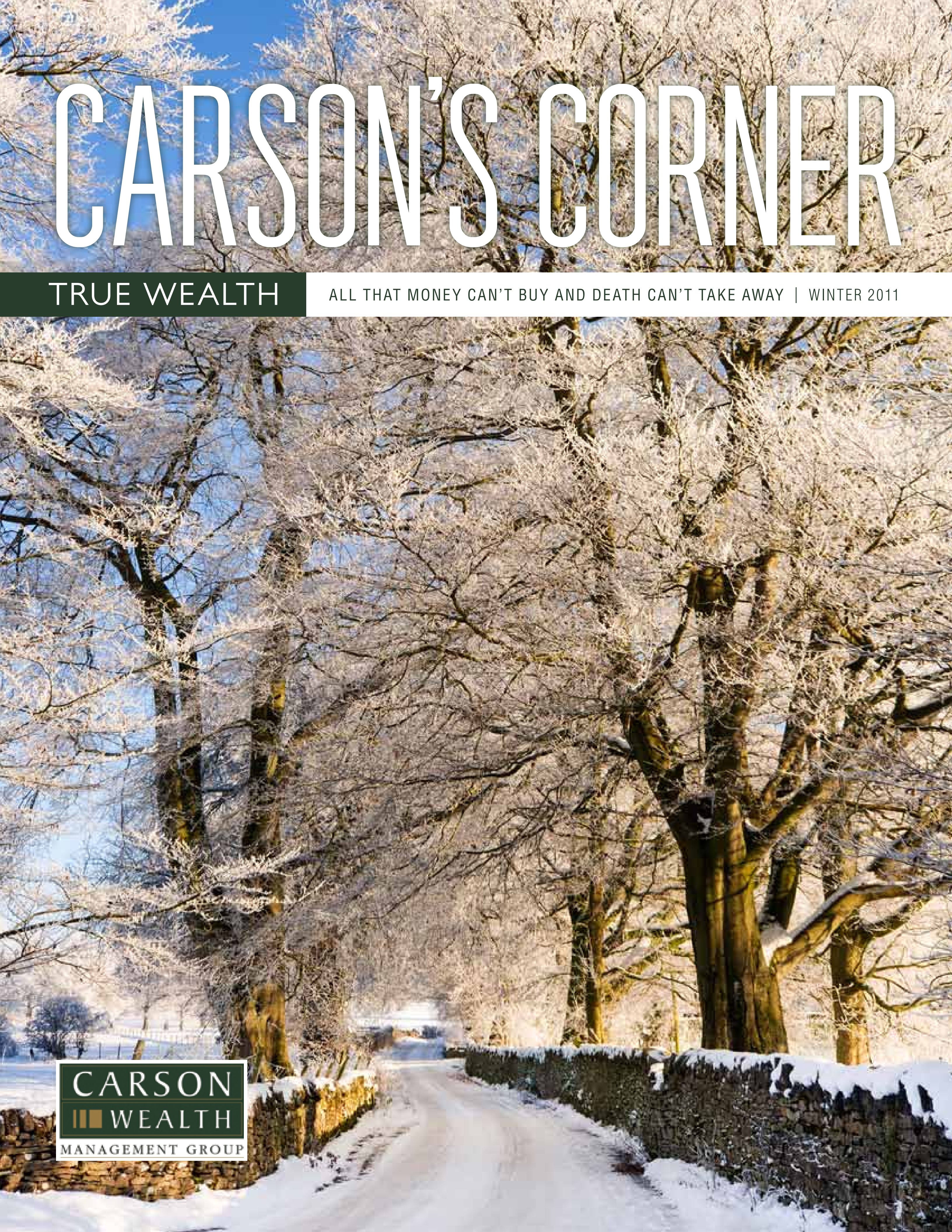
CARSON'S CORNER

TRUE WEALTH

ALL THAT MONEY CAN'T BUY AND DEATH CAN'T TAKE AWAY | WINTER 2011



CARSON WEALTH MANAGEMENT GROUP

‘THE LOST DECADE’: WHAT WE’VE LEARNED

Ron Carson | CEO

The last decade was, well, a ‘lost’ decade for many investors. The stock market moved around a lot, but did not appreciate much, if any, over the past 10 years. What can investors learn from this experience, and from the knowledge of those who successfully navigated the lost decade?

There was a time when investors could afford to buy and hold. That time was the 1980s and 1990s. Markets drifted up with very little resistance, and double-digit returns on diversified stock portfolios were common. If it seemed almost too easy, that’s because it was.

So, what happened to change that? Primarily, rapid advances in technology created a global marketplace, inter-connected markets, and ‘instant everything.’ Alongside lifestyle enhancements and modern conveniences, a very disturbing modern inconvenience arose: very high stock market volatility. Prices moved up and down like a yo-yo at times. Ten years ago, stocks finished a period in which the yo-yo climbed up the stairs. Since that time, the predominant direction of markets has been down the stairs. This is not a toy we are talking about, it’s your money and it’s no joke. We are experiencing a ‘secular bear market.’

With markets going nowhere for so long, we at Carson Wealth have spent a lot of time identifying the market’s seasons. There is much academic research to back up the patterns we have found in broad market movements, but for our purposes here, simply understand that we have evolved. While we have always had many investment and asset allocation tools at our disposal, we have changed the mix over time. This is commonly referred to as a ‘tactical’ approach to managing wealth. It is quite different from the ‘buy and hold’ approach that worked so well during the ’summer season’ of the 80s and 90s. It has been a long winter since then!

We have been in ‘protect mode’ during much of this time, in an effort to preserve capital so we can deploy it at lower prices later. As you can imagine, patience is the name of the game in this environment, as great values don’t simply drop into our laps most of the time.

Finally, we think it’s helpful for you to know that our response to the secular bear market includes both a rigorous top-down approach (broadly assessing the markets, themes and asset classes) and bottom-up approach, in which we seek to identify individual securities that will benefit from those broad themes, but whose future success does not necessarily depend on a vibrant market. We can’t stop the general market from suffering another ‘lost’ period, but we can endeavor to use our resources to try to achieve competitive results regardless of what the market throws at us.

PERSONAL NOTES

RON CARSON

The last several months have been a lot of fun and very interesting for the Carson family. First of all, I had a great time hiking rim-to-rim-to-rim at the Grand Canyon for the second time. To complete this hike, you go from the north rim to the south rim of the canyon on the first day, and then head back to the north rim on the next day. Our group included several wealth advisors with whom I have become acquainted through the years. They hail from many different states. We had a lot of fun and all but one completed the hike.

I also hiked hut-to-hut in the Colorado Rockies this summer. If you’ve never done it, it’s really incredible, and I highly recommend it. The huts were built by the 10th Mountain Division years ago and they’re very well maintained.

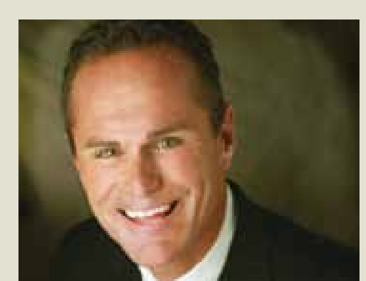
Jeanie and I celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary in June. We traveled to the Napa Valley, one of our top-four favorite places in the world.

My daughter, Chelsie, now works for Carson Wealth as an associate wealth advisor. I can’t tell you how much I love being able to walk down the hall and have brief conversations with her. This fall, Chelsie and I took our one-on-one trip together. We hiked four fourteeners in Colorado in one day. These are four mountain peaks that are 14,000 feet high. It was great fun.

My daughter, Maddie, transferred to University of Nebraska-Lincoln this year. She loves the experience and really enjoys cheering on a football team. DePaul didn’t have one. She has committed herself to fitness and working out. She looks great and our whole family is so proud of her.

Watch out on the roads! Grant is officially driving now—by himself. He waited hours in line for the new iPhone, but that was nothing compared to his eight-hour wait, with me, when we went to ComicCon in San Diego for his one-on-one trip. If you’ve never been, it is quite the spectacle! One hundred thousand costumed people converged in the city’s convention center. Grant said, “Dad, this is my heaven. These are my friends. We’re all geeks”.

I look forward to seeing you at the holiday brunch in December.



TRUE WEALTH

True Wealth—all that money can’t buy and death can’t take away. Take a look at the 9 principles and see how they work in your life.

Be a living example of the transformational power of love.

Stick to your core values.

Be driven by your purpose.

Be accountable through your goals.

Cherish your relationships.

Value your health.

Wisely use your financial resources.

Find ways to be compassionate with the world.

Be open to wise counselors.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Carson Wealth Management Group is not just dedicated to our clients, but to our community as well. That vision extends well beyond our office. Ron Carson and the Carson Wealth Management team are committed to giving back to the community. We support a number of charities including Angel Flight, the Omaha Food Bank, the American Lung Association and the Child Saving Institute.

INCREASING YOUR ESTATE PLAN'S
PERFORMANCE

Beth Schanou, JD

A recent survey by U.S. Trust found that "there is a gap between the importance [the wealthy] place on providing family security and what they are actually doing in terms of estate planning."[1] A majority of survey participants have an estate plan in place, but 39% indicate that their plans are not comprehensive enough to properly manage distribution of their wealth. This may be because leaving a financial inheritance is less important for many of them than achieving other goals, including:

- Financial security for self and family
- Financial freedom
- Travel
- Quality relationships with family and friends

The survey respondents also had concerns about their heirs' ability to handle the responsibilities of wealth. Just over one-half had not fully disclosed their wealth to their children and 15% had disclosed nothing at all. Some of the fears preventing disclosure included the effect the knowledge might have on their children's lives, and concerns that family money could be wasted.

Make Sure Estate Plan Does It All

If one of your priorities is providing ongoing financial security for your spouse and family members, then it's important that estate planning to do more than address tax issues. A comprehensive estate plan should include these priorities: Taxes, Management Continuity, Estate Protection and Financial Security.

Financial Security

Once there is comfort with financial security, it is necessary to establish goals for the distribution of wealth. Things to consider include:

- Who will receive the assets
- How much will each person/entity receive
- How will the wealth be distributed

Estate Protection

Safeguarding your estate comes next. Your estate may need protection from:

- Creditors or lawsuits
- Former family members
- Disgruntled or irresponsible family members

Management Continuity

The next consideration is continuity of management and caretaking for the estate. Is a trust or another entity necessary? It can be a good idea to consider the benefits of:

- Revocable and irrevocable trusts
- Life insurance trusts
- Charitable trusts

Taxes

Finally, the potential tax burdens related to an estate should be addressed.

Everyone Needs A Legacy Plan

Regardless of wealth, everyone needs a legacy plan. It is common for a person who is not concerned about taxes to simply not plan. This is a mistake. Even if your legacy plan consists of a simple Will and Power of Attorney documents, planning is necessary. Likewise, people who are concerned about taxes, and have engaged in estate tax planning, also need to consider other aspects of estate planning and the long-term effects of their legacies.

At Carson Wealth, we understand the importance of planning for generational wealth transfer and the hurdles you may be facing. If you would like guidance in this process, please call us at 1-888-321-0808. We will happily work with you and your estate planning attorney. ■

[1] U.S. Trust, U.S. Trust Insights on Wealth and Worth™: Survey of High Net Worth and Ultra High Net Worth Americans, 2011 Highlights, p.6. The survey included 457 individuals with more than $3 million investable assets. (http://www.ustrust.com/publish/ust_072210/USTSurvey/pdfs/Deck-Full.pdf)

PERSONAL NOTES

JASON COMES

It has been a busy but great year! In addition to birthday parties and the usual activities, we went to Disneyland in March. It's just amazing to see how much fun the little ones have at that place. Nico, age four, got into the Toy Story parades and rides. Gianna, who is six, really enjoyed the performances by all of the Disney characters. The older sisters couldn't wait to leave the amusement park so they could hang out at the hotel and pool. We also visited my brother and his family, along with my Mom and Dennis, who were visiting as well. As most of you know, Dennis had colon cancer and under went chemotherapy. It worked out absolutely great, and we are very thankful! I hope everything is well with you, and look forward to seeing you in the coming year.

CHELSIE CARSON

This year has been one of great change, as well as great joy. I have been with Carson Wealth for just over six months, and couldn't be happier with the decision I made to join such an extraordinary team and family. It has truly been a blessing to work alongside my dad every day. This year, I purchased my first home and love the feeling of being able to call it my own. I think Daisi is also enjoying it, as she now has a whole backyard to herself! Amidst all of these blessings, an old volleyball injury recurred and I will undergo surgery on my hip. My mom and dad will travel with me to Vail, Colorado, where Dr. Philipon will repair my torn labrum. The recovery will be quite extensive as they have to dislocate the hip to repair it, and then re-locate it once they're done. I hope this note finds all of you in good health and full of happiness. I am sending you warm wishes of peace and love.

PHIL MCBRIDE

I love this time of the year. I get to spend time with family at the holidays, watch football, and go to the mountains to ski. I have been traveling a lot lately, visiting with a lot of my professional athletes/clients. I have gone to Chicago, Washington DC and I have attended a couple of Husker games. My plan is to finish out the football season by going to New York City, Philadelphia, and Jacksonville. However, the most exciting thing that happened in the past few months was having Bo Pelini ask Ron and me to give a presentation on finances to the entire Husker football team in August. It was an amazing experience and one that I will not forget. Go Big Red! I hope all of you have happy holidays!

NEW FACES

AARON FOSTER joined the Carson Wealth Team in 2011 as a Financial Analyst/Associate Wealth Advisor. A lifelong resident of the Omaha area, Aaron graduated cum laude from Creighton University's College of Business Administration in 2007 and immediately began work as an Investment Analyst. Aaron recently completed the requirements to carry the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation in 2011 and brings several years of investment analysis experience to Carson Wealth. His research and analytical skill set provide clients and the Carson Wealth Investment Committee with a deep and thorough understanding of investment holdings. While way from the office, Aaron enjoys spending time with his wife Melody and his son Cameron, and is also an avid sports enthusiast.

PAY YOURSELF FIRST

Phil McBride

Most people make sure they have enough money to pay their bills—the mortgage, car, telephone, credit card, and other payments—each month. However, they often forget to write the most important check. Whether you are a teacher, a professional athlete, a student, or a business owner, the name on the first check you write each month should be your own.

I have said it many times: It's not how much you make that matters; it's how much you save. The key to saving is having a plan. Know how much you need to save for retirement, and then pay yourself each month. By setting up a monthly transfer from your checking account to your retirement account, you can automate the process.

If you think you cannot afford to save, consider this idea, offered by best-selling author David Bach. It is called the Latte Factor™ (www.finishrich.com). You cut out small expenses and use that money to pay yourself. For example, by toting your own coffee and snack each morning, instead of going to Starbucks for a latte and a muffin, you can save about $5.00 a day. Over a week, that's $35.00. If you earn a hypothetical annual return of 10%, your savings can grow fairly quickly.

1 year	$1,885	15 years	$62,171
2 years	$3,967	30 years	$339,073
5 years	$11,616	40 years	$948,611
10 years	$30,727		

Remember, it's not how much money you make that will determine whether or not you become wealthy. It's how much you save. Help yourself by taking a disciplined approach to saving. Pay yourself first and do it automatically. If you have any questions about where to direct your savings, please give us a call. ■

SHOPPING FOR INVESTMENTS

Brett Carson & Aaron Foster

Don't confuse a good company with a good stock. This has been our advice to casual investors looking for a quick tip. Admittedly, it is an easy trap to fall into. Who doesn't want to own shares of a wildly profitable company that dominates its industry and is growing like a weed? At Carson Wealth, we look for great companies whose stocks are selling at attractive prices.

Looking for great companies

So what makes a great company? In our opinion, a great company dominates its industry, is highly profitable, requires minimal capital, generates large amounts of cash, and remains self-financing. In many ways, a great company is like an ideal personal financial situation. Imagine that you have a specialized job and cannot easily be replaced (high market share). The job pays a high salary and a bonus, which increase over time (sales growth). Also, your services are profitable for your employer (shareholders). You keep monthly bills low (operating costs) to retain more of your paycheck (earnings per share), which adds cash to your savings account (balance sheet). As cash reserves grow, you become self-financing (no debt). You earn returns on your money by investing (making acquisitions) or returning assets to your family (paying a dividend).

With attractive stock prices

Unfortunately, in the excitement of finding a great company, investors sometimes ignore the company's stock price. If you pay too much for a company's stock, it may not deliver performance you were expecting. In everyday life, very few people have the luxury of purchasing goods without considering the price. For instance, we don't show up at a car dealer, say "I'll have the Jaguar," and ignore the sticker price. Instead, we scour the classifieds and patiently wait for a blowout sale. Or, at the very least, we play hard ball when negotiating with the car dealer. Why should investing be any different?

A disciplined investment philosophy

At Carson Wealth, our disciplined investment philosophy includes searching for those rare instances when great companies go "on sale." We create a shopping list of great companies that we would like to own, and then patiently wait for them to go on sale. A great company is a great stock only when the price is right. ■

PERSONAL NOTES

STEVE WILBUR

The last six months were eventful for my family. The river was so high that we spent much of the summer worried about our home flooding. In August, baseball-sized hail fell from the sky and destroyed just about everything on the outside of our house. On a more positive note, Ely started kindergarten. He is doing great and loving it. Maya is growing up much faster than Stava and I would like. Stava went part-time with Boys Town in August. She really is enjoying her extra time with Ely and Maya.

MARK LOOKABILL

I hope everyone is enjoying the holiday season. The Lookabill household has been a flurry of activity with school programs for Lauren and Jack. We are looking forward to spending the holidays in Omaha with our family. Since Jack is just three years old, I believe the key word will be 'gently' as he hangs ornaments on the Christmas tree with Jill, Lauren, and me. I hope everyone has a tremendous end of the year and a very happy start to 2012.

AARON SCHABEN

The past six months have been full of firsts and excitement. Madden is quickly approaching his first birthday, and it's amazing to see the new things he picks up on every day. We have affectionately nicknamed him "The Destroyer" for his ability to attack his toy box, throw out the toys, and move on to the next room. He gives us perspective on what you can learn, and how much life can change, over a short period of time. Jenna and I are very excited to be calling Omaha home again.

NEW FACES

CARLA HAGEN joined Carson Wealth Management Group in May as a New Business Coordinator. Carla has over 15 years of experience in the administration of qualified retirement plans, starting at a third party administration firm, and most recently in the wealth management department in the banking industry. She is currently finishing her Bachelor's Degree in Business Management at the University of Nebraska-Kearney. Carla and her husband, Scott, and have three children, Cacilia, Nicholas, and Marissa. In her free time she enjoys reading, working out and shopping.

KEVIN ZEMANN joined the Carson Wealth Management Group as Compliance Director in September of 2011, and comes to Carson Wealth with over 18 years experience in the financial services industry, including Chief Compliance Officer for a Cincinnati based Investment Company. Kevin and his wife Ann were married in September 2002, and have one daughter, Madeleine. In his spare time Kevin enjoys reading, playing golf, and spending time with family and friends. Kevin and Ann were formerly foster parents and look forward to pursuing this again in the near future.

BRETT CARSON Brett joined Carson Wealth Management Group in September 2011. He spent the previous 12 years at GARP Research in Baltimore where he did deep, fundamental research on small-to-mid cap companies for mutual and hedge fund clients. Brett received his Certified Financial Analyst designation in 2005. Brett is an Omaha native that graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 1999. He married his wife Andrea in 2007 who is a local high school teacher. Brett is an avid sports fan that enjoys playing golf, travelling overseas, and spending time with his two dogs, Pablo and Boris.

WHAT IF YOU LOST UP TO 50% OF YOUR WEALTH IN A SINGLE DAY

Mark Petersen, CPA, CFP®

Nothing is more satisfying for advisors and their clients than planning, investing, and watching net worth gradually increase. And nothing is more disheartening than having a significant portion of portfolio value disappear as the result of an unanticipated event. There are many situations that can affect portfolio value. Many of them may be avoided. Here are a few to be wary of:

Upheaval in the stock market.
The greatest single day decline in stock market value, as measured by the Dow Jones 30 Industrials Average, was October 19, 1987. On that day the market lost 22.61% (source: Wall Street Journal website). Keeping your eye on long-term goals may help overcome the feeling of panic that market volatility can inspire.

Divorce.
Today, more than one-half of all marriages in the U.S. end in divorce. Property settlements often divide assets evenly, which can significantly diminish your personal wealth. If you have divorced, it is important to change your beneficiary on qualified plans, IRAs, and life insurance policies. If you don't, your assets may end up going to your ex-spouse rather than your current spouse and/or children.

Dying without a formal estate plan.
If you die without a formal estate plan, your estate tax exemption may not be properly applied, and that could result in tax dollars being paid to the government unnecessarily. Each American has an estate tax exemption of $5 million through 2012. If a surviving spouse files a properly completed estate tax return, even when no estate tax is due, he or she can later use his or her unused estate tax exemption, plus the unused exemption of the deceased spouse.

Dying without a will.
In many states, if you have minor children and fail to leave instructions for guardianship, your children are entitled to one-half of the property of the deceased parent. Without a valid will, a guardian may be appointed by the court. That guardian will control the assets of any minor children. If the surviving spouse is not named as guardian, then he or she may have little say in how funds are spent or invested on behalf of their children.

Untimely death of a key person in privately-held business.
The value of a family's business may be reduced dramatically by the death of a key person. In some cases, it may be necessary to sell the business to create the liquidity necessary to pay the estate tax, which generally is due nine months after the owner's death. Key man insurance may help prevent this.

Regardless of the unwelcome surprises life may hold, you often may protect the wealth you've accumulated. If you are interested in learning more about how NOT to lose as much as 50% of your net worth in a single day, give us a call. ■

PERSONAL NOTES

TAD SINGER
What a great year 2011 has been. Caleb and Sebastian were born! We have had a great time learning how to be parents. It still perplexes me that you spend a couple of days in the hospital and then, poof! You are home with two little people who rely on you for everything, and you haven't a clue what you're doing. There have been many firsts this year: teething, crawling, screaming uncontrollably for no reason (Well, that was me). Everyone in the Singer family is doing well. Thank you for all of the warm wishes during our first year as parents.

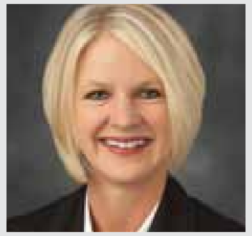
DENNIS MCMILLAN
This past month has been a great time to live in Nebraska. What great weather! Deb and I took a long weekend trip to Atlanta to visit our son and daughter-In-law, Marcus and Michele. They have a 68-foot houseboat on Lake Lanier, just north of the city. We left the dock Saturday morning in search of an island with a nice beach. After a short cruise, we anchored in a quiet cove and started 'veg' time. We had a big screen TV hooked up to a satellite feed for our football fix. It was a great weekend with the exception of a three-hour period when we misplaced Randy, the Dachshund puppy. He had crawled into the cabinet that held the trash can and sacked out. It was a happy ending.

ED MEEKINS
It has been a fun, action-packed summer and early fall at the Meekins house. Our two boys Joey, age three, and Ben, eight months, make sure there is never a dull moment—and we would not want it any other way! My wife, JoDe, and I got away for a couple of days on a belated 10-year wedding anniversary trip to Mexico. The family travelled to New Orleans, in July, for JoDe's brother's wedding. Joey was an excellent little ring bearer. Now, with the start of fall, our focus is shifting to the upcoming Creighton Basketball season. Go Jays!

NEW FACES

SHAYLA KRIHA Shayla joined Carson Wealth in 2011 as a New Business Coordinator. Prior to joining Carson Wealth Management Group, she worked in Radio Advertising in Omaha for nearly 10 years, helping her clients with their business marketing plans. Shayla also worked in Real Estate Sales and gained experience in the financial industry as a Financial Advisor in the Omaha area. Shayla is originally from Omaha, married Barry Kriha in 1998, and they have two boys, Clayton and Bryce, who are active in hockey and soccer year round. She enjoys spending time with her boys, family and friends, and every fall she really enjoys attending Husker games in Lincoln. "Go Huskers"

TERESA LAUGHLIN Teresa joined Carson Wealth Management Group in April 2011 as an Administrative Assistant. She attended St. Mary's University in San Antonio, TX and studied business and accounting. She was previously employed as an Office Manager for a pre-employment screening company. Teresa was born and raised in Omaha. She and her husband, Tom, have been married since August 1983 and have three children; Tom, Jennifer and Katie and one grandchild, Miles. She enjoys going to the gym, reading, and spending time with family and friends.



WHAT'S ON MY iPAD

Mark Lookabill

As many of you know, I am an avid reader. I spend much of my spare time with my nose in a book. Recently, all of that changed. I no longer have a stack of books waiting to be read. Instead, I adapted to the 21st century and, now, I download books to my iPad. My newest favorite method of reading is audio books because my iPad reads to me. I recently read/listened to two interesting books.

The Next 100 Hundred Years: A Forecast of the 21st Century

The first is The Next 100 Hundred Years: A Forecast of the 21st Century by George Friedman. It's a rather lengthy book in which Mr. Friedman gives his views about what we can expect during the next 100 years. His predictions were developed through a process of evaluating the probabilities of various events occurring. Some of Mr. Friedman's thoughts and conclusions are controversial, but I believe it's important to learn about controversial points of view. His ideas also are thought-provoking and, sometimes, counterintuitive.

I was intrigued, as were some of my colleagues at Carson Wealth, by his discussion of demographic trends and population changes, which are important considerations as we develop investment strategies and portfolios. He discusses the nations and economies that he believes will be leaders in the future, and some of his deductions are surprising. For example, many people anticipate that China will be a political and economic leader in the not so distant future. Mr. Friedman, while he notes China will be important and influential, believes that a couple of other countries will have greater influence. You'll have to read the book to find out which countries. He believes these nations are better positioned from both historical and modern perspectives to assume leadership.

I also found Friedman's discussion of the challenges that the United States will face over the next 25 to 50 years to be noteworthy. I was particularly interested in geopolitical risk and the labor market influences of Canada and Mexico. This is a very, very thought-provoking book, and I would recommend that you put it on your reading list.

Boomerang

The second book that I recommend is *Boomerang* by Michael Lewis. You may have read some of this prolific writer's best-selling books, such as *Money Ball, The Big Short, Liars Poker,* or others. Mr. Lewis has cranked out another tremendous and insightful book. In *Boomerang,* he takes a look at European sovereign debt issues, European Central Bank policies, and the looming debt crisis in Europe. Mr. Lewis talks about the ways in which events in the U.S. influenced events in Europe, and the ways in which European events may influence the United States. That's the reason the book is called *Boomerang*. You throw it out and it comes back.

I appreciate the timeliness of this book. As I finished reading it, there were riots in Greece. Events in Europe, including the Eurozone's handling of the Greek financial crisis, and issues in other countries, are highly relevant to investment decisions today. At Carson Wealth, we keep a close eye on Europe and how various issues may affect the United States. *Boomerang* is an entertaining, timely, and easy read. It would make a good holiday gift for family members and friends who are interested in finance and markets.

If you have read any great books lately, let me know. I am always adding to my list of must-read books! ■

WHEN PERMANENT LIFE INSURANCE MAKES SENSE

Ed Meekins

You have probably heard the saying, "Buy term and invest the rest." This slogan encourages people to buy inexpensive term life insurance instead of permanent life insurance, and then take the money saved and invest it. This isn't always sound advice. That's why it is important to understand the differences between term and permanent insurance, and the circumstances in which one or the other may be a better choice.

Term insurance

When you purchase term life insurance, you pay a low premium and receive insurance coverage for a specific period of time. If you die during that time, then the policy's benefits go to your beneficiary. Most term policies can be renewed until you reach a certain age, and then coverage ends. If the policy expires before you do, your heirs receive no benefits. At Carson Wealth, we think that term insurance makes sense in two situations. It may be a good choice when:

Cost is an issue: For example, a young family on a budget may not be able to afford permanent life insurance. In that case, term life may make sense.

Insurance needs are temporary: Term may be a good choice when the period for which life insurance is needed is defined and exact. For example, if a bank wants a business owner to have life insurance before it will make a loan to his or her company.

Permanent life insurance

Permanent life insurance, generally, is owned for life. You pay higher premiums and part of your premium payments go into a cash value savings account. If you want to have insurance coverage until you die, then permanent life insurance may be a good choice. Permanent insurance also may make sense when:

Taxes are an estate planning issue: Life insurance proceeds are income tax free and, if owned by an irrevocable trust, may be estate tax free as well.

Planning for the unknown: Term premiums increase as you age, and may provide significantly lower benefits later on. Permanent life insurance offers coverage for life. If you're not sure what the future will hold, permanent life insurance may be a better choice.

There are many types of term and permanent life insurance. Our goal is to manage your insurance as we manage your other assets—in the most efficient manner possible. If you have any questions about life insurance, please give us a call. We would be happy to help. ■

6 EXCUSES FOR NOT SAVING FOR RETIREMENT

Steve Wilbur

We have all heard them—and most of us have had occasion to give a few. Excuses are a means of rationalizing behavior that we think may be controversial. They can be a source of humor or disgust. One thing is for certain, people have a lot of excuses for not saving for retirement. Here are six:

1. I am paying for my child's college education. There are many ways to fund your child's education, including student loans, scholarships, grants, and other means. There are very few ways to fund your retirement. Retirement should be a saving priority.

2. My parents died young. Dying young is not a retirement plan and cannot be relied on. People are living longer today than ever before, and the trend is expected to continue.

3. I will live on Social Security. According to the 2010 trustees report for the Social Security Administration, the reserve will run out by 2037, and projected tax proceeds should cover about 75% of benefits through 2084. If Congress does nothing, younger generations may receive lower benefits than expected.

4. I will always work. A day may come when you are not able to work anymore. About 40% of people retire earlier than expected. Almost two-thirds of them retire because of poor health or a disability.

5. Too many current expenses. The only cure for too many expenses is old-fashioned budgeting. I have always paid myself first and, if there is money left over, I splurge on the things I want. Don't think about what you are missing today; think about what you will get in the future.

6. I am unemployed. Losing your job is not uncommon today. While unemployed, you may have to cut back or stop saving all together. Once you find a new job, make sure you start saving for retirement immediately.

It's time to take action. Join your employer-sponsored retirement plan, open an IRA, or call us for more information about saving for your future. ■

NEWS & EVENTS

MEET THE GAMBLES: MATT, AMY AND SON TANNER

The family also has a seven-year-old Old English Bulldog named Harley, who is the original baby of the family.

Matt and Amy are celebrating 14 years together. Amy believes their marriage has worked because they both have Christian values, and they both understand the importance of spending time apart every now and then. "Matt goes out and does his thing, I do my thing, we do things together, we do things as a family…as a mother, I understand the necessity for time away," she says. She also thinks she and Matt work well together because they have similar views on parenting. "When we were waiting for Tanner, we were waiting and waiting, and we both had ideas of how child-rearing was going to be…like 'Oh, my child would never do that!'" she laughs.

The Gambles tried to have kids for about five years without success. Amy had polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), which complicated their attempts at getting pregnant. "After fertility treatments and shots, I just couldn't handle it anymore," she explains. Although their emotions were running high, Matt and Amy knew they had another option. "I had a dream where I wasn't going to be able to have kids, and I knew I had to adopt," Amy says. "It was weird, but cool." After helping steer Matt in the direction of adoption, they threw themselves into research, looking into both international agencies and those in the U.S., until they stumbled onto a local adoption center—the Nebraska Children's Home. "My grandparents actually took care of foster kids from the Children's Home, so that's why we chose them," she says. It took a year and six months for the Gambles' adoption process, and it looked like they would have to wait a while longer before an adoption could go through. But on December 22, 2009, the Gambles got the call. They had a son. Tanner was born in North Platte and placed in foster care in McCook, NE., so the Gambles needed to drive out to McCook to pick him up. "I had a hysterectomy scheduled for the 29th, so Matt and I were saying, 'Should we do this? Should we not do this?'" says Amy. They got everything ready and were about to head out to pick up Tanner when they talked to the caseworker out in North Platte. "She told us not to come out because there was a bad ice storm; one of the worst that they'd seen in years, actually." Matt and Amy thought about chancing it but decided it was better to wait out the storm. Amy told her boss, Ron Carson, CEO of Carson Wealth Management Group and founder of Peak Advisor Alliance, about their troubles going to pick up their son.

"He said, 'Wow, that's great story!'" she laughs. And on a miraculous Christmas Eve morning, Carson called Amy to inform her that there was a break in the weather. Carson, who owns his own private jet, offered to personally fly both Matt and Amy out to McCook to get Tanner. Naturally, they took the offer and went to pick up their son with Carson at the yoke.

"[Our families] were so overjoyed about Tanner—Matt's parents especially because they don't have any other grandchildren. You could see in their eyes that they had been waiting for years and years," says Amy, adding that the family loves to spoil her son. "Without adoption, we would not have a family. Where would Tanner be? It's great to have that bond with a child, even though he might not be your own. But he's still mine. We wouldn't be as happy as we are today without him," she says. "Nebraska Children's Home is a great team of people. If we decide to have more children, we would definitely go back through them!"

Amy believes her family is a success for many reasons. "My family and I are strong believers in Christ. We are passionate about spending time together and making the most out of life. We talk out our problems and hold on for the roller coaster that God puts in front of us…We have a great support system with our family and friends. Without them, we would not be where we are today."

BRING YOUR DOG TO WORK DAY

October 7th was our 1st Annual Bring Your Dog to Work Day! It was a huge success among the two-legged and fur-legged participants alike! We had a judging contest for the Best Trick, Best Costume and Cutest Dog! The winners were as follows: Best Trick – Chewie the Golden Retriever (owner – Micah Schmidt), Cutest – Lucy the yellow lab (owner - Kelsey Ruwe), and Best Costume – Daisy the Yorkiepoo (owner – Scott Herman).

FOOD BANK

Carson Wealth volunteered for the Food Bank this summer by handing out food every Friday morning at one of their Fresh Produce stands here in Omaha. Food and other items distributed through Food Bank for the Heartland have touched over 150,000 lives this past year. We all enjoyed giving back to the community and we hope to do it again next year! **www.omahafoodbank.org**

FOODBANK FOR THE HEARTLAND

Child Saving INSTITUTE

CSI GOLF FORE KIDS EVENT

Carson Wealth Management Group will be the title sponsor for the Child Saving Institute's Golf Fore Kids event. This event takes place every June here in Omaha. CSI exists to help children and families. They provide emergency services to children and teens in crisis. And they offer therapy for physically and sexually abused children. Additionally, CSI is a community leader in preventive family education, preservation, and childcare. At next year's event, you will have a chance to showcase your game and make a difference in an at-risk child's life. A multi-divisional tournament offering both a two-person, handicapped best ball and a four-person scramble, this is THE tournament to play next summer. If you are interested please let us know! **www.childsaving.org**

NEWS & EVENTS

NEWS & EVENTS

2011 CORPORATE CUP RUN

We were once again the premier sponsor for the American Lung Association's 31st Annual Corporate Cup! The Corporate Cup's unique character—businesses and their employees coming together to have fun and fight lung disease—is the basis for its success. This year there were over 12,000 participants and they are on target to raise over $400,000! Ron had a personal best in the 10k and is determined to beat his time for next year!

CONGRATULATIONS TO 2011 INDUCTEES, PAUL AND GARY EPSTEIN OF NEBRASKA WINE AND SPIRITS!

The Omaha Hospitality Hall of Fame inducted a number of chefs and restaurateurs during its annual ceremony including Paul and Gary Epstein of Nebraska Wine and Spirits. The event recognized the achievements of the best in the Omaha area's food and restaurant industry and raised scholarship money for culinary students at the Institute of Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College.

The Omaha Hospitality Hall of Fame Annual Dinner and Induction Ceremony celebrate the achievements of the best in the Omaha area food and restaurant industry. This annual dinner publicly recognizes each year's inductees while providing an opportunity for students at The Institute for the Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College to prepare and present the meal. Event proceeds provide scholarships for culinary arts students and fund scholarly academic work.

The Hospitality Hall of Fame was created to recognize achievement and significant contributions in the hospitality industry. The Hall of Fame is a collaborative endeavor of the Omaha Restaurant Association, the Institute for the Culinary Arts at Metropolitan Community College, the National Association of Catering Executives (Omaha Chapter) and the American Culinary Federation (Heartlands Chapter).

CORPORATE ANGEL NETWORK (CAN)

Ron was involved with the Corporate Angel Network (CAN) this past year and flew Paul Lucko and his girlfriend from New York to Chicago. Paul was a 25 year old 3rd year medical student at Columbia University when he found out he had a brain tumor. His prognosis is getting better every day and you can learn more at **www.runpjrun.com**.

Corporate Angel Network is the only charitable organization in the United States whose sole mission is to help cancer patients access the best possible treatment for their cancer by arranging free travel to treatment using empty seats on corporate jets. This not only improves the patients' chances of survival but at the same time, it reduces their emotional stress, physical discomfort and financial burden.

EDUCATING OUR YOUTH

Phil McBride spoke at Papillion La Vista South High School (the school where he used to teach) earlier this spring. His audience was 9th – 12th graders and he did a presentation on finance and what it means to be a financial advisor. He explained the importance of paying themselves first, why they have the most important tool when it comes to investing - time, problems with credit cards & debt, the typical day of a financial advisor and traits you need to become a successful advisor. It was a great day and it reminded Phil of his old teaching days!

NEBRASKA HUSKERS

Ron is currently assisting with the Nebraska Huskers donating his time and plane to help with recruiting trips for the coaches. He believes all of their efforts have been paying off and is very optimistic about the future of the program. He really enjoys being on the sideline during the game and in the locker room during and after games. This opportunity has given him great insight to the caliber of kids and coaches at Nebraska. He is hoping to cheer them on to a bowl game championship!

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