



# ALL EARS!!

THE LITCHFIELD FUND WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

"OUR EARS SPAN ALL FIELDS"



**SUNDAY NIGHT TELEVISION** during the 1960s was very special. No, there wasn't any Sunday night Football, but there was *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Originally broadcast in the 1950s as *Toast of the Town*, *The Ed Sullivan Show* featured the all-time great singers, stars, comedians & acts of my parents' era, while adding in the new upcoming stars of pop, rock & movies. For the kids, we *Wished Upon a Star* with *Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color*, but viewed on a black & white TV for most of the decade. Then finally, at 9 PM, for 14 years & 432 episodes, we watched the Cartwright family battle injustice on the Nevada frontier on the classic television western, *Bonanza*.

**A BONANZA OF HOPE:** *Bonanza* takes place approximately during the 1860s, after the discovery of the Comstock Lode (veins of silver ore) near Virginia City in 1859. The Cartwrights live on The Ponderosa, a 1,000 square mile (about 650,000 acres) ranch, lying between Virginia City, Carson City & Lake Tahoe. There the Cartwrights have created an empire – mining, lumber & cattle. Ben Cartwright is of course, the patriarch; widowed three times, a son from each wife. The oldest son is Adam – intelligent, cultured, rational. The middle son, Hoss, is large, comedic & has the loving heart of a child. The youngest son is the hot-headed & emotional Little Joe.

The Cartwrights faced a battle almost every week, but unlike the Ewings, Carringtons or the many dysfunctional families littered across today's television landscape, they rarely battled each other. They fought as a family against the injustices & wrongdoings of the Nevada frontier. Of course, there were traditional western-themed plots, with clearly labeled bad guys who the Cartwrights faced down - corrupt politicians, crooked sheriffs, violent vigilantes, nasty land barons, bank robbers & murderers. But *Bonanza's* scripts also tackled the important issues that America was facing in the 1960s. They did not, however, do it in a preachy way, take it to the streets & cause mayhem until everyone agrees with us, manner. Nor did they paint a broad-brush story that labeled & blamed everyone a willing participant in the injustice. Instead, they presented a circumstantial, causal story line, giving the viewer a chance to see the wrongdoing, its impact & the courage & bravery of the people who stood up & stopped it! *Bonanza*, along with *Star Trek*, both the Original Series & the Next Generation, ranks among the best television shows to tackle issues of morality, ethics, acceptance & justice. Just like Kirk, Picard, Spock & Number One, the Cartwrights stood for the rights & protection of others, while not neglecting to fight to save what they had built. Of course, unlike the real world, the criminals in *Bonanza* were always pretty obvious & transparent. It was also easy to have faith & hope that Ben, Adam, Hoss & Little Joe would do the right thing & save the day, in just 60 minutes.

When it comes to having hope & faith, there is a bit of an interesting paradox with Lorne Greene, who played the stalwart & upstanding character of Ben Cartwright, a man with a true north ethical-moral compass. Lorne Greene began his career as a newscaster in Canada in the late 1930s. His broadcasts were so widely listened to that the baritone Greene became known as the "*Voice of Canada*." When on September 1, 1939, Canada entered World War 2 alongside Mother England, Greene was responsible for reporting the war news. Those first few years were devastating for the Allies; Greene reported not only the mounting allied battle losses, but also the names of the dead. The "*Voice of Canada*" soon became known as the "*Voice of Doom*."

We have often written in these pages of the dire situation the world was facing in 1942, three years into the war. The basic concepts of freedom, self-determination & individual human rights were faced with near extinction. Though America was now in the battle, the losses were still mounting. Yes, the Japanese had been

turned back at the battles of the Coral Sea & Midway. But 1942 ended with the USA having just a small foothold in North Africa, barely clinging to territory in New Guinea & Guadalcanal & one serviceable aircraft carrier, the Big E (THE *USS Enterprise*, CV-6) standing in the way of a Japanese invasion of the American homeland. It would be interesting to know how Americans, at the end of 1942 just 80 years ago, viewed the coming new year. Were they filled with the hope & promise that the new year, 1943, would bring? Did they have faith that America would prevail in the new year, that their sons overseas fighting the war or perhaps their loved ones in fallen countries, would be safe? Or did they heed the “*Voice of Doom*,” with a feeling that something ominous was hanging over the free world. While the war turned in favor of the Americans & its Allies in 1943, it still took more than 2.5 years to defeat the forces of the totalitarian Axis powers.

Sadly, the defeat of the Axis powers did not bring about the defeat of the evil ideologies of fascism, communism, socialism & Marxism. Many fail to understand how these ideologies operate. The government seeks total control by using lies, gaslighting, withholding important information, manipulation, threats & blackmail to keep their citizens cowed. The government does not answer direct questions, instead uses deflection, more lies or just ignores the question all together. The government accuses others of their own criminal actions. They only allow the ‘elite,’ those with status, money or the proper indoctrination from designated universities to be part of the ruling class. These elites have no diversity of thought & always agree with those in power. The government uses money to keep the populace in line – handouts to those who are compliant; taxes & audits on those who are not. To keep the populace docile & immobile, they tax, ration & destroy needed supplies such as gas, oil, coal, food, baby formula, etc. They create large, phony, existential threats to keep people from focusing on government misdeeds. If someone disagrees with these government mantras, they are labeled a threat to society. And finding & revealing a government conspiracy becomes a conspiracy in itself. Sadly, there are many elected officials in a position of power in our own Constitutional republic who employ these tactics. In fact, these ideologies function exactly in the way a psychology textbook would describe a dysfunctional family with an emotionally abusive parent or spouse.

We enter 2023 with a failing economy, & a government that seems focused on destroying our once vibrant economy of just a few years ago. Can we have hope for the new year? America today faces many of the same issues the Cartwrights stood against - corrupt politicians, overbearing law enforcement, violent vigilantes, crooked big tech CEOs & crime on our streets. How did Americans, as 1942 came to an end, find a way to look for the blessings a new year would bring, with all that was happening in the world? How do the still free people of today find the hope to extract themselves from emotionally abusive global governments that seek to control every aspect of human existence, manipulating thoughts, finances & health? Is being like Susie Walker enough, to believe, to have faith, to find hope when common sense tells us otherwise? Author G.K. Chesterton might agree with Susie, “*Faith means believing the unbelievable. Hope means hoping when everything seems hopeless.*” Remember – the past & present do not predestine an outcome, as long as we have hope. From Robert H. Schuller, “*Let your hopes, not your hurts, shape your future.*” We can make change happen in 2023, Saint Augustine gives us guidance, “*Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are Anger & Courage. Anger at the way things are, & Courage to see that they do not remain as they are;*” as does Martin Luther, “*Everything that is done in this world is done by hope.*” Enter 2023 knowing there are many, who are trying to find the hope & courage to bring about change in the new year. For as Oscar Hammerstein II penned, “*Walk on, walk on with hope in your heart, & you'll never walk alone; you'll never walk alone.*”

**ALL EARS!!** wishes everyone a *Bonanza* of hope for 2023. We close with encouragement from St. Francis of Assisi: “*Where there is discord may we bring harmony. Where there is error, may we bring truth. Where there is doubt, may we bring faith. Where there is despair, may we bring hope.*”

***SEEDS, SPROUTS, GROW, HARVEST!***

**THE LITCHFIELD FUND** – *Tom Malenga*

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