

Tea Leaf

...weekly since 1976

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Wouldn't It Be Nice If...

Written by Jeff Thredgold, CSP, President, Thredgold Economic Associates

- ...residents of the Middle East could get along with each other
- ...there were less irritating ways to bring buyers and sellers together than junk mail, spam, pop-up ads, telemarketing, and endless TV commercials
- ...teachers received more admiration and respect from students and their parents
- ...we could benefit more from years of practical business experience of millions of retirees, rather than simply "putting them out to pasture"
- ...Republican leadership in the Congress would recognize their path to maintaining control in November is tied to spending restraint...not to out-of-control spending
- ...stock prices would move higher (more than 50% of American families now own stocks)
- ...the housing "bubble" on both coasts and in the SW would deflate gradually
- ...we didn't have an \$8,400,000,000,000 gross national debt, and we weren't spending more than \$900,000,000 EVERY DAY just to pay the INTEREST on that debt
- ...the violence and language in today's popular movies could be toned down a bit
- ...we could strike a reasonable balance between energy conservation and the need for new sources of energy
- ...the national media was more balanced in its reporting...and not so negative
- ...stronger Mexican economic growth would provide more good jobs at home
- ...European governments would take more responsibility for serious problems close to home
- ...Avian flu turns out to be a non-event
- ...members of Congress would finally recognize that reducing tax rates typically increases tax revenue...and increasing tax rates typically reduces tax revenue
- ...the Iraqi people would soon take full responsibility for dealing with terrorists, allowing U.S. military personnel to return home
- ...energy prices would decline
- ...health care costs would moderate
- ...more corporate leaders who commit serious crimes could spend some serious time behind bars
- ...the Congress would approve one final minimum wage increase and then tie annual increases to the CPI...and leave politics out of the issue
- ...America's silent majority (our parents and grandparents) received greater respect for the enormous wartime sacrifices they made to help protect the freedoms we all enjoy today
- ...Castro would bite the dust and be replaced with a move towards democracy
- ...politicians were elected based on experience and ability, not on who can spend the most money and sling the most mud
- ...U.S. firefighters, police officers, and military personnel received our respect ALL of the time
- ...we would all get more involved in enriching the lives of those less fortunate than ourselves
- ...more working people would save seriously for their Golden Years (an estimated one-third of the U.S. population saves zero for retirement)
- ...what's good for you tasted as good as what's not
- ...your garbage disposal didn't eat better than two-thirds of the world's population
- ...airlines that lack serious competition in various markets didn't gouge the public

- ...Johnny Carson was still king of late-night TV
- ...American military personnel could see their families more often
- ...basic communication between women and men was just a little bit easier
- ...the Administration and the Congress would stop bickering and take the small steps required now to “fix” Social Security and Medicare for the future
- ...the role of “peacekeeper” wasn’t associated with so much violence
- ...Paris Hilton’s 15 minutes of fame were finished
- ...we heard more of the “good news” from Iraq, not just the “bad news”
- ...the problems in schools today were still spit wads, gum chewing, and truancy, as opposed to violence, drug use, and pregnancy
- ...“government” would recognize that it is there to serve the people, and not the other way around
- ...we would recognize that both short- and long-term interest rates remain quite low, even as the Federal Reserve tightens monetary policy
- ...“far left” liberals and “far right” conservatives would back off a bit
- ...nature was less destructive
- ...political battles for Supreme Court replacements would be more civil
- ...America’s Vietnam War veterans would finally get credit for serving their country
- ...“reality” TV would die a quick death
- ...the nation’s tobacco companies would leave our kids alone
- ...“old fashioned” common courtesy between people made a big comeback
- ...golf was still a 3-4 hour game
- ...we could also find Osama Bin Laden hiding in a dark hole
- ...drive-by shootings were replaced by drive-by moonings
- ...there was a stronger collective effort to improve opportunities in America’s inner cities
- ...Howard Stern was never heard from again
- ...we didn’t have one million lawyers in this country (more than the rest of the world combined)
- ...F.I.C.A. (Social Security/Medicare) taxes were less painful...four out of five American workers now pay more F.I.C.A. taxes than they do federal income taxes
- ...the game of politics in Washington D.C. involved a little more cooperation and a little less confrontation
- ...the Ozbournes were never heard from again
- ...each long-term member of Congress was required to take a year off, start a new business with limited funding, and then deal with the complexities and hassles THEY have created
- ...the outcome of many lawsuits was determined more by the facts and less by who has the deepest pockets
- ...our primary and secondary schools had competition for teachers, students, and funding—just like our colleges and universities
- ...more people would make donating blood a regular quarterly event
- ...many spoiled and pampered athletes in Major League Baseball, the National Football League, the National Basketball Association, and the National Hockey League had to get regular jobs at regular wages (at least for awhile)
- ...we would all keep in mind that despite the problems and challenges we face in the U.S., this is still the greatest country in the world

“TEA”ser

Can you buy an entire chess set in a pawnshop?

—Scott Friedman, CSP



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