



In an effort to avoid adding to what seems a **more than full information flow about economic conditions**, I am offering this month some light but crunchy information snacks ... and a **challenge to an adventure** in recounting a discovery of a strange place close at hand.

Leaders Unite

Those of you who have served the AIACV on the board at any time in your life – consider yourself **permanently Tatoon'd!** ... as you **are now a bona-fide member in an exclusive group** - the **AIACV Leadership Council**. While at our gathering we likely will NOT be displaying *other* tattoos, I CAN promise good company, food, drink, and conversation; and a chance to add *YOUR wisdom and insight* into the mix that makes our organization so rich in texture, talent, and perspective. Please join us for this first of what will become an annual tradition!

Election Beer, Sausage and a Bit o' Drama ...

Our election event was a fun and relaxed evening of great beer, sausage, camaraderie ... and a bit of drama as one vote stood at a dead tie until – well – the mystery tie breaker will have to own up themselves, as my lips are sealed (unless perhaps plied with more beer and sausage) ... The Chapter now has new bylaws – thanks Don,



Carl, Richard and all the rest who helped make this years long effort have a happy ending finally. And ... we also have some exciting 2009 additions to what has been an active and energized board of directors!



Phoenix Place

Richard Raisler - AIACV allied member - extended an invitation to the board and committee chairs to what turned out to be quite an intriguing event a few weeks ago. It was a celebration of the 25 year anniversary of Phoenix Place in Fair Oaks. If you can imagine coming back to stand in the middle of the present owners and their wood houses ... after 25 years and the ravages of people, weather and time **Donlyn Lyndon architect, author and Professor Emeritus** and compared his experiment in ideas and thoughtfulness to what is there today. This place survived a string of bankrupt builders/ developers, leaking roofs, rotting shingles and all the other woes and beauties that time brings to communities. I found it really is special in a quiet way, and it was a treat to get close to the heart of it, and feel how *respected and treasured it is by those who live there*.



Code Conversations

The AIACV continued it's tradition of being a key player in developing a **collaborative and cooperative relationship with our regional code officials** with our fifth annual Code Conversation event (a personal source of great pride!). With Bob Chase AIA, Chief Building official as moderator, we hosted a lively conversation, with pithy and sometimes humorous perspectives on where the code's sticking points are in this first year after rollout of the international code. Some key points were the glitches created when the state did NOT adopt the companion 'international residential code' and the sometimes awkward and unresolved dilemmas that face us as we work with the variety of accessibility standards (ranging from Title 24, to the ADA - which being a civil rights law is not enforced by building officials, but is **the basis for much litigation that is financially rewarding for a few and heart wrenching for many**). I hope you are considering attending the accessibility seminar the chapter is hosting as this is clearly an area of code that needs interpretation and refinement – and now under state law, to maintain a license as an architect you will be mandated to get a certain amount of coursework in the area under your belt ... since ...

Continuing education is now mandatory

Up until a few weeks ago, California was one of only a few states in the country that had NO requirement for continuing education for architects. Now, all architects must earn a few hours of CE credit, but just for accessibility training. Interestingly, **no education is required for life safety and fire, structure, energy conservation, or any of the other myriad considerations we must balance in doing real life work.**

I hope the AIACC gets in front of this issue before every special interest passes their own law requiring education in their interest area ... your board of directors already has voted to support broad continuing education – of course as an AIA member, you are already used to having a continuing education requirement, but to the half of regional architects who are not members, this will be entirely new.



Scholarship Program

Cynthia Easton AIA has stepped up to take the reins of our nascent chapter scholarship program, just voted into being by the Board a couple of months ago. I am thrilled to see us get into the business of **supporting our future leaders** in some albeit modest financial capacity ... in time to qualify for AIA National matching funds!

The Challenge to an Adventure

I could go on ... but with only a few handfuls of weeks left in my term as president, it's easy for me to slip into a reflective mood... so now I'll offer my little story of an ADVENTURE – one that you, yourself could duplicate – easily surpass - with only an investment of one hour of time. *If any one accepts this challenge to explore a strangely lost part of our city, please email me and share your thoughts and photos ...*



Near the heart of a city, between a river and the edge of nowhere, at a stranger's camp ...

Fall is a great time to take walks, and with the beauty of a great natural river so close at hand, Kris and I find ourselves often drawn to the American River. Living here it's easy to forget the urban miracle it is, a legacy to the vision and work of a handful – an unbroken swath of natural splendor snaking through the places of a million lives.

Just a few blocks from my office, at the foot of 28th the paving rears up from its dead flatness. Mounting that hump in a car brings

into sudden view a strange landscape of scruffy ground pierced by pipes – a giant landfill now slowly digesting the cast offs buried there – and three nascent 'parks' – the first more in name than function, the Sutter's Landing sign framed with chain link, dust and an unsettling lack of trees. Just beyond if you drive until you can go no further - a metal warehouse from within which come insistent clacks, bangs, and hollers; it's the next park - a giant shade canopy for skaters, which no doubt will be full of mostly young men trying with bloody determination to master a new age art ... and the final park is just beyond – an untamed wilderness of trees and

dry brush edged by a sinuous giant, the American River, widely and quietly moving, just as it always has. Dropping down a steep embankment and veering left to a dirt path, Tule our tiny Boston Terrier, comes off leash and her face lights up as she bounds away and back, no energy conserved. I'm pulled toward hints of industrial activity just ahead, so ignoring the rusted 'private' sign and long fallen barb wire we reach a dirt road, so deep in fine dry dust even our slow movement brings it alive. In a few hundred feet, our path swings toward the great river, bringing into view a kayak, a fisherman, and on the bank a hint of an abandoned place that reeks of history. Moving closer we come on a tangled mass of pipes, ten foot diameter rotted wood barrels, deeply leaning spalled concrete, and rusted tin – all embraced by a death hug of gigantic wild grapes, their six inch diameter speaking of decades of rule.

As we round the building's edge and move back up to the levee top, we hear voices, a radio, and see a vast field of broken concrete debris – the remains of countless sidewalks and slabs, stretching out to the south to visually touch the downtown skyline just blocks away. Along the edge of the concrete debris mountains, up to the railroad tracks beyond, at the edge of our city, I feel at the edge of nowhere. Here just below are tents – in bright colors of orange and green that once no doubt seemed festive, they are clustered, with a handful of people going about some business between them, with hard words. Another rough wire fence frames the dramatically sudden appearance of a scruffy dog, racing to challenge us, which makes a hasty move away seem prudent.

Just feet from the City's heart, along a great river's brushy edge, at the edge of the nowhere that is at the foot of a stranger's tent.

No buildings, or craftily made things or planned spaces here ...its a collection ... debris, old cars, abandoned machines people and their shelters ...perhaps for reclaiming in some future ... while never pausing flows the river nearby and grows the cottonwoods and wild grapes, just as they have for a thousand years.