

Tea Leaf

...weekly since 1976

Your guide to understanding
today's economy and
financial markets

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Wouldn't It Be Nice If...

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- ...the President and the Congressional leadership would stop talking about being “pro-business” and actually a) promote pro-business policies, and b) remove anti-business initiatives that dominate their agenda
- ...we weren't running a federal budget deficit of \$183,000,000 every 60 minutes
- ...the Federal Reserve's upcoming attempts to unwind unprecedented monetary stimulus would be successful, with inflation staying under control
- ...we could make real progress in “clean burn” coal technology
- ...there was a stronger collective effort to improve opportunities in America's inner cities
- ...American voters would send dozens of long-term members of Congress from BOTH parties home in November
- ...more working people would save seriously for their Golden Years (an estimated one-third of the U.S. population saves zero for retirement)
- ...our kids realized sooner that Mom & Dad might actually know what they are talking about
- ...President Obama and the Congressional leadership were more focused on providing incentives for wealth creation and less focused on wealth redistribution
- ...Wall Street “high rollers” had greater legal and financial accountability for the financial market abuses of recent years
- ...the news media would run positive stories more than once a generation
- ...the Osbournes were never heard from again
- ...our 401(k) balances would continue to rebound nicely in coming years
- ...some of the mind-boggling research advancements in energy production and alternative energy soon made their way into the economy
- ...“government” would recognize that it is there to serve the people, and not the other way around
- ...drive-by shootings were replaced by drive-by moonings
- ...American corporate and consumer confidence would rise solidly in coming months
- ...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
- ...airlines that lack serious competition in various markets didn't gouge the public
- ...America's Vietnam War veterans would finally get credit for serving their country
- ...“nature” was much less destructive
- ...the Administration and the Congress would reach an intelligent, workable, and cost-effective compromise on health care
- ...men and women were from the same planet
- ...we actually got serious about U.S. energy independence with a program geared to 1) conservation, 2) alternative sources of energy, 3) access to much more oil and natural gas in Alaska and on the Continental Shelf, and 4) developing massive deposits of oil shale in the West
- ...American military personnel could see their families more often
- ...our illustrious Congressional representatives actually knew what was in various bills they voted on
- ...primary and secondary schools had to compete for teachers, students, and funding—just like colleges and universities
- ...fewer people were killed each and every year in the name of “religion”
- ...incompetent corporate CEOs who drive companies into the ground were not rewarded with multi-million dollar “golden parachutes” to simply go away

- ...Johnny Carson was still king of late-night TV
- ...“old fashioned” common courtesy between people made a big comeback
- ...politicians were elected based on experience and ability, not on who can spend the most money and sling the most mud
- ...the nation’s tobacco companies would leave our kids alone
- ...the \$865 billion stimulus program contained more in the way of real economic stimulus and less social engineering
- ...we would all get more involved in enriching the lives of those less fortunate
- ...the Congress would soon get serious about reining in the growth rate of entitlement programs in coming years. (Note: In regard to Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid...we do not have to cut spending...we have to slow down the growth rate of future spending...BIG difference!
- ...residents of the Middle East could get along with each other
- ...the problems in schools today were still spit wads, gum chewing, and truancy, as opposed to violence, drug use, and pregnancy
- ...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
- ...“far left” liberals and “far right” conservatives would back off a bit
- ...U.S. firefighters, police officers, and military personnel received our respect ALL of the time
- ...the Castro brothers would bite the dust and be replaced with a move toward democracy
- ...market corrections of various types were a little less painful
- ...the Administration and the Congress would get very serious about reducing future budget deficits
- ...more people would recognize that the U.S. recession is over, and companies would begin hiring again
- ...our presidential campaign season was much shorter and less exhausting...for candidates AND voters
- ...Paris Hilton’s 15 minutes of fame were finally over
- ...we could benefit more from years of practical business experience of millions of retirees, rather than simply “putting them out to pasture”
- ...each long-term member of Congress was required to take a year off, start a new business with limited funding, meet a payroll, and then deal with the complexities and hassles THEY have created
- ...Jon and Kate were never heard from again
- ...the game of politics in Washington D.C. involved a little more cooperation and a little less confrontation
- ...your garbage disposal didn’t eat better than two-thirds of the world’s population
- ...the violence and language in today’s movies could be toned down a bit
- ...solid Mexican economic growth would provide more good jobs at home
- ...the outcome of many lawsuits was determined more by the facts and less by who has the deepest pockets
- ...we didn’t have a \$12,700,000,000,000 gross national debt, and we weren’t spending over \$1,000,000,000 DAILY just to pay the INTEREST on that debt
- ...the role of “peacekeeper” wasn’t associated with so much violence
- ...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
- ...many spoiled and pampered athletes in MLB, the NFL, the NBA, and the NHL 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 one of the greatest countries in the world

“TEA”ser

No matter how much you push the envelope, it’ll still be stationary.

—from Bill Losey



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