US Housing Market Weekly

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THE FEDERAL SAVINGS BANK
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Just How Much Do Stocks Matter For Rates?

Last week we discussed the bond market paradox that has been **dominating the new year**, whereby interest rates moved lower despite stronger economic data. In a normal, boring, perfect world, interest rates AND stock prices would generally move higher when economic data is stronger and vice versa.

At present, there is a disconnect between stocks and economic data. In fact, equities markets continue to have the **worst start to a year—ever**—despite some of the best economic reports in recent memory (like the most recent jobs report which crushed estimates and ranked among the 10 best of the recovery).

The disconnect is a **pleasant surprise for interest rates**, which have been falling in concert with stocks. But it begs the question: if rates are moving lower with stocks right now, why haven't they been moving higher with stocks for the past few years?

If the Fed's response to the financial crisis reinforced any lesson about markets, it's that stocks and bonds **don't always have to follow** each other. This was easiest to observe when both sides of the market would respond favorably to increased accommodation from the Fed (i.e. loose monetary policy helped stocks rise and rates fall simultaneously).

But to be sure, it was **only a reminder** of something we could have already seen in the past. In fact, it's as simple as pulling up a long term chart of stock prices and 10yr Treasury yields (which generally moves in concert with mortgage rates).

National Average Mortgage Rates

	Rate	Change	Points
Mortgage News Daily			
30 Yr. Fixed	6.43%	+0.02	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	5.95%	0.00	0.00
30 Yr. FHA	5.82%	+0.02	0.00
30 Yr. Jumbo	6.62%	0.00	0.00
5/1 ARM	6.28%	-0.01	0.00
Freddie Mac			
30 Yr. Fixed	6.35%	-0.51	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	5.51%	-0.65	0.00

Rates as of: 8/30

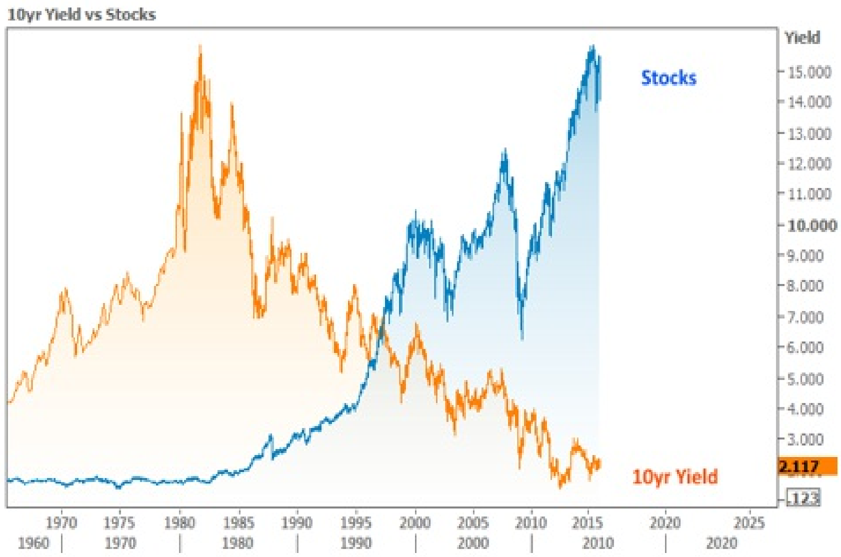
Market Data

	Price / Yield	Change
MBS UMBS 5.0	99.37	+0.02
MBS GNMA 5.0	99.93	+0.02
10 YR Treasury	3.9068	+0.0029
30 YR Treasury	4.1960	+0.0028

Pricing as of: 9/1 7:34PM EST

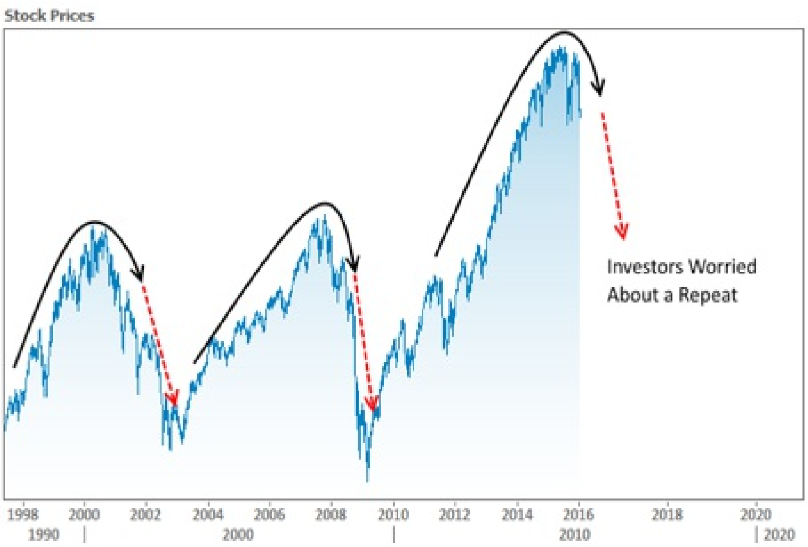
Recent Housing Data

		Value	Change
Mortgage Apps	Aug 28	226.9	+0.49%
Building Permits	Mar	1.46M	-3.95%
Housing Starts	Mar	1.32M	-13.15%
New Home Sales	Mar	693K	+4.68%
Pending Home Sales	Feb	75.6	+1.75%
Existing Home Sales	Feb	3.97M	-0.75%
Builder Confidence	Mar	51	+6.25%



There's **no trick** involved with this chart. Bond yields really did fall consistently since the early 80's while stocks exploded higher. It's only when we zoom in to much shorter time scales that we see the correlation.

The bigger the losses in stocks, the more likely bond markets are to be paying attention (i.e. falling rates), and early 2016 losses have been massive. **Why so big?** Opinions vary, but one of the easiest reasons to grasp would be that investors are worried about something like this:



If stocks are indeed headed for another long term shift like that seen in the chart above, it would make sense for investors to **frantically search** for places to keep their money safe. The bond market is a natural safe haven and additional buying demand in bonds is what helps rates go lower.

On a qualitative note, there's really no telling how long this paradox will last. It already seems to have taken many market participants off guard.

Housing-specific news was light this week. CoreLogic noted "remarkable improvement" in **foreclosure** statistics.

Black Knight had an **interesting perspective** regarding the increase in "tappable" equity likely to result in a HELOC resurgence.

Somewhat in line with the bigger-picture stock market gloominess, a **Fed Survey** found that consumers are expecting low wages and inflation to match.

On a final note, keep in mind that this is a **3-day weekend** for financial markets. Mortgage lenders will be closed on Monday in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

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Recent Economic Data

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
Tuesday, Jan 12				
11:30AM	26-Week Bill Auction (bl)	45		
1:00PM	3-Yr Note Auction (bl)	24		
Wednesday, Jan 13				
7:00AM	w/e Mortgage Refinance Index	1380.4		1114.8
7:00AM	w/e MBA Purchase Index	231.1		196.2
1:00PM	10-yr Note Auction (bl)	21		
Thursday, Jan 14				

Event Importance:

No Stars = Insignificant
☆ Low
★ Moderate
★★ Important
★★ Very Important

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
8:30AM	w/e Continued jobless claims (ml)	2.263	2.248	2.230
8:30AM	w/e Initial Jobless Claims (k)	284	279	277
8:30AM	Dec Export prices mm (%)	-1.1	-0.5	-0.6
8:30AM	Dec Import prices mm (%)	-1.2	-1.4	-0.4
1:00PM	30-Yr Bond Auction (bl)	13		
Friday, Jan 15				
8:30AM	Jan NY Fed manufacturing	-19.37	-4.00	-4.59
8:30AM	Dec Retail sales mm (%)	-0.1	0.0	0.2
Monday, Jan 18				
12:00AM	Martin Luther King Day			
Tuesday, Jan 19				
10:00AM	Jan NAHB housing market indx	60	61	61
4:00PM	Nov Foreign buying, T-bonds (bl)	+38.4		-55.2
Wednesday, Jan 20				
8:30AM	Dec Building permits: number (ml)	1.232	1.200	1.282
8:30AM	Dec CPI mm, sa (%)	-0.1	0.0	0.0
8:30AM	Dec Build permits: change mm (%)	-3.9		10.4
8:30AM	Dec Core CPI mm, sa (%)	+0.1	0.2	0.2
8:30AM	Dec Housing starts number mm (ml)	1.149	1.200	1.173
8:30AM	Dec Core CPI index, sa	244.45		244.14
Thursday, Jan 21				
8:30AM	Jan Philly Fed Business Index	-3.5	-5.0	-10.2
Friday, Jan 22				
10:00AM	Dec Exist. home sales % chg (%)	+14.7	8.9	-10.5
10:00AM	Dec Existing home sales (ml)	5.46	5.20	4.76
Thursday, May 19				
1:00PM	10yr TIPS Auction (bl)	11		

Responsive service, experienced expertise

I've dedicated my 22 year mortgage career to client education, superior service, and honest answers. The lending landscape has changed dramatically the past few years, and continues to do so. My job is to ensure client partners' loans close quickly, without surprises, and I take that responsibility very seriously. Referrals are a responsibility I appreciate; they're a measure of trust, and that trust must be earned every day, on every referral.

Ted Rood