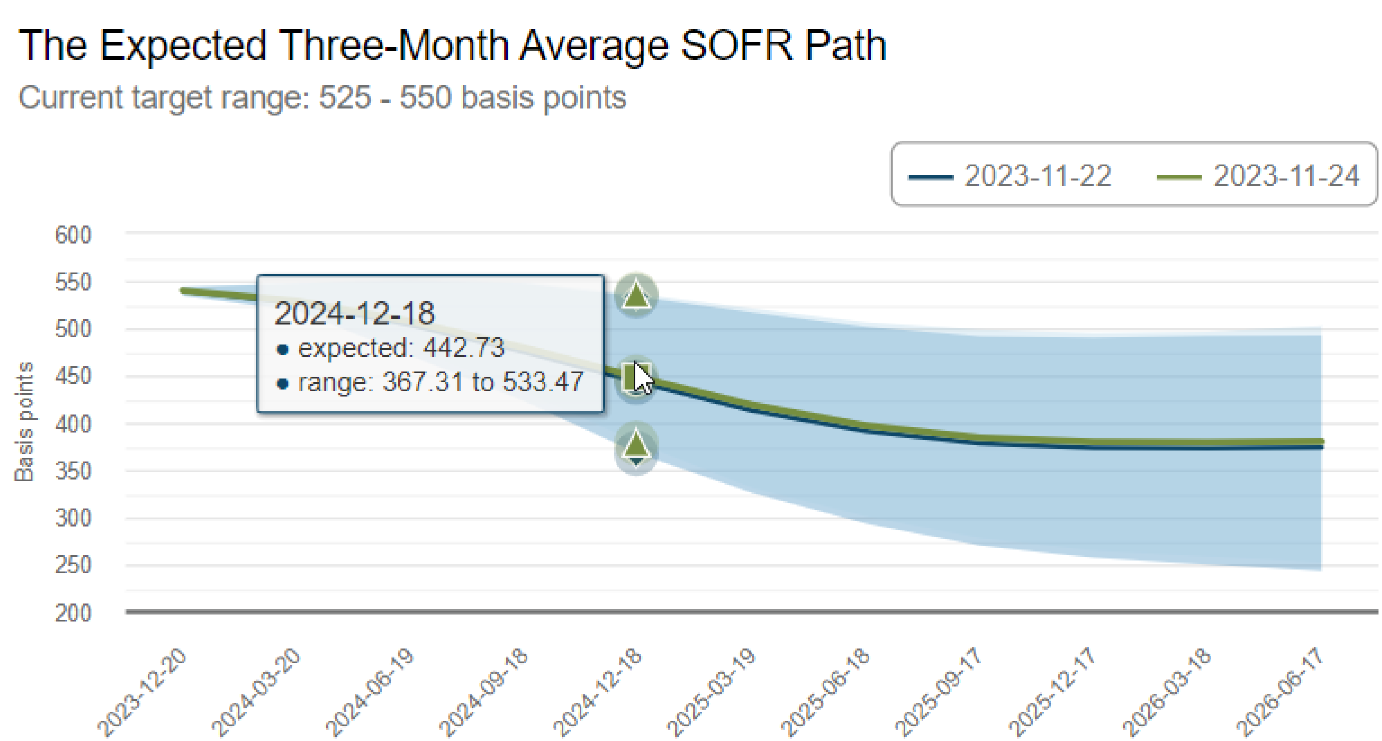
SHORT VOLATILITY STRATEGIES PROLIFERATE; VOLMAGEDDON II NEARING? – LONG CALLS/SHORT PUTS MARKET FLIPS DEALER ASSUMPTIONS AND MARKET BEHAVIOR – TRADE FOR CPI/FED

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

Now that everyone is done their buying now and paying later, we can discuss the short vol now and worry later cohort. Or maybe they don't worry at all, convinced that a slew of Fed cuts are on the way next year:



That is basically four cuts in the market, and with the ten year treasury rate nosediving lately (all that nonsense about tailing auctions, now as forgotten as a bad joke) financial conditions have eased markedly, which might bring back the ole hamster wheel of Jay talking tough again, which he will have an opportunity to do on Friday and obviously during the next Fed podium show open mic during quarterly opex week:

Untightening

A big driver of the gains from the October lows has been the substantial easing of financial conditions (thanks to lower bond yields, lower oil prices, weaker USD, tighter credit spreads).

Source: Daily Shot via GS

Link

Nov 27 2023 at 04:10

Although today was a bit of a blast from the past with the 7-year auction not going well, dealers forced to take a huge chunk and it tailing the market yield pre-auction:

zerohedge @zerohedge · 27m

Buyer strike: Dealer award (mandatory bid) doubles from 10.98% to 20.29%, highest since Nov 2022

> **zerohedge** @zerohedge · 29m
>
> 7Y high yield 4.399%, WI 4.378%, tails 2.1bps, biggest tail since Nov 2022

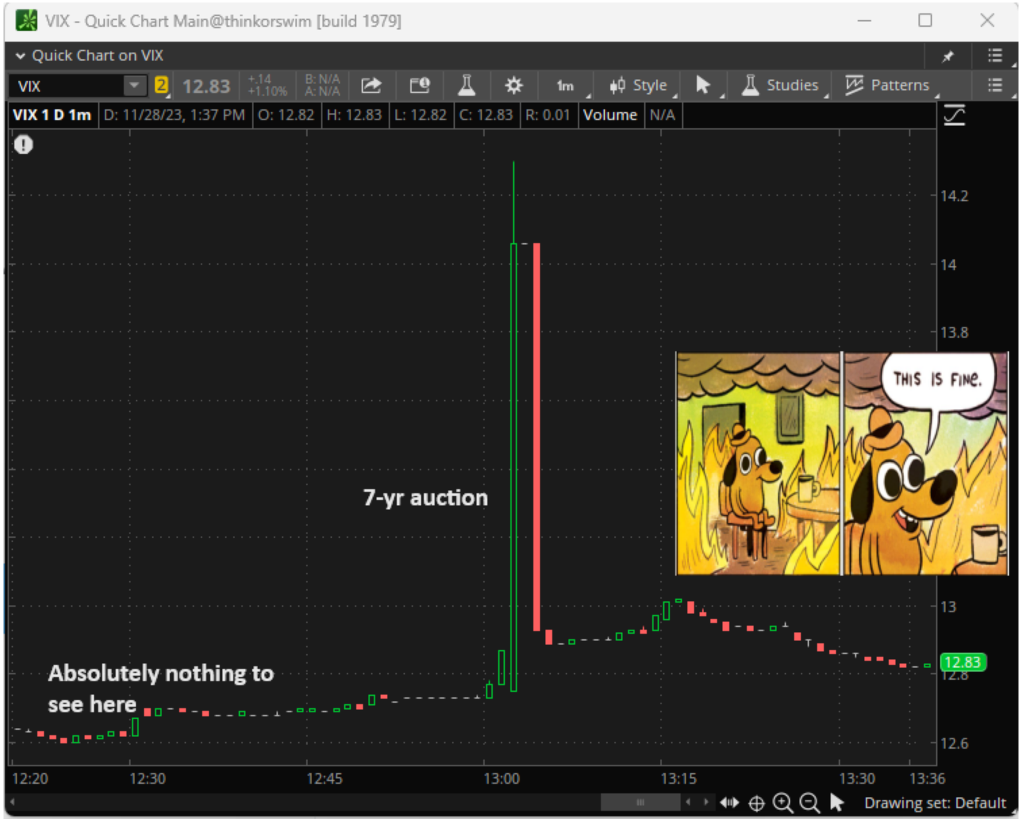
8 18 55 36K

zerohedge @zerohedge · 29m

7Y high yield 4.399%, WI 4.378%, tails 2.1bps, biggest tail since Nov 2022

10 31 62 67K

And, if you are one of those that think the VIX is broken, well, this is how it acted on the auction results:

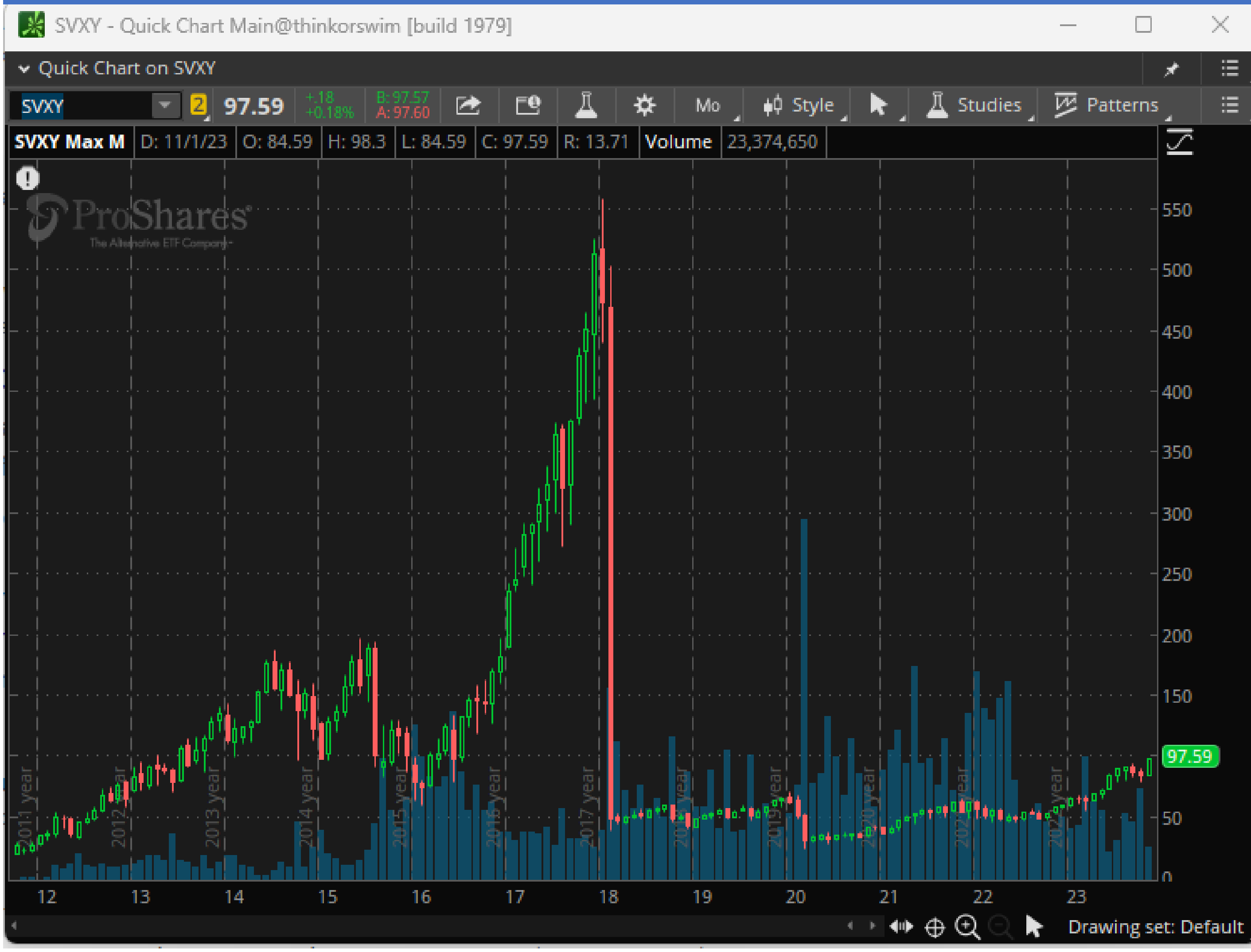


The important auctions are coming during Fed week, 10 and 30 year.

This kind of thing reminds me of volmageddon 2018, when shorting vol got absolutely out of hand. It was concentrated in the short volatility futures ETF space, which died a quick and spectacular death never to be the same. RIP XIV. A castrated SVXY still exists with a .5x inverse governor on it, but this chart will remind you of how it went down:

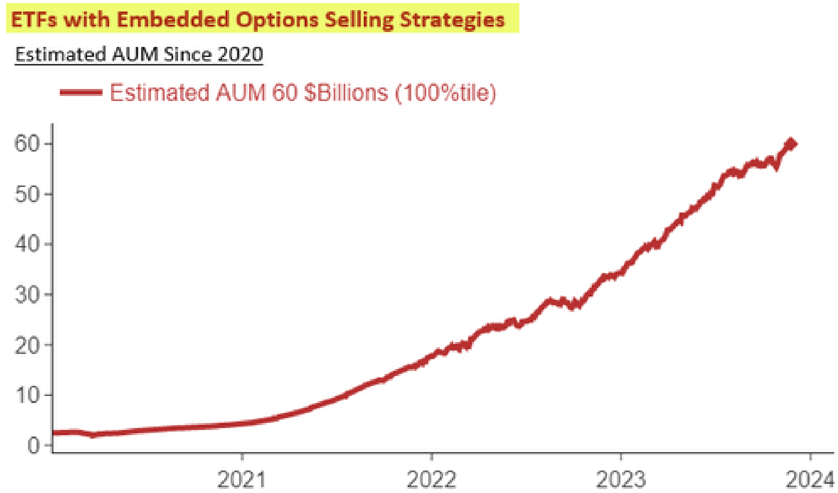
(For a longer walk down memory lane:

https://seekingalpha.com/article/4156919-xiv-and-svxy-what-really-happened)



Today, with 0DTE mania and the like, we have a new and growing crowd of vol shorters, and they are diverse. One faction of the short vol mob includes ETFs selling vol for yield, providing regular monthly income, and their assets are soaring. For reference, volmaggedon caused losses in those short vol ETFs of less than $5 billion:

None of which should be a huge surprise, as McElligott notes that **we've seen fresh all-time highs made last week in US Equities "Options Selling" strategy ETF Assets Under Management**...



Estimated AUM Growth

- **Past Week:** +771 Millions
- **Past Month:** +3,544 Millions
- **Past 3-Month:** +6 Billions
- **Year to Date:** +26 Billions

...where **after the "Shock FCI Tightening" period from Aug to Oct, we've seen a powerful resumption of AUM growth in November,** and making +$26B YTD / +$60B overall, as VRP continues to look attractive.

Source: https://www.zerohedge.com/markets/nomura-warns-traders-are-hate-selling-index-vol-cta-drawdowns-surge-macro-regime-shift

Of course, 0DTE options have seen a surge of daily vol selling, which is why every dip essentially disappears these days. As soon as there is any downside vol, the quant strats come in and set another put wall. They are doing quite well lately, Charlie the celebrity quant calling it manna:

Keep calm...

...and sell daily puts. As McElligott calls it: "manna from heaven".

SPX Daily Options PnL Summary

Cumulative PnL

	1d	10d	20d	60d	ytd
Selling Daily ATM Straddle	0.2%	-0.0%	-0.5%	1.4%	10.4%
Selling Daily ATM Call	0.1%	-2.4%	-5.1%	0.7%	-2.1%
Selling Daily ATM Put	0.1%	2.4%	4.5%	0.7%	12.5%
Selling Daily Strangle	0.1%	-0.6%	-0.7%	0.9%	6.8%
Selling Daily 25d Call	0.1%	-1.7%	-2.7%	0.6%	-1.6%
Selling Daily 25d Put	0.1%	1.1%	2.0%	0.3%	8.4%
Selling Daily Straddle, Long Strangle	0.1%	0.6%	0.2%	0.5%	3.6%
Buy 25d Call, Sell 25d Put	0.0%	2.7%	4.7%	-0.4%	10.0%

Source: Nomura

Link

Nov 27 2023 at 14:20

And, risk.net just ran a story demonstrating how bank quant trading teams now see 0DTE vol as attractive:

Bank QIS teams take zero-day options plunge

JP Morgan sees better risk/reward profile for 0DTE-based trend strategies

Risk.net montage

Banks are beginning to incorporate zero-day-to-expiry, or 0DTE, options in their quantitative investment strategies, in a move they say could boost returns and improve downside protection.

JP Morgan is one of the first to do so with an intraday momentum strategy that incorporates same-day expiry options on the S&P 500, or SPX. The bank says the latest iteration of the popular strategy offers a better risk/reward profile compared with traditional futures-based versions.

And of course, the hedge funds:


Kris Sidial @Ksidiii · Nov 25

Ex: 100M firm looking to take in 25bps weekly in premium. Aka sell what gets us to $250k in premium this week.

S&P 1M vol at 11 needs more units (more risk) to get that premium target than S&P 1M vol at 22.

1 2 52 2.9K

Show replies

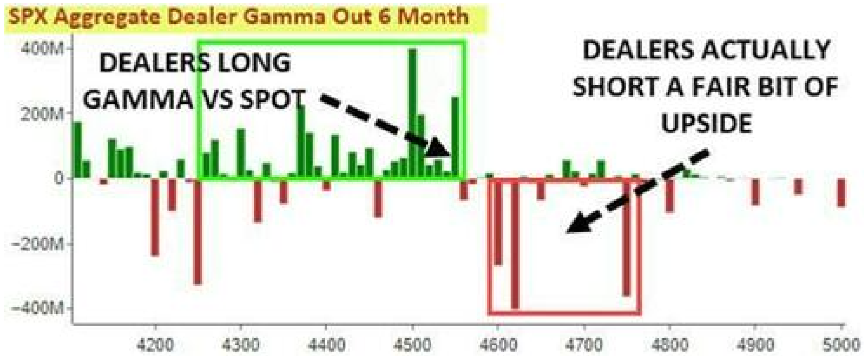
The selling puts to buy calls market is here, it is a 'stabilizer' when nothing else is going on. Market drops, puts are sold. Dealers now holding more puts hedge by buying futures. Since we've recently discussed the everyone is mega long tech/qqq/spx call dynamic, when dealers are short calls and there is news, you get these intraday spikes up, the result of dealers buying more futures/stocks to cover their short calls.

In essence it's a reversal of how it used to be and how the dealer reaction function was modeled. It used to be assumed that dealers are primarily long calls sold to them (covered calls perhaps), having these dealers react by selling futures to hedge their long call position and subsequently buying them back on dips or when their calls burn off (charm/delta decay).

Now, dealers are short calls in indices/giga tech and when the market goes up, they have to quickly buy more to hedge upside convexity. (You saw it today, when for no reason the market spiked up on Waller commentary. Bowman said numerous things to the opposite of Waller, but that didn't matter, the upside spike needed the immediate hedging.)

Also, it was assumed that dealers were short puts, that folks bought as protection for market drops. (*Oh, how old timey! Who in their right mind needs to waste money on insurance!)* When folks used to buy puts, the dealer sold futures to hedge against a drop/their convex downside exposure to puts sold. Now that selling puts to dealers is the thing to do, dealers are long more puts and thus as the market drops they are buyers of futures:

But **this 'easing'-fest, has then helped fuel more of the same US Equities index Vol "hate-selling"** that has now seen Dealers get stuffed on both ATM and Downside Gamma, which **acts as a buffer for markets which makes it difficult to sell-off**...



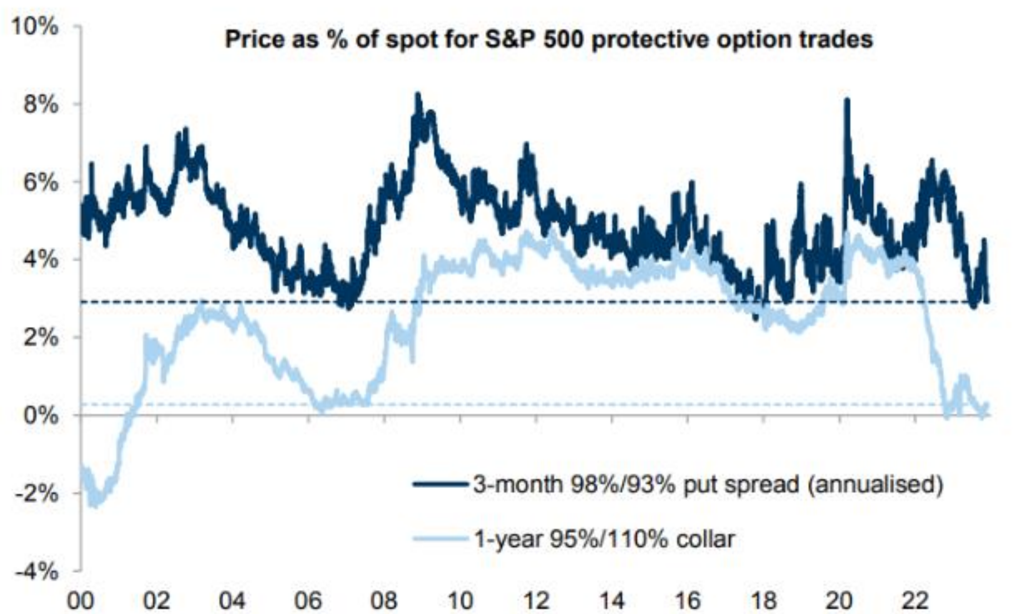
...**although in light of the violence of the crash-up move seen in recent weeks, there are pockets of "Short Gamma" to the UPSIDE from here** (Dealers Short some Upside Calls into "crash-up") on further Spot rally that could feed "accelerant flows"

The result of all this quaintly described 'hate selling' of vol and risk reversal positioning (selling put vol to buy call vol) is that prices are as cheap as ever to hedge or position for a downside move/swing trade. First, you can see put vol crushed and call vol owned in this chart:

The result being that a put vertical spread to hedge is as cheap as it's ever been, and that is saying a lot if you remember the pre-Volmageddon days of 10 VIX:

They note that three-month put spreads on the the S&P 500 are trading close to all-time lows. For longer investment horizons, they like equity collars – a strategy where near at-the-money puts are financed by selling out-of-the-money calls.

Exhibit 5: We like put spreads in the near term and 1-year collars



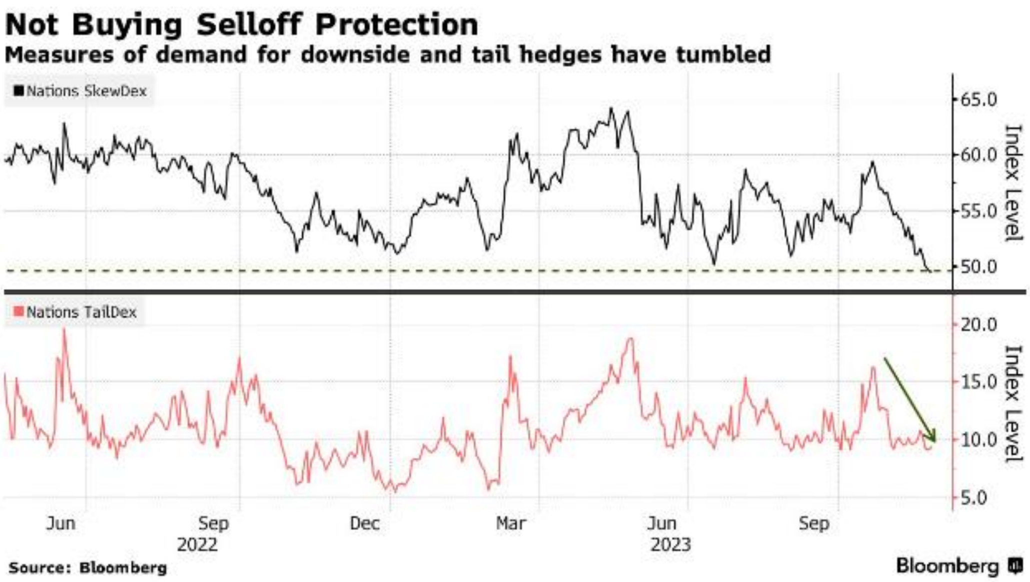
Source: Goldman Sachs, Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Source: Goldman Sachs *Source: Goldman Sachs*

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-11-28/goldman-says-sharp-drop-in-volatility-is-opportunity-for-hedging?srnd=markets-vp&sref=1zxv5xkq

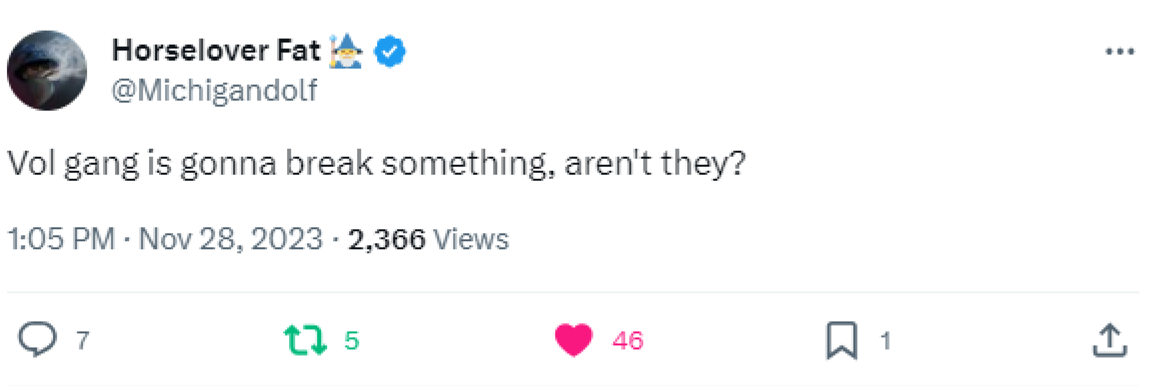
But clearly no one wants hedges, I mean, with everyone crowded in a few stocks that are wickedly overvalued, over-owned and at all-time highs? Fuhgeddaboudit:

"There has been absolutely no demand for hedging – the cost of protection using various metrics are all near lows looking out five years," said Amy Wu Silverman, head of derivatives strategy at RBC Capital Markets. "Additionally, volatility continues to be suppressed in our market due to volatility selling strategies."



https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-11-27/stock-market-today-dow-s-p-live-updates?sref=1zxv5xkq

Folks are taking notice of all this short vol. They know what can happen:



Kris Sidial @Ksidiii

Also, please note. There is absolutely nothing wrong with selling vol opportunistically. There are sophisticated desks that express clean, thoughtful short vol trades in the equity market.

Unfortunately, the majority of short vol participants in this market are more geared towards "income generating" / "yield" programs that are not really vol sensitive.

People who are not in the hedge fund / asset management space would be surprised, but there are lots of smaller multi-billion dollar firms that run programs that target X amount of premium taken in on a weekly basis. If you have an understanding as to how derivatives work, you probably understand why that can be problematic.

6:12 PM · Nov 25, 2023 · **31.4K** Views

15 10 151 27

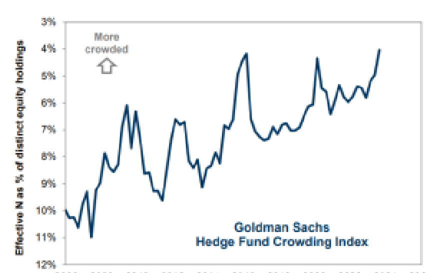
So, now we enter December, or the second half of the market's end-of-year game of chicken. The first part in October saw a lot of hedge funds degross and puke out some giga tech longs, which they obviously just herded back into with amazing speed *and in more concentration than before if you can believe that!* Believe it:

One of the key takeaways from the latest edition was that the bank's "crowding index" hit a record high. That was due to high concentration across funds and outperformance from popular stocks.

Exhibit 23: Hedge fund portfolio density increased
holdings as of September 30, 2023

Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Exhibit 24: Crowding across hedge funds increased in 3Q
holdings as of September 30, 2023



Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

"Mirroring the increasing concentration in the equity market, concentration in hedge fund portfolios has risen; the typical hedge fund holds 70% of its long portfolio in its top 10 positions," Goldman's Ben Snider wrote, noting that the same dynamics pushed hedge fund exposure to the Momentum factor close to a record.

Goldman's Hedge Fund VIP list (the 50 stocks that appear most often among the top 10 holdings of fundamental hedge funds) has returned +31% this year. Not too bad, although you would've done quite a bit better with QQQ, and instead of paying two and twenty, you'd pay 20bps.

Source: https://heisenbergreport.com/2023/11/22/hedge-fund-crowding-hits-record-amid-mega-cap-rally/

Hedge fund exposure to momentum has rarely been as extreme as this, and the swing since 2022 has been astonishing.

Exhibit 16 : Fund portfolios have rarely been more tilted toward Momentum

Source: Goldman Sachs Global Investment Research

Momentum can be fun to ride, but it has a nasty tendency to suffer sudden crashes. Given how large some of the big tech stocks are in hedge fund portfolios — and how strongly they've rallied this year, at least partly as a result of the outsized hedge fund buying — any reversal could become violent.

https://www.ft.com/content/047d52a0-01a1-4db5-b342-f7f159d10d84

Does this scream 12 VIX to you? 30-day forward vol includes, and I'm sure I'll miss a few:

-Treasury auctions 10s/30s – you just saw the 7-yr break the VIX for 15 minutes

-CPI – (https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-11-27/economists-see-stubborn-us-core-inflation-keeping-rates-higher?sref=1zxv5xkq)

-Fed meeting with SEP/Dot plot

-Quarterly OPEX

-JOLTS- one of the biggest market movers this year, if you can believe it

-Non-farm payrolls

So, while we may be propped here for now with short vol dominating/wagging the indices dogs, it certainly appears that December is going see more volatility the deeper we get into it. Simply the major expiration combined with all these vol events is enough, and with so many folks short vol, a pre-Santa surprise might be in store for managers itching to send out those statements stuffed with giga tech marked to perfection.

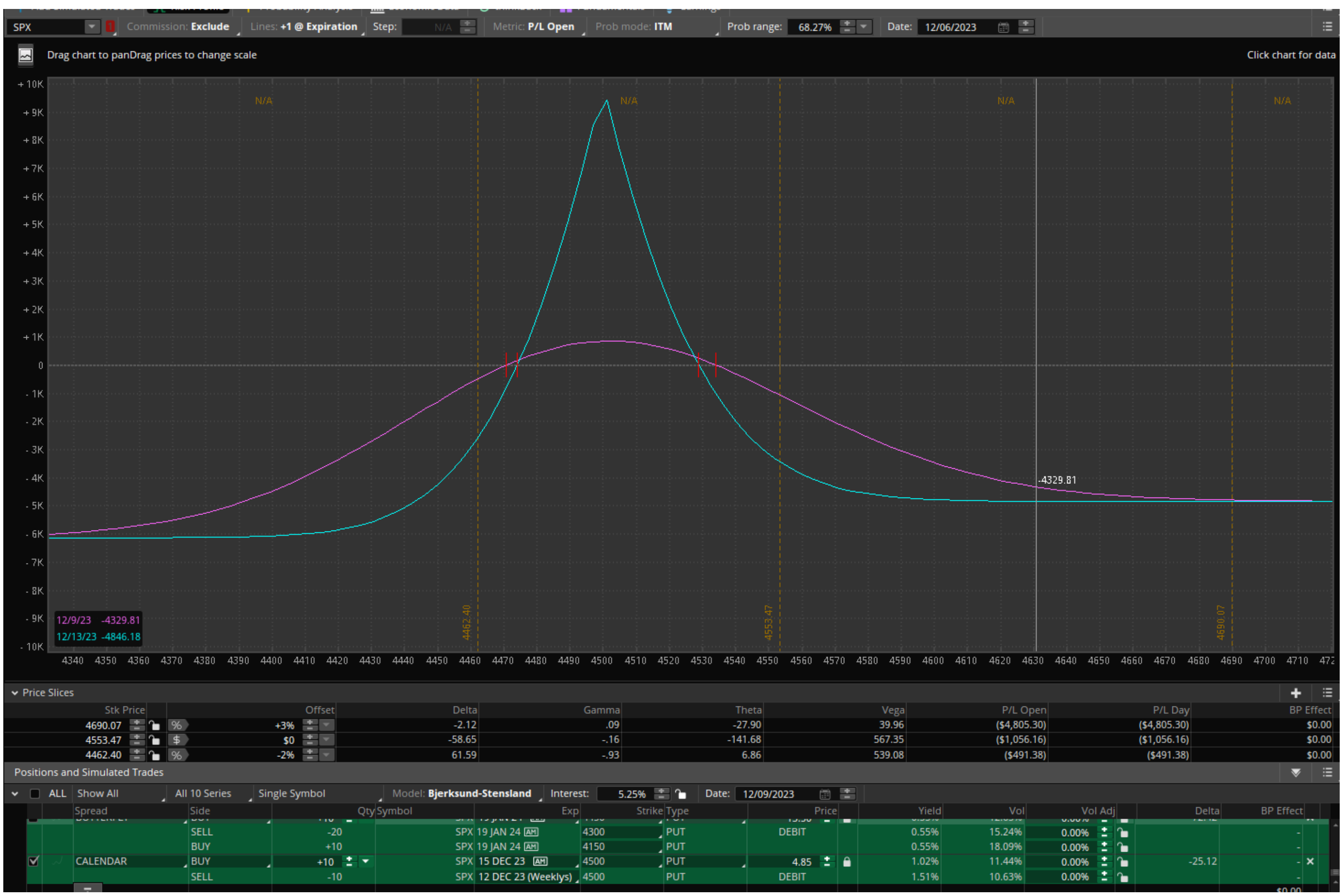
Volatility Trades:

SPX Fed/CPI put calendar spread

Sell 4500 Dec 12th put

Buy 4500 Dec 15th (AM) put

Net debit: $4.80-5

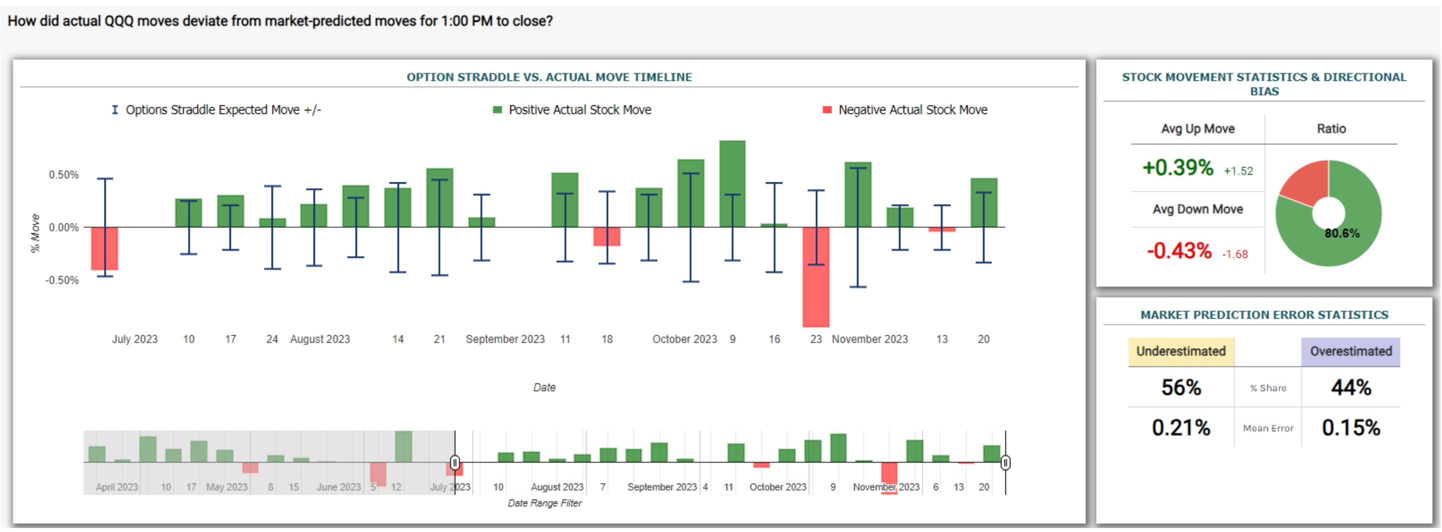


Quarterly expiration, CPI and the Fed meeting in the back leg for less than 5 SPX points 1% below spot price. Target $10-15.

THE TURKEYS ARE STUFFED WITH GIGA TECH CALLS – GOBBLE UP SOME SPY FED WEEK CALENDAR SPREADS

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

What can you say about Monday other than it's as close to homemade QE as you can get? These statistics are just astounding when you consider for the length of time it has been going on now:



You saw it again, the 'catalyst' was supposedly a meaningless 20-yr auction, when in reality 0DTE algos and humans that are not blind to this hoarded calls and forced dealers to be buyers of futures until 3:30pm when some of those hedges came off and the market actually ticked down for a few minutes.

Looking the above chart, I've mentioned that in several instances for the last few months in the timeframe on Mondays from 1pm to close, QQQ can actually outperform not only the call pricing but the straddle pricing. So, to put it more bluntly, more than 80% of the time tech stocks and QQQ rise in the afternoon enough so that long calls and long call verticals are winners. Over and over again.

And why not again this week? I'm sure a lot of folks were wondering (as I was) if the incessant panic grab of Santa calls and giga tech that continued after the short covering in IWM/KRE-like stuff ended (more on that in a minute) might show the markets an actual down day. Ho, not to be, it twas Monday after all.

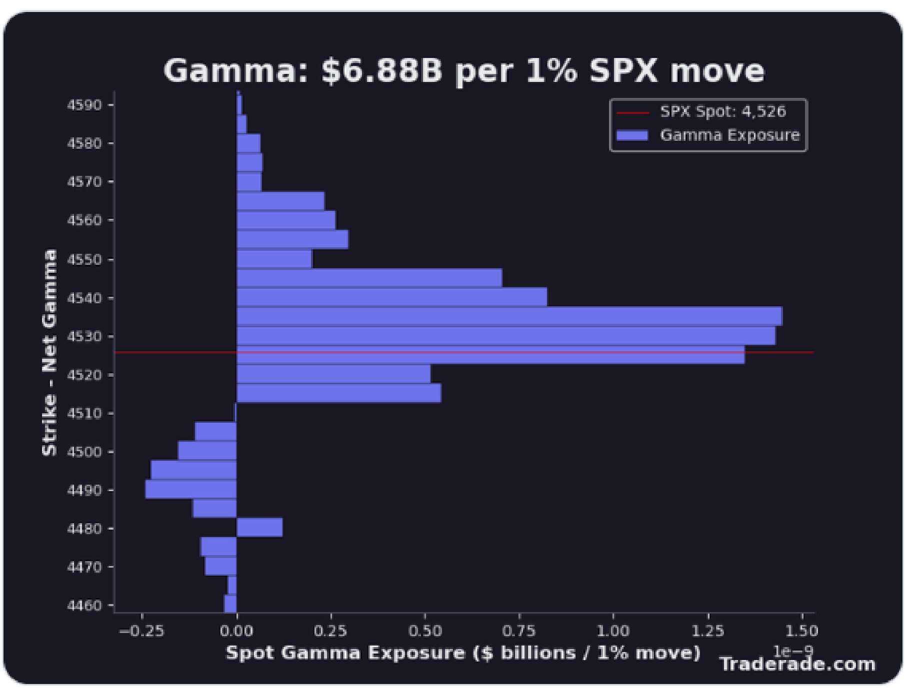
And gobbling up calls and futures they are, in the good stuff of course. Put call ratios in the mag7 were very much below 1 yesterday, meaning far more calls than puts traded.

AMZN	146.2008	+0.70%	+1.0208	28.09%	0.308
MSFT	375.2384	+1.46%	+5.3884	23.87%	0.532
AAPL	191.231	+0.81%	+1.541	20.18%	0.568
GOOGL	134.545	-0.57%	-.765	23.93%	0.474
META	338.0101	+0.89%	+2.9701	28.67%	0.712
NVDA	493.57	+0.12%	+.59	51.67%	0.587
TSLA	233.62	-0.29%	-.68	52.19%	0.643
AMD	120.3574	-0.22%	-.2626	43.67%	0.619

And with volume low this week, post-opex volume often is lower than usual and combined with the holiday week, 0DTE got to wag the market dog again. This great follow on twtr is all over it; here is a fine explanation of what we saw yesterday and then at the close:

Horselover Fat
@Michigandolf

The relative strength in $SPX this morning is due to the frantic Call Buying, imo. The Nasdaq and the Big 8 are just now approaching their OR Highs while the S&P rips. There will be great opportunities to fade this low volume push, but gotta be patient, we know how this game works and you can't fight these 0DTE players. Wait for them to close or show some interest in Puts. We're getting close now.



Traderade

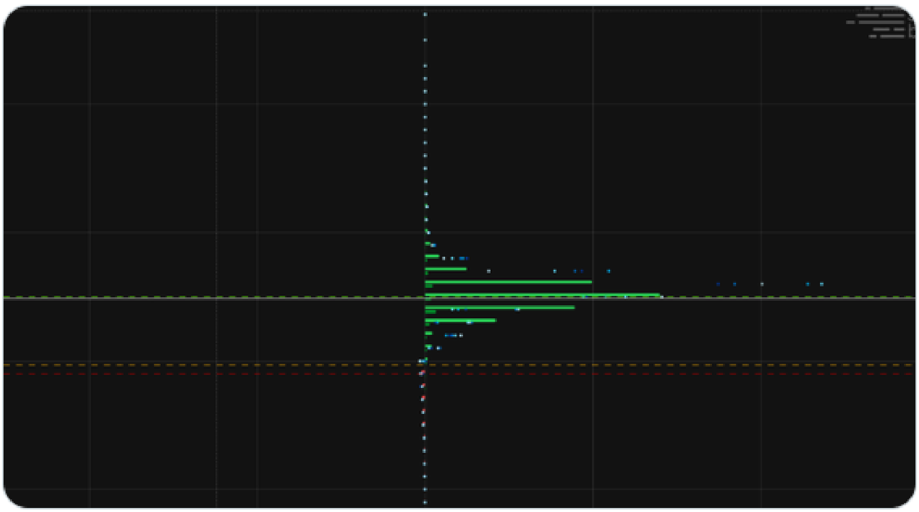
11:00 AM · Nov 20, 2023 · 93K Views

Horselover Fat 🧙
@Michigandolf

And just like that they pack it in for the day with a massive wave of closure.

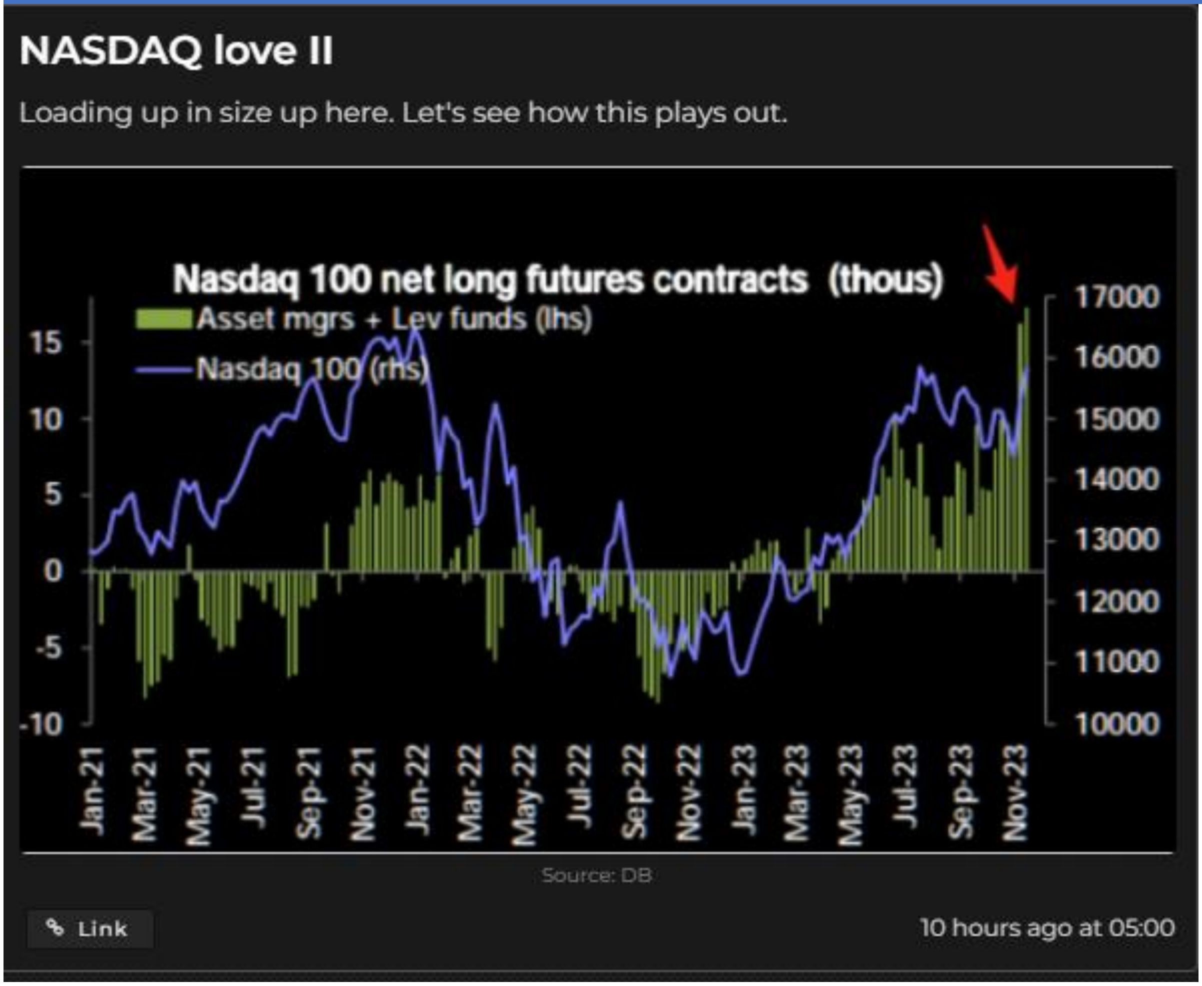
I hope people understand the only reason I'm posting these updates is to show the impact of SPX 0DTEs on ES right now. Arguably the strongest factor driving price. There's still so many incredibly brilliant people on here that are still in denial.

Data is data, don't shoot the messenger.



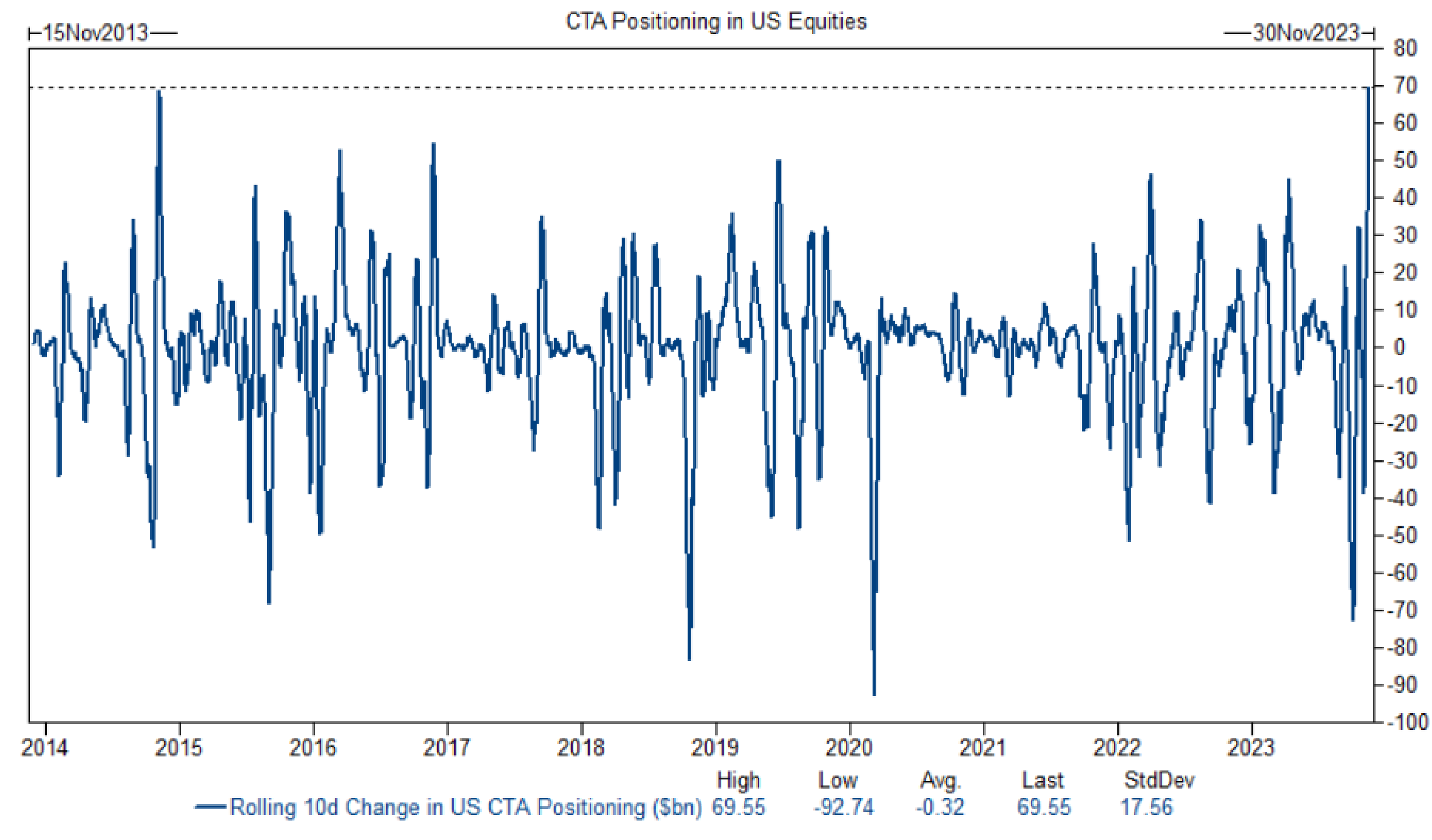
3:54 PM · Nov 20, 2023 · 3,605 Views

But it's not just 0DTE- that dynamic is dovetailing with folks still simply just getting long tech and associated derivatives in many forms. SPY/SPX/QQQ/Mag7 December and January calls for sure, but this is eye-opening:

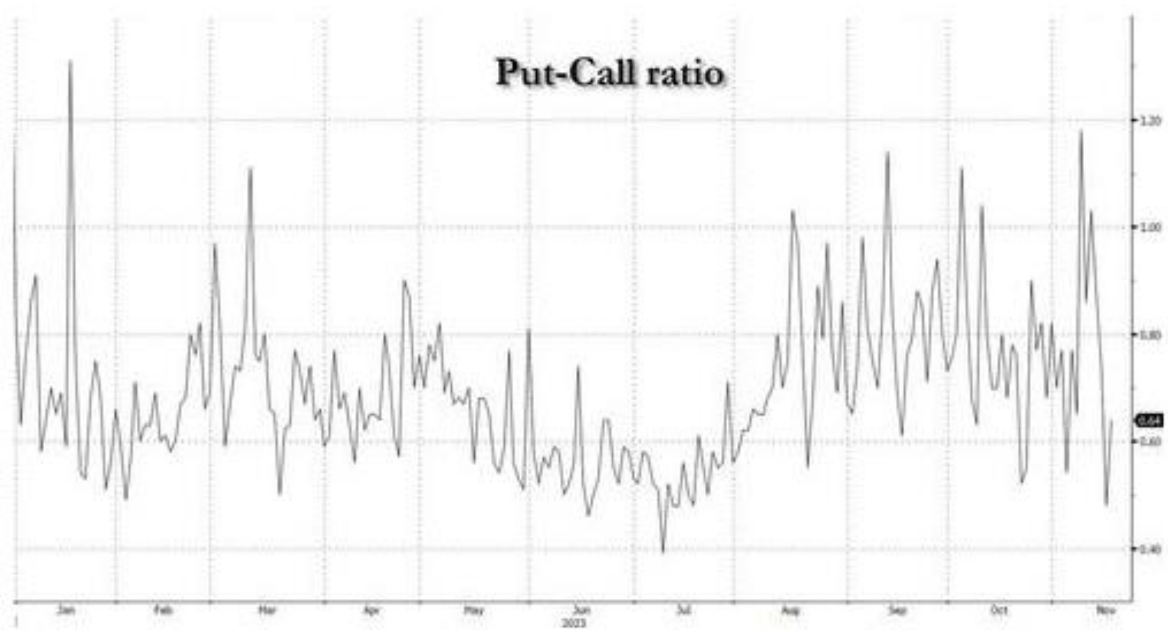


I mean, whatever's working right? And CTAs just did some record buying:

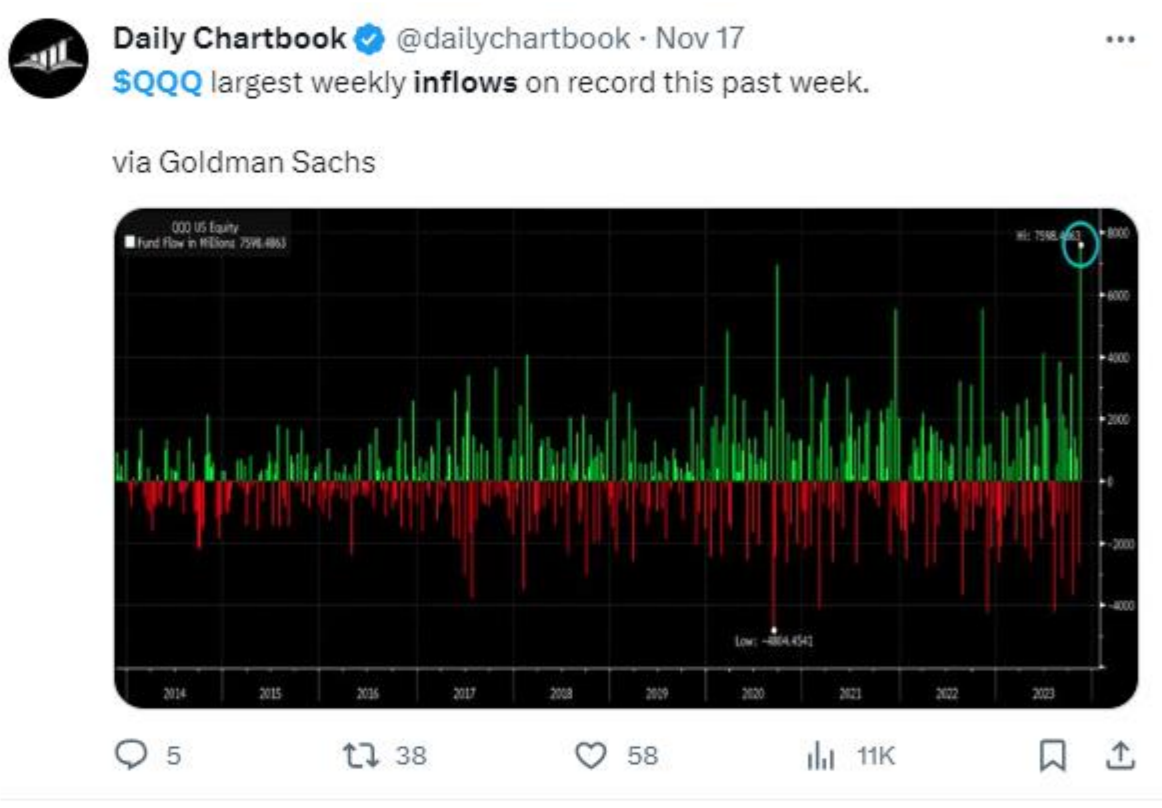
*Goldman's trading desk confirmed our observations from the start of the month, namely that "**over the last 10 days – CTAs have bought nearly $70bn of US equities…this is the largest 10d buying we have on record."***



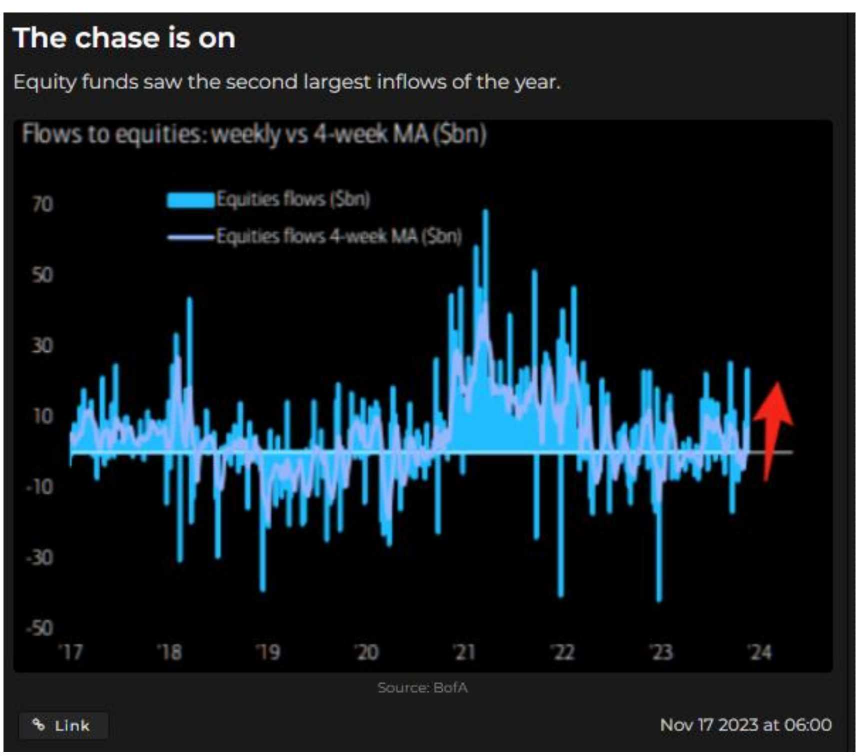
Put/call ratios in stocks are near the lows of the year, which was if you recall when the pre-tech earnings ramp was getting ridiculous:



And folks are just plain ole loading up on the tech stocks. QQQ set a record for inflows



As well as a few other things in equity land, like storming back into home builders (take a gander at an ITB chart for some humor) and emerging markets, but in reality, loading up on SPY is really just buying more mega tech since the mag7 comprise 30% of the fund/index:



Don’t forget giga tech buybacks of course, the ‘buyback window’ opened and I suppose that means that giga tech corporate traders just hit the vwap every day since it doesn’t care about buying back stock when it’s cheaper so as to be more accretive to shareholders, right?

But third, and most important, is that according to BofA, last week saw the "**largest weekly buyback in our data history (since ‘10)**" to wit:

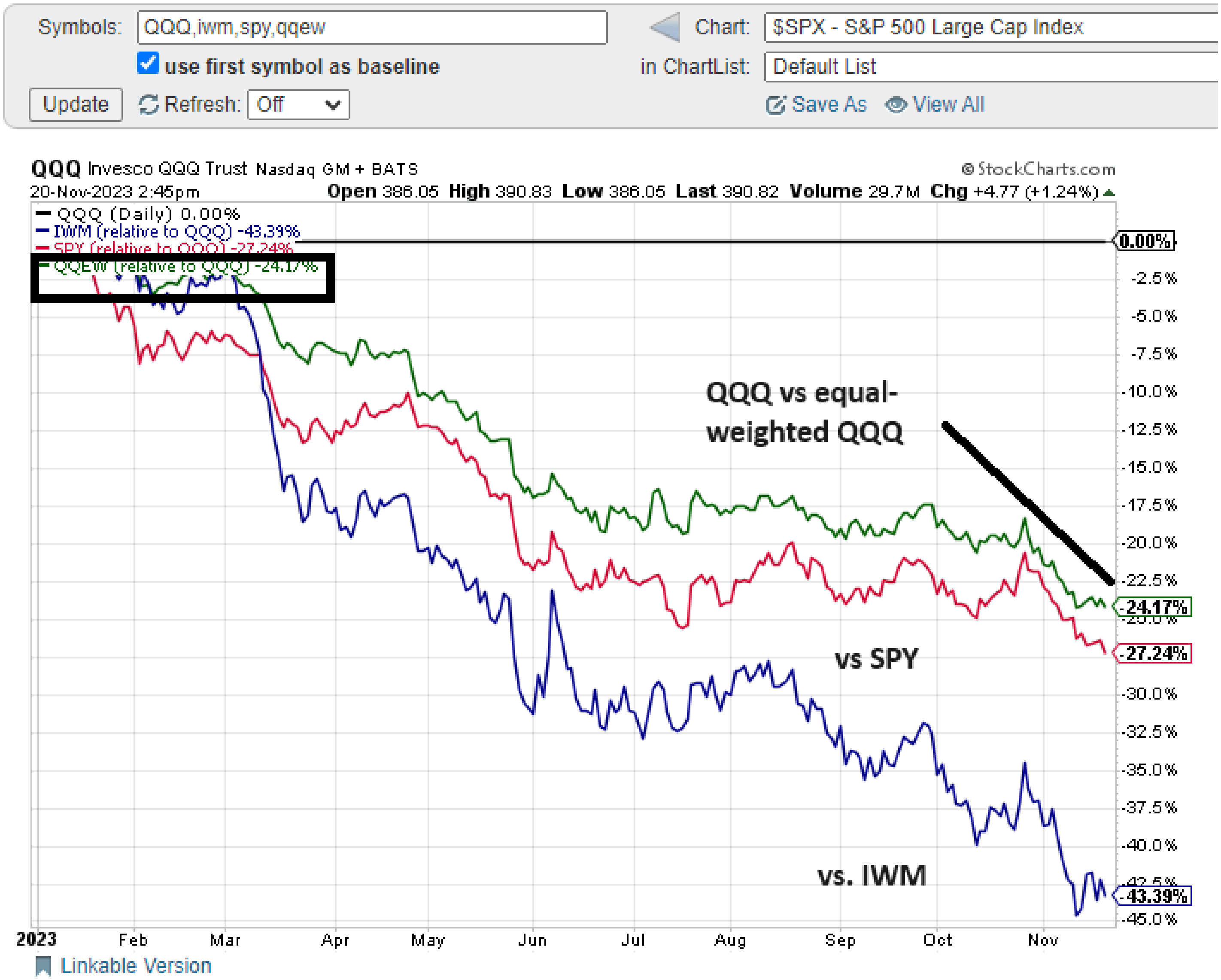
> Corporate client buybacks accelerated last week and are tracking above seasonal levels for the first time since May. YTD, corp. **client buybacks as a percentage of S&P 500 mkt. cap (0.17%) are below ‘22 highs (0.21%) at this time**

Exhibit 3: Corp. client buybacks as a % of market cap is above seasonal trend for the first time since May & this week’s inflows is the largest in our data history (since ‘10)
BofA corporate client buybacks as a % of S&P 500 market cap by week of the year vs. avg since 2010

Source: BofA Securities

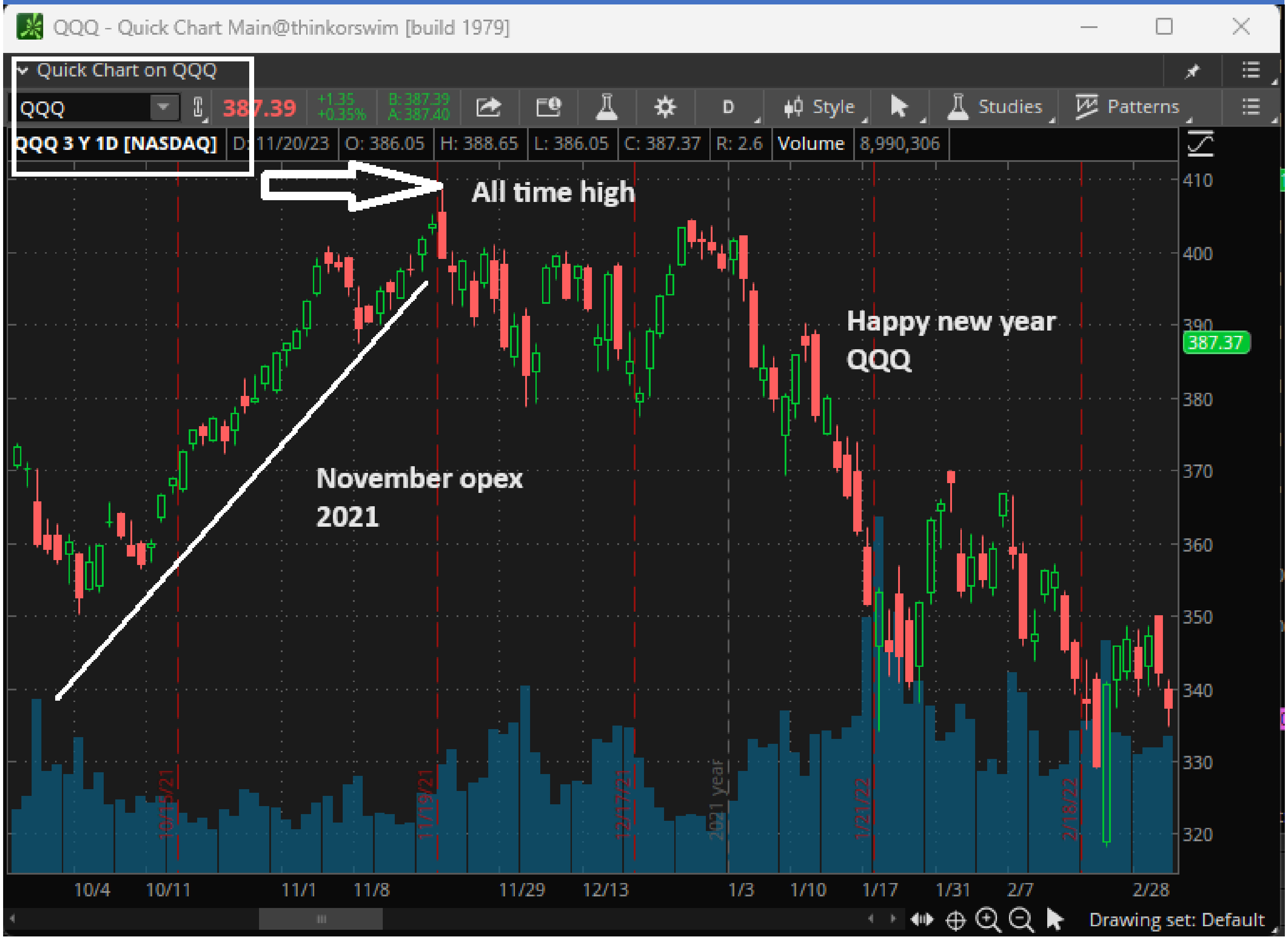
BofA GLOBAL RESEARCH

QQQ outperformance is so frothy, it is not only hitting a new high versus IWM (a record there as well, QQQ divergence from IWM) ***but QQQ is destroying in performance an equal-weighted version of itself!***



So, it’s fair to say that in the blink of an eye, a tidal wave of long large cap tech crashed into markets this month as you can see and filled their holiday cornucopia with tech stocks, tech ETFs, tech calls, and tech futures. And a lot of it.

And so, I looked back at the last time we saw a huge November ramp, and when QQQ last hit it’s all time high (it’s a chip shot away now obviously), and wouldn’t you know, it was the day after November opex in 2021:



So, while implied vol is remains almost ludicrously inexpensive versus the high realized volatility we just witnessed, it's time to carve into this stuffed bird with an eye on the Fed meeting and January's potential tech new year sobriety.

Volatility Trades:

Fed/SPY ex-div put calendar spread

Sell Dec 8th $445 put

Buy Dec 15th $445 put

Net debit: $1-1.25

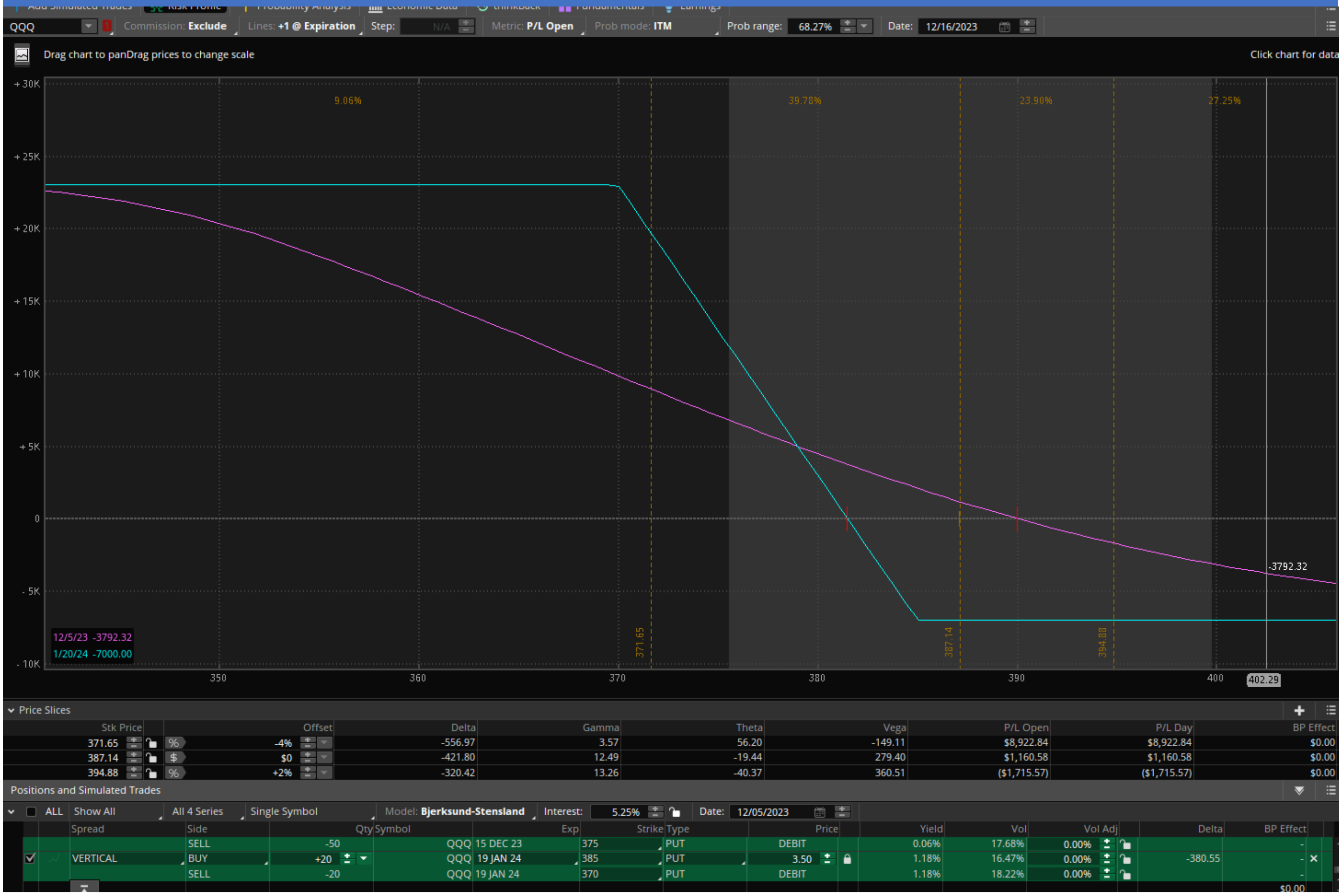
The back leg has $1.80 of ex-dividend in it, along with the Fed meeting, CPI, and quarterly opex, and it costs the equivalent of 10-12 S&P points. Simply an amazing price. I'm fairly confident that everyone long calls and tech stocks are going to be mildly aware of all these risk events when we get there. Target, 2.50-3.

QQQ January opex put vertical spread

Buy $385 QQQ put

Sell $370 QQQ put

Net debit: $3.50



This spread is based on the above QQQ scenario and includes the fact that folks will want to window dress/avoid tax until the new year. At the time of writing, it is closer to $4 so I will watch the post NVDA earnings spike and see if I can get it cheaper then.

Have a great Thanksgiving and keep an eye on the half day. I've seen strange things occur on the half-day trading Friday, and with 0DTE anything can happen. For example, in 2021 covid variant news saw the SPX drop 120 points on that half day. Imagine buying half day puts for pennies and waking up to that (or being too lazy to close short puts, the horror!), someone did. Further, the Monday after Thanksgiving, doesn't have a sanguine record either, even though Mondays are have obviously been call vol paradise.

MARKETS AWAIT UNCLENCH – A THEORY ON THE REAL REASON FOR DECEMBER VOLATILITY – NVDA ON DECK-FED MEETING/DECEMBER VOL TRADE

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

Well, this opex is more like the ole days of zirp in positive gamma, at least since the post-CPI ramp locked the index around 4500. How quaint. Every intraday dip tased by the vol selling crowd. The usual giga watering holes seeing large call gamma volume. A bucolic opex week, sit on the porch, grab a sweet tea and watch the time go by.

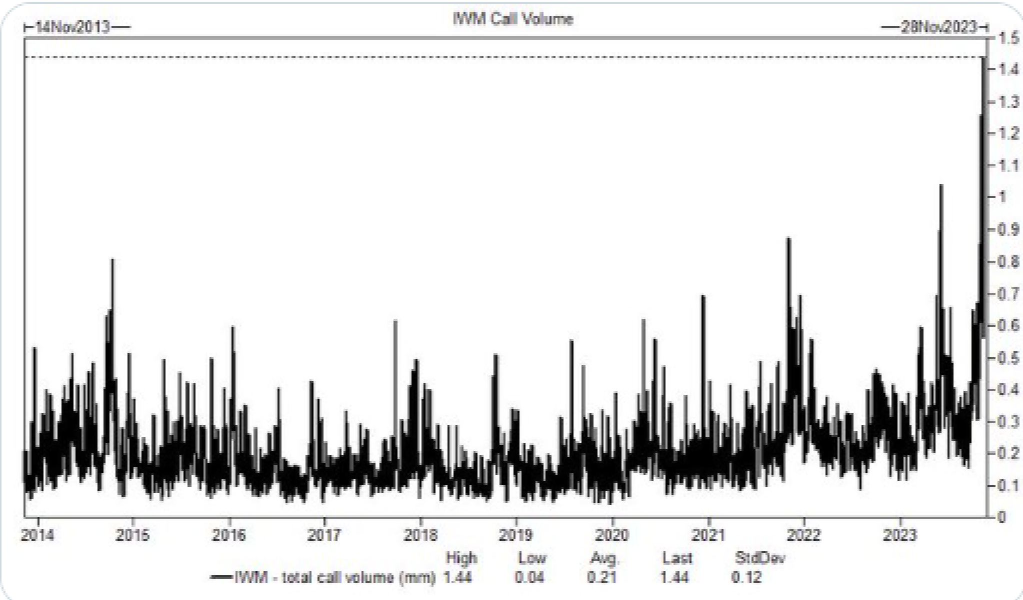
Yet, under the surface, bad breadth continues highlighted by this:

The Russell 2000, off over 1% while SPY/QQQ/DIA chop around flat. Water still hosing down the smoldering ashes of the short seller arson on Tuesday. Two interesting takeaways from the crime scene:

SpotGamma @spotgamma · Nov 14

$IWM call volume. holy cow.

h/t @zerohedge



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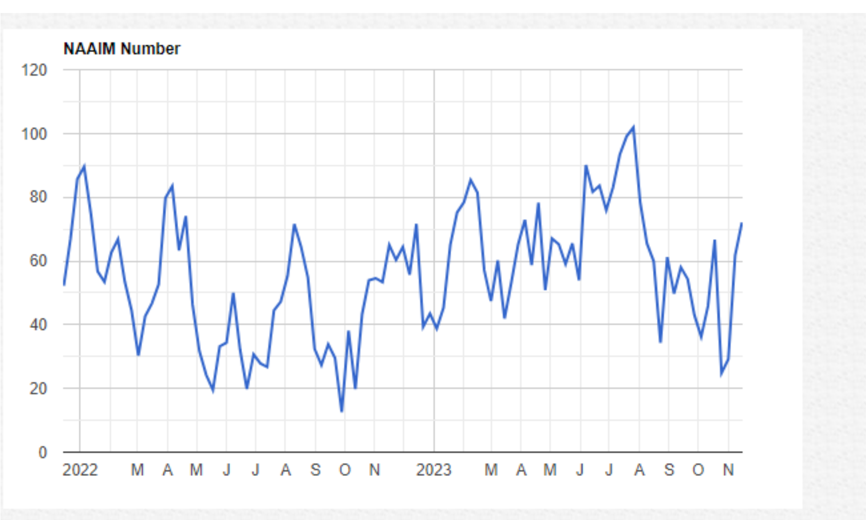
Goodness gracious, there is nothing to compare with that volume, ever. Now, here's the thing. Sentiment shifts faster than ever it seems and it's expressed with call buying. The options market has been democratized. Sentiment has gone from close to wondering where the Fed put was/recession is coming back to soft landing/we don't need a recession, literally overnight. Active managers are as invested (more like long calls, right) as they were during the July earnings season:

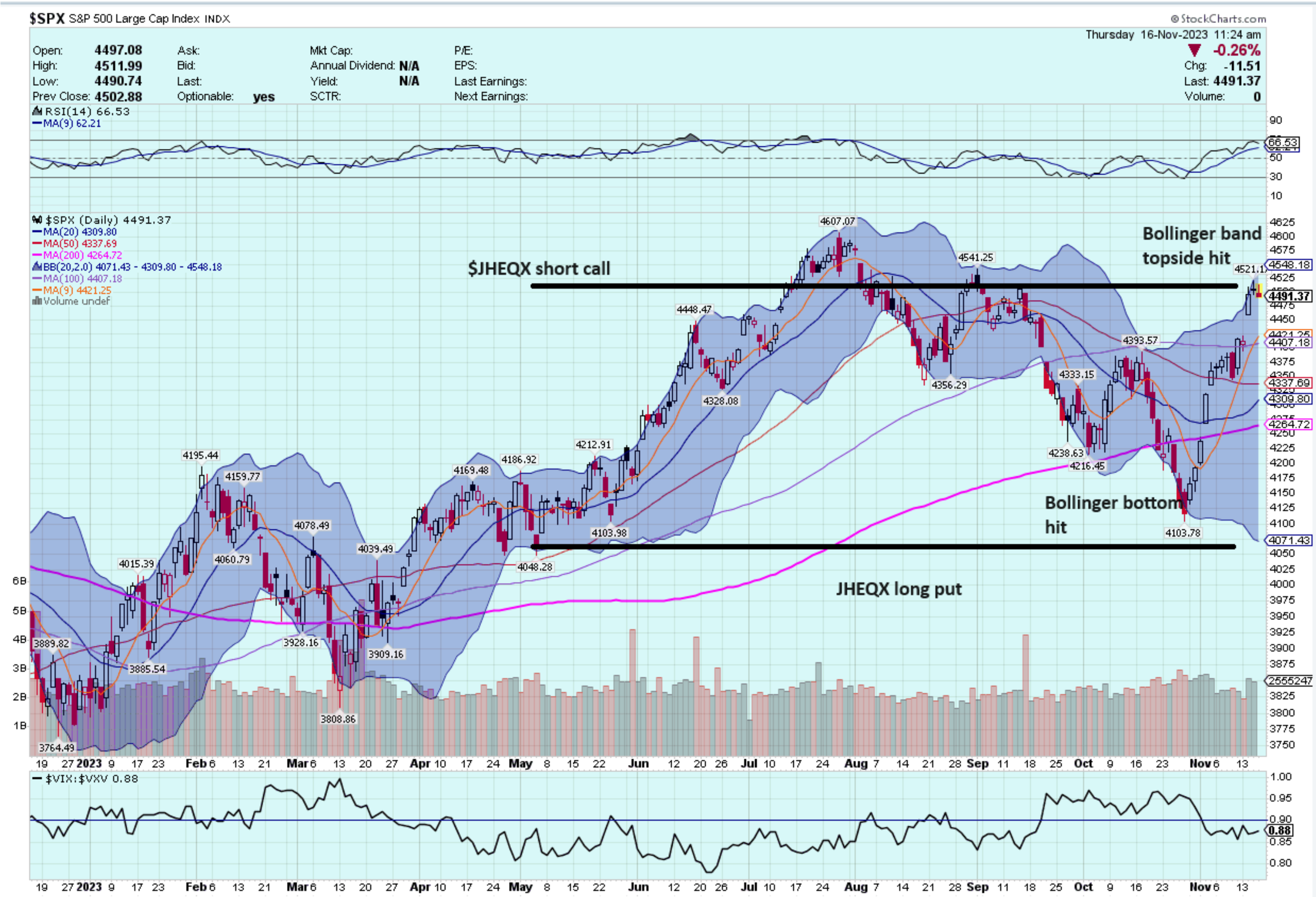


And some folks, well, they made a fortune expecting a squeeze of this magnitude. Using, yes, out-of-the-money opex expiring calls:

Now, back down most stocks slide, squeezes over, opex pinning being achieved by the Atlas' of the markets like MSFT/AAPL holding the whole special opening quotation thing at tomorrow's open together. (https://www.cmegroup.com/education/articles-and-reports/understanding-the-special-opening-quotation-soq.html)

(Which begs a thought for another day/note: If everyone has sold or is not interested in most stocks at this point, then what is the plan for next year? Are PMs going to simply load up on just giga tech on dips next year and expect 30% yet again? Will A.I. and valuation expansion be a 2023 redux?)

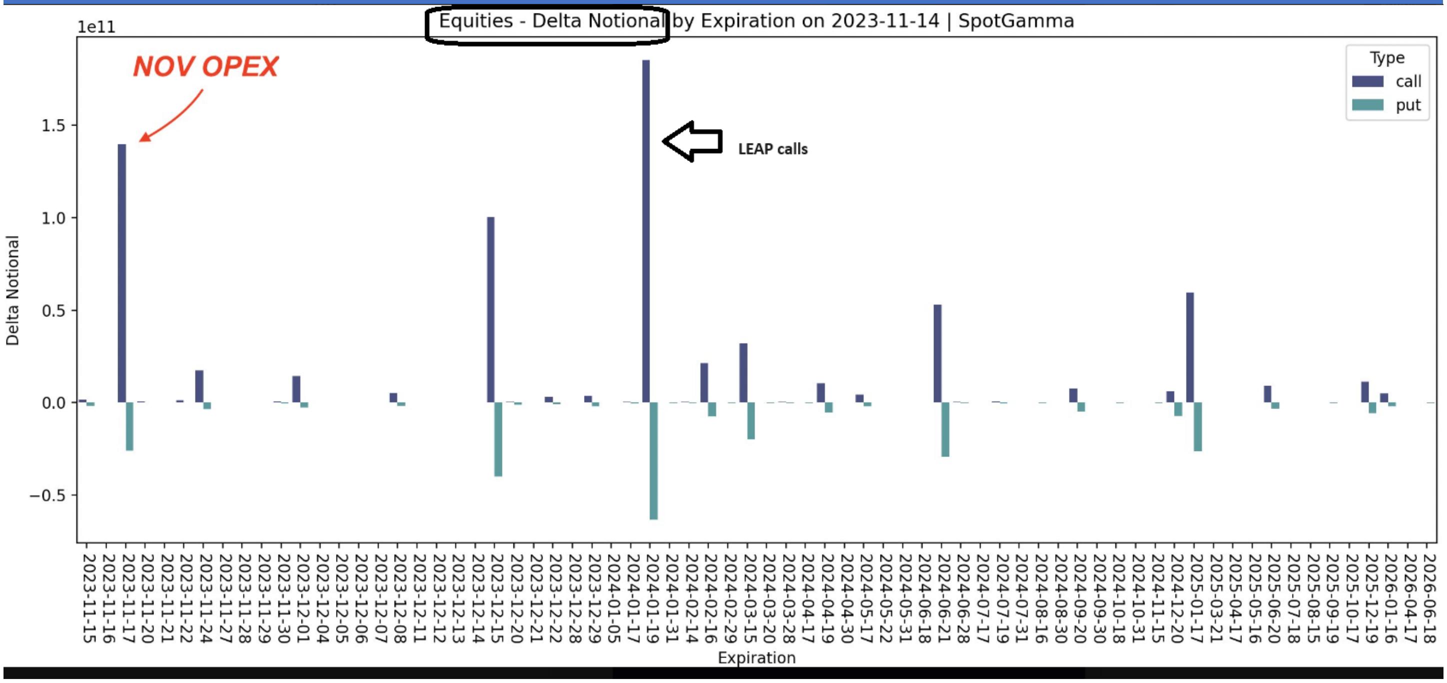
One thing I was pondering this week during the CPI gamma mayhem was the JPM collar. Can you believe that we nearly touched both sides of the collar and both Bollinger bands in only two weeks' time? Just amazing:



So, if you're scoring at home, this zero-debit collar has suddenly become a liability. 41000 or so collars, the short call being worth about $76 less the long put which is about $5.50 is roughly:

41k x 100 x $70.5 = $289mm. Not exactly pocket change for a 16B fund. The good (or scary perhaps) news is that it has 45 days or so to go, so a 5% rally into year-end would really do some damage.

IWM calls and JPM collars dovetail nicely with my topic du jour, why December volatility tends to rise after folks are beached like orca post turkey day. Take a gander at this chart:



LEAPS are calls that are listed years in advance. Basically, an opportunity for someone to own long term upside without plunking down the whole stock price or paying margin fees. And you know, these are generally folks that are long calls, not short.

What does this mean? Well, as you get closer to expiration and the deltas start to decay, you know, charm, then dealers are sellers of the long hedge. So, while the models most folks use to judge whether the market is in positive or negative gamma, this sort of flips that generality on its head.

Instead of buying back the short futures/stocks when the calls the dealers are long (covered calls sold to them) decay, it's the opposite. They are short the calls, thus long the underlying hedge and when they decay, dealers are sellers.

Take a look at the big tech stocks, at the open interest for January LEAPS, it's huge. Combine that with a lot of folks that most certainly got long calls in November post-Fed, when the seasonality/technicals/breadth thrust, what have you, signaled them to shift sentiment and go long December Santa calls as well. What you have is a lot of long calls that on a bad day in the market in December, go up in flames and dealers do a lot of selling. Hence, December volatility.

Just my theory, mind you, what exacerbates December vol. In the meantime, keep an eye on SOQ in the morning, how the market acts on that minor unclench, the markets after 3pm when there is more unclenching, and finally, if the S&P parks here, then Monday/Tuesday could be very interesting. NVDA is clearly the main event next week, so it's harder than usual to gauge how vol is going to act vis a vis unclench.

Volatility Trades:

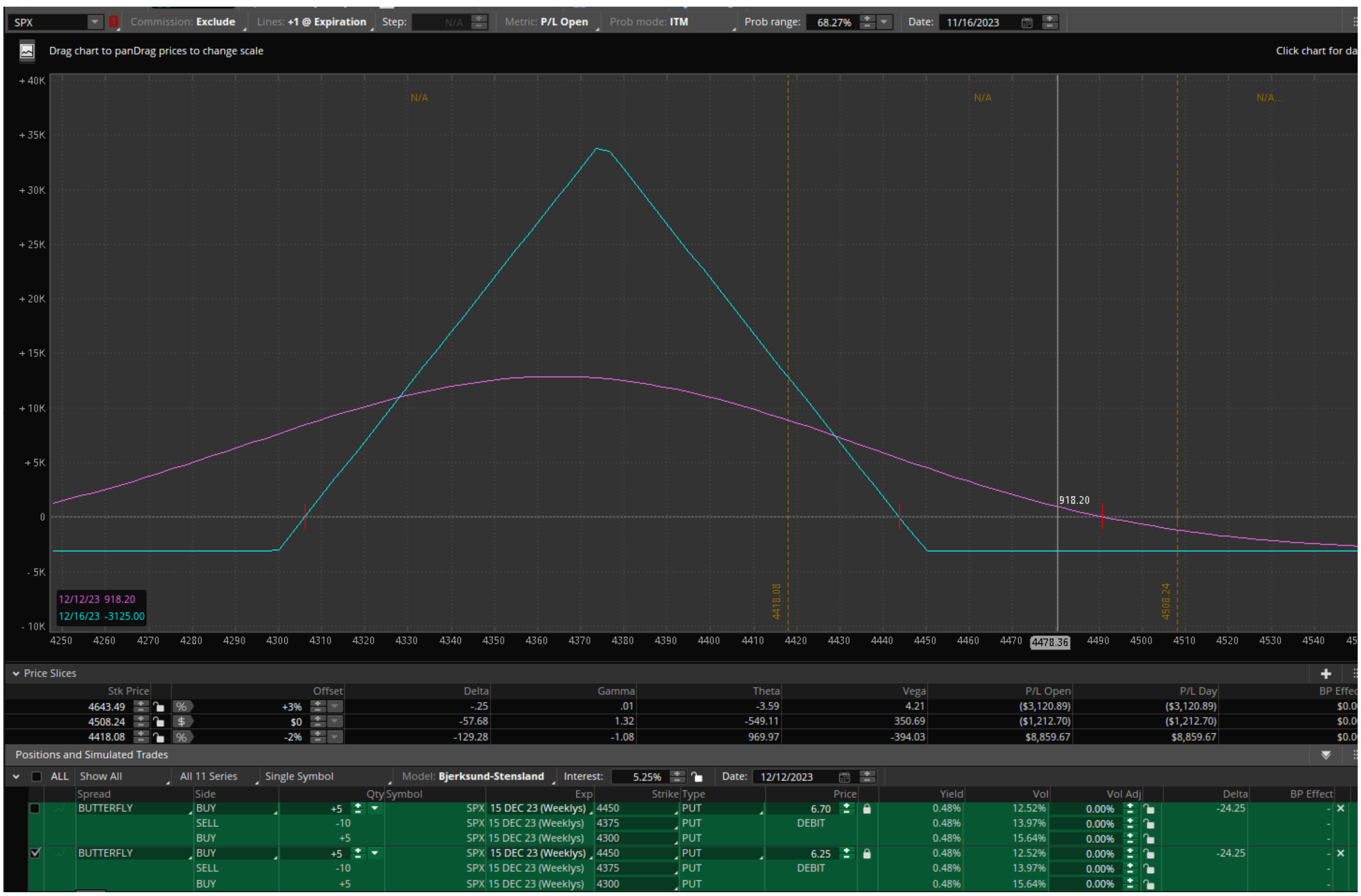
SPX Fed meeting put butterfly spread

Buy 4450 Dec put

Sell 2x 4375 Dec put

Buy 4300 Dec put

Net debit: $6-6.50



Another byproduct of an opex week like this is the room service hop that the low vol of the week gives you to set spreads for very low prices. 6 points of cost for owning 4450-4375, 8% of the width. Only 1% lower it starts to earn, and rapidly. And this spread holds a slew of risk events, JOLTS/CPI/Fed meeting/quarterly opex….It's priced as if the odds of the market having a down day in the next month are close to non-existent. Target- $12-15.

REALIZED VOL REMAINS HIGH AS VIX NEARS LOWS OF THE YEAR – HEDGING FOR A CHANGE IN SENTIMENT – FED MEETING/END OF YEAR

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

Another amazing gap up and gamma-fueled short squeeze, making a mockery of old-timey ‘efficient’ and ‘forward-looking’ market tripe. Today, I’m just going to focus on trades that *are* forward looking, due to the level of implied volatility nearing the lows.

Clearly these market moves are borderline astonishing at this point; it’s a rally reminiscent of coming out of covid or a bank crisis, yet there wasn’t anything remotely like that, which is catching just about everybody off guard. and the Russell 2000 (IWM) is having one of *its best days ever*:

The ludicrously crowded Nasdaq-100 (QQQ) is *up 10% so far this month* and when you compare it to IWM, that outperformance broke out again. On top of that, with the realized volatility being this high, and it being trend vol to the upside, realized vol has surpassed implied volatility in QQQ:

It's almost as if two weeks ago, you had to have the imagination of a madman to think the S&P would travel 10% higher in two weeks. It's not like anything fundamentally has changed.

Tomorrow is vixpiration and retail sales, and while I expect virtually no impact from a negative print regarding the latter, the former might be interesting. It is often the vol dividing line/watershed between low opex week implied vol and rising vol.

If we pin 4500 or go higher, that increases the odds of unclench volatility next week if vixpiration through Friday's close is relatively uneventful. Implied volatility is quite low versus realized volatility and when you add in the fact that the markets have been moving in one direction, trend volatility is making fortunes out of long call vol geniuses.

VOLATILITY ANALYTICS NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 28TH

So, I will save more commentary on the usual stuff for ensuing notes because today is the ideal time to talk about looking ahead to when sentiment is not this ridiculous. I said the same thing and did a similar note during the July earnings summer ramp, and those ideas worked out quite well.

Here is a portion of that note and you will notice a lot of similarities to today:

VOLATILITY ANALYTICS NEWSLETTER – JULY 18TH

HEDGING IDEAS WHILE IMPLIED IS LOW ANTICIPATING AN AUTUMN RETURN OF REALIZED VOLATILITY

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

While everyone waits for the A.I. mentions and resulting giga tech earnings after hours spikes, it's probably a good time to look ahead, to potentially saner times. It certainly appears that QQQ has a date with all-time highs, not far away now, prices from early 2022 when almost everyone was thinking we were in a bubble.

You don't hear that now; you hear about future revenue boosts (sound familiar?) and that the most likely scenario for the economy is the rosiest possible outcome conceived as a low probability path only months ago.

The Fed meeting next week, well that's probably not a factor; it was a vol crush springboard last month and how often does Jay actually come out and talk things down? Quite rare. And in the midst of all the tech earnings that are being unveiled, it's probably even less relevant.

Managers are panic buying, meme stocks are on fire, folks don't dare sell in front of earnings, and speculative fervor in smashing puts every day combined with call gamma sweeps, hard to imagine a meaningful dip anytime soon, as I mentioned in last week's note.

This is the kind of thing that is happening with incredible frequency:

So, while this frenzy seems to be boiling over, the goal today is to examine a few hedging trades with three requirements. Trades that are very cheap due to low demand for hedging and low implied volatility, trades that will not bleed quickly, but ones that will pay immediately if volatility magically returns in the near term or the medium term.

So, here are a few trades that adhere to the goals stated in the last paragraph. I wrote that during July opex week which was similar to this week, gaps and huge upside moves. Bullish opexes can be as crazy directionally these days as bearish opexes are, they tend to really exaggerate the move in the prevailing direction.

Volatility Trades:

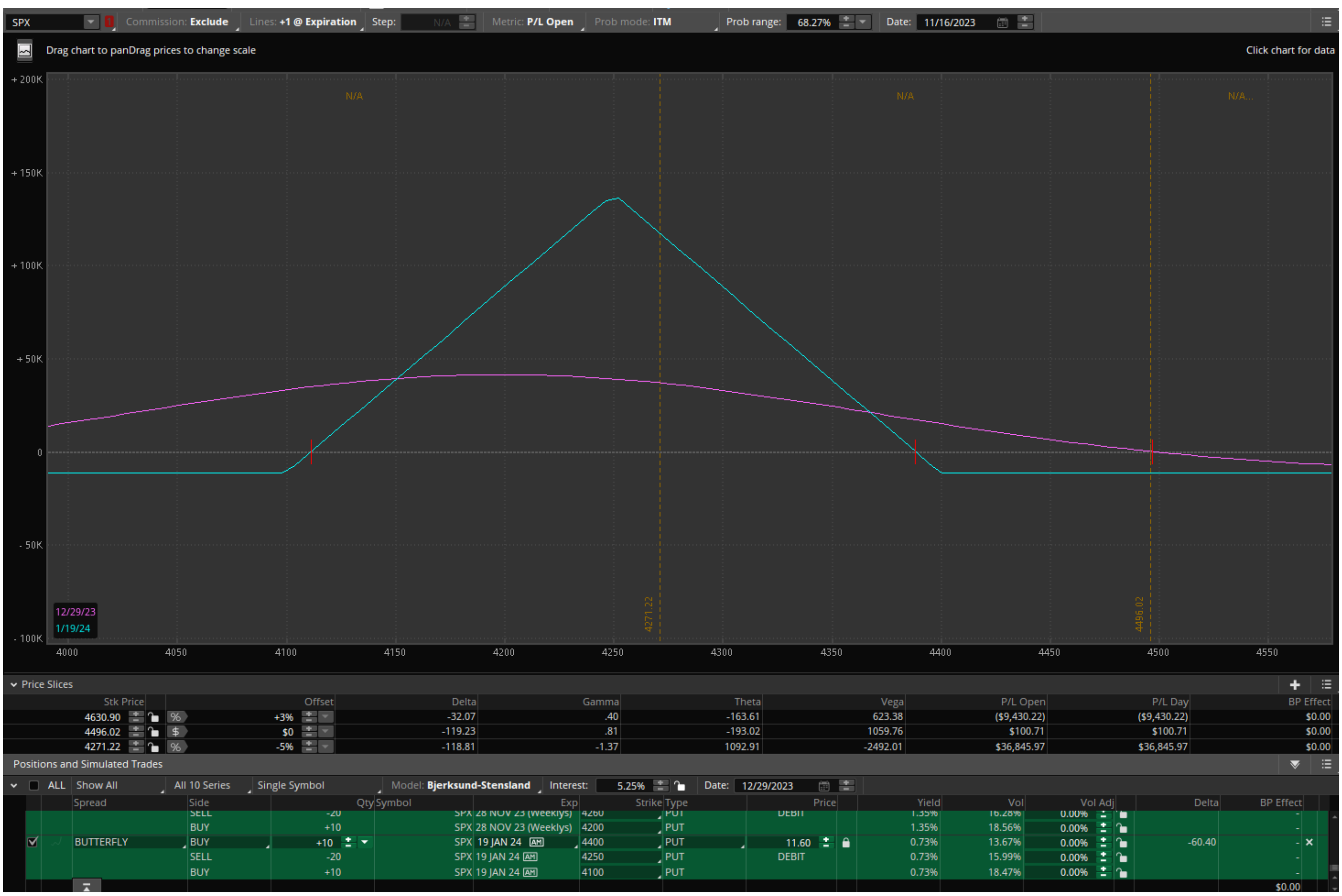
SPX January put butterfly spread

Buy 4400 put

Sell 2x 4250 put

Buy 4100 put

Net debit: $11.50-$12



150 points of downside for 12/150 = 8% of the width. Here is what I said about the nearly identical close-to-the-money put butterfly trade in July, ***which tagged the middle/short strikes at August opex:***

This is an extremely cheap trade. For about 14 SPX points, you get 150 points of downside below 4500, which is only 1% below current price. That is 9.3% of the width. I have no idea why people hedge with naked puts when you can put on a structure like this and pay so little. How much can 14 points bleed? One set of these for $1400 can easily make 500% and not even have to see the market correct 4% from today's price!

Consider this. 4550 x .96, 4% lower at September expiration is 4368. That means this fly at expiration would be worth $132. That's over an 800% return.

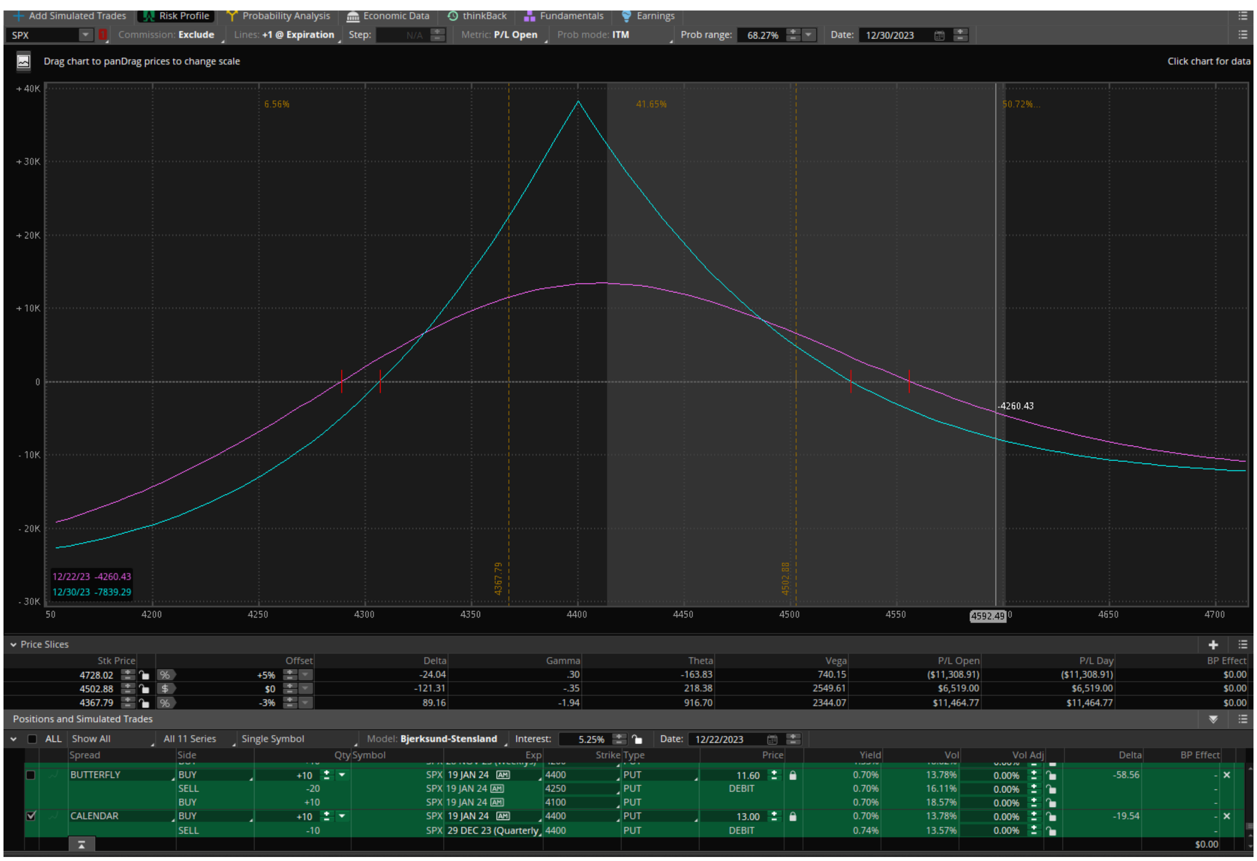
No need to elaborate further frankly.

SPX Fed meeting/Quarterly opex put calendar spread

Sell Dec 29th 4400 put

Buy Jan 19th 4400 put

Net debit: $12-14



QQQ Fed meeting/Quarterly opex put calendar spread

Sell 370 Dec 29th put

Buy 370 Jan 19th put

Net debit: $1.45-1.60

Two trades, same premise. Selling Fed/CPI/quarterly opex vol and owning new year vol for cheap. In the case of SPX, 3 weeks below 4400 for 13 SPX points, .3% of the underlying. That's a 30-minute afternoon move in SPX lately.

The QQQ trade is even more interesting, because folks are holding off selling the big names in here until the new year. Implied vol should start rising as we get closer to year end and the market realizes that.

I will be curious to see how these are pricing right before the Fed meeting. Lately, the 0-1DTE crowd vacuums the premium out before the event, leaving these events to be subject to large moves. That might be the time to kill both of these. Target $25-30 and $4-5.

VOLATILITY ANALYTICS NEWSLETTER – NOVEMBER 28TH

MONDAY CONTINUES LEGENDARY STREAK DEMONSTRATING MARKET 'EFFICIENCY'- OPEX CYCLE CHOP ZONE CONTINUES AS EXPECTED- LOOKING AT 2018 QT CHARTS AGAIN FOR CLUES

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

Welcome to the chop zone:

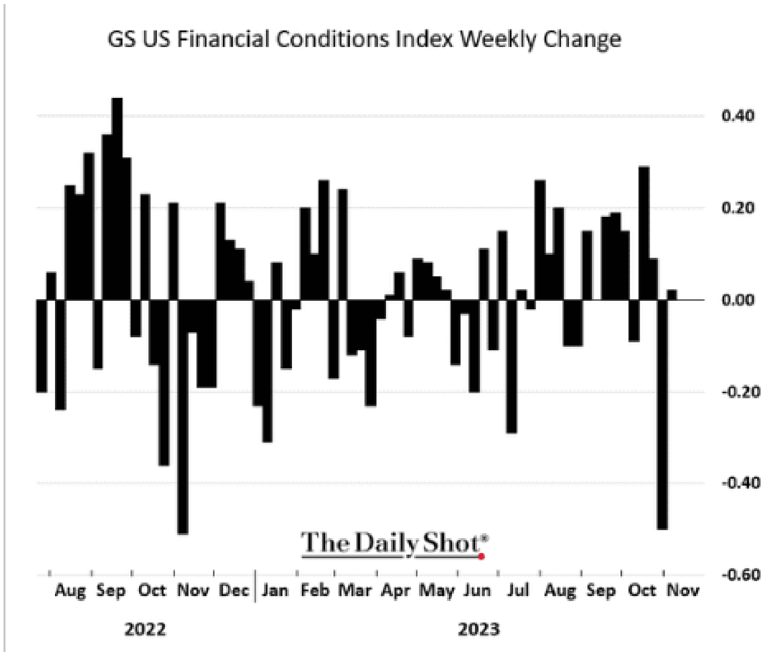
Wednesday's note:

It certainly appears to me, as I stated on Friday, that we've entered the chop area, where the markets might actually have a down day, yet that will magically be recovered the next day (or during an overnight ramp), and when morning ramps fail in the afternoon but conversely morning dips recover in the afternoon.

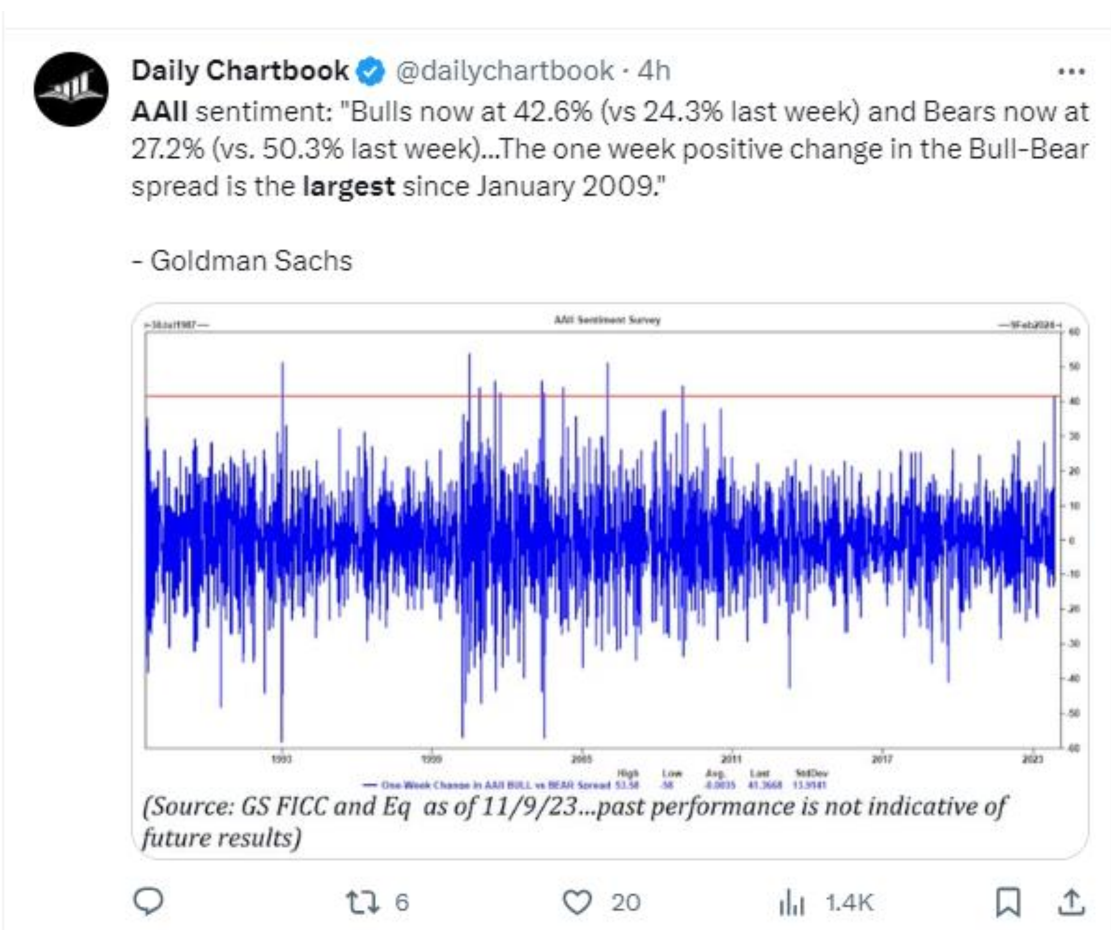
Yesterday's afternoon dip was erased with ease this morning, even as Powell got horrible news. Bad breadth folks foiled again. (See prior note) First, he was out fighting the easing that accompanied the ole 'give the market and inch and it takes the largest rally in two years', thing, since financial conditions eased markedly:

The United States: US financial conditions eased sharply over the past few days.

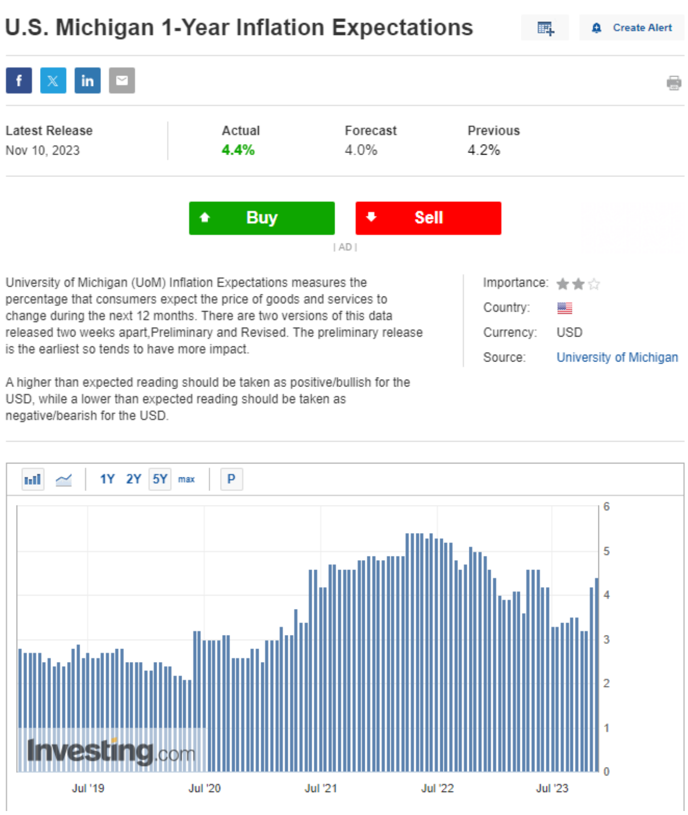
One of the largest easing weeks in ages, which shouldn't surprise anyone:

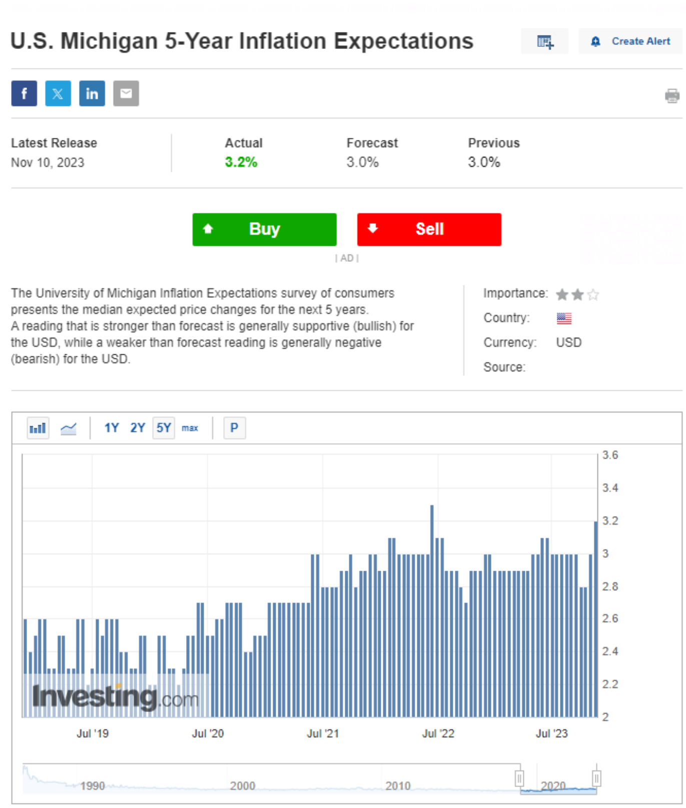


And sentiment, well, let's just say it broke the sound barrier rocketing higher in a Chuck Yeager test plane:



Thus subsequently, Powell was out doing his thing, trying to put the horse back in the barn, when he got this news today, which is precisely the kind of inflation news his horrible dreams are made of:





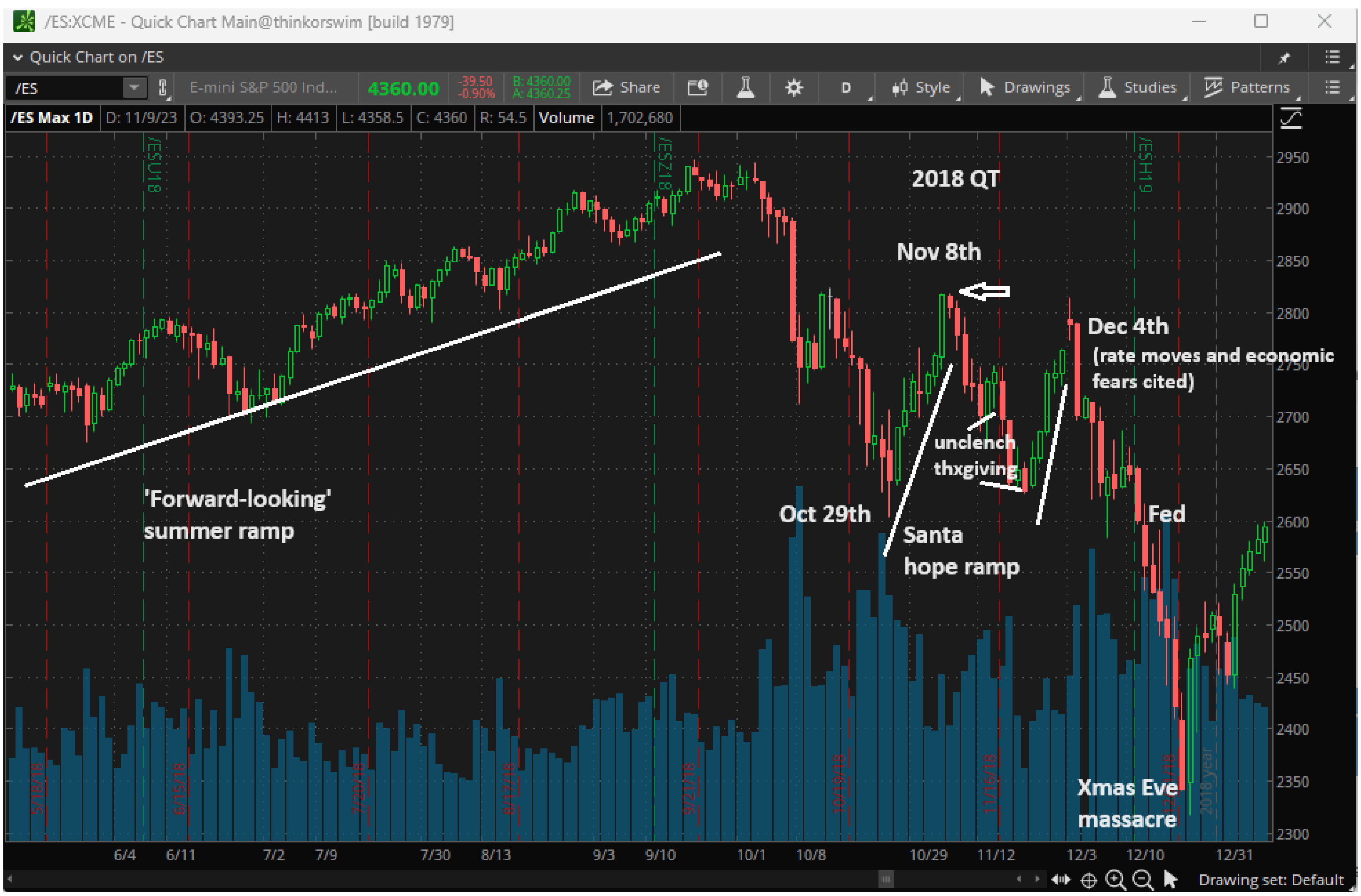
5-year inflation expectations near a multi-decade high? One year inflation expectations surging even as oil/gasoline fall….clearly he felt like:

Doesn't Powell always say that it's critically important to not let inflation expectations become embedded? Just yesterday he said:

> Policy restraint in this case is also good risk management. Supply shocks that drive inflation high enough for long enough can affect the longer-term inflation expectations of households and businesses. Monetary policy must forthrightly address any risks of a potential de-anchoring of inflation expectations, as well-anchored expectations help facilitate bringing inflation back to our target. The sharp policy tightening during 2022 likely contributed to keeping inflation expectations well anchored.

Get ready for an endless slew of Fed speak threatening future hikes, and Jay's pre-Christmas podium show might just not yield the same warm and fuzzy results that last week's did. They have no choice but to push back on easing conditions aggressively and CPI next week, things most certainly would auger well if it also exceeds expectations.

To that point, let's go back and review how 2018's QT and rate peak and how that went for the indices:

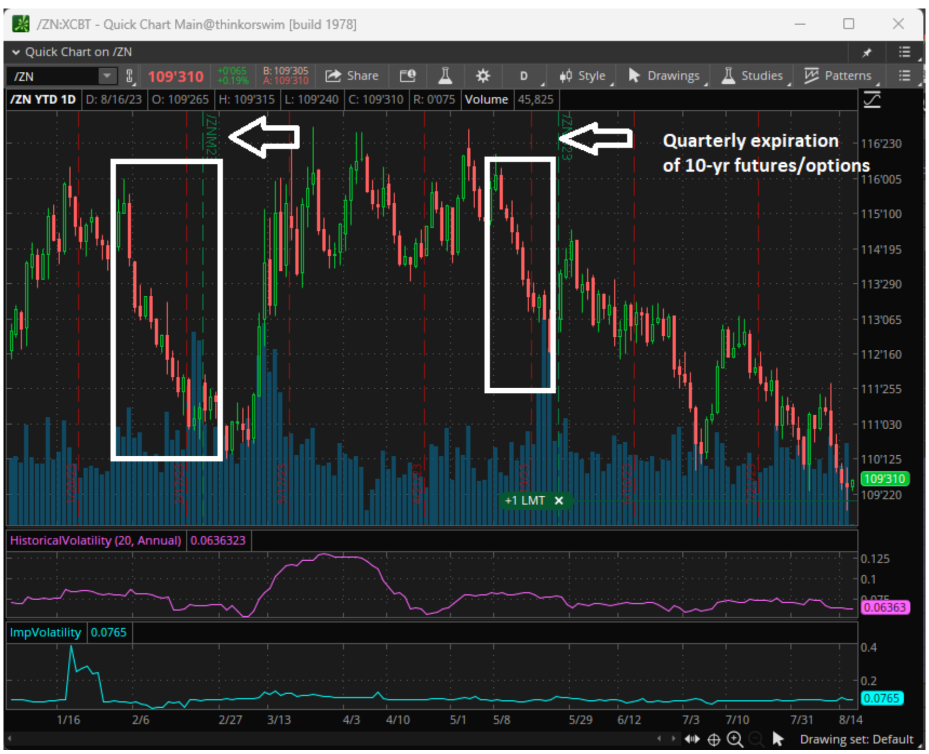


It obviously is not going to work out like this, but it certainly looks awfully similar thus far to this year. Back to the October levels, retracing the entire drop. Interestingly, back in 2018, if you look at news reports from December 4th, moves in rates and fears of a recession were blamed for the huge drop that day, sound familiar?

Speaking of rates and the 10-yr yield, December futures options expire soon, and this is a topic I discussed in August as having the potential to cause volatility, which it did into that expiration:

August 14th and 30th notes:

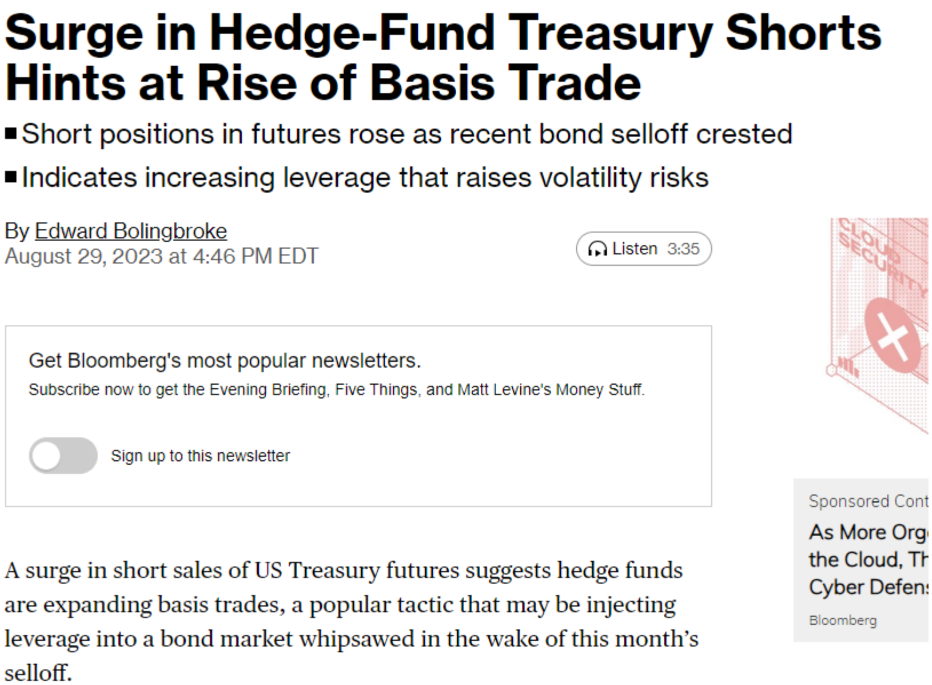
You know what's coming up, and is coincidentally on the date of Jackson Hole? Treasury note futures options quarterly expiration, a biggie, and specifically the 10-yr note futures contract. Just like everything else these days, it has large open interest and, well, look at this:



When these are falling it means that the 10-yr yield is rising, consider it a sort of inverse chart. So, there is a lot of options gamma in these right now, all those open and traded options have to be dealer hedged, just like stocks and indices options and this often forces rates higher during high gamma time periods. And we all know that a rising 10-yr causes stress in just about everything, and yes, in the tech stocks everyone loves.

And:

In fact, Bloomberg today highlighted a large seasonal arbitrage trade around 10-yr futures that occurs at the end of these cycles and had a lot of hedge funds shorting 10-yr futures which drove up yields:



Surge in Hedge-Fund Treasury Shorts Hints at Rise of Basis Trade

- Short positions in futures rose as recent bond selloff crested
- Indicates increasing leverage that raises volatility risks

By Edward Bolingbroke
August 29, 2023 at 4:46 PM EDT

Listen 3:35

A surge in short sales of US Treasury futures suggests hedge funds are expanding basis trades, a popular tactic that may be injecting leverage into a bond market whipsawed in the wake of this month's selloff.

So, lots of reasons for more volatility in the near term:

-CPI and PPI next week

-Those data points occur around vixpiration, frequently a volatility watershed point:

'With opex a week away, and vixpiration Wednesday, heavy chop is expected. And Wednesday's vixpiration, often the vol watershed day, happens again to coincide with the outset of giga tech earnings season. How did that go in July?'

Source: October 13th letter

-10-yr futures options gamma could enhance rates vol and thus equities vol

-Plain ole opex and unclench

-Fed needing to parrot more hawkish commentary

-Bullish sentiment surge

But before that cluster of vol events, we all know what has become a de facto free ride for QQQ call option longs right? The glorious streak of Mag7 Mondays, will we see the 19th straight?

Volatility Trade:

QQQ Dec 8th Jolts/NFP early Dec vol put butterfly spread

Buy $370 Dec 8th put

Sell 2x $360 put

Buy $350 put

Net debit: $1.00-1.20

Critical Fed data during this timeframe, the week before the meeting. NFP is the second Friday in December, not on the 1st, a calendar quirk that happens occasionally. This timeframe is often quite volatile anyway, as it was during 2018 QT as we saw in the chart above. Target $4.

DIVERGENCES, BAD BREADTH AND HERDING RULE – MARKETS HAVE ENTERED THE CHOP ZONE – IS THERE AN END OF YEAR UNCLENCH COMING?

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

Markets change and evolve but people, not so much. Market dogma, a lot of those professorial rules that the CFA adopted as biblical chapters in how things work or should work don't apply in the same way anymore. Here is an example of someone that doesn't get it:

Christmas' rally cancelled

Mike Wilson argues that the chances of a 4Q rally have fallen considerably. His observations on narrowing breadth, cautious factor leadership, falling earnings revisions and fading consumer and business confidence support this assertion, while consensus sees a rally into year-end that's based mostly on bearish sentiment and seasonal tendencies. He sticks with his long-standing YE S&P target of 3,900, which implies a 17x multiple on our 2024 EPS forecast of approximately $230. (MS)

Link

Oct 30 2023 at 16:40

His timing was exquisite. The strongest rally in two years came immediately after this, leaving people who think in old-timey concepts of bear markets in the dust.

Hey, Mr. Wilson! (couldn't help myself) This is markets reality:

I belong to a generation whose every member has seen the movie Meatballs. Among its most famous scenes is the one where Camp North Star head counselor Tripper Harrison (played by Bill Murray) delivers a fiery motivational speech to his young charges on the eve of North Star's annual beatdown at the hands of rival Camp Mohawk in a multi-event "Olympiad" sports competition. Harrison's impassioned soliloquy culminates in the refrain "It just doesn't matter," which becomes a chant that the campers take up and repeat as they charge out of the cabin, fired up to compete and not caring if they win or lose.

Nope, earnings, a recession or even an earnings recession… simply reach into your show & tell grab-bag of negatives and pull one out, show the class. Then sit down because they don't matter right now. Price to earnings multiples on the market? Haaa, that is pure comedy, nearly everyone follows companies' adjusted earnings now.

Breadth? I've been hearing about this forever now it seems, and it hasn't mattered a whit. And you just knew didn't you, you like I could feel them coming, that the gamma/vol crush nitrous ramp would bring out these almost pathetic tweets:

Walter Deemer @WalterDeemer · Nov 4

1/2 Saints preserve us -- we got a Whaley Breadth Thrust Friday! It takes Advances > 73.66% of Advances+Declines over a five-day period to get one. Friday's reading was 75.96% (Column N in the worksheet). This is the ...

Show more

Show this thread

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	
1	Date		Advances	Declines	UpVolume	DnVolume		10-D Adv	10-D Decl	"B/
2										1.9
3281	16		2132	758	2877	457		14920	13976	
3282	17		1685	1203	2724	1021		16130	12706	
3283	18		482	2412	631	3026		14866	13983	
3284	19		582	2286	930	2988		14174	14708	
3285	20		788	2069	830	3102		13100	15710	
3286	23		896	1983	1144	2574		12034	16781	
3287	24		2008	872	2474	1301		11914	16889	
3288	25		683	2230	1061	2773		10838	18006	
3289	26		1508	1355	2166	2050		11860	16956	
3290	27		749	2137	847	3088		11513	17305	
3291	30		1999	882	2611	1250		11380	17429	
3292	31		2069	834	2898	1304		11764	17060	
3293	Nov 1		1943	954	2420	1755		13225	15602	
3294	2		2583	328	4192	497		15226	13644	
[illegible]95	3		2416	486	3758	777		16854	12061	

There it is!

Sat 8:08 PM

Ryan Detrick, CMT @RyanDetrick · Nov 3

We officially saw a super rare Zweig Breadth Thrust today. Thanks to @NDR_Research for the data.

This rare signal is simply stocks moving from ...

Show more

Comedic Footnote: Do you know what nitrous does to gasoline and the functioning of the engine? Well, if you substitute gamma for nitrous and markets for engine in this definition my analogy is quite 'fire' as the kids say:

How Does Nitrous Oxide Help an Engine Perform Better?

Updated: Apr 19, 2021

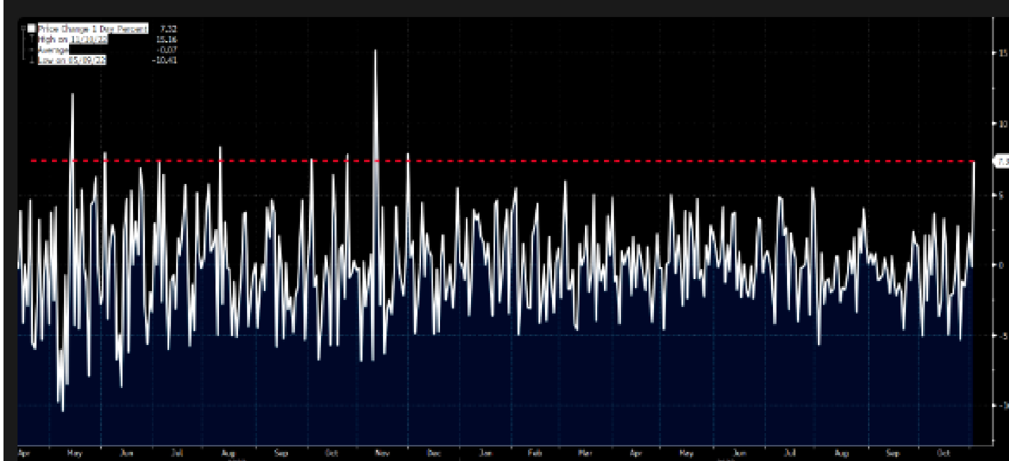
You may have read our article about how sodium chlorate acts as a way to store oxygen. You release the oxygen in sodium chlorate by heating it. It turns out that nitrous oxide (N20) works exactly the same way. When you heat nitrous oxide to about 570 degrees F (~300 C), it splits into oxygen and nitrogen. So the injection of ~~nitrous oxide~~ gamma into an ~~engine~~ market means that **more oxygen is available during combustion**. (of vega) Because you have more oxygen, you can also inject more fuel, allowing the same engine to produce more power. ~~Nitrous oxide~~ gamma is one of the simplest ways to provide a significant horsepower boost to any ~~gasoline engine~~ market.

Nitrous oxide has another effect that improves performance even more. When it vaporizes, nitrous oxide provides a significant **cooling effect on the intake air**. When you reduce the intake air temperature, you increase the air's density, and this provides even more oxygen inside the cylinder.

So, these 'breadth thrusts' which were simply an upside cocktail of implied vol incineration, aforementioned gamma fuel and of course, short covering in the junk names, because hedge fund factor crowding is a big part of the clown car giga tech herding situation:

Everything good comes to and end

Systematic Long/Short managers saw a decline of 1.1% yesterday, marking the third largest daily drop this year. The unwinding of crowded positions (with crowded shorts rising by 2 standard deviations) and stocks with high short interest (increasing by 2.6 standard deviations) were the primary causes of the "pain". Chart shows non profitable tech 1 day moves.



Source: Bloomberg/GS

Link

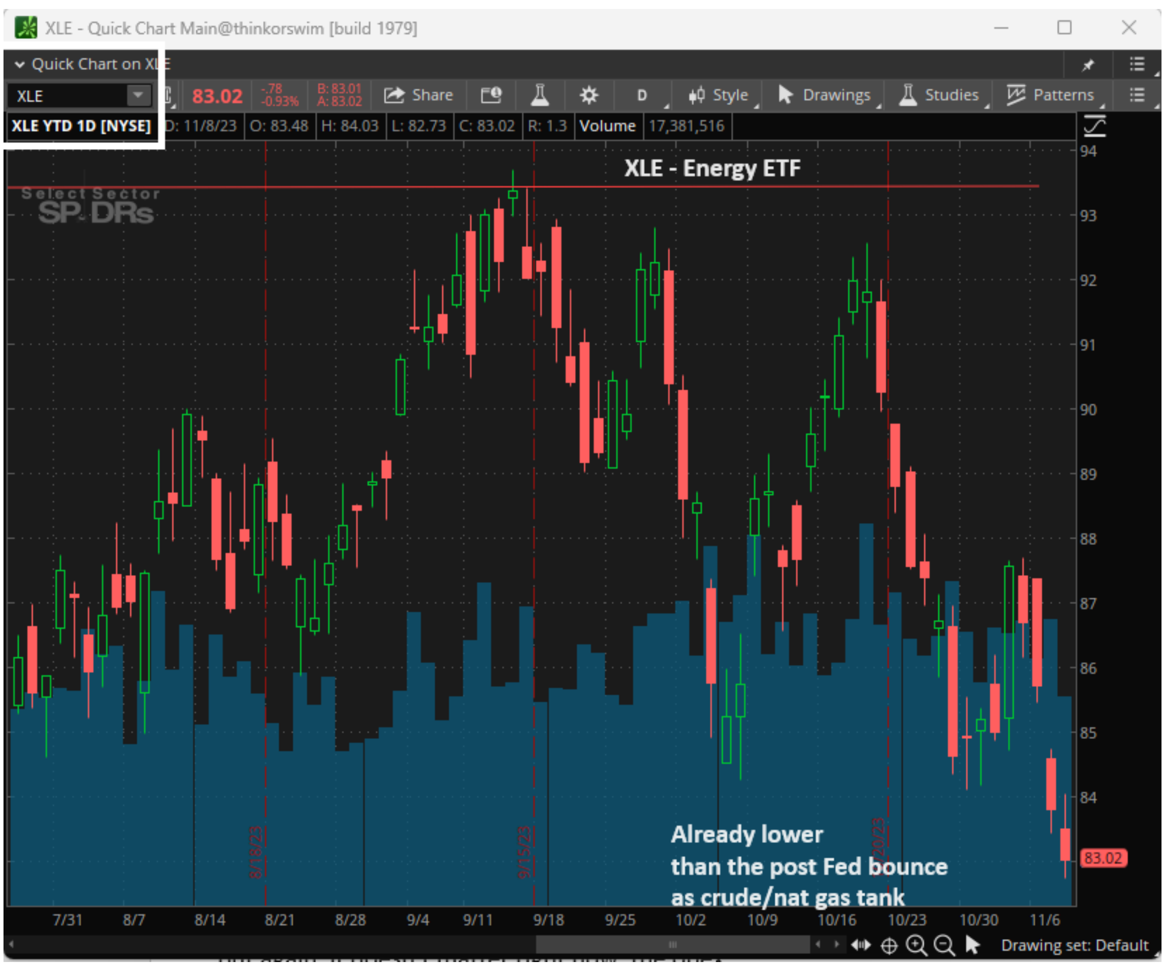
Nov 03 2023 at 11:00

This reminds me of what I wrote a few notes ago about 'sharpe' hedge fund trades, which basically highlighted the crowdedness of the low vol giga tech versus the high vol unprofitable or economically and rate sensitive stuff. I mean, that pretty much sums it up, the markets this year. Folks are really, really long/stuffed into the clown car oasis stuff and not liking basically anything else due to what is inevitably coming down the pike next year.

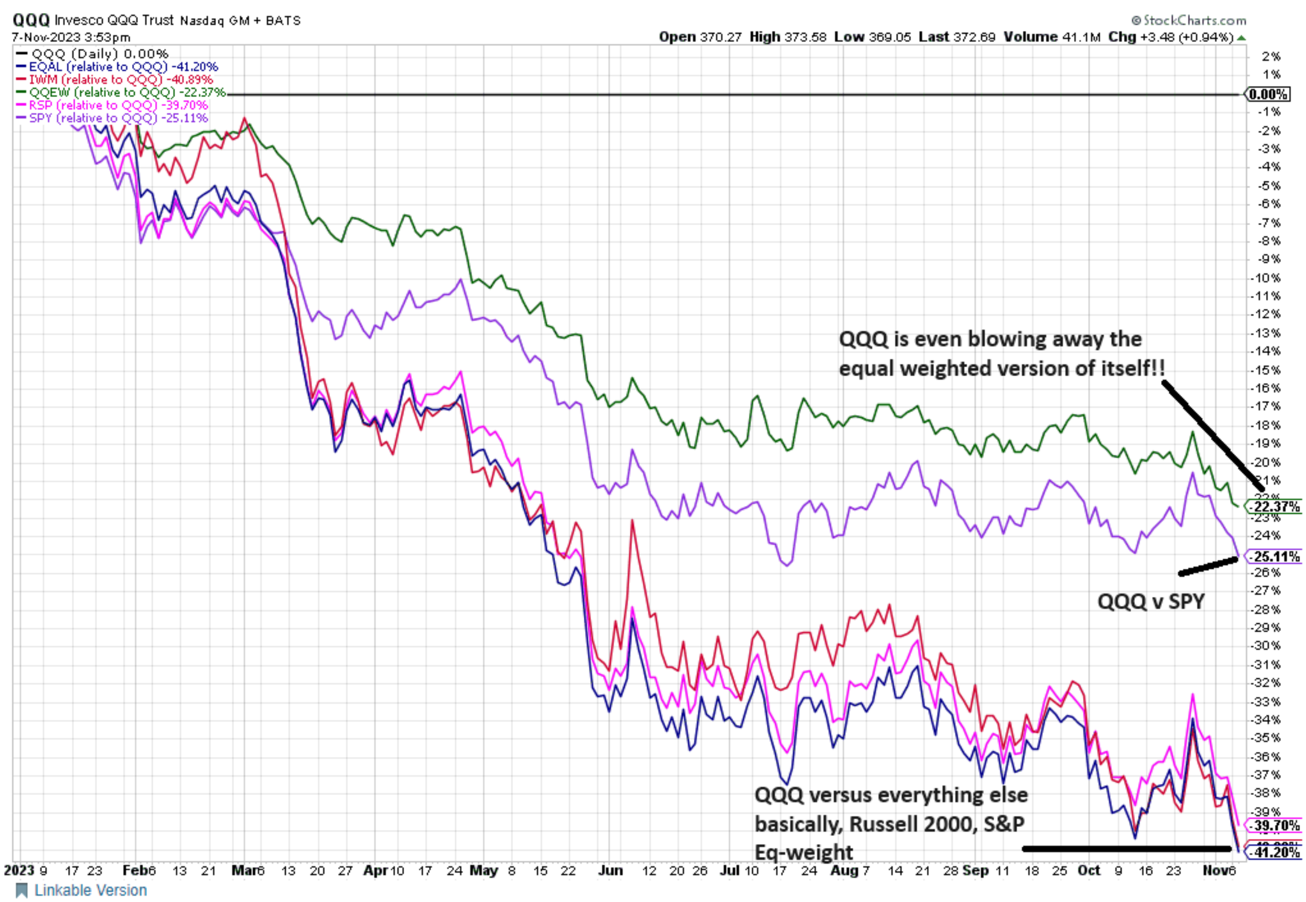
Nearly every day lately it seems, and even this week with SPX and QQQ still rising, a lot of stocks are down and this crowded hedge fund trade continues to earn, unabated:

Speaking of next year, and I will further delve into this topic as we approach year end, I can foresee a situation where seasonality and the calendar push this market jalopy sputtering into the December 31st garage, only to see implied vol perk up with that specific point in time. By market jalopy, you know what I mean, I'll let a couple charts do the explaining:


IWM - Quick Chart Main@thinkorswim [build 1979]
IWM 360 D 4h [NYSE]
Russell 2000 ETF
back to pre-NFP prices already


XLE - Quick Chart Main@thinkorswim [build 1979]
XLE YTD 1D [NYSE]
XLE - Energy ETF
Already lower than the post Fed bounce as crude/nat gas tank

And like QQQ is the one investment ring to rule them all, here is the one chart to rule them all, depicting the market jalopy for what it truly is:



I discovered something interesting today. I was pondering this market structure, and how narrow it is, and the equal weight ETFs, and I thought, 'Why aren't there more ETFs that simply take advantage of the fact that herded stocks outperform the indices almost all of the time?'

I mean, this is pretty much a fact, not to belabor again the point that valuations are pretty much useless in today's markets, but beyond the reality of it being true for a long time, it is even more true today; the investing flows in the passive investing dominated world keep siphoning to the herded names.

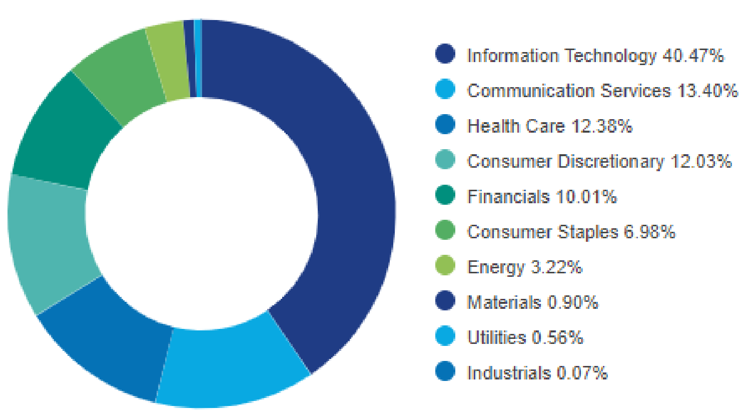
So, why not more ETFs that simply hold the biggest names? And then I thought, 'What if there was an ETF that held stuff like LLY and UNH, the herded names in non- giga tech in case/when there's a rotation?' Well, I happened to find one, XLG:

Product Details

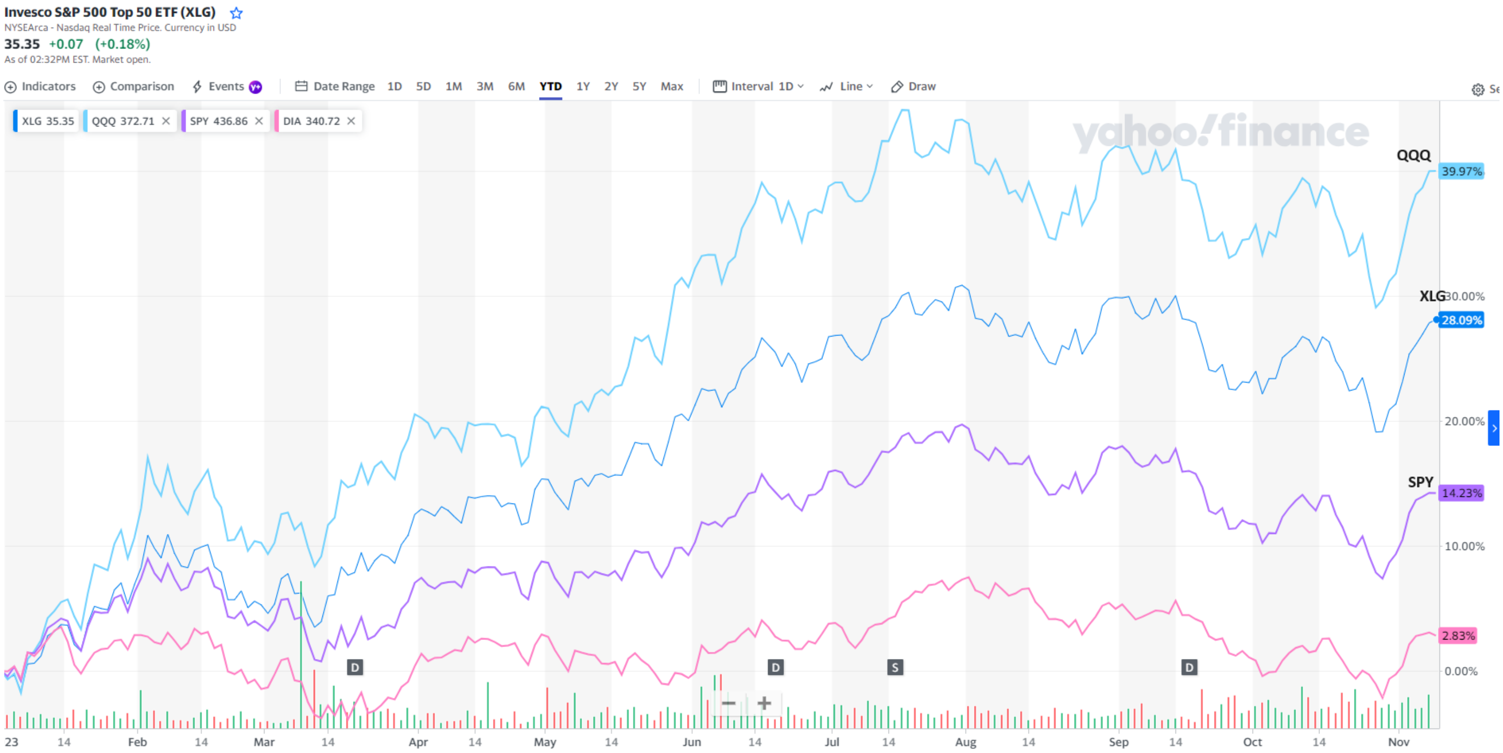
The Invesco S&P 500® Top 50 ETF (Fund) is based on the S&P 500® Top 50 Index (Index). The Fund will invest at least 90% of its total assets in securities that comprise the Index. The Index is composed of 50 of the largest companies in the S&P 500® Index. The Fund and the Index are rebalanced annually.

Sector Allocation

as of 11/07/2023



And how pray tell has this ETF done this year versus QQQ and the SPX?

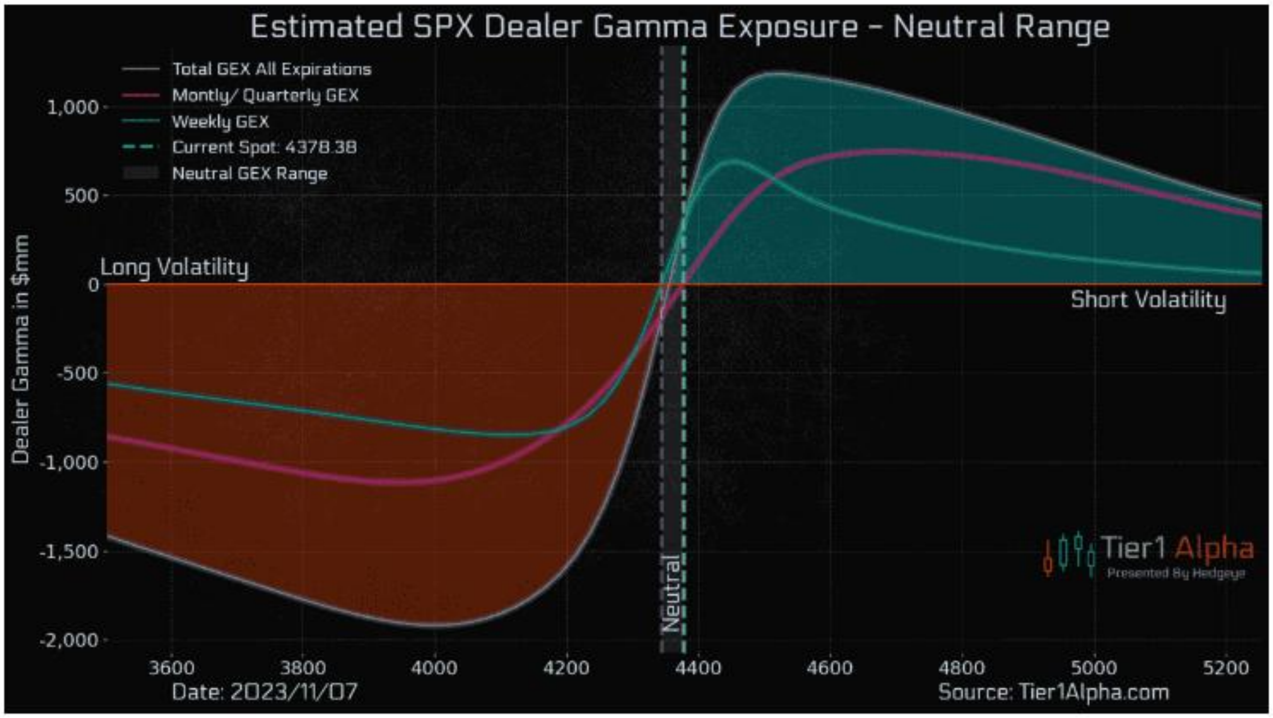


How about that? Not too shabby. Sure, it holds a lot of giga tech, but it *outperformed QQQ by 10%* when it was getting hammered last year when folks had a brief bout of herding dizziness regarding rates and tech duration. Don't kid yourself, in a down year, 10% outperformance means a ton to a portfolio manager. You can basically create your own typical hedge fund by owning this and long TWM (2x short IWM) and SARK (short ARKK- unprofitable tech).

Anyway, back to the here and now, the opex cycle as it were, and the chop zone. This is how it went in October, and similarly to different extents in most months this year:

It certainly appears to me, as I stated on Friday, that we've entered the chop area, where the markets might actually have a down day, yet that will magically be recovered the next day (or during an overnight ramp), and when morning ramps fail in the afternoon but conversely morning dips recover in the afternoon.

What may differ from October, is how opex week goes and in my opinion, it mostly comes down to this:



Earlier this week, we introduced our neutral gamma window, which measures the spread between the weekly gamma flip and the monthly gamma flip. Today, that gap has narrowed significantly, which means if dealers are pushed back below the 4355 strike, there is less of a buffer on the other side before dealers will be back in a vol-supplying, negative gamma regime.

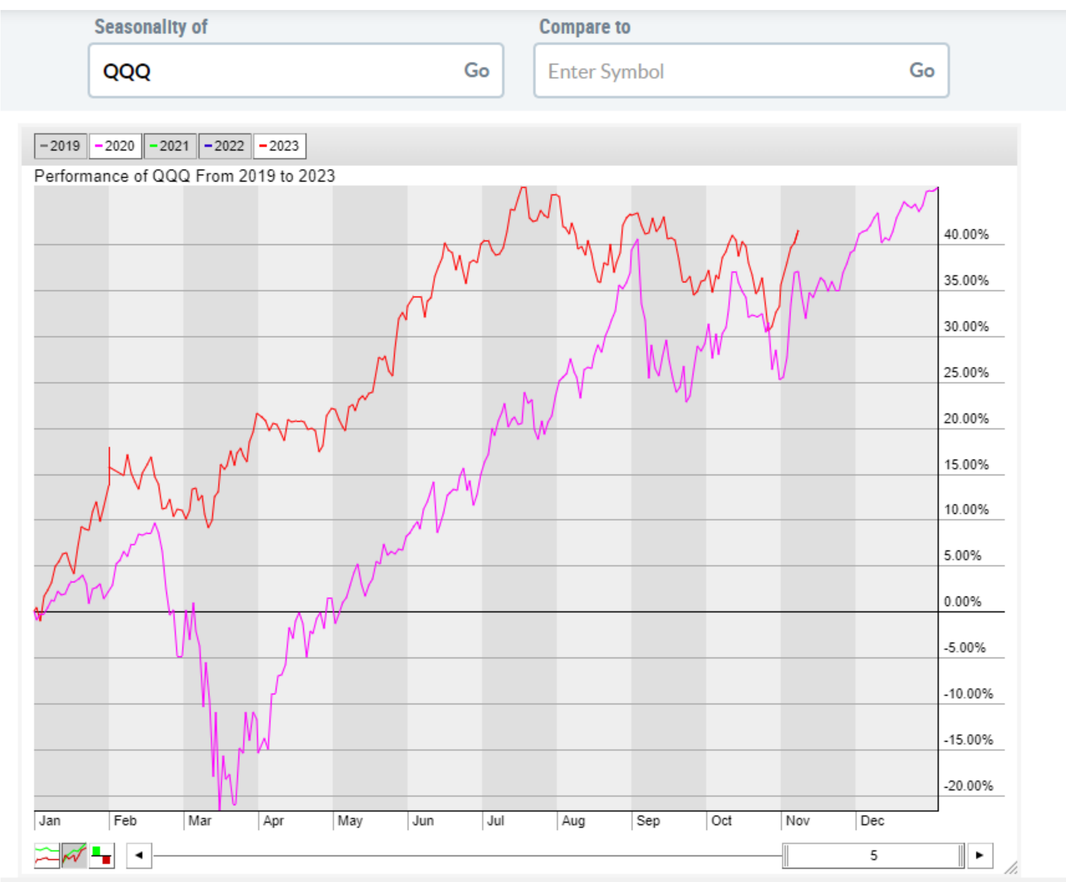
(Source: Tier1alpha.com 11/8 daily note)

If we enter negative gamma, flip over per se, then the post vixpiration watershed I often refer to, well, the chop gets heavier and unclench starts early. That's what happened in October, we were in negative gamma and the bounce into the chop zone time frame crumbled before unclench, early unclench if you will.

Should we stay in positive gamma, it's tougher to unglue the indices as dealers are buying futures on dips, which is why the positive gamma area is often so low in realized vol. The good news for vol fans is that that black diamond negative slope into where dealers become rapid sellers isn't far away. Can CPI and retail sales next week be blamed for pushing equities over the K-12?

(Lane Meyer doesn't know when to quit.)

One more interesting chart I keep following is this odd analog:



Why it continues to mirror 2020 is anyone's guess, but if you think about it, 2020 saw QQQ drop 30% in February and March during the onset of covid while last year saw QQQ drop 35%, so it's sort of as if they are following the same recovery path from recent nadirs. If it follows again, and it did a damn great job of mirroring October, it does suggest we're due for an actual down day in QQQ shortly. Which would dovetail with the Thursday before opex result in the SPX chop chart above.

Essentially, the vol forecast is for mild chop for a bit yet.

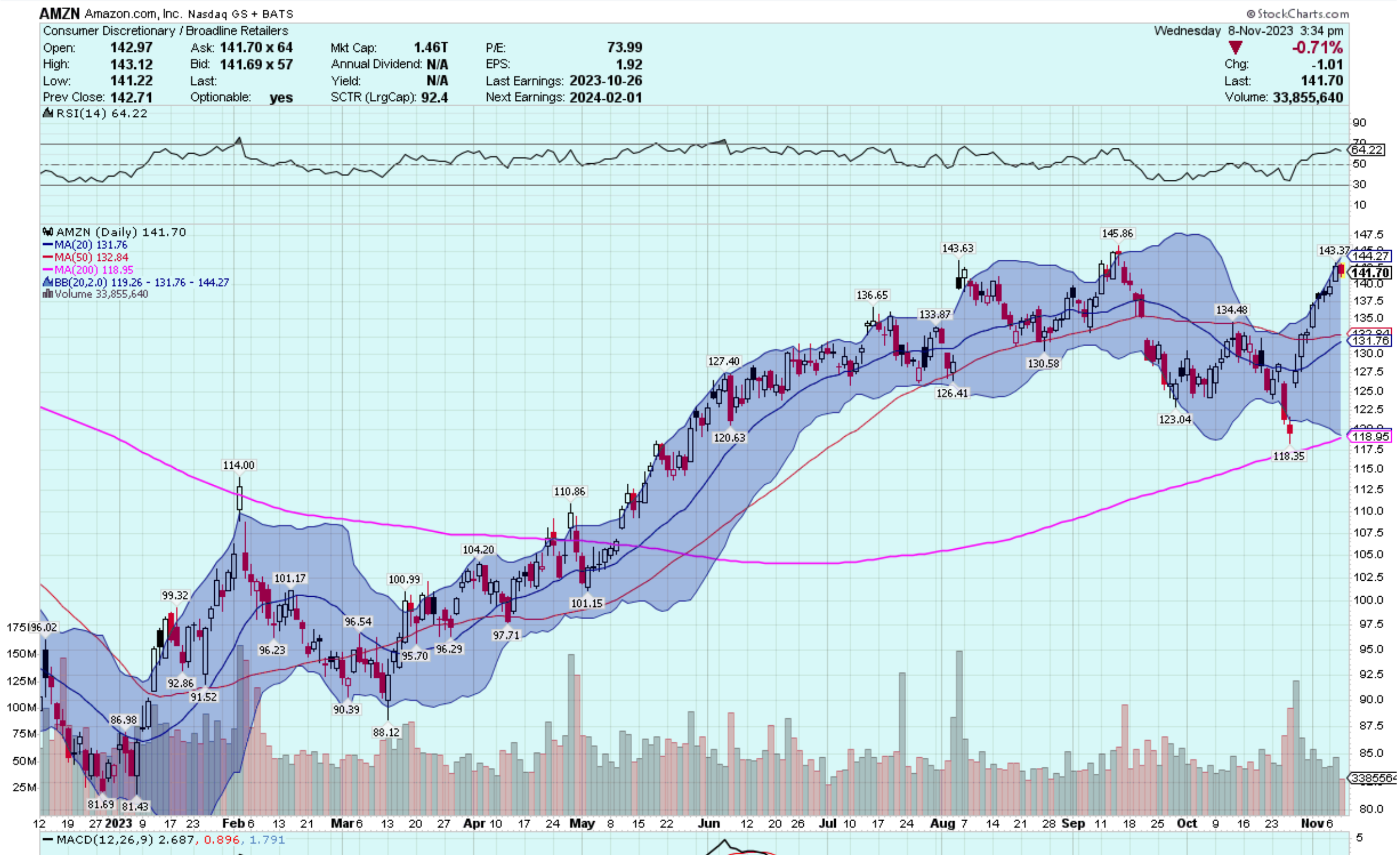
Volatility Trade:

AMZN unclench put calendar spread

Buy Nov 24th $140 put

Sell Nov 24th $132 put

Net debit: $1.40



A basic unclench long vol trade. $8 of potential for $1.40, nearly 6-1. It's where it has paused in the past, it's had a comical series of consecutive up days, 20% off a low eight trading days ago. I know, like TSLA that is not a car company it's a tech company, AMZN is a cloud storage company and not a consumer retail company.

But…..with lithium prices tanking under weak demand for EVs globally, amazing how it suddenly became a car company again in October and hasn't recovered. Ostracized from the cool crowd of MSFT/AMZN/META that are perched near 52-week highs. Well, retail sales are next week, so maybe AMZN decides to think about retail for a couple days.

Put verts pay faster than put flies and you don't have to be as exact (you can't blow through it), plus, it's a trade that's more reflective of my get long more vol thesis of late. Target, $4.

CRASH UP YET ANOTHER EXAMPLE THAT OWNING VOL WINS IN A 0DTE WORLD- CHRISTMAS CREEP SENTIMENT SHIFT ALREADY – TRADE FOR POST CPI/OPEX

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

Stunning option-driven markets. I've been hammering home two main themes in this note lately, owning vol and the opex cycle. From only a week ago and 250 SPX points (what?) lower:

And while things, justifiably mind you considering the landscape, seem awfully heavy in markets right now, we are entering that part of the opex cycle, where premium burn likes to support the indices. (You know, when Cem starts tweeting queen emojis and the such)

In the blink of an eye, the biggest week of the year, all of the downdraft from mid-October erased, small caps come to life (remember I mentioned IWM/RTY last week, it's where the shorts hang out), and the 10-yr yield retraces back to….September levels:

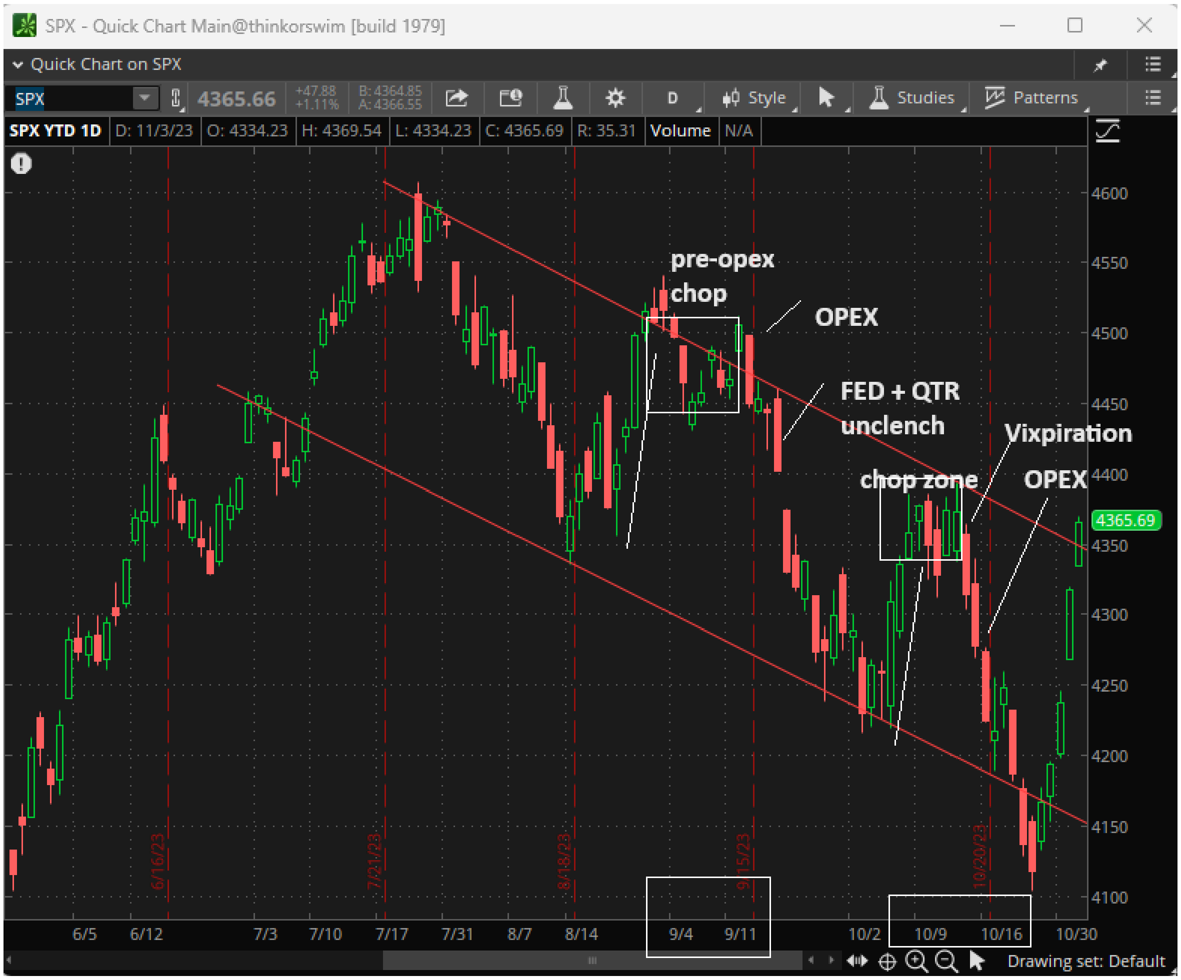
Being bearish the indices seems pointless regardless of what the news is these days. Recessions or yield spikes, so much the better for buying calls. Bears get a chance during the part of the opex cycle when gamma rolls off and before the end of the month/early in the month behavior kicks back in.

So, here we are again, up a lot lately and about to probably reenter the chop zone once this Santa spike parabola runs out of rocket fuel. Christmas creep is not only for the Hallmark channel or retail promotion starting in October, now folks start talking about/expecting the Santa rally in equity markets two months early as well. I've spoken about this before:

From the October 13th note:

In fact, I say this every year, vol almost always seems to rise in December, just when folks are looking for a Santa rally which statistically comes only from Christmas through the first week of January. December is often a volatile month; smooth to the finish, it usually is not! And with QT and massive rates volatility and sticky inflation and massive divergences in tech versus everything and macro weakness just beginning….vol is probably going to hang around.

Speaking of the aforementioned chop zone, we are nearing the time when the indices grind in an area, post-vanna/charm melt up:



(Charm is just decay of deltas, so for a dealer delta-hedging, he needs less long or short futures to hedge…..which means, gamma time. The residual of dying option delta is gamma, and the gamma playground is what makes 0DTE all the rage, and means sweeping puts or calls can wag the indices dog. Vanna is the implied vol effect on deltas, so if post event implied vol gets crushed, we have the same effect, deltas fall and dealer hedges unwind. Dealers clearly were buying a lot of S&P Emini contracts this week.)

Once again, owing the option vol was better than spreading vertically or in time. Here is a Friday 4300 call, just stunning the profit potential/leverage ***available before the Fed and NFP***:

(Did I do this, no. The hope is that if I write these examples out many times I will finally figure out how to have the imagination required to look so far out of the money that it seems impossible.)

So, the forecast is for some chop and then we will see how the markets handle the 10-yr auction next week with a whole new rate level (Don't the October auction bidders left out over a couple ticks in yield because they were worried feel stupid now..) and then it's on to CPI and retail sales, with a heavy dose of Fed speak along the way too be sure.

Volatility Trade:

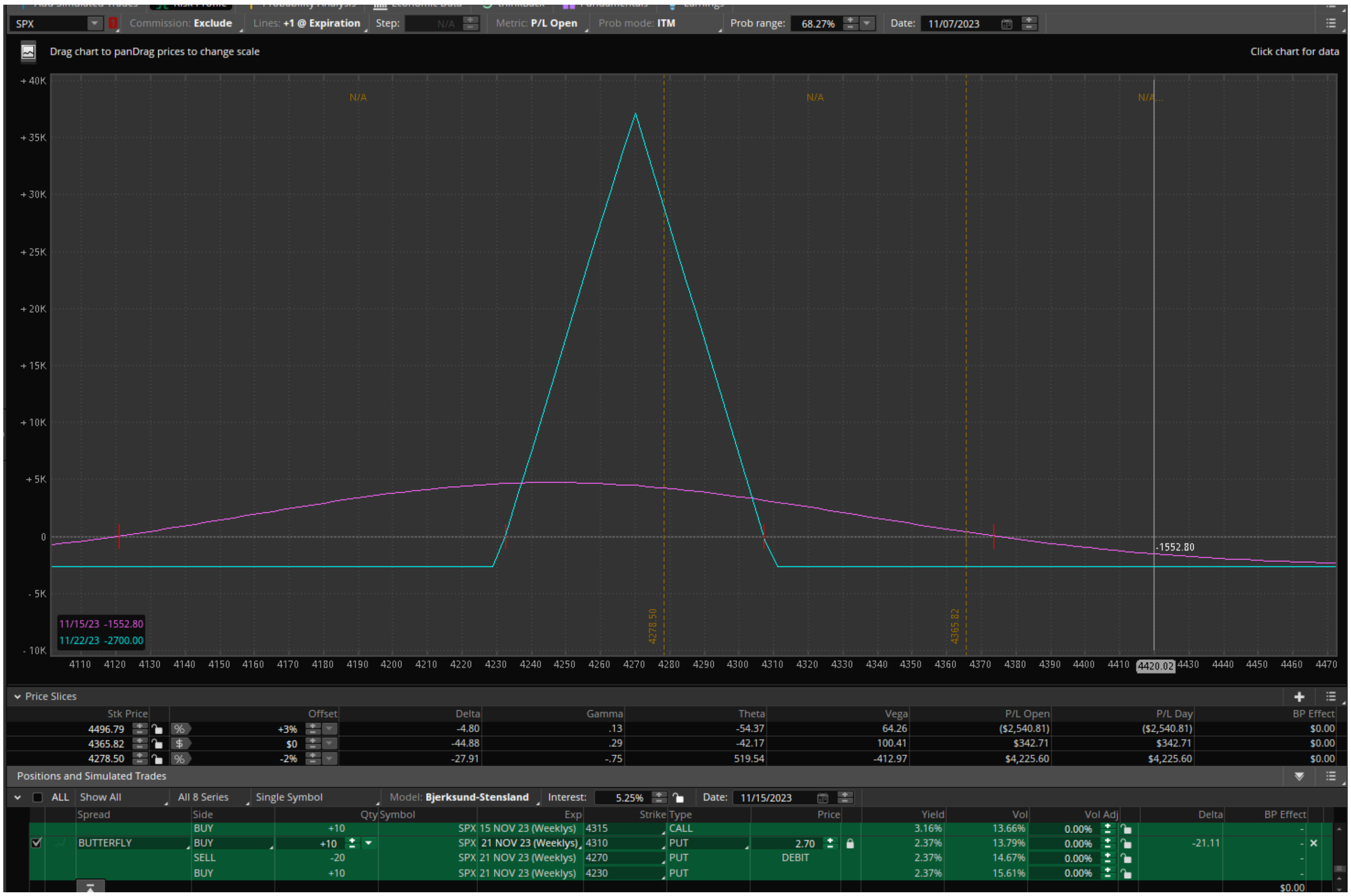
SPX Unclench put butterfly spread

Buy 4310 Nov 21st put

Sell 2x 4270 put Nov 21st

Buy 4230 Nov 21st put

Net debit: $2.75-3 ($2.90 filled)



40 pts wide for 7% of width, so cheap. A 2% or so pullback after vixpiration would be ideal. Target: $8.

ZOMBIFIED FED CAN'T SAVE BLOODY MARKETS AFTER EATING INTO YOUR PORTFOLIO – A FEW THOUGHTS PRE-FED/JOLTS/NFP – 0DTE TRADE IDEAS

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

Ah, I did slather on some thick Halloween schtick, and you are thus groaning like the undead, but it's pretty accurate, that headline. The zombie Fed, can't cut and can't hike, just staggering around like the mob of zombie firms it has created, powerless to save yet eating bond and stock values and finally sinking its teeth into the heart of global portfolios, the giga tech names where the world equity herd resides.

One of the darkest portfolio managers, he who should be called Dr. Crash since it seems like that's all he has blathered about for decades now, Jeremy Grantham had this to say and it wasn't even on Halloween when he was quoted, it was January:

"We are in what I think of as the vampire phase of the bull market, where you throw everything you have at it: you stab it with Covid, you shoot it with the end of QE and the promise of higher rates, and you poison it with unexpected inflation – which has always killed P/E ratios before, but quite uniquely, not this time yet – and still the creature flies," Grantham writes.

"(Just as it staggered through the second half of 2007 as its mortgage and other financial wounds increased one by one.) Until, just as you're beginning to think the thing is completely immortal, it finally, and perhaps a little anticlimactically, keels over and dies. The sooner the better for everyone."

https://ioandc.com/grantham-calls-the-death-of-the-vampire/

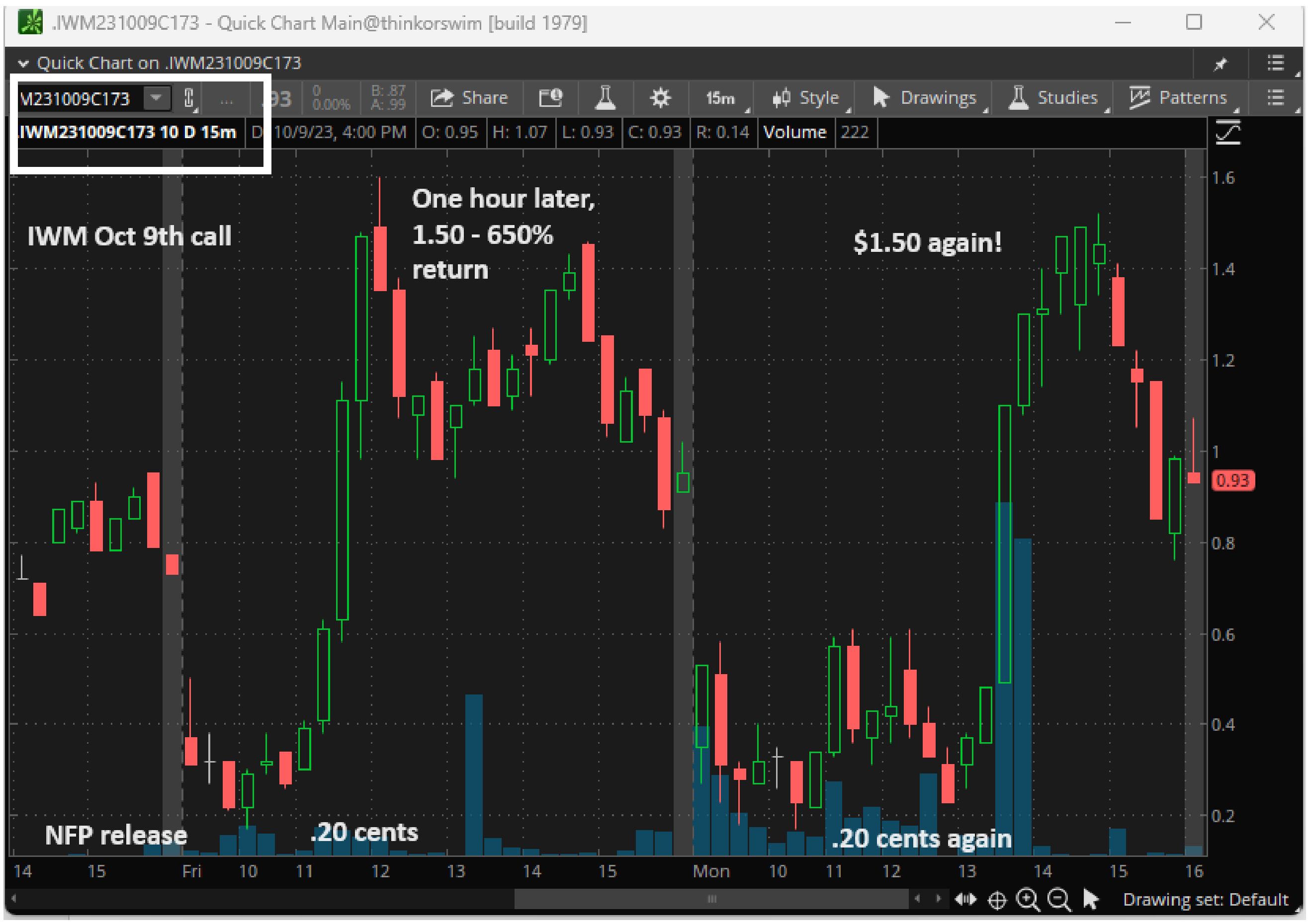
And so, the markets world braces again for Jay's prattle show about dark and cloudy skies, glued to his imaginary truths that are simply dusty theories deserving to be burned at the stake, while waiting the scythe of rates to cause something to go bump in the night.

If you are looking for something to 0DTE trade during all the horror, let me remind you of the discarded and desiccated IWM, loaded with rate sensitive undead companies (more like neo-dead), which is why in theory it is down so much versus QQQ, is heavily shorted and houses heavily shorted names within.

From the October 10th note:

Vol continues to be sold aggressively into monthly payrolls, JOLTs, CPI and the Fed meeting, and the result often is a big move in options that are grossly underpriced once the first move is made. Also, the day before the event frequently offers some excellent opportunities as well.

Now, let's be realistic, not every release is going to see a day where the S&P 500 has a 60-100 point low/high intraday vol result like recent events, but as they keep happening and when a few of these moves are harvested, those trades pay for several that do not. In fact, you can potentially keep trading the same option for a couple days and do it twice. For example, look at an IWM $173 Monday call that expired yesterday:



Someone got a jump on panning for post-Fed upside vol in this gutter yesterday:

FLOWrensics @FLOWrensics_ · Oct 30

$IWM Repeat sweepers in the 11/06 $165 CALLS ~$800K premium

TIME	SYMBOL	EXP	STRIKE	C/P	SPOT	DETAILS	TYPE	VALUE	IV
12:32:33	IWM	11/6/23	165	CALL	162.84	800@1.32_A	SWEEP	$105.6K	25
12:32:11	IWM	11/6/23	165	CALL	162.87	943@1.32_A	SWEEP	$124.5K	24
12:31:45	IWM	11/6/23	165	CALL	162.89	1000@1.329_AA	SWEEP	$132.9K	24
12:29:51	IWM	11/6/23	165	CALL	162.9	3000@1.33_A	BLOCK	$399K	24

1 12 41 15K

Also yesterday, the black cat was let out of the bag early on Treasury auction needs for the 4th quarter, a topic I mentioned last week as probably coming in light, which it did:

> Oct 30 (Reuters) - The U.S. Treasury Department said on Monday it expects to borrow $776 billion in the fourth quarter, $76 billion less than its forecast in July, citing increased revenue estimates, bringing some relief to bond markets rattled for months by a glut of new debt.
>
> A U.S. Treasury official said revenue is expected to rise in the October-December period partly because income tax payments from California and some other states deferred due to natural disasters were now starting to flow into the Treasury.

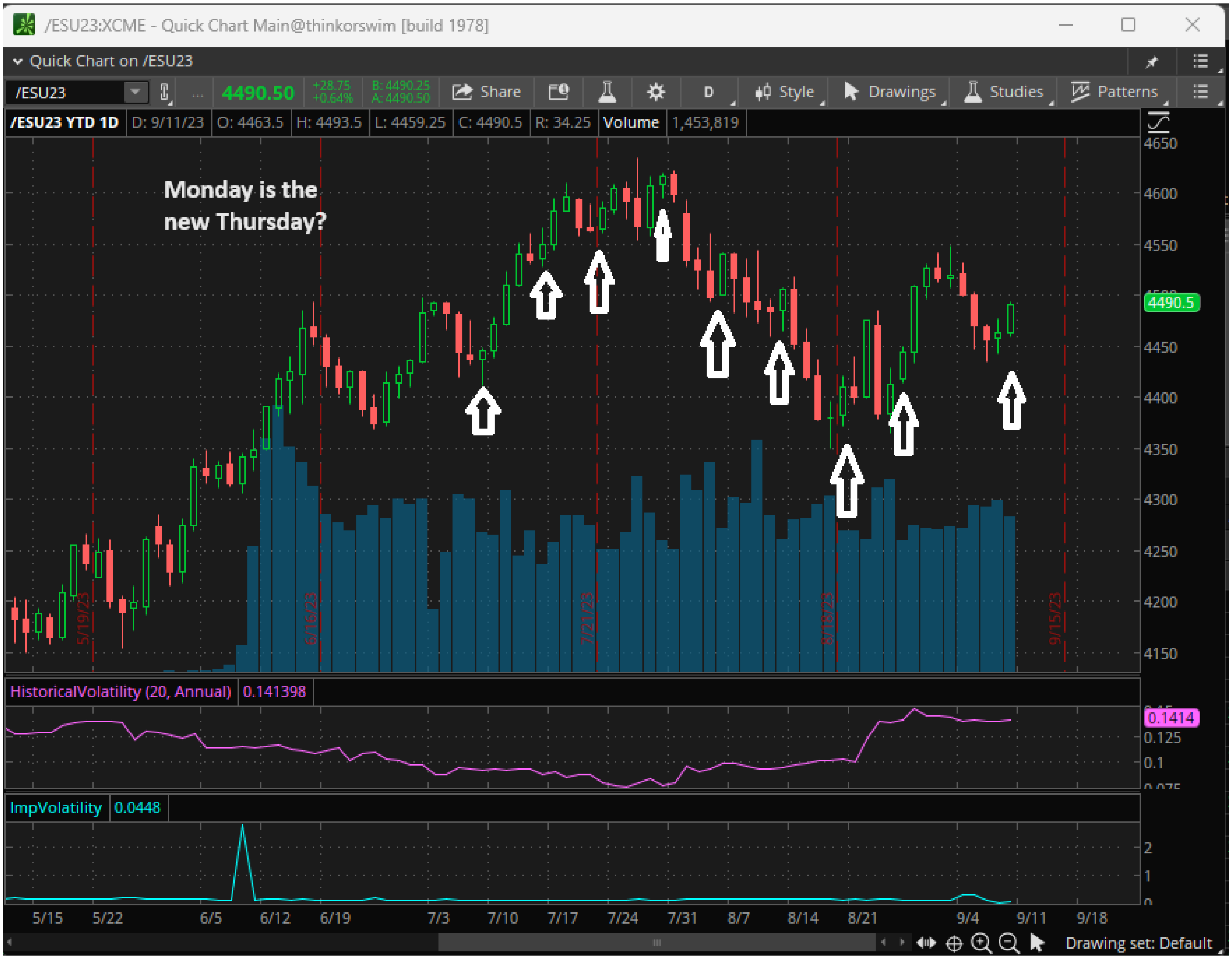
https://www.reuters.com/markets/us/us-treasury-borrow-776-billion-q4-2023-10-30/

So, that's some rates noise mostly out of the way for bond markets to focus squarely on JOLTS, and that is where 0DTE comes in. If JOLTS is higher than expected and the market drops, that probably sets up a nice 10am-noon dead cat bounce pre-Fed, and since premium is higher than usual on the 0DTE options for obvious reasons, call spreads might be a better idea.

Hard to pinpoint specific ideas until we see if it falls, by how much and how much implied vol dies. But, a knee-jerk drop on JOLTS would be a nice set up pre-Fed, that's basically the point.

I wanted to circle back on this topic, one I wrote about not long ago:

From the September 13th note:



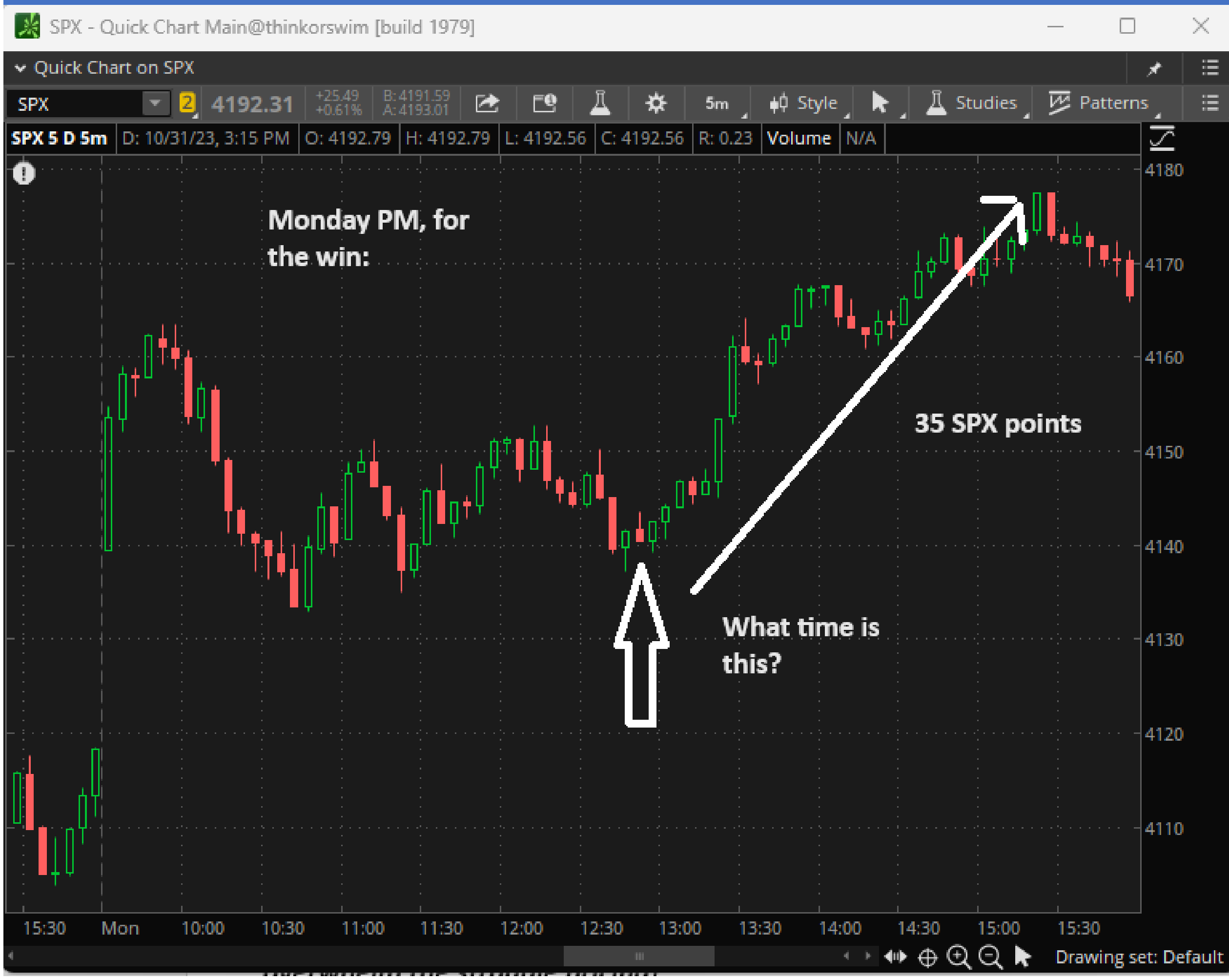
The market doesn't have a case of the Mondays, that is for sure, it's been up every time since June opex, if you can believe that. (There were a couple post-holiday Tuesdays in there to open weeks, not counting those since…well they aren't Mondays.)

Well, I have located quite the handy dandy tool for this combining Mondays with 0DTE and in this case, screening for the 1pm phenomenon. Check this out:

On marketchameleon.com, you can screen 0DTE strategies by time of day, day of week and macro/vol event days using SPY and QQQ option straddle vol pricing data. How amazing is that!? This is hedge fund quant fun for us plebes.

Here we can see that Mondays from 1pm to close have consistently not only been positive most of the time during that window, ***but they have also been positive enough to overwhelm the straddle pricing!***

Yesterday wasn't looking particularly hot, another trendmatic fade-o-rama kind of day, until:



It really is astonishing, this new 0DTE land we are in. I have some more thoughts on this, how it relates to the entire vol surface and the opex cycle, which I will get to in a note after all these vol events pass.

I will circle back to carve up the market carcass after Jay spooks everyone. Probably Thursday evening, post Fed full day reaction and pre-NFP.

RUSSELL 2000 REACHES PRICE FROM 2020 – SENTIMENT CONTINUES TO SOUR BEFORE FED – JPM COLLAR PRICE NEARS

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

Some interesting commentary from an economist who, brace yourself, believes that traditional economic theories, those espoused by Jay Powell's Fed, might not be correct… stop the presses:

Nobel Laureate Romer Says Fed Would Be 'Crazy' to Hike More

- Inflation, growth theory is 'just not true right now,' he says
- Fed should begin cutting rates ahead of reaching 2% target

"The theory was you could only bring inflation down when the economy slows and that just is not true right now," said Romer, who is an economics professor at Boston College. "So right now we're at a period where we've just got to look at the facts and not be confused by some theory that turns out to be wrong."

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2023-10-26/nobel-laureate-romer-says-fed-would-be-crazy-to-hike-more?sref=1zxv5xkq

Equity markets aren't waiting for autopilot Jay to say something like, 'It doesn't ***feel*** like policy is too tight.' Folks are deleveraging during game of chicken season with a push from rising realized volatility. Remember my comments on Wednesday in this regard?

And, considering the plateau QQQ is still on, it's almost hard to imagine that 'game of chicken' season is going to end anytime soon. Managers that were right this year, the few that went against value, with the high valuations and thus fortunately surfed A.I. mania, they are probably going to be tested further; it seems to have a future date with the 200-day moving average at a minimum…

Well, Charlie the celebrity quant was out yesterday commenting on exactly this, seeing folks tapping out on the giga-herded names that have worked, referring to them as Sharpe trades, essentially in that their return/risk was very high, thus high Sharpe. But, the denominator is realized vol, and since that is rising in these names:

"Crowded growth [shares] and tech longs are actually putting up good enough numbers but still not being rewarded by the market, especially when EPS beats but revenue misses," McElligott noted.

This matters. These are your consensus longs. Your hiding places. Your 2023 alpha generators. Your hedge fund favorites.

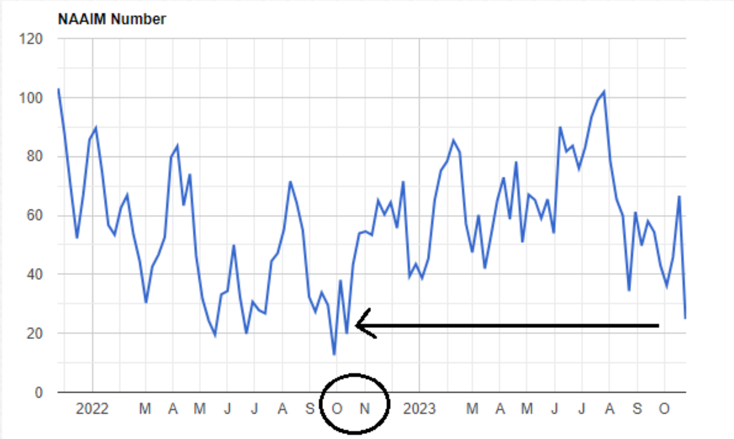
Two Nomura baskets tracking growth longs and the most crowded hedge fund names just suffered ~7% six-day drawdowns, a 2.5 standard deviation event on a one-year lookback.

"You can feel it in the PNL [and] you can see it in the intraday behaviors and end-of-day performance of late," Charlie went on, noting that "a bunch of the stuff that's been high Sharpe over parts of the year has recently turned high vol." That's bad news. "BIG $HARPES, BIG PROBLEM$," as he put it. Even for discretionary cohorts, volatility is an exposure toggle (to employ Charlie's favorite phrase), so… commence the de-grossing.

Bringing it back to discretionary investors, McElligott said that if you ask him "further breakdown is likely dependent on the fundamental / active side of the equities universe and an extension of this recent earnings behavioral shift towards longs, especially as PNL management psychology moves into year-end protection mode."

Source: https://heisenbergreport.com/2023/10/26/mcelligott-sees-big-problems-for-2023-big-sharpe-trades/

In the meantime, active investment managers are turning quite dour, in the case of the NAAIM, bearishness levels last seen in October of last year, don't you love markets + calendar symmetry? They usually call it 'seasonality' when it's bullish, like Santa rally, first days of January, July 4th, etc, right now they just called it a recession coming:

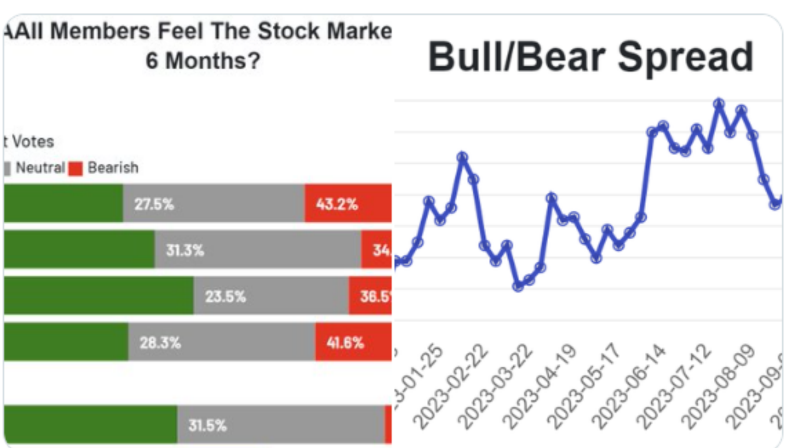


This week's NAAIM Exposure Index number is:
24.82

AAII SentimentSurvey
@AAIISentiment

AAII Sentiment Survey:
*Bearish: At its highest level in nearly six months; unusually high
*Bullish: Right at the bottom of its typical range
*Neutral: Below average for 4th week

aaii.com/sentimentsurvey



8:21 AM · Oct 26, 2023 · **5,912** Views

And interestingly, although it's a bit early for it to really matter to markets and dealers, the huge end of quarter JPM collar spread (a popular fintwit popcorn trade for sure), the long strike is rapidly approaching, so it will be fun to monitor after Thanksgiving into year-end:

How it's looking:

Rough estimates, judging by the screenshot on the prior page, which were the unadjusted strikes, they sold the calls to buy the put spread for about $47 each side/net zero to enter, so the value of this hedge now is about:

41000 collars x 100 = 4.1mm x (long put current value ($93) – short put ($11)) $82 = $336mm, which means dealers have had to add about $145mm of short exposure lately. So, thinking about Mr. long call vert from the last note, who was a huge vol buy for dealers, this is approaching that size. It matters even this early.

So, a couple final thoughts and then a trade. Certainly, Friday has been quite the risk off situation lately and recent Mondays (most Mondays for quite a while now actually, take a look at just Mondays on a chart) have seen a sort of vol exhale, similar to post risk events like NFP or CPI:

Usually, Friday's close is a nice time to buy vol, since folks overcrush it into the weekend, but lately it's been a good time to sell it, something to think about early next week when looking at implieds.

And while things, justifiably mind you considering the landscape, seem awfully heavy in markets right now, we are entering that part of the opex cycle, where premium burn likes to support the indices. (You know, when Cem starts tweeting queen emojis and the such)

So, with all the vol events staring the market down the barrel of shotgun and considering the time of the opex cycle, wasn't it that horribly tragic news of excellent September payrolls when the markets opened 40 points lower and just marched higher considering vol burn and time of opex cycle?

Looks vaguely familiar to now, a steep one direction drop into end of month, so it wouldn't surprise me if the markets catch their breath with the help of the opex cycle after NFP. Or we can continue to crash because, well, Jay + good news.

Volatility Trade:

Post FED/NFP broken wing call butterfly spread

Buy 4210 Nov 6th call

Sell 2x Nov 6th 4240 call

Sell Nov 6th 4275 call

Net debit: $1.75 (filled) - $2

This is a bargain for less than 2 SPX points. You are getting a lot of leverage for not a lot of risk. For this to burn, SPX would have to rally to 4300 by NFP day, and let's be realistic, that is a lot of upside vol that would certainly not bring back systemic or trend strats into the picture.

And, you can imagine a lot of folks that are sitting overhead looking to sell after the earnings reactions just witnessed. So, it's less than 2 points that can easily pay $10 on a 2% bounce from here. Target, $7.50.

I will have some 0DTE commentary in a note before the Fed/Jolts/Tbac/ISM circus.

GIGA TECH HERD FINALLY BEGINS TO BLEED DOWN TO THE UNIVERSE OF STOCKS – NEXT WEEK'S VOL EVENTS ARE MANY AND HUGE FOR MARKETS

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

Remember this from my October 13th note?

You might find this interesting, from celebrity quant Charlie McElligott a couple weeks ago:

> Long story short (there's probably a pun in there somewhere, but it's not intentional), the impact of the quarterly roll was supposed to be one-way (Charlie used the same language), but upside index options plays for November amounting to $233 million (!) in premium paid turned what would've been a large vol supply event into a vol *buy*, altering the setup for Q4 and the end-of-year trade.
>
> What does that mean? Well, colloquially, the read-through is that there could be embedded overhead pushback on a rally. McElligott elaborated. "If this is who we believe it is, the entity trades with extreme discretion and is typically uber-quick to monetize a winning trade," he said.
>
> So, if the market moves in favor of those positions, profit-taking is likely. Charlie spelled out the implications of that hypothetical profit-taking. "[T]he market is operating in some ways with an upside overhang thanks to there being all of this delta to go if we see SPX rally and those options print," he said.

Well, if you were having a bad couple of months, it wasn't this bad. Guess who finally gave up hope for a seasonal rally? Yep, Mr. Index Call Vert:

- **The massive SPX Call Spread buyer who I've hammered you all on for weeks looks to finally be tapping-out of a large chunk of their trades**, taking what I'd say is closer now to a ~$150mm-$200mm "L" *(from a trade that at one point was +$250mm, ouch)*

Nov3 4400/4600cs -20k -1bn in delta and 3mm in vega
Nov10 4450/4550 cs -16k -500mm in delta and 2mm in vega
Nov 4450/4650 cs -22k -1bn in delta and 4.6mm in vega
Nov 4450/4550 cs -26k -1bn in delta and 4mm in vega
Nov10 4400/4600 cs -10k -700mm in delta and 2.3mm in vega

Oof, a $400mm U-Turn is a tough trade fail to swallow. Especially, since you know who was basically on the other side of your trade, pocketing several Irani-sized pallets of Jay's QT induced cash? This smarmy and intolerable fund manager celebrity:

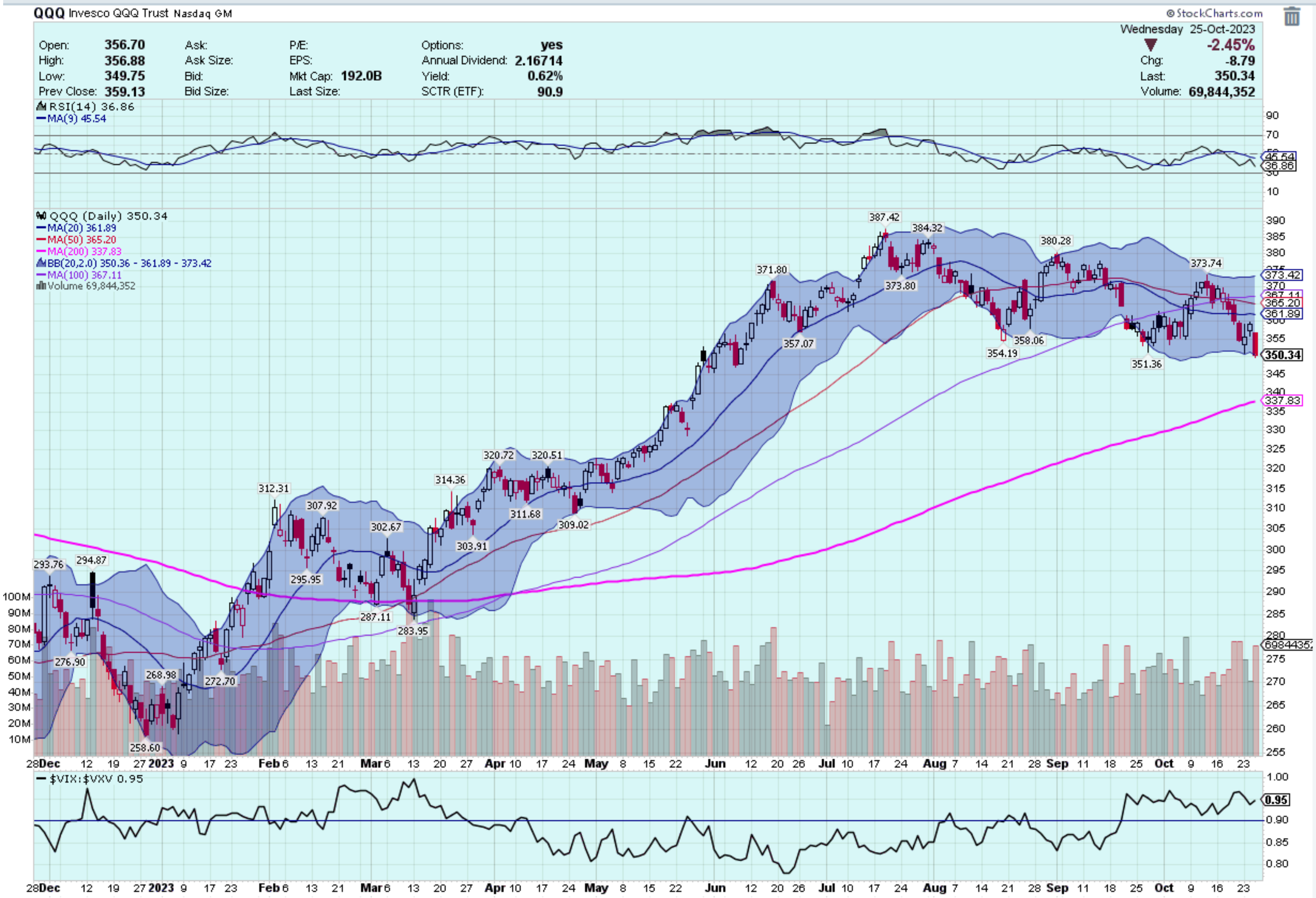
(Pallet joke: https://www.cnn.com/2016/08/03/politics/us-sends-plane-iran-400-million-cash/index.html)

One giant problem with seasonality: it tends to work a whole lot less when central bankers are motivated to cause economic damage. Jay's Jihad against aggregate demand is starting to leave more holes in things/collateral damage than Cheney's birdshot. (Too young for that joke? See: https://www.vanityfair.com/hollywood/2018/12/guy-dick-cheney-shot-harry-whittington-watching-vice)

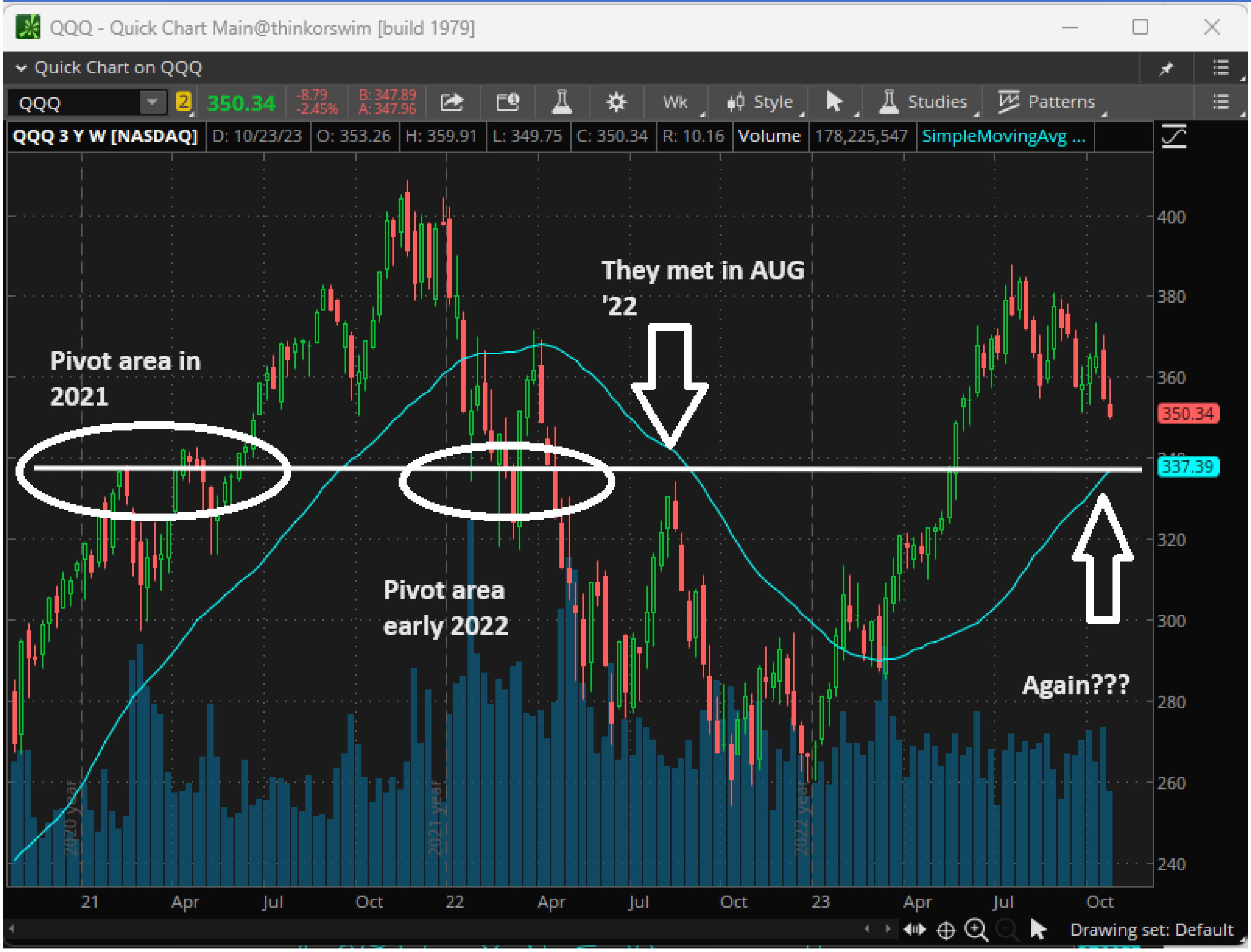
Good earnings aren't working for stocks and yet bad ones, forget it. ADP beat estimates yesterday (I know, that game is one of the oldest complete farces in market history) but, they reiterated guidance and 10% growth and this is how the market reacted to pretty darn good news in this environment:

So, earnings don't matter for the most part. MSFT had a great quarter, showed 25% earnings growth and it had trouble hanging on to a small gain on the day.

And, considering the plateau QQQ *is still on*, it's almost hard to imagine that 'game of chicken' season is going to end anytime soon. Managers that were right this year, the few that went against value, with the high valuations and thus fortunately surfed A.I. mania, they are probably going to be tested further; it seems to have a future date with the 200-day moving average at a minimum:

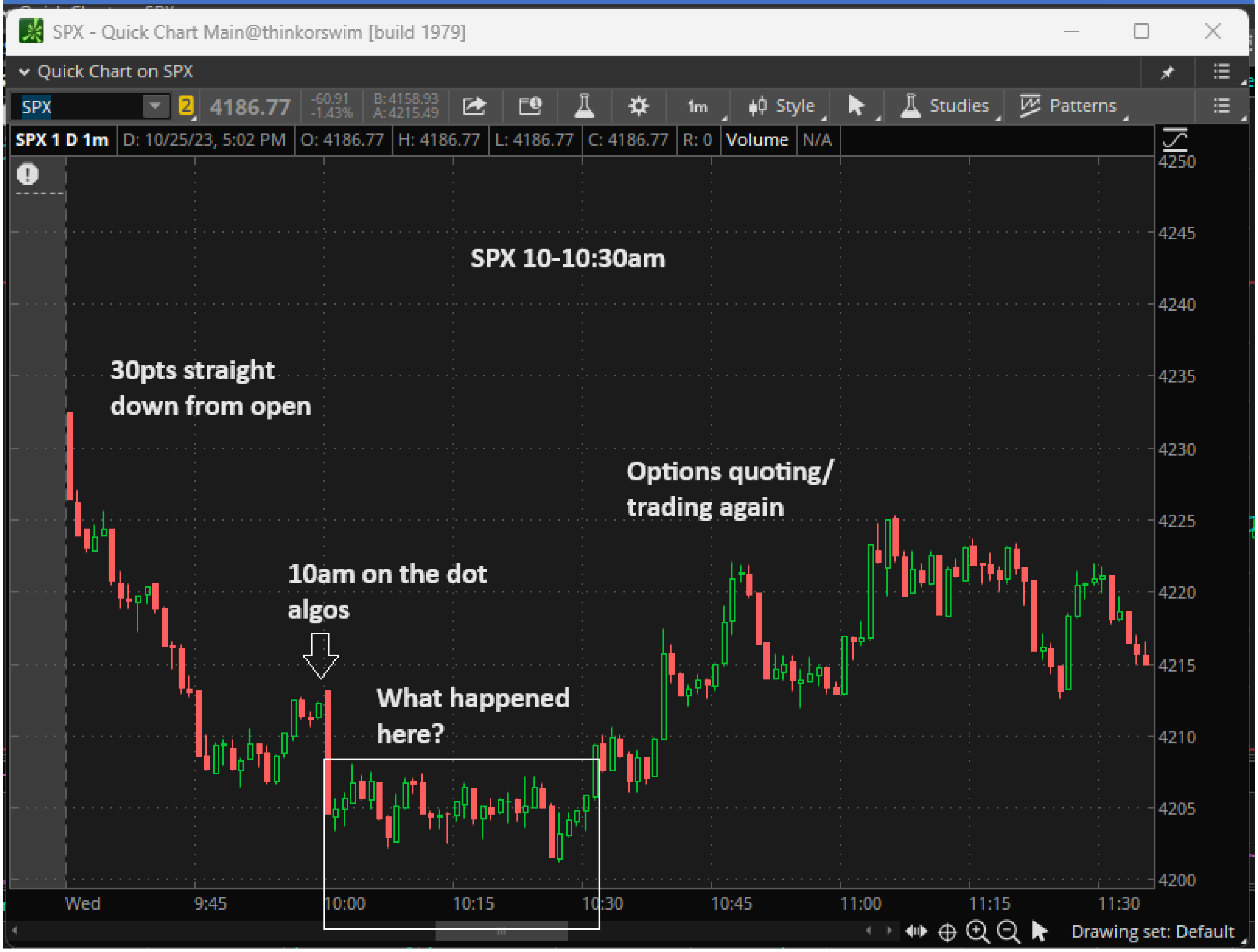


Let's be realistic, the 200-day moving average area would still be up 25% or so year-to-date in QQQ. Interestingly, that particular spot would also dovetail with a support level from the last few years, and a combination of level and average that marked the top last summer:



Swipe down to a trade idea for this technical analysis tinder date below.

Before I continue on the topic of options vol, you probably missed some Mr. Market humor today. Now, we all know how important options are to market functioning and behavior these days, you would have to be more than ignorant at this point to not realize or accept that. But, did you see what happened this morning, in the middle of the market puking out the earnings hope and over-owned tech stocks?



The market just froze as if it was a shortened half-day holiday trade with the VIX at 12. Ghosts of Thanksgiving Friday past markets in the middle of the indices trying to melt down. Well, there was a perfectly good explanation for this, and you probably guessed it, what was to blame:

RIGD - 0DTE Alerts
@rigd_ai

OPTIONS TRADING IS DOWN AT E*TRADE, IBKR, WEBULL, ROBINHOOD, THINKORSWIM, FIDELITY, WEBULL AND MORE

THE MARKET IS 100% RIGD!!!!

#0DTE $SPY $QQQ

10:26 AM · Oct 25, 2023 · **18.4K** Views

Cboe US Options Exchange System Status Update - OPRA Processing Issue

October 25, 2023 10:16:03

Cboe US Options Exchanges have identified an OPRA processing issue impacting Cboe's ability to submit quotes to OPRA. All other Cboe Exchange systems are operating normally.

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So, if you aren't quite sure yet which end of the dog wags the market, there is yet another example.

Well, if you stole Jay's dusty printer and printed/traded off of the 1pm phenomenon I've been hammering home in my recent 0DTE notes, congratulations, it has been damn consistent.

But, things are changing, you can't keep a great trend quiet for very long; big hedge fund money has invested in awfully smart systems to ferret this stuff out and frontrun until it doesn't work, or it adapts/morphs:

That is not only quite a risk-free bearish feast, but it follows a schedule on top of it. Bears get served a Chateaubriand precisely at the lunch gong. Yet, why wait, might as well get into the honey pot early, as in perhaps European traders want in on Jay's QT turned bear QE. It will be interesting to see what happens tomorrow at 1pm when the 7-yr auction is released.

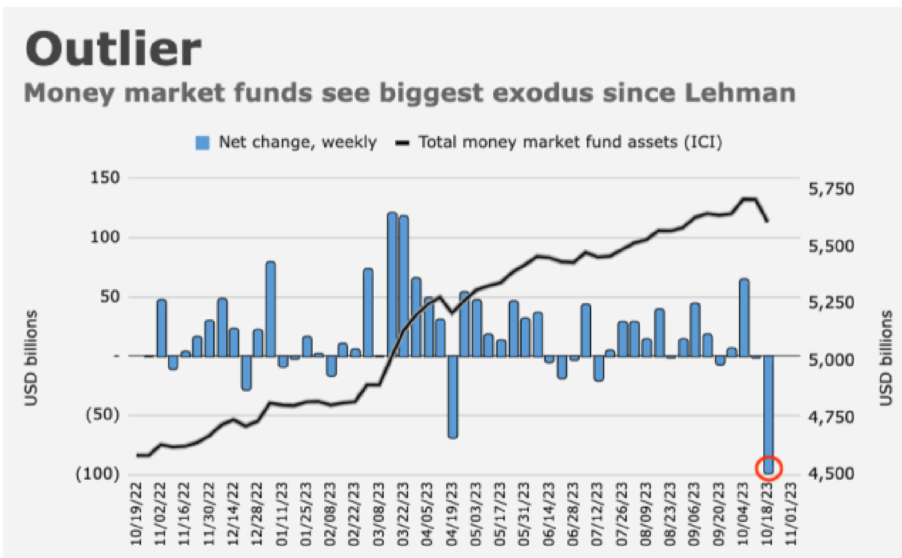
(Hint, it's going to tail, bond markets are quite volatile if you haven't noticed; 'when issued' yields versus auction doesn't matter anymore if it's off a few bps compared to the last few years of snoozer auctions/bond markets during ZIRP regardless of what ZH says about how bad it was. When are people going to figure this out?)

Ok, so let's lay out the vol events lying dead ahead, there are a slew of biggies and thus, markets are almost sure to be quite volatile. (I'd say choppy, but we seem to be on the Acela high speed commuter rail down, so will refrain from 'chop' until we have an actual up day.)

1. November 1st – JOLTs – It has been one of the most volatile days this year, since people landing jobs is clearly bad.
2. November 1st 8:30am – TBAC funding announcement – The Treasury advisory committee releases funding needs for the next quarter. Now this could be better than expected, the late California tax filing delay and student loan restart may have actually reduced immediate Treasury needs, and it was reflected in a huge withdrawal from money market funds last week:

The $98.8 billion outflow came amid cash withdrawals presumably tied to tax payments around an extended filing deadline.

The entirety of the redemptions (and then some) were in institutional government. That category shed $112.42 billion during the week.



This is anomalous and therefore it makes little sense to contextualize it via this year's massive inflows to money funds.

I love a "since Lehman" headline as much as anybody, but I don't think there's anything to see here. The IRS granted several automatic extensions this year tied to severe weather, and there was a deadline on October 16. The only color I saw on Thursday evening cited companies making delayed tax payments.

Source: https://heisenbergreport.com/2023/10/19/money-market-funds-see-largest-outflow-since-lehman/

The bottom line here is that if the Treasury requires higher auction amounts than expected, bonds should fall and equity indices will follow. Vice versa if the above theory holds water and bonds subsequently rally off lower than expected auction raises.

3. Fed meeting – Mr. Autopilot will probably get questioned on the soon to be infamous 'Does not *feel* like policy is too tight'. Anything can happen, but lately he has been a maestro at tanking things, so vol will be bid.
4. November 3rd – Non-farm payrolls. Lately, this event has reemerged as a big vol day. In October, Bloomberg opined that it would be the last good one, we shall see:

September Jobs Report May Be Last Good One Before Sharp Slowdown

- Bloomberg Economics expects employers hired 173,000 last month
- Growth may plummet amid tighter financial conditions, strikes

Whatever it says, folks will bring in all kinds of caveats around strikes, seasonal adjustments, the household survey, etc. Regardless, price will be moving.

If you are hunting for good news There are no Treasury note/bond auctions next week. Bond vol fun starts again on the 7th, and CPI isn't far behind that, but the above is enough of a vol calendar to be concerned with for now.

Volatility Trades:

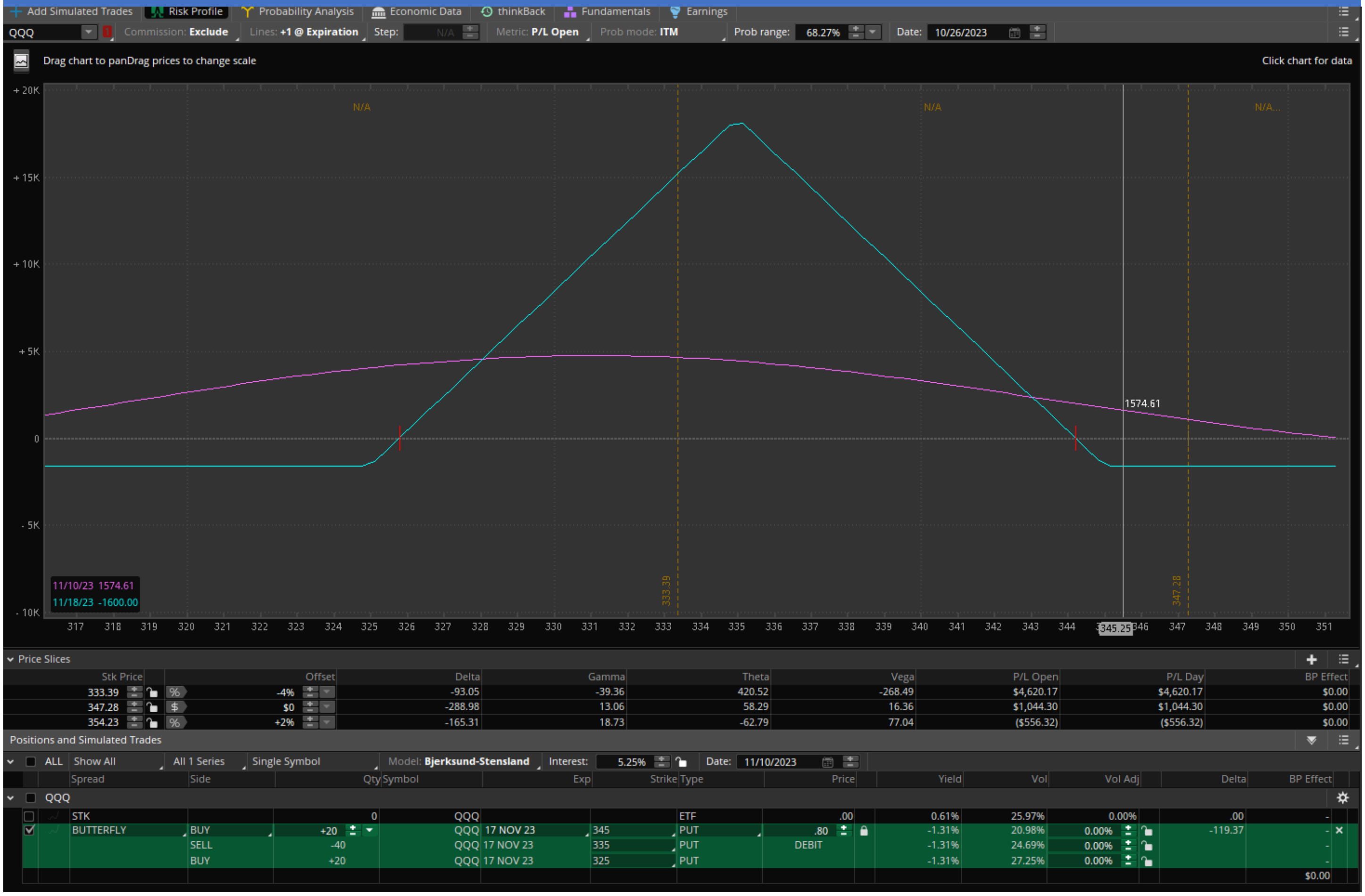
QQQ Nov 17th OPEX put butterfly spread

Buy $345 Nov put

Sell 2x $335 put

Buy $325 put

Net debit: .80-1.00



On the premise mentioned above, a bearish spread targeting the 200-day moving average on QQQ, with the short strikes near said average and clear support/pivots. If you expect a bounce, maybe wait to add this cheaper. Target, $3.

SPX Call diagonal spread:

Sell Nov 1st SPX 4250 call

Buy Nov 2nd SPX 4255 call

Net debit: 1.60-1.70

I call this a 'prove it to me' spread. In that, it doesn't cost much and works if the market proves it can buck a strong prevailing trend, in this case, obviously the aforementioned Acela lower. I expect at some point a bounce as shorts take profits ahead of the myriad of vol events – wouldn't you? Just let them go by and sell again after?

Threading the needly perfectly, this thing could be worth $10, but I will kill it at $5, if we bounce. These spreads for Thu/Fri this week are over $3 now, and that is with no event in the back leg, so, more of a matter of the market essentially just pausing its waterfall for a day ahead of these events to make 3x.

Also, take a look at Mon/Tue, they are pricing around 1.70 as well.

TECH EARNINGS VOL UNDERPRICED LIKE INDEX VOL - DISPERSION TRADING RESPONSIBLE? – VIXPIRATION WAS THE VOL WATERSHED AGAIN

VOLATILITY SUMMARY

'With opex a week away, and vixpiration Wednesday, heavy chop is expected. And Wednesday's vixpiration, often the vol watershed day, happens again to coincide with the outset of giga tech earnings season. How did that go in July?'

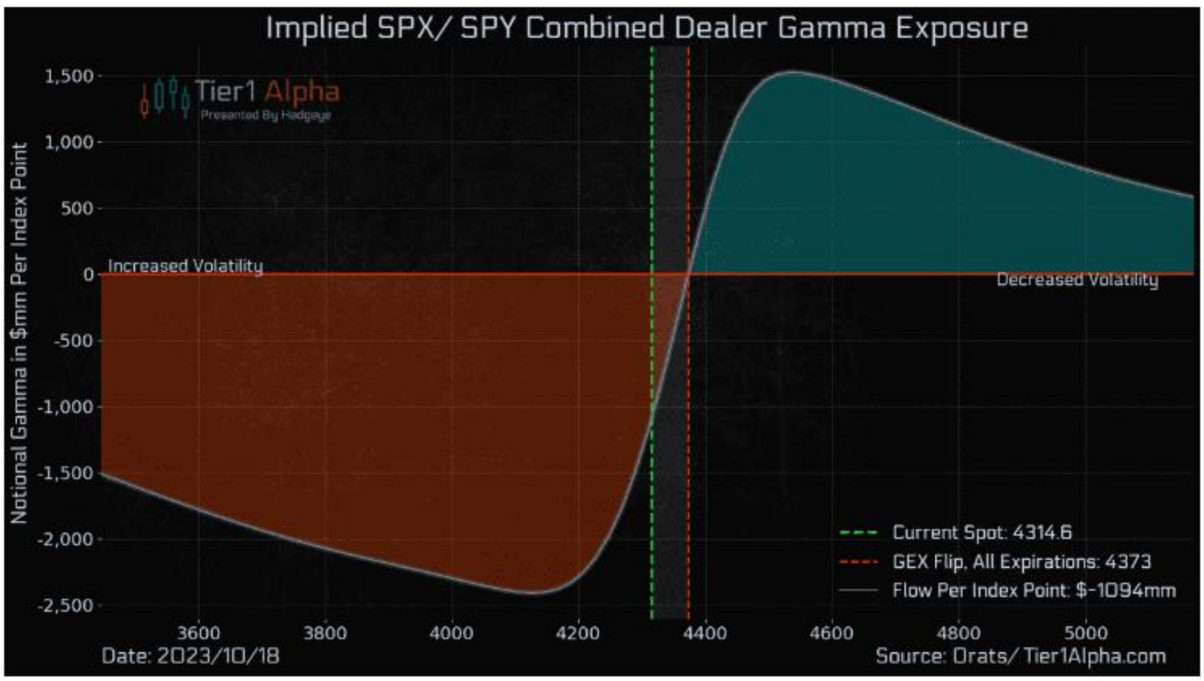
Source: October 13th letter

While everyone waits for the attack to start, so they can buy QQQ again…..I mostly jest, but would that surprise you?

In the meantime, VIX 9-day, a better representation of 'fear' (for lack of a better word) in the markets in my opinion, since the vast majority of options volume these days falls into that window, closed at the highest level since the end of the first quarter, when banking headlines were causing market haywire:

But markets falling in negative gamma while folks wait for next steps in the Middle East and really for the main events of earnings season to begin on Tuesday afternoon with giga tech firm reports, is not a big surprise. Vixpiration was once again the dividing line between implied and realized vol temporarily easing and it picking back up. And when I say realized vol, I mean day-to-day change, because we all know, intraday vol has remained high. Because, you know, we pretty much are always living on the negative gamma slope now:

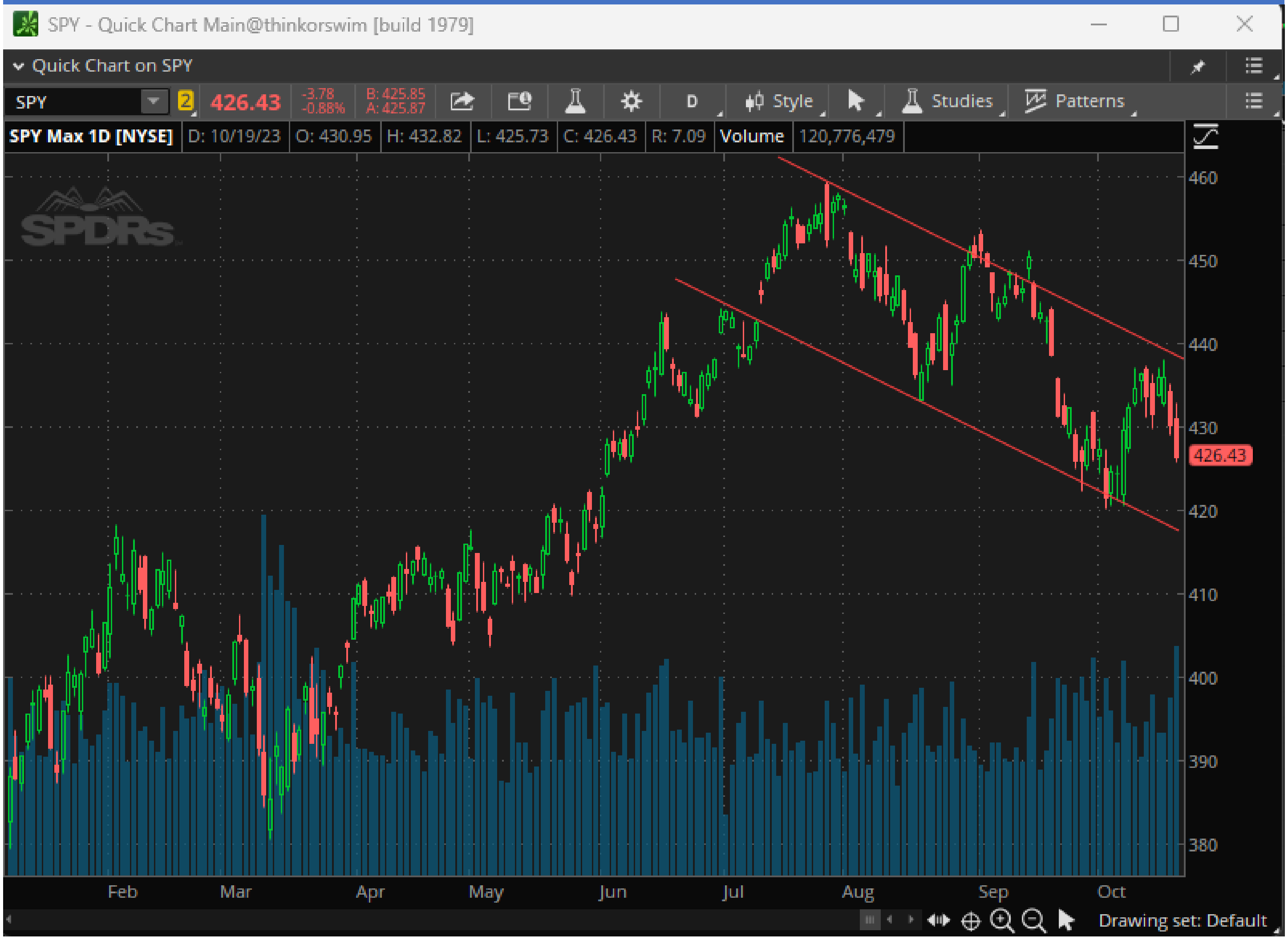
GAMMA EXPOSURE:



Dealers are back in a negative gamma regime, with just over $1 billion to hedge per index point. Yesterday, we pointed out that the gamma curve was quite steep, suggesting that even small changes in the index could significantly impact dealers' positions. As the markets fell, this is precisely the behavior we observed.

Source: Tier1Alpha.com newsletter

Folks are going to look at the following chart and assume something like, ‘well, lower highs and heading to new lows’, and I don’t blame them; folks trading the channel are loving what they think is a new trend, because *you know that everybody looks for the new trend*:



So, if you are one of those folks, carry on.

What interested me today were NFLX and TSLA earnings reactions. And, it was bugging me yesterday, that implied volatility into both of these reports seemed way too low relative to recent earnings releases, *precisely when it seemed to me to have way more importance.*

I mean, these stocks are obviously the behemoths holding up the entire market and the ones managers need to stay propped to make their year if they are doing well by holding herd stocks or simply SPY/QQQ. They are the market, *especially with nearly everything else down year-to-date.*

So, with so much on the line and NFLX and TSLA both with long histories of giant earnings release moves, not only for year but in recent times mind you, so no potential for forgetting that, why did they go in with implied volatilities for earnings so low?

Here's my guess. Yet another growing source of vol supply:

One Trading Strategy Is Winning Big in This Nasty Year for Stocks

- Dispersion trade up as single stocks swing, VIX stays muted
- Subdued demand for portfolio hedges is behind volatility quirk

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-10-17/one-options-trade-wins-big-in-strange-year-for-stock-volatility?sref=1zxv5xkq

Volatility Trades Get Reborn as Market Split Spurs New Short

- Macro forces spur growing divergence across stocks, industries
- Dispersion trade is advancing beyond hedge-fund investors

https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-08-22/volatility-trades-are-reborn-as-two-tier-market-spurs-new-short?sref=1zxv5xkq

Call it the volatility trade, squared.

As macro shocks hit global markets, a complex strategy that bets the gap between stock winners and losers will grow is spreading across hedge funds, real-money managers and even private banks.

The so-called dispersion trades offer a way to play a slew of market themes, everything from splits among tech stocks to the prey and predators of the M&A boom and the trade-war fallout.

Known as a short-correlation bet, it pairs a long and short position in equity options to profit from diverging prices.

So, sell some vol over here, long some vol over there. Cute. What happens when it doesn't work?

The strategy, which has cooled of late after notching outsize gains earlier in the year, is deployed mostly by volatility hedge funds and banks packaging it into systematic strategies. Versions of the trade may buy options on a basket of stocks while others, like those managed by Assenagon and Fulcrum, are more selective. Some are neutral to volatility, whereas others are buying more options than they sell.

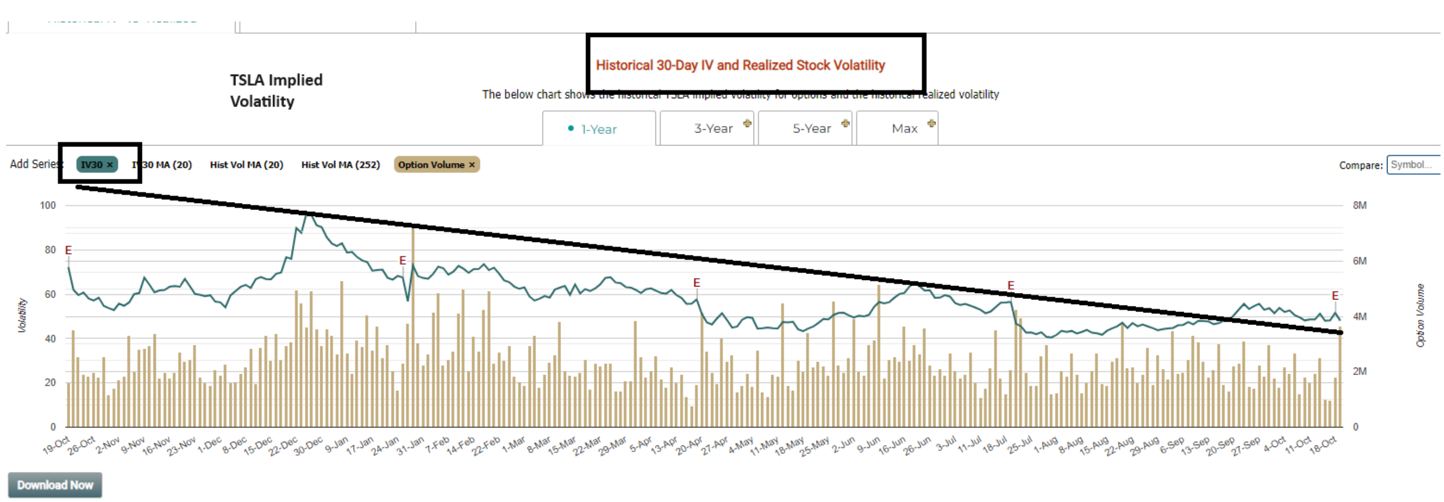
And:

With shorting volatility a key ingredient in the trade, it comes with a health warning for tourists and practitioners alike.

“It’s an elegant strategy but it’s definitely complex,” said Tobias Hekster, co-chief investment officer at hedge fund True Partner Capital. “It requires quite a bit of management and maintenance.”

Fast-money traders with a short-correlation bias incurred “significant” losses in August 2011, for example, when the Cboe Volatility Index gapped upwards by 25 points, according to Hekster, a volatility trader.

Ok, look at how TSLA implied vol has been falling and notice how the rises that naturally coincide with earnings season vol have been coming down:

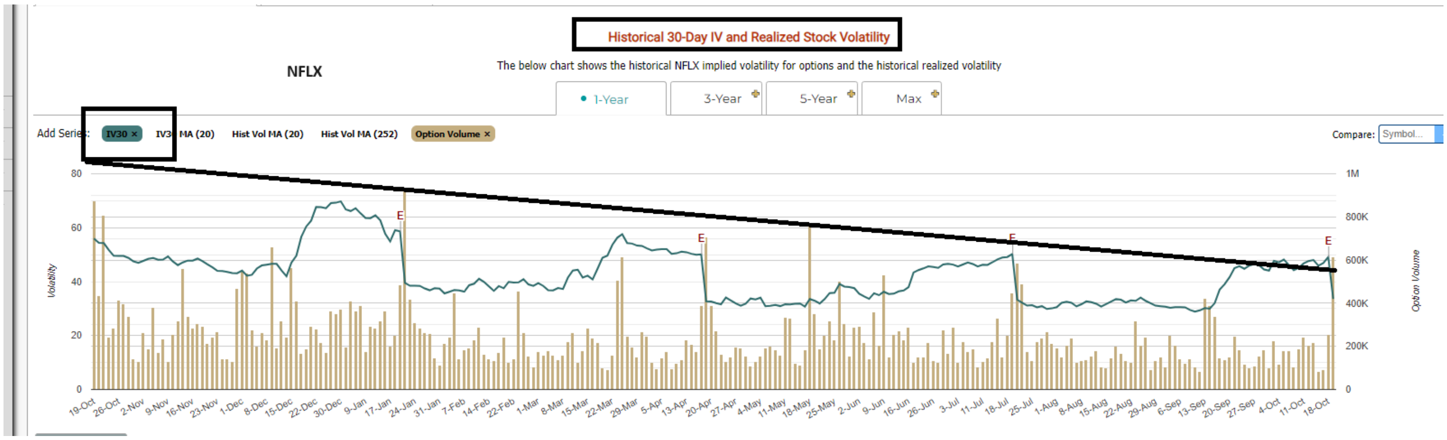


But…. the earnings moves lately have been high:

Stock Price Performance - Last 12 Quarterly Earnings — TSLA

	Before Earnings (Not Including Day of Earnings)					Day of Earnings					After Earnings (Not Including Day of Earnings)					Custom Range
Date	2 Weeks	1 Week	3 Days	2 Days	1 Day	Earnings Move	Opening Gap	Open-to-High	Open-to-Low	Drift Open-to-Close	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	1 Week	2 Weeks	2 Days Before to 2 Days After
18-Oct-2023 AMC	-7.1%	-7.7%	-3.4%	-4.4%	-4.8%	-100.0%	-6.9%	+2.1%	-4.1%							
19-Jul-2023 AMC	+3.1%	+7.1%	+3.5%	+0.3%	-0.7%	-9.7%	-4.1%	+0.5%	-6.5%	-5.9%	-1.1%	+2.3%	+0.9%	-2.7%	-1.4%	-8.3%
19-Apr-2023 AMC	-2.7%	0.0%	-2.4%	-3.5%	-2.0%	-9.8%	-8.0%	+2.2%	-3.4%	-1.9%	+1.3%	-0.3%	-1.4%	-1.7%	-1.1%	-11.8%
25-Jan-2023 AMC	+17.2%	+12.2%	+8.3%	+0.5%	+0.4%	+11.0%	!!! +10.8%	+0.9%	-3.3%	+0.2%	+11.0%	+4.0%	+8.1%	+17.5%	+29.4%	+15.8%
19-Oct-2022 AMC	-7.8%	+2.2%	+8.3%	+1.2%	+0.8%	-6.7%	-6.2%	+3.5%	-3.0%	-0.5%	+3.5%	+1.9%	+7.3%	+8.6%	+3.9%	-4.1%
20-Jul-2022 AMC	+6.8%	+4.4%	+3.1%	+2.9%	+0.8%	+9.8%	+3.0%	+7.2%	0.0%	+6.6%	+0.2%	-1.2%	-4.7%	+3.4%	+13.6%	+9.3%
20-Apr-2022 AMC	-6.6%	-4.4%	-0.8%	-2.7%	-5.0%	+3.2%	+10.1%	+1.6%	-7.4%	-6.2%	-0.4%	-1.1%	-13.1%	-13.0%	-13.4%	-2.9%
26-Jan-2022 AMC	-15.3%	-5.9%	-0.7%	+0.8%	+2.1%	-11.6%	-0.4%	+0.2%	-11.2%	-11.2%	+2.1%	+13.0%	+12.3%	+7.5%	+9.1%	+2.0%
20-Oct-2021 AMC	+10.6%	+6.8%	+2.7%	-0.5%	+0.2%	[illegible]	-1.1%	+5.1%	-0.1%	+4.4%	+1.8%	+14.6%	+13.9%	+20.5%	+37.6%	+18.6%
26-Jul-2021 AMC	-4.1%	+1.8%	+0.4%	+1.3%	+2.2%	-2.0%	+0.9%	+0.5%	-5.5%	-2.8%	+0.3%	+5.1%	+6.6%	+10.1%	+10.1%	+5.3%
26-Apr-2021 AMC	+5.2%	+3.3%	-0.8%	+2.6%	+1.2%	-4.5%	-2.9%	+1.0%	-1.9%	-1.7%	-1.5%	-3.9%	+0.7%	-4.4%	-12.4%	-7.2%
27-Jan-2021 AMC	+1.1%	+1.6%	+2.1%	-1.9%	-2.1%	-3.3%	-5.2%	+3.5%	-2.3%	+2.0%	-5.0%	+0.5%	+4.5%	+1.7%	-2.9%	-4.9%

And check out NFLX, same situation:



But even crazier earnings moves lately:

Stock Price Performance - Last 12 Quarterly Earnings — NFLX

	Before Earnings (Not Including Day of Earnings)					Day of Earnings					After Earnings (Not Including Day of Earnings)					Custom Range
Date	2 Weeks	1 Week	3 Days	2 Days	1 Day	Earnings Move	Opening Gap	Open-to-High	Open-to-Low	Drift Open-to-Close	1 Day	2 Days	3 Days	1 Week	2 Weeks	2 Days Before to 2 Days After
18-Oct-2023 AMC	-8.2%	-5.4%	-2.7%	-4.1%	-2.7%	+16.1%	+16.9%	+1.0%	-3.1%	-0.7%						
19-Jul-2023 AMC	+7.1%	+7.6%	+8.1%	+6.1%	+0.6%	-8.4%	-6.5%	+0.4%	-3.3%	-2.1%	-2.3%	-2.1%	-2.2%	-5.5%	-1.5%	-9.8%
18-Apr-2023 AMC	-3.8%	-1.3%	-3.6%	-1.5%	+0.3%	-3.2%	-3.1%	+0.7%	-2.3%	-0.1%	+0.7%	+1.5%	+1.8%	-0.6%	-1.2%	-1.4%
19-Jan-2023 AMC	+2.0%	-4.4%	-5.1%	-3.2%	-3.2%	+8.5%	!!!!!!! +6.5%	+2.3%	-1.1%	+1.9%	+4.4%	+6.2%	+7.4%	+5.3%	+6.8%	+11.5%
18-Oct-2022 AMC	+0.1%	+12.4%	+3.6%	+4.7%	-1.7%	+13.1%	+10.1%	+5.4%	-0.9%	+2.7%	-1.6%	+6.3%	+3.7%	+9.6%	+0.2%	+18.1%
19-Jul-2022 AMC	+8.5%	+15.6%	+15.4%	+6.6%	+5.6%	+7.4%	+3.3%	+4.2%	-3.9%	+3.9%	+3.4%	+1.9%	+1.0%	+4.8%	+4.8%	+15.5%
19-Apr-2022 AMC	-8.3%	+1.3%	-0.5%	+2.2%	+3.2%	-35.1%	-29.7%	+1.5%	-13.3%	-7.7%	-3.5%	-4.7%	-7.2%	-16.7%	-9.8%	-36.2%
20-Jan-2022 AMC	-8.1%	-2.1%	-3.3%	-0.5%	-1.5%	-21.8%	-21.3%	+2.3%	-5.0%	-0.6%	-2.6%	-7.8%	-9.5%	-3.3%	+3.2%	-29.0%
19-Oct-2021 AMC	+0.7%	+2.3%	+0.8%	+1.7%	+0.2%	[illegible]	-2.2%	+2.0%	-1.3%	0.0%	+4.5%	+6.3%	+7.4%	+6.0%	+10.1%	+4.2%
20-Jul-2021 AMC	-2.0%	-1.8%	-2.2%	+0.1%	-0.2%	-3.3%	-0.9%	+0.9%	-3.9%	-2.4%	-0.4%	+0.4%	+0.6%	+1.1%	+0.7%	-3.2%
20-Apr-2021 AMC	+0.9%	-0.8%	+0.1%	+0.6%	-0.9%	-7.4%	-7.7%	+1.6%	-0.8%	+0.3%	0.0%	-0.7%	+0.3%	-0.5%	-2.5%	-8.8%
19-Jan-2021 AMC	-3.7%	+1.5%	-1.2%	+0.2%	+0.8%	+16.9%	+12.5%	+5.1%	-1.3%	+3.9%	-1.1%	-3.6%	-5.0%	-10.8%	-8.0%	+13.5%

Funds are shorting this volatility, isn't it obvious now? And isn't that a recurring theme lately, especially in this note, when I keep hammering home the fact that it's often better to be long vol than to be short vol lately? Shorting vol is crowded on several shadow fronts these days, yet another byproduct of Jay and ZIRP.

Here are two charts that demonstrate how ridiculous the market mispricings were going into last night. Here are the NFLX and TSLA at-the-money straddle charts:

And:

Whaaaat? They both made 100% overnight returns??!!

So, this strategy isn't even sophisticated, it is more like option dumb. It's supposed to lose more often than it wins, right? You could have opted for a long iron condor (two long option vertical spreads one put/one call) or double long butterfly spreads (put and call butterflies) and crushed 100% overnight.

It's a great time to be a long vol trader, that is for sure. Too many people are in the short vol business. And, you know who's back, Jay the autopilot, you saw what he said today:

You might just get what these short vol guys hate the most, everything going in one direction sometime soon. Volmageddon 2.0. The kindling is certainly there, the markets propped on just a few names and a growing cadre of folks exotically shorting vol in a myriad of ways.

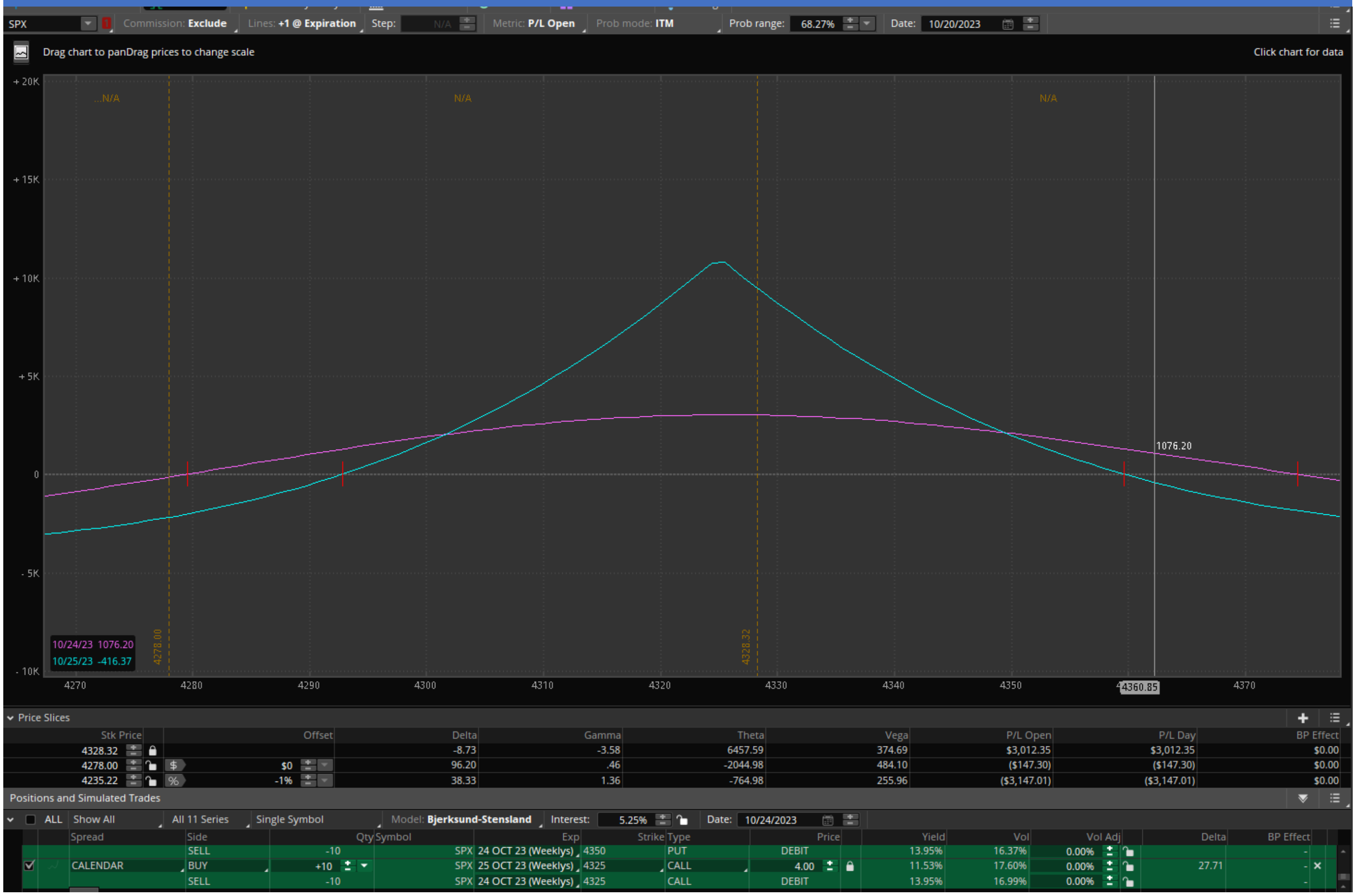
Volatility Trades:

Long tech earnings call calendar spread

Sell Oct 24th 4325 call

Buy Oct 25th 4325 call

Net debit: $3.75-4.00



The QQQ put calendars for the 24th/26th are working nicely and the war news during opex week is raising implied volatility in the front of the surface, when the vol smashers usually would have killed Monday and Tuesday's vol by now. So, pairing elevated front with MSFT/GOOG earnings in the back leg, is nicely priced at 4 SPX points.

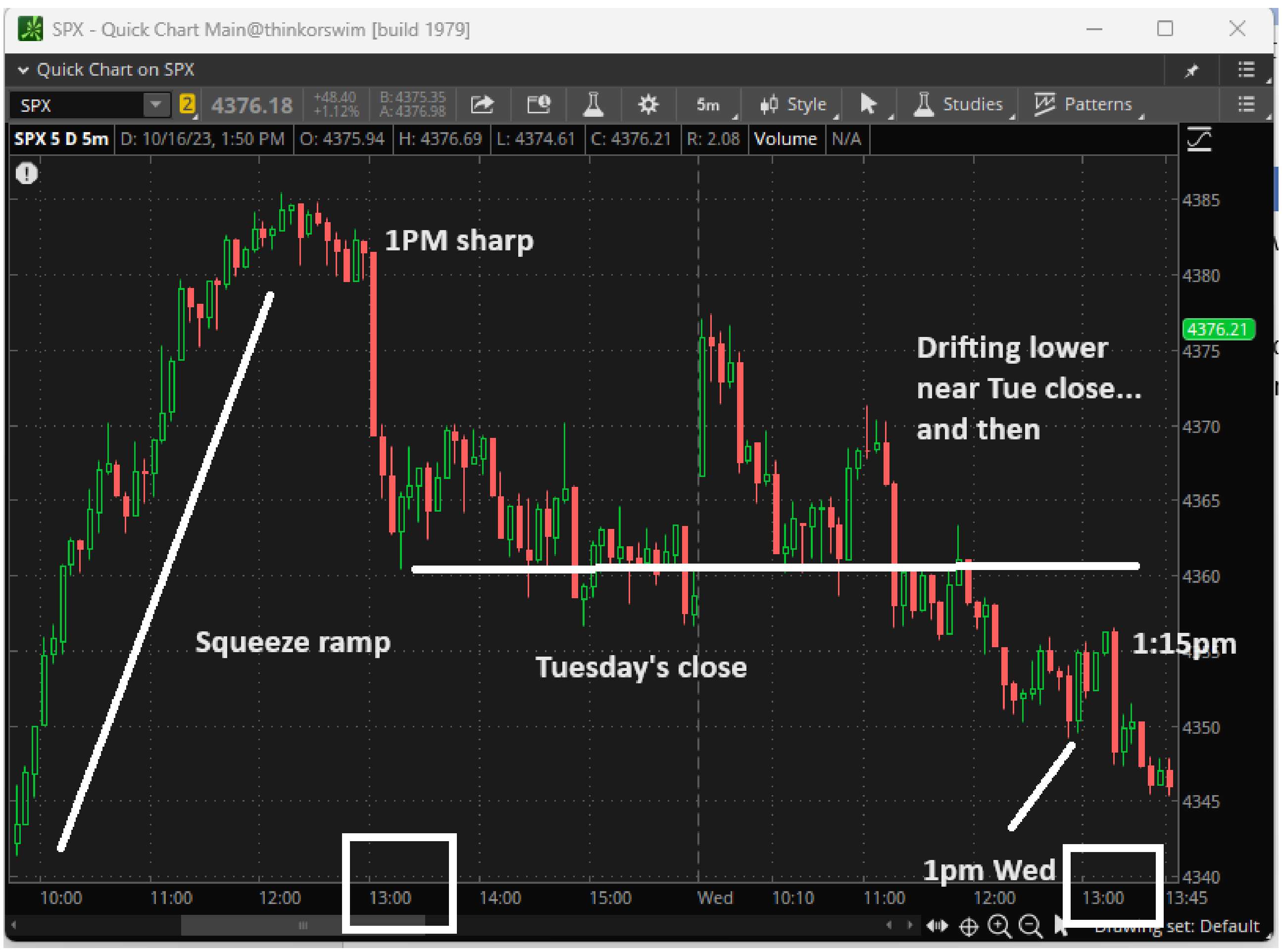
As I see it, this is essentially a market vol event, with the giant chunk of market cap in QQQ/SPY in the few giga tech names. They have to come through for basically everyone, nerves will be high. Target, $6.50-7.

0DTE OBSERVATIONS FROM CPI – MORE TRADES FOR GIGA TECH EARNINGS

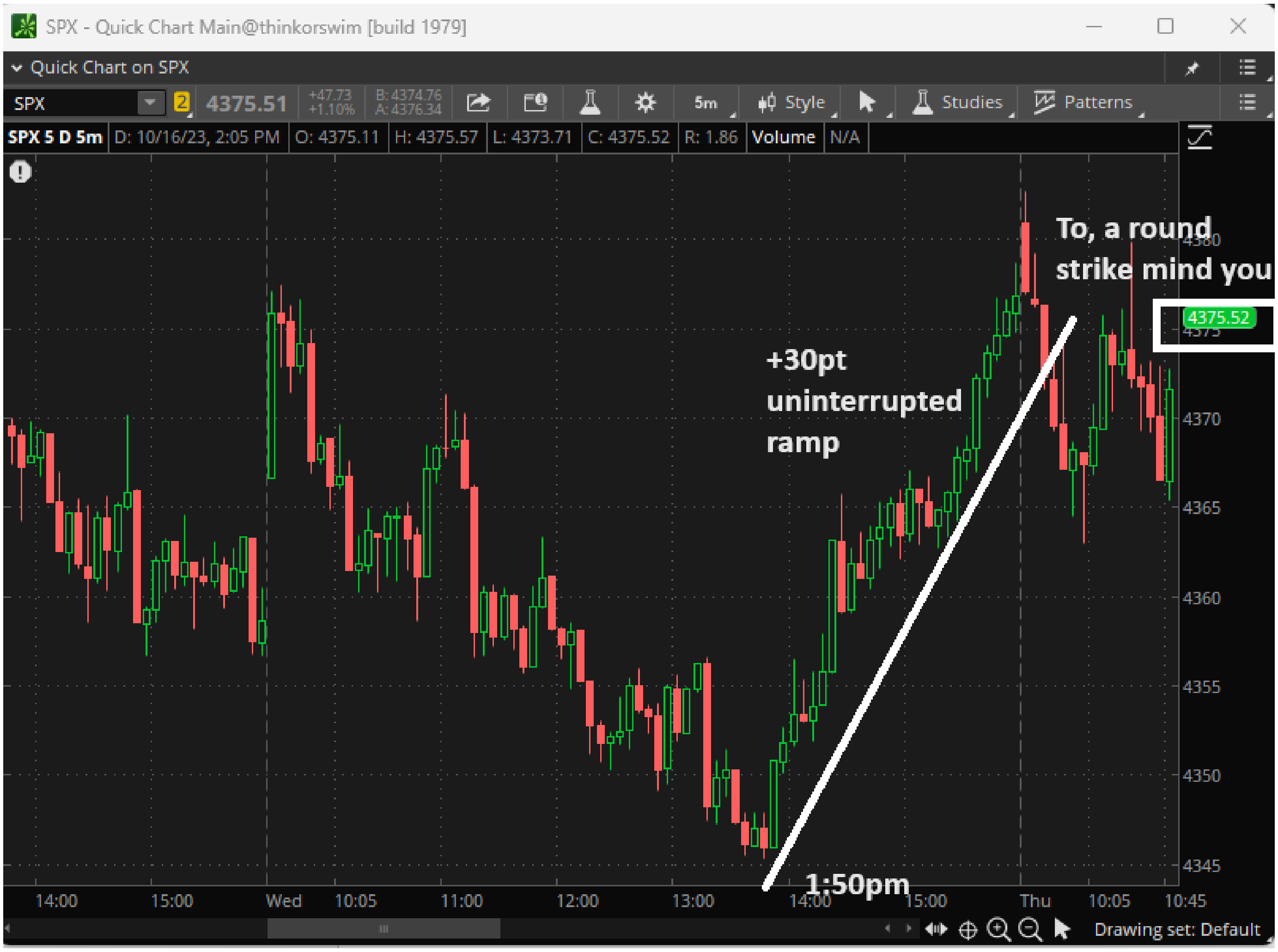
VOLATILITY SUMMARY

While we sit on a pre-vixpiration ramp and camp/vol smash Monday (how surprising) a brief lookback on 0DTE price action around CPI last week.

Things were sort of meandering lower on CPI eve Wednesday after a squeezy kind day Tuesday, where IWM/Russell 2000 and most downtrodden stocks that were previously refusing to bounce finally gave up and saw some short covering ahead of CPI data. And, once again before I go on, exactly 1pm on Tuesday was the daily turning point, the time I alluded to in last week's note:



So, while Tuesday offered a large move the first half of the day to sort of shoot against after 1pm with 0DTE options, Wednesday before CPI did not, just a gradual drift around flat, so the setup I wrote about and was looking for, a big move up or down into Euro-close or 1pm didn't materialize. And as you can see in the above chart, nothing is happening into nearly 2pm until:

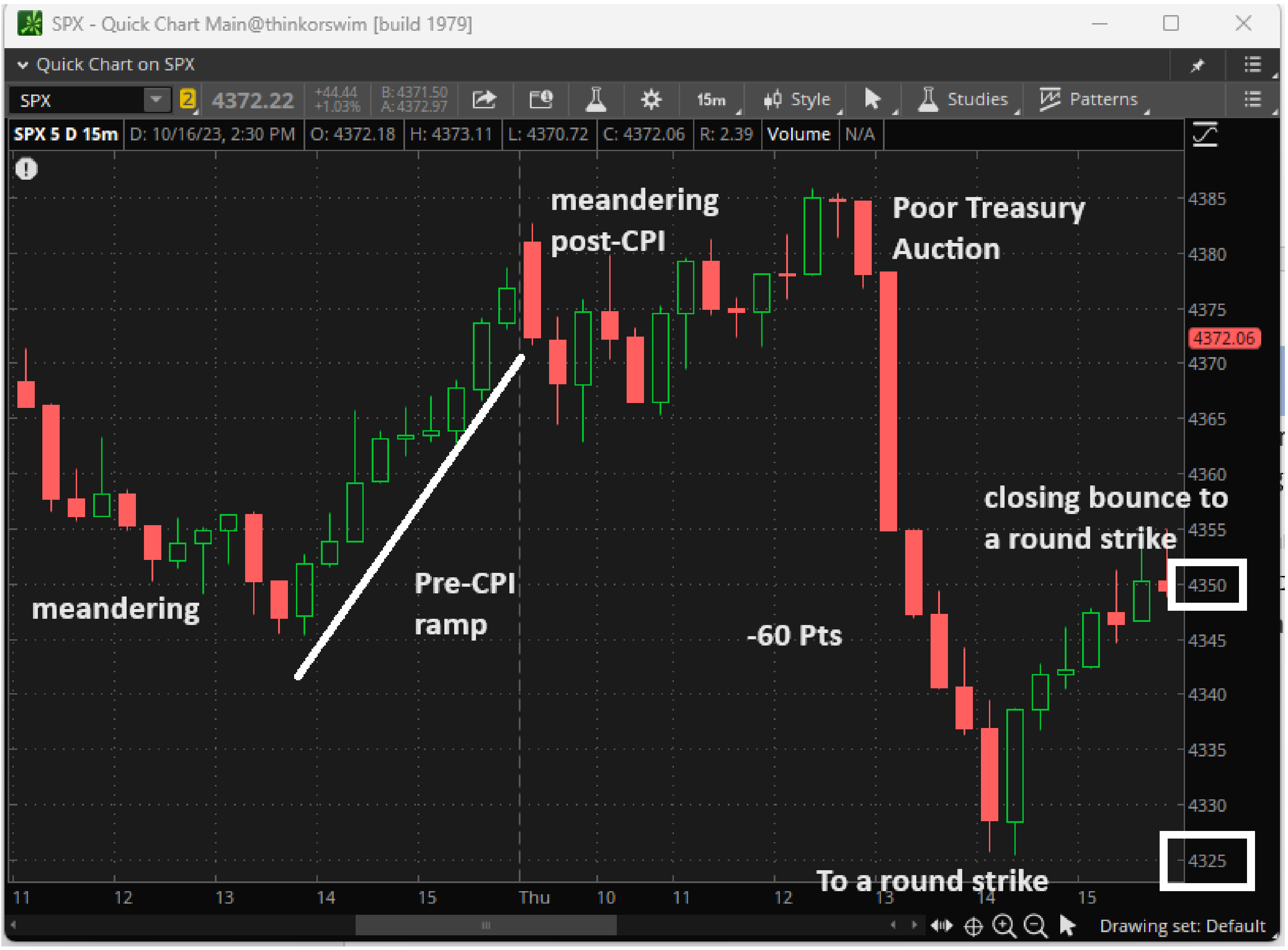


The train leaves the station and doesn't look back in a straight ramp higher and sits, of course to rub it in, on the round strike of 4375. Amazing. It was as if, once everyone fell asleep the shenanigans began. The 4360 call:

And, if you felt slighted like I did, that you were asleep at the switch and missed a 600% return in the afternoon, you also missed the next bus. 'They' jumped on 4370s and had fun getting 600% out of those in the last half hour to boot:

So, I suppose the 0DTE lesson of the story here: if there is an event the next day, keep an eye out for cheap options well past 1pm *especially* if it looks like nothing is going to happen.

On CPI day, if you had quickly absorbed the lesson above (I did not apparently learn fast enough), about if things appear exceptionally quiet, more reason to be on the lookout for the potential of a big late move. Once again, the morning was meandering along, digesting a mixed CPI report when:



Again, what do we see here?

A. 1pm move
B. 2pm bounce
C. Round strike low
D. Round strike close

So, I'm adding Treasury note/bond auctions to my list of 0DTE vol events to consider in the future; makes sense, if the highly volatile long duration section of the yield curve moves markets then these are most certainly to be considered vol events, no?

And so, if you had 4350 puts on Thursday, well, it was a good day for you:

Our markets today, 0DTE bucket shop nirvana. I hope these observations help you navigate/profit from some potential post-vixpiration/pre-NFLX/TSLA Wednesday 0DTE fun.

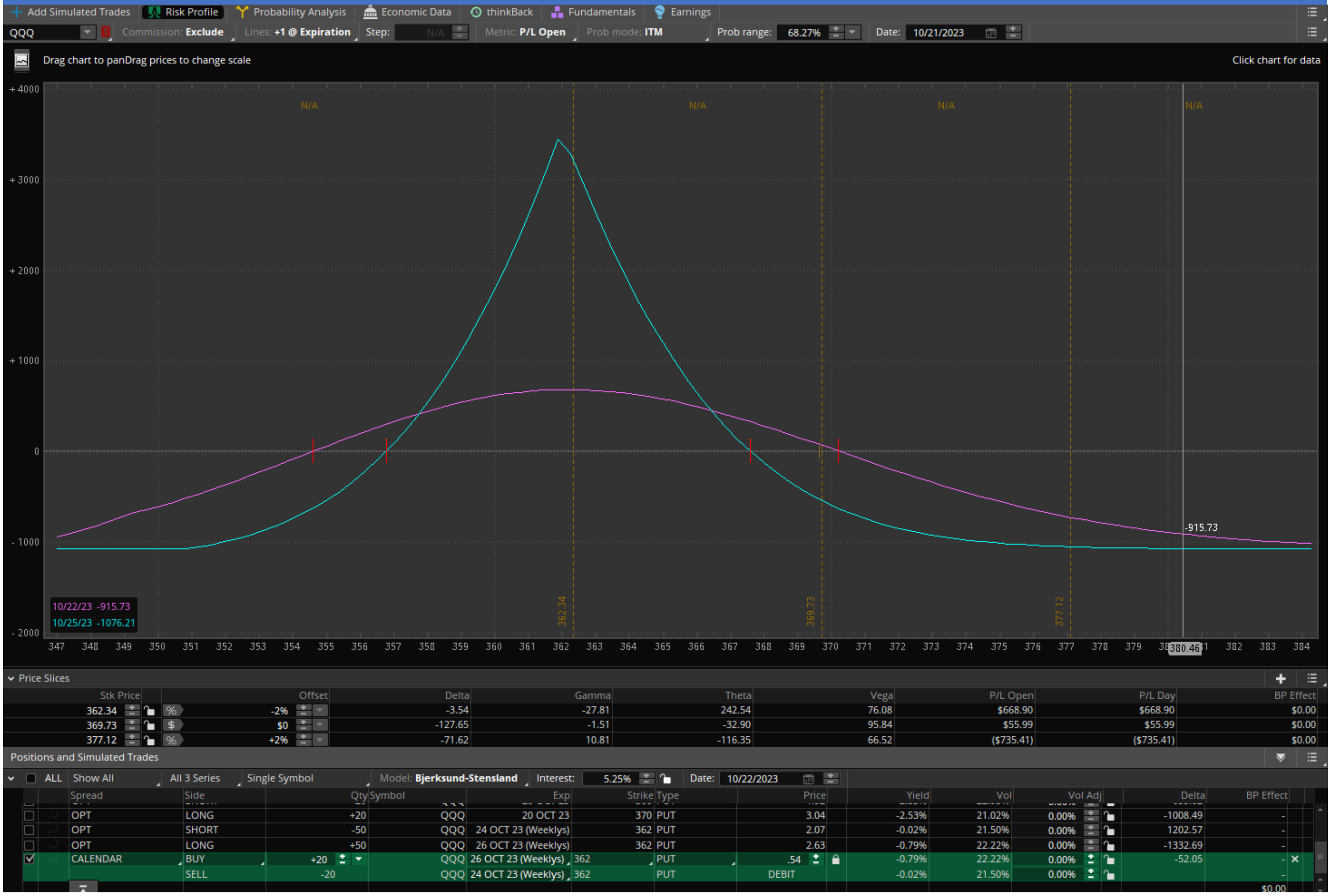
Volatility Trades:

QQQ Giga tech earnings put calendar spread

Sell $362 Oct 24th put

Buy $362 Oct 26th put

Net debit: .52-.56 (.54 filled)



Pretty basic concept of being long back vol event risk, building off the 18/20th trade ideas from Friday. This time, the back leg holds a giant chunk of QQQ/SPY in GOOG/MSFT/AMZN earnings releases. If the market shoots higher or lower after NFLX/TSLA report, I will adjust and add these spreads higher or lower. Target, $1.