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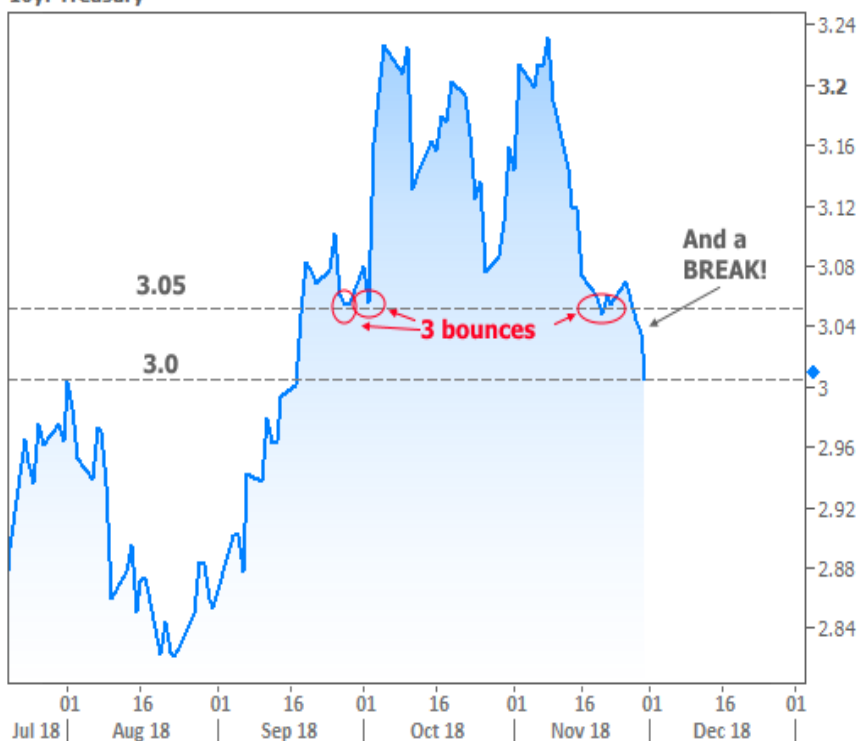
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Are The Highest Interest Rates Behind Us?

Relative to the last 2 years of pain for rates, a **sense of hope** has emerged, seemingly overnight, as the 10yr Treasury yield (an important benchmark for longer-term rates like mortgages) broke through a key level.

3.05% had **consistently blocked** the advance of falling rates for more than 2 months. The most recent bounce happened just last week. Breaking through sets us up to challenge the big psychological barrier at 3.0%.

10yr Treasury



The catalyst for the late week surge was a **speech by Fed Chair Jerome Powell**. The Fed sets monetary policies that can have a direct impact on rates. Those policies are largely a function of objective economic data, but there is some room for interpretation.

The Fed's interpretation has arguably been fairly balanced over the past few years. On the one hand, they've been hiking at a much slower pace compared to past cycles. On the other hand, they've been hiking **regularly** and their outlook has clearly called for those hikes to **continue** well into 2019.

National Average Mortgage Rates



	Rate	Change	Points
Mortgage News Daily			

30 Yr. Fixed	7.07%	+0.02	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.45%	0.00	0.00
30 Yr. FHA	6.51%	+0.02	0.00
30 Yr. Jumbo	7.26%	0.00	0.00
5/1 ARM	7.02%	-0.01	0.00

Freddie Mac

30 Yr. Fixed	6.86%	-0.01	0.00
15 Yr. Fixed	6.16%	+0.03	0.00

Rates as of: 6/28

Market Data

	Price / Yield	Change
MBS UMBS 5.5	98.49	-0.45
MBS GNMA 5.5	99.10	-0.44
10 YR Treasury	4.4049	+0.0069
30 YR Treasury	4.5659	+0.0019

Pricing as of: 7/1 4:48AM EST

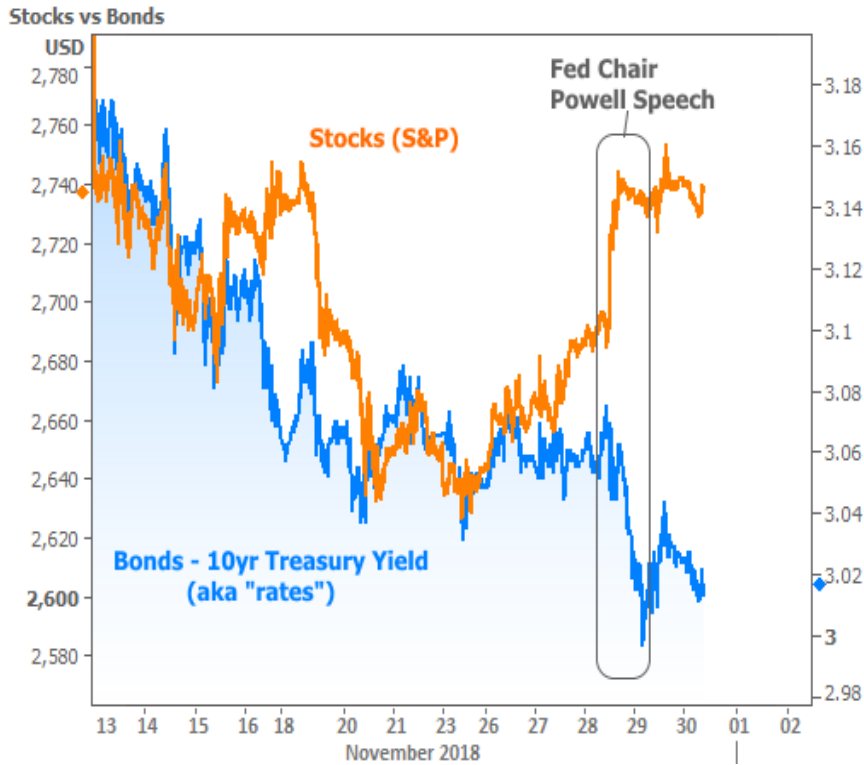
Recent Housing Data

		Value	Change
Mortgage Apps	Jun 12	208.5	+15.58%
Building Permits	Mar	1.46M	-3.95%
Housing Starts	Mar	1.32M	-13.15%
New Home Sales	Mar	693K	+4.68%
Pending Home Sales	Feb	75.6	+1.75%
Existing Home Sales	Feb	3.97M	-0.75%
Builder Confidence	Mar	51	+6.25%

Powell's speech upset the balance as far as many investors were concerned. Back in October, Powell said rates were "a long way from neutral, probably" before adding that the Fed may even raise rates past neutral (a level that neither promotes or discourages economic growth). He'd been sticking to that script regularly **until this week** when he said rates are now "just below" neutral.

Beyond the comment on rates, Powell also noted that the Fed's rate hike outlook is **no guarantee** of a policy path (translation: they might not end up hiking as much as anticipated). The determining factor in that policy path will be economic data. On that topic, Powell said the Fed "will be paying very close attention."

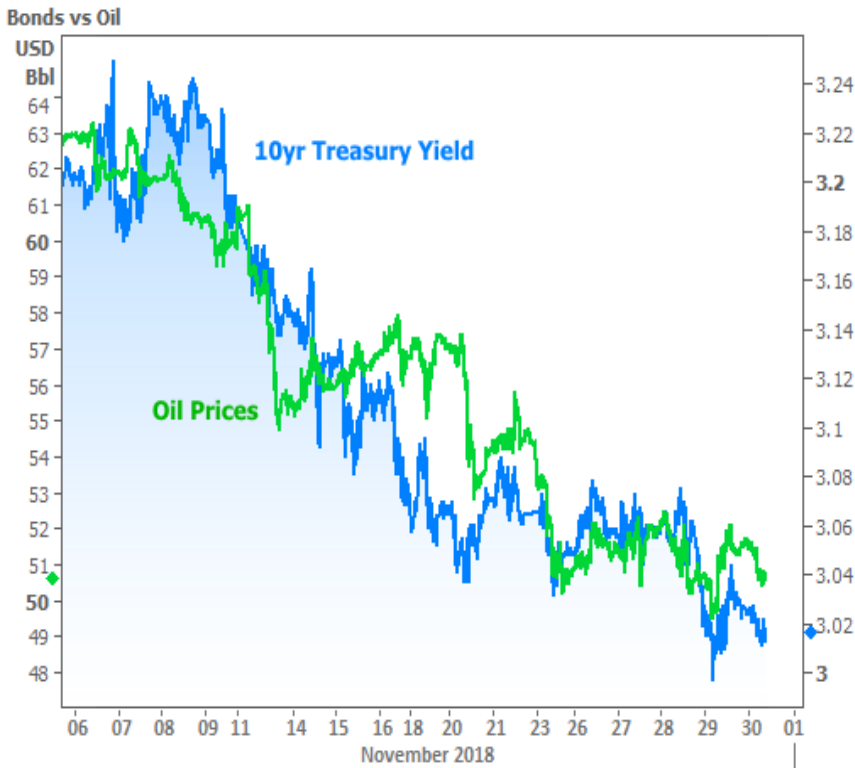
Stocks and bonds both seized on the **apparent shift** in tone from the Fed Chair. In general, when the Fed is perceived as less likely to hike rates, both sides of the market rally. That can be seen in the following chart with stocks surging and rates falling.



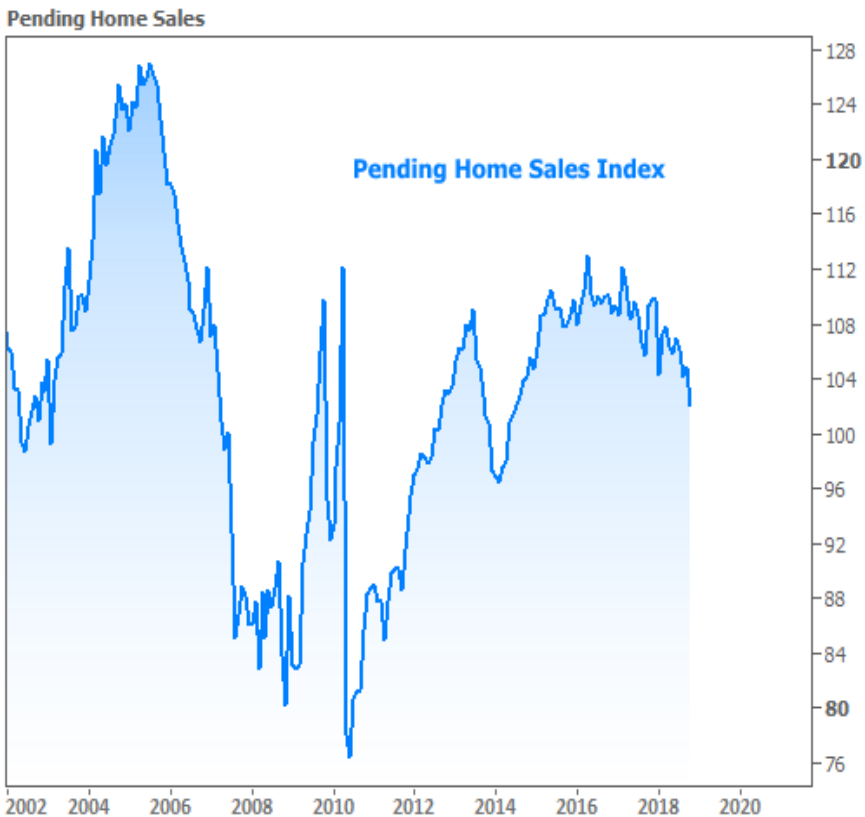
Combined with the positive move in rates that began 3 weeks ago, a sense of hope seems to be returning to the bond market. Keep in mind that at least **some** of that "hope" will come at the **expense** of stocks and the economy. After all, rates tend to fall when the economy is weak.



You might notice that the blue line (bonds) was more willing to move lower than the orange line (stocks) in November. Of course we just discussed the Powell effect, but well before Powell's speech, we can see bonds setting "lower lows" even as stocks try to hold the same defensive floor. One potential reason is **weakness in oil prices**. Oil has a bearing on inflation, and inflation has a bearing on bonds. Falling oil prices can add downward pressure on rates.



If these positive influences stick around, the highest rates for this economic cycle may indeed already be behind us. That **couldn't come a moment too soon** for the housing market where sales continued to slump according to two reports out this week.



Still, it's not necessarily safe to assume rates will keep moving lower. Keep Powell's comments about economic data in mind. The Fed will be watching the data closely. To whatever extent next week's important economic reports disappoint, **hope will remain alive** for rates. But if those reports are stronger than expected, rates could easily bounce back toward recent highs.

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Recent Economic Data

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
Tuesday, Nov 27				
9:00AM	Sep CaseShiller 20 yy (%)	+5.1	5.3	5.5
9:00AM	Sep Monthly Home Price mm (%)	0.2		0.3
10:00AM	Nov Consumer confidence	135.7	135.9	137.9
Wednesday, Nov 28				
7:00AM	w/e MBA Purchase Index	247.8		227.7
7:00AM	w/e Mortgage Refinance Index	787.7		783.7
8:30AM	Q3 GDP Prelim (%)	3.5	3.5	3.5
10:00AM	Oct New home sales-units mm (ml)	0.544	0.575	0.553
10:00AM	Oct New home sales chg mm (%)	-8.9	3.7	-5.5
Thursday, Nov 29				
8:30AM	Oct Core PCE (y/y) (%)	+1.8	1.9	2.0
8:30AM	Oct Personal Income (%)	+0.5	0.4	0.2
8:30AM	Oct Consumer Spending (Consumption) (%)	+0.6	0.4	0.4
10:00AM	Oct Pending Sales Index	102.1		104.6
10:00AM	Oct Pending Home Sales (%)	-2.6	0.5	0.5
Friday, Nov 30				
9:45AM	Nov Chicago PMI	66.4	58.0	58.4
Monday, Dec 03				
10:00AM	Oct Construction spending (%)	-0.1	0.4	0.0
10:00AM	Nov ISM Manufacturing PMI	59.3	57.6	57.7
10:00AM	Nov ISM Mfg Prices Paid	60.7	70.0	71.6
Tuesday, Dec 04				
9:45AM	Nov ISM-New York index	840.8		831.9
Wednesday, Dec 05				
7:00AM	w/e Mortgage Refinance Index	836.4		787.7
7:00AM	w/e MBA Purchase Index	249.9		247.8
Thursday, Dec 06				
8:15AM	Nov ADP National Employment (k)	179	195	227
8:30AM	w/e Jobless Claims (k)	231	230	234
10:00AM	Oct Factory orders mm (%)	-2.1	-2.0	0.7
10:00AM	Nov ISM N-Mfg PMI	60.7	59.2	60.3

Event Importance:

- No Stars = Insignificant
-  Low
-  Moderate
-  Important
-  Very Important

Date	Event	Actual	Forecast	Prior
10:00AM	Nov ISM N-Mfg Bus Act	65.2	62.0	62.5
Friday, Dec 07				
8:30AM	Nov Non-farm payrolls (k)	155	175	250
8:30AM	Nov Unemployment rate mm (%)	3.7	3.7	3.7
8:30AM	Nov Average earnings mm (%)	0.2	0.3	0.2
10:00AM	Oct Wholesale inventories mm (%)	0.8	0.7	0.7
10:00AM	Dec Consumer Sentiment	97.5	97.0	97.5

Real Talk

At The Rate Shop, we're not your average mortgage banker. We specialize in bringing you ridiculously low interest rates that will make you wonder what the other guys are doing. In fact the **ONLY** objection we ever hear is "your rates sound too good to be true". Well they're not, and here is why...

After 15 years in the retail banking world I was frustrated with the high interest rates that came from that business model. As I looked around at all the bloated layers of management and their expensive salaries and the overhead of running a larger company (think rent costs, employee health and benefit costs, payroll taxes, and on and on) it dawned on me that I was a part of the problem, and the solution, for me at least, was so easy to see.

Start my own mortgage brokerage shop. No expensive executive salaries, no expensive building to pay rent at, no unnecessary employees and all the costs that are associated with that. What happens when you cut out all the fat? You can provide lower rates and lower closing costs. It's simple. Now here is the best part, you still get great service from a local Kansas City Lender. My mission is to let everyone know that low rates and great customer service are NOT mutually exclusive.

Thanks for coming along on this journey where Low Rates meet Great Service. The two do NOT have to be mutually exclusive. It's just a lie that the big box mortgage companies have been telling you for years. Don't believe me? Give me a call or shoot me a text on my personal cell phone today and compare my rates and costs up against any other lender in the country, and be prepared to be blown away.

Mike Baker

