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# Poking Fun at Yourself

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

As I work feverishly this week to complete the final editing of my new book, *econAmerica* (see reverse), I'm turning to the *Tea Leaf* vault for a piece that we haven't run in a while. This piece was originally written a few years ago by Todd Zagorec, a friend and former banking associate at KeyCorp. Todd has long been miscast in life...he should have been a writer for Leno or Letterman. The piece has been updated to reflect current events.

## The Setting...

This interview is an excerpt from a recent public affairs radio broadcast. I didn't catch the beginning of the program, so I missed the names. I assume the one with the ouija board was the economist.

## The Interview...

### Why did you go into your particular field of study?

**Lawyer:** I found the rules that make society possible to be fascinating.

**Economist:** I needed a career that would reward exaggeration and guesswork, and this pays better than astrology.

### How does one become a lawyer/economist?

**Lawyer:** It's important to do well in college, and then study hard for three more years in law school. To get your license, you have to pass a closed-book exam covering all aspects of law, and lasting two or three days. In addition, throughout your career you must satisfy continuing legal education requirements in order to remain a lawyer.

**Economist:** It all starts with an invitation on a matchbook cover. This is followed by a couple of night classes learning to say things like, "Interest rates will remain stable, assuming they don't rise, fall, or God-forbid...move sideways."

### Who are some of your heroes...the role models of your profession?

**Lawyer:** Abraham Lincoln, Daniel Webster, Clarence Darrow, and Oliver Wendell Holmes.

**Economist:** Jeanne Dixon, Jimmy the Greek, Willard Scott, and Shirley MacLaine.

### If you couldn't be a lawyer/economist, what would you be?

**Lawyer:** A writer or a teacher.

**Economist:** A phrenologist (one who studies bumps on the skull).

### Are you involved in any community service?

**Lawyer:** I'm working on establishing a foundation to provide free legal services to nursing home residents.

**Economist:** I'm tinkering with a new kind of copper bracelet that's a lot cheaper than the new Medicare prescription drug benefit program.

### What are your professional goals?

**Lawyer:** To provide fair and effective representation for my clients.

**Economist:** To pay off my gambling debts.

### Your professions often seem to get more criticism than most. Lawyers are said to be greedy, technical, and unprincipled. Economists are supposedly vague and unscientific. What do you think of that?

**Lawyer:** I honestly feel the criticism is exaggerated. Lawyers are no worse than the people they represent. Of course there are problems—crowded courts, complicated

laws—and I'm hopeful that reform will take place, but that will take a lot of time, imagination, and effort. Difficult problems are never easily solved.

**Economist:** OK, so economics isn't an exact science like tarot cards, chiropractic, or Kirlian photography, but I think it's every bit as respectable a field as rolfing, channeling, or est. In short, I'm tired of the criticism and think it's high time economics was given the respect and status it deserves alongside all the other occult sciences.

**What advice can you give young people who want to succeed?**

**Lawyer:** Your reputation is the most important thing you have.

**Economist:** Always split aces and eights, and never double down when the dealer shows an ace.

**Thank you very much for your time.**

**Lawyer:** You're welcome.

**Economist:** What about my honorarium?

**“TEA”ser**

Nothing is impossible. We just don't know how to do it yet.

—L. L. Larison Cudmore

**Odds and Ends**

*econAmerica*

My latest book, published by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., is on schedule to be released in June 2007. In coming weeks I will give you details on how you can get a great deal on a copy.

In *econAmerica*, I present my optimistic view of the U.S. economy, and why it will perform well in coming years. *econAmerica* attempts to debunk common myths about the economy perpetuated by the national media, and it provides four key reasons for consumers and investors to be upbeat.



*Movin' Up*

We've outgrown our current space in downtown Salt Lake City and are heading up to the new University of Phoenix building in Clearfield, Utah, a suburb of Salt Lake about 25 miles north of our current offices. **Beginning March 3**, our new address will be:

1366 S Legend Hills Drive, Suite 150  
University of Phoenix Building  
Clearfield, Utah 84015

Our toll free number will remain the same (888-THREDGOLD), and we will publish our new local and fax numbers as soon as we have them.

*Cyber Challenges*

Some of you may not have been able to access our web site this past weekend, for which we apologize. Our e-mail was also down for a while, so if you sent us an e-mail that did not get answered, please send it again. Sorry for the trouble. It seems our ISP/web host somewhat self-destructed. (Yes, we're now using another service.)

I'm still a big fan of technology...sometimes it just has to be babied a bit.



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