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1. **ONE MONTH** - The S&P 500 **lost 1.01%** (total return) in **January 2021**. Exactly one-third (**33%**) of the months over the **last 30 years** (the 360 months from 2/1991 through 1/2021) have produced a **negative return**. The S&P 500 consists of 500 stocks chosen for market size, liquidity and industry group representation. It is a market value weighted index with each stock's weight in the index proportionate to its market value (source: BTN Research).
2. **INDEX MATH** - The S&P 500 closed at an **all-time high** on Monday 1/25/21, finishing the day at 3855. **Just 13 individual stocks** in the index also closed at an **all-time high** on Monday 1/25/21 (source: BTN Research).
3. **END OF LIFE** - 2,839,000 Americans **died in 2018**. 2,855,000 Americans **died in 2019**. An estimated 3,271,000 Americans **died in 2020** (source: Center for Disease Control).
4. **IN A UNION** - 35% of workers in the **public sector** (i.e., local, state or federal government) were **union members** in 2020. 6% of workers in the **private sector** were **union workers** in 2020 (source: Bureau of Labor Statistics).
5. **PLANNING AHEAD** - 6 out of every 7 **full-time workers** surveyed (86%) in October 2020 are **investing money for their retirement**, mostly through an **employer-sponsored pre-tax plan**. 2,069 workers participated in the survey (source: Transamerica Center for Retirement Studies).
6. **RELIEF DOLLARS** - 36% of **stimulus payment** money received by Americans from the March 2020 CARES Act was put **into savings**, while 35% was used to **pay down debt** (source: Federal Reserve Bank of New York).
7. **THEY VOTE THIS YEAR** - Presidents of **4 of the 12 regional Federal Reserve Banks** began their **1-year rotation** as **voting members** of the Federal Open Market Committee (**FOMC**) last Tuesday 1/26/21. The **4 new voting members in 2021** are Charles Evans (Chicago), Mary Daly (San Francisco), Raphael Bostic (Atlanta) and Thomas Barkin (Richmond). The New York Fed President (currently John Williams) is a **permanent member** of the FOMC (source: Federal Reserve).
8. **SELLERS' MARKET** - There were **1.07 million existing homes** for sale nationwide as of 12/31/20. Two years ago (12/31/18), there were **1.53 million existing homes** for sale nationwide. Ten years ago (12/31/10), there were **3.02 million existing homes** for sale nationwide (source: National Association of Realtors).
9. **AS LONG AS RATES STAY LOW** - The **average interest rate** that the US government pays on its **interest-bearing debt** as of 12/31/20 was **1.695%**, down from **2.331%** as of 12/31/15. That means our government can **borrow 37.5% more money today** than it borrowed **5 years ago** and still have the **same out-of-pocket interest expense cost** (source: Treasury Department).
10. **COMING BACK?** - The number of **operating oil rigs** in the United States both **on land and offshore** have **increased for 10 consecutive weeks** through last Friday 1/29/21. The current total of 384 operating oil rigs nationwide is **57% higher** than the low point of 244 from 8/14/20. The **pandemic forced 60 North American oilfield service companies into bankruptcy** (source: Baker Hughes, Haynes and Boone).
11. **GLOBAL TRADE REBOUNDS** - After declining for 10 months during the 2020 pandemic, the **monetary value of goods shipped worldwide** in November 2020 **exceeded its previous high-water mark** achieved in December 2019 (source: Netherlands Bureau for Economic Policy Analysis).
12. **READY TO LEAVE?** - **New York residents** are currently subject to a **top state marginal tax rate of 8.82%** at taxable income levels of \$1.08 million for an individual return and \$2.16 million for a joint return. NY Governor Andrew Cuomo **has proposed** raising that **top marginal rate to 10.86%** for the 2022 fiscal year beginning 4/01/21. NYC residents are also subject to a **maximum city marginal tax rate of 3.876%**, i.e., their **total marginal rate could be as high as 14.736%** during fiscal year 2022, the **highest in the nation** (source: IncomeTaxPro.net).
13. **GETTING ACCURATE INFORMATION** - Over the **15 years** from 2005 to 2020, **2,100 American newspapers** went **out of business** (source: University of North Carolina Hussman School of Journalism and Media).
14. **IT'S FREE** - 17 US states offer **free community college education**, including Arkansas, California, Maryland, Oregon and New York. All 17 states do enforce **different eligibility requirements** to qualify for the free tuition, e.g., community service, or a minimum high school GPA (source: The College Post).
15. **BROKE?!** - Evander Kane of the **NHL's San Jose Sharks** is in the 3rd year of a **7-year contract** that will pay him **\$7 million a year**. However Kane filed for **Chapter 7 bankruptcy protection** on 1/09/21, listing in the bankruptcy filing **\$10 million of assets** offset by **\$27 million of liabilities** (source: San Jose Mercury News).

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