## In This Issue

## Understanding Your Data for Better Trading

In the fast-paced, high-stress world of technical analysis, it is easy for traders to take market data for granted. Questions about individual data points usually come up when a problem is suspected, such as a market fill outside the reported range or actual trading results that vary greatly from simulated ones. As data providers, we understandably have a different point of view. Yes, data may be just a cog in the wheel, an unseen input for your trading system, but we feel that getting to know your data can enhance your overall trading by fostering a better understanding of the analysis process. Here is an overview of what you get at CSI:

### The Data Fields:

**Opening Prices** - All of CSI's opening prices represent the opening-range average. Some services, especially those devoted exclusively to stocks, do not offer opening prices and some others give the first price of the day. The opening-range average is the most appropriate number to report because it will be most representative of the fill you would have received whether you were a buyer or a seller at the open. If a data service always publishes the low end of the opening range, then all simulated buy orders would suggest you had an advantage even though the opposite is more likely. Many services use the bid or the low side of the opening range for their published price. They may be helping their customers fool themselves into believing they have a better solution for long trades than would be possible.

**High and Low Price Reports** - CSI reports the highest price actually traded in the high field and the lowest actual trade for the low field. We do not show bids or asks in the absence of trading. The only exception to this involves exchange posted settlements when no trading was reported for a given contract. Under these conditions, the open, high and low fields will hold the exchange-posted settlement price. This is true regardless of a commodity's activity or lack thereof.

**Settlement Prices** - The settlement price is usually the last or "closing" price. However, this may not be the case for contracts of the metals and energy products markets. When contracts of these markets trade less actively during a given day or do not trade at all during the final minutes before the closing bell, their settlement prices may be outside of their actual trading range. This occurs when other contracts of the same

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market, usually those nearest to delivery, are heavily traded at the close of the day. They experience a range of daily highs or lows that, given carrying charges and interest rates, are not reflected in lightly traded contracts. Since settlement prices do not necessarily represent actual trades, then under the conditions cited, the settlement price could lie above the highest actual trade or below the lowest actual trade of the day. A committee of experts from the exchange is responsible for making the judgment call on settlement prices.

As discussed in the February '97 CSI Technical Journal, QuickTrieve® users receive adjusted high/low ranges, whereby the daily range is adjusted to include the settlement value. Users of Unfair Advantage® can display adjusted or exchange-sanctioned unadjusted data.

**Cash Prices** - Where most services report prior day cash prices, CSI reports current day cash prices for nearly all of the commodities followed. The cash price basis for each market is listed in the CSI Cash Price Fact Sheet. We provide the lag day (prior day) cash price for a few markets as noted.

**Estimated Volume** - For commodities and futures, CSI reports the estimated volume as quoted by the exchanges for today and the official volume and open interest for the prior trading day. For stocks and indices, CSI quotes only today's volume.

**Volume and Open Interest** - For commodities and futures, CSI reports yesterday's official volume and open interest today. The figures supplied include volume and open interest for all contracts, both active and inactive, including switching months. Quick-Trieve users receive total volume and open interest with individual contract prices, although contract-level values are available upon request. Users of Unfair Advantage have access to both total and contract-level volume and open interest at any time.

### Format Choice:

Given the anomalies of data content, form and presentation, the user may be faced with a decision to adopt a particular format for holding data resources. The futures industry seems to have focused on three basic choices including ASCII, CSI and MetaStock. The ASCII format is not very space efficient, but is the most flexible. The MetaStock format was derived from the old CompuTrac format and has proved to pass the test of time in that it seems to be insulated from large-number problems because of floating point number representations. The CSI format is quite popular because it can accommodate more information in the same fixed space, but numbers greater than 99,999 for price statistics can cause some user headaches. Depending upon the commodity you wish to analyze, one of the above choices will satisfy your needs.

### Computed Contracts:

Traders and analysts who study the futures markets often look to computed contracts so that they can view long periods into the past to perform their back testing. A couple of cautions are in order that may help traders avoid being trapped by significant biases.

If you concatenate contracts together into one long back-adjusted series for, say, 20 years or so, you may see prices go negative into the past. What this suggests for your derived trading system is an unrealistic bias toward the long side of every trade you consummate. Inflation plays a role in all of our decisions, but is it reasonable that prices can be negative? Perpetual Contract® data cannot go negative because it essentially represents forward markets. It is important

# Historical Data on CD ROM - Now from Just $79

In keeping with our commitment to provide exceptional market data at affordable prices, we have introduced three new historical data packages on CD, starting at just $79. These packages provide the most recent ten years of market data for your choice of commodities, stocks or both. Low purchase prices plus economical quarterly update rates make these CDs outstanding values.

Each of the new packages is provided with processing software to distribute data to CSI format, MetaStock format or ASCII files, much the way QuickTrieve handles data on diskettes. Below is a summary of these new packages. For complete details and an order form, please contact our marketing department or visit our web site at http://www.csidata.com.

### New!
### 10-Year U.S. Stock, Index and Mutual Fund Data Base on CD ROM

This package includes all U.S. Stocks, Indices and Mutual Funds found in the CSI data base.
*Base rate for ten-year package $79*
*Quarterly updates $25/ea.*
*4 quarterly updates $85/prepaid.*

### New!
### 10-Year North American Commodity and Cash Data Base on CD ROM.

This covers all U.S. and Canadian futures and commodities, cash included!
*Base rate for ten-year package $99*
*Quarterly updates $35/ea.*
*4 quarterly updates $105/prepaid*

### New!
### 10-Year North American Commodity/ Cash and Stock/Index/Fund Data Base on CD ROM

This is a combination of everything provided in the two packages listed above.
*Base rate on ten-year package $159*
*Quarterly updates $45/ea.*
*4 quarterly updates $165/prepaid*

## New Lower Rates for our Full History CD ROMS:

These CDs are provided in your choice of CSI format, MetaStock format or ASCII format.

### Full North American Commodity & Cash Data Base on CD ROM

This provides all contracts and cash of CSI's U.S. & Canadian commodities from the later of 1/69 or our first day on file.
*Base rate $295*
*Semi-annual updates $100/ea.*

### Full Overseas Commodity Data Base on CD ROM

This package includes all contracts of all overseas commodities in CSI's extensive database from our first day on file.
*Base rate $395*
*Semi-annual updates $150/ea.*

### Complete Commodity and Stock/ Fund/Index Data Base on CD

The ultimate in market data, this CD includes North American and overseas commodities plus all U.S. stocks, funds & indices.
*Base rate $895*
*Semi-annual updates $200/ea.*

### Understanding Your Data ...
*(continued from page 2)*

to recognize that every type of computed contract has some sort of defect and to keep that limitation in mind when evaluating your results.

We hope this information will help you to better understand your data, which, we feel, is among the most important factors in your trading system. Now that you know what your trading system is analyzing, you can focus your attention on how to best apply the results. ◆

*Bob Pelletier*

## Unfair Advantage Update:

*We have finally caught up on our backlog and are actively shipping all orders!*

# Ask Customer Service

**Q.** *What is the best way to get assistance from the CSI service staff?*

**A.** If you need help with a problem immediately, the fastest and best way to get it is to call our staff at (561) 392-8663. Our customer service hours are 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Friday, holidays excluded.

There may be times when our staff is busy assisting other customers and your call can't be taken by a service representative. At such times, you may leave a message with our receptionist. We'll respond as quickly as possible.

For less urgent needs, consider sending an E-Mail message to: techsupport@csidata.com. We maintain a library of answers to common questions, so a fairly detailed response can be tailored to your needs and E-Mailed back to you, usually within 24 hours of your original transmission. Feel free to fax us any time at (561) 392-7761. QuickTrieve users can also send a message to CSI during data retrieval sessions. Use the Order Subsystem for that.

**Q.** *What information should I have when calling the service department?*

**A.** Always have your User ID handy and, if possible, call when sitting at your computer. Important facts to note include: What you were doing when the problem occurred; The exact error message that displayed; If this problem has occurred before, and if so, under what circumstances; If available, a description of your hardware configuration, such as modem type, com port, DOS or Windows version, etc.

**Q.** *Is there any way to order history for QuickTrieve without calling your service department?*

**A.** Although you can order by phone, mail, E-Mail or fax, the best way is to transmit your order through QuickTrieve's Order Subsystem. Our History on-demand system provides the fastest and most economical means for ordering and receiving historical data via modem. If you are using one of our prepaid subscriptions, the history on-demand system is the only way to get your free data. (History on-demand is an order that is transmitted through the software and processed while you are on line. The data download occurs in the same phone call as the transmission of the order.)

By the way, you can now order any data except Seasonal Indices as history on-demand. Options, which were originally unavailable through this service, are now on line in the on-demand system. The order subsystem can be used to order history on diskettes, but not at on-demand prices.

**Q.** *Should I call Customer Service about a question on my bill?*

**A.** No. Please direct those calls to our bookkeeping department at (800) 274-4727 or (561) 392-8663. Their hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday, holidays excluded. When contacting our bookkeeping representatives, please have your User ID, invoice number and amount in question ready. Often a fax (to 561-392-7761) or E-Mail (to billing@csidata.com) with these details is the most efficient way to relay this information. We make every attempt to promptly resolve all questions to your satisfaction.

**Q.** *What resources would you recommend using as an early alternative to calling Customer Service?*

**A.** Any time you experience a problem, please try the operation again before picking up the phone. If the problem repeats, write down all the details and either contact us or try these alternatives:

**The QuickTrieve User's Manual** - Early versions of QuickTrieve were

supplied with full ring-bound manuals. If you have one, check the table of contents and index for a listing of your application or, in the case of the troubleshooting section, your problem. These manuals are available for purchase for $14.95.

**The QuickTrieve On-Line Manual** - This is a condensed ASCII file version of the larger printed manual. It includes most of the applications described in the printed manual, including a full Troubleshooting section. This manual is provided with every Quick-Trieve software system. Instructions for reading/printing it are included in the Tutorial and were printed in the March '97 CSI Technical Journal.

**Unfair Advantage Help File** - Users of Unfair Advantage have access to a Help Menu from the software's toolbar. Simply click on the topic of interest to read concise instructions. ✦

# Market Statistics Update

### ADDITION TO THE STOCK DATA BASE

| 18644 | CTBP | Coast Bancorp | OTC |

### DELETIONS FROM THE STOCK DATA BASE

| 5643 | AAL | Alexander & Alexander Services Inc |
| 4902 | EMT | American Medical Response Inc |
| 5665 | AHR | Americana Hotels & Realty Cp |
| 11039 | ACA | Arcadian Cp |
| 29077 | ATSIW | Ats Medical Inc Wt |
| 2158 | AUST | Austin's Int'l Inc |
| 8162 | BMJF | B.M.J. Financial Cp |
| 6825 | BARE | Barefoot Inc |
| 13058 | MCP | Bear Stearns Cos. 5 1/2% Mrk Common Linked Higher Income |
| 2186 | BNRY | Bonray Drilling Cp |
| 1443 | BRFC | Bridgeville Savings Bank Fsb Pa |
| 4858 | CAF | Capitol American Financial Cp |
| 3725 | CTN | Centennial Technologies Inc |
| 12375 | CPLX | Cerplex Group Inc |
| 8352 | CHEM | Chempower Inc |
| 1534 | CNBL | Citi Bancshares Inc |
| 12820 | CTRNE | Computron Software Inc |
| 3696 | CTZ | Corpus Christi Bancshares Inc |
| 7356 | DNA | Diana Cp |
| 18525 | DPWR | Digital Power Cp |
| 29518 | DTSXU | Digital Transmission Systems Inc Un |
| 1097 | ECK | Eckerd Cp |
| 4582 | ERCC | Energy Research Cp |
| 8574 | ENC | English China Clays Plc Adr |
| 1393 | EPIC | Epic Design Technology Inc |
| 29166 | EVENW | Ev Environmental Inc Wt |

| 29093 | XLTCW | Excel Technology Inc Cl B Wt |
| 18320 | FHPCA | FHP Int'l Cp Conv. Pfd. Series A |
| 8643 | FHPC | FHP Int'l Cp |
| 2327 | FFRV | Fidelity Financial Bankshares Cp (Richmond, VA) |
| 13002 | FNH | First National Bankshares Inc (LA) |
| 2351 | FSFI | First State Financial Services Inc |
| 15549 | FSOLF | Forasol Foramer N.V. |
| 2241 | FOILO | Forest Oil Cp $.75 Conv. Pfd. |
| 7903 | FH | Foundation Health Cp |
| 29197 | FHRIW | Fullhouse Resorts Inc Wt |
| 2805 | GRMN | Garment Graphics Inc |
| 29191 | GRMNW | Garment Graphics Inc Cl A Wt |
| 29192 | GRMNZ | Garment Graphics Inc Cl B Wt |
| 5596 | GMI | Gemini II Inc |
| 6814 | GC | Grancare Inc |
| 4827 | GROV | Grove Bank |
| 2387 | HRSNF | Hariston Cp |
| 8865 | HII | Health Images Inc |
| 2567 | HCDV | Hilcoast Development Cp |
| 18332 | HOPRP | Holly Products Inc 10% Conv.Pfd. Series D |
| 2424 | HLND | Homeland Bankshares Cp |
| 18602 | HOFC | Homeowners Financial Cp |
| 3675 | HBI | Houston Biotechnology Inc |
| 29097 | INTIW | Industrial Technologies Inc Cl A Wt |
| 29098 | INTIZ | Industrial Technologies Inc Cl B Wt |
| 12498 | IMED | Informedics Inc |
| 29262 | IAACW | Int'l Assets Holding Cp Wt |
| 18538 | IVCL | Invesco Funding Llc Adr |
| 12294 | KELLW | Kellstrom Industries Inc Wt |
| 9055 | KCLC | Kindercare Learning Centers Inc |
| 29051 | KCLCW | Kindercare Learning Centers Inc Wt |
| 7339 | KNA | Knogo North America Inc |
| 2304 | LBFI | L&B Financial Inc |
| 4138 | LATS | L.A. T Sportswear Inc |
| 21274 | LLCFX | Laidlaw Covenant Fund|Money Market Funds |
| 7958 | LBCI | Liberty Bancorp Inc |
| 4804 | MAYF | Mayfair Homes Cp |
| 7397 | MX | Measurex Cp |
| 9205 | MIKL | Michael Foods Inc |
| 12545 | MCAP | Microcap Fund Inc |
| 4843 | MDLD | Midland Financial Group Inc |
| 15760 | NPSC | New Paradigm Software Cp |
| 15760 | NPSCW | New Paradigm Software Cp Wt |
| 9375 | OSBN | Osborn Communications Cp |
| 8431 | PFINP | P&F Industries Inc Pfd. |
| 9392 | PNTC | Panatech Research & Development Cp |
| 1433 | PHXYE | Phoenix Shannon Plc Adr |
| 20027 | DSAIX | Premier Strategic Growth Fund Cl A|Dreyfus Premier Group |
| 3467 | PRZ | Prism Entertainment Cp |
| 12658 | PWRR | Providence & Worcester Railroad Co. |
| 11362 | PRJ | Providence Journal Co. Cl A |
| 6374 | KFV | Quest For Value Dual Purpose Fund Inc Capital Shares |
| 1094 | RCI | Roc Communities Inc |
| 7548 | RYR | Rymer Foods Inc |
| 29480 | SCTIW | Sc&T Int'l Inc Wt |
| 12700 | SDNB | Sdnb Financial Cp |
| 4302 | SFBM | Security Bancorp |
| 29116 | SHEDW | SMT Health Services Inc Wt |
| 15103 | SQAX | SQA Inc |
| 9829 | STMX | Systemix Inc |
| 4667 | TEMDD | Telmed Inc |
| 29134 | TEMDW | Telmed Inc Wt |
| 13113 | TDDA | Three D Departments Inc Cl A |
| 13114 | TDDB | Three D Departments Inc Cl B |
| 4596 | TIRTZ | Tidelands Royalty Trust B Ubi |
| 12747 | TMCI | TM Century Inc |
| 9785 | TRSC | Triad Systems Cp |
| 12200 | UASI | United Air Specialists Inc |
| 1405 | VSEN | Video Sentry Cp |
| 9911 | WEG | Washington Energy Co. |
| 12687 | SADL | William H. Sadlier Inc |
| 29625 | WWESU | Worlwide Entertainment & Sports Cp Un |