



2nd Quarter ~ 2011

“Second verse, same as the first...” Never thought we’d be borrowing from a ‘60s Herman’s Hermit’s hit, but now that the second quarter of 2011 has drawn to a close, it appears someone has hit the replay button. We’ve still got political turmoil in Africa and the Middle East; a possible sovereign debt crisis in the European Union; slowing economic growth here at home; and Japan’s nuclear crisis spilling into industries – from autos to Apple -- dependent on Japanese parts. Hardly an upbeat tune. And the uncertainty song just gets louder in the coming weeks. The Feds finally stopped the hold-interest-rates-low-by-buying-billions-of-bonds trick and Congress starts debate on raising the debt ceiling. No sure bets there. Any wonder why so many corporations lowered their projected earnings for the rest of the year?

So once again we’re reporting on a volatile market. For the second quarter this year the market rose and fell and rose again to leave some stock prices higher, some lower, but the over all market still lagging behind its pre-2008 world wide collapse level. Through all the noise we’re paying particular attention to the increasing amount of money moving into cash and the stalled high-yield bonds market. Although quality corporate bonds have risen in value, it’s the high-yields that typically track stocks.

On an administrative note, please take a moment to complete and return your profile update form. Excellent service requires accurate, current data. Your help with this chore is greatly appreciated.

We do have some sad news to report. After years of declining health, Rick’s mother, Mary Schaeffer, passed away on June 21st . We are very grateful for the expressions of sympathy and understanding from our family, friends and clients – the circle of people who have become so dear to us over the years. Many got to know Mary when she lived with us and worked at Schaeffer Financial. She was a drop-everything-for-my-family kind of mom. Who else would thrive with a job description that included assorted administrative tasks AND chauffeuring granddaughters to their endless activities? We have many happy memories and so much for which to be thankful.

We are particularly grateful for the lessons that Mary taught during these last difficult months. Not only was she proactive in getting her estate planning documents in order, she was very good about communicating her personal desires for treatment in the face of terminal illnesses. What a gift to those called to her bedside to hold her hand. There was no anguishing question about her care. Instead there was time to be close and say goodbyes.

So perhaps before you head to the beach, or dive into a summer novel, you could double check the status of your estate plan. And we're not just talking about the paperwork. Have you had the conversations with the people who need to know your thoughts? Too often we get phone calls when it's too late. Please don't leave your grieving circle of loved ones with unanswerable questions and unnecessary paperwork burdens. Call if you don't know where to start or bump into questions as you attend to these details. We have plenty of experience and resources to share. It will be such a gift for your family and such a lovely tribute to Mary.