

## Mary Bersot Thinks Positive About the Economy

BY ANN MIZEL

Tiburon investment manager Mary Bersot of Bersot Capital Management tells her clients that “buy and hold works,” even though, as investment guru Warren Buffet recently pronounced, the economy has “fallen off a cliff.”

On the contrary, “the worst of the economic crisis is most likely behind us,” Bersot told *The Ark* recently during a talk in her Tiburon Boulevard office. “While we’re currently in a “down phase,” and the “new chic” is saving, if you have high quality stocks, don’t panic and sell. Step away, and take a deep breath; things are never as bad — or as good — as you think.

“We are more optimistic than the news media,” Bersot said. “We are *not* headed toward another Great Depression, although the news media is full of statistics and information that does little more than increase fear. Bankruptcy is often portrayed as a stigma, but I see it as a strategy that gives a company a chance to reorganize. Remember that Apple Computer almost went under, and now their stock is over \$100.”

Bersot thinks that the government’s stimulus plan will revive our economy, but stresses that unemployment is the key. “It absolutely must stabilize before confidence improves,” she said.

Out of adversity grows opportunity. “Even a recession can open up new possibilities for change,” Bersot pointed out. “In this economic climate, conspicuous consumption will be tempered, and we will be forced to take a close look at spending and expenses to adjust to a new reality.

“The high returns of recent decades are a thing of the past. While the stock market will recover, it will be a long time before risk is ignored, and we can live off substantial profits from our investments or our homes.” Now, Bersot sees the bond market, especially municipal bonds in quality states and communities, as very attractive and offering better returns than cash.

Bersot takes great pride in the personal attention



Mary Bersot, optimist.

her clients receive at Bersot Capital Management. “I insist we meet every quarter, even if they have no questions,” she said, “and I always remind my clients that there is no such thing as a stupid question.”

She stresses to her clients the importance of an absolute “wall” between a money manager and the institution holding a client’s money. “Our clients get a statement from us and a separate statement from the custodian (Fidelity Investments), and they should match,” said Bersot, who added that her clients also have on-line access to monitor their own investments.

Bersot, who has 32 years of expertise managing assets, began her career with Wells Fargo Bank where she managed some of the largest and most complex family trusts and advisory accounts. She has seen her client base growing, as more and more people are requiring wealth management advice. “Our company — we are investors, not traders — has no institutional clients, no pension plans. We are focused almost exclusively on Marin families, and we have many women clients.” (Find out more at [www.BersotCM.com](http://www.BersotCM.com). or by calling 388-2007)

Bersot’s family includes four grown children and two grandchildren. Her husband, Tom Bersot, is a research physician at UCSF. ☺