FUND*MARKET* INSIGHT REPORT

LSEG LIPPER RESEARCH SERIES

JANUARY 31, 2024

The Month in Closed-End Funds: January 2024

Performance

For the first month in three, equity closed-end funds (CEFs) on average suffered negative returns on a net-asset-value (NAV) basis, declining 0.59%, while for the third month in a row they posted plus-side returns on a market basis, rising 1.01% for the month. Meanwhile, also for the third month running, their fixed income CEF counterparts witnessed monthly gains on a NAV basis (+0.49%) and a market basis (+1.64%) for January.

After a rocky start in trading during the first week of 2024, U.S. stocks rose on Friday, January 5, but still snapped a nine-week winning streak with all three broad-based U.S. indices declining for the week. The Russell 2000 (-3.75%) and Nasdaq (-3.25%) suffered the largest declines for the week. Investors stepped back into the market on Friday after the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that the U.S. added 216,000 jobs in December, handily beating analysts' expectations of 170,000. The unemployment rate remained steady at 4.7%, while hiring for October and November were revised downward. In other news, the December Institute of Supply Management services index fell to 50.6 from 52.7 the month before. The 10-year Treasury yield rose six basis points (bps) on the day to finish the week at 4.05%.

Investors pushed stocks higher the following week despite learning about a U.S.-led airstrike in Yemen that was intended to thwart further attacks on ships in the Red Sea. Nonetheless, the Nasdaq posted it largest one-week gain since November after the Bureau of Labor Statics reported the December producer price index fell 0.1% from the month prior—its third straight month-over-month decline. The 10-year Treasury yield dipped nine bps for the week to settle at 3.96%.

The S&P 500 closed at its first record high in slightly more than two years on Friday, January 19, as fourth quarter earnings reports ramped up. Semiconductor issues got another shot in the arm after Super Micro Computer Inc. (SMCI) released updated financial guidance, which surpassed its prior outlook. In other news, the University of Michigan reported that its preliminary consumer sentiment gauge for January rose to 78.8 (its highest level since July 2021) from 69.7 the month before. The 10-year Treasury yield rose 19 bps to finish the week at 4.15%.

The Dow closed above the 38,000 mark for the first time in history on Monday, January 22, when investors digested a report that showed the Conference Board's leading economic index for the U.S. fell for the twenty-first consecutive month in December to 0.1%, beating analysts' expectation of a 0.3% decline. However, the markets finished mixed at week's end as investors remained mostly optimistic ahead of the Federal Reserve Board's policy-setting meeting the following week along with five of the Magnificent Seven reporting Q4 earnings. The 10-year Treasury remained unchanged for the week.

On the last trading day of the month stocks ended down, with the Nasdaq suffering its largest one-day decline since December 2022. While the Fed left its key lending rate unchanged, Fed Chair Jerome Powell said inflation is "still too high" and that a March interest-rate cut was unlikely. Adding to the carnage, while both Microsoft and Alphabet's Q4 earnings beat analysts' expectations the day before, investor expectations were perhaps too high, causing the tech giants to tumble on the last trading day of the month. The 10-year Treasury yield fell 16 bps for the week to close out the month at 3.99%.

The Month in Closed-End Funds: January 2024

- For the first month in three, equity CEFs (-0.59% on a NAV basis) suffered losses while their fixed income CEFs (+0.49%) counterparts on average posted plus-side returns.
- At month end, 11% of all CEFs traded at a premium to their NAV, with 12% of equity CEFs and 10% of fixed income CEFs trading in premium territory. The domestic equity CEFs macro-classification witnessed the largest narrowing of discounts for the month among Lipper's CEF macro-groups—255 bps to a 9.36% median discount.
- Income & Preferred Stock CEFs (+1.44%), for the first month in four, outpaced the other classifications in the equity CEF universe for January.
- U.S. Mortgage CEFs (+2.47%), for the first month in 19, outperformed the other classifications in the domestic taxable bond CEF macro-group.
- The domestic taxable bond CEFs macro-group (+0.83%) outperformed its world income (+0.76%) and municipal debt (-0.16%) CEF counterparts for the first month in four.

Authored by:

TOM ROSEEN

Principal, Lipper Global Research

LSEG Data & Analytics

LSEG

Treasury yields declined at the short-end of the curve while rising at the long end during the month, with the one- (seven bps) and two-month (13 bps) yields seeing the largest declines in January. The 20- and 30-year Treasury yields witnessed the largest increases, rising 14 and 19 bps, respectively, to finish the month at 4.34% and 4.22%. Yields remained inverted for all maturities, except the five- (+3.91%) and seven-year (+3.95%), from the one-month to the three-year yield. The two- and 10-year Treasury yield spread narrowed seven bps from its December month-end closing value to minus 28 bps.

During the month, the dollar strengthened against the euro (+1.88%), the pound (+0.06%), and the yen (+3.78%). Commodity prices were mixed for the month, with front-month gold prices falling 0.68% to close the month at $2,048.40/oz., and front-month crude oil prices rising 5.86% to close at $75.85/bbl.

For the month, 60% of all CEFs posted NAV-based returns in the black, with 47% of equity CEFs and 69% of fixed income CEFs chalking up returns in the plus column.

For the second month in a row, Lipper's mixed-assets CEFs (+0.61%) macro-group outpaced its two equity-based brethren: domestic equity CEFs (-0.64%) and world equity CEFs (-1.56%).

The Income & Preferred Stock CEFs classification (+1.44%) moved to the top of the equity leaderboard for the first month in four, followed by Options Arbitrage/Options Strategies CEFs (+0.46%) and Energy MLP CEFs (+0.12%). Emerging Markets CEFs (-3.74%) suffered the largest negative performance in the equity universe and was bettered by Utility CEFs (-3.29%) and Convertible Securities CEFs (-1.54%). For the remaining equity classifications, returns ranged from negative 1.38% (Real Estate CEFs) to positive 0.03% (Diversified Equity CEFs).

Three of the five-top performing equity CEFs for January were warehoused in Lipper's Options Arbitrage/Options Strategies CEFs classification. However, at the top of the leaderboard were **Principal Real Estate Income Fund** (**PGZ**, housed in the Real Estate CEFs classification), rising 5.70% on a NAV basis and traded at a 13.12% discount on January 31 and **Taiwan Fund Inc.** (**TWN**, warehoused in Lipper's Emerging Markets CEFs classification), gaining 4.64% and traded at a 20.65% discount at month end. Following those two were **Eaton Vance Tax-Managed Diversified Equity Income Fund** (**ETY**, housed in the Options Arbitrage/Options Strategies CEFs classification), gaining 3.78% and traded at a 5.71% discount on January 31; **Eaton Vance Risk-Managed Diversified Equity Income Fund** (**ETJ**), rising 3.75% and traded at an 8.91% discount at month end; and **Eaton Vance Enhanced Equity Income Fund** (**EOI**), returning 3.33% and traded at a 3.41% discount on January 31.

For the month, the dispersion of performance in individual equity CEFs—ranging from negative 10.73% to positive 5.70%—was much narrower than December's spread and skewed to the negative side. The 20 top-performing equity CEFs posted returns at or above

CLOSED-END FUNDS LAB

TABLE 1 CURRENT-MONTH PERFORMANCE, P&D, P&D SHIFTS (% OF UNIVERSE)

	NAV RETURNS POSITIVE	PREMIUM/DISCOUNT		NOW TRADING AT	
		BETTER	WORSE	PREMIUM	DISCOUNT
Equity CEFs	47	72	28	12	87
Bond CEFs	69	82	18	10	90
ALL CEFs	**60**	**77**	**23**	**11**	**89**

TABLE 2 AVERAGE NAV RETURNS, SELECTED PERIODS (%)

	JANUARY	YTD	3-MONTH	CALENDAR-2023
Equity CEFs	-0.59	-0.59	9.12	9.69
Bond CEFs	0.49	0.49	9.68	10.73
ALL CEFs	**0.04**	**0.04**	**9.44**	**10.28**

TABLE 3 NUMBER OF IPOs, YTD VERSUS PRIOR YEAR

	JANUARY 31, 2024	CALENDAR-2023
Conventional CEFs	0	0
Interval CEFs	0	39

TABLE 4 AVERAGE SIZE OF IPOs, SELECTED PERIODS, $MIL

THREE MONTHS THROUGH 12/31/2023	0
COMPARABLE YEAR-EARLIER THREE MONTHS	135
CALENDAR 2022 AVERAGE	202

TABLE 5 NUMBER OF MERGERS & LIQUIDATIONS, YTD VERSUS PRIOR YEAR

	JANUARY 31, 2024	CALENDAR-2023
ALL CEFs	**0**	**33**

TABLE 6 MEDIAN PREMIUMS AND DISCOUNTS (%)

	31-OCT	30-NOV	29-DEC	31-JAN
Equity CEFs	-13.86	-12.03	-13.16	-11.31
Bond CEFs	-12.27	-11.37	-11.11	-9.14
ALL CEFS	**-13.03**	**-11.69**	**-11.97**	**-10.08**

Source: LSEG Lipper

positive 2.44%, while the 20 lagging equity CEFs were at or below negative 4.58%.

For the month, 136 CEFs in the equity universe posted returns in the red. The worst-performing fund was housed in Lipper's Emerging Markets CEFs classification. At the bottom of the pile was **China Fund Inc.** (**CHN**), shedding 10.73% of its December closing NAV and traded at a 13.71% discount on January 31. The second worst-performing equity CEF was **Templeton Dragon Fund Inc.** (**TDF**, also housed in the Emerging Markets CEFs classification), posting a 9.24% loss and traded at a 14.50% discount at month end.

The U.S. Treasury yield curve flattened slightly during the month. All yields, except the five- and seven-year, with maturities less than 10 years remained above the 10-year Treasury yield (+3.99%), with the one-month yield witnessing the highest absolute rate, coming in at 5.53%. At month end, the two- and 10-year Treasury yield spread (-28 bps) narrowed seven bps for January.

For the first month in four, the domestic taxable bond CEFs macro-group outpaced the other two macro-groups in the fixed income universe, posting a 0.83% gain on average, followed by world income CEFs (+0.76%) and municipal debt CEFs (-0.16%).

Investors pushed the U.S. Mortgage CEFs (+2.47%) classification to the top of the domestic taxable fixed income leaderboard for the first month in 19, followed by Loan Participation CEFs (+0.90%) and General Bond CEFs (+0.79%). Corporate Debt BBB-Rated CEFs (Unleveraged) (+0.13%) was the relative laggard of the group and was bettered by Corporate Debt BBB-Rated CEFs (Leveraged) (+0.28%).

On the world income CEFs side, Global Income CEFs (+0.92%) posted attractive returns, while their Emerging Markets Hard Currency Debt CEFs (-0.33%) counterparts suffered declines, keeping the world income CEFs macro-group in the number two position in the fixed income universe for the month.

The municipal debt CEFs macro-group (-0.16%) underperformed the other two groups, posting the weakest one-month return of the fixed income macro-groups, with eight of the nine classifications in the group posting losses for January. The High Yield Municipal Debt CEFs (+0.39%) classification posted the only plus-side returns of the group, followed by General & Insured Muni Debt CEFs (Leveraged) (-0.16%) and California Municipal Debt CEFs (-0.19%), while New Jersey Municipal Debt CEFs (-0.68%) posted the largest decline of the group. Single-state municipal debt CEFs (-0.40%) lagged its national municipal debt CEF counterpart (-0.04%) by 36 bps.

Three of the five-top performing individual fixed income CEFs were housed in Lipper's U.S. Mortgage CEFs classification. At the top of the chart were **Invesco High Income 2024 Target Term Fund** (**IHTA**, housed in the U.S. Mortgage CEFs classification), posting a handsome 6.14% return and traded at a 7.26% discount on January 31 and **Nuveen Mortgage and Income Fund** (**JLS**, also warehoused in the U.S. Mortgage CEFs classification) chalking up a 3.54% return and traded at an 11.35% discount at month end. Those two were followed by **City National Rochdale Strategic Credit Fund** (**CNROX**, housed in the Loan Participation CEFs classification), returning 2.94%; **Pioneer Diversified High Income Fund Inc.** (**HNW**, housed in the High Yield CEFs [Leveraged] classification) rising 2.72% and traded at a 10.39% discount at month end; and **Western Asset Mortgage Opportunity Fund** (**DMO**, housed in the U.S. Mortgage CEFs classification), posting a 2.58% return and traded at a 7.92% discount on January 31.

For the remaining funds in the fixed income CEF universe, monthly NAV-based performance ranged from negative 1.45% for **Morgan Stanley Emerging Markets Domestic Debt Fund** (**EDD**, housed in the Emerging Markets Hard Currency Debt CEFs classification and traded at a 15.13% discount on January 31) to positive 2.49% for **Pioneer Floating Rate Fund Inc.** (**PHD**, housed in Lipper's Loan Participation CEFs classification and traded at an 8.04% discount at month end). The 20 top-performing fixed income CEFs posted returns at or above positive 2.02%, while the 20 lagging CEFs posted returns at or below negative 0.91% for the month. For January, 108 fixed income CEFs witnessed negative NAV-based performance.

Premium and Discount Behavior

For January, the median discount of all CEFs narrowed 189 bps to 10.08%—narrower than the 12-month moving average median discount (10.96%). Equity CEFs' median discount narrowed by 186 bps to 11.31%, while fixed income CEFs' median discount narrowed by 198 bps to 9.14%. The domestic equity CEFs macro-group's median discounts witnessed the largest narrowing among the CEF macro-groups—255 bps to 9.36%—while the taxable bond CEFs macro-group witnessed the smallest narrowing of discounts—88 bps to 6.63%.

Gabelli Utility Trust (**GUT**, housed in the Utility CEFs classification) traded at the largest premium (+88.89%) in the CEF universe on January 31, while **Highland Opportunities and Income Fund** (**HFRO**, housed in the Loan Participation CEFs classification) traded at the largest discount (-44.01%) at month end.

For the month, 77% of all closed-end funds' discounts or premiums improved, while 23% worsened. In particular, 72% of equity CEFs and 82% of fixed income CEFs saw their individual discounts narrow, premiums widen, or premiums replace discounts. The number of funds traded at premiums on January 31 (45) was nine more than the number on December 29 (36).

CEF Events and Corporate Actions

IPOs

There were no CEF IPOs in January.

Rights, Repurchases, Tender Offers

RiverNorth Capital and Income Fund, Inc. (**RSF**), a closed-end fund, announced the final results of its repurchase offer for up to 5% of its outstanding common shares. The repurchase offer expired on January 3, 2024. Based on information provided by DST Systems, Inc., the depositary for the repurchase offer—a total of 1,602,879 shares—were submitted for redemption, and 222,327 shares were repurchased. In accordance with the terms and conditions of the repurchase offer, because the number of shares submitted for redemption exceeds the number of shares offered to purchase, the fund will purchase shares from tendering shareholders on a pro rata basis (disregarding fractional shares). The purchase price of repurchased shares is equal to the fund's NAV per share calculated as of the close of regular trading on the NYSE on January 3, 2024, which was equal to $16.83 per share.

Western Asset High Income Fund II Inc. (**HIX**) announced that its board of directors has approved a transferable rights offering. The offer to acquire additional shares of common stock will be made only by means of a prospectus supplement and accompanying prospectus, and the announcement does not constitute an offer to sell, or a solicitation of an offer to buy, any of the fund's securities. A summary of the terms of the offer is as follows:

1.) Each stockholder will receive one transferable right for each share of common stock held on January 29, 2024 (the "record date"). Three rights plus the final subscription price per share of common stock (the "subscription price") will be required to purchase one additional share of common stock; however, stockholders who held fewer than three common shares on the record date will be entitled to subscribe for one common share. Fractional shares will not be issued.

2.) The subscription price will be determined based upon a formula equal to 92.5% of the average of the last reported sales price per share of the fund's common stock on the NYSE on the expiration date and each of the four preceding trading days (the "formula price"). If, however, the formula price is less than 90% of the NAV per share of common stock at the close of trading on the NYSE on the expiration date, then the subscription price will be 90% of the fund's NAV per share of common stock at the close of trading on the NYSE on that day. The estimated subscription price has not yet been determined.

3.) Record date stockholders who fully exercise their rights in the primary subscription will be eligible for an oversubscription privilege entitling these stockholders to subscribe for any additional shares of common stock not purchased pursuant to the primary subscription, subject to certain limitations, allotment, and the right of the board of directors to eliminate the oversubscription privilege. Holders of rights acquired in the secondary market may not participate in the oversubscription privilege.

4.) The rights were expected to trade "when issued" on the NYSE beginning on January 25, 2024, and the fund's shares of common stock were expected to trade "ex-rights" on the NYSE beginning on January 26, 2024. The rights were expected to begin trading for normal settlement on the NYSE (NYSE: HIX RT) on or about February 1, 2024.

5.) The offer expires on February 26, 2024, unless extended.

6.) The definitive terms of the offer will be made through a prospectus supplement and accompanying prospectus. The final terms of the offer may be different from those set out above.

The fund expected to mail subscription certificates evidencing the rights and a copy of the prospectus supplement and accompanying prospectus for the offer to record date stockholders on or about January 31, 2024.

Mergers, Liquidations, and Reorganizations

Bexil Investment Trust (**BXSY**) announced that it has changed its name to Bexil Investment Trust from **Dividend and Income Fund** (old symbol: **DNIF**). The fund also announced that its stock symbol has changed to BXSY from DNIF and its NAV symbol is now XBXIX. These changes have been made to, among other things, increase fund awareness. The fund's CUSIP will not change, nor will there be changes to the fund's investment objectives, principal investment strategies, or portfolio management as a result of the above. The fund is a CEF with the primary investment objective of seeking high current income. Capital appreciation is a secondary objective. The fund seeks to achieve its objectives by investing, under normal circumstances, at least 50% of its total assets in income generating equity securities.

The board of trustees of **Nuveen Preferred and Income Term Fund** (**JPI**) has approved a proposal that will allow shareholders of the fund the opportunity to maintain their investment in the fund and its leveraged exposure to preferred and other income producing securities. In light of the upcoming scheduled termination of JPI on August 31, 2024, the proposal asks shareholders to vote to amend the fund's declaration of trust to eliminate the fund's term structure. If the amendment is approved

Authored by:
TOM ROSEEN
Principal, Lipper Global Research
LSEG Data & Analytics

by shareholders, the fund will conduct a tender offer for 100% of its outstanding shares at NAV. If the fund's common assets taking into account common shares properly tendered in the tender offer would be $70 million or greater, the tender offer will be completed, and the fund's term will be eliminated. If the fund's common assets after the tender offer were less than $70 million, the tender offer will be canceled with no common shares repurchased, and instead, the fund will proceed to terminate as scheduled.

If JPI's term structure is eliminated, the fund's name will change to **Nuveen Preferred Securities & Income Opportunities Fund**, and the common shares of the fund will continue to trade on the NYSE under the current ticker symbol. In addition, if the fund's term structure is eliminated, Nuveen will waive 50% of its net management fees over the first year following the elimination of the term, which may enhance the net earnings of the fund. The changes described above will take effect with respect to JPI only if shareholders of the fund approve the proposal described above and the tender offer condition is satisfied.

abrdn Income Credit Strategies Fund (**ACP**) (the "acquiring fund") announced that it held a special meeting of shareholders on January 19, 2024, at which shareholders of the acquiring fund voted to approve the issuance of additional shares of ACP in connection with the proposed reorganization of the First Trust-advised closed-end funds, as noted below. As of the record date, October 23, 2023, ACP had outstanding 52,109,950 shares of common stock and 1,600,000 shares of outstanding preferred stock. 42.57% of outstanding common stock were voted, representing a quorum. Proposal: To approve the issuance of additional common shares of beneficial interest of the fund in connection with the reorganization of **First Trust High Income Long/Short Fund** (**FSD**) and **First Trust/abrdn Global Opportunity Income Fund** (**FAM**), each a closed-end fund, with and into ACP. The shareholders of FSD and FAM will hold a special shareholder meeting to consider the approval of the proposed reorganizations on February 20, 2024. It is currently expected that the reorganizations, if approved by shareholders of FSD and FAM, will be completed in the first quarter of 2024 subject to the satisfaction of customary closing conditions.

XAI Octagon Floating Rate & Alternative Income Term Trust (**XFLT**) announced that its shareholders have approved two important proposals at the reconvened special meeting of shareholders held January 24, 2024. At the special meeting, shareholders approved the following: 1.) An amendment to the trust's second amended and restated declaration of trust (the "term amendment") to eliminate the trust's termination date of December 31, 2029, and make the trust perpetual. 2.) A new subadvisory agreement among Octagon Credit Investors, LLC ("Octagon"), the trust, and XA Investments LLC ("XAI") (the "New Octagon Agreement"), to provide for continued portfolio management by Octagon upon the closing of the acquisition of Octagon's parent company, Conning Holdings Limited (together with Conning & Company, "Conning"), by Generali Investment Holdings, an entity comprising the majority of asset management activities of Generali Group ("Generali"). The term amendment: The term amendment, which is the first of its kind for a listed term trust closed-end fund, removes the trust's previous termination date and makes it a perpetual closed-end fund. The term amendment was effective as of February 1, 2024. In connection with the term amendment, the trust will change its name from XAI Octagon Floating Rate & Alternative Term Trust to **XAI Octagon Floating Rate & Alternative Trust**. The trust began trading on the NYSE under the new name effective before the market opened on February 1, 2024, and will continue to trade under ticker symbol XFLT. There are no changes to the trust's investment policies or strategies in conjunction with the term amendment or the name change.

ClearBridge MLP and Midstream Fund Inc. (**CEM**), **ClearBridge Energy Midstream Opportunity Fund Inc.** (**EMO**), and **ClearBridge MLP and Midstream Total Return Fund Inc.** (**CTR**) announced approval by each fund's board of directors of a proposal to merge (i) CEM with and into EMO and (ii) CTR with and into EMO, subject to approval by stockholders of each fund. The approval of each individual merger is not contingent upon the approval of the other merger. If approved, the mergers are expected to occur during the third quarter of 2024. If the proposed mergers are approved by the stockholders of each fund, (i) common stockholders of CEM and CTR would receive shares ("shares") of common stock of EMO, based on each fund's respective NAV per share and (ii) holders of CEM's and CTR's mandatory redeemable preferred stock (MRPS) would receive shares of MRPS of EMO with the same aggregate liquidation preference and terms to their respective MRPS. In lieu of issuing fractional shares of common stock, EMO will pay cash to each former common stockholder of CEM and CTR in an amount equal to the value of the fractional shares of EMO common stock that the investor would otherwise have received in the merger. The merger is expected to qualify as a tax-free reorganization for federal income tax purposes.

Each fund's board of directors also determined that it is advisable and in the best interest of each fund to repeal such fund's election to be subject to the Maryland Control Share Acquisition Act under Maryland General Corporation Law (the "Control Share Act"). Each fund's board of directors approved an amendment to the current third amended and restated bylaws of each fund to remove such fund's election to be subject to the Control Share Act, effective as of January 25, 2024.

As previously announced, prior to the completion of the mergers, CEM, EMO, and CTR will conduct tender offers that are expected to commence on or about May 21, 2024, for up to 50% of such fund's outstanding shares at a price per share equal to 100% of the fund's NAV as of the business day immediately following the expiration date of the tender offer. CEM, EMO, and CTR will repurchase shares tendered and accepted in the tender offer in exchange for cash. Each fund's tender offer period is expected to close on or about June 18, 2024. In the event a tender offer is oversubscribed, shares will be repurchased on a pro rata basis.

Other

The board of directors of **ASA Gold and Precious Metals Limited** (**ASA**) has unanimously adopted a limited-duration shareholder rights plan to protect the interests of the company and all of its shareholders. The rights plan is currently effective and will expire on April 29, 2024. The limited-duration rights plan was adopted in response to the rapid and significant accumulation of ASA shares by Saba Capital Management, LP. In recent public filings, Saba disclosed that it and its affiliates have acquired a position in ASA representing 16.87% of ASA's outstanding common shares.

The rights plan is intended to prevent Saba's unilateral attempt to obtain creeping control of the company, which the board believed would undermine ASA's strategic focus on long-term capital appreciation in the global gold mining industry. The rights plan is designed to enable ASA's shareholders to realize the long-term value of their investment, provide an opportunity for all shareholders to receive fair and equal treatment in the event of any proposed takeover of ASA and guard against tactics to gain control of ASA without paying all shareholders what the board considers to be an appropriate premium for that control. The rights plan is not intended to deter offers or preclude the board from taking action that it believes is in the best interest of the company and its shareholders.

ASA will issue one right for each ASA common share outstanding as of the close of business on January 12, 2024. The rights will initially trade with ASA's common shares and will become exercisable only if a person acquires 15% or more of ASA's outstanding common shares. Any shareholders with beneficial ownership of 15% or more of ASA's outstanding common shares (including Saba) prior to this announcement are grandfathered at their beneficial ownership levels at the date the rights plan was adopted but are not permitted to acquire additional common shares representing 0.25% or more of the outstanding common shares without triggering the rights plan. Pursuant to the rights plan, should it be triggered, the board may decide that: 1.) Each holder of a right (other than the acquiring person, whose rights will have become void and will not be exercisable) will be entitled to purchase, for a purchase price of $1.00 per share, one ASA common share. 2.) Alternatively, (on a cashless basis) each outstanding right (other than the rights held by the acquiring person, whose rights will have become void) will be exchanged for one common share. Further details about the rights plan will be contained in a Form 8-K and Form 8-A to be filed by ASA with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission.

For immediate assistance, feel free to contact Lipper Client Services toll-free at 877.955.4773 or via email at LipperUSClientServices@lseg.com. For more information about LSEG Lipper, please visit our website at lseg.com/en or lipperalphainsight.com