

Investment Insights

Well how about that...

Some of you may recall that I unwittingly left my purse inside my vehicle last May while I hit a bucket of balls at a local driving range. I'm sure you can see where this story is heading...within an hour, I am dealing with a broken-into vehicle, with everything being stolen, and finding myself without an identity of my own. Pretty much the only thing that the thieves didn't make off with was my social insurance number - but they had everything else: driver's license, care card, Nexus pass, birth certificate, etc.

Apart from the initial purchases on my Visa card, and the obvious fact that they made off with my beloved personal belongings (including a business card of my Uncle's with a poem he wrote for me which I'd been carrying around since I was six), there wasn't much for me to fret about. After I replaced all of my ID, I was back in business.

Next thing you know, January 14th rolls around, and I'm opening mail. This is the date that I received a credit card bill from Future Shop in the amount of \$2200, on a card that I didn't know existed! I guess I can at least thank the thieves for shopping during the boxing day sales - they probably saved the credit card company a few hundred dollars. A week later, I get a call from a lovely lady at a bank in Chilliwack, inquiring as to whether or not I wanted cheques for the new account I opened. Say what? Oh no!

Evidently some very brazen woman had waltzed into the bank branch and opened an account using all of my identification. I have to credit this bank employee. She said that she went home that night just not feeling right about the meeting, so she Googled my name. Up pops my media publications and my website, which clearly show her that not only do I work for a bank-owned firm, but I have a stable career and home life in White Rock. Why would I want an account in Chilliwack? Bless her, she called me at work and found me as confused as she was.

I think (hope, pray, insert any word you want here) that I have the issue in check as much as I can. The RCMP are on the case, and hopefully will find my imposter shortly. In the meantime, she has also requested credit at TWO other institutions. Let's hope she gets something nice for herself. Lord knows, she's a good person and deserves the best life has to offer. Or, at least that's what my friends tell me.

I'm trying not to take this whole thing personally. She's not out to directly sabotage my life, or waste my time with pointless and frustrating calls to Equifax and TransUnion. She's a thief, after all, not a disgruntled sibling who took and sold one of my most prized baseball cards after a childhood tiff (which is another story entirely). As much as I consider myself calm and rationale, even though I tell myself this is not a personal attack, but the work of a morally challenged individual, it's hard not to let it hurt my feelings.

If I've learned nothing else from this unwanted adventure, it's that I have new-found respect for the value of sometimes inconvenient rules. If that wonderful bank employee hadn't needed to see picture ID, if she didn't have the ability and smarts to check further into it, who knows where I'd be! Well, the real me would be here at my desk. My doppelganger...a beach in Hawaii.

- **Jolene**



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Please be advised...

The final day for 2010 RSP contributions is **Tuesday, March 1st**.

If you require a Realized Gain & Loss report for 2010, please let me know. They are produced manually and can be emailed or mailed to you within 5 business days.

Tax Time

Please note the deadline for tax form mailings is as follows:

T3 – March 31
T5 – February 28
T4 – February 28

RSP Contributions – up to March 20
Annual Trading Summary – February 28

It is highly recommended that you wait to file your taxes until after April 15th to ensure that you have received all forms.

I'm proud as punch!

So, I have to take time to gloat a bit. My best friend Aly is an amazingly talented woman. Mother of two by day, jewellery designer by night, she creates some of the most wonderful things that I have ever seen. She specializes in silver fingerprints – a casted charm of your loved one's print that you can wear around your neck, on a bracelet or even as earrings.

Aly was recently contacted by a designer in LA who has invited her to attend the pre-Academy Awards events, where she will have the opportunity to showcase her wares to Hollywood's A-listers. You may have caught her story on CTV or A-Channel news, or even in various newspapers around the lower mainland and Island.

I'm so proud of her I could burst, and I'm so pleased to have the opportunity to accompany her to Beverly Hills on Friday, February 25th to help her. Way to go Aly! www.alydahl.com

What's new?

My title! Again? Back in November I took over as Branch Manager of ScotiaMcLeod's White Rock and Abbotsford offices. I'm really excited about what this means for me, and my clients. I have taken the promotion as a compliment to the type of business I run, and the wonderful clients that I work with. As always, I am looking to continue to build my business with the right clients. If you know of anyone who could benefit from the services that I offer, please let me know.

Last year I went through Scotia's "media training" program, which gives me the ability to become a spokesperson for our firm when quotes are required and articles are commissioned about our industry. I've had several opportunities to be published this year, including pieces in the Globe and Mail and National Post. I'm including a copy of one of the most recent articles that I thought might be of interest.

Retirement tips from someone who has seen it all

Excerpts from Dan Richards, Globe and Mail Update, Sept 13/10

Dan Richards is an interesting financial "coach" of sorts. He is well published, and covers a broad area in his articles. This one in particular caught my eye, and even for those who are retired, it can be a good reminder of what's really important.

What leads to a successful retirement? Here are four of the things learned from clients who retired successfully:

The quality of your life is shaped by the quality of the people in your life

The happiest retirees are active and have many positive people in their lives, some older, some younger and some the same age. Professor John Helliwell of the University of BC, whose recent work has focused on the drivers of well-being said "A key mistake for many people is overestimating the impact of material possessions and underestimating the effect of social connections."

Wealth comes from choices, not chances

Having said that money is not the be-all and end-all in determining retirement happiness, people still need enough money to enjoy retirement. Depending on the kind of retirement lifestyle one aspires to, that amount can be relatively modest or quite substantial, especially if they plan to travel, spend winters down south and eat out often.

Control your emotions

Usually, what really works in the long term is often in direct contradiction to people's immediate emotional impulses. A classic example of the quick fix mindset is the surprising number of Canadians who in response to surveys list winning a lottery as part of their retirement planning strategy. There are few certainties when it comes to investing. The key to success is to make decisions based on probabilities rather than possibilities.

Don't wait to start

Smart people learn early in life to defer gratification and make saving a priority. Canadians thinking about retirement have two choices: They can try to forge their own route, or they can follow the proven path provided by those who have successfully gone into retirement before them.

Important Upcoming Dates

February 2011

Nothing noteworthy

March 2011

1 – LAST DAY FOR 2010 RSP Contributions

1 – Bank of Canada Interest Rate Announcement

13 – Daylight Savings Begins, clocks move ahead an hour

15 – US Federal Reserve Announcement

April 2011

12 – Bank of Canada Interest Rate Announcement

22 – Good Friday, Office and Markets Closed

25 – Easter Monday, Office Closed

26/27 – US Federal Reserve Announcement

The Last Word

"A successful retirement, like a successful life, rarely happens by accident or default. It happens by design."

- Paul Merriman

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