

December 17, 2008

# Jobless, Bailout News Trigger Unhappiest Day So Far in 2008

The five least happy days of 2008 in U.S. coincide with negative economic news

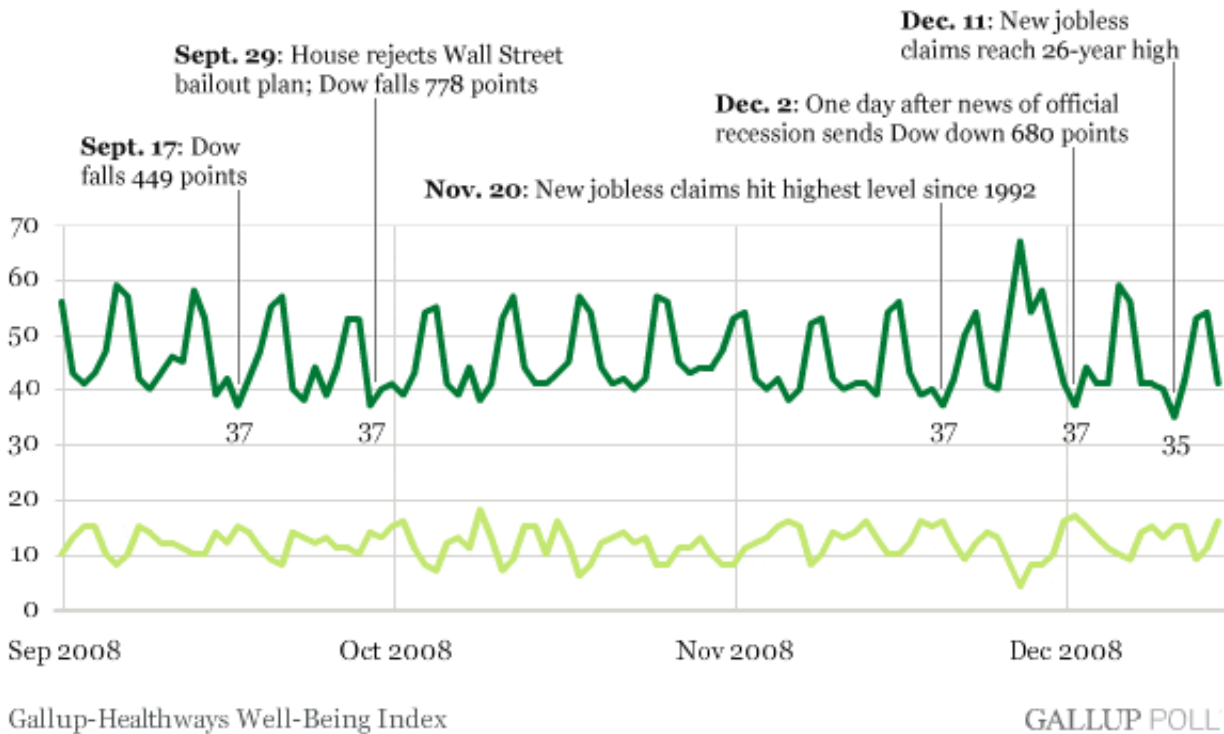
by Elizabeth Mendes

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- The percentage of Americans experiencing a lot of happiness or enjoyment without a lot of stress or worry fell to a new low of 35% on Thursday, Dec. 11, the same day the U.S. Labor Department announced that new jobless claims jumped to a 26-year high and the auto bailout bill failed in the Senate. The [Gallup-Healthways mood measure](#), which consistently finds happiness higher on weekends and lower on weekdays, finds that thus far in 2008, the five days on which Americans experienced the lowest levels of happiness all coincided with highly negative economic news.

### Gallup Daily: Mood

Based on emotion experienced Sept.1-Dec.16, 2008

- % With a lot of happiness or enjoyment without a lot of stress or worry
- % With a lot of stress or worry without a lot of happiness or enjoyment



On two of those five days, Nov. 20 and Dec. 11, the Labor Department reported a steep rise in new jobless claims. The other three lows in happiness occurred the day of or the day after major drops in the Dow.

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*Gallup Daily: Mood -- Five Least Happy Days in 2008*

Based on Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

	<b>Event</b>	<b>% Happiness/ Enjoyment</b>
Dec 11, 2008	New jobless claims reach 26-year high	35%
Dec 2, 2008	One day after news of official recession sends Dow down 680 points	37%
Nov 20, 2008	New jobless claims hit highest level since 1992	37%
Sep 29, 2008	House rejects Wall Street bailout plan; Dow falls 778 points	37%
Sep 17, 2008	Dow falls 449 points	37%

GALLUP POLL

Exactly two weeks prior to the Dec. 11 low, happiness had hit an all-time high for the year of 67% on Thanksgiving Day. Including Thanksgiving, the four happiest days of the year have occurred on holidays, with New Year's Day, the day after Independence Day, and Father's Day tying for the fifth happiest.

*Gallup Daily: Mood -- Five Happiest Days in 2008*

Based on Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index

	<b>Event</b>	<b>% Happiness/ Enjoyment</b>
Nov 27, 2008	Thanksgiving	67%
Mar 23, 2008	Easter	65%
Jul 4, 2008	Independence Day	64%
May 11, 2008	Mother's Day	63%
Jan 1, 2008*	New Year's	62%
Jul 5, 2008*	Day after Independence Day	62%
Jun 15, 2008*	Father's Day	62%

\*Denotes a tie

GALLUP POLL

For a majority of Americans, holidays are an occasion when they can spend a larger-than-normal amount of time socializing with friends and family. The [Gallup-Healthways mood measure](#) has previously reported that the days of the year when the most Americans experience happiness or enjoyment also tend

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to be days they report [spending more time with friends and family](#). On the other hand, throughout 2008, Gallup has found [lows in happiness](#) to be consistent with news of a faltering economy.

Prior to the worsening of the financial crisis [in September](#), Gallup found that 58% of Americans reported a lot of happiness or enjoyment without a lot of stress or worry on a typical Saturday or Sunday, compared to 46% on a typical Monday. Since mid-September, weekend levels as well as weekday levels of happiness have frequently been lower than they were before the crisis.

## Survey Methods

For the Gallup Poll Daily tracking survey, Gallup is interviewing no fewer than 1,000 U.S. adults nationwide each day during 2008. The U.S. mood results are based on data from Sept. 1-Dec. 16, 2008, and the maximum margin of sampling error is  $\pm 2$  percentage points.

Interviews are conducted with respondents on land-line telephones (for respondents with a land-line telephone) and cellular phones (for respondents who are cell-phone only).

In addition to sampling error, question wording and practical difficulties in conducting surveys can introduce error or bias into the findings of public opinion polls.

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