



# ALL EARS!!

*The Litchfield Fund  
Weekly Newsletter*

“We just don’t hear it on the street, we have our ears spread across all the fields!!!!”



**Litchfield**

**There are so many Christmas traditions!** One of *All Ears!!* favorites is watching Christmas movies. Popcorn & hot cocoa under a blanket on the sofa with your Christmas Angel! So many movies, so many beautiful songs! *Der Bingo* crooning *White Christmas* or Judy wishing all a *Merry Little Christmas*! They soothed the fears & troubles of an entire generation at war! We, of course, like those old classic movies! Some enjoy the newer more irreverent movies! Others enjoy those sappy Hallmark & Lifetime Christmas movies. So why don’t you grab some popcorn & join us as *All Ears!!* takes a Christmas trip through the movies.

**Movie Trip:** Everyone has **A Christmas Story** of their own! You decide to take **A Christmas Vacation**. You plan to spend **Christmas in Connecticut** & stay at a **Holiday Inn**. Hoping for a **White Christmas**, the weather & traffic turn your drive into **The Nightmare Before Christmas**. A harried driver wearing a Santa cap cuts you off on an icy road! You don’t like being a **Scrooge**, but you shout “**Bad Santa!**” You **Remember the Night** you spent in **The Apartment** of a friend in Manhattan last yule season, the bad accident you had. **It Happened on 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue!** No one was hurt, a true **Miracle on 34<sup>th</sup> Street!** This trip is stressing you out! You just want to **Jingle all the Way** there! To calm down you try to recall the nice conversation you had just before you left with **The Bishop’s Wife**. Stuck in traffic, your phone rings. Your mother tells you, your sister is in tears, her husband had **A Holiday Affair**. You ask yourself why you did not say yes when a friend said **Meet Me in St. Louis!** Or why didn’t you just stay **Home Alone?** Suddenly you remember a gift you wanted to get for Uncle Joe! Wait, you see **The Shop Around the Corner!** You are such a good little **Elf!** You finally get there, now you know what it must have felt like when **Santa Claus Conquers the Martians!** Yes, **It’s a Wonderful Life**, but why isn’t Christmas **In The Good Old Summertime?**

## **Merry Christmas & Happy Holidays from The Litchfield Fund!**

**Industry News:** CEO changes continued this week at companies big & small. *Chipotle*, looking toward a 2017 rebound, named Steve Ells sole CEO, as co-CEO Monty Moran stepped away. *Hail Merry* named CPG veteran Andy Malloy as CEO. *Beyond Meat’s Beyond Burger™* will be offered at all 28 locations of the fast & casual dining *Veggie Grill*.

*Monsanto’s* \$66B purchase of *Bayer* was approved by shareholders. Regulatory approvals are still pending. A *Reuters* report noted venture capital firms are dialing back investment in on-demand meal delivery companies citing decreased valuations, inability to cut-costs / raise prices & the number of competitors. More than \$9B has been invested in 125 meal delivery start-ups.

*REBBL* closed a \$10M investment round with *Powerplant Ventures*, *BIGR* & John Foraker participating. Per SPINS, super-herb coconut milk based *REBBL* is the #1 selling functional beverage.

The CPI for food-at-home, which represents consumers' grocery store purchases, fell for the 12<sup>th</sup> straight month. Declines in meat & dairy prices continue. Egg production has been high & prices for eggs are also in decline. The USDA is seeking to clear up the confusion around expiration dates on food. The various terms, "sell by", "use by", "best by", etc. lead to confusion, safety fears & food waste. The flavored sparkling water category rose 15.6% in sales as millennials chose sparkling water over soda, where sales fell by 0.2%.

*Kroger*, amid cost pressures, is offering early retirement buyouts to 2,000 non-store employees. *ConAgra* will pay \$11.2M to settle the 2006 *Peter Pan* salmonella case. Reports indicate *General Mills* may still be a takeover target of *3G Capital*.

**Market News:** The post-election market surge continued despite the FED enacting a much-expected rate hike. The rate hike tempered markets at the end of the week. We wonder if Chairman Yellen's announcement that 3 rate hikes should be expected in 2017 was premature. We applaud the FED preventing any bubble breaking, but there is nothing that suggests this economy is roaring as soundly as the FED suggests. Various consumer & business confidence indices have reached 8 to 10 year highs, driving the post-election market enthusiasm. However, unemployment, wages & growth statistics continue to disappoint.

***Seeds, Sprouts, Grow, Harvest!***

**The Litchfield Fund**

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