JANUARY 2023

Barita 45TH ANNIVERSARY

EDITION #1

WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

January 4, 2023

Analyst Insight

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The Death of Crypto?

Introduction

“Crypto peaked a year ago — investors have lost more than $2 trillion since”, was a headline run by CNBC in November 2022. The fall from the blissful peaks seen during the pandemic of cryptocurrency giants has been sharp and drastic. The popular cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, has fallen below $17,000 from its peak of $68,000, representing a loss of 74% in value in just over one year. News headlines have been dominated by distress and fallout at prominent entities in the industry while the two biggest cryptocurrencies, bitcoin and Ethereum have lost value in step with the riskiest stocks listed on American stock exchanges. By all measures, this seems like a spectacular crash for the industry and the death of a space overrun with hype and questionable risk management. But the question still stands, why do the biggest investment banks worldwide have exposure to the industry? What has caused savvy institutional investors to establish a stake and expend resources on research on the industry? The answer is the unique technology that backs these digital assets.

What are Cryptocurrencies?

A typical currency is a medium of exchange that is dependent on centralized authorities to support it, for example, through faith in the backing of a Government and a Central Bank that controls changes in the overall supply of the currency through its actions. A cryptocurrency breaks this mould via two main characteristics:

- Digitalization – Cryptocurrencies are exclusively transacted on computer systems over the internet. Cryptocurrencies have no physical form and exist only in a virtual record.
- Decentralization – Cryptocurrencies are not inherently dependent on a centralized organization determining its supply or managing its creation. Rather, new cryptocurrency can be minted through the solving of complex mathematical problems, verified by the consensus of the digital network.

What is the appeal?

The technology behind these digital networks is revolutionary and has many practical real-world applications. Decentralized cryptocurrencies are almost universally based on a blockchain which serves as a public database for the transaction history of these currencies.

A blockchain is a Distributed Ledger Technology that provides a secure way to access, validate, and trade assets and record each transaction across multiple locations on the network at the same time. The blockchain is virtually tamper-proof due to the cryptographic fingerprint that users leave with each entry on an increasingly vast peer-to-peer network. In other words, blockchain technology is essentially immune to cyber-attacks, as all previous records or nodes on the chain are practically immutable. In order to alter the blockchain, attackers would have to control 51% or more of the nodes on the network, a task that requires inordinate amounts of cost and equipment to carry out on mature networks. These characteristics can reduce the need for intermediaries, reduce counterparty risk and ultimately reduce transaction and operating costs.

Blockchain technology has significantly more practical use cases than just being the backbone of a currency like bitcoin. It has the potential to be disruptive in banking and finance by providing more secure and efficient ways to settle international payments; faster settlement times and more consolidated audit trails for capital market transactions. Additionally, Governments can better regulate the auditing and compliance practices for organizations because of the high barrier to blockchains being altered by fraudulent individuals. In Business, blockchain technology may be superior for managing supply chains, healthcare information, insurance contracts and any type of transaction or record management-based application.

The almost endless applications of blockchain technology behind cryptocurrencies is part of the reason why the industry has attention from institutions and governments worldwide despite being an initially confusing asset class.

What does this mean for consumers and retail investors?

The cryptocurrency and broader digital asset markets are largely unregulated and include participants who trade despite not fully understanding the asset they are trading. These markets expose investors to a high degree of risk, significant volatility and potential fraud. Large investors only expose a small portion of their portfolios to these assets for this reason, while also investing much larger amounts into researching and implementing the underlying blockchain technology.

While cryptocurrency markets may not be the most suitable for material portfolio exposure at the moment, investors must be aware of the technology backing the space. Blockchain and digital ledgers have the potential to act as a catalyst for a paradigm shift in the way businesses and governments operate moving forward and pioneers in the space may see great benefits which may eventually be more reflected in the traditional investment landscape.

Investment Playbook

EQUITIES

Stock Ticker	Stock Information (as at December 30, 2022)	Comments
WISYNCO Wisynco Group Limited	P/E: 15.10x P/B: 3.47x Price: $17.67 Div Yield 1.7%	**OVERWEIGHT** Throughout the pandemic, Wisynco has managed to improve its operational efficiency but given the effects of COVID-19 on industries such as tourism and education, the Company was unable to deliver significant revenue growth. Now, with tourism rebounding and schools operating at a greater level, Wisynco has married its improved operational efficiency with stronger revenue growth, allowing for significant net profit growth. As tourism is expected to continue growing towards its pre-pandemic level of output, we expect Wisynco to continue to perform well. Wisynco Equity Report
JMMBGL JMMB Group Limited	P/E: 6.59x P/B: 1.39x Price: $32.95 Div Yield 2.58%	**OVERWEIGHT** Given its relatively low P/E ratio and considering the Group's consistently strong performance throughout the pandemic, the market has been underpricing JMMBGL significantly relative to its local counterparts. JMMBGL's price has declined by 15.7% YTD which provides investors with an opportunity to acquire JMMBGL shares at a more attractive price. The the long-term outlook for the company and the stock remains favorable, buoyed by an expanding regional footprint. JMMB Equity Report
MASSY Massy Holdings Limited	P/E: 8.83x P/B: 1.02x Price: $79.97 Div Yield 3.34%	**OVERWEIGHT** Massy Holdings Limited. (MHL, Massy), through its portfolio companies, engages in trading, manufacturing, distribution, and service industry businesses throughout the Caribbean region. The company operates through three portfolios: Integrated Retail, Gas Products, Motors, and Machine and two business lines: Financial Services, and Strategic and Other Investments. In financial year 2020, Massy transitioned from a Conglomerate to an Investment Holding Company. By so doing, Massy's strategy has changed, with the Group focusing mainly on its core portfolios. These core areas of the business represent Massy's competitive advantages, are well-positioned to scale, and are therefore expected to drive strategic growth going forward. Massy Equity Report

Ratings Definitions

OVERWEIGHT/BUY

Exposure to this asset should be between 5% and 10% of your total portfolio

UNDERWEIGHT

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LASD **Lasco Distributors**	P/E: 8.11x P/B: 1.20x Price: $2.59 Div Yield 2.51%	**OVERWEIGHT** Our expectation is for the Company to continue along its growth trajectory, supported by the improving economic backdrop of the global economy, which should manifest through continued domestic demand for goods and services. With increased stopover arrivals and the reopening of key industries such as entertainment and education (face-to-face teaching), there are sufficient catalysts to spur further growth in 2022. However, this isn't without challenges as the global supply bottleneck has affected LASD's margins. In response, management has prudently managed operational costs such that higher imported inflationary has not completely eroded the bottom line, resulting in continued growth. Lasco Distributors Equity Report
SCIJMD/SCIUSD **Sygnus Credit Investments**	P/E: 12.26x / 13.84x P/B: 0.73x / 0.82x Price: $12.67 / $0.09 Div Yield: 2.83% / 2.65%	**OVERWEIGHT** Sygnus' business model is built on providing capital and direction to the underbanked, targeting the middle market. To accomplish this, the Company has executed several equity raises, the most recent of which was its APO launch in December 2020. Sygnus has demonstrated their commitment to growth and being the market leader in the regional private credit space with their acquisition of a Puerto Rico-based, private credit firm, Acrecent Financial in Q3 of their financial year. The stock trades at significant discount relative to peers both from a P/E perspective and a P/B perspective. At present, given Sygnus' strong current and expected future growth, the market is pricing Sygnus at a steep discount to its book value per share.
TROPICAL **Tropical Battery Limited**	P/E: 14.54x P/B: 2.85x Price: $2.21 Div Yield 0.45%	**OVERWEIGHT** Tropical Battery has been aggressively pursuing revenue diversification strategies, to reduce its dependence on auto battery and accessory sales. This is evident by the company's recent launch of three new subsidiaries aimed at providing renewable energy solutions for commercial customers. In addition, the company recently implemented a new inventory management system that has yielded improved operational efficiencies in addition to targeted sales initiatives that have improved revenue growth. We believe that the Company will continue to grow as they build out new revenue lines, improve operational efficiencies and drive targeted sales initiatives. Tropical Battery Equity Report

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PROVENJMD/ PROVENUSD Proven Group Limited	P/E: 16.95x / 17.51x P/B: 1.14x / 1.11x Price: $28.08 / $0.19 Div Yield: 4.17% / 4.09%	**OVERWEIGHT** Proven has shown a decline in profitability throughout the current financial year, a performance driven by lower share of earnings of associates and higher operating expenses. The company continues to demonstrate its appetite for growth through acquisitions as evidenced by the recent 100% acquisition of Fidelity Bank (Cayman). The company has a history of acquiring companies with accretive value. We expect that profit margins will improve in the future as one-off spending related to recent acquisitions pass.
LUMBER Lumber Depot Limited	P/E:12.23x P/B: 3.65x Price: $2.69 Div Yield 2.23%	**OVERWEIGHT** Lumber represents an option to gain exposure to the construction sector which has been a relatively resilient and fast-growing sector. With this sector tailwind, lumber has shown strong revenue growth since its 2019 listing and the financial year 2022 revenue and net profit are 10.1% and 26.8% higher than financial year 2021 revenue and earnings, respectively. We are still monitoring how the company progresses given the loosening of restrictions and continued growth in the construction sector. We also note that despite the growth it has shown over the last 2 years, the stock still trades at an attractive PE compared to Junior market peers. Lumber Depot Equity Report
LAB The Limners and Bards Limited	P/E: 17.25x P/B: 4.54x Price: $2.76 Div Yield 3.99%	**OVERWEIGHT** The LAB is the only listed Creative Agency on the JSE. Throughout the pandemic, the demand for the services provided by the Company has been strong. In FY2021 alone, revenue grew by 35%, an indication of the demand for the Company's services while net profit grew by 22%. With consistently positive cash flows and a cash balance that is 1.36x larger than the Company's current liabilities, we believe the Lab is poised to invest its capital efficiently towards further growth. The first step towards this is the Lab's brainchild, "SCOPE Caribbean". To date, SCOPE has not been profitable which has negatively impacted the Lab's net profit growth. This is not abnormal for a new business, and we expect this should turnaround as the business scales. The LAB Equity Report

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JBG Jamaica Broilers Group Limited	P/E: 7.23x P/B: 1.61x Price: $31 Div Yield 1.39%	**OVERWEIGHT** JBG's financial performance has rebounded nicely from the lows seen in FY2020, driven by the recovery in the Jamaican economy and tourist arrivals, coupled with JBG's growing presence in the US market and the increasing production of the Best Dressed Chicken line of products. Despite efforts made to decrease the impact of its Haiti operations, it continued to weigh on group performance. Positive results from expansion into the United States and recovery in Jamaican operations have offset poor performance in Haiti, resulting in increased sales and profitability in FY2022, as well as a return to operating cash inflows. Jamaica Broilers Group Equity Report
GK GraceKennedy Limited	P/E: 10.66x P/B: 1.2x Price: $83.22 Div Yield 2.32%	**MARKETWEIGHT** For the nine months ended September 30, 2022, GK reported significant top-line growth, however, margin deterioration contributed to a decline in the bottom line. Revenues increased by 12.2% and profits remained flat as operating expenses grew at a rate of 13.6%. The company cited challenges presented by high inflation globally, sustained supply chain issues, increasing interest rates, and foreign currency volatility as issues that have affected profit margins. GK continues to advance its merger & acquisition (M&A) strategy, following the acquisition of Bluedot in the second quarter of 2022, the company continues to seek M&A transactions locally and internationally. These acquisitions stand to add more diversity and growth to the company's earnings. GraceKennedy Group Equity Report
LASM Lasco Manufacturing	P/E: 9.74x P/B: 1.76x Price: $4.22 Div Yield 1.72%	**MARKETWEIGHT** Our expectation is for the Company, like others, to continue benefiting from an improving local economic backdrop. There has been an increase in the revenue growth rate for the six months ended September 30, 2022, when compared to the financial year ended June 30, 2022. However, this was partially offset by a slight reduction in the gross profit margin, owing to global supply chain issues and the general inflationary environment. Lasco Manufacturing Equity Report

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SEP Seprod Limited	P/E: 20.46x P/B: 1.87x Price: $71 Div Yield 1.83%	**MARKETWEIGHT** Seprod has experienced a deterioration in its cost of sales, owing to global supply chain issues and other inflationary pressures. Despite this, instead of raising prices to consumers by a similar magnitude, Seprod has absorbed some of these costs which have affected profitability. Profits have increased over the 9-month period ended September 30, 2022, however, margins have deteriorated. Therefore, the uncertainty regarding the cost of goods remains a threat to Group profit growth, especially given the current inflationary environment. The Group has acquired A.S Bryden, which will diversify the Group's revenue further and is expected to be accretive. Seprod Equity Report
MAILPAC Mailpac Group Limited	P/E: 14.43x P/B: 8.63x Price: $2.02 Div Yield 5.45%	**MARKETWEIGHT** During the peak periods of the pandemic, MAILPAC benefited immensely as online shopping became a larger share of shoppers' wallets. In large part, this period of heavy COVID-19 fear has reduced and while we anticipate online shopping will remain integral for the everyday consumer, the outsized growth we witnessed in FY2020 will likely soften further. Admittedly, the Company has a robust balance sheet with more cash than total liabilities which we believe places MAILPAC in a position to make growth-inducing investments. The current slowdown in demand and consequently revenue and profit growth, matched with the Company's strong balance sheet underscores our MARKETWEIHT recommendation Mailpac Group Equity Report
SGJ Scotia Group Jamaica Limited	P/E: 9.13x P/B: 0.96x Price: $34.23 Div Yield 4.53%	**MARKETWEIGHT** The greatest driver of profitability in FY2021 was the reduction of Expected Credit Losses (ECL) relative to the previous year as the economic backdrop improved. Scotia is not likely to have this benefit recur to the magnitude it did in FY2021. The group has made an accelerated effort to digitize its business in line with its digital strategy to drive efficiency and better service customer needs. SGJ is looking to further consolidate its operations and funnel investments in core operations through technology and talent, while also looking to enter new markets and launch new products. Scotia has two major positives. The first is that the current rising interest rate environment supports the Group's bank model, more so than other listed financial institutions. The second is that SGJ is a consistent source of relatively attractive dividends which makes the Company a good asset for investors with a clear preference for income. Scotia Group Equity Report

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FTNA Fontan Limited	P/E: 17.51x P/B: 4.96x Price: $8.93 Div Yield 2.02%	**MARKETWEIGHT** Fontana has been growing and expanding since listing on the junior exchange in 2019. The Company has plans to expand, which include a new outlet to bring its footprint to a total of seven locations. In its most recent quarter, Net Profit saw a 43.3% increase over the same quarter in the prior financial year. Further, the cost of sales has been impacted given the current inflationary environment and is likely to continue being affected in the near to medium term. However, the company continues to grow organically and is financially positioned to do so. Due to the current environment and increased finance costs, profitability could dampen in the near term but in the long term, the addition of its new outlet could support growth. On balance, the Company has both significant risks and the potential for upside, which underscores our recommendation. Fontana Equity Report
SVL Supreme Ventures Limited	P/E: 28.07x P/B: 18.58x Price: $29.93 Div Yield 2.67%	**MARKETWEIGHT** Supreme Ventures is the market leader in the lottery and gaming industry. The company has also in recent years embarked on an aggressive growth strategy through several acquisitions (Champion Gaming and Post To Post Betting). The company would have been impacted by the pandemic as the lockdown measures impacted its operations at Caymanas Park. With the easing of restrictions, the Company should benefit from an easing of lock down restrictions and a normalization of business. Despite this, in the medium term we note that the company now has competition in the lottery segment of the market which may negatively impact margins. The degree to which this might impede the pace of revenue growth will however depend on the take up of new games such as Scratchaz which, at present, seems popular amongst younger consumers as it is a new addition to the Company's product offerings. Supreme Ventures Equity Report
ECL Express Catering Limited	P/E: 46.97x P/B: 16.59x Price: $5.14 N/A	**MARKETWEIGHT** ECL has seen improved performance as the tourism industry rebound, following the pandemic, has been robust. However, the Company is not currently operating at pre-covid efficiency levels, as price increases due to the current global supply chain challenges have driven higher costs across all product categories. While we do expect the tourism industry to continue to recover, driving ECL's revenues to grow and likely surpass pre-covid levels by FY2023/FY2024, the inflationary pressures can not be ignored. Longer-term we do expect the company to reap the benefits of their expanded footprint within the Sangsters International Airport as well as the return to trend growth in stopover arrivals. ECL Equity Report

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Investment Playbook

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Stock Ticker	Stock Information (as at December 30, 2022)	Comments
VMIL Victoria Mutual Investments Limited	P/E: 21.16x P/B: 2.01x Price: $4.02 Div Yield 3.86%	**OVERWEIGHT** Victoria Mutual has recently rebranded under the "VM Group". By association, there has been implications for VMIL. For example, the Company has been significantly more active in the capital markets through its investment banking arm. We expect continued growth in the investment banking space will add considerable value to the Company's bottom line which has already shown clear improvement throughout FY2021. VMIL Equity Report

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Monitoring List

EQUITIES

Stock Ticker	Stock Information (as at December 30, 2022)	Comments
MDS Medical Disposable Supplies	P/E: 13.25x P/B: 1.1x Price: $4.77 Div Yield 1.47%	Medical Disposables and Supplies have quietly been diversifying its revenue streams over the last 2 years. This is inclusive of its purchase of 60% of Cornwall Medical and Dental Supplies(CMDL) which has been consolidated into the company's financials as of their second quarter 2021. This increases the company's exposure to the dental supplies space and expands their reach into the western end of the island. The company has also shifted to providing more confectionary products and we believe its expansion and diversification efforts are worth watching.
SOS Stationery & Office Supplies Limited	P/E: 14.71x P/B: 4.79x Price: $16.92 Div Yield 0.95%	Stationery and Office Supplies presents investors with another option to benefit from the reopening of the domestic economy. A core segment of their business would have suffered from the lockdown measures and work from home, namely the sale of furniture and its SEEK line of books. However, during that period stationary sales have done well to fill that revenue gap. With the resumption of economic activity, the return to office and the expansion in the BPO sector, SOS might be a large beneficiary in 2022.
SJ Sagicor Group Jamaica Limited	P/E: 15.3x P/B: 2.1x Price: $56.91 Div Yield 1.95%	Sagicor Group Jamaica Limited would have been adversely impacted by the pandemic even more so than the typical financial sector company due to their exposure to the tourism sector. This would have therefore led to sizeable impairment losses on their investment in associated companies (I.e., Playa Hotel and Resorts). For 2022 we therefore expect to see some amount of recovery as the group has disposed of their investments in Playa which will stem impairment losses while simultaneously still having direct exposure to travel through their US resort (The Hilton DoubleTree) while their banking services should benefit from a pickup in economic activity.

***The "Monitoring List" represents stocks that are on our radar as our initial expectation for these companies is positive. However, no official recommendation is presented as these stocks are still being evaluated.*

Unit Trust

Unit Trust Fund	28/12/2022	21/12/2022	Week/Week Return	Year-to-Date Return	1 Year Return	Yield
Capital Growth	90.95	90.71	0.26%	-1.09%	1.86%	-
Money Market	15.5275	15.5153	0.08%	1.99%	2.45%	4.29%
Income Portfolio	100.00	100.00	-	-	-	4.76%
FX Bond Portfolio	1.3391	1.3403	-0.09%	-2.84%	-2.65%	3.86%
Real Estate Portfolio	5,194.14	5,204.15	-0.19%	879.90%	924.49%	-
FX Growth Portfolio	0.8363	0.8527	-1.92%	-22.71%	-23.09%	-

“Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago.”

Warren Buffett

LOCAL EQUITY MARKET

For the week ended December 30, 2022, the local stock market as measured by the Combined Index advanced by 3.05%. The Main Market Index advanced by 3.17%, the JSE Junior Market Index advanced by 2.00%, and the JSE USD Equities Index declined by 7.37%. During the week, Stanley Motta Limited was the largest ordinary equity gainer, rising by approximately 26.29% to close at $5.14. The biggest decliner was Productive Business Solution Ltd USD Ordinary Shares, which fell by 14.96% to close at $1.80.

Small-cap stocks, reflecting those listed on the Junior Market Index have outperformed, growing by 16.28%, outpacing its Main Market counterpart which has declined 10.16%. It must be noted that the Junior market has retreated substantially from the highs achieved during the summer.

For the week ended December 30, 2022, overall market activity resulted from trading in 121 stocks, of which, 62 advanced, 48 declined and 11 traded firm. Market volume amounted to 255,331,282 units valued at over $1,826,954,956.01. Kingston Properties Limited was the volume leader with 136,112,985 units (52.88%), followed by Wigton Windfarm Limited Ordinary Shares with 52,361,439 *units (13.25%)*, and Regency Petroleum Co. Limited with 7,053,366 units (2.74%).

Revisiting relevant news during the week:

TransJamaican Highway deal moving forward

Following the requisite consent from most of its bondholders, TransJamaican Highway Limited (TJH) will move forward with the proposed changes to various agreements which will pave the way for it to acquire Jamaican Infrastructure Operator Limited (JIO).
TransJamaican Highway deal moving forward

Ultra Financier deploys $250 million in loans

Ultra Financier Limited has demonstrated proof of concept in under two months as it lent $250 million (US$1.63 million) in the burgeoning luxury asset-based lending space in Jamaica.
Ultra Financier deploys $250 million in loans

CinemaOne readies for rights issue

CinemaOne Limited (Cine1) is bullish on the cinematic space in Trinidad and Tobago as it gears up for its rights issue next month despite incurring losses for the third-consecutive year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
CinemaOne readies for rights issue

$535 billion investment targeted

Jamaican developer Seve7n Builders Jamaica Limited has signed an investment agreement with Canadian financier Alpina Boutique Investment to undertake eight projects over the next six years which could run into the hundreds of billions of dollars.
$535 billion investment targeted

Done deal! Shareholders approve JP, PanJam merger

Shareholders of Jamaica Producers Group Limited (JP Group) and PanJam Investment Limited gave their stamp of approval last Thursday to the proposed merger of the entities as they voted in favour of the various resolutions at the respective extraordinary general meetings (EGM)
Done deal! Shareholders approve JP, PanJam merger

Delta Capital to roll out payment cards in 2023

The Zachary Harding-led Delta Capital Partners is now finalising its acquisition of the Massycard (Barbados) Limited portfolio with a view to launch rebranded cards in the first quarter of next year before expanding its prepaid debit card business to other territories in the Caribbean
Delta Capital to roll out payment cards in 2023

Index	30/12/2022	23/12/2022	31/12/2021	Week/Week	Year-to-Date
JSE Main Market	355,896.64	344,963.23	396,155.61	3.17%	-10.16%
JSE Junior Market	3,986.44	3,908.35	3,428.30	2.00%	16.28%
JSE Combined Market	368,591.98	357,675.83	401,130.23	3.05%	-8.11%
JSE USD Equities Market	233.97	252.58	195.51	-7.37%	19.67%
JSE Financial Index	85.88	83.14	98.05	3.30%	-12.41%
JSE M&D Idex	97.42	95.43	100.38	2.09%	-2.95%

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

U.S.

Stocks close out down year on down note in thin trading

The major indexes ended mostly lower in a second week of light holiday trading, although the S&P 500 Index remained above its intraday low recorded the week before. Consumer staples and materials shares fell the most, while consumer discretionary shares were resilient, thanks in part to strength in Target and several other retailers. A highly publicized wave of flight cancellations pushed shares of Southwest Airlines sharply lower when trading opened Tuesday, but the airline recaptured some ground as the week progressed. Bond trading closed early on Friday, and both equity and bond markets were scheduled to be closed on Monday in observance of the New Year's Day holiday.

Positive signals on supply chains and manufacturing prices

The Richmond Fed's index of manufacturing activity in the Mid-Atlantic region brought some good news, recording its first positive reading in eight months. While wages continued to increase in December at a solid pace, supply chains also eased, helping to send prices paid and received lower and leaving inflation expectations for the coming year "much lower than current price trends." Weekly jobless claims rose from 215,000 to 225,000, in line with expectations and still below their mid-November peak of 241,000.

Longer-term yields touch highest level since mid-November

The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note rose over the week, touching its highest intraday level since November 14 on Friday morning (Bond prices and yields move in opposite directions). Our traders noted that the positive economic surprises appeared to be one factor pushing Treasury yields higher, although the prospect of faster economic growth in China also played a role. The broad tax-exempt bond market logged negative returns through most of the week, as municipal bonds continued to see outflows, likely reflecting year-end tax-loss harvesting by investors.

Europe

ECB policymakers press for more rate hikes

Dutch central bank Governor Klaas Knot, one of the more hawkish members of the European Central Bank's (ECB) Governing Council, said in an interview with the Financial Times newspaper that the ECB would achieve "quite a decent pace of tightening" through half-percentage-point increases in the deposit rate—now at 2%—at its next five policy meetings. Knot also opined that any recession would be "short and shallow" and suggested that recent economic data in some eurozone countries, such as Germany, showed that "the worst...may already be behind us.".

UK house prices decline for fourth month; more UK workers unveil strike plans

UK house prices contracted for a fourth consecutive month in December as higher mortgage rates continued to depress the market, according to a survey by Nationwide, a mortgage provider. The cost of a house fell 0.1% month over month. On a year-over-year basis, house price growth slowed to 2.8% from 4.4% in November. The list of UK workers mainly in the public sector striking or planning to undertake other actions in a bid for better pay and working conditions increased, raising concerns that the Bank of England may hike interest rates over a longer period to prevent inflation from becoming entrenched. The list includes nurses, ambulance drivers, some doctors and teachers, rail and postal workers, airport baggage handlers, border security agents, highway workers, civil servants, bus drivers, firefighters, charity workers, and meteorologists.

Japan

Japanese equities began the final week of 2022 positively, recording early gains amid thin holiday trade. Having fallen to three-month lows on Thursday, the Nikkei 225 clawed back some lost ground on Friday, but ended down 0.54% for the week and down 9.37% for the year, it first annual loss in four years. In the currency market, the yen rebounded late in the week after the Bank of Japan announced a raft of unscheduled bond purchases.

T.RowePrice Market Data

Index	30/12/2022	23/12/2022	31/12/2021	Week/Week	Year-to-Date
Dow Jones	33,147.25	33,203.93	36,338.30	-0.17%	-8.78%
S&P 500	3,839.50	3,844.82	4,766.18	-0.14%	-19.44%
NASDAQ 100	10,939.76	10,985.45	16,320.08	-0.42%	-32.97%
FTSE 100	7,451.74	7,473.01	7,384.54	-0.28%	0.91%
Euro Stoxx 50	3,793.62	3,817.01	4,298.41	-0.61%	-11.74%

ABOUT US

> **Barita Investments Limited**, is a publicly-traded company on the JSE, 74.3% owned by Cornerstone Financial Holdings Limited (“Cornerstone”).

The Barita Group is made up of Barita Investments Limited and its subsidiary, Barita Unit Trusts Management Company Limited (BUTM). Founded by Rita Humphries-Lewin in 1977, Barita has the distinction of being one of the oldest stock brokerages in Jamaica. The Company is regulated by the Financial Services Commission (FSC), is a member of the JSE and is licensed as a Primary Dealer and Cambio Dealer by the Bank of Jamaica (BOJ or the Central Bank). In August 2018, Cornerstone Financial Holdings Limited (Cornerstone or CFHL) acquired majority shares in Barita and has supported the Company’s mission and vision to be a premier investment force in Jamaica and the wider Caribbean.

OUR PRODUCTS AND SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Stock Market investments on any of the three regional exchanges
- Fixed Income Trading
- Investment Banking Services
- Unit Trust Investments
- Currency Trading
- Structured Products
- Retirement Planning
- Wealth Planning
- Market Research

BUTM currently offers six (6) unit trust products spanning fixed income, equities and real estate and is recognised as a strong player in the middle market retail segment and a leader in unit trust performance.

Barita serves its clients island-wide through its Head Office in Kingston and branches in Mandeville and Montego Bay with a team of 163 members across its operations island-wide.

Contact us

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Website: www.barita.com