



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

The Mother Road! America's Main Street! The Road of Flight. The Will Rogers Highway! Nicknames for the most famous road in America, Route 66! When opened in 1926 it became *the* pathway across America. The 2,448 mile Chicago to Santa Monica route became the favorite passage for vacationing families, wannabe movie stars, newlyweds, and sadly, Dust Bowl refugees. But Route 66 faded from glory, replaced by superhighways. Some sights still remain & some states have revived the historic byway. But for all its wide-eyed travelers Route 66's most appropriate nickname may have been *The Road of Dreams!*

The American Psyche & Entrepreneurial DNA: After a WWII stint in the Marines, Bobby Troup left with his new bride to drive to Hollywood to try his hand at songwriting for the movies. After graduating from Wharton, Mr. Troup saw some regional pre-war success as a jazz pianist & songwriter (with a few songs recorded by The Andrews Sisters & Sammy Kaye). Mr. Troup never had resounding success as a songwriter and just some success as an actor, playing Dr. Joe Early in the TV show *Emergency!* But along the trip to Hollywood his wife Cynthia spoke of 'Getting your Kicks on Route 66' & by the time Mr. Troup arrived in Hollywood he had a song to show Nat King Cole. Mr. Troup's song has been covered by the likes of Chuck Berry, The Rolling Stones, Depeche Mode, Glenn Frey, John Mayer, & Diana Krall!

But there is more to Route 66 & the American Psyche than Mr. Troup's song. Whether born from the pioneers desire to find better land for farming or a better place to raise a family; a wanderlust for wide open spaces & endless skies; the freedom to travel with no borders, boundaries, guards, or checkpoints; or a 100 year old automobile culture in a country with thousands upon thousands of miles of paved road (and enough cheap gas to enjoy them all) America has always been a society wanting to hit the open road. And along those roads entrepreneurs found ways to start a business! Whether it was in the early days of saloons & general stores or in the modern day with a franchised mini-mart, Americans have always thought to place their money & effort into a business to try to make an income, a better life, or a fortune!

Route 66 was the epidemic of that entrepreneurial spirit. Roadside diners, lodgings, native craft shops & gas stations dotted the landscape. Tourist attractions such as wax museums, Indian reservations, Tee-Pee shaped ice cream stores, leaning water towers & hidden caverns got motorists to stop & spend their money. Because of Route 66 we have motels (motorist hotel), drive-in restaurants (the first MacDonald's opened in Barstow, CA on Route 66), station wagons & a car culture. The town of Winona, AZ may have turned into another ghost town if it had not been for Mr. Troup's lyrical plea 'And don't forget Winona' which caused travelers to stop in the

small western town! Economic cycles come & go. It can always be said that it is a bad time to get married, start a family or start a business. But it does not keep Americans from trying!

It may seem Providence that **The Litchfield Fund** was travelling the Road of Dreams as it made it first (contingent) commitment place equity into a small growing business. Like those who started businesses along Route 66 we know that taking such an entrepreneurial risk involves hard work, extreme care & a resilient nature. We are looking forward to working with this young company to see both it & **The Litchfield Fund** become an American success story! We did not see Tod & Buz in a 1960 convertible Corvette, but we did see what America once was & still can be – a place where dreams come true!

Portfolio News: The trend of natural & organic products finding their way into traditional outlets continued this week. Boulder Brands (**BDBD**) announced this week a deal to supply *Pizza Hut* with *Udi's* Gluten Free pizza dough. Hain Celestial (**HAIN**) will begin supplying *Panera* with hormone & antibiotic free chicken & turkey meat from its *Hain Pure Protein* division. General Mills (**GIS**) announced a new line of *Fiber One* low calorie desserts.

Wells Fargo upgraded Hershey (**HSY**) to a buy, citing an improved gross margin and a \$122 to \$124 target price. However, cacao grindings were down for the first time in 2 years, indicating consumers may be reacting to increasing chocolate prices. **HSY** was #2 on a new Deloitte compilation of the best publically traded companies in the U.S. The study used a new rating process taking into account profitability, social accountability, employee engagement, etc. Whole Foods (**WFM**) was #17 and United Natural Foods (**UNFI**) was #72. Citicorp downgraded ConAgra (**CAG**) to NEUTRAL from BUY. **CAG's** stock fluctuated this week as rumors of a private takeover were spurred by **CAG's** search for a new CEO & **CAG** cancelling an investor event.

Seeds, Sprouts, Grow, Harvest!

The Litchfield Fund

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