

HEARD ON THE STREET

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Overheard

Wondering why Pfizer agreed to pay a 29% premium for Wyeth? It was the X factor. A rival bidder, identified as "company X," emerged in December, months after Pfizer began talks with Wyeth. Company X didn't get far, as the most it could offer was a price "in the mid-40s." Pfizer ended up offering about \$50 a share. Could company X still be on the prowl?

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Finding secure employment is more important than ever. But if a government job doesn't suit, there are other options. Sageworks Inc., which compiles financial data on privately held U.S. companies, points to several sectors still posting solid profit growth.

Dentistry seems to be bearing up -- perhaps due to all that anxious teeth grinding. And, recession or not, taxes make for prosperous accountants. Finally, there is always the bottle: Beer, wine and liquor wholesalers are doing just fine.