18.32%	0.39%
S&P 500 Information Technology	928.33	4/28/2017	198.51	11/20/2008	928.33	0.00%	15.41%	1.33%
Philadelphia Semiconductor	1023.29	4/27/2017	171.32	11/20/2008	1005.53	-1.74%	11.43%	1.60%
S&P 500 Telecom Services	183.85	7/1/2016	88.10	3/9/2009	160.33	-12.80%	-7.15%	4.86%
S&P 500 Industrials	573.26	3/1/2017	132.83	3/9/2009	569.18	-0.71%	6.40%	2.12%
S&P 500 Materials	336.51	4/25/2017	108.33	3/2/2009	333.17	-0.99%	7.33%	2.02%
Philadelphia Gold & Silver	228.95	4/8/2011	38.84	1/19/2016	83.10	-63.70%	5.66%	0.56%
TR/CC CRB Commodity	473.52	7/2/2008	155.01	2/11/2016	181.73	-61.62%	-5.60%	N/A
BofA ML Perpetual Preferred	247.41	4/27/2017	51.79	3/9/2009	247.27	-0.06%	6.45%	5.29%
BofA ML U.S. High Yield Constrained	403.47	4/28/2017	130.37	12/12/2008	403.47	0.00%	3.83%	6.01%

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