



# CAMBRIDGE 8

Volume 2, Issue 1- September 22, 2009



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## Harvard Alumni Stuff

Have you joined the Alumni website?

Sign-up today:

<http://amdpalumni.ning.com/>

Have you joined a Harvard Club in your area? Find one close to you:

<http://post.harvard.edu/harvard/clubs/html/sites.shtml>

## Upcoming Events

### Tenth Anniversary of AMDP.

Thursday, July 22, 2010 will be a reception and dinner at the Harvard Club.

Friday, July 23, 2010 will be a full-day educational program. Alumni Reunion.

## September 2009

*Pavan Bhatia*

I hope everyone is doing well and prospering in their lives and careers!

September marks the second edition of our Newsletter “Cambridge 8”. Thanks to all the contributors for this month. I hope you all share your stories with us for future newsletters.



I can only speak for myself, but it’s been hard getting used to the idea that we are finished with the Harvard program! I look forward to keeping in touch with everyone as time goes by through our newsletters e-mails and hopefully some visits.

Make sure you take the time to join the AMDP Alumni websites and the local Harvard Clubs.

## Taking Control of the Things We Can

*Tom Powell*

Earlier this week, after wrestling with the spate of painful economic news provided by major media, I recognized that I had no immediate control over any of the massive economic concerns. The stock market zigged when I hoped it would zag. Unemployment numbers, often reported differently, moved at different paces in the undesirable direction. Our federal deficit grew, which increased our individual debt responsibility. The problems were not



confined by the pages of the newspapers. When I peered through my office window I saw quality real-estate projects continuing to sit lifeless because they lacked funding. After a few moments of reflection, I recognized that I, and certainly the majority of us, am being forcibly weighed down by all of the negative. Instead of dwelling on the uncontrollable, we should be manifesting the positive by taking hold of the reins on those things in which we can have significant influence.



I decided to start anew with more refreshing thoughts. So, I turned to a medium in which I had some control over the information that was presented to me: Google. Two main pages topped the list when I searched for the words "Economy: We Are the Answer." The first was an informal

Yahoo Answer Board on which the following question was raised: "Is there hope for the American economy or should we just drastically change the way we live?" The user went on to define "drastically change" by giving up our private houses and cars. The second most-popular page that appeared was BarackObama.com, which suggests no one within Google's reach really believes we the people have the capacity to be the answer to our economic problems. According to my Google search, the answer either rests in the hands of President Obama or we will all be forced to live in communal frat houses without automobiles.

When our economy is running smoothly, we all welcome the opportunities to be part of a do-it-yourself world. We bag our own groceries, scan our own documents, rent our own movies and print our own boarding passes. On a weekly basis, we all most likely take it upon ourselves to deposit, track, clean, swipe, dry, spray, refill, bus, organize, pour, dispense and scan in the presence of other do-it-yourselfers in the vast public.

As long as the tasks are minimal and the goal is clearly in view, we are encouraged to do everything ourselves. The responsibilities we used to let others handle, we now do

ourselves (I cooked my own meal at Melting Pot earlier in the month). About half of the times I visit a gas station, there is no reason for an attendant to be present-unless I am in Oregon or New Jersey, where state officials prohibit me from pumping my own gas. But, when an issue has

options that are more complex than selecting diesel or regular, our individual accountability takes a vacation. Why do we turn our focus to other superpowers to take control and eliminate ourselves from the equation? The Problem is Passivity

This economic downturn is nothing more than a collection of intertwined problems. Although financially painful and physically overwhelming, there is no reason for any of us to hide underneath our desks and wait for the shaking to end. Think about the steps we all take when trying to overcome a timely problem-for an example, a clogged drain. We take a short period of time to analyze the situation. We look at all the factors involved and ask ourselves crucial questions: Is the water draining at all? Is the clog causing the pipes to leak? How severe is the leak? Is it causing immediate damage? Next, inevitably, it is human instinct to search for the quickest fix. We switch on the garbage disposal and rub our lucky rabbit's foot. When we are forced to take real







action we must recognize the weapons we have to combat the problem (a plunger, a drain snake, Drain-O). After we extinguish our resources, we then consult the knowledge of an expert.

Now consider the enormity of our current economic struggles. The formula for dealing with the problem is much more complex, but it should still follow the basic fundamentals. Why then have droves of investors been complacent to listen to long-winded "experts" before analyzing their situation and deducing what it is that they can do for themselves? The formula is flip-flopped when we let ourselves believe that any given problem is too big or too complex. Remember the old adage, "We can only eat an elephant one bite at a time"? Many of the intricacies of this recession are out of our control, but the sooner we take control over the issues we can influence, the sooner the complex problems begin to untangle. If the severity of the problem is directly proportionate to the amount of time we take to analyze it, then we only need a brief moment to stare into a clogged drain. In that same vein, our economic crisis is much more complex and has required a longer period for analysis. I argue we have passed this stage of the process and action is required now. This summer brought about a number of signs that suggest we are now slogging around somewhere near the bottom. With home-improvement projects, summer vacations and outdoor entertainment, consumers typically spend more in the summer months. We are now entering what is destined to be a difficult autumn. Unemployment will continue to strain on families, foreclosures will mount and consumers will tighten the

belts they let momentarily loosen over the summer. ....Continued Page 4

## David Chen Welcomes New Baby Girl

Little Bella



On July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009, David Chen and his wife welcomed their new baby daughter "Belicia" to the world. Bella (nickname) is the first baby for the couple. Bella was born at 830am, in Beijing. She was 3.5 kg, now about 5kg, crying and smiling randomly. "I am excited and proud to be father of my beautiful baby, on the other hand there are sacrifices to be made as a father, one of them is to postpone my study and missed all of my dear AMDP mates in July...These days I have a special time to play with Bella in the early morning before I go to work, she wakes up at 6am everyday...One benefit to raise a baby in China is availability of maids, in Chinese its called Ayi, there is special maid for first month baby and also

for infants, these released a lot of burden from me and my wife...If any of you want to give birth a baby in China I can arrange full service now ", says David.

We wish David all the best in raising his precious new baby!

David Chen  
Director of Planning and Design,  
Chief Architect,  
New World China Land (Beijing)

## Katherine's New Venture

In August, and a mere two weeks post AMDP graduation, Katherine Williams Kane bought some properties at auction in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. The photo is the 1877 structure that she will renovate as her residence.

Kathy says "horse-hair plaster walls and original wrought-iron balconies will be a new wrinkle in my development experience. I may need the help of architect classmates for the interior layouts of this monster. That is.....,after I get approvals from the city's Historic District Commission my renovation goals. God help me!"



Katherine's new, 1877 property



Taking Control of the Things We Can  
Tom Powell...continued



On the other hand, as the leaves turn and nature gets stripped of its color, a buckled economy will continue to present opportunities for us to take action. It is time for all of us to stop viewing ourselves as helpless observers and again consider ourselves part of the equation. In some ways we already are important variables, but we rely on the inadvertent action we take to be sufficient. How many times have you heard an angry citizen blurt out something along the lines of "I do my part, I'm a taxpayer"? The somewhat-passive action of paying taxes funds many integral economic systems in which our country balances itself.

Just as we hire plumbers to help unclog our drains and keep them running smoothly we elect (read "hire") officials to help unclog our economy and keep it running smoothly. With our plumbers, we are responsible for paying the bill to enable them to do their job. The same is true for the officials; by paying our taxes, we essentially all pick up our share of the bill and expect them to do

their share of the work. Without our capital, their positions would not exist; but this hardly means we have positioned ourselves as active parts of the recovery. Investing to Make a Difference

To be an important cog in the recovery machine, we must put our money to work. Our money does not do any good stuffed in a mattress or buried underneath the deck. Private capital built this country and there are few economic problems that private capital cannot solve, if allocated effectively. During the Great Depression, a time when the economy constricted and the majority of construction projects were put on hold, the entire construction of the Empire State Building was

completed.

Thanks to funding from its principle backer, an automobile tycoon aiming to one-up a major competitor, the Empire State Building was constructed with staggering momentum. During the Depression, building materials were cheaper and workers were eager to earn a wage, much like today. The construction put people and money back to work in dire times; not to mention the mystique the building has given our country for nearly eight decades.

A project as grand as the Empire State Building might only come around once a century, but that does not rule out the need for quality projects in our own communities. When private capital teams with quality-managed projects, the outcomes can be extraordinary. But, you need both. Whereas quality projects cannot get off the ground without capital, poorly-managed projects get ran back into the ground even with all the capital in the world. This recession has torn through our communities and left a stockpile of quality real-estate projects to collect



Harvard Square: 2:00 am





dust. Without proper funding, the projects remain undeveloped, unproductive and severely underemployed. Placing our private capital into quality projects will bolster the number of available jobs in our communities and get people behind a meaningful cause. There are loads of individuals that could be taking charge and becoming part of this recovery. We will show great resilience when we, on our own, come out of this strong, super-charged and feeling part of something.

We have to put the days of excuses behind us. We should be searching for any project that someone says "can't be done" and aim to defy. When the newspapers have stopped reporting stories that highlight economic blemishes, our unemployment numbers are approaching all-time lows and our government takes a permanent vacation from bailouts; we will only vaguely remember our current doubts. We will, however, remember the period of time when we all did our part to restore communities. We will remember the turning point when we took action to pull ourselves from the painful times and regained our spot as part of the equation.

Thomas J. Powell  
Chief Executive Officer  
ELP Capital, Inc.

## Trees and Fall

*Pavan Bhatia*

With fall approaching, it reminds me of a simple but amazing day I spent with a very interesting lady many years ago. Trained as a scientist more than 50 years ago in India, when most women didn't even attend school, she became a pioneer in her field. She spent most of her life

studying the minutest of plants and pulses and contributed her research to agricultural advances.

I lived in New Jersey at the time and it was early fall with a crisp chill in the air. I decided to take Dr. Verma, for an outing while she was visiting her son in New York. Her appearance was very simple and understated.

All bundled up in our winter coats and scarves, we proceeded to the botanical gardens near my home. I looked at the grass, it started to pale and the tress were nearly void of their leaves. The garden appeared lifeless. I quickly realized it wasn't the best time to visit a botanical garden. "Don't worry she said, I am just happy you brought me here".

She asked me to look closely at each tree and see how it had changed from summer when in full bloom to fall. The summer was about the leaves, but the fall was about the beauty of the bark. Looking closely the bark of the trees was iridescent and simply radiant. I had never noticed this before.

We walked along further, and she picked up tiny seed pods, you know the ones you would grab off trees and just toss away a few instances later. She opened one up. It was so small, yet it was completely engineered inside. It was symmetrical and beautiful. It was a small miracle in my hand, once planted would become a full size tree and outlast my life time.



I learned a lot that afternoon. I shared with her many things about my life including my frustrations about how things were.

She assured me that everything would be ok. "God listens to our prayers. If he thought about all the small and great things, he will surly think of you and do what's best. Life always changes so just appreciate what you have and there is potential and opportunity everywhere, if you look close enough."



## Mossaed Has Moved



“You guys scared me of the road trip so we just went to Washington D.C for a while then we decide to settle here in Boston because my family liked it and I am a Cambridge resident now!”

All the best for Mossaed and his family!

## Found on Google

### Spide-Camel Wins Beauty Contest!

I just couldn't resist sharing this picture I found!



Graduation, July 2009

## FUN PHOTOS



Boston, July 2009



Boston, July 2008