



Unsettled used to be the term that seemed best to describe these times we happen to be living in. Lately I wonder if we have passed some kind of fuzzy threshold moving closer to **chaos**. The troubling developments in the financial markets, including crazy swings in the stock market, and the collapse of some of the world's largest institutions are additions to what seemed an already **full plate of change**. To me at least change lately seems to press with such ferocity that I almost become numb to it. Oh yeah – another bank failure ... at a personal level, I didn't even blink, as I had my company's working capital in a bank that failed nearly two years ago – my luck was to have my liquid assets in the first financial institution to have failed in over a decade (for the morbidly curious: Netbank ... and yes, the failure did cost me real money). I was frankly

shocked to realize that the FDIC limit was, in fact, something that could affect me, as being over it meant that poof – a large chunk of real money just evaporated, with not even a whimper. Ouch

With the business climate continuing to weaken in almost every sector of the economy, added to the angst that occurs when I read about the ice pack melt exceeding even the worst case predictions, and more *change* in the same vein, it feels like the pace of change is accelerating and increasingly chaotic.

It does not help that my business is off; but you probably already knew that, right? In an email from an architect friend yesterday, he said 'send any carriage houses or remodels my way you're not interested in, as my well of word of mouth referrals seems to have gone dry'. I emailed him back – "It's not your well, the water table's dropped!"

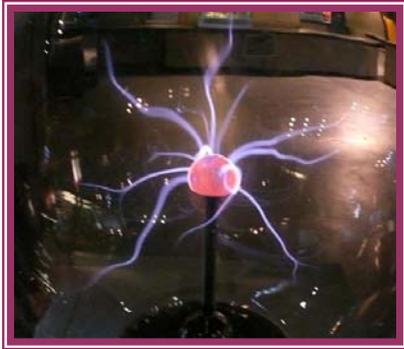
But I'm already hunkered down, with pretty clear memories of 1991 when my office went from 21 employees down to 2 ½ in the span of a few months. Today, with word just having come in moments ago that a large project's that we've been working on for over a year had it's funding evaporate, the road ahead doesn't look all too rosy ... but as a contrarian ... I'll encourage you to take another look, from a broader perspective.

I have been hosting a series of meetings with an ad-hoc group representing some key organizations active in our built environment in various ways. It includes representative of the Urban Land Institutes, the Builder's Exchange, the city's Development Oversight Commission, the Metro Chamber of Commerce, the Downtown Partnership, and of course the AIACV. At our meeting a week ago, in spite of the grey economic environment, it was clear that we all feel an incredible energy in the air here, and intense optimism when we look out to the long view. This ad-hoc group is exploring areas where we share common ground, on the theory that if we can identify one or two **key areas of common interest** and devote our respective talents, energies, and unique perspectives and approach to those, some amazing things will happen. Based on the comments and lively interaction, it is clear that in spite of whatever bumps there are in the road ahead, there is a groundswell of interest and enthusiasm that spans across many local organizations. We are poised for smart growth and environmentally sensitive leadership in shaping the future of our region – there is no doubt of that in my mind. With the kind of ground work being laid now,



while times admittedly are not rosy – wow – when the marketplace turns around, as it will, we will be in a position to have it roaring back locally! And we, in the design community, will be right there, because – right now – we are IN THE ROOM, and IN THE DEAL.

In the meantime, I'm seeing another change approaching as I enter the final few months of my term as your AIACV President. While I'm not ready to sing my swan song just yet, I've begun thinking 'what next'



... which led me to an out-of-the-blue decision to toss my hat into the ring for a run for AIACC Vice President of Communication, following Nick Doucas's footsteps in that role as he aspires toward the Presidency of the AIACC by seeking election as AIACC First Vice President. If Nick and I are both successful, it would create an unparalleled situation where TWO AIACV members are on the California State Executive committee at the same time ... which may lead to ... someplace good I'll venture. If you happen to know someone on the AIACC board, Nick and I would both appreciate support in this adventure. In an environment of dramatic change come ... dramatic changes ... and with our energy as part of the mix, not a few of those changes will be **good news**.

Thoughts? Email me mfm@appliedarts.net

PS Thanks to all for helping make the Globe Mill AIACV Event such a huge success ... perhaps the largest AIACV building event in the chapter's history!