

TAKING A DEEP BREATH – DECEMBER 2016

December 13th, 2016



In my last article of the year, all I can say is: WHEWWWW.....that's over. A deep breath is required. The entire year revolved around the election and the energy of anxiety surrounding it. In the aftermath, that energy expended itself into space; much of it visible; people in the streets and the 8-9\$ gain in the Dow Jones Industrial Average.

I feel like I did after a Cross-Country Meet. I feel, well, tired. But I know there is another Meet in two days, and another after that, etc. The feeling of exhaustion is both physical and emotional. 2016 ran the gauntlet, from an economic perspective and a retirement planning perspective. Now, with some things decided, we sail into an even more uncharted archipelago.

Just as early explorers, seeing the Pacific Ocean for the first time, we should all take a deep breath. As if searching sea Charts for guidance through this newfound archipelago could tell me anything, I have to rely on information, misinformation and rumor from the local guides. So it goes with trying to figure out the best retirement strategies. Commentators, some no more than cheerleaders tell us to *'buy, buy, buy stocks and mutual funds, all arrows point northforever!'*

Yet, caution stirs the senses to life. With no Sacagawea to guide us, trying to chart the best course through the phase of retirement, and near retirement. Staring out at an unknown, with new wind patterns, currents and eddies, there is some time for consideration and retrenchment.

When I turn off the TV and put down the financial journals of record, I suddenly realize these 'guides' know about as much as I do. They prognosticate and project, but without science native wisdom. These seem to be sailors who will go down to the sea; but not be responsible for the economic and human loss in the banality of their advice.

So, like an ancient mariner, I know I have four items in my bag that will guide me through any uncharted water. I have my compass, sextant, star chart and a good timekeeping device. These tools have served this Mariner. He knows how to use them. He takes a deep breath, and orders the main sails, mizzens and moon-rakers deployed, plots his course, and takes in the wind.

Similarly, I am taking a deep breath, working with the tools I know, and setting a course that considers the counsel of the local guides, searches for where it might be useful, but in the end, sails on the considered course.

In the end, we can't repeal math, and we can't repeal time. We can stop at exotic ports of call that are on our path. We can take part in the festivities of a new culture or wealth. We just can't get mired there. As retirement nears, we need to know when to push away from the welcoming banquet, posit our stores, and sail on to the horizon.

TAKE A DEEP BREATH! Get out the tools we have been given. Secure the current hard earned wealth we have, push away from the table of tempting greed, and set the sails straight for the horizon.

Aye, Aye, Capt'n!