



# Clipboard

Joan Marie Mikkelsen, EPC, CFP  
Financial and Insurance Services

[www.checkwithjoan.com](http://www.checkwithjoan.com)

Quaker Landing, 150 – 33 Ochterloney St., Dartmouth, N.S., B2Y 4P5

Bus: (902) 468-0602 Fax: (902) 468-0603 Toll-free: 1-877-439-8396 E-mail: [info@joanmikkelsen.com](mailto:info@joanmikkelsen.com)

---

February 2008

## Starting a new year

We are almost through the first month of 2008, and annual account statements are starting to arrive in the mail. Instead of leaving them unopened or just filing them away, it may be a good idea to check your financial position now relative to a year ago. It is also a good time to sit down with your financial advisor to review your accounts and to see if you are on track to achieving your financial goals.

Whether you use a book or a computer program, you can list your accounts in one column, and the balances in another column. At a glance you will be able to compare one year to another and see your progress.

This is a good time to review your short, medium, and long-term goals. What do you want to achieve? Where do you want to be? Are you on the right track? If not, what changes will you need to make in order to achieve your goals?

It is also a good idea to check your credit bureau file to ensure that there are no unauthorized accounts or inquiries. Refer to my web site, or call Equifax at 1-800-465-7166, and TransUnion at 1-800-663-9980.

Soon, income tax receipts will be arriving for your 2007 income tax return. Here is an opportunity to see if your income is being taxed efficiently. Check the following:

1. Are you taking advantage of eligible tax credits: age; caregiver; charitable donations; children fitness; disability; education; employment; GST; interest on student loans; medical expenses; pension income; public transit passes; spousal/partner and wholly dependant person; transfer credits to spouse; and tuition fees?
2. Are you taking advantage of eligible deductions: RRSP contributions made up to March 1, 2008; child care expenses; moving expenses; carrying charges such as interest, safety deposit box rental, and accounting fees?
3. Is there an opportunity to split your income, such as employer pension, RRIF, or CPP, with a spouse?
4. Are you taking more than needed or required from a RRIF?

Working with a tax professional and financial advisor can help to ensure tax efficiency.



# A comfort letter to investors

Dear investor,

The new year has certainly started with a surprise, with this sharp and sudden decline in world stock markets. The drop has been blamed on concerns that the U.S. has entered a recession, and that this will lead to an economic slowdown in the rest of the world. In addition, there are fears that financial institutions may announce further losses stemming from the sub-prime mortgage meltdown.

For sure, this kind of market activity can be unnerving, especially with the media reporting it on the front pages like a major natural disaster. However, the fact of the matter is that it's not a disaster. Market declines are a normal part of investing.

Remember why you are investing – for the long term. History has shown that market downturns have provided opportunities for people who remained committed to their long-term investment goals. By staying the course and continuing to invest – buying when prices are down – you can create enhanced potential for long-term gains.

Furthermore, a portfolio that is diversified by asset class (equities and bonds), sector and region will have more stable returns, because not all investments provide the same returns at the same time, or respond to events in the same way. This is how diversification helps boost returns and reduce risk at the same time.

Investment portfolios should be chosen to help you meet your financial needs, based on your individual goals and risk tolerance. A stock market downturn can be uncomfortable, but it's no time for hasty actions. I work with my clients, and together we have developed a disciplined, long-term plan that can weather short-term changes in the investment climate.



## Quote

“We simply attempt to be fearful when others are greedy and to be greedy only when others are fearful”.

Warren Buffett