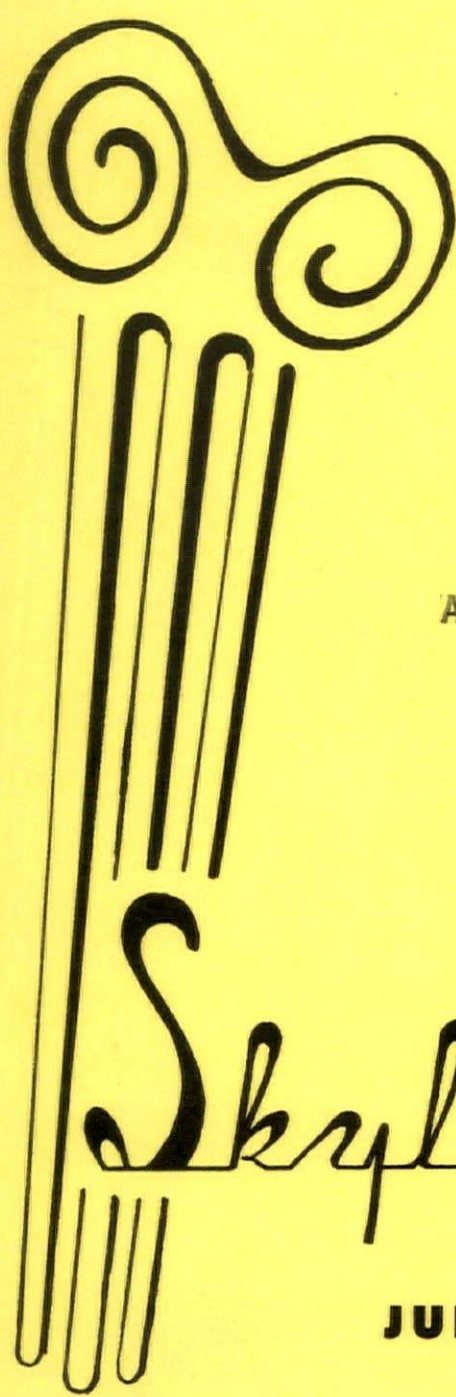


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Skylines

Volume Six, Number Seven

July, 1956

No July Meeting, for this is the month for fishing, picnicking, going to baseball games and the Starlight Theatre or just staying home.

However, there is important news this month. **Architectural Standards and Compensation** has been completed and is ready for you. By now, you should have received your copy in the mail. This brochure was prepared for your use. Your clients, too, may be (undoubtedly, will be) interested, so you will probably want to order extra copies. The cost of additional copies is 25c each, and they may be ordered from Frank Grimaldi.

Be sure to order your extra copies soon, so if a client would like to have one, you will have one to give him.

MEMORIAL COMMISSION TO HOLD DESIGN COMPETITION

The Corregidor Bataan Memorial Commission of Washington, D. C. announced today through its Chairman, The Honorable Emmet O'Neal, that it will hold a design competition for a Pacific War Memorial to be conducted under the regulations of the American Institute of Architects.

In order to select a small group of about twelve competitors, the Commission invites any registered architect who may be interested to submit a brochure showing what he has accomplished in the governmental and religious building fields, or any related field.

The War Memorial, said Mr. O'Neal, is planned for erection on Corregidor Island in Manila Bay at a cost of several million dollars to be obtained from voluntary donations. It is to reflect the vast scope of the War in the Pacific from 1941 to 1945 and is to be dedicated to all who fought and died in that vast area while serving under the American flag. Additionally, Mr. O'Neal emphasized the Memorial will not only commemorate the sacrifices, accomplishments and high purposes of those who fought in the Pacific War but, it is hoped, the Memorial building will also serve as a library, archives, museum and possibly as a center of enlightened thought in behalf of liberty and peace.

Brochures should be addressed to the Corregidor Bataan Memorial Commission, Washington 25, D. C., and should be received on or before July 23, 1956. The Commission was established by Congress in 1953.

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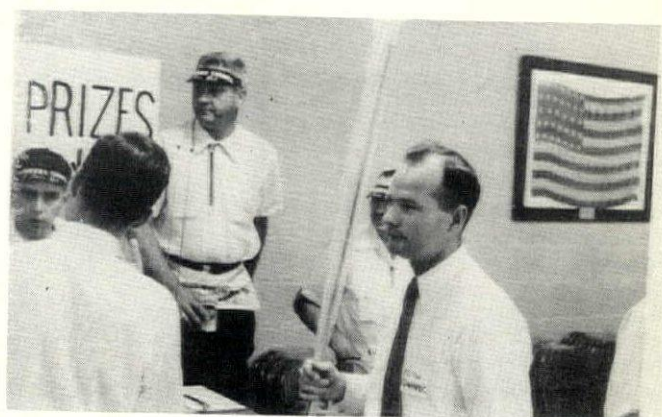
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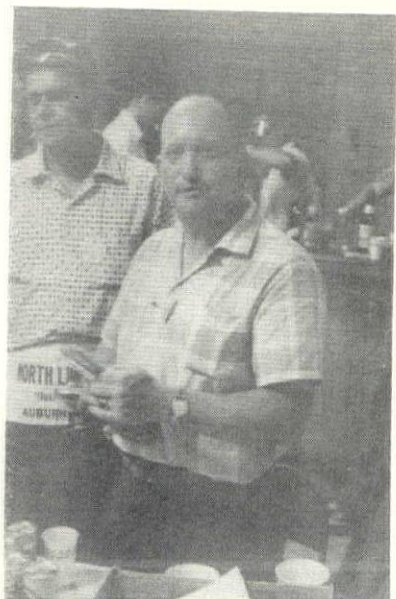
Monte Carlo Night was a gala affair, indeed. Monday night, June 11, the American Legion Clubhouse in Overland Park was alive with architects who were trying their luck at the various tables. The games were manned by some of the ablest croupiers in the business (members of the Kansas City Chapter of Producers' Council). The weather was very warm for June, but no one noticed . . . all present were far too busy trying to run the \$8,000 they had been given into a fortune. Unfortunately, the \$8,000 was not the real stuff . . .

but, some won prizes





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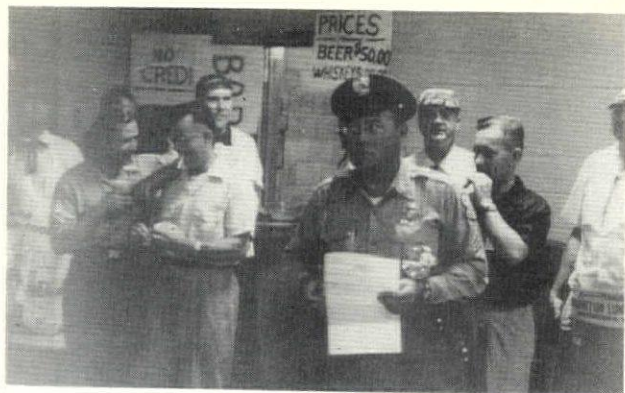
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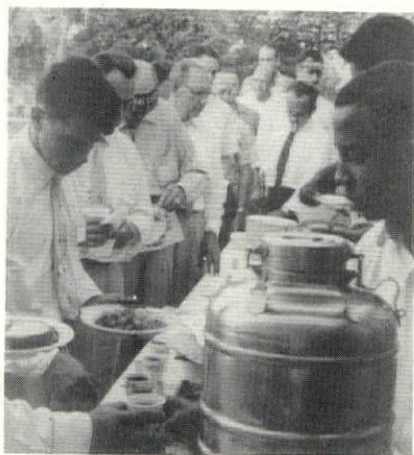
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Some were arrested



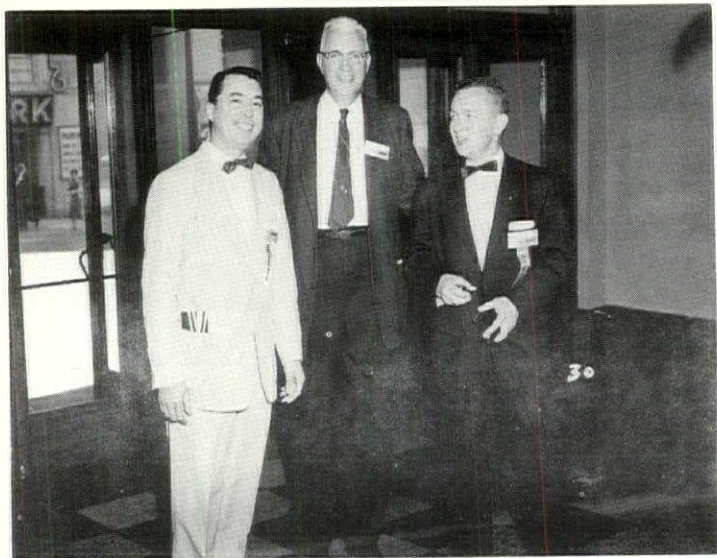
Most people ate (and ate)



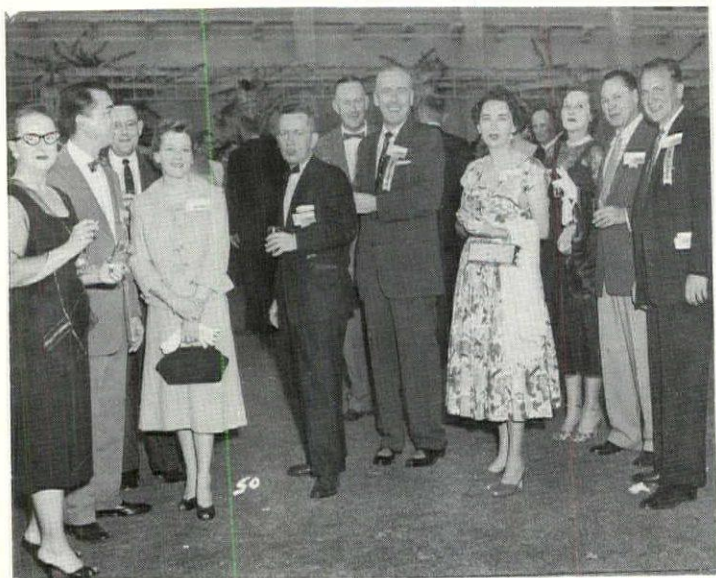
And everyone had a wonderful time.

Yes, the Producer's Council is a Sure Bet!!!

Conventioning in Los Angeles



Robert Elkington, President of Missouri Association of Registered Architects and St. Louis Chapter Member, was there . . . so were Joe Shaughnessy and Frank Slezak, from our chapter.



Missouri Architects get together. l. to r., Mrs. Paul Buchmueller, Robert Elkington, Mrs. Elkington, Frank Slezak, Lloyd Roark, John Sweeney, Mrs. Rex Becker, Mrs. Hari Van Hoefen, Mr. Van Hoefen and St. Louis Chapter President, Rex Becker.



Three people named Hollis—Mrs. Robert, Robert and Mrs. Don—Don was at the bar.

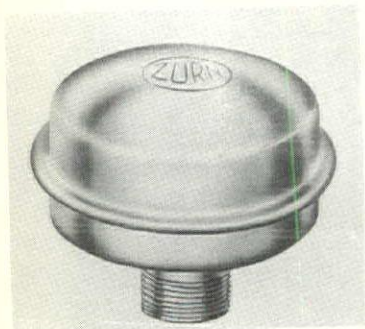


Mr. and Mrs. Joe Shaughnessy and Frank Slezak getting around at the President's Reception.

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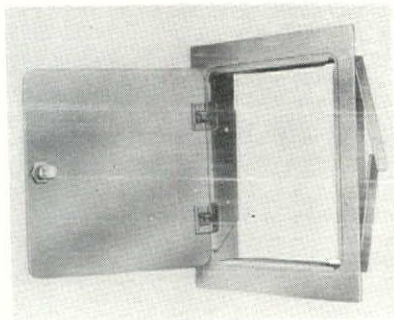


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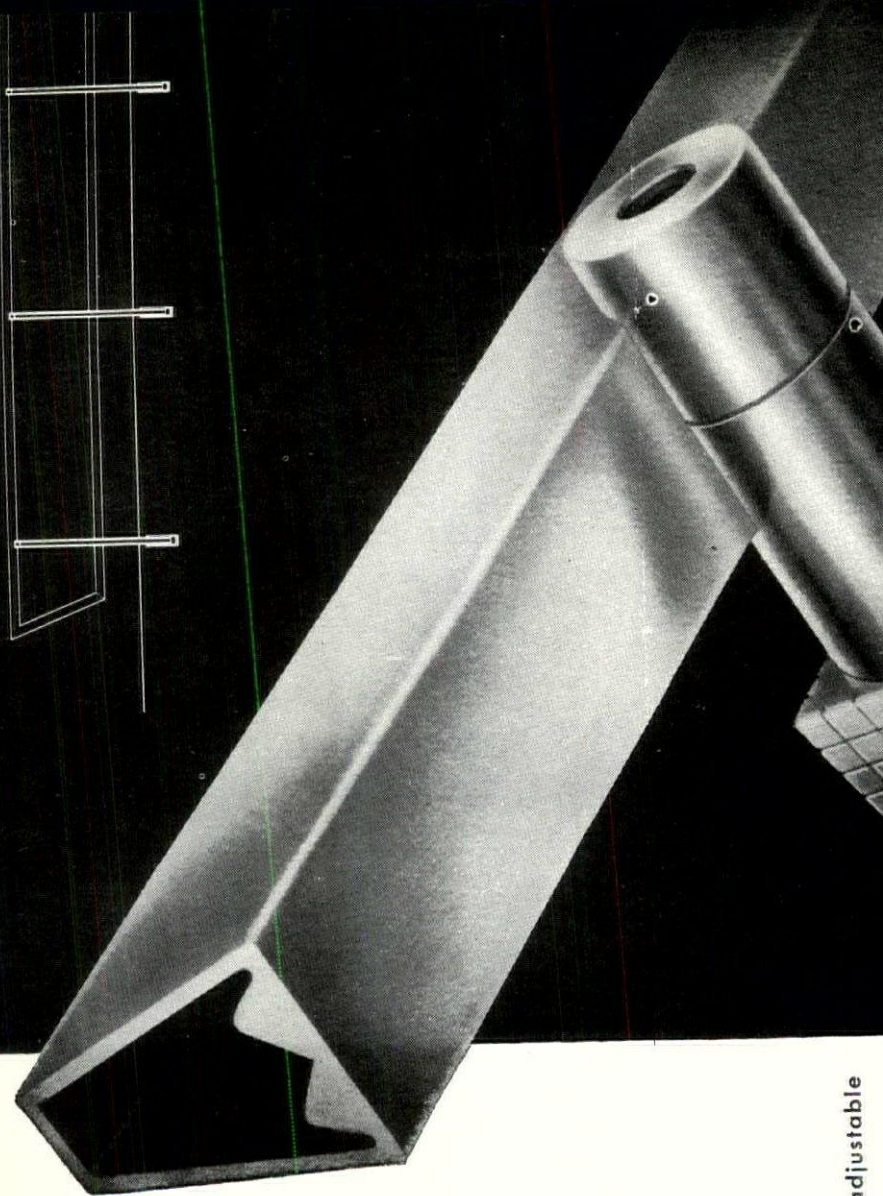
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JUNE CHAPTER MEETING

The last chapter meeting of the 1955-56 season was held at the Golden Ox on Tuesday, June 19. We are again indebted to the Kansas City Chapter of Producers' Council. Representatives from Armstrong Cork Company, Congoleum-Nairn, Inc., Johns-Manville Corporation, Kentile, Inc., Mosaic Tile Company and Uvalde Rock Asphalt Company were on hand to talk about the different kinds of floor coverings available to the architect. Displays had been set up by the companies, and slides showing the uses of the various materials were shown.

This was one of the outstanding technical programs of the year. The members of Producers' Council prepared an interesting program and presented it well.

Our Program Committee did an excellent job of providing us with a variety of interesting programs this past season, and they well deserve our thanks.



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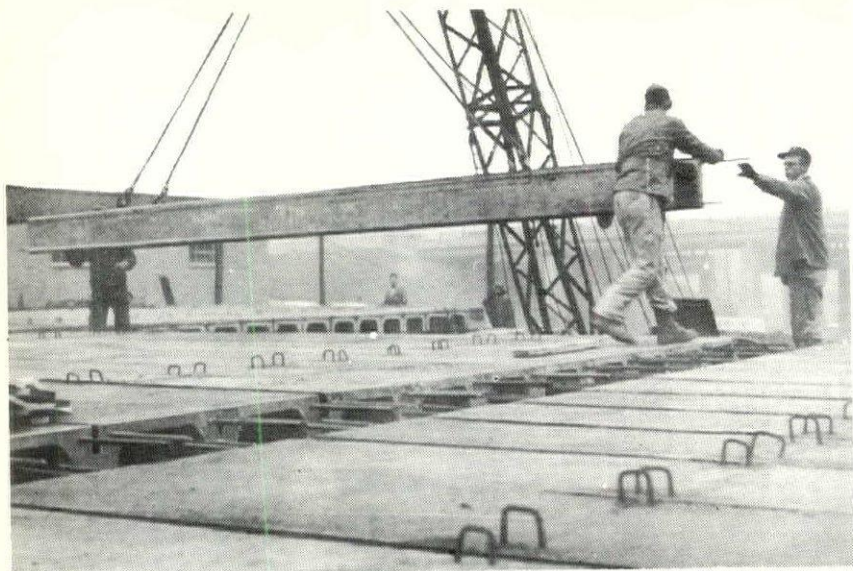


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Seminar: Architecture for Safety

THE FIRESAFE BUILDING

By John C. Thornton, Detroit, Michigan
Chairman, AIA Committee on Human Safety

Fire in buildings is taking the lives of our people every day. The Board of Directors of the American Institute of Architects became concerned over the high death rate and appointed the Human Safety Committee to study the problem of safety in buildings with instructions to first find what the Architect can do in the design of his buildings toward saving the lives of the occupants if and when fire strikes. This study has brought to light a great many things that will aid the Architect in his determination to help save the lives of his fellow men.

In this country we have been thoughtless about fire. Our heritage of wood construction may have caused us to take fire as a matter of course, rather expecting a certain amount of it and be willing to take chances. We will always have fires because we have the two things that cause fire: combustible materials and people. The materials furnish the fuel and the people make the errors that touch off the fires. The Architect **can** do things in design that will make fires less dangerous, but he can do very little about the people who will continue to do foolish things. What he can do, among other things, is to so design a building that when fire does come the occupants will not be killed by the lethal gases before they can escape.

When a great tragedy occurs the public demands new laws to prevent a recurrence, and then in a short space of time forgets all about it. People in general have forgotten the tragic hotel fires of ten years ago. There are, however, several organizations that are doing their best to improve our chances for a longer life. The National Safety Council, the National Fire Protection Association, the National Board of Fire Underwriters, the International Association of Fire Chiefs and others are doing fine work. The American Institute of Architects has joined in this work. The difficulty is that the public, and that means most of us, has been asleep so long that it is difficult to wake us to the fact that something can be done about it.

We are trying to change the misconception that many people have that a FIREPROOF BUILDING is a FIRESAFE BUILDING. Fireproof does not mean firesafe. They are entirely different terms. Fireproof means that the building structure will withstand a fire for a certain period of time. It does not take into consideration the contents which usually consists of highly flammable fuel. A large steam boiler is fireproof but we scarcely

consider it safe for occupancy when burning fuel is present. It is the same thing with the fireproof building when its contents are burning. A fireproof building can be made firesafe more easily than a nonfireproof structure, but there are many things to be done on the drawing board in the early stages of design to make any building firesafe. The word FIRESAFE expresses our goal.

The great killer in a fire is not the fire itself but the lethal gases of combustion which build up high pressures in a closed building, mushrooming throughout the entire structure and killing quickly, often without warning. It does not take a large fire to do this. A burning overstuffed chair or a television set can and has killed occupants of a building.

The profession is making a study of including venting in the design of buildings. Automatic vents are available and are being installed in many factory buildings as the result of a great fire in an automotive plant. We believe that they should be considered at the design stage in every building, especially where people sleep or a large number of people congregate. The problem is fairly easy in single story buildings. In multi-story structures it is much more difficult and will require all the Architect's ingenuity to solve. We know that it will be solved and that in a few years it will be common practice.

Venting will allow the gases of combustion to reach the out of doors by prearranged and directional control before they spread to snuff out the lives of occupants. These gases if not vented build up tremendous pressures, ready to explode under certain conditions.

One ton of wood will produce 7,000 cubic feet of gas at 400 degrees C. 40% of this gas is deadly carbon monoxide. If the wood is painted, the amount of gas is increased.

We have learned that an air conditioning or a ventilating system can be a hazard to life in case of fire or a means of venting which will save many lives. If there are no controls to stop recirculation in case of fire, gases will find their way to all sections of the building. On the other hand, a system designed to vent the floor or floors where there is fire and not allow the smoke to reach other floors will save the occupants. Location of vents away from exits is important.

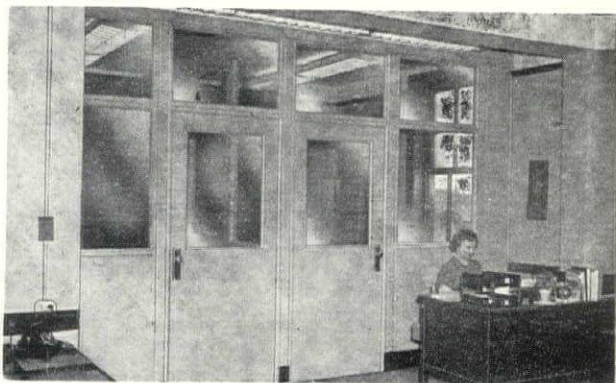
Vertical venting is natural and better than horizontal venting which is influenced by the wind and exposures. Venting must first be arranged to save human life and then to aid in fighting the fire. It must be of the type that allows the gases to reach the out of doors but prevents its spread from floor to floor.

Venting has been required for the stages of theaters as the result of tragic fires, but we have been lax in designing for it in other occupancies.

In some buildings we provide drains and scuppers to drain off water to save valuable property in case of fire, but have done nothing to drain off the deadly gases to save what is far more valuable—human lives.

Many good sound absorbing materials are not suitable for air duct linings. Combustible linings will carry fire rapidly to all sections of a building and produce quantities of gases.

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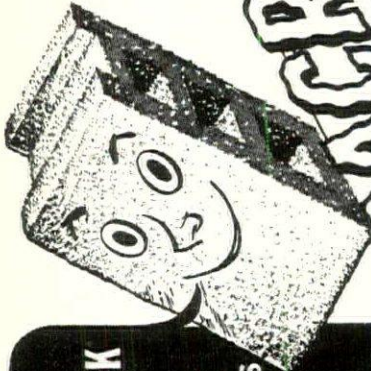
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The design of basements is receiving more attention by Architects. A high percentage of fires originate in basements and due to the contents, the gases from such fires are highly lethal. In older buildings we had manholes for coal and ash hoists which provided means for smoke to be removed so that firemen could reach the flames. Now many basements are constructed with no openings to the out of doors and there is no way for the smoke to be drawn off except up the stairway by means of which the firemen must enter to reach the flames. Smoke from such a fire will find its way to other parts of the building. Such a situation is highly dangerous not only to the occupants but to the firemen also. We are now advocating that basements have at least one exit directly to the out of doors and also other openings for the venting of smoke on other sides if possible. There should be automatic vents for certain occupancies. It is also desirable to place other basement stairs as near to building exits as possible. Such exits will save lives and aid in fighting of fires.

Wood roofs were easy for the fireman to open to vent smoke. We also had skylights, but they are not needed where there is modern lighting and ventilation. To open a concrete roof takes valuable time and requires special tools. Every roof should have some means for quick venting either for fire department control or automatic vents similar to those used in one story buildings. We believe that for most occupancies the automatic vents are indicated.

Elevators should not be counted upon as exits in case of fire, although some codes permit it. Elevator doors are not smoketight and the power may fail. The shaft should be vented automatically of smoke that enters it if it is not to spread out on various floors. Stair wells must not become vents for the building until all occupants have escaped. Its use then is the decision of the fire department. We must take pains that all doors fit tightly to make them as smokeproof as possible. Automatic vents at the top of stair wells are recommended by most authorities, although there is some difference of opinion on the subject. We believe that they are necessary but that there should be some means of introducing fresh air into the shaft at a lower level so that the venting will not pull in smoke. All exit stairs should lead directly to the out of doors. Stairways that lead to the outside through rooms that may be filled with smoke are not safe exits. The open stairway should be a thing of the past. They have caused many deaths. Last year there was a case of several deaths in a two story building because the gases went up an open stairway so quickly that the occupants did not have a chance.

The chimney effect of the open stairway was not recognized until many lives were lost. We blame past design for this condition. Let us be careful that we do not do things just as foolish and be blamed by future generations.

The present day Architect is not bound by tradition as was his brother of a few years ago. If he becomes aware of hazards to life in buildings, he will find ways and means to lessen these hazards. Let us break away from the false idea that a fireproof building is firesafe.

In modern design the Architect is eliminating the source of many fatal fires: the inaccessible spaces containing combustible materials. Our present day design does not require such places which were popular in

the past. We are looking forward to the time when there will be few of them and when we must have them they will be of noncombustible materials. We include the drop ceilings which have been to blame for the rapid spread of many fires. Fires in these spaces often gain great headway before discovery. The dropping of the ceiling has been known to be the first indication that there was fire. This was called to the attention of the profession last year. There was a case of such a fire a few weeks ago and several lives were lost.

Fire doors that do not operate fail in their purpose and give a wrong sense of security. It can be said that this is usually caused by poor housekeeping. The Architect can, however, design doorways so that materials piled near them will not interfere with the operation of the doors and he can check to see that the fusible links are in the line of possible fire so that they will operate when needed.

The question of inner courts is being studied. They should be accessible to the fire department for fire fighting, but more important for rescue. They have been listed as the cause of the rapid spread of many fires.

One of the things that the Architect can do in the early stages of design is to locate certain rooms so that their location will not be a hazard to occupants of the building and at the same time provide easy access to them for the fire department. Passing a hazardous room to reach an exit is dangerous. Such rooms as the pin room in a bowling alley, store rooms and shops in hotels and other buildings and the operating rooms in hospitals must receive special attention as to location.

More people die from fire in homes than in any other occupancy. We believe that automatic venting is vital in the modern home. We are building homes so tight today that we are increasing the chance of gases building up pressures that endanger the lives of the occupants. We are making a study of automatic venting for homes. Exits from basement recreation rooms should be directly to the out of doors and occupants should not be required to pass the heating plant to reach the exit. Many people have died because of an open stairway. A closed door can save lives. In homes the careful selection of materials play an important part in safety.

Few people realize that heating of wood and similar materials is cumulative. While the ignition point of wood is about 750 degrees F, continuous heat lowers this point. It has been known to drop as low as 212 degrees F. This is why it is advisable to keep low pressure steam pipes from contact with wood.

In the proper selection of materials, the Architect can be of great service to his client. The fire ratings of the materials should be considered. Some loosely pressed boards will carry fire more quickly than wood. Drapes vary from fire resistant to those that cause flash fires. Finishes may retard fire or cause it to spread rapidly. There are materials that are put upon the market in two forms, flameproofed for locations where the code requires such treatment and flammable material sold without this treatment.

Many manufacturers are trying to put out safe materials, but we will always have those with us who are willing to take chances with the



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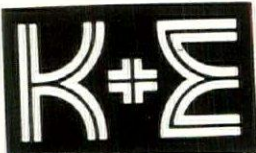
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lives of others. Most plastics are not more dangerous than other materials commonly used in the home but those in the pyroxylin class can be. Architects should check the flame spread of the materials he uses and also for the lethal gases given off when burning.

It should be kept in mind that flameproofing of materials such as drapes is not usually permanent so clients should be warned, neither are they noncombustible after a fire is well started. Their great value is their ability to resist fire in the early stages.

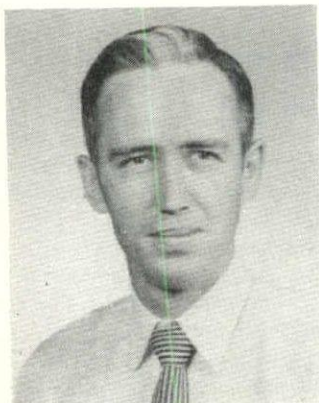
Some day we may have an act requiring that materials be marked with their flame spread rating. It is almost as necessary as the Food and Drug Act.

Panic is the great cause of deaths in many fires. While it probably is not possible to wholly eliminate it, the Architect often has the key to the conditions that cause it and can do as much as any other person to lessen this hazard. In panic human beings become like animals. They no longer think, their only idea being flight with no thought for the safety of others. Discipline such as received in the army or during fire drills will often prevent panic, but most of the people have not had this training or have forgotten it and revert to the animal instinct. The Architect can, however, design buildings to cut down the chances of it happening. He can design to give a sense of security. Exits must not only be adequate but what is more important must give a feeling that exit is easy. They must be well lighted and plainly marked. As people in panic always attempt to leave by the door they entered, it is essential that these doors be more than ample and very easy of gress. Entrance doors that open in only, with no hardware on the inside, such as are often found in super markets, invite panic. The dangers of this occupancy were reported to you last year, in order that our members would design to eliminate them and not wait until a catastrophe causes the public to demand greater safety.

If occupants feel that it is easy to get out of a building, know that there is little combustible material present, or can see sprinkler heads, there is less danger of panic. Also, if there are automatic vents for smoke and the ventilating system does not recirculate the air in case of fire, the chances of panic will be reduced. The Architect, by thoughtful design, can contribute a great deal to the sense of security.

The place to study fire safety is on the Architect's drawing board, not after the building is completed. The principles of the action of fire, and its fast growing children the gases of combustion, have not changed. We also know how human beings usually act in panic. The trouble is that everyone has ignored these principles. Codes which are usually minimum requirements cannot cover every kind of design adequately. It often makes a major catastrophe to bring about a demand that codes be changed. The Architect must think beyond the codes as he designs, foresee what will happen in case of fire in the building he is creating and how the occupants will act. In this way he can do more to protect the lives of human beings in case of fire than any other person because he is at the seat of the fire first, before the fire occurs, while the building is being created on paper.

● ● in the news



This month we have a new Junior Associate Member. **Richard L. Nichols**, of Springfield, Missouri, received his degree in Architecture from Kansas State College in 1951. He worked in the offices of Allmon & Hedges and Harold A. Casey. Since the summer of 1952, he has been in the office of I. Dale Allmon.

Herbert C. Anset has moved his office. He is now at 1412 West 47th Street. The new telephone number is Jefferson 1-3750.



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