



ALL EARS!!

THE LITCHFIELD FUND WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

"OUR EARS SPAN ALL FIELDS"



ON THE 1960S TV SHOW *My Favorite Martian*, Uncle Martin raised his antennae when he wanted to make himself invisible. The portrayal of extraterrestrial beings having antennae probably started with old movies. Make up & special effects allowed movie makers to give the characters human qualities while still making them look like creatures. Antennae probably were used for two reasons. First, the entomological parallels - flying, existing long before & after humans, arriving in swarms & invading in mass! Also, antennae give these beings an appearance of having sensory abilities that surpass human capabilities. But with experience, most humans develop their own set of antennae!

ANTENNAE OR ANTENNAS? A radio antenna has a dual purpose, to take an electrical signal & transmit it as a radio signal & then to take a radio signal & transmit it as an electrical signal. In my mom & dad's little hamlet, each of my grandparents' houses sat about half-way up the hill. The crops were terraced behind the houses to the top of the hill. At the top of the hill there were the shanties & out-houses, more homes, crops & even some livestock. When my grandparents' homes finally got a radio, it needed an antenna to get a good signal. They ran a wire up the hill & the antennas were placed on top of the shanties, to get the best signal. There was the Miners Union Hall down on the main road, centered among the villages & mines. Besides holding meetings there for the mine workers, this is where they held dances & wedding receptions (like my mom & dad's). Usually, there was just a group of guys playing music; I have photos of my dad playing a mandolin. If they wanted more modern big band swing music, or if there was a Joe Louis fight that night, someone placed a radio in the back of a truck & brought it to the dance hall. The radio needed an antenna for reception, so some guys would walk around outside with the antenna until someone shouted that they had a signal! Then they would try to find a place to mount the antenna so they could go back & enjoy the dance or the fight. Early TV sets had the classic set of rabbit ears (so did portable TVs well into the 1980s). The rabbit ears were twisted & turned in every direction to get the best signal & bring the picture into focus. Often, people would add tinfoil or a hanger to tips of the antennas to increase the range. Rabbit ears were replaced by permanent antennas on top of the roof, creating the classic suburban-scape photo of TV antennas stretching across the horizon. In the early sixties, my uncle installed a roof antenna that was on a pivot. He had a dial by the TV set. When he turned the dial, it mechanically changed the direction of the antenna on the roof! The reason? So that he could watch Pittsburgh Pirates games broadcast by KDKA in Pittsburgh! In the late 1970s, a good friend from high school crawled out on his roof in an ice storm on New Year's Day to remove the ice from the antenna & get a clear picture for the football games. He slid off the roof, breaking his ribs & injuring his spleen! Fortunately for insects, like Uncle Martin, they have their own antennae. An insect's antennae are sensory organs sensitive to touch, smell & in some species, sound. And while humans do not have actual antennae, the senses we do have, especially after years of living, do make for a nice set of antennae - we can SEE the truth, TOUCH the reality, HEAR the lies, TASTE the hypocrisy & SMELL the bulls**t! So as we pass the first 100 days of the most successful, most pro-American, most meaningful, most world-changing start to a new administration in American history, we can indeed smell the odiferous scents reeking from the opposition party & enemy media! They are continuing their histrionics of the last 10 years! He's deporting fathers who are pastors of their church, coach little league & walk blind dogs! He's ripping 3-week old babies from their mother's bosoms & sending them to Latin America without their parents. Prices went up again in March (though much less than under the previous administration) & GDP went down (a backward looking index based on the previous administration's policies), it's because of tariffs, tariffs, tariffs (even though tariffs didn't go in place until April). OH MY GOD, college students who were over 18 & signed all the appropriate legal papers now need to pay back their student loans! His popularity is at an all-time Presidential low, even though the 78M people who voted for him still stand behind him! How dare he & DOGE stop the wasting of taxpayer money that is funding corruption! Or, they just stand in front of the media or a group of paid protestors & shout, "This is the worst 100 days of a new Presidency ever! Bad man, bad man, bad man! Hitler, Hitler, Hitler! Impeach, impeach, impeach!" SMELL.THE.BULLS**T! Humans have five senses. Time, age, knowledge & experience, with just a bit of applied intelligence, gives us a sixth sense. Whether it has to do with a politician, a used car salesman, a media personality, a talkative neighbor, a potential business partner or a golf partner, we can smell the bulls**t - we have heard it all before. From British comedian & magician Tommy Cooper, "Deja Moo: The feeling that you've heard this bulls**t before!" Fortunately, these bullsh***ers are not smart, their comments smell & what they say does not hold with the reality we see. From American sci-fi writer William Gibson, "The deadliest bullshit is odorless & transparent." Unlike lies, bulls**t has no basis in reality. From American philosopher Harry Frankfurt, "The bullsh***er is neither on the side of the true or the side of the false. His eye is not on the facts at all. He does not reject the authority of the truth, as the liar does & oppose himself to it. He pays no attention to it at all. By virtue of this, bulls**t is a greater enemy of the truth than lies are." Our human antennae, like radio or TV antennas, pick up all the noise transmitted across the atmosphere, pick up the signals, & transform it into a clear picture. When the picture is clearly bullshit, it's time to twist the TV antennas, turn our antennae & pick up a clearer signal & focus in on the true picture! And yes, electronic equipment have antennas & living creatures have antennae - that's no bulls**t!

INDUSTRY NEWS: Winner of the 2022 *Brandjectory Pitch Slam*, *Olyra*, raised \$5M from undisclosed investors. *Gorgie*, female-focused, BFY energy drink, raised \$24.5M led by *Notable Capital*; *Gorgie* will launch in 1900 *Target* stores. *BARCODE* hydration drink raised an undisclosed amount from *Dunn Capital*. Gut health food maker *Quite Nice* raised \$1M led by *Sweet Spot Capital* with participation from *Cistern VC* & *SuperAngel Fund*. In Great Britain, *Harry Brompton's Iced Tea* raised £2M from *Traditum*. Also in the UK, wellness brand *Puresport* raised £3.6M led by *Redrice Ventures* & *Five Seasons Ventures*. Canned rum cocktail *Casaly* raised over \$3.9M. In India, *Phab*, a DTC healthy snacking brand, raised \$2M led by *OTP Ventures*, with additional investors including *Capri Global*, *Sim&San* & angel investors. *Heineken* made an undisclosed minority investment in *Tenzing*, a natural energy drink brand. *Nourish*, nutrition counseling, raised a \$70M Series B led by *J.P. Morgan Private Capital's Growth Equity Partners*, with participation from *Thrive Capital*, *Index Ventures*, *Y Combinator* & others. In London, *WineFi* raised £1.5M led by *Coterie Holdings*, a British fine wine group, with *SFC*

Capital, *Founders Capital* & others angel investors; *WineFi* gives its users data-driven access to fine wine investment opportunities. *Irrigreen*, robotic irrigation systems, raised \$19M from *Natural Ventures*, *Burnt Island Ventures*, *Ulu Ventures*, *MFV Partners*, *Tamiami*, *Sum Ventures* & others. In The Netherlands, *Peckish*, an AI inventory management platform, raised €800K led by *Arches Capital* with *Antler*, *Newland Syndicate*, *Empower Impact* & strategic angels. Iowa's *Growers Edge*, financial products & data tools for agricultural retailers, manufacturers & lenders, raised \$25M led by *S2G*, *Cibus Capital* & *Lowercarbon Capital* with participation from *Otter Creek*, *iSelect* & others. *Pluri*, a biotechnology company producing cell-based products, has acquired a 71% stake in cultivated cacao maker *Kokomodo* for \$4.5M. In Uruguay, *Yeda Health* raised \$ 300K led by *OurCrowd LATAM Labs* for its predictive diabetes & obesity treatment platform. *Conagra* sold *Chef Boyardee* for \$600M in cash to *Brynwood Partners'* subsidiary *Hometown Food*. *Apex Capital* acquired a majority stake in *Juanita's Foods*, a producer of Mexican food products in the USA. *Valeo Foods* acquired Italian sweet bakery *Freddi Dolciaria*, packaged wafers, cakes & biscuits across Europe. *Instacart* acquired eCommerce solutions provider *Wynshop*. Premium meal delivery service *Feast & Fettle* acquired New York-based *Ipsa Provisions* to expand its reach. *Lipman Family Farms* acquired Tennessee tomato grower *Shelton & Sons*. *Eagle Eye Produce* announces acquired the Pacific Northwest onion packing facility operated by *Baker & Murakami Produce Company*. *Lineage* acquired four existing cold storage warehouses (in KS, IL, PA & AZ) from *Tyson* for \$247M, with 49M cubic feet of storage & 1,000 employees. In Great Britain, *Verb Ventures* launched €25M to invest in late seed & series A supply chain platforms. Boston-based *Freight Farms*, a noted containerized vertical farm, filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy with \$7M in liabilities. *DoorDash* is seeking to acquire meal-delivery service *Deliveroo*, offering £2.7B, looking for the opportunity to expand to more European markets. In the *Alimentation Couche-Tard* & *Seven & i* merger drama, access to *Seven & i's* financial data has been granted.

Sprouts Farmers Market reported another stellar 1st QTR with net sales up 19%, comparables up 11.7% & diluted EPS up 62%. *Publix* had a strong 1st for revenue & traffic, but earnings took an impact from equity security transactions. *Loblaw's* reported across the board 1st QTR growth. *Amazon* also reported across the board increases in 1st QTR. *Instacart* posted higher 1st QTR revenue, but income took a hit on higher operating expenses; management forecasted a 2nd QTR better than analyst estimates. *Coca-Cola* beat 1st QTR estimates despite a drop in revenue caused by a false malicious video; the company reaffirmed guidance. *Kraft Heinz* posted its fourth consecutive quarter of beating estimates as 1st QTR numbers bested analyst forecasts. *Kellanova* reported mixed 1st QTR results, net income was higher but adjusted EPS & revenue fell. *Utz* posted all-around 1st QTR growth, hitting analyst projections for EPS; the snacking sector drove volume. *Hershey* beat 1st QTR estimates for EPS, although EPS was lower YOY; the chocolate maker is seeking a cocoa tariff exemption. *Mondelez* reported growth in 1st QTR, driven by price hikes, & confirmed full-year guidance. *Grupo Bimbo* reported 1st QTR record revenue, but North American sales declined almost 5% on weak demand. *Lancaster Colony* saw a 45% increase in 3rd QTR income, but revenue dipped. *Pilgrim's Pride* saw a 2% 1st QTR revenue increase & a 69% jump in net income on lower commodity prices. Hog production drove a very strong 1st QTR performance for *Smithfield Foods*. *Seaboard* saw a slight increase in 1st QTR revenues but its pork segment & its investment in *Butterball* put constraints on income. *Vita Coco* surpassed 1st QTR revenue & earnings estimates, posting a 31¢ EPS, well above the 22¢ estimate. *Oatly* beat 1st QTR earnings expectations, reporting an EPS loss of \$0.6 (expectations were a loss of \$0.96) on a slight revenue decline. *Sysco* saw a 1.1% increase in 3rd QTR revenue, but profit & income fell. *HelloFresh* reported 1st QTR revenue in line with expectations & confirmed its full-year outlook, though revenue fell 8.3%. *McDonald's* posted a down 1st QTR as store traffic declined at the fastest pace since 2020. In the midst of turnaround efforts, *Starbucks* had a disappointing 2nd QTR with five straight quarters of margin tightening; the coffee shop will move away from the rollout of automated baristas which customers did not like & hire more baristas. International business drove 1st QTR earnings at *Domino's* as revenue missed forecasts, but earnings beat estimates.

Walmart opened a cutting-edge, technology-enhanced 'store of the future' in Cypress, Texas. *Publix* opened another Boca Raton location. *United Supermarkets (United Family)* opened its 100th New Mexico Market Street location in Rio Rancho. *Hy-Vee* will close two of its standalone meal prep facilities & shift production back to individual stores. *Amazon* will spend more than \$4B to expand its rural delivery network & bring delivery to small towns across the USA. In Great Britain, *Lidl* will invest £500M to expand & enhance its retail network. *C&S Wholesale Grocers* will close a distribution center in Baldwin, FL, impacting 500 employees. *Rustica Foods* will invest \$47M to build a third production facility. *Dr. Schar* will expand its New Jersey manufacturing facility with a \$28M investment. *Meatable & TruMeat* will partner to drive global commercialization of faux-cultivated meat & build a facility in Singapore. *Bimbo Bakeries* has added to its *Thomas'* portfolio with *Thomas' High Protein Bagels* featuring 20 grams of protein per bagel. *PepsiCo* launched a lemonade iced tea line. *Applegate* is launching a lightly breaded chicken line. *McCormick's* launched eleven new *Cholula* products. *Beyond Meat* debuted *Beyond Chicken Pieces*. *Hiya* launched a children's health powder with nutrients & electrolytes. Infant formula producer *Bobbie* debuted an organic whole milk formula. Beer producer *Asahi Group Japan* began a pilot of its animal-free milk *LIKE MILK*, utilizing proprietary yeast fermentation technology. *Earth First Food Ventures (EFFV)* formed *PFerrinX26*, a 50:50 joint venture with *DeNovo Foodlabs* to scale the production of bovine lactoferrin via precision fermentation. *Standing Ovation & Tetra Pak* will partner to optimize alternative casein production. *McDonald's* dropped its price-fixing claims against *Cargill*, but allegations against other meat suppliers are continuing. *Upside Foods* lawsuit against Florida's cultivated meat ban is moving forward. A former *Celsius* executive is headed to prison charged with insider trading. *Sobey's* parent *Empire Company* announced Michael Medline, president/CEO, will retire next year. *Nestlé* named Jeff Hamilton as the new CEO of Zone Americas. *Ferraro Foods* named Bill Stafford as its new CEO. John Brase, *Smucker* COO, will become president under Mark Smucker, chairman & CEO. Grocery store operations tech solutions provider *Upshop* appointed Mike Sanders as CEO. *Associated Grocers* named David Politz as the new CEO,

According to *Numerator*, for the sixth straight year, *Walmart* leads the grocery share market with 21.2%; *Kroger* follows with 8.9%, *Costco* next at 8.5%, *Albertsons* at 5.0% & *Publix* at 4.1%. From *Placer.ai*, both *Aldi* & *Lidl* are growing foot traffic faster than the overall category, at 8.9% & 4.2% respectively. Also from *Placer.ai*, foot traffic at club stores increased as people's antennae picked up the wrong signals from the media about tariff impacts. *NIQ* reported that 59% of USA consumers indicate they would buy more private label products if a larger variety were available; 59% also trust store brands. In 2024, total USA per capita vegetable & pulse consumption fell to 376 pounds, marking the lowest level since 1988. Vietnam imported \$51M in produce from the USA last month, making the USA the southeast Asia country's largest supplier. Coconut oil demand & price is on the rise, driven by its ability to replace high priced cocoa butter in many applications. Flour production rose for the fifth straight quarter. Midwest rains vastly improved the condition of the next wheat crop & took pressure off commodity prices.

MARKET NEWS: Markets continued upward throughout the week, as trade deals & mineral deals came into focus, clarifying the economic vision of the new Administration. Tech earnings were strong, helping the market move higher. The S&P 500 had its longest winning streak in 21 years! China removed tariffs on \$40B worth of USA imports. The PCE & Core PCE inflation indices came in at 0.0%, with YOY flat. The GDP was lower than expected but the data does not reflect \$9T in USA investment the new President arranged in the first 100 days! Oil prices hit a 4 year low. Home prices rose 4.5%, below expected increases; pending home sales rose significantly. Consumer spending & personal income indices were better than expected. On Thursday, jobless claims came in 16K higher than expected, causing the bullsh***ers to scream recession, economic meltdown, economic crises as the stock market rose throughout the day! On Friday, the new jobs number came in much higher than expected driving the market even higher.

SEEDS, SPROUTS, GROW, HARVEST!
THE LITCHFIELD FUND — *Tom Malenka*
 V11issue46.05.03.25

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.