



ALL EARS!!

THE LITCHFIELD FUND WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

"OUR EARS SPAN ALL FIELDS"



U AND V ARE IN THE NEWS A LOT THESE DAYS! Will the economy have a slow, wandering U-shaped recovery or a fast-paced V-shaped recovery. (We are betting on a V-shaped recovery because we never would bet against America & Americans, even when giving points!) German physicist Johann Wilhelm Ritter discovered invisible (beyond the visible spectrum) UV rays & radiation in 1801. Today, we need UV for vital Vitamin D to support our immune system but too much UV is bad for skin health! UV is just one of nearly 500K two, three & four-letter acronyms that can be built from the alphabet's 26 letters! Let's be thankful we don't have any more letters!

ET: Acronyms have *invaded* our lives! ET, TV, MD, JD, PhD, AAA, BBB, ABA, AMA, CIA, FBI, DOJ, CEO, CIO, CTO, CMO, CRM, USDA, NASA, FDA, FTD, FCC, EMT, DDS, ABC, CBS, REM, IRA, IRS, ERA, RBI, TD & 490K more! For many years, there actually were 27 letters in the English alphabet! The Latin word for 'and' is 'et.' Centuries ago, to save space, as well as writing & printing supplies (or perhaps the time it takes to chisel words on a stone monument), the 'E' & 'T' were often combined, creating the '&' symbol or *logogram* we use today. By the 18th century, the '&' symbol was so commonly used in printing & sign making, that '&' became the 27th letter of the alphabet, finishing with 'and' following Z. Late into the 19th century & early 20th century, when schoolchildren were taught to recite the alphabet, saying 'and' after Z left the listener waiting for something more, so children were taught to recite, X, Y, Z, *and per se and*. This meant *and by itself*, 'and.' The expression *and per se and* was slurred by children when quickly reciting the alphabet & morphed into, of course, *ampersand!* Just like early printers & sign makers, **ALL EARS!!** uses the ampersand to save space to bring to you as much news & information as we can in these 2 pages, *just as we have for the last 6 years!* Yes, this week, **THE LITCHFIELD FUND & ALL EARS!!** celebrated its 6th business anniversary! It has been a fast 6 years, working with emerging brands, & now part of an exciting new partnership (with *The Movitz Group & JPG Resources*), [Brandjectory](#), the relationship building platform for brands & investors in our industry! *Brandjectory* is off to a fast start, with brands & investors joining from a variety of natural products segments such as plant-based foods, beverages, coffee, supplements, sparkling waters, granola, bars, ice cream, nuts, butters & so much more. We are working hard to grow the *Brandjectory* community & will be adding many significant enhancements! As for **ALL EARS!!**, hopefully, it will continue to be your go to source for a tidy weekly summary of industry news & that you find something interesting, insightful or inspiring in this author's meandering mindings & musings! If you do, remember what British essayist Isaac D'Israeli said, "A great work always leaves us in a state of musing."

INDUSTRY NEWS: *Honey Mama's* (refrigerated chocolate bars) closed a \$5.8M raise with *Rodeo CPG & Amberstone Ventures*. *Forerunner Ventures* led a \$6.5M raise for *Dumpling*, a tech startup allowing individuals to offer their own personal grocery shopping service. *Béla Wellness* raised \$515K from beverage industry veterans. *Ocado* will raise \$1.3B by selling shares & with a bond offering. *Ascus* (microbe-based animal feed supplements) closed a \$46M round led by *Temasek* with *Aneterra Capital, Formation 8 & Cavallo Ventures* involved. *Andes AG* closed a \$3M round, led by *KdT Ventures & Chile's Endurance VC*, for its beneficial microbe seed treatment. *Bühler Group* will partner with *Big Idea Ventures*, joining *Big Idea Ventures' New Protein Fund*, to invest in & accelerate 100 startups across the world that are creating alt-proteins. *LiveKindly* acquired Swedish plant-based, soy burger maker, *Oomph!*

Walmart acquired *CareZone's* intellectual property, including an app that helps patients manage health information & access health services. *AB InBev* will add the 68.8% of *Craft Brew Alliance* it does not own for about \$321M, but sell the *Hawaiian Kona Brewing's* operations, brewery & brewpubs, while retaining the remaining *Kona Brewing, Widmer Brothers & Redhook Brewery* business. *Maple Holdings* (a *JAB* subsidiary) will convert about 10% of its *Keurig Dr Pepper* stock into shares for its minority holders. *Maple* will still own more than 52% of *KDP* after the conversion. *Albertsons* finally completed their IPO, offering 65.8M shares to be priced between \$18 & \$20. Better-for-you burger chain *BurgerFi* intends to merge with *Opes Acquisition Corporation*, who will likely IPO the chain. *Capitol Peak Partners* (led by a former *Dean Foods' CEO*) & *KKR* (a lender & previous owner of *Borden*) are expected to buy *Borden's* assets out of bankruptcy. *Earl Enterprises (Buca di Beppo & Bertucci's)* has acquired *Brio Italian Grille & Bravo! Italian Kitchen* from bankrupt *FoodFirst Global Restaurants*. Lenders have extended *GNC's* credit until June 30.

CVS Pharmacy & DoorDash will partner for same-day home delivery of health, beauty & wellness products. *Staples* will use *Instacart* for same-day delivery from 1K stores. *Instacart* may end service in Seattle if a law passes requiring contract workers to be paid an extra \$5 per trip, per *GeekWire*. *Walmart* will add 1.2K *Shopify* sellers to its eCommerce marketplace this year. *Walmart* will pilot a self-checkout store. *Publix* opened its first Georgia *Greenwise Market*, its seventh store in the concept. *Giant Eagle* will introduce *Cookery Complete* meal-kits, made by private label meal preparer, *FreshRealm*. *Upfield Group* (plant-based margarines, spreads & cheese) will invest €50M in a new food science center in an AgriScience hub in Wageningen, The Netherlands. *Glass Door* reports that the increase in grocery workers has led to a 648% increase in open grocery manager roles. *Kroger Precision Marketing (KPM)* will work with streaming platform *Roku* on a new shopper data program to make TV advertising more precise & measurable. Predictive-arrival technology *Rakuten Ready* now has a resource guide for retailers, grocers & restaurants, titled *Playbook for Creating Contactless Experiences*, to deal with online eCommerce growth. *Kraft Heinz* updated the branding of its entire portfolio. *PepsiCo, ConAgra, Mars & B&G Foods* will discontinue the branding for *Aunt Jemima, Cream of Wheat, Uncle Ben's & Mrs. Butterworth's*. *PepsiCo* reported that 47% of its beverage portfolio has met the company's 2025 added sugars reduction target, with a goal of 67% compliance by 2025. *Nestlé's Sweet Earth Foods* will add 2 new plant-based burritos & 6 new plant-based bowls. *Beyond Meat* will launch a value pack of burgers for the summer, with pricing getting much closer to real beef patties. *Pilgrim's Pride* CEO Jayson Penn will take a leave of absence to build his defense against price-fixing charges. The former *Bumble Bee* CEO was fined \$100K & sentenced to 40 months prison for conspiring to fix tuna prices. If you are virtually attending *BevNET/NOSH* live this week, watch for **THE LITCHFIELD FUND & Brandjectory** on the lunchtime Virtual Lounge!

USA food & beverage sales rose 14.3% in May YOY, reaching \$74.3B. Per *NPD Group*, 68% of USA grocery shoppers reported not encountering food or beverage shortages when shopping during the past week. Per *PwC*, shoppers intend to keep pantry loading due to the current environment. Per the *Plant Based Food Association*, plant-based yogurt sales rose 31.3% in the past year but still makes up just 3.5% of the yogurt market. Per *IRI*, meat & poultry sales rose 24.2% year-to-date. USA maple syrup production rose 4.6% while prices fell 8%.

MARKET NEWS: It was another topsy-turvy week for the market indexes. USA Retail Spending rose 18% in May YOY, a record increase, fueling hopes for a V-shaped recovery.

SEEDS, SPROUTS, GROW, HARVEST!

THE LITCHFIELD FUND – *Tom Malenjo*

V7issue01.06.20.20

The Litchfield Fund is a family owned & operated limited liability corporation. We do not solicit or accept investment from outside individuals or entities. Opinions contained in *All Ears!!* are ours & should not be considered investment advice or recommendations.