1st & 10 - Turning up the Heat

July 24, 2026

As an older person, I am required to discuss the weather daily and fully understand barometric pressure, jet streams and most importantly La Nina. I'll spare you the details, but my conclusion for the summer is this: It's Hot. Here in North Carolina where the weather is anything but normal, we have been roasting since mid-May and now it won't stop raining after desert-like draught conditions for most of the Spring. At least we have AC! I don't know how so much of the world survives without it…actually, we are just spoiled. Even in the summer heat, we have so much going for us in America. We just celebrated 250 years! And just ask any visitor who came to watch the World Cup! BBQ ribs, ranch dressing, FREE public bathrooms, kind and generous people, and yes…AIR CONDITIONING. God Bless America!

1. I'm so glad the war in Iran is overrrrrr….oh wait. Nevermind. [Are Oil Prices Driving the Iran conflict?]

2. What new tax changes took effect on July 1st? California added to its gas tax (I'm not joking). Utah gets a gas tax holiday (nice). A bunch of cities and States are increasing sales taxes – including Illinois, and Charlotte, NC. [Find out what changed in your State.]

3. The stock market rotation we are seeing this month is typical, normal and to be expected. [And it doesn't mean what you think it means].

4. One of my favorite weekly reads is John Mauldin. In a recent letter discussing inflation, he included this very revealing chart. The eroding effects of inflation over time are disturbing to say the least. What stands out to you?

Purchasing Power Erosion Table

What $100 in purchasing power becomes after sustained inflation. Shading: pale = mild erosion, deep red = severe erosion.
Formula: $100 ÷ (1 + rate)^years

Rate	1 yr	2 yr	5 yr	10 yr	15 yr	20 yr	25 yr	30 yr	35 yr	40 yr
1%	$99	$98	$95	$91	$86	$82	$78	$74	$71	$67
2%	$98	$96	$91	$82	$74	$67	$61	$55	$50	$45
3%	$97	$94	$86	$74	$64	$55	$48	$41	$36	$31
4%	$96	$92	$82	$68	$56	$46	$38	$31	$25	$21
5%	$95	$91	$78	$61	$48	$38	$30	$23	$18	$14
6%	$94	$89	$75	$56	$42	$31	$23	$17	$13	$10
7%	$93	$87	$71	$51	$36	$26	$18	$13	$9	$7
8%	$93	$86	$68	$46	$32	$21	$15	$10	$7	$5
9%	$92	$84	$65	$42	$27	$18	$12	$8	$5	$3
10%	$91	$83	$62	$39	$24	$15	$9	$6	$4	$2

5. Do you remember me mentioning something called "Structured Notes?" (your answer should be "YES" since I have pointed them out in 3 of the last 4 letters). While we buy individual notes for many of you in your portfolios, we are now also utilizing an ETF of notes in some portfolios. This is really exciting stuff. Click here to know more.

6. Stock market growth comes down to earnings. If companies are earning more than before, stocks tend to go up. When they earn less, we see corrections and even recessions. We are smack in the middle of earnings season today, and the big boys are still making HUGE profits as are most tech related names. This is one of the big differences between now and the Tech bubble that burst in 2000…back when most of the tech companies had NO profits…just hope and a website.

7. Speaking of changes on July 1st – Student loans. Different income-bracketed payment plans, which also applies to some ParentPlus loans. Grad Plus loans are gone. ParentPlus loans have new limits. But the PSLF program still exists – check it out.

8. What about Trump accounts? Will there be a baby boom? Can grandparents contribute?

9. A short rant on property taxes: All of us homeowners feel it. The rage when your annual property tax bill arrives in the mail (yes, Californians, you can brag yours doesn't go up much, but then again, it starts high to begin with!). Taxation is a necessary evil. I get it, but property taxes after many years feel like robbery. While my house value can go up and my taxes with it, my utility of the house stays the same along with my utility of public services. I feel particularly frustrated for many seniors who have paid decades worth of property taxes and even now without a mortgage are paying tens of thousands of dollars per year which is MORE THAN THEIR MORTGAGE PAYMENTS USED TO BE! We have to do something about this. Just like the Social Security system. Who has the guts to make changes to the system for the good of the PEOPLE? When you find someone, let me know and I will vote for them.

10. A pastor I heard recently characterized the month of May as "May-cember." I guess that was not an original of his, but it was the first I heard of it, and so true…at least in our home where we had the end of school, graduations, tons of work, and adult kids moving in and out. It was long but we made it through. And now comes August-mania. Maybe this just applies to my home in 2026, but with all the activity on the calendar in August (none of it vacation related mind you), I am going to need to take a VERY long weekend over Labor Day. And this is without any coaching responsibilities this year. I'm sure we will get through it, but your prayers are appreciated!

I hope you find this note interesting and entertaining every month – and maybe even educational and or helpful. Please pass it along.

Can I ask a question - **WHO DO YOU KNOW THAT I SHOULD KNOW? CAN YOU INTRODUCE ME?** And not people who could need my help (although that is fine too). Really anyone - just good people that you think are worth knowing. I would love to expand my network. Let me know WHO I SHOULD KNOW!

God bless,

Josh