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# Night at the Museum

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

One of the painful realities of life as an economist and professional speaker is that the subject matter of economics is typically viewed (with good reason!) by the general public as confusing, intimidating, and boring. As a result, trying to present weekly economic and financial information with an unusual twist can occasionally be a most welcome change.

Warning!! This week's *Tea Leaf* is my semi-annual economic, financial, and political update...using today's current movie titles. My sincere apology in advance to anyone I might offend.

*The beginning of a new year seems an appropriate time to review where we've been and where we might be going...*

## The American Economy

U.S. economic growth has been quite good over the past few years. The economy has registered solid gains in employment, low inflation, and low interest rates.



Still, millions yearn for an **ERA GON** by, when **THE PURSUIT OF HAPPYNESS** in this **HOME OF THE BRAVE** lacked the **CHARLOTTE'S WEB** of global terrorism. Life then focused more on **DRIVING LESSONS** for young people, rather than the horrific **BABEL** and **TENACIOUS D**efense of freedom and life in the Middle East.

## The Global Economy

Strong performance of the global economy is a positive development for America. Solid global growth, combined with a weaker U.S. dollar versus major currencies, brings **THE GOOD GERMAN** and other **TURISTAS** to our shores, spending aggressively.

## The Stock Market

**FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION** we review a stock market **BREAKING AND ENTERING** record territory. Our view? Solid gains continue to be expected in coming years.

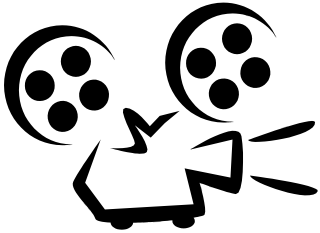
## Iraq & Terrorism

Meanwhile, American and British political and military leaders debate the **TIME TO LEAVE** Iraq, with **THE ESCAPE CLAUSE** hopefully providing for political stability in the region. Others see a repeat of our experience in Vietnam, fearing the regional **APOCALYPTO** that could result. As then, we fight an enemy using **THE PAINTED VEIL**s of women and **UNACCOMPANIED MINORS** as military shields.

We collectively wish Osama bin Laden a less than **WONDROUS OBLIVION**. We feel some level of satisfaction as he presumably lives a Spartan existence in the **CAVE OF THE YELLOW DOG**.

### Politics

Our **WE ARE MARSHALL** role in the world will be vigorously debated in the halls of Congress. In addition, **THE DEPARTED** Republican majority will continue to rue that early November day when they were **FLUSHED AWAY**.



We wonder whether the voters' **SHUT UP AND SING** wake-up call to Republican leaders regarding desired political cooperation will get through.

At the same time, President Bush wonders how **THE HISTORY BOYS** in future generations will grade his White House performance.

### New Leadership

**DREAMGIRLS** Nancy Pelosi and Hillary Rodham Clinton envision **THE PRESTIGE** of Democratic leadership that hopefully cements political control for years to come. Meanwhile, other liberal leadership in the new Congress elude **BORAT** wishes to **DECK THE HALLS** with new spending programs and, ultimately, with higher taxes on the wealthy.

### At the Federal Reserve

Chairman Ben Bernanke, **THE GOOD SHEPHERD** of monetary policy, takes rising comfort in his **CASINO ROYALE** bet in late June 2006 to move to the sidelines, following 17 consecutive monetary tightening moves. Wall Street anticipates the **HAPPY FEET** feeling of likely short-term interest rate cuts by mid-year 2007, as the Fed might be able to increase **THE FOUNTAIN** of money growth at that time.

Other forecasters see that **STRANGER THAN FICTION** view as a **SHORTBUS** to losses. This vocal minority sees **FUR**ther interest rate hikes still to come.

### Turf War

On a lighter note, Florida and Ohio State will battle after **THE HOLIDAY** for college football supremacy, with one presumably emerging as **THE QUEEN** bee and the other as **THE BRIDESMAID**. Michigan, still clinging to **ROCKY BALBOA**-type hope of a national title, feels the **CURSE** of a tight loss to the Buckeyes on November 18...and presumably suffered through a **BLACK CHRISTMAS**.

## “TEA”ser

Do the Hokey Pokey once a week, just in case that's really what it's all about.

—Scott Friedman



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