



...weekly since 1976

Your guide to understanding
today's economy and
financial markets

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THREDGOLD
ECONOMIC
ASSOCIATES

The TEA Company
A Professional Speaking and
Economic Consulting Company
1366 S Legend Hills Drive, Suite 150
Clearfield, Utah 84015
801-614-0403

www.thredgold.com

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Movie Questions

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 emergence of 2008 presents a variety of critical questions to be pondered...and eventually answered.

Will the **ONCE** mighty U.S. economy avoid recession?

Will the **ENCHANTED** global economy remain on track, or might the global credit crunch that began with an **AUGUST RUSH** render growth **INTO THE WILD**?

Will the **DEEP WATER** decline of the American housing market stage a solid **COMEBACK** in late 2008 and in 2009?

Will the American stock market avoid the **STEEP** decline constantly predicted by many prognosticators?

By the time we reach the summer of '08, will we still care who **THE SEEKER**s of the White House are?

Will **THE GREAT DEBATERS** within the Democratically-controlled Congress focus on actually getting something done, or remain fixated on finding the **DIRTY LAUNDRY** and **BOOK OF SECRETS** of the Administration?

Have enough elderly Republican Senators resigned their seats...a process perhaps known as **NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN**...creating an impossible scenario for their party to regain the Senate in '08?

Will the national media's **THERE WILL BE BLOOD** regard for U.S. housing markets scare away thousands of potential homebuyers?

Will Iraqis/Afghans continue to oust **THE SAVAGES** of al-Qaeda, and cooperate further in getting their countries away from **CHARLIE WILSON'S WAR** and back on track?

Will American voters be able to stay **AWAKE** with regard to politicians who **WALK HARD** for our allegiance?

Will the tens of billions of dollars of **MAD MONEY** that chased the slightly higher investment returns which included diced and sliced subprime mortgages ever be recouped?

Will the next President have **THE GOLDEN COMPASS**-aided talent to help restore America's good name in the world?

Will the Congress ever get serious about wasteful spending? **IN REAL LIFE** the energy bill passed by the Congress last week and sent to the President for his signature contained 9,000 earmarks (local pork barrel spending projects).

Will we continue to make additional progress on reducing our twin deficits regarding the budget and trade? Did **JUNO** (sorry) that the FY 2007 budget deficit was half the average of the past 40 years as it relates to the size of the economy?

Will the **ALIENS VS. PREDATOR** mindset of Iraqi Sunnis vs. Iraqi Shiites (featuring one **ROGUE HITMAN** after another) ultimately prove the **UNDOING** of the current sharp decline in violence...or can peace ultimately prevail?

Will we soon see the 2008 election season as no more interesting than a typical Hollywood **BEE MOVIE**?

Will current Federal Reserve Chair Ben Bernanke see through **THE MIST** and pull the proper levers and push the right buttons in the Fed's **WONDER EMPORIUM**... correctly following the thin path between economic stimulus and loss of inflation-fighting credibility?

Will the **CITY OF MEN** (the nation's capital) be guided by a woman beginning on January 20, 2009, the date of the next Presidential Inauguration?

Will additional CEOs of Wall Street and global investment firms soon find **I'M NOT THERE** anymore...even as they take their multi-million dollar "retirement" packages?

Will the soon-to-be anointed **WATER HORSE**s who lead their respective political parties into the November election help or hinder those running under the same banner?

Will the **I AM LEGEND** view expressed by former Federal Reserve Chair Alan Greenspan in his book be tarnished further by critics of his opposition a few years ago to greater regulatory oversight (aka **TEETH**) regarding the mortgage industry?

Will those many Presidential candidates (including a few **FLAKES**) who miss **THE FINAL CUT** and are rendered to **THE BUCKET LIST** go gracefully?

In regard to his historical legacy, will the President enjoy enough success in specific areas to serve as **ATONEMENT** to those who will never forgive his move into Iraq?

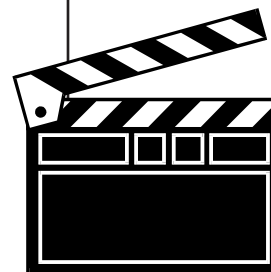
Will widespread voter distaste for the traditional political process of attacks and mud throwing eventually lead billionaire New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg to seek interest in **FINISHING THE GAME** as a viable third party candidate for president? Would he have a chance (the betting on this end says yes)?

Will Russian President Putin continue to follow **THE GAME PLAN** that allows him to retain **CONTROL** even after he formally steps down as President in a few months?

Will American military personnel be able to leave Iraq with **STRENGTH AND HONOR** in large numbers in mid-to-late 2008, seeking **THE PERFECT HOLIDAY** of spending **THIS CHRISTMAS** with their families?

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A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery on a detour.



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Thredgold Economic Associates
1366 S Legend Hills Drive, Suite 150
Clearfield, Utah 84015
www.thredgold.com

Graphics and layout by Kendall Oliphant
Research assistance by Shawn Thredgold