



Will Turbulent Markets Imperil Your Retirement?



They likely will not in and of themselves. But how you react to them may. Market turbulence has been a fact of life in all markets and in all time periods. Markets recover from downturns and the average returns over time have been remarkably consistent. And, if history remains a valid guide, this time will be no different.

For a white paper on that subject, visit our homepage www.fragassoadvisors.com and click on "Fragasso Financial Advisors Commentary – What to Make of the Current Market?" or call Joy Holden at 412-227-3234 or 1-800-900-4492 and ask for a copy. You will learn there, with historic data to support the contention, that, while past performance is not a guarantee of future results, markets have always historically recovered and have provided returns in keeping with how the portfolio is structured.

So how can your actions disrupt your retirement financial security?

First, you can make too-frequent



BOB FRAGASSO, CFP®
President

changes to your portfolio spurred by market fears or chasing trends. This may create unnecessary transaction expense but, even more importantly, may cost even more in opportunity lost through impatience or fear. It is similar to tearing up your garden because the flowers haven't grown fast enough. We often hear the question, "Why don't I just sit out the market for awhile until it settles down and then I'll get back in on the way back up?" We wish that could be done. Unfortunately, there are no timing services or newsletters that have been successful at doing that. Markets do not move linearly and, thus, it is not possible to correctly predict their up and down movements. The white paper referenced above contains a self-test.

Try it for yourself. The better course is to construct your portfolio properly in keeping with your return needs, risk tolerance and time frames until goal attainment. Then stay with that portfolio for the returns the markets are positioned to provide.

Second, people sometimes invest too cautiously thinking that they are safely positioned. But a low return, while seemingly safe, can derail your goals. Consider a low, single-digit rate of return that is deteriorated by taxes, now or later, and inflation, which is historically relentless, that results in a true, negative return over time. That is why retired people sometimes find themselves spending down principal to live. In this case, it is not because they invested too aggressively, but because they invested too cautiously thinking they were protecting capital when they were actually risking it through a return that is inadequate for their needs.

Third, an improperly structured portfolio

Will Turbulent Markets

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may provide too much risk that will cause the investor to fall prey to the gremlins of fear in downturns when the portfolio's value drops more than the investor is psychologically equipped to handle. Some investment advisors have hired psychologists or use psychological testing tools to determine their clients' risk tolerance levels. We believe that talking extensively with our clients about their goals, family needs, concerns and time frames accomplishes the same in a more personalized way. Also, and very importantly, we translate that understanding of goals, needs, time and concerns into an appropriate asset allocation for each client's portfolio. We do strive to "make each client's success personal" as our ads state.

So please read on through this edition of our newsletter to learn more about the particulars of retirement financial planning and investment management. And call your financial advisor to discuss any questions that these articles create and to help address your individual needs and life goals. If you are not a current client, an advisor will be immediately assigned to talk with you. We believe it is that contemplative and personalized process that makes our service unique and that explains our very high client retention through all market cycles. We want to help you, so call us now.

Saving for Your Retirement

Your contact
for this article:



MICHAEL FERTIG
Managing Director
Chief Marketing Officer

One of the most common goals shared by all people in all parts of the world is the idea of a secure retirement. Regardless of how far, or near, retirement may be for you, it is important that we consider the following:

Major considerations

How much will you need in retirement?

When do you plan to retire? What kind of lifestyle do you desire? How much do you have right now that you can count on for your retirement? What about Social Security; do you know what kind of benefits you can expect? These are all factors you will need to consider when you determine how much you need.

Know how much you have

Take an honest look at your present net worth. If you're like most people, you've got a long way to go before you can afford to retire. Knowing how much you currently have earmarked for retirement will assist you in saving for your retirement.

Implement a savings plan

Take an honest look at your current spending. Just as in planning for other financial goals, you need to implement a savings plan. Think about establishing a long-term systematic

savings plan to put aside funds for retirement. If you haven't already done so, consider the benefits of establishing and sticking to a spending plan.

Decide where to put your dollars

You've freed up some cash, and you want to put it where it will do the most good. You need to consider some options:

- Take advantage of employer-sponsored retirement plans
- Utilize IRAs
- Evaluate other investment alternatives

Take full advantage of employer-sponsored retirement plans

Taking advantage of retirement plans in general

Does your employer offer a retirement plan? If so, be sure that you're taking full advantage of it. If your employer has a defined benefit plan (a traditional pension plan, with pension benefits typically based on the number

of years you work and your level of compensation), make yourself familiar with the details of the plan. Although most aspects of such a plan are beyond your control (e.g., you can't make contributions), you should know how your plan works. How long do you have to work before you have rights under the plan (the plan's vesting schedule)? When are you entitled to a full pension? This information is vital if you're considering leaving your employment.

If your employer offers a defined contribution plan (such as a 401(k) plan, to which contributions can be made by employer and/or employee), much depends upon the specific type of plan. The one feature that these plans have in common is that the contributed funds grow tax deferred. This is significant, because investments in these plans can grow more rapidly than identical investments that don't grow tax deferred. Depending upon the type of plan that you have, you may be able to make voluntary contributions.

Maximize employer-matching contributions

Some retirement savings plans such as 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans (tax-sheltered annuity plans for employees of public schools and certain tax-exempt organizations), and thrift savings plans (plans to which you generally make after-tax contributions) allow employers to match contributions that you make up to a specified level. Since this is basically free money (once you're vested in

those employer dollars), consider taking advantage of it. Contribute enough to the plan so that your employer contributes the maximum matching amount. For more information, refer to the specific plan in which you participate.

Self-employed individuals should consider establishing their own retirement plans

If you're self-employed, seriously consider establishing a retirement plan for yourself. For example, a simplified employee pension (SEP) plan is relatively easy to implement (it's really not much more than a big IRA), and it allows you to save significant funds for retirement or you might consider an individual 401(k) plan. If you're a business owner with employees, you should think about setting up an employer-sponsored retirement plan. There are a variety of retirement plans that are appropriate for sole proprietors and partnerships, corporations, and tax-exempt organizations.

If you do contract work for a tax-exempt organization or a state or local government

If you perform services as an independent contractor for a state or local government or a tax-exempt organization that sponsors a Section 457 plan (a specific type of deferred compensation plan), you may be able to participate in that plan. If you can participate, you can defer a significant portion of your compensation to the plan.

Individual retirement accounts (IRAs)

Contribute to an IRA each year

IRAs offer significant tax incentives to encourage you to save money for retirement. You can contribute up to \$5,000 to your IRA in 2008 (\$6,000 if you're age 50 or older), as long as you have at least that amount in compensation for the year. (For 2007 you can contribute up to \$4,000, \$5,000 if age 50 or older). The types of IRAs that you can use (and the corresponding tax advantages) depend upon your income level, filing status, and whether or not you're covered by an employer-sponsored retirement plan.

If your spouse does not have compensation, contribute to an IRA for your spouse

You may be able to set up and contribute to an IRA for your spouse, even if he or she received little or no compensation for the year. To contribute to a spousal IRA, you must meet the following four conditions:

1. You must be married at the end of the tax year
2. You must file a joint federal tax return for the tax year
3. You must have taxable compensation for the year
4. Your spouse's taxable compensation for the year must be less than yours

Saving for Your Retirement

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Choosing investments within your retirement plan

It's important to understand that the earnings potential offered by a retirement plan (e.g., 401(k) or IRA) is not generated by the plan per se, but by the investments held by the plan (e.g., stocks, bonds, mutual funds). Choosing the right mix of investments within your plan is just as important as choosing the right plan itself. When making your choices, many factors should be considered including your time horizon, your tolerance for risk, and the tax implications. For example, it may not make sense to hold tax-exempt securities within a plan that is tax deferred.

The Jobs and Growth Tax Relief Reconciliation Act of 2003 (2003 Tax Act) complicates matters further. The 2003 Tax Act reduces capital gains tax rates and the tax rates on qualifying dividends. However, investments held in retirement plans will not benefit from these lower tax rates. Thus, holding investments that generate income subject to these lower rates in a tax-deferred plan is now less appealing. This does not mean that such investments are inappropriate for retirement plans, only that you should consider carefully your overall investment portfolio in deciding what investments to hold within, and outside of, a retirement plan.

Evaluate nonqualified investment programs

Annuities and retirement

Annuities, which are funded with after-tax dollars, grow tax deferred. When you retire, if you're over age 59½, you may make withdrawals or begin taking payments that will continue as long as you live. The tax-deferred earnings portion of these withdrawals or payments will then be taxed as ordinary income. Keep in mind that, as with IRAs, if you withdraw any money from an annuity before you're 59½, you'll generally have to pay an additional 10 percent penalty tax.)

Life insurance and retirement

Some life insurance has certain tax advantages, such as the tax-deferred growth of the cash value of permanent life insurance. This type of life insurance can be a supplementary source of retirement income, in addition to providing financial protection to your beneficiaries. Please note, however, that withdrawals from the cash value will reduce the amount of the death benefit.

Review other investments

You should consider carefully your current investment portfolio. Are you putting your money in appropriate investments?

Other considerations

Does your employer offer or are you in a position to take advantage of any of the following?

- Nonqualified deferred compensation plans
- Stock plans
- Other employee benefits

Choose the right strategy to save for your retirement

You know that you should be taking advantage of employer-sponsored retirement plans, making yearly contributions to IRAs, and considering all of your other options, but how do you decide which to do first? If you have the cash, you should probably be doing all three. If not, conventional wisdom says you should always consider taking advantage of any employer-matching contributions within an employer-sponsored retirement plan. Contribute at least enough to capture the full match offered by your employer.

Beyond that level of savings, you have to think about whether it's better to make additional voluntary contributions to your employer-sponsored retirement plan or put those dollars into an IRA or elsewhere. Annuities and life insurance, for example, play an important role in many peoples' retirement planning.

Certainly, if you have not reached the pretax contribution limit at work, funneling more dollars into your 401(k) or other employer-sponsored plan probably makes the most sense. The ability to make systematic contributions straight from your paycheck is a huge practical plus for most individuals, and the power of tax-deferred savings can be great. Although the traditional IRA also provides tax-deferred growth, the ability to deduct contributions is phased out for high- and middle-income taxpayers also participating in

qualified retirement plans. If you earn too much to make a deductible IRA contribution, you should probably fully fund your employer-sponsored retirement plan before making nondeductible contributions to a traditional IRA.

The Roth IRA and Roth 401(k) /403(b) offer yet more options. With these arrangements, you invest after-tax dollars, but you don't pay income tax on the earnings for qualified withdrawals. Tax-free earnings are

even better than tax-deferred earnings because tax-deferred earnings will eventually be taxed when you start taking distributions. In deciding between a Roth IRA and a traditional IRA or other alternative, or between pre-tax and Roth 401(k)/403(b) contributions, you should consult a financial professional who can make some planning assumptions and crunch the numbers to see what makes the most sense.

The opinions voiced in this material

are for general information only and are not intended to provide specific advice or recommendations for any individual. To determine which investment(s) may be appropriate for you, consult your financial advisor prior to investing. All performance referenced is historical and is no guarantee of future results. All indices are unmanaged and cannot be invested into directly.

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CONTACT Pittsburgh offers immediate emotional support and crisis intervention services through its volunteer hotline, outreach and educational programs.

Taking Advantage of Employer-Sponsored Retirement Plans

Employer-sponsored qualified retirement plans such as 401(k)s are some of the most powerful retirement savings tools available. If your employer offers such a plan and you're not participating in it, you should be. Once you're participating in a plan, try to take full advantage of it.

Understand your employer-sponsored plan

Before you can take advantage of your employer's plan, you need to understand how these plans work. Read everything you can about the plan and talk to your employer's benefits officer. You can also talk to a financial planner, a tax advisor, and other professionals. Recognize the key features that many employer-sponsored plans share:

- Your employer automatically deducts your contributions from your paycheck. You may never even miss the money--out of sight, out of mind. You decide what portion of your salary to contribute, up to the legal limit. And you can usually change your contribution amount on certain dates during the year.
- With 401(k), 403(b), 457(b), SARSEPs, and SIMPLE plans, you contribute to the plan on a

pretax basis. Your contributions come off the top of your salary before your employer withholds income taxes.

- Your 401(k) or 403(b) plan may let you make after-tax Roth contributions--there's no up-front tax benefit but qualified distributions are entirely tax free.
- Your employer may match all or part of your contribution up to a certain level. You typically become vested in these employer dollars through years of service with the company.
- Your funds grow tax deferred in the plan. You don't pay taxes on investment earnings until you withdraw your money from the plan.
- You'll pay income taxes and possibly an early withdrawal penalty if you withdraw your money from the plan.
- You may be able to borrow a portion of your vested balance (up to \$50,000) at a reasonable interest rate.
- Your creditors cannot reach your plan funds to satisfy your debts.

Contribute as much as possible

The more you can save for retirement, the better your chances of retiring comfortably. If you can,

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Vice President, Retirement Plan Specialist

max out your contribution up to the legal limit. If you need to free up money to do that, try to cut certain expenses.

Why put your retirement dollars in your employer's plan instead of somewhere else? One reason is that your pretax contributions to your employer's plan lower your taxable income for the year. This means you save money in taxes when you contribute to the plan--a big advantage if you're in a high tax bracket. For example, if you earn \$100,000 a year and contribute \$10,000 to a 401(k) plan, you'll pay income taxes on \$90,000 instead of \$100,000. (Roth contributions don't lower your current taxable income but qualified distributions of your contributions and earnings--that is, distributions made after you satisfy a five-year holding period and reach age 59½, become disabled, or die--are tax free.)

Another reason is the power of tax-deferred growth. Your investment earnings compound year after year and aren't taxable as long as they remain in the plan. Over the long term, this gives you the opportunity

to build an impressive sum in your employer's plan. You should end up with a much larger balance than somebody who invests the same amount in taxable investments at the same rate of return.

For example, you participate in your employer's tax-deferred plan (Account A). You also have a taxable investment account (Account B). Each account earns 8 percent per year. You're in the 28 percent tax bracket and contribute \$10,000 to each account at the end of every year. You pay the yearly income taxes on Account B's earnings using funds from that same account. At the end of 30 years, Account A is worth \$1,132,832, and \$815,649 after taxes, while Account B is worth only \$757,970. (Note: This example is for illustrative purposes only and does not represent a specific investment.)

Capture the full employer match

If you can't max out your 401(k) or other plan, you should at least try to contribute up to the limit your employer will match. Employer contributions are basically free money once you're vested in them (check with your employer to find out when vesting happens). By capturing the full benefit of your employer's match, you'll be surprised how much faster your balance grows. If you don't take advantage of your employer's generosity, you could be passing up a significant return on your money. For example, you earn \$30,000 a year and work for an employer that

has a matching 401(k) plan. The match is 50 cents on the dollar up to 6 percent of your salary. Each year, you contribute 6 percent of your salary (\$1,800) to the plan and receive a matching contribution of \$900 from your employer.

Evaluate your investment choices carefully

Most employer-sponsored plans give you a selection of mutual funds or other investments to choose from. Make your choices carefully. The right investment mix for your employer's plan is important when planning for retirement. That's because over the long term, varying rates of return can make a big difference in the size of your balance.

Research the investments available to you. How have they performed over the long term? Have they held their own during down markets? How much risk will they expose you to? Which ones are best suited for long-term goals like retirement? You may also want to get advice from a financial professional (either your own, or one provided through your plan). He or she can help you pick the right investments based on your personal goals, your attitude toward risk, how long you have until retirement, and other factors. Your financial professional can also help you coordinate your plan investments with your overall investment portfolio.

Finally, you may be able to change your investment allocations or move

money between the plan's investments on specific dates during the year (e.g., at the start of every month or every quarter).

Know your options when you leave your employer

When you leave your job, your vested balance in your former employer's retirement plan is yours to keep. You have several options at that point, including:

- Taking a lump-sum distribution. This is often a bad idea, because you'll pay income taxes and possibly a penalty on the amount you withdraw. Plus, you're giving up continued tax-deferred growth.
- Leaving your funds in the old plan, growing tax deferred (your old plan may not permit this if your balance is less than \$5,000). This may be a good idea if you're happy with the plan's investments or you need time to decide what to do with your money.
- Rolling your funds over to an IRA or a new employer's plan if the plan accepts rollovers. This is often a smart move because there will be no income taxes or penalties if you do the rollover properly (your old plan will withhold 20 percent for income taxes if you receive the funds before rolling them over). Plus, your funds will keep growing tax deferred in the IRA or new plan.

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Coordinating Long-Term Care Insurance with Government Benefits

If you're a senior, the future may present more of a concern than it once did--you may wonder what you'll do if your health deteriorates. If you must enter a nursing home, for example, how will you pay for it? Fortunately, you may have several options. One such option is long-term care insurance (LTCI). Government-regulated programs can also help. These include Medicare, Medigap, and Medicaid.

If you lack sufficient resources to pay for long-term care on your own, should you buy LTCI, rely only on government programs, or use an LTCI policy to supplement government benefits? Before you can answer this question, you'll need to know what types of long-term care are covered under each program. Figuring out where one program leaves off and another begins can be a challenge, so here's an overview.

The three types of long-term care

There are basically three types of long-term care: skilled care, intermediate care, and custodial care. You need to understand how these types of care are defined, and the extent to which you can obtain coverage for each of them.

What is skilled care?

Skilled care is continuous round-the-clock care required to treat a medical condition. It is ordered by a doctor and usually delivered by a skilled medical worker (e.g., a registered nurse or professional therapist). A treatment plan is established and supervised by a doctor.

Medicare's coverage of skilled care

Medicare is a federal health insurance program for people age 65 and older and certain others. It provides 100 percent coverage for the first 20 days in each benefit period (year) that you're in a skilled care facility--as long as certain conditions are met:

- Before moving into a skilled care facility, you must have spent at least 3 consecutive days in the hospital for the same condition
- This hospital stay must be within 30 days of the time you enter the skilled care facility, and
- Skilled care must be provided in a certified facility

You are required to pay a daily co-payment (\$128 per day in 2008) for the 21st through 100th day in a skilled care facility, but Medicare covers any expenses beyond this amount.

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GREGG DAILY
Vice President

Medicare provides no coverage beyond the 100th day.

Medigap's coverage of skilled care

Medigap is supplemental health insurance sold by private insurance companies (under federal guidelines) to fill in some of the gaps in Medicare's coverage. Most Medigap plans cover your daily Medicare co-payment for the 21st to 100th day of skilled care.

Long-term care insurance's (LTCI's) coverage of skilled care

LTCI pays a selected dollar amount per day for a specified period for certain forms of care in nursing homes and other settings. You'll need LTCI if you want coverage beyond the 100th day of care in a skilled care facility. Because many people who enter such facilities stay for several years, LTCI can provide valuable financial protection.

What is intermediate care?

Intermediate care is care needed on only an occasional basis (daily or a few times a week), and is less specialized than skilled care. It is provided by

trained medical workers under the supervision of a doctor.

Medicare and intermediate care

Medicare may cover certain types of intermediate care, but only under specific conditions. For example, it covers skilled nursing care, physical therapy, and speech therapy services provided in your home, but only if you are confined to your home and a doctor orders the services. Intermediate care in a nursing home is typically not covered by Medicare.

Medigap and intermediate care

Most Medigap policies provide an additional \$40 per at-home visit for intermediate care, but only if a doctor orders the services as a follow-up to an injury or illness. Intermediate care received in a nursing home is typically not covered by Medigap.

LTCI and intermediate care

Most LTCI policies provide coverage for intermediate care services provided in the home or in a facility. (Home health care and care in a facility can be purchased separately or together.) If you have the coverage for either home or facility care, LTCI will cover all three levels of care. In addition, many LTCI policies cover care received in continuing care retirement communities, assisted-living centers, and adult day-care centers.

What is custodial care?

Custodial care is provided to assist in performing the activities of daily living (e.g., bathing, eating, and dressing). It does not require a doctor's orders and can be performed by someone without professional medical skills. This type of care can be provided at home or in a facility.

Medicare and Medigap don't cover custodial care

Medicare provides no coverage for custodial care, because these services are generally nonmedical in nature. Medigap also provides no coverage for custodial care.

LTCI does cover custodial care

If you are concerned about coverage for custodial care, an LTCI policy may be appropriate. Along with coverage for personal care, many policies may also include coverage for light housekeeping, meal preparation, and laundry services, among other things. If you have the coverage for either home or facility care, it will cover all three levels of care. When you're shopping for an LTCI policy, keep in mind that most long-term care is custodial in nature.

Using Medicaid to pay for your long-term care expenses

Medicaid is a joint federal-state program that provides medical assistance to low-income individuals who are aged, disabled, or blind. To qualify for Medicaid's long-term care benefits, you must be financially and

medically eligible. Financial eligibility is based on the amount of your income and the value of your assets. In most states, Medicaid will pay for all three levels of care if you meet the same general medical requirements that would be present in an LTCI policy.

Unfortunately, meeting Medicaid's financial requirements is difficult. In fact, many people are forced to exhaust their life savings to qualify for Medicaid. Others will not meet the requirements for Medicaid and will be unable to rely on the government to care for them. A comprehensive LTCI policy can help pay for long-term care costs and preserve family assets. If you haven't already discussed this important aspect of your future financial security with us, please call now. We would be happy to help you reach a sound decision.

Note: The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 gave all states the option of enacting long-term care partnership programs that combine private LTCI with Medicaid coverage. Partnership programs enable individuals to pay for long-term care and preserve some of their wealth. Although state programs vary, individuals who purchase partnership-approved LTCI policies, then exhaust policy benefits on long-term care services, will generally qualify for Medicaid without having to first spend down all or part of their assets (assuming they meet income and other eligibility requirements).

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Profiles in Progress: Client Stories TOPS Staffing

There are lots of widely held beliefs about business and Mary Cepicka Dvorsky has proved many of them to be wrong! Mary has demonstrated that a woman can become a successful entrepreneur in a field where she previously had little experience, in a geographic area where the economy and population counts were contracting, and in the face of stiff competition from large, national companies. Together with her grown children, Susan Cepicka, Lee Ann Johnston and David Cepicka, she has built the area's largest temporary staffing company with over \$20 million in annual revenues, 32 employees and 500 contract staffers placed with her company's clients.

But breaking molds was not easy. Mary came out of a traditional homemaker's role without business experience or even a business degree. With Lee Ann born in 1965, David in 1968 and Susie in 1970, Mary was fully challenged in her roles as wife and mother. By 1983, she was ready to return to the work force. She dipped her toe into the water by taking a temporary staffing position with the Kelly Services temporaries staffing agency. Within two weeks she was made a permanent staffer and within 12 months was managing the Monroeville office. By 1985, she was

given the additional responsibility of creating and managing Kelly's Greensburg office. Mary thrived, was successful and valued by Kelly Services.

In October of 1987, the local Kelly franchise was taken over by its

of our firm. She opened a second office in Wexford in 1991. A third office was opened in New Stanton in 1993 to serve the needs of the Sony plant that opened there that year.

A great success story thus far. Here it becomes really interesting, as the large national companies began to invade our geographic area competing to place clerical and light industrial staffers with local companies. Commensurately the cost of workers' compensation insurance premiums began to sky-rocket because of an increasing



Susan Cepicka, Lee Ann Johnston, David Cepicka and Mary Cepicka Dvorsky

number of plaintiffs' suits across Pennsylvania. It was at this time in 1991 that Lee Ann joined the company followed by Susie in 1993 and David in 1994. Together the management team decided to add new staffing disciplines to counter the competition and to come out from under the crushing burden of workman's comp premiums for light industrial workers. They began to staff for finance, information technology and engineering/designing that also paid more per hour for each of the workers placed. This seems so

corporate entity at the death of the local franchise owner. This propelled Mary to begin TOPS Staffing with two employees. That was quite a risk for someone who only four years before had not even thought of the staffing business. But initiative, hard work, and smart decisions allowed Mary to succeed in this new enterprise. TOPS began placing clerical and light industrial workers with local companies, for that was the extent of the staffing industry then. TOPS began with a Penn Hills office and this is when we first met Mary as a client

natural now, but was ground-breaking in the early 1990s.

TOPS has since established these specialized disciplines into separate companies. AllTek was created in 2002 to house the engineering, designing and manufacturing position staffing. e-Staff was created in 2005 for Internet development and systems staffing and Account Staff established in 2005 for accounting and financial analysis. And finally, Sterling Office Professionals came into being in 2006 for human resource department staffing and higher end administrative workers. Mary, Lee Ann, Susie and David created the template for today's staffing firms with their break out thinking and action, and made a very successful company in the process that is still housed under the TOPS Staffing corporate umbrella.

Mary credits the problems encountered along the way, higher cost insurance coverage and intense national competition, for creating the solutions. She is correct but overly modest. It took courage and creative thinking to make those solutions a reality. The management team was

not deterred from acting by economic downturns or a shrinking corporate base locally. They forged ahead with their vision and TOPS is making a lot more money now, according to Mary, than they ever did in the old way of doing business. They are building a new 12,000 square foot office building as their current 7,500 square foot building is inadequate to contain their growth. TOPS has been recognized as the 9th largest staffing company in the country and designated the fastest growing staffing company in the U.S. for the period 2003 – 2008.

Mary states that she has no regrets and that it has been a fun ride that is no where near over as the management team has its eyes on continued development of the business. We began working with Mary in 1987 shortly after she began her company. She needed a financial advisor to handle the profits that were already coming to her from the business. She was referred to us by a respected business owner and Mary said she made the choice to work with us based on our reputation and the trust that was quickly established. In return, we are grateful for the

confidence that Mary, Susie, David and Lee Ann have placed in us and for their friendship. We wish them continued success and await the next chapter in the TOPS story.

New Face: Bryan Hoover



Bryan Hoover joined the firm as an intern in May, 2007 while pursuing his Bachelors Degree from Penn State University. Earlier

this year Bryan passed his Series 7 and Series 66 certification examinations. He is currently studying for his insurance certification. In August Bryan became our newest full-time employee working as a Client Account Specialist.

In his off hours Bryan enjoys playing the guitar and exercising. He also enjoys traveling and recent trips have taken him to Florida, Atlantic City and Canada.

Bryan states that he is very happy working for the firm and we are pleased to welcome him into the Fragasso Financial family.



Hundred Acres Manor is Pittsburgh's premier haunted-house attraction. Located in South Park (Allegheny County) it is the longest single haunted-house experience in Western Pennsylvania. Our 45-minute tour of terror and mayhem will leave you shivering with fright. Come and see for yourself!

Managed by a group of dedicated volunteers that want to make a difference in our community, Hundred Acres Manor is a Halloween tradition in its 5th year.

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TIME: 7:00 p.m. - 11:30 p.m. (Friday and Saturday),
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www.homelessfund.org

Fragasso Continues to be Recognized as a Top U.S. Independent Financial Advisor

- #17 by *Registered Rep Magazine's* Top 100 list
- #33 by *Barron's Magazine*
- Top 5 U.S. Investment Team by *Research Magazine*

Fragasso Financial Advisors was recognized this month as one of the nation's top independent financial advisors according to the August issue of Registered Rep and also Barron's Magazine. In addition, the firm was designated as a Top 5 U.S. Investment Team by Research Magazine.

"As a firm, we certainly appreciate this recognition. But the real pride

is directed at what we have done each and every day as we focus on our clients' financial success." said President, Bob Fragasso.



Pictured above, The Fragasso Management Team, from left: In front, seated: Andrei Voicu, Ray Amelio, Deborah Gravel. In back, standing: Michael Fertig, Nadene Sales, Bob Fragasso

Fragasso commented on the growth strategy that has elevated the independent advisory to reach assets under management approaching 700 million dollars. "Our company has been built through an intense focus on the client and unlike so many other large investment service firms - we do it one client at a time. We sell no internal, proprietary products so there is absolutely no conflict of interest. We like to say that we make our client's financial success personal and we are extremely proud to provide this high-level of financial planning excellence right here in Pittsburgh."