

# BENA CAPITAL, LLC

March 18, 2024

*To all my Partners,*

By now, all of you have received your individual monthly statements. If for any reason you have not, please contact me, and I will be glad to resend it to you.

History has shown that some months are kinder than others to investors. According to records spanning over 95 years, since 1929:

*Months with the biggest gains:*

January, April, July & December

*Months with the biggest losses:*

February, May, August, September

## **Bena Capital Fund:**

<b>12-month returns</b>	<b>February</b>	<b>February 1-15th</b>
<b>+34.89%</b>	<b>+7.26%</b>	<b>-2.03%</b>

Stocks fell after inflation data (CPI, PPI) was reported this month hotter than expected. Producer Price Index (PPI), rose 0.6%% in February compared to other PPI increases over the last consecutive months. This month, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) climbed more than forecast over the past year. Going into 2024, Wall Street was buying stocks thinking they would probably be 4 interest rate cuts for the year but with the hotter-than-expected inflation numbers (CPI & PPI), the thought of 4 cuts is just wishful thinking for this year.

Last week the EU (European Union) fined Apple, saying the iPhone maker set unfair rules for developers of music streaming apps. This fine is the EU's largest-ever antitrust penalties. Needless to say, Apple will be fighting this fine vigorously through the courts. There's an old saying, '*you can't fight City Hall*,' meaning they've got the deeper pockets. Apple, on the other hand, probably has deeper pockets...than the EU. Bena Capital has a substantial stake of Apple, for the last 20+ years, '*this too shall pass*'!!

### *So, how did we do?*

For February:		1-year (12 month) returns:	
Dow Jones:	+1.93%	Dow Jones:	+19.78%
S&P 500:	+4.61%	S&P 500:	+26.89%
Nasdaq:	+5.29%	Nasdaq:	+35.74%
Berkshire Hathaway:	+6.83%	Berkshire Hathaway:	+24.36%
<b>Bena Capital Fund:</b>	<b>+7.26%</b>	<b>Bena Capital Fund:</b>	<b>+34.89%</b>

### *Some highlights of last month:*

- February added 275K full-time & part-time jobs for month
- February's unemployment at +3.9% (up from January's 3.7%)
- February's CPI (Consumer Price Index) rose higher +0.4% from January
- February's CPI Year-over-Year is up +3.2% (up from Jan's YOY of +3.1%)
- Amazon joined the 30 Dow Jones index on February 26, replacing Walgreens
- Family Dollar stores will close 1,000 unprofitable stores this year, 600 stores immediately, and an additional 400 will not renew their leases when those leases expire.
- Unilever spinning off Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream division and cutting 7,500 jobs.
- Sweden becomes NATO's 32<sup>nd</sup> member to join the Alliance.
- NYC Mayor imposes an 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. for illegal migrants in 24 NYC shelters due to violence occurring from illegal migrants.
- Credit card delinquencies surged in 2023, indicating financial stress, according to the New York Federal Reserve

### *Key changes in consumer rates:*

	3/11/22(%)	3/15/24 (%)
30-year Fixed Rate Mortgage:	4.29	7.09

Personal Loan: 5-year	12.63	21.14
Credit cards:	16.34	20.75
New vehicle APR:	5.2	7.1

### ***President Joe Biden's Fiscal Year 2025 Budget Proposal***

**\$7.3 Trillion**

Budget spending

**\$5.5 Trillion**

Tax revenue

**\$1.78 Trillion**

Adds to Federal deficit

Source: White House

### ***Cost on the National Debt for February***

The cost on the National Debt grew to a record in February.

The Treasury Dept. stated that we spent \$76 billion on interest alone last month, up 67% from February of 2022!

The deficit, which is the difference between what the U.S. Treasury takes in compared to what we spend, grew 13% from February 2022.

*But Biden can forgive student loans that would go towards the treasury because... It's only money, and this IS an election year!*

#### **Student Loan Forgiveness**

Announced in February: \$1.2B

Total under President Biden: \$138B

***Yes, it is election season!***

### ***Inflation over the last 3 years***

(January 2021 – Feb. 2024)

**+21.2% +21% +29.6% +22.7% +20% +28.4% +30% +20.3% +31.4%**

Groceries Eating out Baby food Pet food Rent Electricity Nat. gas Used cars Airfare

Source: BLS

### ***more inflation (because I couldn't get in on the same line!)***

(January 2021 to February 2024)

**+12% +31.4% +41.96% +46.62% -2.11% +4.11%**

Apparel	Airfare	Gas prices	Credit card debt	Real hourly wages	30-yr. mortgages
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Source: BLS; St. Louis Fed; AAA; Freddie Mac

### ***Not all things have gone up:***

(January 2021 to January 2024)

<b>-26%</b>	<b>-2%</b>
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Home sales	Real wages
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Source: BLS; Fed. Reserve Bank

### ***Percentage of those taking early 401(k) withdrawals due to economic hardships going up?***

(2020 through 2024)

<b>2.0%</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>2.8%</b>	<b>3.7%</b>
2020	2021	2022	2023

Source: CNBC; March 11, 2024

### ***We don't have an income problem-We have a spending problem***

#### ***The new \$1.2 Trillion spending bill:***

- \* \$1.8 million for LGBTQ+ senior citizen living homes
- \* Sen. Chuck Shumer (D-NY) added \$1.5 million to encourage kids to play video games
- \* Sen. John Fetterman (D-PA) added \$368,000 for a 'Built By Us' radio podcast.
- \* Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-IN) added \$2 million for illegal aliens to see psychiatrists
- \* Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-MA) added \$1 million to boost 'LatinX' small businesses
- \* \$880 million for 'enhanced border security' in the Middle East (none for our own southern border)
- \* \$1.1 million for 'climate resilience and equity' in Boston, MA
- \* \$1.6 million for EV busses on Cape Cod
- \* \$4 million for an 'economic justice' lab in Connecticut
- \* \$15 million for Egyptians' college tuition

- \* Sen Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH), \$2.5 million for kayaking facility in New Hampshire
- \* Sen Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), \$4 million for ‘Alaska King Crab Enhancement Project’

### ***TikTok possibly banned in the U.S.?***

Those U.S. app/websites that are presently banned in China

**Google   YouTube   X (formally Twitter)   Instagram**  
**Meta (formerly Facebook)   Zoom   LinkedIn   Reddit   Wikipedia**

### ***Realtors Settle, Possible Big Shift on Commissions***

The National Assoc. of Realtors has reached a nationwide settlement of claims that the industry conspired to keep agent commissions high. The NAR agreed to abandon longstanding rules that have required most home-sale listings to include an upfront offer telling buyers’ agents how much they will get paid.

### **FBI Terrorist Watchlist**

Southwest land border encounters

<b>336</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>26</b>
FY2024-2021	FY2024	FY 2017-2021

Source: U.S. Customs & Border Protection

### ***Have you moved?***

Our CPA, LaCaze Moss, will be sending out 1099s to any of our partners who either were issued interest checks or withdrawals during the FY2023. If you have moved or a change of address to where your 1099s should be sent, please contact me with the new information.

## **Men ages 25-54 not participating in labor force**

**5.8%**

**11.4%**

1976

2022

Source: BLS

## **The S&P Rises 3 out of 4 years since 1926!**

The S&P is up approx. 75% of the time going all the way back for almost 100 years!  
(since 1926)

<b><i>S&amp;P</i></b>	<b><i>% advance each year</i></b>
20%+	36%
+10% to +20%	21%
0 to +10%	15%
0 to -10% decline	15%
10%+ decline	13%

Source: Dimensional Funds

## ***And we won't make you have a minimum of \$5 Million!***

J.P. Morgan Bank is offering to pay 6% interest on CDs, but the catch is a minimum deposit of \$5 million, plus it cannot already be at their bank. It must be brought over from another banking institution. Bena Capital has been paying a 6% interest paid monthly over 12 months for a couple of years now. Glad to see J.P. Morgan is seeing it our way!