



ROSENTHAL | HENRY

CAPITAL ADVISORS

1st Quarter 2023 Letter to Investors:

Important Notes to Readers:

- 1) Please save the date for our 2023 Annual Investor Meeting and Banking Industry Update, to be held Tuesday, June 13th at the Morris Park Country Club, from 5:30PM – 8:30PM (cocktails & dinner will be served). Formal invitations and additional details will follow. Until then, please mark your calendar in preparation for joining us for this important update! If you are unable to attend, a video of our presentation will be sent to you after the event. We look forward to hosting you.
- 2) Monthly Investor Statement(s) are available via our secure online portal. The link to that site is: <https://app.lpx.fund/>. If you have any issues accessing your statements, please let us know and we will provide them to you immediately.
- 3) We hope you will read Section 4 – the Conclusion. We find it oxymoronic, but the “conclusion” should often be the “foreword”. History, philosophy, and psychology are important. We share some in that section!

Section 1 – A Recap of Investment Returns from the Funds:

Summary Results Table: The table below presents our performance by month and YTD as of 4/30/2023; as well as the last 4 years.

Results Table 1

	Fund 1 ¹	Fund 2 ¹	^BANK ²	KRE ²	S&P 500 ³	Russell 2000 ³
April '23	-5.7%	-3.7%	-5.0%	-2.7%	1.5%	-1.9%
March '23	-19.3%	-17.1%	-24.6%	-28.8%	3.5%	-5.0%
Feb. '23	-0.1%	0.0%	-0.7%	-0.9%	-2.9%	-2.2%
Jan. '23	2.9%	5.0%	4.3%	5.8%	6.5%	10.1%
YTD '23 ⁴	-22.0%	-16.0%	-25.8%	-27.4%	8.6%	0.4%
2022	-13.0%	-11.2%	-18.4%	-17.1%	-19.4%	-21.6%
2021	37.7%	32.7%	39.7%	37.0%	26.9%	13.7%
2020	1.9%	-6.1%	-10.6%	-9.0%	16.3%	18.4%
2019	17.4%	22.7%	21.2%	27.1%	28.5%	23.7%

1. Average monthly net rate of return after fees/expenses
 2. BANK is the Nasdaq Small Cap Bank Index and KRE are regional bank stock ETF's
 3. Russell 2000 is a small-cap stock market index; S&P 500 tracks performance of 500 large companies
 4. Year to date performance as of April 30, 2023

1st Quarter 2023 Review: My oh my. What can we say? It has been a tumultuous time for bank *stocks* – yet bank *earnings* continue to be fine. We encourage you to spend time digesting the information in **Section 3** about actual operating and earnings metrics from our banks. 64% of our banks in Fund 1 beat analysts' expectations while 63% of banks in Fund 2 beat analysts' forecasts. Again, many more details about earnings results are presented in **Section 3**.

Stocks prices have declined in the first 4 months of 2023 more than any other period in the history of our Funds. YTD we are down 22% in Fund 1 and 16% in Fund 2. In spite of the strength of our particular banking companies, there has been “no place to hide”. Indiscriminate selling, combined with unprecedented levels of short selling has amounted to “throwing the baby out with the bath water” for our banks. We’ve beaten our benchmarks; but that’s no consolation.

Section 2 – General Commentary on the Community Banking Industry and its Prospects:

Before proceeding, the following are links to our three most recent communications. They provided details surrounding the failure of 3 niche/specialty banks, as well as our commentary on the fallout from those and related events. If you missed them, they offer you the opportunity to catch the “re-runs” of our remarks and shorten this letter a bit.

[February 2023 Quick overview Summary](#)

[March 2023 Quick Overview Summary](#)

[May 5, 2023 Interim Update from Rosenthal | Henry Capital Advisors](#)

Next, we share some updates on previous observations along with some fresh thoughts.



Takeaways from our Attendance at an Important Banking Conference: We have just returned from the Gulf States Banking Conference held in New Orleans. During this annual event, we spoke with many bankers from different traditional banking companies. Each one of them reinforced that they have not experienced any undue or damaging deposit withdrawals; that loan quality remains pristine; and that liquidity remains near all-time highs. Additionally, from a macroeconomic perspective, we were reminded that higher interest rates provide consumers with more purchasing power and that the Secure Act 2.0 is adding billions of dollars to the equity markets. That's certainly good news! However, the general tone of the conference was sober. There are most definitely challenges facing all banks – given how rapidly the landscape has changed.

A recap of these headwinds can be summarized as follows: 1) pressures on net interest margins (“NIM”) due to increased deposit pricing; 2) uncertainty surrounding the imposition of new rules from banking regulators and increased deposit insurance premiums (remember, it is the banks which pay into the FDIC insurance fund, not taxpayers); 3) concern over the economy and the potential for a recession – and the possibility of slower loan growth during any budding contraction; 4) the unfettered impact of short-sellers and their ability to profit by fostering sensational negative rumors; and 5) the Fed keeping rates too high for too long.

What are Banks Doing in Response to Current Conditions: The timely recognition of the new operating environment by our banks naturally leads to conversations regarding what management teams are doing in response to these factors. First and foremost, a common theme in response to the above is that expense cutting, and belt tightening are the order of the day. However, this is a very delicate tight rope to walk. Disruptions in the marketplace – like those which are occurring now – most definitely create “opportunities”. Taking advantage of the prospects of adding key revenue producers to the team and gaining new clients must continue to be a keen focus for bank leaders. Therefore, any cost-cutting measures will be focused on non-essential expenses. That effort must and will be intensified.

Our focus on banks which use a “relationship-banking” business model are, in fact, raising deposit rates – but to a lesser extent than industry/market averages; and, at the same time, continuing to increase loan rates to preserve NIM. It's a delicate balancing act – but service and personal attention still matter to relationship-based clients of community banks.

There is another action step being implemented by bankers in response to a potential recession. Banks *are* tightening lending standards more than we indicated in our previous letters to you. It's not just that borrowers face a more difficult time meeting debt service coverage ratios given higher loan rates as we highlighted previously. It's more than that. Banks are requiring more upfront “equity” in deals and therefore loan-to-value advance rates are declining. Personal guarantees are being collateralized with personal assets. And there are a host of other more restrictive lending practices also being utilized at this time.

Of course, this is a double-edged sword. On the one hand, this is most definitely appropriate if credit conditions are deteriorating. These behaviors should limit an uptick in problem loans in the future. But on the other hand, tighter standards are a self-fulfilling prophecy of sorts. Tighter credit increases the possibility of a recession. Therefore, the discussion from talking heads is centered on whether or how much more the Fed may need to raise interest rates, since tighter lending standards are being imposed. Only time will tell what combination of factors will lead to taming inflation.

Finally, virtually every conversation we had with the participants at the conference was uniformly furious that the SEC isn't doing more to enforce regulations around short selling. The banking lobbyists are screaming for a renewed ban on short selling at this time. We expected that such a ban might be imposed by now. So far, that has not materialized.

What are WE doing in Response to Current Conditions: We have increased our cash position compared to the last update we provided. At this writing, our cash position is roughly 19% of our Funds and those are funds on which we can now earn a risk-free rate of approx. 4.5%. We have raised cash by harvesting some losses and gains in order to be tax efficient in our management of the Funds. When the time is right, this gives us an opportunity to rebuy stock in banks we still view as strong – but can re-enter our positions in them at a lower cost basis. We continue to protect against downside risk by conservatively using covered call options. Next, we are intensively studying market disruptions like the one we are now experiencing. In so doing, we learned the following interesting facts about what has happened historically when bank stock performance diverges from broader market indices:

“Bank stocks could be due for a rally if history repeats itself. Stocks in the sector have underperformed the S&P 500 by about 26 percentage points over the last three months (down 23% vs. up 3%), making it one of a handful of times since 1940 there's been such a large performance gap.



But that could mean a turnaround is in the cards if the stocks perform in line with historical trends. After the few times bank stocks lagged the S&P 500 by more than 15 percentage points on a three-month return basis, the group has seen strong returns over the next three, six and 12 months, according to monthly data since 1940 analyzed by Ari Wald, head of technical analysis at Oppenheimer.

It's a trend that's most poignant at the one-year mark after the signal is hit. Bank stocks have historically surged 27.6% in the year since the 15% threshold was met, while they've only gained 8.6% in average one-year periods without the signal. The stocks have also outperformed the broader S&P 500 on average over the three, six and 12-month periods after the signal was hit."

Finally, we have increased the already intense oversight we apply to monitoring our portfolios. We are talking to our banks regularly, we added the Gulf States Banking Conference to our existing roster of conferences which we regularly attend, we are chatting with other bank stock analysts and researchers with more frequency, and we are staying up later than usual at night reading everything we can get our hands on in order to keep on top of this evolving situation.

We will continue to react appropriately as conditions warrant. That means we will increase our cash holdings as called for and redeploy cash into bank stocks at the right time. Until the negotiations surrounding the increase of the debt ceiling for the U.S Treasury are resolved, it is NOT the right time.

We want to wrap up this section in order to allow you to spend time reviewing the next sections in depth. Our final comment here is to repeat what we have said several times since SVB failed. It is our belief that there isn't "financial contagion" in the banking industry like that which occurred in '08-'09; but rather "sentiment contagion" and short sellers taking advantage of baseless fears to profit unjustly. We encourage you to stay the course and allow markets to correct to the underlying reality over time.

Section 3 – An Analysis of our Banks Earnings/Operating Performance:

Fund 1 Headlines

- **64% of our Banks in Fund 1 Exceeded Analyst's EPS Expectations this Quarter.**
- **Year-Over-Year Wtd. Ave. "Pre-Provision" EPS for Banks in Fund 1 Increased 33%, and "Bottom line" EPS Increased 44% YOY.**
- **Loan Growth Exceeds Expectations – Banks in *Our Portfolio* Grew Loans More than Banking Industry as a Whole (Wtd. Ave. +2.9% in Our Portfolio vs. 1.5% Banking Industry Avg. Q/Q)**
- **Margins compress slightly with Wtd. Ave. NIM at 3.88% in Q1 '23 vs. 3.99% in Q4 '22**

Fund 2 Headlines

- **63% of our Banks in Fund 2 Exceeded Analyst's EPS Expectations this Quarter.**
- **Year-Over-Year Wtd. Ave. "Pre-Provision" EPS for Banks in Fund 2 Increased 30%, and "Bottom line" EPS Increased 29% YOY.**
- **Loan Growth Exceeds Expectations – Banks in *Our Portfolio* Grew Loans More than Banking Industry as a Whole (Wtd. Ave. +2.0% in Our Portfolio vs. 1.5% Banking Industry Avg. Q/Q)**
- **Margins compress slightly with Wtd. Ave. NIM at 4.08% in Q1 '23 vs. 4.15% in Q4 '22**

"Current" Earnings and Operating Metrics: As you can see from the headlines above and the other information in Appendix B, key performance indicators from our banks remain very strong. It's important to reiterate that current margins are still significantly ahead of NIM's from the '20-'21 comparative periods. They have and will continue to come down. But the key question is how much and how fast.

The failures of SIVB, SBNY and FRC have most certainly accelerated the pace at which banks are now having to "pay up" for deposits to preserve and even enhance their liquidity. This will force banks to charge higher loan rates and look to supplement revenue by increasing a host of fee income generating services. As mentioned in Section 1, overall expense control is also being ramped up across the board.

Capital levels have ticked down a bit – but not egregiously. This is, of course, due to marks against banks' bond portfolios and the corresponding impact on capital. But again, remember that the principal repayment of these bonds is NOT in jeopardy now, as it was in '08-'09. So, while the unrealized losses are being dinged against capital in this part of the interest rate cycle, as these bonds get closer to maturity, the "marks" against capital will reverse and capital ratios will be helped by the all-important passage of time.



Non-performing assets remained rock solid – but despite that, reserves to loans increased – likely in anticipation of some future uptick in problem loans. As we have stressed in all our letters to you, the biggest wild card which will impact future earnings is how loan quality will hold up. We want to reinforce to you that the banks in which we have chosen to invest have performed far better than their peers and the industry as a whole when it comes to managing through previous difficult “credit cycles”. While their past performance is no guarantee that they will outperform again, our confidence is remarkably high that they will, due to their longstanding, conservative credit cultures and underwriting standards.

Forward Earnings Prospects/Estimates: While we are pleased with the 1st Quarter 2023 results from our banks, everyone is much more interested in what is likely to happen going forward. The headwinds we described in Section 1 are not inconsequential. Most analysts have reduced their estimates for EPS in 2024 by roughly 10% of 2023 forecasts. That’s a point of some concern.

However, as we have preached in the past, bank stock prices are a function of both past performance and future prospects. P/E’s remain at historic lows. If a recession occurs and it is short-lived and not very “deep”, and banks once again prove how resilient they are, we believe P/E’s ratios will revert to something much closer to their historic average. That alone could more than offset any slight decreases in EPS next year – should they actually materialize.

We continue to watch and listen to the many variables that go into judging how our banks will perform over time. This is my 38th year in banking as a participant. But I started learning and studying about banks as a boy under the excellent tutelage of my father. Therefore, you might say I have been a “bank guy” for more than a half a century. In that time, I’ve seen some scary periods. But the lesson I cannot and will not forget is that banks “win”. They are an integral part of the fabric of commerce. They are a necessary component of the growth and development of the nation. They are not a fad. They are not meme stocks. Unlike the horse and buggy, they will not become obsolete. Oh, for sure they will morph and be part of the ever-changing kaleidoscope of business. But they will continue to provide the essential functions which they have had for centuries. Years from now we can look back and see if this prognosis holds true in this “new time”. You know our beliefs.

Section 4 – Conclusion: There is a thing in psychology called “The Recency Effect”. The theory goes that folks tend to believe that what has happened recently will continue to occur going forward. It is one of the reasons it is so hard to pull the trigger to buy something that has recently declined in value. Conversely, when something appreciates in value, people think it will continue to go up in price as it has in the past – and they keep buying. Investors need to be wary of this phenomenon. It can cause undue optimism or pessimism. But the notion of buying low and selling high is a time-tested and proven approach to investing.

It is our job to use our skills, talents, and experience to avoid being influenced too much by the Recency Effect. We must use logic, reason, and common sense to make judgments about the past, present and future. We have argued that long-term investing has proven to be more successful than trying to “time” the market. Yet, we cannot deny that we were “opportunistic” when we started this venture on the heels of the Great Recession. Not since then, has there been a “sale” on bank stocks, the likes of what we are seeing now. So, we will once again be “opportunistic” when the time is right and “take another bite of the apple” to generate solid, risk-adjusted returns for you as we have in the past.

Patience is a virtue. It is also an AWFULLY hard trait to master. Together, we hope and believe that patience, opportunism, intellect, and common sense will continue to pay off over the long run. As stated above, community banks are not going away and will continue to play a key role in the American capitalist economy. As such, the returns they generate for investors to deliver their products and services will, by necessity, be appropriate and rewarding over time. We have proven we can beat the indices by picking great banks and managing the portfolio as a whole. We plan to do nothing less in the future.

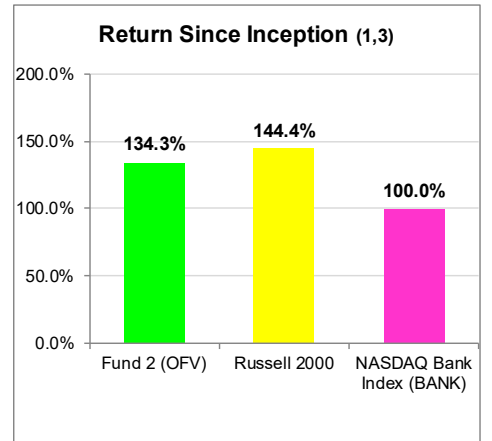
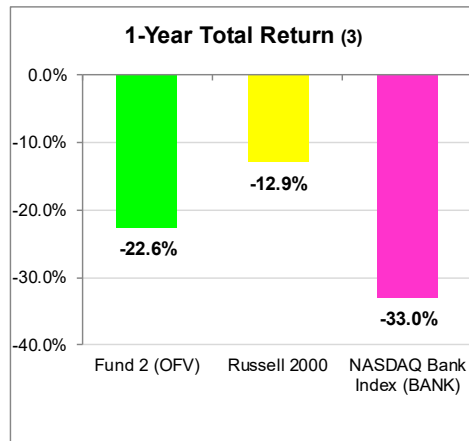
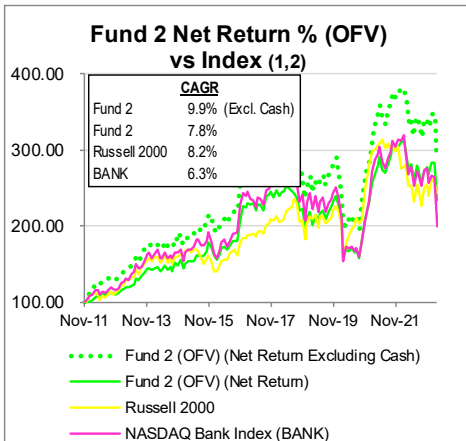
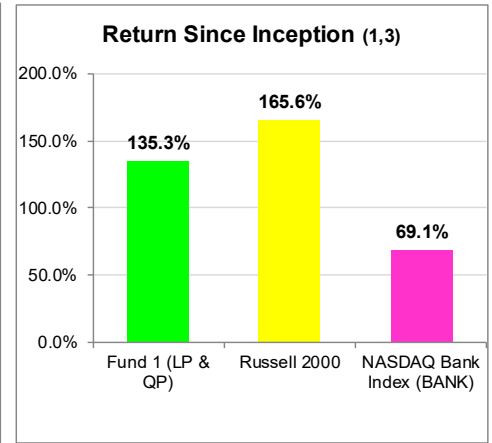
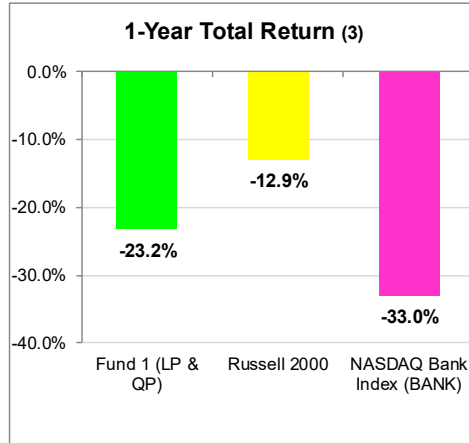
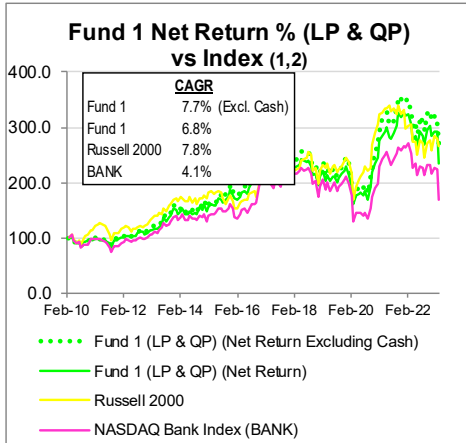
As always, you may reach us by calling the office at 574-243-6502, John’s cell at 574-276-1128, or Adam’s cell at 440-667-5974. Or by email: john@rosenthalpartners.net or adam@rosenthalpartners.net

With warmest personal regards,

John and Adam



APPENDIX A



- (1) For comparison purposes, inception date for Fund 1 uses March 2010 Fund 2 uses November 2011 monthly statement from LICCAR.
CAGR = Compound Annual Growth Rate
- (2) Net return (excluding cash) for Fund 1 = Fund 1 Total Return divided by prior month end market value of bank/security investments.
- (3) Total return for Fund 1 (LP & QP) based on monthly statements compiled by LICCAR & Gryphon Group net of all expenses;
Russell 2000 and NASDAQ Bank Index based on data provided by S&P Global Market Intelligence.
(Based on ending index value, not total return).

As always, past performance may not be indicative of future results. Therefore, no current or prospective client should assume that the future performance of any specific investment, investment strategy (including the investments and/or investment strategies recommended by the advisor), will be profitable or equal to past performance levels.

