

# Economic trouble seen by many as just dues after boom times

NEW YORK (AP) — A large percentage of economic forecasters are looking for trouble ahead, and they're finding support for their fears in the past.

Whether the fears are justified is an entirely different matter. A vocal minority of forecasters, for instance, say their brethren are locked into a neurotic view of the economic world as one in need of punishment.

Why the punishment? Good times breed the feeling. And when those good times persist despite budget and trade deficits and myriad other unresolved problems, a sense of guilt develops. Good times, it is felt, are undeserved.

In the political realm, therefore, a good many economists say that even if George Bush enjoys an extended honeymoon he eventually will be confronted by the problems. It is his fate, they say, to face the deficit and tax monsters.

This is how they set the stage: For the eight years of the Reagan administration the economy enjoyed great prosperity. Interest rates fell. Inflation declined sharply and remained fairly low. Both stocks and bonds rose by roughly 11 percent a year in real terms.

Business strengthened itself during this time. Small companies prospered. Employment grew. Large companies became much more competitive. Corporate profits rose. By most measures, real income also rose.

All this came about while some economists worried themselves silly. It couldn't be happening they said, pointing to the mountainous budget deficit, spectacular trade deficit, low savings rate, and shaky financial institutions.

They insist we have run up debts that must be repaid. The comparison of Ronald Reagan and Calvin Coolidge is convenient for such thinkers. The "Roaring 20s" of Calvin Coolidge's administration were among the best years of the century for stocks. Then the economy collapsed.

In the "bad things to come" scenario, President-elect George Bush plays the role of Herbert Hoover. Coolidge's era buried Hoover. Ronald Reagan's era could disintegrate and smother Bush and his plans.

The scenario appeals to those who like their rationales well packaged, but such packaging is accomplished only by eliminating some factors.

Securities markets, for example, might be overpriced but not to the same extent as in 1929. The Federal Reserve Board has a better handle on the economy. Industry today is stronger than it was two decades ago or in 1929.

Such factors don't fit into the package. It

doesn't stop the thinking, however. Those who see trouble ahead then point to an expansion that already is six years old, which they view as old age. It cannot last, they say.

Perhaps not, but recessions have always been a threat, and an actuality too. President Eisenhower had three of them, and his terms generally are viewed as having been economically stable and successful.

There is no question that Bush's administration will be forced to deal with tough matters, including the twin deficits of budget and trade, tax questions, bad debts everywhere, structural problems in banking, poverty, uncertainty.

In the years since World War II the stock market has declined five of six times during the first year after a Republican election victory. It could do so again, adding to the existing pressures. But it will come back.

As important as the potential downside to the problems is how effective the new president's policies are. There are always problems to deal with, which is why presidents are elected. Bush isn't without weapons to use.

Some of those weapons might have to be used to infiltrate the minds of those who spread the philosophy of inevitable failure.

## Tips supply needed income for low-salaried food servers

By Ron Pippin  
Reporter

"Tipping is not a city in China" reads the large pickle jar on the bar at Duddley's Draw. Five nickels and two dimes are scattered about the bottom of the jar. Nothing more.

Although less lucrative tips could be expected at a place that sells 64 ounces of beer for less than \$3, 15 percent of the total bill is considered standard gratuity for service in most restaurants and bars.

Many students work as waiters, waitresses or bartenders, relying on tips from customers to pay college expenses.

Because most Bryan-College Station restaurants pay their waitstaff between \$2.01 and \$2.25 an hour, tips are essential.

The Deluxe Burger Bar, located on University Avenue (Northgate), pays its food servers \$2.25 an hour. Manager Kevin Warren, who also waits tables part time, said waiters and waitresses at The Deluxe average about 15 percent of total sales in tips.

"Our people make between \$30

and \$60 on weeknights and sometimes more than \$100 on weekends," Warren said. "Sunday nights are much worse because we get a lot of Corps and dorm students."

"People who have never waited tables don't realize how hard it is," he said. "They also don't realize you're making two bucks an hour."

Warren also said he thinks people tip poorly not because they don't know any better, but because they are inconsiderate.

Warren said families who visit for football games and other events are usually the best tippers.

"Sorority girls also tip well, but C.T.s are the worst," he said.

Although tips at The Deluxe appear average, gratuity at Ken Martin's Steakhouse in Bryan doesn't. Tip percentages over the past three months show an average of less than 11 percent for all waitpersons.

Darla Darcy of Bryan, who waits tables at Ken Martin's, attributes this to the fact that the restaurant doesn't

serve alcohol and attracts a more conservative patronage.

"Local people aren't as conscious of etiquette as people from Dallas or Houston," Darcy said.

She also said she doesn't think people tip poorly to be rude, but simply because they aren't aware of the 15 percent standard.

Darcy said she averages between \$20-\$30 on weekdays and about \$60 on weekends.

Bartenders around the area receive higher hourly wages than waiters — between \$3.35 an hour and \$4 an hour — but smaller percentages in tips.

Raimund Gideon, a junior landscape architecture major from Conroe, tends bar at Yesterday's billiards bar in Bryan.

Gideon said he averages \$8 in tips on weekdays and \$20 on weekends.

Gideon said although \$3.75 an hour is decent pay, he still relies on tips to meet expenses.

"I have weeks where I eat less than normal because my tips are so bad," Gideon said.

## LTV gets Scout rocket launch rights

WASHINGTON (AP) — LTV, the Dallas-based aerospace firm that has produced Scout rockets for the government for the last 28 years, has been granted the exclusive right to produce and launch the rocket commercially, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration announced Thursday.

The Scout is used mainly for small science payloads. Since the first launch on July 1, 1960, there have been 112 Scout launches. LTV said the value of contracts to date has been more than \$350 million. Each Scout costs from \$7 million to \$12 million, from start through launching.

The agreement with the Missiles Division of LTV Missiles and Electronics group is "another important advance in establishing a strong U.S. commercial launch vehicle industry," the NASA announcement said.

Since Aug. 15, 1986, when President Reagan ordered NASA out of the commercial launch business, NASA has signed such agreements with McDonnell Douglas, maker of Delta rockets; Martin Marietta, which markets Titans; and General Dynamics, manufacturer of Atlas-Centaur.

Each agreement is followed by others that convey the right to use government launch pads on a cost-reimbursable basis.

American launch companies have contracts worth nearly \$1 billion to launch 18 payloads through 1992. All the agreements were reached since President Reagan announced his policy, which was designed not only to free the shuttle for government satellite launches, but also to spur a private launch industry.

LTV built the Scout under a series of government contracts for flight vehicles used for NASA science missions. The Scout usually is launched from either Wallops Island, Va., or Vandenberg Air Force Base in California.

It was the first solid propellant vehicle to place a payload in orbit and has an operational success rate of 95 percent, including 37 successful launches in a row between 1967 and 1975.

Originally, the 75-foot-tall Scout could put a 131-pound payload into a 300-mile-high orbit. Today's rocket can lift 450 pounds into that orbit.

## False invoices incriminate importers

EL PASO (AP) — A federal grand jury returned a conspiracy indictment against officers and employees of a now-defunct apparel importer as part of an ongoing joint investigation by the U.S. Customs Service and the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Operation Mexican Express has been gathering evidence over the past year involving falsified invoices for imported clothing. Customs officials in El Paso said shipments into the United States by Harco Industries between 1983 and 1987 were undervalued, resulting in an estimated loss of \$500,000 in U.S. revenue.

Harco was part of a maquiladora, or twin-plant, program, an agreement between American companies and Mexican labor. The company provides the components and sends them across the border for assembly.

A duty is charged on the expenses incurred during the manufacturing process, according to Daryl Shumaker, assistant special agent of enforcement in El Paso.

Customs officials announced Wednesday the 52-count indictment is the "tip of the iceberg" and indicated that other indictments would be forthcoming on other companies involved.

## Couple leaves city 'rat race,' finds haven in countryside

MUENSTER (AP) — It's the American Dream — chucking the city rat race and the pressure of a 9-to-5 job for a cozy home in the country and a creative commercial venture.

Two and a half years ago, Paul and Jody Valentine left congested traffic, polluted skies and humdrum jobs in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

"We just decided we didn't want to commute to the big city any more to work," Jody says. "Some of our neighbors still commute, and we feel so sorry for them."

It was three months after they first saw the 42 acres of rocks and trees that the Valentines decided to pull up stakes and move from Lake Dallas to the country. Working together, they cleared a small area in the gently rolling hills 10 miles northwest of Muenster and set about building a new life.

"Where we're standing right now, we dug through the brush to find it — we cleared it by hand," Paul says, lounging against the rustic kitchen bar in their compact solar- and wood-heated home.

"Everything here has been done by just the two of us. Not one thing was hired done. Except the well — we did have that drilled."

"Everything" includes their sunny house, a workshop and the rustic boardwalk that connects them. The Valentines make their living wood-working.

"The workshop's not finished and the house is not finished and I don't know if they'll ever be finished," Jody says, laughing.

"Things got to rolling pretty fast," Paul agreed.

Jody says their experiments in woodworking led to the move.

Today, the Valentines' steadily-growing catalog of full-color prints records more than 160 items they have designed and made for their Rock Creek Farm business. Their creations range from tiny wooden books bearing the titles of well-known classics to primitive angels and seven-foot-tall hutsches.

They work in solid pine and scorn the use of hot glue guns.

"The real country stuff is what we make — the more dents and nicks, the better," Jody says.

"There are no two pieces the same," Paul adds. "That may be the basic idea — nothing's the same."

This time of year, the Valentines' days are filled with their work. They

begin planning for Christmas well in advance, and enlist the help of a neighbor for packing and mailing orders.

"It's about six or seven months out of the year that we're pretty busy," Paul says. "We work from just after daylight until way after dark. Usually, quitting time is just before the 10 o'clock news — and that's not so we can watch the news; that's just so we can come inside and go to bed."

Paul does the saw work; Jody paints and stencils. Both spend

hours pouring over favorite magazines and craft books, drinking in rustic settings and accessories with an eye toward their next creation.

"We're always making different things, new and different things," Jody says.

"It's something you can't keep up with," Paul says. "You never know from one week to the next what's going to be popular."

They are among the craftsmen exhibiting on the courthouse square in Gainesville Dec. 10, 16 and 17.

## Pets make poor gifts in certain situations

By Timothy J. Hammons  
Reporter

When giving a gift for Christmas, there's always a problem of getting the right size or color. Even when the gift is an animal.

In fact, when the gift is an animal, there are a lot more things to consider than just color.

Dr. Bonnie Beaver, a Texas A&M professor of veterinary medicine, said if you are determined to give a pet as a gift, it is best to do some research and consider all those involved.

People do not take into consideration the responsibility involved when giving a pet, she said.

"The primary problem is the person who gets the pet may not want it," she said. "You may also be giving an animal that is not appropriate."

People who live in apartments have to consider the rules of the complex in which they live, she said. Some apartment complexes do not allow pets, while others allow only certain kinds of pets such as cats and fish.

Even people who live in houses may not want a pet because they have a small yard or they travel a lot, Beaver said.

No one kind of animal is better to give than any other, she said. For instance, terriers are independent dogs while beagles are

more dependent. There are too many varieties of dogs to say what is the best to give.

"If you want to give a pet, then give a picture or a collar," Beaver said. "This is a way of saying, 'This is what I'm going to give you,' and then the person will have a choice in selecting the pet."

Allowing the person to select the pet is better because the person may want a short-haired dog as opposed to a long-haired dog, she said. It is also more fun for the person receiving the pet.

Waiting until after Christmas to bring a new pet into the house is better because there is less stress on those involved, Beaver said. There are a lot of things going on at Christmas that make waiting to bring a puppy into the home a better decision, she said.

As for giving children pets, Beaver said it is best to check with the parents of the child beforehand. Usually parents end up with the burden for their children's pets, she said.

Either way, the animal still has to be fed, cleaned up after and vaccinated. The animal is going to require a lot of patience before it can be properly trained, she said.

It must be understood that pets are long-term commitments, she said.

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