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| **RESOURCE LOG – July 2020** | | | | |
| **Article Title** | **Detail** | **Publication** | **Date** | **Author** |
| Economy, Low Rates Boost Gold | Gold prices extended a recent rally Tuesday, closing out their best quarter in four years with uncertainty about the economic recovery and ultralow interest rates lifting demand for the haven metal.  Prices ended the second quarter up 13%, their biggest quarterly advance since early in 2016.  Stocks and other areas of the market are rallying as the world economy reopens, but many investors remain bullish on gold because of the unknown direction of the coronavirus pandemic.  Low and negative bond yields around the globe are also making bullion, which doesn’t pay a yield simply for holding it, more attractive for investors who seek investments that do. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/01/2020 | Amrith Ramkumar |
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| Virus Sends Oil Prices On Wild, Six-Month Ride | The coronavirus transformed global oil markets in the first half of 2020, sending prices on a wild ride and spurring historic changes to energy supply chains and products used to invest in crude.  Oil started the year trading above $60 a barrel. The pandemic and ensuing global economic shutdown slammed U.S. crude; it fell below $0 for the first time ever in late April. Within weeks, though, prices had recovered. They ended the quarter Tuesday around $40.  U.S. production also has crumbled with companies forced to shut in productive wells, a trend investors say could forever alter the shale boom that made the country the world’s largest producer of oil and gas.  “this is going to be an on-going thing because there are so many different elements we’re not sure of,” said Andy Lebow, senior partner at Commodity Research Group.  OPEC recently reported strong cooperation with the agreed-upon output cuts in May and said cartel members that weren’t fully complying would have to further cut supply.  Meanwhile, U.S. crude supply recently tumbled to a two-year low of 10.5 million barrels a day, government data show. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/01/2020 | Amrith Ramkumar |
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| After Crisis Low, Stocks Rebound In Quarter | After a quarter in which the coronavirus shutdown sent markets plummeting, U.S. stocks recovered with their best quarter in percentage terms in more than 20 years.  Partly due to a stimulus package from the Federal Reserve and congress and a surge in trading among individual investors, the rally has lifted everything from beaten-down energy stocks to apparel retailers to big technology firms.  “Massive stimulus by the Fed and on the fiscal side has propelled the stock market’s recovery at a speed unlike what we’ve ever seen,” said Liz Ann Sonders, a chief investment strategist at Charles Schwab & Co. “but there’s a perceived disconnect between what the market has done and the economic recovery. The reality is, the second half of the year may see a lot of choppiness.” | The Wall Street Journal | 07/01/2020 | Michael Wursthorn |
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| Fauci, Powell Warn of Fresh Risks To Lives, Economy if Virus Spirals | Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell, speaking on Capitol Hill on Tuesday, pledged to consider additional relief to prevent lasting damage to labor markets and businesses as states struggle to contain the pandemic.  “We have entered an important new phase and have done so sooner than expected,” Mr. Powell said. “While this bounce back in economic activity is welcome, it also presents new challenges – notably, the need to keep the virus in check.” | The Wall Street Journal | 07/01/2020 | Talal Ansari and Tom Burton |
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| What’s News | ♦ The S&P 500 and Nasdaq rose 0.5% and 1%, respectively, in the first session of the quarter, while the Dow industrials slipped 0.3%.  . | The Wall Street Journal | 07/02/2020 |  |
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| Exxon Telegraphs Deep Losses Ahead Due to Low Prices | Exxon Mobil Corp. warned Thursday of steep losses in its refining and oil-and-gas production businesses during the second quarter, signaling that the company is likely to report a second straight quarterly loss later this month.  Second-quarter earnings are likely to be brutal across the U.S. oil patch because global oil demand fell by some 18% during the period, according to the International Energy Agency…  U.S. benchmark oil prices averaged about $29 a barrel during the second quarter, compared with around $46 a barrel during the first quarter, according to FactSet. Demand was so low and storage so full in April that prices briefly fell below zero for the first time on record.  Benchmark natural gas prices averaged about $1.77 per million ETU’s during the second quarter, compared with around $1.87 during the first quarter, FactSet data show. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/03/2020 | Rebecca Elliott |
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| Oil Hits Highest Close in Nearly Four Months | Oil prices rose Thursday after employment data showed the U.S. economy gained more jobs than expected last month.  U.S. crude futures for August delivery added 2.1% to $40.68 a barrel on the New York Mercantile Exchange, their highest closing price since March 6.  Recovering demand and record production cuts by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its allies have helped return prices to their March levels. Still, stockpiles remain elevated after surging during the spring…  Analysts at Goldman Sachs said that oil demand could reach pre-coronavirus levels by 2022,…  Meanwhile the number of rigs drilling for oil, a proxy for sector activity, declined in June.  Elsewhere in commodities, most actively traded gold futures recovered some of Wednesday’s losses, rising 0.6% to $1.790.00. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/03/2020 | Sebastian Pellejero |
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| U.S. Adds Jobs Amid Cloudy Outlook  *Unemployment drops to 11.1% from 13.3% but more COVID cases slow down reopenings* | Unemployment fell and the U.S. economy regained 4.8 million jobs in June…  …the U.S. labor market is operating with about 15 million fewer jobs than in the February…  There already are signs the economy could be affected by the virus surge that started in late June… | The Wall Street Journal | 07/03/2020 | Sarah Chaney |
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| What’s News | ♦ Joblessness is likely to remain in double-digits through year end and the economic downturn will be more severe than previously forecast, the CBO said. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/03/2020 |  |
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| What’s News | ♦ U.S. stocks rose on the jobs report, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq both gaining 0.5% and the Dow adding 0.4%. All three finished the week up 3.2% or more. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/03/2020 |  |
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| U.S.-Stock Funds Rose 23.5% in Quarter | The result of the two quarters of head-spinning market moves; U.S.-stock funds are down 7.0% for the year to date.  The winners in the market, he notes, have been growth stocks (companies that promise profit growth), which have drubbed value stocks, as well as technology as a sector.  Brad Neuman, director of market strategy at investment manager Alger, In New York, says the U.S. economy is recovering.  Bond funds roe in the quarter. Funds tied to intermediate-maturity, investment-grade debt (the most common type of fixed-income fund) rose 5.0% for the quarter, and are up 5.4% for the year to date. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/06/2020 | William Power |
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| Uncertainty Lingers For Shale Companies Despite Oil’s Rebound | U.S. crude supply is falling at its quickest pace ever, easing a global oil glut and spurring a swift recovery in fuel prices.  Yet oil’s push back above $40 a barrel as drivers return to roads isn’t enough for beleaguered shale producers, which until recently were the driving force behind a transformation of the global energy industry. For many of them, prices haven’t risen far enough to help ease the strain of debt taken on during boom times. And the need to cut output in the face of pandemic-hit demand means they can’t pump their way out of trouble.  Even with the recent rebound, oil prices are still well below where they started 2020, and many investors still expect a wave of bankruptcies… | The Wall Street Journal | 07/07/2020 | Amrith Ramkumar |
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| Stocks Soar as Amazon Tops $1.5 Trillion | Stocks jumped, lifted by shares of everything from medical-technology companies to banks.  Global stocks rallied, with the Shanghai Composite Index soaring 5.7% to its highest level since early 2018.  At least part of stocks’ recent gains appear to stem from bets the U.S. will be able to avoid having to reinstate widespread restrictions on business.  The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 459.67 points, or 1.8%, to 26287.03. The S&P 500 added 49.71 points, or 1.6%, to 3179.72 and the Nasdaq Composite advanced 226.02 points, or 2.2%, to 10433.65.  “Quite frankly, we’re not that optimistic about markets for the second half of the year,” said John Vail, chief global strategist at Nikko Asset Management, who added that the firm expects middling returns for U.S. stocks for the year.  Elsewhere, the Stoxx Europe 600 rose 1.6% after data showed German factory orders rebounded 10.4% in May after falling sharply during the lockdown in April. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/07/2020 | Anna Isaac and Akane Otani |
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| Treasury Yield Gap Widens in Sign of Economic Growth | A widening gap between 10-year Treasury yields and those on two-year Treasurys is a sign that investors expect faster growth and higher interest rates in the future. This is known as a steepening of the yield curve. Investors often sell Treasurys, which are considered super safe, when they want to put more money into riskier corporate debt or stocks. Bond yields rise as prices fall.  U.S. retail sales jumped 17.7% in May after dropping 14.7% in April, even though the economy has only partly reopened. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/07/2020 | Paul J. Davies |
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| Airline Stocks Drag Down S&P | Stocks pulled back after a recent rally, as gloomy economic forecasts suggested a recovery will be uneven.  The S&P 500 fell 34.40 points, or 1.1%, to 3145.32, snapping a five-session winning streak. The Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 396.85 points, of 1.5%, to 25890.18. The Nasdaq Composite lost 89.76 points, or 0.9%, to 10343.89.  All three have risen more than 40% from their March lows. But investors still have to weigh a recession and what are expected to be especially weak second-quarter earnings against their bets for a longer-term recovery. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/08/2020 | Anna Hirtenstein and Paul Vigna |
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| China Orders Up a ‘Healthy Bull Market’  *Stocks take cues from buoyant state media* | Chinese stock markets have been on a tear lately. The CSI 300 index, a gauge of the largest companies listed in Shanghai and Shenzhen, gained 14% in the past week. There has certainly been positive news: China’s economy is slowly getting back on tract, and corporate earnings are improving.  What really seems to have gotten Chinese investors excited is state media’s switch to a bullish tone.  But the government wants more robust domestic capital markets to a void businesses’ overreliance on bank loans, and to help cushion any financial blows from abroad. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/08/2020 | Jacky Wong |
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| S&P Fall as Netflix Passes Verizon | The broad U.S. stock index pulled back, dropping 17.89 points, or 0.6%, to 3152.05. Only its consumer discretionary and technology sectors gained ground. The index has surged more than 40% from its March low.  The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 361.19 points, or 1.4%, to 25706.09, dragged down by broad losses among the blue chips.  Investors continued to favor many of the megacap growth stocks that have outperformed throughout the market turmoil. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/10/2020 | Karen Langley and Caitlin Ostroff |
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| China Cautions Investors About Market Exuberance | The optimism has spurred mainland Chinese stocks to multiyear highs in recent days, with the Shanghai Composite rising 16.5% over eight straight sessions of gains through Thursday.  There is concern that the gains have been too rapid. Chinese state media urged investors this week to think long term.  Stock market gains are occurring against a brightening economic backdrop. Some economists expect second-quarter data to show China’s economy grew in the three months through June. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/10/2020 | Chong Koh Ping, Xie Yu and Joanne Chiu |
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| Trump Dims Hopes for Next Stage of China Trade Accord | President Trump damped expectations for a promised phase-two trade pact with China on Friday, saying the relationship between the countries has been too badly damaged by the coronavirus pandemic.  When the U.S. and China signed their trade deal in January, the two sides described the pact as a first-phase agreement, to be followed by new negotiations toward a more expansive deal in a second and possibly third phase. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/11-12/2020 | Josh Zumbrun and Catherine Lucey |
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| American Warns Boeing On MAX Orders  *The airline tells plane maker to help with the financing or it won’t take the jets* | American Airlines Group Inc. has threatened to cancel some of its orders for Boeing Co.’s troubled 737 MAX jets, people familiar with the matter said, a sign of deepening financial stress in the aviation industry.  The carrier has struggled to secure financing for 17 jets it had expected Boeing to deliver this year, some of these people said. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/11-12/2020 | Andrew Tangel |
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| Equities Tally Modest Weekly Gains  *Financial stocks climb; European shares are up despite a selloff in Asian markets* | U.S. stocks climbed Friday, ending the week with gains, as investors brushed off worries about a fresh wave of coronavirus infections and its impact on the economic recovery.  The Dow Jones Industrial Average advanced 369.21 points, or 1.4%, to 26075.30.  The S&P 500 rose 32.99 points, or 1%, to 3185.04. the Nasdaq Composite climbed 69.69 points, or 0.7%, to 10617.44, a fresh record for the technology-heavy index.  All three indexes were positive for the second consecutive week, even as new coronavirus cases in the U.S. repeatedly hit records.  Financials were the S&P 500’s best performers Friday, rising 3.5% in a sign that risk-seeking investors were snapping up economically sensitive stocks. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/11-12/2020 | Avantika Chilkoti and Alexander Osipovich |
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| Virus Clouds Outlook for Earnings  *Many companies have pulled guidance, resulting in wide gap in analysts’ estimates* | More than 180 companies in the S&P 500 have pulled their earnings guidance in the wake of the economic crisis wrought by the coronavirus pandemic…  Economists generally agree the recently completed second quarter was likely the trough of the downturn, but the extent of the damage is still unclear.  The stock market has remained resilient, despite the hazy outlook. The S&P 500 has surged 42% from its March low thanks to high levels of stimulus from the Federal Reserve and Congress. Although the rally has slowed over the past month, the index is off just 1.4% in 2020.  Analysts say the guidance is necessary for investors to make knowledgeable decisions and sometimes to keep companies honest. It can also help curb volatility in stocks following the reports. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/13/2020 | Michael Wursthorn |
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| What’s News | ♦ A rally in stocks fizzled, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq losing 0.9% and 2.1%, respectively. The Dow eked out a gain of less than 0.1%. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/14/2020 |  |
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| Deficit Reaches $3 Trillion As Virus Costs Soar  *Share of GDP rises to a post-WWII record, with any new stimulus plan likely to widen gap* | As a share of gross domestic product, the 12-month deficit came to 14% last month, compared with 10.1% in February 2010, when the U.S. was still recovering from the last recession.  The Congressional Budget Office has projected the annual deficit could total $3.7 trillion in the fiscal year that ends Sept. 30. But the gap could widen even further if Congress and the White House agree this month on another round of emergency spending… | The Wall Street Journal | 07/14/2020 | Kate Davidson |
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| Blue Chips Rise 557 Points After Late-Day Rally | The Dow Jones Industrial Average raced higher late in the trading day, clinching a third straight session of gains and its biggest point and percentage advance of the month.  “Investors continue to focus on good news and dismiss bad news,” said Michael Farr, chief executive officer of Farr, Miller & Washington.  The Dow rose 556.79 points, or 2.1%, to 26642.59, its best day since June 29. The S&P 500 gained 42.30 points, or 1.3%, to 3197.52. The Nasdaq composite advanced 97.73 points, or 0.9% to 10488.58, trailing behind its peers. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/15/2020 | Anna Hirtenstein and Gunjan Banerji |
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| OPEC Forecasts 2021 Demand Failing to Offset Pandemic Fall | Even a record-breaking rise in oil demand next year won’t be enough to spur a recovery back to pre-coronavirus levels, according to the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries.  While annual demand for gasoline, diesel and other refined products was seen rising by a record amount, “efficiency gains, including teleworking and teleconferencing, may cap oil demand gains in 2021 to remain below pre-crisis levels of 2019,” OPEC said.  The market will continue to gradually stabilize in the second half of 2020, before rebounding next year largely due to improved economic momentum, the organization said. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/15/2020 | David Hodari |
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| What’s News | ♦ U.S. stocks rallied, with the Dow, S&P 500 and Nasdaq advancing 2.1%, 1.3% and 0.9%, respectively. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/15/2020 |  |
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| What’s News | ♦ U.S. consumer prices climbed sharply in June as states were broadening efforts to reopen. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/15/2020 |  |
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| Banks Prepare For Wave of Loan Defaults  *JP Morgan, Citigroup, Wells Fargo set aside total of $28 billion to cover pandemic losses* | The largest U.S. banks signaled that the worst of the coronavirus recession is yet to come, opting to stow away tens of billions of dollars to prepare for an expected wave of loan losses.  The provisions amount to a sharp increase from what they put away in the first three months of the year, reflecting a shift in their assumptions about the length and severity of the pandemic’s economic toll. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/15/2020 | Ben Eisen and David Benoit |
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| Stocks Rise on Vaccine’s Progress | The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose a fourth straight day, notching its longest win streak in more than a month, after investors got good news.  Signs of progress toward a coronavirus vaccine by Moderna propelled most corners of the stock market higher.  Those developments helped push the blue-chip index up 227.51 points, or 0.9%, to 3226.56, leaving it off 0.1%from where it started the year. The Nasdaq Composite advanced 61.91 points, or 0.6%, to 10550.49.  Promising developments on various coronavirus vaccines in development have acted as crucial catalysts for some of the stock market’s biggest days of gains, sometimes even helping to pull indexes out of a rut. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/16/2020 | Joe Wallace and Michael Wursthorn |
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| What’s News | ♦ China has become the first major economy to return to growth since the coronavirus started sweeping the world earlier this year, posting a 3.2% expansion for the second quarter from a year earlier. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/16/2020 |  |
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| What’s News | ♦ BofA said it set aside $5.12 billion in the second quarter to cover loan losses, but the lender struck an optimistic tone on the economy. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/17/2020 |  |
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| Rate for 30-Year Mortgage Falls to Lowest on Record | The average rate on a 30-year fixed mortgage fell to 2.98%, mortgage-finance giant Freddie Mac said Thursday, its lowest level in almost 50 years of record-keeping. It is the third consecutive week and the seventh time this year that rates on America’s most popular home loan have hit a fresh low.  The average rate on the 30-year mortgage stood at 3.72% at the beginning of the year and 3.81% a year ago, according to Freddie Mac. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/17/2020 | Orla McCaffrey |
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| The $52 Trillion Bubble: China Grapples With Epic Property Boom  *Real-estate surge eclipses the one in U.S. housing in the 2000s* | After a brief pause during coronavirus lockdowns in February, a Chinese property boom in some megacities that many thought was unsustainable has resumed its relentless upward climb, with prices rising higher and investors chasing deals despite millions of job losses and other economic problems. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/17/2020 | Stella Yifan Xie and Mike Bird |
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| Economic Concerns Drive Down Stocks | U.S. stocks fell while Chinese stocks suffered their biggest drop in more than five months on concerns about rising coronavirus infections and the global economy’s faltering recovery from the pandemic.  The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 135.39 points, or 0.05%, to 26734.71, snapping a four-session winning streak. The S&P 500 dropped 10.99 points, or 0.3%, to 3215.57. The Nasdaq Composite fell 76.66 points, or 0.7%, to 10473.83.  After surging in April and May, the stock market’s rally has slowed in recent weeks.  “It’s just a tug of war,” said Esty Dwek, a strategist as Natixis Investment Managers.  Unless the pandemic forces a renewed total lockdown, Ms. Dwek expects the markets and economy to keep moving forward. “we’re on our way to recovery,” she said. “It’s just not a straight line up.”  Across Asia, most major equity benchmarks ended the day down.  Data on China’s retail sector showed it is recovering more slowly than expected, with sales falling 1.8% in June from a year earlier. Economists had projected 0.3% growth. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/17/2020 | Caitlin Ostroff and Paul Vigna |
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| U.S. Is Stepping Up Pressure on China  *Rhetoric escalates and officials weigh new restrictions as relations fray further* | The Trump administration is intensifying U.S. pressure on China, piling on visa bans, sanctions and other restriction that are battering already unsettled ties between the world’s two largest economies.  Hawkish policies from both governments over trade, technology and global influence have pitched relations downward for the past two years. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/17/2020 | Andrew Restuccia and William Mauldin |
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| Beijing Aims to Build On Economic Upturn | China reported a robust rebound in the second quarter of the year, avoiding a recession and putting the world’s second-largest economy back on a growth trajectory even as other countries struggle with the impact of the pandemic.  On Thursday, China said its economy grew 3.2% in the three months ended June 30, compared with the year-earlier period. The figure topped economists’ forecasts…  Chinese exports in particular have been a bright spot… | The Wall Street Journal | 07/17/2020 | Jonathan Cheng |
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| Tumbling Real Yields Boost Riskier Assets | U.S. Treasury yields have fallen close to record lows when adjusted for expected inflation, providing an extra boost to riskier assets in response to both better economic data and the promise of continued monetary stimulus.  At the same time, the nominal 10-year yield has ticked down to 0.63% from 0.64%. that means the inflation-adjusted 10-year Treasury yield, a proxy for the so-called real yield, has slid from around minus 0.4% to minus 0.8% - a level not reached since late 2012, when the Fed was still responding to the 2008-09 financial crisis.  Taken together, the increase in inflation expectations and decline in real yields both echo and help explain the strong performance of stocks in recent months.  Despite Mr. Powell’s gloomy tone, investors were eventually comforted by his assurances that the central bank would maintain, and possibly even expand, its stimulus programs, investors and analysts said. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/18-19/2020 | Sam Goldfarb |
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| Virus Surge Shows Signs of Derailing Jobs Revival | The U.S. labor-market recovery is losing momentum as a surge in coronavirus cases triggers heightened employer uncertainty and consumer caution. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/18-19/2020 | Sarah Chaney and Kim Mackrael |
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| Businesses Are Gearing Up For Longer Road to a Rebound | Companies are turning furloughs into permanent layoffs, de-emphasizing their core businesses and downsizing production indefinitely.  Executives who were bracing for a monthslong disruption are now thinking in terms of years. Their job has changed from riding it out to reinventing.  There are some signs of strength in consumer spending. The Commerce Department on Thursday said U.S. retail sales – a measure of purchases at stores, at restaurants and online – increased 7.5% in June…  Still, some economists say the data obscure the reality on the ground, where consumers are increasingly fearful of the economic impact of a new surge of Covid-19 cases. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/20/2020 | Chip Cutter and Doug Cameron |
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| What’s News | ♦ The Nasdaq jumped 2.5% to a record as tech stocks rallied, while the S&P 500 added 0.8%. the Dow rose less than 0.1%. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/21/2020 |  |
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| What’s News | ♦ Republicans laid out their priorities for the next round of coronavirus aid, calling for legal protections for businesses and money to reopen schools but no funding for states and cities sought by Democrats, kicking off a sprint to pass legislation. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/21/2020 |  |
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| What’s News | ♦ EU leaders were closing in on a deal for a likely $2.06 trillion coronavirus spending package meant to right the bloc’s slumping economy. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/21/2020 |  |
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| Merkel’s Change of Heart Drove European Union Rescue Plan | With her prodding, European Union Leaders took a step on Tuesday they have shunned for years – agreeing to issue common debt on a large scale – to fund an attempt to lift member countries out of economic crisis brought on by the coronavirus.  Ms. Merkel’s Damascene conversion, unthinkable a few months ago, raises the prospects of a reversal of fortune for the EU.  The breakthrough came around dawn Monday after all-night talks, when Ms. Merkel extracted acquiescence from Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte, the recovery plan’s most vocal critic. Fearing an impasse that would be politically and economically catastrophic, he and other skeptics who had initially opposed handouts acceded to the €390 billion in grants with few restrictions. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/22/2020 | Bojan Pancevski and Laurence Norman |
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| Unemployment Claims Rise As Virus Surge Hits Recovery | Initial unemployment claims rose by a seasonally adjusted 109,000 to 1.4 million for the week ended July 18, the Labor Department said on Thursday, halting what had been a steady descent from a peak of 6.9 million in late March…  The increase followed a period where claims had settled around 1.3 million a week, well above the pre-pandemic record of 695,000 in 1982.  The data also show that unemployment rolls have shrunk in recent weeks. Taken together, claims and benefits totals suggest new layoffs are being offset by hiring and employers recalling workers… | The Wall Street Journal | 07/24/2020 | Eric Morath |
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| In Natural Gas, Firms and Bearish Bets Gain | There haven’t been many moneymakers in the energy sector this year and two of the few are completely at odds: Those who bet gas prices would fall have been rewarded. So have shareholders of natural-gas producers.  Natural-gas prices ended Thursday at $1,785 per million British thermal units – up 20% from June’s 25-year low but 20% lower than this time a year ago. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/24/2020 | Ryan Dezember |
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| Gold Jumps to Near-Record High | The price of gold neared an all-time high that has stood for almost nine years on Thursday, punctuating a furious rally driven by anxious investors seeking refuge from the coronavirus-induced economic slow-down.  The most actively traded gold futures, for delivery next month, ended the day up 1.3% at $1,800 a troy ounce…  Prices have risen nearly 25% this year, extending an advance that began early in 2019. Their intraday record is $1,923.70, also hit nearly nine years ago.  The coronavirus has sparked a global gold rush, with physical traders in London and New York trying to get their hands on more metal and individuals around the world ordering bars and coins.  The recent surge heralds new excitement for gold, which has been prized for thousands of years going back to ancient Sumer and Egypt and used to determine the value of money by various societies for nearly as long.  Gold has been a fixture in financial markets for decades because it was used to determine the value of the U.S. dollar until 1971, when President Nixon took the country off the gold standard.  Rising inflation could hurt the dollar’s purchasing power, boosting gold because it would then require more dollars to purchase bullion.  Traders say investors have also been pushed to precious metals because many other conventional assets like stocks and bonds are expensive. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/24/2020 | Amrith Ramkumar |
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| What’s News | ♦ U.S stocks fell on Friday. All three major indexes posted losses for the week as shares of some tech heavyweights faltered. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/25-26/2020 |  |
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| What’s News | ♦ The U.S. economy lagged in July and Europe’s bounced back, according to surveys of purchasing managers. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/25-26/2020 |  |
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| Tech Heavyweights Damp U.S. Stocks | Shares of technology heavyweights dragged the S&P 500 lower Friday and toward a  weekly loss, snapping a three-week winning streak.  The information technology sector – one of the market’s biggest winners this year – was the biggest laggard of the S&P 500’s 11 sectors for the week.  The S&P 500 lost 20.03 points, or 0.6%, to 3215.63. the Dow Jones Industrial Average shed 182.44 points, or 0.7%, to 26469.89. The tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite dropped 98.24 points, or 0.9% to 10363.18, finishing its second consecutive week of declines.  U.S. stocks have also been sensitive this week to cues on whether lawmakers will have a new stimulus bill hammered out before their summer break in August. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/25-26/2020 | Gunjan Banerji and Anna Isaac |
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| A Golden Rule From a Golden Fool  *Maybe calling gold ‘a pet rock’ was off the mark: The yellow metal has been white-hot this year. But those who rush to buy it could still end up in the red.* | Since I wrote that column five years ago, gold has returned an average of 10.5% annually – barely below the gains on U.S. stocks. And so far in 2020, it’s up 24% even as stocks are as flat for the year as…pet rocks.  Gold is attracting a lot of money in a hurry.  …gold has been regarded as a buffer against high inflation, protection against a falling dollar, or a universal currency that shines brightest when the news is darkest.  “The factors that drive gold prices tend to fluctuate,” says Suki Cooper, head of precious-metals research at Standard Chartered Bank in New York. “It is a fickle kind of asset.”  Gold shot up close to $1,900 in the summer of 2011, but the hyperinflation never materialized. In real, inflation adjusted terms, gold gained about 6% annually in both 2011 and 2012, then lost 38% from 2013 through 2015…  By late 2015 the gold price had sagged to $1,050.  That’s not a sure thing. “The main downside risk to gold is that interest rates may not remain low for a prolonged period,” says Ms. Cooper. A surprisingly swift or unexpectedly strong economic recovery could push interest rates back up, hurting gold. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/25-26/2020 | Jason Sweig |
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| Gold Surges to A Record  *The metal climbed 0.4% to $1,897.50 a troy ounce* | Gold prices rose to a new closing record for the first time since 2011, extending a summer surge fueled by nervous investors adding bullion to their portfolios as the coronavirus muddles the global economic outlook.  The coronavirus has ignited a global gold rush, with physical traders around the world trying to get their hands on more metal and individuals ordering bars and coins. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/25-26/2020 | Amrith Ramkumar and Joe Wallace |
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| Stocks During Recessions Offer Clues  *Performance through recent downturns could give hint where prices might go next* | A look at the performance of U.S. stocks through recent recessions holds some clues about where markets might go next… and also some warnings.  Yet when investors get their first look at U.S. gross domestic product for the second quarter Thursday, it probably won’t be pretty. The economy likely contracted by nearly 32%, according to economists surveyed by The Wall Street Journal. That would be the worst contraction on record.  In three of the past five recessions dating back to 1980, the stock market was higher before the recession ended.  “We have to keep in mind that the stock market is not the economy,” said Gregory Daco, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics. “The stock market can have long movements completely disconnected from any sense of economic reality.” | The Wall Street Journal | 07/27/2020 | Paul Vigna |
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| Broad Market Rally Brings Wary Investors Off Sidelines | Stocks, bonds and commodities are heading for their strongest simultaneous four-month rise on record, highlighting the breadth of the market recovery during the 2020 economic slowdown.  Through Thursday, the S&P 500 and S&P GSCI commodities index were each up more than 25% since the end of March…  Investors and analysts attribute the broad rise in financial markets to faith in government and central-bank stimulus programs, hopes for vaccine development and wagers that the coronavirus crisis will spell opportunity for several large but nimble, well-placed companies…  Many portfolio managers believe the gains are justifiable, given expectations that economic conditions will improve and the success of policy makers in unfreezing debt markets whose functioning is crucial to American corporations. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/27/2020 | Amrith Ramkumar |
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| Fed’s Outlook Grows Gloomier  *Officials stress need to curb the pandemic so economic recovery can be sustained* | Officials have warned this month in speeches and interviews that the economy faces a deeper downturn and more difficult recovery if the country doesn’t take more effective action to slow the spread of infection.  The Fed isn’t likely to roll out new stimulus measures this week but is debating how to provide more support to the economy once the economic outlook becomes clearer.  “Business leaders are getting worried. Consumers are getting worried,” Atlanta Fed President Raphael Bostic said July 7 in a discussion hosted by the Tennessee Business Roundtable. “there is a real sense that this might go on longer than we had hoped and we had expected and we had planned for.”  One risk for the Fed is that markets and the public expect it will fix problems its tools aren’t suited for, said former Fed governor Randall Kroszner. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/28/2020 | Nick Timiraos |
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| Gold Prices Surge to Intraday Peak | Gold prices zoomed to a record, as a weakening dollar injected new momentum into a rally driven by uncertainty about the world economy.  Futures contracts for delivering gold in August shot up 1.8% to $1,931 a troy ounce…  The gloomy outlook for the world economy, a decline in interest rates, tensions between the U.S. and China, and the dollar’s depreciation fueled the surge as investors bought assets they perceive to be havens.  Gold prices have gained nearly 9% over the past month and about 27% this year…  The price of silver, seen as a store of value by investors as well as having widespread industrial uses, rose even more sharply than gold Monday. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/28/2020 | Joe Wallace |
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| Dollar’s Fall Nears Worst in A Decade | Investors have sold the dollar and bought currencies of countries with lower infection levels in recent weeks. That has erased 3.8% of the currency’s value in July, putting it on track for its worst one-month performance in over nine years.  Investors are betting that the Federal Reserve will offer a gloomier outlook for the economy following a two-day meeting that end Wednesday. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/28/2020 | Caitlin Ostroff |
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| Technology Stocks Power Broader Market | Stocks rose as investors bet that the largest technology firms will power ahead despite an uncertain economy.  The broad stock market index rose 23.78 points, or 0.7%, to 3239.41. The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 114.88 points, or 0.4%, to 26584.77. The technology-focused Nasdaq Composite index jumped 173.09 points, or 1.7%, to 10536.27.  The big technology companies are due to report quarterly earnings this week.  Real yields, which reflect the value of bond yields after adjusting for inflation expectations, have plunged around the world as central banks slashed interest rates and unleashed stimulus to address the economic hit from the coronavirus pandemic.  The real yield on U.S. Treasurys has dropped to 2012 levels, which is driving a selloff in the dollar, according to Derek Halpenny, head of research at MUFG Bank.  Meanwhile, the latest economic data showed orders for durable goods jumped by 7.3% in June from a month earlier, the second consecutive monthly gain. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/28/2020 | Anna Isaac and Ben Eisen |
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| Earnings Shortall Hurts Stocks | Stocks fell after some large companies reported earnings that revealed an even larger hit from the coronavirus pandemic than investors had been expecting.  The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 205.49 points, or 0.8%, to 26379.28. The S&P 500 lost 20.97 points, or 0.6%, to 3218.44, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite declined 134.18 points, or 1.3%, to 10402.09.  Stocks have rebounded from their pandemic-crisis lows, supported by aggressive monetary policies and economic stimulus. Now, investors must balance dismal headline earnings with more optimistic projections for coming quarters.  Investors are also watching for progress on a coronavirus relief bill.  Gold prices rose 0.7% to a record close of $1,944.70 a troy ounce.  Gold pays no income, so becomes more attractive to investors when yields on other assets decline.  The central bank announced Tuesday it was extending all of its emergency lending programs by three months so they would run through the end of the year.  The yield on the benchmark 10-year U.S. Treasury note declined to 0.581% from 0.609% Monday. Bond yields fall as prices rise. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/29/2020 | Sam Goldfarb and Caitlin Ostroff |
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| What’s News | ♦ The Fed extended by three months to Dec. 31 all its emergency lending programs to support the economy during the pandemic. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/29/2019 |  |
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| Stocks Jump as Fed Vows Support | Stocks climbed as Federal Reserve officials reiterated their support for an economy battered by the coronavirus pandemic.  The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 160.29 points, or 0.6%, to 26539.57. The S&P 500 ticked up 40 points, or 1.2%, to 3258.44, buoyed by gains among all 11 sectors in the index. The Tech-heavy Nasdaq Composite added 140.85 points, or 1.4%, to 10542.94.  The dollar slipped with the WSJ Dollar Index, which tracks the U.S. currency against those of major trading partners, falling 0.4%.  In bond markets, the yield on 10-year U.S. Treasury notes slipped to 00.578% from 0.581% on Tuesday.  The pandemic has battered corporate earnings around the world, though second-quarter profits at major U.S. companies have so far beaten the gloomy expectations of analysts. Just over 40% of companies in the S&P 500 had reported through Wednesday, posting a 41% decline in earnings from a year earlier, according to FactSet. Of those, 79% topped forecasts. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/30/2020 | Dawn Lim and Joe Wallace |
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| Shell Posts Loss of $18.4 Billion | The Pandemic has crushed demand for oil, hitting prices hard. When around two-thirds of the world’s population was in lockdown in early April, global oil demand fell by a third, according to the International Energy Agency.  Benchmark Brent oil prices averaged $29.60 a barrel between April and June, down 57% from the comparable year-earlier period. Brent traded at $43.78 a barrel Thursday.  Oil companies have taken swift action to shore up their finances since coronavirus struck, including cutting costs and reducing staff. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/31/2020 | Sarah McFarlane |
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| Germany’s Economy Is Hit Hard  *Second quarter was worst on record, but there are signs of a V-shaped recovery* | Germany suffered a record economic contraction in the second quarter as measures to slow the pandemic’s spread closed businesses and kept consumers at home, but Europe’s power-house is nonetheless expected to shrink by less and recover faster than other major economies.  Germany’s gross domestic product fell 10.1% compared with the previous quarter…  The economy shrank by 34.7% on an annual basis, roughly matching the 32.9% contraction in the U.S….  Weakness in Germany is ominous for the rest of Europe…  German manufacturers are tightly integrated in the continent. Other European economies including France and Italy are expected tot post even deeper contractions when they report second-quarter economic data Friday. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/31/2020 | Tom Fairless |
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| U.S. Economy Sees Record Downturn  *GDP drop, rise in new weekly jobless claims suggest pace of recovery is slowing* | The economy contracted at a record rate last quarter and July setbacks for the jobs market added to signs of a slowing recovery as the country faces a summer surge in coronavirus infections.  The Commerce Department said U.S. gross domestic product – the value of all goods and services produced across the economy – fell at a seasonally and inflation adjusted 32.9% annual rate in the second quarter, or a 9.5% drop compared with the prior quarter. Thursday’s figures were the steepest declines in more than 70 years of record-keeping.  Meanwhile, the Labor Department’s latest figures on unemployment benefits suggested the jobs market was faltering.  “We’re expecting a longer and slower climb from the bottom unfortunately, and here the virus will dictate the terms,” said Beth Ann Bovino, U.S. chief economist at S&P Global Ratings. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/31/2020 | Harriet Torry |
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| Amazon Leads Its Tech Peers In Gains | Amazon.com Inc. delivered soaring quarterly sales and profit, leading a pack of tech giants that reported thriving business during the throes of the coronavirus pandemic and affirming the industry’s central place in business and society as scrutiny of its clout grows.  The Seattle e-commerce pioneer now employs more than 1 million workers, the second-highest in the U.S., behind Walmart Inc. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/31/2020 | Sebastian Herrera |
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| Economic Weakness Sinks Stocks | Stocks fell on one of the busiest days of the corporate earnings season, while new data laid bare the extent of the economic damage wrought by the coronavirus pandemic.  Major indexes opened sharply lower, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell nearly 550 points before paring its losses to close down 225.92 points, or 0.9%, to 26313.65.  Investors largely expected poor economic figures, and the extent of the second quarter’s decline in gross domestic product – nearly 33% on an annualized basis – was slightly smaller than economists’ projections.  Investors appeared to swap stocks for bonds, pushing Treasury prices higher. That sent the yield on benchmark 10-year bonds down to 0.54%, the lowest level since March. | The Wall Street Journal | 07/31/2020 | Michael Wursthorn and Anna Hirtenstein |
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| 5 Great REITs to Buy Now | It hasn’t been a good year for landlords. Publicly traded real estate investment trusts – which own income-producing real estate – have been clobbered in 2020, with the category overall losing 13.6%, compared with a 5.0% loss for the S&P 500 index.  For REIT’s that owned apartment buildings, shopping malls, hotels or office buildings, collecting rent became a talk task, and investors took notice. | Kiplinger’s Personal Finance | 08/2020 | Ryan Ermey |

“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did.” -Mark Twain

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