

## The Bears

**Bears are cute from a distance, but scary up close. Markets are bumpy, and we all know that, but it is never much fun on the downward section of one of those bearish bumps.**

We were not a hunting family, but dad always carried rifles with him when we were deep in the bush. From a young age, we regularly held target practice and were taught familiarity with and a healthy respect for firearms.

After a day of robust fishing on the windy lake, we came back to the camp which we had tightly secured against the potentiality of a visit from the hungry momma bear we had seen earlier. Security is a relative term. The sow and her cubs had sniffed out our food cache in the back of the camper, torn open the small side window, to somehow yank out about two thirds of our dry food. She proceeded to chew through, and to slobber on nearly all of it, making the pristine wilderness campsite look like it had lost an argument with an urban dumpster.

Losing our dry food was one thing, but as night time came on, keeping our composure was the imminent task. Given that the camper was now associated with a food source, the flimsy yellow canvas tent seemed as safe as anything for a place to sleep. The thought of driving to a hotel or a safer location in nearby Prince George never occurred to us. We were too cheap for hotels, and we had fishing to do the next day.

Before retiring, we set up a tripwire perimeter using heavy pound test fishing line and some makeshift bells (bean cans with rocks dangling inside). If the sow had tripped one of the perimeter lines, the noise of the bean cans would awake us from our light sleep, and dad would use the rifle – which he slept with - as a noisemaker if nothing else.

We lay restlessly. Funny how ears work so much better at night. The forest never sleeps, but this night the critters were more sinister than usual. Eventually I drifted off, but it seemed like just moments later when in the very early dawn, Dad was up and out of the tent, rifle in hand.

The beast and her babes were back.

Dad was a small man, but this was one of his bigger moments. I don't recall hearing him shift a live round into the chamber, although honestly by then I wanted him to. Instead, he was the little man with a steady voice -- firm, but not startling – loud, but not shrill. A sort of loud talk/whisper.

"Hey there! Wo there Momma. Hey you! Turn around. Go. Hey you! Go."

Nothing. We lay in the tent, stiff and terrified while dad did what dads do.

We could hear him walk toward the lake, carrying on his deep whisper, bordering somewhere between a feigned command and a desperate negotiation. From that distance he slid a round into the chamber and clicked the safety. I pressed my hands over my ears, bracing for a clap of thunder that never came.

Instead, more whispering, talking, walking, coaxing. Further and further away from the tent and our campsite until we couldn't hear it anymore. About a half an hour or so later he came back and lit the camp stove, making the grand announcement that he made every morning that summer:

"Daylight in the swamp!"

Time to light the fire and get on with another day of fishing.

The bear, and the fishermen, all lived. Later that week the conservation officer came along, and took over the area, and we moved on.

## **Bear Markets**

That was 39 years ago, at the shore of a lake which sits about 100 miles from where I am typing this column. This year, a different sort of bear has poked her head into my summer, occasionally disheveling what might otherwise be a perfectly relaxing time. But the lessons of a small man with a steady voice still ring true. As is so often the case, it is better to talk than shoot. Better to listen than pull the trigger. Take necessary precautions, and be prepared for the worst, but save your bullets.

As RBC analysts recently pointed out in their July 2016 monthly Global Insight essay, when it comes to global equity market jitters, life is a “long and winding road.” Furthermore: “If post-Brexit volatility is not the start of a global bear market—and we don’t think it is—then opportunities should eventually emerge to buy attractive businesses at bargain prices.”

And the same analysts noted that the naturally-resulting risk aversion in Europe might actually help US bonds, holding interest rates lower for longer still: “Over time, U.S. corporate bonds should benefit from an influx of foreign funds as the market offers relatively attractive yields compared to other regions.”

That’s right. Things are far from perfect in the land that brought us Dorito’s and Captain Kangaroo, but as cheesy as it might sound, a little America still goes a long way in a diversified portfolio. Bears and bulls (and blowhards) will come and go.

And someday we will also be glad we kept a little slice of Europe too.

*These are my comments and not those of RBC Dominion Securities. Statements are provided in good faith but without legal responsibility. A number of important factors could cause results to differ materially from those expressed or implied here.*

Mark Ryan is an advisor with RBC Wealth Management, Dominion Securities (member CIPF) and can be reached at [Mark.Ryan@rbc.com](mailto:Mark.Ryan@rbc.com) or 250-960-4927.