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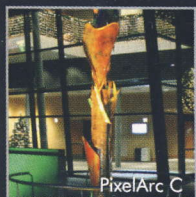
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I don't know the collective noun for trade shows, or even if there is one, but with so many around these days, I think we need one. It should be something like 'blister', or 'chafe'. A chafe of trade shows? Yes, that'll do nicely.

As you'll see inside, we're well into the spring chafe of trade shows. Behind us are NAMM (USA), ISE (The Netherlands) and ARC (UK) - all of which you can read about in this issue - plus Show-Way (Italy) and - by the time you read this - ProLight&Sound (Germany). Then SIB (Italy), PALME (Dubai), USITT (USA) and some others I've forgotten are still to come. It's an annual onslaught for many companies. But what characterises the events we've reported on so far - including Show-Way, which you can read about in the next issue - is that they have been successful, well-organised, well-attended and well-received events. And that's not according to the organisers, but to people who have visited the shows and asked the exhibitors.

So, good signs, despite some pessimistic economic forecasts. Like all experts in intangible matters, economists are divided on everything: ask a panel of economists what's going to happen in the next 12 months, and you'll hear enough conflicting views to be better informed, but none the wiser. When it comes to economics, I believe in the Jeremy Clarkson school of thought, which says that the only smart people are those smart enough to realise that they don't really know anything. While there may be international rumblings about credit crunches and fears of recession, from our point of view at least, based on the business and networking environments we have witnessed so far, 2008 is proving to be strong on business and full of promise. We don't yet know what lies behind the sad news about Marquee Audio (see page 8), but it would appear to be an isolated case.

Green threads: There are several threads to our industry's developing relationship with 'green' practices featured in this issue. With two theatres - the Redditch Palace Theatre (see *Letters*, page 14) and the admirable Arcola Theatre (see *Business Watch*, page 34) - we have positive signs of action being taken (in fact, the Arcola Theatre is a fascinating, trailblazing example to entertainment venues worldwide). But it's not all positive: this month's *Green Room* (page 64) says that despite all encouragement to the contrary, those involved with the day-to-day business of event production continue to do their thing in the same old way, which isn't really green, but does at least give them a margin. And who can blame them? But then, maybe the analogy with health and safety is well made: who could 'afford' to jump through all the hoops of H&S best practice before it was enforced by legislation? As ever, we'd like to hear your views.

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