



ALL EARS!!

THE LITCHFIELD FUND WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

"OUR EARS SPAN ALL FIELDS"



LESS THAN A MONTH after the first shots of the Revolution were fired at Concord & Lexington in April 1775, the Second Continental Congress came into session. After 14 months of debate, these men would declare America ready to *"assume among the powers of the earth, the separate & equal station to which the Laws of Nature & of Nature's God entitle them."* They set forth these enduring principles of freedom: *"That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty & the pursuit of Happiness."* Sadly, throughout our history, American men have been called upon to defend & die for these principles.

PRINCIPLES: In just about 400 days, America will celebrate its 250th birthday! America was founded on concepts unheard of in the 18th century – individual freedom & power belonging to & held among the governed. With Memorial Day upon us, we are reminded of all the times American men – & women – have been called upon to defend & protect these principles. In America, this sense of freedom runs so deep in our collective DNA & psyche that often good American men & women rise up & even sacrifice to defend these principles for others. From ending Muslim piracy on the Barbary Coast to ending slavery here in America; then moving on to fighting fascism, communism & totalitarianism across the world in the mid-20th century to fighting terrorism & religious intolerance in the Middle East, America has stepped into the fray to protect those whose freedoms are being trampled upon & extinguished. Think for a moment of the principles of the countries & cultures that Americans have had to fight since 1941; it's a long ugly list: ethnic genocide, religious intolerance, imperialistic jingoism. And then think of the day-to-day tactics & atrocities these cultures have employed: a radicalized in-the-bag media; lawless courts & judges; disarming the populace; punishing free speech; street mobs that enforce government mandates; class warfare & ostracization; a permanent underclass of workers & slaves; genocide; disparaging religion; torture; indoctrination & radicalization of the youth; sexual perversion – a list that is longer & whose details are even uglier. American men for centuries have been called to war & it is these evils that they have been asked to fight. And yet, after 250 years of having a well-trained military designed to do what the military is designed to do – destroy the enemy – this evil still exists. It exists in regions where we went to war to end it & it exists right here at home – in our cities, on our streets, on our campuses. The sad truth is that evil never dies, it just manifests itself in another form. Like every horror movie, it's behind the next door, at the top of the stairs, possessing the next person or at least making itself ready to come alive & appear in the upcoming blockbuster sequel. Just like in those movies, evil always finds its way to possess the weak, the unsure, the lost, the ignorant, the brainwashed. Wars begin for many reasons – cultural & historical differences, border disputes, territorial expansion, etc. – but war is most often a clash between the haves & the have-nots. Pure & simple jealousy! Why else would there be hate for the culture that inhabits merely 0.2% of the total land area of the Middle East? Why would people flock to a wealthy country that is considered to be the most racist, most sexist, most evil, most imperialistic in the history of the world, risking illegal entry only to then try to rebuild their own culture while taking to the streets to condemn their more-than-generous host? It is jealousy, & jealousy, not money, is the root of all evil. It is safe to assume that from the American Revolution forward, few of those Americans who went to war truly understood what type & level of evil they were fighting. They were likely horrified when they saw that the British burned churches filled with colonists; that the Japanese tortured & raped the peoples of the South Pacific & Asia; that terrorists use women & children, even hospitals, as human shields; & that the Third Reich created a systematic process for ethnic genocide. Our American men went to war because of their own principles, not just our enduring principles of freedom, but their belief in God, country, family & community. We hope & always pray that Americans will never again be called to war; that Americans will never be called to defend the principles of freedom anywhere in the world. Today, we have a President who is a peacemaker. He understands the power of commerce & the beauty of mutual success; he is using this power to prevent & end wars. The real fight against evil is right here at home: corrupt judges who prevent criminals from being incarcerated or deported; congress members who attack ICE agents & aid & abet criminal illegal aliens; universities who allow terrorists to control their campuses, spout genocide & racial hate; lying & corrupt government officials controlled by corporations, oligarchs & foreign countries; & an anti-American media that has been covering up & participating in this now 10-year attempt to unseat & destroy the American people's President. Whether the battle to destroy evil (or at least put at bay its current manifestation) is fought with planes & tanks by the American military or with ideology, rational arguments & using the foundations of our law to remove & incarcerate those insiders working to defeat & destroy America; each American must look inside themselves for the principles they hold most dear. For most of us, those principles are the same: We want our freedoms; we want success; we want love & respect; we want our children to grow & be safe; we want to help those who truly need help; we want happiness & we want to live with & around people who share these basic human principles. It is these principles, these simple common beliefs, that Americans have fought & died for over the last 250 years. So we bow our heads – thankful, grateful & overwhelmed – that there have been & still are those among us, these Americans, willing to make this sacrifice to stand up to evil & fight for the enduring principles of freedom – for the world; for our Nation; for all of us; for me.

INDUSTRY NEWS: *Final Boss Sour* raised \$4M led by *Science Inc.* *Valerie*, a women's wellness startup focused on perimenopause & midlife health, raised £514K in a pre-seed from angel investors, including Giles Brook, former CEO of *Vita Coco*. *Sanzo* is now part of *Morrison Seger Venture Capital Partners* investment portfolio. *Cleveland Kitchen*, a producer of fermented foods, secured \$2.9M in funding from undisclosed investors. In Europe, *Freshflow* raised €6.5M for its AI grocery fresh department replenishment platform led by *World Fund*, *Capnamic*, *Venture Stars*, *Caesar Ventures* & *Catatumbo Capital*. In Europe, fresh dog food provider *Butternut Box* secured over €75M in debt financing from *Liquidity*. In Australia, restaurant table app *EatClub* raised \$18.2M led by *Co:Act*. *Verdi*, automated irrigation technology, raised \$6.5M led by *SVG Ventures* with *NEC*, *Ponderosa Ventures*, *Elemental Impact*, *GenomeBC* & *Ponderosa Ventures* involved. *Blooms* raised a \$2.6M for its fintech business for Latin American produce exporters that supply the USA & Canada; the round was led by *SP Ventures* with participation from *Angel Ventures*, *The Yield Lab Latam*, *Eqwow*

Ventures, Glocal Managers & Mercy Corps Ventures. Odeko, café technology provider, bought Humankind Beverage, a cafe distributor & bottled beverage brand; Odeko will also sell Humankind bottled water, juices & teas across its national distribution network. In Brazil, meat companies Marfrig Global Foods & BRF announced an intent to merge. In Canada, poultry processor Sofina Foods acquired poultry company Exceldor Cooperative. Lallemand will acquire AIT Ingredients & Solyve from Moulins Soufflet, which is a subsidiary of Groupe InVivo. Bartlett acquired fellow grain & oilseed agribusiness Ceres Global Ag Corp. in a deal valued at approximately \$140.1M. Birmingham Chocolate acquired Macalat, a sugar-free, sweet dark chocolate made with MycoTechnology's mushroom mycelium. Smart Organic AD, a Bulgarian producer & distributor of organic plant-based foods, bought chocolate brand LoveRaw. Big Idea Ventures acquired the Veolution venture platform. CookUnity acquired Fraîche, a smart fridge platform serving chef-crafted meals & snacks to NYC offices. The Loch Lomond Group acquired American whiskey maker New York Distilling. Newlat Food will acquire Diageo's production facility in Santa Vittoria d'Alba, Italy. Diageo is looking to cut \$500M in cost & hinting at potential brand sell offs. In the UK, Asda is seeking to sell 20 stores for £400M to fund its turnaround efforts. Kraft Heinz is looking at possible portfolio adjustments, with processed meats, coffee & other business reported as possible segments. JBS stockholders approved its dual listing proposal. Emil Capital Partners closed on its fourth fund at \$100M with involvement from Munich's Tengelmann Group; the firm rebranded as ECP Growth.

Target reported a drop in 1st QTR revenue & traffic but still reported income growth. BJ's saw a 9.7% increase in 1st QTR profit on gains in traffic & revenue. Flower Foods reported lower sales & income for 1st QTR. Monde Nissin says sales in its Quorn Foods meat alternatives business fell 5.8% in 1st QTR, slightly outperforming the UK alt meat category which was down 8.9%. For DINE Brands (IHOP, Applebee's, etc.), 1st QTR revenue rose 4.1% but net income was down 54%.

Buc-ee's will expand to Mississippi & Virginia. Vallarta Supermarkets opened its 60th California store in Colton. FreshDirect will open its first brick & mortar location in Southampton, NY. Wegmans will lower prices on some must-have summer essentials. Target will partner with Shipt to offer Target Circle 360 members same-day deliveries from more than 100-plus retailers with no markups. Market 32 & Price Chopper will team up with DoorDash for on-demand grocery & meal delivery. Trader Joe's is looking to build a distribution center on Long Island. Walmart is getting push back from consumer groups & our President for claiming tariffs will impact prices while also touting that a large majority of their products are American made! SpartanNash will add a Brat Shop in stores. Chosen Foods debuted avocado oil salad dressings. Campbell will launch a powdered V8 drink. Coca-Cola has launched Sprite + Tea. The Pizza Cupcake rebranded as Incredifulls & will introduce new breakfast SKUs. Bob's Red Mill debuted a new Signature Blends coffee cake mix. Flower Foods will pursue additional better-for-you bread & snack options, including a low-carb bread. Pasta Rummo launched a protein pasta with 21 grams of plant-based protein per serving. Oscar Mayer will pit all six of its Wienermobiles against one another in the Wienie 500 at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway in advance of the Indianapolis 500! Panera is planning to close its remaining fresh dough baking facilities as it moves to an on-demand model. Rite Aid will close distribution centers in Washington & Maryland as part of its bankruptcy process. DSM-Firmenich opened a new innovation facility in New Jersey. Apple Valley Foods will close its fresh & frozen pie manufacturing facility in Chaska, MN. Food ingredient supplier Newly Weds Foods acquired a Dyersburg, TN manufacturing facility from Devey Mustard & Condiments. John Deere will invest \$20B to build & manufacture in the USA! PepsiCo will more than triple the production capacity of a salty snacks manufacturing plant currently being built in Kazakhstan. Wayne-Sanderson Farms will partner with fintech company Vestwell to provide the poultry processor's 2K+ farm partners retirement programs tailored to fit their individual needs. A class-action lawsuit against Krispy Kreme claims the retailer provided false & misleading statements & made material omissions about its McDonald's partnership. Montana stopped the sales of lab created meats. Nebraska removed soda & energy drinks from eligible SNAP purchases. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins announced a USDA portal now available for farmers, who were maliciously targeted by the Biden administration, to register complaints & report lawfare attacks. Proposed cuts to SNAP benefits passed in the Big, Beautiful Bill that will reduce fraud & corruption, require abled body recipients to work, go-to-school or be in training, & place more responsibility on states to fund & manage benefits; under the proposal, no one who deserves benefits will lose benefits. HHS released its MAHA report, focused on ultra processed foods, GRAS certification process, chemicals, pesticides & more. The HHS also increased warnings on the deadly mRNA virus mandated by many states. Finally, the HHS has reduced the 453-page dietary guidelines to 4 pages to make it easier to understand & for families to use. When Family Dollar becomes a stand-alone company its former president Duncan MacNaughton will be chairman/CEO.

Trader Joe's was #1 in the latest Axios Harris Poll 100 corporate reputation poll; Costco was #5. Once again, this time in a study from E&Y, consumer brand loyalty has fallen significantly, with consumers looking at price & value; consumers are open to purchasing store brands. Fresh potatoes remain a staple in the kitchens of USA consumers with 85.2% of households purchasing potatoes 11 times per year, according to Potatoes USA; consumers' reasons include that potatoes are satisfying, real & can be served in so many different ways. Mexican avocado exports will reach a record high of \$4B in 2025. Peru's mango exports rose 267% for 2024-25 season. USA pork exports to Mexico rose 11% in 1st QTR. Barbeque prices are higher entering into the summer season, ice cream prices are lower.

MARKET NEWS: Markets were lower on the week on little economic news; rising bond yields; investors' inability to understand the power & beauty of tariffs; & a possible 50% tariff on all European Union goods beginning June 1 if the EU does not get serious about trade negotiations. Investors also tried to resolve if possible deficit increases from the new tax bill will be offset by growth. The house passed the Big, Beautiful Bill which includes permanent tax cuts, fraud elimination, reduction in green tax benefits & more. The bill heads to the Senate for review & reconciliation, with plans to pass by July 4. The Senate voted to end states' EV mandates. The Treasury will stop producing pennies in 2026, which cost 3.69¢ each to produce & cost the American taxpayer \$85M per year! Gas prices reached their lowest point for Memorial Day weekend since 2021. For the first time in 5 years, a majority of Americans believe the economy is getting stronger.

SEEDS, SPROUTS, GROW, HARVEST!

THE LITCHFIELD FUND – *Tom Malenka*

V11issue49.05.24.25

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.