

I am in Cambridge Bay this week (as Clarence knows) , and until next Friday February 16th. Last night, while I was walking back to my hotel from the Trade Show's Meet and Greet, a RCMP cruiser stopped next to me. I was offered a ride even though I was just about two blocks away from the hotel. Last year, I had a similar experience, except it was just a concerned resident, and not the RCMP. Nice to see people care. Admittedly, the local residents are much more aware than I am of the potential dangers of walking on your own at night. e.g. a polar bear had been sighted nearby yesterday.

January was another positive month. Apparently, on an historical basis, the November-December-January time frame might be the strongest three-month period for markets. This makes sense given that September is typically not a good month, and October has had a few crashes. So it is reasonable that the markets often improve afterwards.

The business news media is currently obsessed with the '*when and by how much will interest rates decrease*' topic. Market interest rates have already decreased. So the main topic is about decreases from the central banks. Thankfully, very few experts are calling for central banks to keep rates at current levels over the next 12 months.

In what might appear as a contradictory conclusion, many optimists are saying the U.S. economy is strong so the rate cuts might be smaller than expected and may not begin until later in the year. And in a similar somewhat contradictory fashion, many pessimists are saying that the U.S. will fall into a recession (it isn't already), which would then force the central banks to lower their rates sooner and to a greater extent than currently anticipated. Personally, I am looking forward to lower rates which might then lower costs for consumers, house owners with mortgages, and corporations. GIC buyers might not be rejoicing though. As one year GICs come due, last year's higher rates are not likely to still be available.

As I mentioned back in January, I don't think 2024 will just be 'Rainbows and Unicorns'. The markets cannot go up in a straight line. I do think we are bound to be disappointed at some point in time . But whatever downturn we experience, this often becomes a good opportunity to re-balance a portfolio and when possible, even add money. Eventually downturns are followed by upturns. And the upturns last much longer than the downturns.