



ALL EARS!!

THE LITCHFIELD FUND WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

"OUR EARS SPAN ALL FIELDS"



LITCHFIELD

THERE ARE MANY GIFT-GIVING occasions! There are occasions that mark another life milestone, like birthdays & anniversaries. There are gifts given for a significant life event: a first communion, a bar or bat mitzvah, graduations, weddings, a new home, or the birth of a child. There are days we give others a gift to express our love, such as Valentine's Day, Mother's Day & Father's Day. And there are hallowed holy days, where the gift given symbolizes or represents a much greater gift - the gift of faith. Once a year, a holiday is celebrated with much fanfare, but no gifts are given. Yet, 247 years ago, fifty-six men gave us all a gift – the gift of our *precious, fragile, sacred freedoms*.

THE GIFT OF FREEDOM: The road to Independence was long & not easy. To pay for the *Seven Years War*, known in North America as the *French & Indian War*, the British had begun to take advantage of America's assets & wealth ([ALL EARS!! THE LAST STRAW 04/24/21](#)). By 1776, the Americans had endured 13 years of British atrocities. Tariffs & taxes were in fact the least significant issues. Americans' very life & liberty were threatened by British soldiers, magistrates & appointed government officials; free speech was shut down; guns & gunpowder confiscated & churches were attacked & shuttered. On a misty April morning in 1775, as the British attempted to seize the armories at Lexington & Concord, a small band of Patriots stood their ground. War, a Revolution, has come to America. Yet, these fledging independent colonies were far from declaring Independence. Most Americans considered themselves British & only hoped for the basic rights granted every English person. They wanted a reconciliation with Mother England. But as war began, mostly in the New England states, the consideration of Independence was taken up by the Second Continental Congress, convened within a month of the '*Shot heard 'round the world.*' The colonies sent their representatives. Some colonies sent their leaders. In other colonies, the leaders stayed home to run their states & manage the war that was in their midst. So, despite the current narrative, these 56 men came from all walks of life. Some were well-educated, many were self-educated. There were lawyers, physicians, merchants, surveyors, ministers, tradesmen, land owners & plantation owners. They were as young as age 26 (Edward Rutledge & Thomas Lynch, Jr.) & as old as age 70 (Benjamin Franklin). Many were unknown & have passed into history's footnotes. Others were famous in the colonies & Franklin already had achieved world-wide acclaim. Some were firebrands for Independence, like John Adams & Samuel Adams. South Carolina's representatives led a coalition of southern colonies who wanted to protect their livelihood - cotton & the institution of slavery. There was John Dickinson from Pennsylvania, who not only hoped for reconciliation with England, but wanted a more formal union of the colonies & a foreign alliance before declaring Independence. He argued his point & then honorably resigned before the signing; he joined the Pennsylvania militia to fight alongside his countrymen. Then there was the sage voice of Benjamin Franklin, who helped the abolitionists see that what they wanted could not be accomplished without first achieving Independence & that Independence could not be achieved without the southern colonies allied in the fight. The arguments were intense. The days were long & hot. Jefferson's brilliant prose was constantly edited by 55 men who were, frankly, not as well-versed or well-read as the 33-year-old Jefferson. From Nelson Mandela, "*There is no easy walk to freedom anywhere.*" But then, on July 2, these 56 men pledged their life, liberty & sacred honor, knowing full-well they were committing treason, to give us the Gift of Freedom; our *sacred, fragile, precious rights: Life, Liberty & the Pursuit of Happiness*. But the Gift of Freedom comes with a great responsibility. Sigmund Freud points out, "*Most people do not really want freedom, because freedom involves responsibility, & most people are frightened of responsibility.*" George Bernard Shaw wrote, "*Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it.*" Franklin famously pointed out that those who seek security over liberty will get neither & President Eisenhower agreed, "*If you want total security, go to prison. There you're fed, clothed, given medical care & so on. The only thing lacking... is freedom.*" Many times, governments provide these entitlements to keep people willingly in the social or economic caste in which they find themselves. Voltaire tells us, "*It is difficult to free fools from the chains they revere.*" Our responsibility for freedom begins with protecting the rights & freedoms of others from any government chains. From JFK, "*The rights of every man are diminished when the rights of one man are threatened,*" & Clarence Darrow, "*You can only protect your liberties in this world by protecting the other man's freedom.*" Our Founding Fathers knew the path to equality was through freedom; from Milton Friedman, "*A society that puts equality before freedom will get neither. A society that puts freedom before equality will get a high degree of both.*" We need to be bold in protecting the freedom & liberties of all - from Lincoln, "*Freedom is not the right to do what we want, but what we ought.*" To protect our freedom, we must understand that freedom means equality for all as God & nature intended, not as regulated by the government. Once more from President Eisenhower, "*History does not long entrust the care of freedom to the weak or the timid.*" I love what America stands for, the

freedom that allows every child to rise based on his or her own merits, talents, skills, determination & character. I love this story, not just because it is the story for millions upon millions of Americans, but because it is my story. I doubt anyone who would have looked at my family household 60 years ago & would have predicted this outcome to my life. I truly believe that my story is uniquely American. So as each of us enjoys one more dog from the grill, one more beverage of choice & one more scoop of ice cream; as we sit with friends to watch the next generation splash in pool or run through a sprinkler; & then as we bring the family together to watch the children smile & laugh at the Fireworks of Freedom; think about what that next generation needs to know about this important Gift of Freedom. John Adams knew its importance: “*Children should be educated & instructed in the principles of freedom.*”

INDUSTRY NEWS: *Slate Milk* closed a \$5M round from the *UFC* & became an official partner. Health & wellness brand *Beekeeper's Naturals* raised \$14M led by *Devonshire Investors* & *CAVU Consumer Partners*. Germany's *Bluu Seafood*, cultivated fish, raised €16M led by *Sparkfood* & *LBBW*. Meal delivery service *Everytable* raised \$25M led by *Dohmen Company Foundation's Impact Investment Fund*. *Aquatech* startup *eFishery* raised \$20M from *Abu Dhabi Sovereign Wealth Fund ADQ*. *Hyfé*, feedstock from food processing wastewater, raised a \$9M led by *Synthesis Capital*. *Tayside Australia* invested an undisclosed amount in automated indoor farming startup *Stacked Farm's* \$100M round. *Nature's Path Organic Foods* acquired *Love Child Organics*, Canadian baby food & children's snacks. *Heritage Grocers Group*, with the banners *Cardenas Markets*, *Tony's Fresh Market* & *Los Altos Ranch Market*, acquired *28 El Rancho Supermercado* in Texas & Kansas. *Sandton Capital Partners* acquired *Vindara*, *Kalera's* subsidiary that produces seeds for indoor farming, for an undisclosed sum. Specialty food distributor *Lipari Foods & Baroody Imports*, wholesale distributor of Middle Eastern foods, merged. *Sysco's* specialty produce company, *FreshPoint*, acquired *Minnesota BIX Produce*, specialty produce & fresh-cut distributor. *The Naked Market* purchased the low-alcohol aperitifs maker *Haus* for an undisclosed amount; *Haus* shut down last year when a \$10M funding round collapsed. India's *Omnivore* closed another \$150M round, its third, to invest in breakthrough technologies for agriculture, food & the rural economy. *Innova Memphis* closed \$40M to invest in pre-seed, seed & early-stage startups addressing the evolution of agriculture. *Joyful Ventures* raised \$23M to invest in the vegan protein sector. *Monster Energy* is set to buy *Bang Energy* for up to \$362M, according to a court filing, as the only successful bidder. *Canopy Growth* is being investigated by the SEC for material misstatements in its financial reporting.

Sales were slightly higher, income slightly lower in *Costco's* 3rd QTR with increases in traffic & volume; the company will crack down on membership card sharing. *Walgreens* stock dropped on mixed 3rd QTR results as the company issued a warning that consumer spending is falling & government subsidies for pushing unproven drugs are drying up. *General Mills* had a weak 4th QTR & a soft forecast, its stock dropping.

Whole Foods opened a new market at *Walter Reed Hospital* in DC. *Lidl* opened a second DC area store. *Metropolitan Market* will open its tenth Seattle area store. *Trader Joe's* will build a distribution center in SoCal. *Walgreens* will close 150 USA stores & 300 U.K. stores as demand for Covid shots & tests subside. *Casey's General Store*, the third largest c-store chain in the USA, will look to add 350 new stores by 2026 & new private label brands. *Dollar Tree* will offer higher priced groceries such as bread & ice cream, up to \$5 in price. *Danone* is seeing increased sales in USA discount retailers. *Mars* has a goal of \$1B in frozen sales by 2030 within the *Dove*, *M&M's*, *Snickers*, *Twix* & *Kind* in ice cream & frozen treat formats. *Danish Naturlil'* debuted in the USA market, launching its vegan butter at *HEB*. *Sippin Snax Gourmet Bar Snacks*, maker of seasoned peanuts & snack mixes, will partner with *Boston Beer* to launch *Samuel Adams Boston Lager Craft Peanuts*. Microbial discovery startup *AgBiome* will partner with chemical company *Lamberti* to develop biological crop products. *Liberation Labs* will build a \$115M, 45 employee facility in Richmond, IN to produce alt-proteins & biopesticides. *Synonym Bio* launched *Scaler*, an interactive tool to help fermentation companies project costs at commercial scale. Protein company *Sophie's Bionutrients* will partner with the Danish Technological Institute to produce alt-ice cream made from chlorella. NYC will place restrictions on wood-fired pizza in support of worn-out tired mantras. *McCormick* named *Brendan Foley* as its new CEO.

From *Placer.ai*, shoppers are shifting to lower cost retailers & visiting multiple retailers to save money, across all economic demographics. From *FMI*, 44% of consumers are making a greater effort to select more nutritious options versus a year ago. According to the *American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) Restaurant Study*, *Chick-fil-a* took top spot in the QSR category while *The Outback* landed the top spot in the full-service category. Egg production rose 4% in May as flocks continue to grow.

MARKET NEWS: Markets were higher as several economic data points trended upward.

SEEDS, SPROUTS, GROW, HARVEST!

THE LITCHFIELD FUND – *Tom Malenka*

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