

MONEY & INVESTING

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2003 C1

Ahead Of the Tape

—Today's Market Forecast—
By **JESSE EISINGER**

Claim It and It Will Come

■ Economists yet again predict that weekly jobless claims will fall today. Instead, they've been rising for three weeks now and have gone back over the 400,000 level, which economists consider significant.

Keep predicting it and one day you'll be right. Claims are seen falling by 12,000 to 410,000, after last week's rise of 3,000 to 422,000. (The rises have been understated in the past few weeks because there's been a pattern of the week-earlier numbers being revised upward.) This trend is disconcerting, even to the bulls, but won't change minds about the outlook unless the job losses persist.

The mood is more optimistic now, partly because of the positive spin placed on this week's Manpower survey on corporate-hiring intentions. Despite some misleading conclusions that the news was good, it actually was mixed to weak. The percentage of firms expecting to hire in the fourth quarter was down year over year, while the percentage of firms expecting to reduce staff increased.

If jobless claims come in weak again, that will suggest that payrolls will drop again in September.

The bulls say that employment is about to turn and that since all the other good things they have been predicting have come true—among them the profits recovery and the increases in capital spending—people should believe them on this, too.

Jobless Weekly jobless claims, four-week moving average; in thousands

2000 '01 '02 '03

Source: Thomson Datastream

■ **Cheesestake**
The Philadelphia Fed puts out its survey on manufacturing activity, an early read on the last month of the third quarter.

Economists are looking for a decline to 17 in September after the index soared to a five-year high of 22.1 in August.

The components, such as orders, shipping and employment, weren't as strong as the headline figure, points out Merrill Lynch economist David Rosenberg. With manufacturing clearly on the rebound, the question is just how sizzling and sustainable it will be.

Please send comments and questions to tape@wsj.com and check Mondays for selected letters at WSJ.com/Tape.

—Inside—

■ **Heard on the Street:** Did a leak of a medical study this week allow investors to unload shares in Johnson & Johnson?
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■ **Deals & Deal Makers:** Bumping up its private-equity assets, Lehman Brothers will buy Crossroads Group of Dallas.
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■ **Credit Markets:** Treasury traders can no longer worry just about Treasurys.
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Weakened NYSE Must Face Challenges

SEC Is Investigating Governance, And Rivals May Seek to Capitalize; Delicate Framework in Question

By **SUSANNE CRAIG**
And **KATE KELLY**

IT TOOK 36 YEARS for Dick Grasso to build his prominent career at the New York Stock Exchange. It took two hours for it to formally end.

Late yesterday, at an emergency board meeting, the chairman and chief executive told directors meeting by phone that he was willing to resign, if asked, because the furor over his \$187.5 million compensation package, including \$48 million he had agreed last week to forgo under pressure from the board, had become too much of a distraction for the Big Board. The Wall Street Journal reported the existence of Mr. Grasso's pay package in May. Details were made public by the Big Board in late August.

Shortly before 4:15 p.m. Eastern time yesterday, NYSE directors, including a number of Wall Street's most powerful CEOs, logged on to a conference call. They knew what was coming. As early as 2 p.m., Mr. Grasso and his advisers had begun calling board members, telling them he planned to tender his resignation at an emergency board meeting. Some expected the meeting to be as brief as a half hour.

William Harrison, the head of J.P. Morgan Chase & Co., jumped directly into a discussion about Mr. Grasso's leadership, running through an almost laundry-like list of reasons why Mr. Grasso must resign. "This is about the integrity of the exchange," he said, according to two directors who were on the call.

Several influential directors backed him up, including Henry Paulson Jr., the head of Goldman Sachs Group Inc. and one of the Wall Street CEOs who over the past week has been discussing the possibility of Grasso's resignation with his fellow directors. Andrea Jung of Avon Products Inc. also voiced concern about the damage to the exchange, as did Madeleine Albright, a former Secretary of State, who has been lobbying behind the scenes for change.

But Mr. Grasso wasn't without supporters. Several spoke up, including Kenneth Langone, who was chairman of the 27-member board's compensation committee for many of the years Mr. Grasso received big payouts, and James Cayne, chairman and CEO of Bear Stearns Cos. One director even suggested the entire board resign and Mr. Grasso remain because it was the board that awarded his compensation.

"I don't want issues related to me to get in the way of the exchange," Mr. Grasso told directors at one point during the meeting, according to a person familiar with the matter. He said "I was prepared to tender his resignation, if the board were to ask for it," said H. Carl McCall, the NYSE director who chairs the compensation committee and co-chairs the special committee on governance.

Mr. Grasso stepped off the call and directors put the question to a vote. Thirteen wanted to accept his resignation. Seven didn't. (The remaining directors were either absent or didn't vote.) Mr. McCall delivered the news to Mr. Grasso.

Much of the discussion at the meeting focused on who would lead the Big Board. Even the directors who had been asking for his resignation didn't have a successor set.

Herbert M. Allison Jr., chairman of institutional-investor group TIAA-CREF and a Big Board director, has rebuffed an approach to become the NYSE's interim chairman, according to a person familiar with the matter. Please Turn to Page C13, Column 1

Highs and Lows for a NYSE Lifer

After years spent working his way up the management chain at the New York Stock Exchange, and becoming the first member of management to be elected president, Dick Grasso finally became the Big Board's chairman in June 1995. His tenure was marked by a record-breaking market rally, structural change and scandal on Wall Street—and a sudden toppling over his high pay.



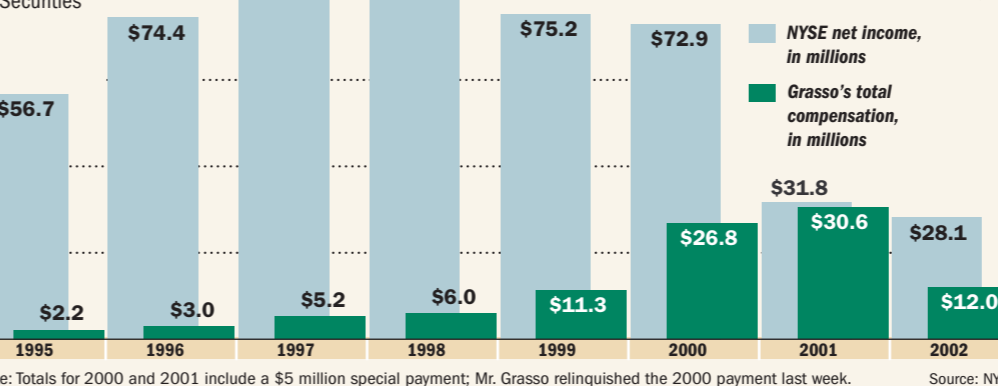
In this 1989 photo, Mr. Grasso, then NYSE president (left) poses with L.A. Gear Chairman Robert Y. Greenberg (center) and NYSE floor-trading executive J. Gregory Gavin.

His Roots

Age 57
Grew up in Jackson Heights, Queens in New York City
1966-68 Served in the Army

At the NYSE

1988 Named president and chief operating officer. While president, he would serve under William Donaldson, who now is Securities



Outside Interests

Had served on the board of Home Depot Inc., but was forced to give that up amid recent crackdown on corporate governance.

He also served as the vice chairman of the National Italian American Foundation and various other posts.

His Best & Worst Moments

- Best: Being named chairman, after Mr. Donaldson left, completing a nearly 30-year trek through the NYSE's management ranks
- Reopening the exchange, four trading days after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks. Was among the New York officials credited with keeping calm.

Worst

- Criticized for composition of the NYSE

board, which he had much power over—including the resignation of Martha Stewart during her trading scandal, and the forced withdrawal of Citigroup's Sanford Weill, whom Mr. Grasso championed during the stock-research scandal as a representative of the "public."



Developed an adversarial relationship with the media. Was criticized for banning reporters from Arab TV station Al Jazeera from the trading floor.

He Said It

“Even the great Cy Young lost a few.”

—Mr. Grasso, in June, reacting to intense criticism over the NYSE board's governance and his pay.

By **KATE KELLY**
And **SUSANNE CRAIG**

Grasso, Who Wanted to Be a Cop, In the End Showed That He Knew When It Was Time to Surrender

DICK GRASSO was exhausted when he stepped into Nino's, an Italian restaurant in Manhattan, late last Thursday on the two-year anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. The New York Stock Exchange chief soon became energized when patrons cheered him and Nino's pianist launched into "God Bless America." Perched in front of the baby-grand piano, Mr. Grasso, hand on his heart, joined in and led the crowd in a patriotic tribute.

Behind the scenes, however, others were joining a different chorus—calls for Mr. Grasso to resign. A number of key constituencies were outraged over the disclosure of Mr. Grasso's large compensation package in late August, including a retirement package of \$139.5 million and a \$5 million bonus for his work to open the NYSE after the terror attacks.



Dick Grasso

Late yesterday, Mr. Grasso—a legendary fighter who had climbed from a clerk's position to the very top of the NYSE during a 36-year career—heeded those calls and said he would resign as the NYSE's chairman and chief executive.

Mr. Grasso's resignation caps one of the most gripping dramas in the 211-year history of the Big Board. For more than two weeks, calls for his ouster spread from the floor of the NYSE to large institutional investors, including the influential California public-employees pension funds. By yesterday, politicians, including Senators John Edwards and Joseph Lieberman, both Democratic presidential hopefuls, were joining the chorus. For most of the NYSE board, the cacophony finally became too much, culminating in a vote to ask for Mr. Grasso's resignation last night.

The upheaval at the NYSE comes at a pivotal time for the financial markets, just as the nation and investors emerge from an unprecedented period of corporate fraud that has rocked the economy. A recovery has begun and financial markets have recorded solid gains since the beginning of the year. But most strategists consider the investment climate still fragile.

Mr. Grasso never intended to work in finance. Growing up in the Jackson Heights section of New York's Queens borough, he aspired to be a police officer, but bad eyesight kept him off the force. In an interview five years ago in New York's Daily News, Mr. Grasso recalled that his mother chastised him years later, calling him "stupid," and saying that if he had only passed the eye test, he could have had a better career. He dropped out of the New York area's Pace University after two years and joined the army—earning a sharpshooter badge and a good-conduct medal—before joining the Big Board.

His first job, in 1968, was clerk in the exchange's stock-listing department, paying \$80 a week. His rise was swift. After nine years, he was Please Turn to Page C12, Column 1

How Much Severance Pay Is Enough?

By **THEO FRANCIS**

HOW MUCH MORE money will Dick Grasso walk away with?

That depends on whether the chairman of the New York Stock Exchange, who yesterday tendered his resignation amid the furor over his \$139.5 million retirement-compensation package, quit on his own, left for "good reason" or was fired by the board—a distinction that could make a difference of millions of dollars in severance pay.

Yesterday evening, the exchange said Mr. Grasso, 57 years old, offered to resign if requested by the board; the board then asked for and accepted his resignation. Compensation con-

sultants say that that chain of events could let Mr. Grasso argue he was removed without cause. Any dispute about the cause of Mr. Grasso's departure would go to an arbitration panel, under terms of his employment contract.

If he can show he was removed without cause, he would be entitled to his \$2.4 million annual salary and bonus for the full term of his contract, which runs through May 2007, or about \$8.8 million; the pay would be reduced somewhat to reflect the interest he would have a chance to earn because he will receive the payments in advance. He would also get other perks, including free health care for life.

"I would suspect that he'd take the position, Please Turn to Page C12, Column 6

Arkansas Rulings May Hurt Reputation Of Pricewaterhouse

A PAIR OF JUDICIAL ORDERS sanctioning PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP for misconduct in a civil lawsuit here cast a harsh spotlight on the accounting firm and its top U.S. partner, Chairman Dennis Nally, as well as their recent efforts to restore public trust in the firm. The orders by Miller County Circuit Court Judge Kirk D. Johnson include findings of docu-

ment destruction by the firm and misrepresentations by the firm to the court about Mr. Nally's knowledge of the facts underlying the suit. The findings prompted Judge Johnson to sanction PricewaterhouseCoopers \$50,000 in a March 28 order for engaging in a "systematic course of conduct intended to obstruct the discovery process." A PricewaterhouseCoopers spokesman yesterday said Mr. Nally was unavailable to comment.

Sanctioned

"PwC misrepresented to the Court that Nally did not have knowledge relating to the issues of this case" and it was "inconceivable that counsel could have been misled about Dennis Nally's knowledge of issues related to this lawsuit."

"... the history of this case has proven that Defendant, PwC, has its own agenda; and, in the opinion of the court, fails to cooperate with its own attorneys to follow the orders of the court."

—Miller County Circuit Court Judge Kirk D. Johnson of Texarkana, Ark.

In a court filing Friday, opposing a motion by the plaintiff in the case for further sanctions, PricewaterhouseCoopers wrote that "PwC has taken steps to preserve, collect and produce documents responsive to plaintiff's discovery requests. Those efforts have resulted in the production by PwC of hundreds of thousands of pages of documents, approximately 80 CD-ROMs of engagement letters (roughly equivalent to one million additional Please Turn to Page C10, Column 1

Stocks Fall Slightly From Recent Highs

By **E.S. BROWNING**

A DAY AFTER scoring their strongest gains in two months, stocks gave some back, but remained near their recent highs.

After rising more than 118 points on Tuesday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average shed 21.69 points, or 0.23%, to finish at 9545.65. It still is up 14% so far this year, near a 15-month high.

The Nasdaq Composite Index fell 0.22%, or 4.15 points, to 1883.10—up 41% on the year and near an 18-month high.

The big move came in Treasury bonds, which rose sharply. Some traders credited a delayed reaction to Tuesday's news from the Federal Reserve that its interest-rate targets won't rise soon. That news had helped spark the stock rally on Tuesday, but bonds moved little that day. Others said Japanese institutions were buying dollars and putting the money into bonds. The Commerce Department said housing starts were down in August, and DuPont said earnings for the second half would be at the lower end of its expectations. Both were bad news for stocks. Some investors were distracted by the controversy over the compensation of New York Stock Exchange Chairman Dick Grasso, although several said that didn't affect stock prices much.

To many, the mild stock retreat looked simply like a consolidation after Tuesday's big rally.

"The fundamentals of the stock market itself still look good," said stock trader Michael Driscoll at New York brokerage firm Bear Stearns. The declines were small compared with Tuesday's gains, he said, adding, "It is really two steps forward and one step back."

The broad Standard & Poor's 500-stock index fell 0.33%, or 3.35 points, to 1025.97, still up 17% this year.

Outside the U.S., stocks advanced in dollar terms. The Dow Jones World Stock Index, excluding U.S. stocks, rose 1.07%, or 1.35 points, to 127.57.

In major U.S. market action: Stocks retreated. On the Big Board, where 1.31 billion shares traded, 1,574 stocks rose and 1,658 fell.

Bonds gained. The 10-year Treasury note rose 23/32, or \$7.1875 for each \$1,000 invested. The yield, which moves inversely to price, fell to 4.172%. The 30-year bond was up 1 11/32 to yield 5.095%.

The dollar was mixed. Late in New York, it traded at 116.16 yen, up from 116.13 yen, while the euro rose against the dollar to \$1.1283 from \$1.1178.

Markets Diary/Trading for Wednesday, September 17, 2003

Stocks	Dow Jones Industrial Average	9545.65	▼ -21.69
	DJIA	9545.65	-21.69 -0.23 +16.80 +14.43
	Nasdaq Comp.	1883.10	-4.15 -0.22 +50.39 +41.00
	S&P 500	1025.97	-3.35 -0.33 +18.00 +16.61
	Russell 2000	515.10	-0.56 -0.11 +36.72 +34.46

Global Stocks	DJ World Stock Index (excl. U.S.)	127.57	▲ +1.35
	DJ World (ex. U.S.)	127.57	+1.35 +1.07 +24.28 +22.04
	Nikkei 225	10990.11	+103.08 +0.95 +16.03 +28.11
	DJ Euro STOXX 50	2586.81	+1.53 +0.06 +8.57 +8.40
	MSCI EAFE	1127.18	+9.39 +0.84 +21.47 +18.32

Bonds & Interest	10-Year Treasury Note Yield (4 p.m. ET)	4.172%
	10-Year Note	5.00%
	Federal Funds Target Rate	1.25%
	3-month Treasury bill	0.93%
	DJ Corporate Bond Index	170.99
	Lehman Brothers MBS	1065.32

U.S. Dollar	Percentage change since Sept. 17, 2002	97.3	▼ -0.2
	Euro	1.1283	1.1178 1.1300 1.1138
	Yen	116.16	116.13 115.87 116.52
	Dollar (J.P. Morgan Index)	1.6096	1.5880 1.6099 1.5863
	Canadian dollar (per U.S. dollar)	1.3657	1.3684 1.3644 1.3741

Commodities	DJ-AIG Commodity Futures (1991=100)	117.690	▼ -0.116
	DJ-AIG Commodity Futures	117.690	-0.116 117.806 106.985
	Oil (Nymex crude future), bbl.	\$27.03	-0.53 \$27.56 \$29.48
	Gold (Comex spot), troy oz.	\$376.20	+2.70 \$373.50 \$320.60
	Wheat (#2 hard KC), bu.	\$3.5300	+0.0050 \$3.5250 \$5.1500

GRASSO PAYS THE PRICE

NYSE Must Face Challenges

Continued From Page C1

interim chairman, according to a company familiar with the matter. One source said Silicon Valley lawyer Larry W. Sonsini was asked to take on the role of interim chairman during a second board phone call late last night. Mr. Sonsini declined the offer. Mr. McCall accepted the position of lead director and will guide the board as it seeks an interim successor to Mr. Grasso.

In the late-night call, the board reaffirmed its support for Catherine Kinney and Robert Britz, the exchange's co-chief operating officers who are directors themselves. Mr. McCall said he hoped the two executives would "continue to provide... leadership under the chairman and commit to continuing our process going forward to a governance plan that will make the exchange a model" for other institutions.

With Mr. Grasso gone, the Big Board may respond more dramatically to calls from the Securities and Exchange Commission to revamp its governance policies. Its strategy may also change on other matters such as a broad SEC examination of market structure and questions about the NYSE's status as a self-regulator. Directors are considering proposals such as splitting the roles of chairman and CEO, adding more non-executive-industry directors to the board and minimizing the ability of the chairman and CEO to influence board-nominations.

Some floor members, meanwhile, have renewed calls for taking the exchange public in a stock offering. If that were to happen, the exchange might have to split off its regulatory arm from the exchange itself.

Mr. Grasso's departure is certain to have a substantial impact on the NYSE. During his eight years in the top job, Mr. Grasso has come to epitomize the exchange. In opening-bell ceremonies, regulatory settlements, and charitable functions, his image has been broadcast around the world. His leadership in the face of adversity, such as the Sept. 11 terror attacks, has earned him respect even from the NYSE's critics. And within

the exchange, staff members from the luncheon club waiters to the most powerful floor traders count him as a friend.

In addition, Mr. Grasso helped the NYSE maintain a dominant position on trading market share. Even with the rise of electronic competitors, the NYSE maintains roughly 80% of the trading volume in its own listed stocks. By comparison, the Nasdaq Stock Market trades less than 20% of the volume in its stocks.

With uncertain leadership at the helm, "their competitive position vis-à-vis the listing business is weakened to some degree," said Matt Andresen, head of global trading at Sanford C. Bernstein & Co. If companies view the Big Board as an unstable home, he added, they might consider abandoning the exchange and listing on the Nasdaq, its top competitor, instead.

In addition, said Mr. Andresen, the NYSE's political position may weaken. "In Washington, the perception is that they're going to be a political hot potato," a view that could affect pending SEC decisions that are important to the exchange.

Losing ground inside the Beltway could be a blow for the Big Board, which has been lobbying hard in recent months to counter calls for changes in the markets. Among other things, the SEC is considering whether to repeal the so-called trade-through rule, which prevents market centers from ignoring superior stock prices on other exchanges. Nasdaq and other markets contend the trade-through rule has preserved the Big Board's dominance in its own stock trading by making it difficult for other market centers to compete with it. The NYSE, which has so far sought to preserve the rule, disagrees.

Nonetheless, some supporters remain steadfast. "I don't want to see him go," Karen Nelson Hackett, a longtime broker, said before Mr. Grasso's resignation was announced. "Who knows what happens in the future with someone we don't know." —Ann Davis contributed to this article.

Investors Bid Up Used-Car Auctioneer USS

By TODD ZAUN

TOKYO—Japanese used-car specialist USS is proving there is more than one way to make money in Japan's auto industry.

While shares of the nation's big makers of new cars, such as Nissan Motor and Honda Motor, have long been popular with investors, analysts say little-known USS, Japan's leading used-car trader, is also worth a look.

Shares of USS, which operates a dozen used-car auction houses across Japan, rose more than 25% during the past year, outperforming the broad Topix stock index, which gained less than 20% during the period.

The stock's rise was driven by impressive growth in revenue and profit. USS reported a 31% jump in revenue for the quarter ended June 30 to 9.72 billion yen (\$83.7 million) and a 18% rise in operating profit to 4.56 billion yen. The company's net profit rose 4.4% to 2.27 billion yen. For the year ended March 31, USS posted a 30% increase in revenue and 39% increase in net profit.

The profitable run was fueled by big increases in the number of cars put up for auction and a steady increase in completed sales, the two most important factors for revenue growth for car-auction companies. USS collects a commission of about 9,000 yen for putting a car up for sale and an additional 18,000 yen if the vehicle is sold. USS operates what analysts say is a very sophisticated car auction.

There are no auctioneers, and the cars aren't driven into an auction pit. Instead, dealers at USS's auction houses place bids with the press of a button as images of cars—and information about them—pop up on giant computer monitors.

Every Thursday, at an auction house that seats more than 1,000 people near the company's headquarters in the western city of Nagoya, about 6,000 vehicles are put up for bid. The average auction takes just 15 seconds. At USS's largest site, in Tokyo, the company moves about 10,000 vehicles at each of its weekly auctions.

For the year ended March 31, USS put 1.55 million cars up for bid and found buyers for 843,816 of them, an increase of 16% from the year before.

A number of analysts predict healthier results ahead for USS because the company is quickly gaining a reputation as the auction house with the best selection of cars and the best prices. "For dealers, USS offers the best

choice to sell and the best selection of good used cars to buy," says Noriyuki Matsumura, auto analyst at Nikko Citigroup.

"They're strong for the same reason that the financial world prefers the Tokyo Stock Exchange rather than small regional exchanges, because in Tokyo they know they can trade anything," Mr. Matsumura rates the stock a "buy."

USS is the market leader, with a 25% share of the used-car auction business in Japan. The company is hoping to increase the number of cars it puts up for bid by opening new auction houses next year in Tokyo and the neighboring city of Yokohama.

"With the opening of the Yokohama and Tokyo sites next year, their profit growth should be strong," says Mr. Matsumura, who recently raised his target price on USS to 8,300 yen from 7,000 yen.

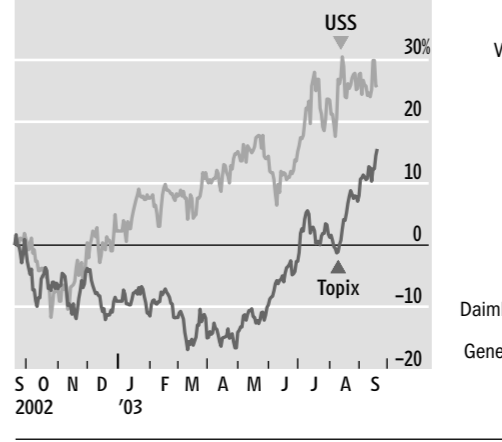
USS probably won't be able to maintain last year's blistering pace of profit and revenue growth over the long run. Already this year, the rate of growth in the number of cars offered for sale is slowing slightly. For that reason, Laurent Halmos, midcap stock analyst for UBS Securities Japan Ltd., recommends that investors take a cautious stance toward USS for now, though he remains bullish on the company overall.

Reflecting that short-term caution, Mr. Halmos lowered his rating on the company earlier this year to "neutral" from "buy."

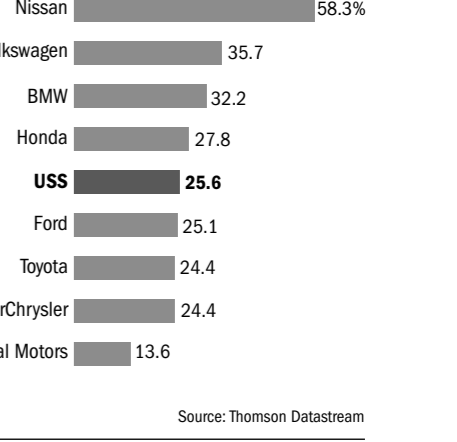
"Last year was really great...but this year volumes are decelerating and we don't expect so much growth," he says. "In the long run, though, it's a wonderful company. If you want to invest in

Has Japan Got a Deal for You!

Ahead of the broad Japanese market For most of the past 52 weeks, shares of Japan's largest used car trader, USS, have outperformed Japan's broad stock-market index, the Topix.



In the middle of the auto pack Year-to-date performance of some of the leading global auto manufacturers and USS, in U.S.-dollar terms.



Japan, you have to take a look at USS."

Yesterday's Market Activity

Overall, the Dow Jones World Stock Index rose 0.3%, or 0.56 point, to 168.64. Excluding the U.S., the index rose 1.1%, or 1.35 points, to 127.57.

In TOKYO, the Nikkei Stock Average climbed 1%, or 103.08 points, to a 15-month high of 10990.11 as European investors and other traders continued to pile into Japanese equities. Canon closed up 2.5% to 6,110 yen in active trading after hitting a record high of 6,210 yen. Honda Motor gained 3.4% to 5,500 yen.

In LONDON, the FTSE 100 Index slipped 0.1%, or six points, to 4293.00. Tobacco stocks rallied, boosted by news a

U.S. court will hear an appeal regarding a recent \$10.1 billion verdict against Altria for allegedly misleading smokers.

British American Tobacco gained 1% to 104 pence. BAE Systems rose 1.4% to 184 pence after the company announced first-half earnings per share 9% above its forecast and Credit Suisse First Boston raised its full-year forecasts for the aerospace company.

In PARIS, the CAC 40 Index gained 0.22%, or 7.52 points, to 3393.93 in light volume. Mobile-phone equipment maker Alcatel rose 3.4% to €11.38 after being chosen by Orange as one of its suppliers for so-called third-generation mobile phones. Orange shed 0.5% to €9.76. Saint Gobain gained 1.2% to €34.72.

Northrop Grumman Corp.

Poison-Pill Plan to End Early; CEO to Assume Chairman Post

Northrop Grumman Corp. said it would end its shareholder-rights plan at the end of the year instead of in 2008, when it was set to expire. Known as a "poison pill," these protections are put into place to make it difficult for an unwelcome suitor to attempt a hostile takeover of a company. Defense contractor Northrop, based in Los Angeles, has tripled in size in recent years, making it unlikely another company could attempt such a maneuver. A majority of company shareholders have voted in recent years, including at Northrop's annual meeting in 2003, to scrap the rights plan. Separately, Northrop said its chief executive and president, Ronald Sugar, will assume the additional post of chairman, effective Oct. 1.

Jack in the Box Inc.

Jack in the Box Inc. issued earnings projections for its fiscal first quarter and full year that were below Wall Street estimates, as the fast-food company prepares to reposition itself as a higher-quality, higher-priced quick-service restaurant. The San Diego restaurant chain is making the transition in an attempt to attract diners from outside its core group of customers, 18- to 34-year-old males. Despite an anticipated increase of between 1.5% and 2% in same-store sales, or sales at stores open at least a year, the company projects first-quarter earnings of 53 cents a share on revenue of \$663 million, compared with net income of \$21.2 million, or 56 cents a share, on revenue of \$613.3 million in the year-earlier quarter ended Jan. 16. Analysts polled by Thomson First Call, expect the company to earn 59 cents a share on revenue of \$649 million in the quarter. For fiscal 2004, Jack in the Box forecast earnings of \$1.68 a share on revenue of \$2.2 billion.

Dollar Weakens Against European Currencies

By JAMIE MCGEEVER And TOM BARKLEY

Dow Jones Newswires

NEW YORK—The dollar weakened against the major European currencies yesterday, which were all lifted by massive buying of sterling after a strong suggestion from the Bank of England that United Kingdom interest rates could be raised soon.

The dollar remained well supported against the yen, however, even though there was no overt yen-selling intervention from Japanese monetary authorities, according to dealers.

Rather, the ever-present threat of intervention by the Bank of Japan on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, to keep the yen at a competitive level for Japanese exporters, was enough to avert heavier dollar weakness.

There was little in the way of fundamental news to give the market direction yesterday. But in keeping with recent trends, the steep fall in U.S. bond yields—the 10-year note yield fell as low as

4.152%—was closely correlated with the decline in the dollar.

This reminded dealers that the return on U.S. assets will remain low, and with the BOE suggesting monetary policy could soon be tightened, sterling led the charge.

"Sterling was extremely well bid...and I think we'll see it go up to \$1.6200 in the next few days," said a dealer at a European bank in New York.

In late trading in New York, sterling was at \$1.6096, up more than two U.S. cents, or 1.4%, from \$1.5880 late Tuesday in New York. The euro was at \$1.1283, up 1% from \$1.1178 late Tuesday, and against the yen, was at 131.06 yen, up from 129.89 yen late Tuesday.

The dollar was at 116.13 yen, nearly unchanged from 116.13 yen late Tuesday in New York, but comfortably off the session lows of 115.85 yen. The dollar was weaker against the Swiss franc, however, trading at 1.3793 Swiss francs compared with 1.3897 Swiss francs.

In London trading yesterday, the BOE released the minutes from the last monetary policy committee meeting. The minutes contained a line that stated, while

interest rates remain on hold, a rate rise "might soon become necessary."

And earlier yesterday, the U.K.'s widely watched claimant count measure of unemployment fell 6,900 to 930,800 in August, the lowest level since September 1975, National Statistics said.

This, coupled with the drop in U.S. yields, helped drive up the euro against the dollar, too.

"Spread differentials that had favored the U.S. over the euro zone not too long ago are now equal," and could favor the euro in the near term, said Tim Mazanec, senior currency strategist at Investors Bank & Trust.

Dealers reported heavy euro buying across the board, with preplaced stop-loss buy orders triggered against the dollar above \$1.1250 and \$1.1280, and against the yen above 130.80 yen and 131.00 yen.

The next target for the euro against the dollar, if it can get above \$1.1300, is \$1.1350, which is the midpoint of the summer range, said Peter Watkins, vice president of foreign exchange at Fortis Bank New York.

Best and Worst Performing DJ Country Indexes

Ranked by percentage change, in U.S.-dollar terms

Table with columns for Country, Index, and % Change. Ireland is the best performer (+3.11%) and Thailand is the worst (-1.51%).

Dow Jones Country Indexes

In U.S. dollar terms, Sept. 17, 2003 5:15 p.m. ET

Table with columns for Country, Index, and % Change. Australia is the top performer (+2.17%) and Malaysia is the lowest (-0.77%).

Best and Worst Performing DJ Sector Titans

Ranked by percentage change, in U.S.-dollar terms

Table with columns for Noncyclical Goods/Svcs., Insurance, Telecommunications, Automobile, Construction, Technology, Retail, Industrial Goods/Svcs., and Chemicals. Noncyclical Goods/Svcs. is the best performer (+1.51%) and Chemicals is the worst (-0.48%).

International Stock Market Indexes

9/17/03 NET CHG % CHG YTD NET CHG % CHG

Table listing international stock market indexes by country and index, showing percentage changes.

MSCI Indexes

SEP 16 SEP 15 FROM 12/02

Table listing MSCI indexes for various countries and their performance relative to the 12/02 index.

World Index

EAPE Index 932.8 922.6 +1.7

As calculated by Morgan Stanley Capital International Services, Geneva. Each country's local currencies, if based on the close of 1969 equalling 100.

Asia

HONG KONG IN H.K. DOLLARS

Table listing Asian stock market indexes and their performance.

Europe

EUROPEAN CURRENCY UNITS

Table listing European stock market indexes and their performance.

Pacific

NEW ZEALAND IN N.Z. \$

Table listing Pacific stock market indexes and their performance.

AFRICA

JOHANNESBURG IN RAND

Table listing African stock market indexes and their performance.

AMERICA

NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE

Table listing American stock market indexes and their performance.

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