The

Pre-Market

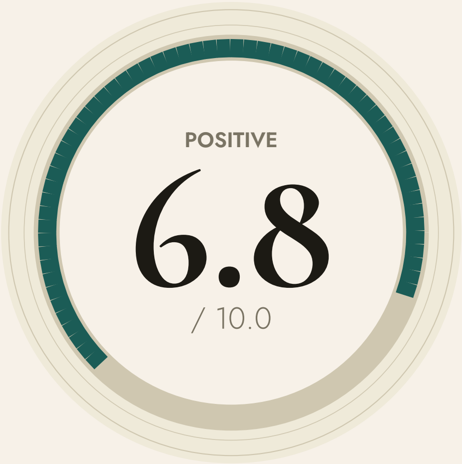
VOLUME I · ISSUE NO. 13

THE PRE-MARKET

A Sunday Read

A Weekly Sentiment & Event-Driven Brief

Sunday, August 16, 2026 · For the week of August 17 — 21



CONFIDENCE SCORE

8.0+	6.5–7.9	5.0–6.4	3.5–4.9	<3.5
Strongly Bullish	Positive ◂	Neutral	Cautious	Bearish

"Inflation cooled, small caps hit a record, and the consumer stopped spending. Two of those three are the story. Retail earnings decide which."

IN THIS ISSUE

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The Week Ahead

What we're watching · August 17 – 21, 2026

Inflation cooperated while the consumer chose not to. July CPI landed at +0.1% on the month and 3.4% on the year, cooler than the +0.2% consensus, with core at 2.5%. PPI came in flat on the month and decelerated from 5.5% to 4.7% annually. Then Friday delivered retail sales at −0.6%, the control group at −0.4%, and online −2.2%. Disinflation and a spending stall arrived in the same five days.

The tape took the good half. SPY closed at a record 776.34 and the Russell 2000 finished at an all-time high of 3,068.42 after touching 3,069.71 intraday. The Nasdaq-100, +1.09%, is still below its May 29 record close. Energy led everything at +7.67%, oil +7.31%, and the VIX drifted to 14.25.

> *"The long end sold off into the softest inflation print of the summer. When bonds refuse a gift, the gift is not what the tape thinks it is."*

Underneath, two trades carried everything. Memory went parabolic — SanDisk +35.4% after an investor day that locked in roughly half of fiscal 2027 bit supply, Western Digital +17.2%, Micron +10.7%. Energy squeezed in every direction: Marathon Petroleum +19.2%, Phillips 66 +14.6%, Valero +14.5%, ConocoPhillips +7.8%. Super Micro +28.0%, CoreWeave +16.1%. The damage sat in China tech and consumer names — Coherent −14.1%, JD.com −11.9%, Lucid −11.7%, Hims & Hers −10.9%, AppLovin −9.0%.

The score moves up to positive because the inflation constraint loosened and the tape confirmed it at the index level, not just in the mega-caps. Small caps at an all-time high is a breadth fact, and it is the first one this cycle that has not needed a Fed cut to justify it. What holds the score below seven is the consumer. Walmart, Home Depot, Target, Lowe's, TJX and Ross all report into a week that begins with Friday's retail sales figure already on the board. Six guides in four days will settle whether Friday was a July distortion or the start of something.

SCORE COMPONENTS

CALENDAR	**6.5**/ 10	*FOMC minutes Wed, flash PMIs Fri*
SENTIMENT	**8.0**/ 10	*SPY record, Russell all-time high, VIX 14.25*
MACRO / FED	**6.0**/ 10	*CPI 3.4%, PPI 4.7%, retail sales −0.6%*
EVENT CATALYST	**7.0**/ 10	*WMT, HD, TGT, LOW, TJX, ROST, DE, ADI*

WHAT MOVES THE SCORE

Strongly Bullish (8.0+) on Walmart and Home Depot both raising full-year guidance with the Russell holding above 3,050, which would make Friday's retail sales figure a one-month distortion. Neutral (<6.5) on two or more of the six retailers cutting guidance, the 30-year pushing through 5.35%, or the flash composite PMI dropping below 53.

Composite Confidence Score (CCS) = 0.25 × Calendar + 0.25 × Sentiment + 0.30 × Macro + 0.20 × Event Catalyst. Score interpretation: 8.0+ Strongly Bullish · 6.5–7.9 Positive · 5.0–6.4 Neutral · 3.5–4.9 Cautious · <3.5 Bearish.

The Macro Calendar

No inflation print, one set of minutes, a housing and PMI week

The heavy data is behind us. This week is housing on Tuesday, the July 28—29 FOMC minutes on Wednesday afternoon, and the August flash PMIs on Friday morning. The minutes are the one release with real information in them: that meeting produced a 9—3 hold and the first three-way same-direction dissent since September 2016, and the transcript will show how close the hike vote actually was. Jackson Hole is the following week, August 27—29.

DAY	RELEASE	IMPORTANCE	THE READ
Mon Aug 17	Empire State Mfg, 8:30	Low	August, est 10.2 after 15.6.
Mon Aug 17	NAHB Housing Index, 10:00	Low	Est 35 vs 34. Builders still depressed.
Tue Aug 18	Housing Starts, 8:30	Moderate	Est 1.390M after 1.427M; permits 1.380M.
Tue Aug 18	Industrial Production, 9:15	Moderate	Est +0.2%; capacity use 76.3%.
Wed Aug 19	**FOMC Minutes, 14:00**	**HIGH**	July 28—29. Three dissents, all for a hike.
Wed Aug 19	EIA Crude Stocks, 10:30	Moderate	Est −1.5M after −1.2M. Oil +7.3% last week.
Thu Aug 20	Philly Fed, 8:30	Moderate	Est 8.5 after a 41.4 outlier. Claims 225k.
Fri Aug 21	**S&P Flash PMIs, 9:45**	**HIGH**	Composite est 54.1 after 54.5.

MACRO RISK WATCH · FOUR STRESS POINTS

- **The consumer — spending contracted in July.**
  Retail sales −0.6% on the month, ex-autos −0.3%, and the control group that feeds directly into GDP −0.4%. Online −2.2%, auto dealers −1.8%, clothing +1.9%, restaurants +0.5%, so this is not a collapse in discretionary appetite — it is a step down in the big ticket. The year-over-year rate decelerated from 6.8% to 5.0%. Six retail guides land Tuesday through Friday, and they will read that number back to us with margin attached.

- **Inflation — the constraint loosened on both sides.**
  Headline CPI came in at +0.1% in July against a +0.2% consensus and the annual rate eased to 3.4% from 3.5%. Core ran +0.2% with the annual rate at 2.5%, down from 2.6%. The producer side moved further: headline PPI was flat on the month and decelerated from 5.5% to 4.7% annually, with core PPI at 4.2%. Falling producer inflation ahead of consumer inflation is the sequence that usually holds. Fed funds remain at 3.50—3.75%.

- **The long end — it sold off through a soft print.**
  The 10-year rose from 4.66% to 4.70% and the 30-year from 5.21% to 5.26% during a week that delivered cooler CPI, cooler PPI and a negative retail sales figure. TLT −0.87%. That is a term-premium market, not an inflation market, and $125 billion of quarterly refunding settling Monday is the immediate reason. If duration will not rally on disinflation and a weak consumer, the constraint on equity multiples is supply rather than the Fed.

- **Energy — the price ran while the money left.**
  XLE +7.67% and oil +7.31%, the best sector week of the summer, with refiners leading: Marathon Petroleum +19.2%, Phillips 66 +14.6%, Valero +14.5%. At the same time Strategas data shows roughly $4.0 billion pulled from energy funds over 65 trading days, the largest stretch of outflows since mid-2025, and XLE alone lost $797 million in August for a fifth consecutive monthly outflow. In March the same funds took in a record $12.5 billion. Price and flow have fully decoupled.

The Divergence

Small caps made a record. The consumer stopped spending.

The Russell 2000 closed Friday at 3,068.42, an all-time high, on the same morning the Census Bureau reported July retail sales at −0.6% with the control group at −0.4%. Small caps are the most domestically exposed and most consumer-levered index in the market. They set a record on the day the consumer data went negative.

The bond market did not play along either. Cooler CPI, cooler PPI and a contracting consumer should be a duration rally. Instead the 10-year rose four basis points to 4.70% and the 30-year five to 5.26%, with Monday's refunding settlement doing the pushing. Equities priced the disinflation and ignored the spending; Treasuries priced the supply and ignored both. One of those desks is reading the week wrong.

WATCH LIST

Supporting the setup

- Headline CPI 3.4% from 3.5%; core 2.5% from 2.6%
- PPI decelerated from 5.5% to 4.7% year-over-year
- Russell 2000 record close at 3,068.42
- Unemployment fell to 4.1%; VIX closed at 14.25
- Ten of eleven S&P sectors finished the week green

Threats to the setup

- Retail sales −0.6%; control group −0.4%; online −2.2%
- 30-year rose to 5.26% into the softest print of the summer
- Nasdaq-100 still below its May 29 record close
- Consumer discretionary was the worst sector at −1.38%
- Energy funds have shed ~$4.0B over 65 trading days

THE FRICTION TRADE · four names carrying the divergence

SanDisk
SNDK
+35.38%
Investor day locked in FY27 bits
MKT CAP $243.03B
52W $43.20 — $2,354.39

Marathon Petro
MPC
+19.19%
Crack spreads with oil up 7.3%
MKT CAP $103.76B
52W $160.87 — $360.10

Coherent
COHR
−14.06%
Optics funded the memory bid
MKT CAP $63.75B
52W $84.35 — $440.00

Home Depot
HD
−4.71%
Reports Tuesday into a −0.6% print
MKT CAP $337.88B
52W $289.10 — $426.75

Weekly returns measured August 7 close to August 14 close. SanDisk and Marathon are the two live scarcity trades — one in bits, one in refined barrels — and both ran without a single macro release helping them. Coherent is what paid for it: capital left datacenter optics for memory in the same five sessions. Home Depot is the control group, marked down all week ahead of a Tuesday print that now has a negative retail sales figure sitting underneath it.

THE OPTIONS MATH · modeled weekly contracts, August 7 to August 14

CONTRACT	AUG 7	AUG 14	RETURN
SNDK $1,300 call, weekly	$23.90	$341.11	**+1,327%**
SMCI $33 call, weekly	$0.46	$6.84	**+1,387%**
MPC $310 call, weekly	$2.85	$45.42	**+1,494%**
WDC $450 call, weekly	$8.10	$58.80	**+626%**
COHR $360 put, weekly	$5.90	$34.17	**+479%**

Contract values are modeled Black-Scholes at 70% implied volatility on SanDisk, 78% on Super Micro, 44% on Marathon, 62% on Western Digital and 66% on Coherent, seven calendar days to expiry, priced to the Friday close. Spreads on four-figure strikes like SanDisk are wide enough that the quoted entry flatters the result. Each of these also had to survive Wednesday, when the CPI print landed and the memory complex went sideways for a session. The cash returns in the cards above are the honest read of the week.

Last Week's Movers

Two scarcity trades did almost all of the work

SPY +0.40%, QQQ +1.11%, IWM +1.17%: the index move was modest and the dispersion underneath it was not. Memory and energy took the week outright — SanDisk +35.38%, Super Micro +27.98%, Marathon Petroleum +19.19%, Western Digital +17.15%, Micron +10.72%. Ten of eleven S&P sectors finished green, with consumer discretionary the only red one. The losses clustered in China tech and in whatever had to be sold to fund the memory bid — Coherent −14.06%, JD.com −11.86%, AppLovin −9.04%, Broadcom −8.13%. Weekly returns run Fri Aug 7 close to Fri Aug 14 close. On each card the rail spans the 52-week range; the shaded segment traces the week's move and the dot marks Friday's close.

THE WEEK'S BIGGEST WINNERS

SanDisk *SNDK* **MKT CAP $243.03B**

▲ 35.38%
$1,212.22 › $1,641.11

52W $43.20 — $2,354.39

CATALYST · HALF OF FY27 BIT SUPPLY ALREADY COMMITTED

SanDisk used its August 13 investor day to disclose agreements covering roughly 50% of fiscal 2027 bit output and about two-thirds of fiscal 2028, and the stock closed the week at $1,641.11. The most recent quarter put revenue at $5.95B, up 251%, with datacenter revenue up 645%. RBC and Wells Fargo both raised targets the same day while staying at Sector Perform and Equal-Weight, which is the whole tension: the demand is not in dispute, the multiple is.

Super Micro Computer *SMCI* **MKT CAP $25.77B**

▲ 27.98%
$31.13 › $39.84

52W $19.48 — $58.78

CATALYST · AI SERVER BID WITHOUT THE ANALYSTS

Super Micro closed at $39.84, +27.98%, in a week when Citi, Goldman and Mizuho all raised targets to $34—$39 while holding Neutral, Sell and Neutral ratings. Nine covering analysts average $37.78, below Friday's close, and only 22% are bullish. This is a rack-level beneficiary of the memory build-out trading well past where the sell side will follow it.

Marathon Petroleum *MPC* **MKT CAP $103.76B**

▲ 19.19%
$298.20 › $355.42

52W $160.87 — $360.10

CATALYST · REFINING MARGINS WITH CRUDE UP 7.3%

Marathon closed at $355.42, within 1.3% of its 52-week high, as the refining complex ran with oil. Phillips 66 +14.57% and Valero +14.54% in the same five sessions. Fourteen analysts average a $302.43 target, well below the close, which means the group has now outrun published estimates rather than being pulled by them.

ALSO GREEN LAST WEEK

Oscar Health *OSCR*	$27.90 › $32.76	▲ 17.42%
Western Digital *WDC*	$434.31 › $508.80	▲ 17.15%
CoreWeave *CRWV*	$90.67 › $105.26	▲ 16.09%
Intuitive Machines *LUNR*	$16.40 › $19.01	▲ 15.91%
MongoDB *MDB*	$398.80 › $460.33	▲ 15.43%
Micron Technology *MU*	$877.58 › $971.66	▲ 10.72%

cont. · Last Week's Movers

THE WEEK'S BIGGEST LOSERS

Coherent *COHR* MKT CAP $63.75B

▼ 14.06%
$379.14 › $325.83

CATALYST · OPTICS SOLD TO PAY FOR MEMORY

52W $84.35 — $440.00

Coherent closed at $325.83, −14.06%, without a company-specific catalyst, in the same week SanDisk ran +35% and Western Digital +17%. Datacenter optics and datacenter memory compete for the same allocation inside an AI-infrastructure book, and last week that allocation moved. The stock is now 26% below its $440 high while the wider AI complex sits near records.

JD.com *JD* MKT CAP $40.80B

▼ 11.86%
$32.97 › $29.06

CATALYST · CHINA E-COMMERCE MARKED DOWN AGAIN

52W $24.51 — $36.86

JD.com closed at $29.06, −11.86%, with PDD −7.60%, Baidu −5.51%, NetEase −5.37% and Alibaba −3.58% alongside it. The whole China internet group traded as one position. JD now sits closer to its 52-week low of $24.51 than to its $36.86 high on a $40.8B market capitalization, which prices a domestic consumer that has not reaccelerated.

AppLovin *APP* MKT CAP $105.97B

▼ 9.04%
$346.79 › $315.44

CATALYST · 58% OFF THE HIGH AND STILL DE-RATING

52W $303.17 — $745.61

AppLovin closed at $315.44, −9.04%, roughly 4% above its 52-week low and 58% below a $745.61 high set earlier this year. The ad-tech multiple compression that took The Trade Desk apart last quarter has now reached the name that was supposed to be immune to it. Nothing in the week explains the move beyond continued distribution.

ALSO RED LAST WEEK

TMC the metals co. *TMC*	$4.57 › $4.01	▼ 12.25%
Hims & Hers Health *HIMS*	$31.59 › $28.15	▼ 10.89%
Oklo *OKLO*	$48.42 › $44.38	▼ 8.34%
Broadcom *AVGO*	$427.77 › $392.99	▼ 8.13%
Strategy *MSTR*	$100.01 › $93.04	▼ 6.97%
Applied Materials *AMAT*	$539.15 › $507.18	▼ 5.93%
Honeywell *HON*	$246.22 › $233.96	▼ 4.98%

Broadcom and Applied Materials falling in a week the memory names ran 10–35% is the clearest rotation signal in the tape: this was capital moving inside semis, not out of them. The memory complex — SanDisk, Micron, Western Digital, Samsung and SK Hynix — has its own deep dive later this issue.

THE WEEK IN SECTORS · S&P 500, AUG 10 — 14

SECTOR	WEEK	WHAT DROVE IT
Energy	▲ 7.67%	Refiners led — MPC +19.2%, PSX +14.6%, VLO +14.5%
Utilities	▲ 1.61%	Power demand bid returned — Vistra +5.4%, NRG +6.9%
Communication services	▲ 1.53%	Netflix +5.4% and Spotify +5.1%; GOOGL −2.4%
Technology	▲ 1.09%	Memory carried it — SNDK +35.4%, WDC +17.2%, MU +10.7%
Materials	▼ 0.61%	Chemicals weighed; MP Materials +14.9% the exception
Consumer discretionary	▼ 1.38%	Retail sales −0.6%; Amazon −4.3%, Home Depot −4.7%

> *SPY closed at a record $776.34 with ten of eleven sectors green and consumer discretionary the lone loser. When the only red sector is the consumer, the retail guides next week are the whole tape.*

Retail Watch

What Reddit, X, and the news channels talked about last week

Retail attention ran in three lanes last week: memory, where SanDisk and Micron turned a supply shortage into a momentum trade; energy, where a 7.3% move in crude pulled the refiners along; and market structure, where Cboe quietly pulled Monday's premarket options launch off the calendar. The retail sales miss barely registered against any of it.

THE LEADERBOARD · most-mentioned tickers on Reddit, X, and WSB (Aug 9 — 15)

#	TICKER · COMPANY	MENTIONS	CHANGE	WHY IT WAS TALKED ABOUT
1	**MU** *Micron Technology*	1,417	**+143%**	Up 705% in a year; the $1,200 target thread
2	**SNDK** *SanDisk*	968	**+264%**	Investor day sold out half of FY27 bit supply
3	**SMCI** *Super Micro*	624	**+91%**	+27.98% while the sell side stayed Neutral
4	**AAPL** *Apple*	511	**+77%**	Washington pressure on Chinese memory sourcing
5	**MPC** *Marathon Petroleum*	389	**+204%**	Refining margins; the group ran with crude
6	**BABA** *Alibaba*	342	**+58%**	AliCloud +40% and a 5% CXMT stake worth $20B+
7	**WDC** *Western Digital*	318	**+126%**	Nearline HDD pricing follows NAND upward
8	**LUNR** *Intuitive Machines*	247	**+96%**	+15.91%; Stifel upgrade Friday
9	**OSCR** *Oscar Health*	196	**+312%**	+17.42% on subsidy headlines; heavy call flow
10	**STM** *STMicroelectronics*	154	**+68%**	Up 109% in a year on EU industrial support

THREE SPECULATION THEMES · what retail is trading around

MEMORY BECOMES A MEME *MU · SNDK · WDC · SMCI · AAPL*

Micron is up 705% over twelve months and the boards have moved from justifying the move to extrapolating it, with $1,200 the number being passed around. The catalyst retail latched onto was political: Washington is pressing Apple to drop Chinese memory suppliers, and a prediction market on the outcome circulated widely. A supply shortage with a policy tailwind is exactly the kind of story that outruns its own math.

THE ENERGY SQUEEZE NOBODY WAS POSITIONED FOR *MPC · PSX · VLO · XLE*

Energy funds have shed roughly $4.0B over 65 trading days, the largest stretch of outflows since mid-2025, with XLE alone giving up $797M in August — a fifth consecutive monthly outflow and a reversal from a record $12.5B inflow in March. Crude answered with +7.3% and the sector +7.67%. Retail read the flow data as the setup rather than the warning.

PREMARKET OPTIONS PUSHED BACK AGAIN *AAPL · NVDA · TSLA · MU · PLTR*

Cboe had single-stock options set to trade from 7:30 a.m. ET this Monday, August 17, in roughly 21 of the most liquid names. Late in the week the exchange struck the date and reset the launch to "a date to be announced" — the second postponement, after an original July 13 start. The boards had spent the week planning around it. Options Radar has the rest.

> *Retail and the institutional bid are pointed at the same trade for once. Memory is not a board fantasy — it is a real shortage with real contract pricing — which makes the crowding the risk rather than the thesis. Mention counts are directional estimates, not audited data.*

Options Radar

Premarket options are postponed, and every retail guide still lands before the bell

Cboe has postponed its premarket options session a second time. The plan — single-stock options from 7:30 a.m. ET in roughly 21 of the most liquid names, order queuing from 7:15, a Curb session from 4:00 to 4:15 p.m. — was set for Monday, August 17; the exchange's notice now reads "effective on a date to be announced." The eligibility bar — 150,000 contracts of daily volume, a $50B cap, 10 million shares — still stands. The timing stings. Home Depot, Target, Lowe's, Walmart and Deere all report before the open this week, and those reactions stay unhedgeable gaps. Index vol is cheap at 14.25, which makes single-name retail premium the expensive part of the board. Read this as a positioning map, not a contract tally.

HD
The Home Depot

PUT SIDE HEAVY · IMPLIED MOVE ~6%

$338.86 CLOSE · 20.6% OFF THE 52W HIGH · TUE 9:00 A.M. ET

Home Depot, −4.71% last week, reports Tuesday morning — the first major test of the consumer since Friday's retail sales miss. The stock is 20.6% below its high with the put side carrying the flow, and the pressure point is comparable transactions rather than ticket. A weak guide from the largest housing-linked retailer sets the tone for Lowe's the next morning.

MKT CAP $337.88B

52W $289.10 — $426.75

TGT
Target

CALL DEMAND HEAVY · IMPLIED MOVE ~9%

$154.48 CLOSE · 1.3% OFF THE 52W HIGH · WED 8:00 A.M. ET

Target sits within 1.3% of a 52-week high after a run from $83.44, which is the most aggressive pre-print setup in the group. The turnaround narrative is fully in the price and the surface prices the widest move of any retailer this week. Discretionary was the only red S&P sector last week, so the burden of proof is on the guide.

MKT CAP $70.16B

52W $83.44 — $156.47

WMT
Walmart

TWO-SIDED FLOW · IMPLIED MOVE ~5%

$115.27 CLOSE · 14.7% OFF THE 52W HIGH · THU 8:00 A.M. ET

Walmart is the single most important print of the week and the surface is unusually balanced, which is rare for a name this size ahead of a quarter. It is the consumer's trade-down beneficiary and its e-commerce margin story at the same time, and the two readings point in opposite directions on the same tape. A raised full-year guide resolves the retail sales scare in one line.

MKT CAP $917.33B

52W $95.42 — $135.16

DE
Deere & Company

LOW VOL · IMPLIED MOVE ~5%

$608.85 CLOSE · 9.7% OFF THE 52W HIGH · THU 10:00 A.M. ET

Deere reports Thursday morning into the softest agricultural equipment cycle since 2019, and implied vol sits in the lower half of its own range despite that. Large-ag order books and the fiscal 2027 early-order program are the swing lines. The stock has held 9.7% off its high through the downturn, so the premium is priced for continuity, not for a reset.

MKT CAP $164.35B

52W $433.00 — $674.19

ALSO ON THE RADAR

- **Micron is on the premarket list and does not report until September 22.**
  That combination was set to become the cleanest new instrument on the board: a name up 705% in twelve months, with headline risk arriving overnight from Seoul and Washington. Whenever the session finally opens, expect the memory complex to be its first real test.
- **Energy premium is still priced for the outflows, not the move.**
  XLE finished +7.67% in a week that also marked a fifth straight month of fund redemptions. Upside calls in the refiners have not repriced to match the spot move, which is what a squeeze looks like before the surface catches up.

> *Four before-the-open retail prints in three days and no extended session to meet them. The venue will solve some future quarter's gap risk — this week's guides trade the old way, gap and all.*

Upcoming Earnings

Thirteen reports, and seven of them are the American consumer

Fabrinet *FN*

THIS WEEK
Mon Aug 17 · after close

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$570.22	$634.00	▲ 11.2%	$452 – $750
Aug 14 close	n = 6 analysts	67% bullish rated	high · low

MKT CAP $20.43B

52W $272.49 $748.89

LATEST ACTION · Jul 22 · Needham maintains Buy, lowers target $800 › $650

THE READ · Opens the week and sets the optics tone. Datacenter transceiver mix against a 24% pullback from the high.

The Home Depot *HD*

THIS WEEK
Tue Aug 18 · 9:00 a.m. ET

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$338.86	$385.59	▲ 13.8%	$310 – $444
Aug 14 close	n = 22 analysts	77% bullish rated	high · low

MKT CAP $337.88B

52W $289.10 $426.75

LATEST ACTION · Aug 11 · Wells Fargo maintains Overweight, raises target $360 › $400

THE READ · The first consumer read after a 0.6% retail sales decline. Comparable transactions, not ticket, is the line.

Keysight Technologies *KEYS*

THIS WEEK
Tue Aug 18 · after close

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$357.82	$379.36	▲ 6.0%	$220 – $425
Aug 14 close	n = 11 analysts	82% bullish rated	high · low

MKT CAP $61.15B

52W $152.85 $374.96

LATEST ACTION · Jul 13 · Morgan Stanley upgrades to Overweight, raises target $350 › $400

THE READ · Within 5% of its 52-week high with the least upside on the page. AI test and measurement orders carry it.

Mercury Systems *MRCY*

THIS WEEK
Tue Aug 18 · after close

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$111.12	$92.33	▼ 16.9%	$68 – $109
Aug 14 close	n = 6 analysts	50% bullish rated	high · low

MKT CAP $6.67B

52W $62.78 $128.45

LATEST ACTION · Jul 13 · JP Morgan maintains Neutral, raises target $99 › $101

THE READ · Trades above every published target including the high. Defense electronics margin recovery has to keep running.

cont. · Upcoming Earnings

Target *TGT*

THIS WEEK
Wed Aug 19 · 8:00 a.m. ET

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$154.48	$137.11	▼ 11.2%	$81 – $177
Aug 14 close	n = 27 analysts	37% bullish rated	high · low

MKT CAP $70.16B

52W $83.44 — $156.47

LATEST ACTION · Aug 14 · Telsey maintains Outperform, raises target $150 › $170

THE READ · Within 1.3% of the high, above the average target, and only 37% of the desk is bullish. The setup is the risk.

Lowe's Companies *LOW*

THIS WEEK
Wed Aug 19 · 9:00 a.m. ET

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$218.47	$261.42	▲ 19.7%	$220 – $296
Aug 14 close	n = 19 analysts	68% bullish rated	high · low

MKT CAP $122.50B

52W $199.40 — $293.06

LATEST ACTION · Aug 13 · Citigroup maintains Buy, lowers target $285 › $267

THE READ · Reports the morning after Home Depot with the stock below every published target. Pro demand is the swing.

Analog Devices *ADI*

THIS WEEK
Wed Aug 19 · 10:00 a.m. ET

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$389.39	$443.57	▲ 13.9%	$293 – $550
Aug 14 close	n = 21 analysts	91% bullish rated	high · low

MKT CAP $189.67B

52W $223.47 — $445.91

LATEST ACTION · Jul 14 · Keybanc maintains Overweight, raises target $500 › $525

THE READ · The best-covered chip name of the week at 91% bullish. Industrial and auto bookings decide the analog cycle.

TJX Companies *TJX*

THIS WEEK
Wed Aug 19 · 11:00 a.m. ET

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$152.09	$176.00	▲ 15.7%	$155 – $197
Aug 14 close	n = 15 analysts	93% bullish rated	high · low

MKT CAP $168.01B

52W $132.01 — $170.00

LATEST ACTION · May 21 · UBS maintains Buy, raises target $193 › $197

THE READ · The trade-down beneficiary if the consumer is genuinely weakening. 93% bullish and below the lowest target.

Wolfspeed *WOLF*

THIS WEEK
Wed Aug 19 · after close

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$31.79	$25.00	▼ 21.4%	$20 – $30
Aug 14 close	n = 2 analysts	50% bullish rated	high · low

MKT CAP $1.65B

52W $8.05 — $80.82

LATEST ACTION · Jul 21 · Susquehanna maintains Neutral, lowers target $40 › $30

THE READ · Two analysts left covering it, both targets below the price, and the stock is up nearly 300% off the low.

cont. · Upcoming Earnings

Walmart *WMT*

THIS WEEK
Thu Aug 20 · 8:00 a.m. ET

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$115.27 Aug 14 close	$138.11 n = 27 analysts	▲ 19.8% 93% bullish rated	$121 – $155 high · low

MKT CAP $917.33B

52W $95.42 — $135.16

LATEST ACTION · Aug 12 · RBC Capital reiterates Outperform, $137 target

THE READ · The most important print of the week. Trades below every published target with 93% of the desk bullish.

Deere & Company *DE*

THIS WEEK
Thu Aug 20 · 10:00 a.m. ET

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$608.85 Aug 14 close	$652.82 n = 14 analysts	▲ 7.2% 50% bullish rated	$531 – $812 high · low

MKT CAP $164.35B

52W $433.00 — $674.19

LATEST ACTION · Aug 14 · JP Morgan maintains Neutral, lowers target $590 › $570

THE READ · An evenly split desk at 50% bullish. Large-ag order books and the fiscal 2027 early-order programme.

Ross Stores *ROST*

THIS WEEK
Thu Aug 20 · after close

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$245.36 Aug 14 close	$232.71 n = 14 analysts	▼ 5.2% 79% bullish rated	$159 – $290 high · low

MKT CAP $78.71B

52W $143.39 — $257.00

LATEST ACTION · Aug 14 · Telsey maintains Outperform, raises target $265 › $280

THE READ · Closes the off-price read after TJX. Trades above the average target within 5% of its 52-week high.

BJ's Wholesale Club *BJ*

THIS WEEK
Fri Aug 21 · 8:00 a.m. ET

CURRENT PRICE	ANALYST TARGET (avg)	IMPLIED UPSIDE	TARGET RANGE
$93.41 Aug 14 close	$107.08 n = 12 analysts	▲ 14.6% 58% bullish rated	$90 – $125 high · low

MKT CAP $11.93B

52W $83.21 — $107.62

LATEST ACTION · Aug 4 · Evercore ISI maintains In-Line, raises target $95 › $100

THE READ · The membership-warehouse counterweight to Walmart. Renewal rates and fuel gallons are the two variables.

Deep Dive · Memory

Three suppliers have sold out all of 2027, and buyers are receiving seventy percent of what they asked for.

WHAT THE PRICE DID

Memory contract prices rose 90 to 95% in the first quarter of 2026. DRAM ran another 58 to 63% in the second quarter and NAND 70 to 75%, with Samsung's own disclosed DRAM average selling price up in the mid-forties and SK Hynix's NAND up in the mid-fifties. Commodity DDR4 chips touched $20 in May, the highest DRAMeXchange has recorded in a decade of tracking. Server DDR5 rose a further 15 to 23% in August, with 32, 64 and 96 gigabyte modules quoted at $900, $1,590 and $2,650.

The third quarter is the first deceleration. TrendForce now models conventional DRAM up 13 to 18% and NAND up 10 to 15%, off a base high enough that a slower rate of increase still compounds. Gartner expects DRAM and solid-state pricing to finish 2026 roughly 130% above 2025 and memory to reach 23% of a personal computer's bill of materials, against 16% last year. Hewlett-Packard already put its own figure at 35%, up from 15 to 18% a quarter earlier, with memory costs doubling sequentially.

WHY IT DOES NOT FIX ITSELF

Samsung, SK Hynix and Micron have sold out their entire 2027 DRAM and high-bandwidth memory output. Digitimes reports customers are being allocated 60 to 70% of requested volumes, and accelerator servers are expected to absorb roughly 70% of total DRAM production. Goldman Sachs put the 2026 DRAM deficit at 4.9%, the widest in fifteen years, alongside a 4.2% NAND gap and a 5.1% shortfall in high-bandwidth memory. Micron has collected $22 billion of prepaid deposits from customers buying their place in line.

Supply cannot answer inside the horizon that matters. Samsung's P5 fab and SK Hynix's Yongin plant do not reach mass production until the second half of 2027. Micron's Idaho expansion arrives mid-2027, its Tongluo acquisition contributes no wafers until late 2027, Singapore NAND lands in 2028 and New York in 2030. Meanwhile capacity is leaving: Samsung is converting its last two-dimensional NAND line to advanced DRAM, Kioxia and Micron are exiting the same product, and TrendForce sees that capacity down 41.7% this year.

THE SUPPLY CLOCK · who is committed through when, as reported through Aug 14, 2026

COMPANY	COMMITTED	NEW CAPACITY	THE READ
Micron · MU	2027 DRAM, HBM	Idaho, 2027	$22B prepaid; 16 multi-year agreements signed
SanDisk · SNDK	Half of FY27	Fab conv.	Two-thirds of FY28 bits locked at investor day
Samsung	2027 DRAM, HBM	P5, H2 2027	Chips delivered 99.7% of company profit
SK Hynix	2027 DRAM, HBM	Yongin, 2027	Leads HBM4; record quarter still missed
Kioxia	NAND, pending	None near	2027 allocation expected to close this month
Seagate · STX	Nearline to 2028	None near	Taking 2029 orders; cloud drives near 26TB
Western Digital · WDC	Not disclosed	None near	Pure-play drives; nearline is 89% of revenue

Allocation and capacity timing per Digitimes, TrendForce, company earnings releases and the SanDisk investor day of August 13, 2026. Samsung, SK Hynix and Kioxia are not listed in the United States. Committed volumes are supplier statements, not audited backlog.

cont. · Deep Dive · Memory — Washington, the bull case and the bear case

THE POLITICAL LAYER

Apple spent the summer lobbying for clearance to buy DRAM from CXMT, the Chinese supplier that sits on the Pentagon's 1260H list but not the Commerce entity list, and on Friday Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick closed the door in public: the administration "is not in favor of that," and "it's not great American companies using Chinese memory." Senators Jim Banks and Chuck Schumer have given Apple until Friday, August 21 to commit against Chinese memory anywhere in its product line. Micron has lobbied for the same outcome. The practical effect is that the largest buyer of memory in consumer electronics has been steered back toward the three suppliers who are already sold out.

THE BULL CASE

- **The earnings are already in the reported numbers.**
  Micron's May quarter delivered $41.46 billion of revenue against $35.69 billion expected, an 84.6% gross margin, and guidance of $49 to $51 billion with earnings near $31 a share. SanDisk grew revenue 251% with datacenter up 645%. Samsung's chip division ran a 70% operating margin.

- **Contracts, not spot prices, now set the floor.**
  SanDisk has agreements covering roughly half of fiscal 2027 bit output and two-thirds of fiscal 2028. Micron's high-bandwidth memory is priced and volume-locked. A price break requires customers to walk away from supply they prepaid to secure.

- **The multiples are not demanding.**
  Micron trades at 21.99 times trailing earnings, SanDisk 22.25 and Western Digital 20.50 — backward looking multiples against earnings that are still climbing. Consensus targets sit 41.8%, 20.2% and 10.1% above Friday's closes.

- **Physical space is the binding constraint.**
  Wolfe Research's Chris Caso: "You just don't have the physical space to make the semiconductors right now." Buildings take years. The earliest credible oversupply window any bull or bear in this debate names is 2028.

THE BEAR CASE

- **A percent or two of oversupply is enough.**
  Morningstar's William Kerwin, the only sell rating on Micron: "The moment you get to a percent or two of oversupply, you can really see prices crash." He sees a wave of Western and Chinese capacity arriving by 2028, and reads 1995 as the template.

- **The second derivative has already turned.**
  Contract increases decelerated from triple digits to the mid-teens in one quarter. Bloomberg Intelligence's Shuli Ren argues the shortage peaked in the second quarter and the industry could swing to oversupply by 2028. Goldman's own August survey concedes acute scarcity has passed.

- **The customers are cracking before the suppliers do.**
  Gartner expects personal computer shipments to fall 10.4% and smartphones 8.4% this year. Dell has warned of further increases up to 30% on memory-heavy configurations. Demand destruction in the consumer channel is the mechanism that ends every memory cycle.

- **The market is already selling the good news.**
  SK Hynix posted a record quarter and fell about 10% on it, because high-bandwidth shipments slipped and capex durability was questioned. Samsung shed more than $80 billion of value on the same worry. Zero bearish sell-side ratings across the three names is a positioning fact, not a safety margin.

> *The shortage is real, the contracts are signed and the fabs are late — and every participant in the argument agrees the danger arrives in 2028, not this quarter. That makes the next twelve months a question of price paid rather than thesis. Micron has run 705% in a year and does not report until September 22, which leaves the tape trading on allocation headlines and Washington deadlines in between. Own the contracted names, not the ones whose margin comes from spot.*

Crypto Corner

Records in the index, half off in the coin · and a Senate vote on September 15

THE DIVERGENCE · a risk-on week that skipped one asset

The S&P 500 closed at a record, the Russell 2000 made an all-time high, volatility drifted to 14.25 and energy finished +7.67%. Bitcoin −2.95% to $62,975, Ether −1.71% to $1,880. That is four sessions of broad equity risk appetite that the largest digital asset declined to participate in, and it is the third consecutive week the pattern has held. Cooler consumer prices and a lower unemployment rate did not help either coin.

The distance from the highs is the part worth sitting with. The iShares Bitcoin Trust closed at $35.63 against a 52-week high of $71.82 — the coin is trading at roughly half its peak while the index it used to lead is setting records. Trust volume ran 22.7 million shares against a 43.1 million average, so the selling is not urgent. It is absence. Nobody is fighting over this asset in either direction right now.

THE EQUITY WRAPPERS · where the damage compounds

Strategy closed the week at $93.04, −6.97%, against a 52-week high of $367.57, and now carries a $30.8 billion market capitalization on negative trailing earnings. Coinbase −3.34% to $148.47, some 63% below its own high of $402.16. Both fell more than the coin they track, which is the arithmetic of leverage and fee compression working in the direction nobody buys them for.

One corner of the complex still earned its keep. IREN +6.86%, Core Scientific −3.95%, and the split between them has nothing to do with hash rate — it is which miner has converted its power contracts into artificial-intelligence compute leases. Capital inside this sector is now paying for megawatts delivered to a datacenter, not for coins produced. That repricing has been going on quietly all summer and it is the only bid in the group.

WHAT TO WATCH

- **September 15 is still the only date on the calendar.**
  The Senate votes at 2:15 p.m. Eastern on cloture for the motion to proceed on the market-structure bill. Sixty votes are needed against a fifty-three seat majority, so seven or eight Democrats have to cross.
- **Volume, not price, tells you when interest returns.**
  Trust volume at roughly half its three-month average is the cleanest read on participation. A move back above average alongside a rising price is the signal; price alone on this volume is noise.
- **The miners are no longer a bitcoin trade.**
  Names with signed compute leases trade on power economics and lease terms. Grouping them with the coin was already a mistake in June and it is a worse one now.

> *A tape that puts the Russell at an all-time high and leaves bitcoin at half its peak is telling you something about what this rally is made of. Money is paying for earnings, allocation and megawatts. It is not paying for beta anymore, and the coin has been beta since November.*

Small-Cap Watchlist

Six new names · every one of them is priced off a date

All six names on this page are new this week. Five reported second-quarter results in the first two weeks of August; the sixth, Capricor, faces an FDA decision on Saturday the 22nd. The mix runs from uranium enrichment to bill payments, and the common thread is a hard date — an approval, a shareholder vote, a guidance number — that the market has already started paying for. Prices are the August 14 close.

Capricor Therapeutics — $6.65

CAPR ▲ 62.59%

DMD CELL THERAPY · FDA AUG 22

WHAT IT DOES
Clinical-stage biotech built around Deramiocel, a cardiac cell therapy for the cardiomyopathy that comes with Duchenne muscular dystrophy, with an exosome platform behind it.

WHY IT IS HERE
The FDA decision on Deramiocel is due August 22, inside this issue's week. Cantor Fitzgerald upgraded to Overweight with a $28 target on Friday and the stock answered with +57.96% in a single session.

KEY RISK
A binary regulatory event against a 52-week range of $2.96 to $40.37, with a pending securities class action tied to earlier FDA communications. A rejection hits the stock and the litigation story at once.

MKT CAP $382M 52W $2.96 — $40.37

Centrus Energy — $190.15

LEU reported Aug 5

URANIUM ENRICHMENT · HALEU

WHAT IT DOES
Enriches uranium for U.S. reactors and is the only licensed American producer of HALEU, the higher-assay fuel that next-generation reactor designs require.

WHY IT IS HERE
Second-quarter earnings of $1.77 a share beat a $0.74 estimate on August 5, with revenue of $176.1M up 14%. A definitive HALEU supply agreement with X-energy followed a day later, and contracted backlog now runs roughly $4.5B through 2040.

KEY RISK
HC Wainwright cut its third-quarter estimate to a $0.75 loss from a $0.29 loss on August 11 while keeping its buy, and the stock carries roughly 87 times earnings into that air pocket.

MKT CAP $3.60B 52W $142.13 — $464.25

Palladyne AI — $6.61

PDYN ▲ 10.35%

DEFENSE AI & ROBOTICS

WHAT IT DOES
Sells AI autonomy software for defense robotics, drones and industrial machines — the control layer rather than the hardware.

WHY IT IS HERE
Second-quarter revenue grew 470% to $5.8M, a quarter ahead of estimates, with $13M of new awards and backlog of $24.6M, up 43% from the prior quarter. An exclusive U.S. partnership with Israel Aerospace Industries covers the HARPY and HAROP loitering-munition lines.

KEY RISK
Guidance implies $32M to $36M of annual cash burn against a business doing $5.8M a quarter, and a thin float amplifies every headline in both directions.

MKT CAP $312M 52W $4.14 — $10.73

CorMedix — $7.54

CRMD ▲ 1.34%

DIALYSIS ANTI-INFECTIVE

WHAT IT DOES
Commercial-stage pharma selling DefenCath, an antimicrobial catheter lock for dialysis patients, alongside the Melinta anti-infectives portfolio it acquired.

WHY IT IS HERE
Second-quarter revenue reached $101.9M, and a new multi-year supply agreement puts DefenCath in all five of the largest U.S. dialysis operators. Full-year guidance held at $325M to $345M with the EBITDA guide raised to $125M to $140M.

KEY RISK
The stock is down roughly 40% over twelve months and the business is concentrated in one product and one channel — any dialysis contracting disruption lands directly on results.

MKT CAP $592M 52W $6.13 — $14.96

Paymentus — $41.86

PAY ▲ 8.53%

BILL-PAYMENT PLATFORM

WHAT IT DOES
Runs the cloud platform that utilities, insurers and government agencies use to present bills and process customer payments.

WHY IT IS HERE
August 3 earnings of $0.25 beat $0.19 on revenue of $360.7M, up 28.8%, and full-year guidance rose with it. Goldman went to $40 from $32, Baird to $38 and Wolfe to $44, and the stock set a 52-week high the next day.

KEY RISK
Roughly 63 times earnings, and most of the fresh targets sit at or below Friday's close — the beat is in the price, and the multiple needs the growth rate to hold.

MKT CAP $5.26B 52W $20.11 — $45.31

USA Rare Earth — $20.00

USAR ▲ 3.47%

MINE-TO-MAGNET RARE EARTHS

WHAT IT DOES
Building a U.S. rare-earth supply chain from mining through magnet manufacturing, aimed at displacing Chinese supply in defense and industrial magnets.

WHY IT IS HERE
Second-quarter revenue of $5.82M missed, and the stock rallied anyway: the balance sheet holds $1.5B of cash, first commercial magnet sales are on track for year-end, and Cantor initiated with a buy while Northland holds a $45 target. The Serra Verde acquisition vote lands August 28.

KEY RISK
All of the revenue is a legacy metals business — the mine and the magnets the $2.65B valuation is pricing do not ship yet, and the August 28 vote is real event risk if it slips.

MKT CAP $2.65B 52W $11.45 — $43.98

Quarterly figures are from company releases and call transcripts dated August 3 through August 13. Analyst targets, ratings and coverage are as of the August 14 close. Capricor's FDA action date and USA Rare Earth's Serra Verde shareholder vote fall on August 22 and August 28.

> *Every card on this page trades against a date — an FDA letter, a shareholder vote, a guidance number. Dated catalysts pay quickly and punish quickly, and none of these six will wait for a second look. Size for the day the date goes against you.*

Launch Control

Four ways to own the shortage trade, and two hedges against it

Memory and energy took the week, and neither move came from a headline that anyone traded on Friday. Both came from allocation — supply that has already been committed to somebody else at a price set months ago. The four names below are the cleanest listed exposures to that arithmetic across chips, storage, equipment and refining, and the two counterweights are what pays if Wednesday's Fed minutes read hawkish and Friday's flash surveys come in soft at the same time. Prices reflect the August 14, 2026 close.

COMPANY	LAST	LAST WK	52WK RANGE	THE SETUP
Micron *MU* **MKT CAP $1.10T**	$971.66	▲ 10.7%	$113.46 – $1,255.00	Sold out of 2027 DRAM and high-bandwidth memory with $22 billion of customer deposits collected. Trades at 21.99 times trailing earnings against a $1,378 average target, 96% of 26 analysts bullish. Does not report until September 22.
SanDisk *SNDK* **MKT CAP $243.03B**	$1,641.11	▲ 35.4%	$43.20 – $2,354.39	Wednesday's investor day locked roughly half of fiscal 2027 bit output and two-thirds of fiscal 2028 under customer agreements, at a 78.4% gross margin. RBC and Wells Fargo raised targets without upgrading.
Lam Research *LRCX* **MKT CAP $415.64B**	$332.36	▲ 6.8%	$94.11 – $438.50	The most direct beneficiary of memory capital spending through etch and deposition. Delivered $1.82 against $1.68 expected on $6.72 billion of revenue, and sees equipment spending up 22% in 2026.
Marathon Petroleum *MPC* **MKT CAP $103.76B**	$355.42	▲ 19.2%	$160.87 – $360.10	Energy led at +7.67% with crude +7.31%, and refining captured the widest part of it. Fourteen analysts average $302, well below Friday's close. The move has outrun estimates, which makes this one to trim rather than add.
SPDR Gold Shares *GLD* **MKT CAP $141.64B**	$401.48	▲ 0.8%	$305.19 – $509.70	A quiet 0.8% week while equities made records, which is what you want from a hedge. Cooler prices and lower unemployment mean the metal now trades Wednesday's minutes instead.
iShares 20+ Yr Trsy *TLT* **MKT CAP $41.47B**	$82.04	▼ 0.9%	$81.82 – $92.19	The ten-year moved from 4.66% to 4.70% and the thirty-year from 5.21% to 5.26% in a week of cooler inflation, which is the tell. The quarterly refunding settles Monday.

Prices, market caps and 52-week ranges reflect the August 14, 2026 close. The LAST WK column is the Friday-to-Friday close-to-close move from August 7 to August 14. Analyst targets and coverage counts are as of the same date.

These are positioning notes, not recommendations. The four shortage names are one trade expressed at four points on the risk curve; gold and duration are what pays if the growth data cracks before the pricing does. Size accordingly.

> *Every name in the top half of this table is long the same idea: that somebody has already bought the supply and the price is set by who is left out. Nothing on the calendar next week tests that directly, which is the risk. A crowded trade with no catalyst until September trades on positioning, and positioning is the one input nobody publishes.*

The Tactical Read

One trade, one invalidation, one dissent

THIS WEEK'S TRADE

one setup · one invalidation

THE SETUP
Own the contracted memory complex against the consumer names reporting this week. Memory has sold 2027 and taken 35% of a computer's parts cost; the consumer just spent less in July. Same dollar, two ends of it.

WHY IT FITS A 6.8 TAPE
A 6.8 is a tape you stay long in, with the return sitting underneath the index rather than in it. The Russell made an all-time high while the Nasdaq stayed below May. Breadth like that resolves through pairs.

SIZE
Three-quarters of full risk at a 6.8. The long side is already crowded, so nothing added into strength. Gold and long duration stay on as the growth hedge either way.

INVALIDATION
Walmart beating and raising on Thursday says the consumer is fine and kills the short leg. Apple winning clearance for Chinese memory before Friday's deadline undercuts the long leg.

Not a recommendation — a worked example of the letter's own logic. Your book, your call.

LEVELS · the numbers behind the setup

NAME	FRI AUG 14 CLOSE	LAST WEEK	UPSIDE FAIL LINE	DOWNSIDE BREAK LINE
S&P 500	**776.34**	▲ 0.4%	785 = melt-up confirmed	762 = record rejected
Russell 2000	**3,068.42**	▲ 1.1%	3,150 = breadth broadens	3,000 = small caps fold
VIX	**14.25**	▼ 4.4%	18 prices the calendar	13 is full complacency
10-YEAR	**4.70%**	+4 bp	4.90% revives the hike	4.50% takes it off
30-YEAR	**5.26%**	+5 bp	5.40% breaks the refunding	5.10% clears the supply

The S&P line is quoted on the index ETF. Levels are markers, not signals — a break changes which trade is on.

THE POSTURE · the book heading into the week

- *Records were set without the leaders. The Russell 2000 made an all-time high and the S&P closed at a record while the Nasdaq 100 stayed below its May peak. A rally that no longer needs the largest five names is a better rally and a harder one to index.*
- *July retail sales came in at −0.6% with online −2.2%, and thirteen companies report this week, seven of them selling to that same consumer. Walmart, Home Depot, Target and Lowe's decide whether one soft month was weather or a trend.*
- *Cooler inflation did not lower the front end. Headline consumer prices slowed to 3.4% and the ten-year still rose four basis points. Three officials dissented in July, all in the same direction, and Wednesday's minutes are the first look at how close that vote was.*
- *Book: added to memory after the SanDisk investor day, trimmed the refiners after a 19% week, holding gold and long duration as the growth hedge, and buying no index protection at a 14.25 volatility reading.*

THE DISSENT · the case against the 6.8

The case against a 6.8 is that two sectors are carrying it. Energy ran +7.67% during a stretch that saw roughly $4 billion leave energy funds over 65 trading days, which describes short covering rather than allocation. Memory is a supply story with no earnings date until September. Strip both out and what is left is a consumer that spent 0.6% less in July.

THE PRE-MARKET
Sunday, August 16, 2026 · Week of August 17—21

Consumer prices, producer prices, retail sales and claims per the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau. Memory pricing and capacity per TrendForce, Gartner and company filings. Premarket options session status per Cboe notices. Prices and analyst data as of the August 14, 2026 close.