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CONTENTS

Winter Meeting '69 .......................................................... 6
The Hanging Monasteries ................................................. 9
Beach Residence for Mr. & Mrs. S. Douglas Fleet ................. 14
Wachovia Bank & Trust Co. .............................................. 15
N. C. Eye-Bank Office Building ........................................ 16
The Home Federal Building .............................................. 17
News-Notes ................................................................. 18
Incidentally ................................................................. 20
Calendar of Events ......................................................... 22
Index to Advertisers ...................................................... 22
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The gracious Carolina Hotel in Pinehurst was the setting for the 55th Annual Winter Meeting of the North Carolina Chapter AIA on February 6, 7 and 8.

A combination of major speeches, professional issues and product displays during the three day program of the convention was well planned, informal and relaxed.

Among many highlights were the presentation of one Honor Award and six Awards of Merit; Craftsmanship Award; entertainment by Burt Massengale’s orchestra; ladies fashion show; and, of course, President’s reception and banquet.
THE HANGING MONASTERIES

By Gary Larsen

Through many centuries, life inside the cloister offered the only chance for those with a tendency to lead a scholar's life. Violence thrived on the outside and all was war or single combat. The only libraries were housed in the monasteries, and the cloister surrounded the majority of existing gardens. Such communities were formed as large royal courts adorned with more art treasures than the royal castles. It is almost impossible not to look upon many of the monasteries of Europe as
great estates, huge family houses, or little kingdoms of their own.

The monastic life, with its solitude, meditation, peacefulness, unworldliness, sacrifice, and ultimate spiritual aims, seems to be best achieved by complete isolation and detachment from the rest of the world. Monasteries, therefore, flourish in the most remote areas. But none are so inaccessible as those known as Meteora, the places up in the air.

In the Pindus Mountains in a district of Thessaly in Greece, south-east of Mount Olympus, rise the vertical, grey stone shafts of Meteora. Traveling north on the very flat plain between Trikkala and Kalambaka, one is startled by the enormous, peculiar rock forms protruding from the flat grassy plain.

In the village of Kalambaka at the foot of these rocks, you are more aware of their gigantic proportions and their complete foreign character as though they were, as legends says, meteors hurled by an angry god from heaven.

The twisting road from Kalambaka to Meteora winds through the forest of 24 gigantic pillars which rise to a height of 1828 feet above the sea level. The rounded faces of the shafts are the finished product of erosion caused by a lake which covered the entire area. This unique setting in the 11th century was chosen by refugees fleeing from wars, crime, and violence of the time as a retreat for the foundation of their ascetic cult. These refugee
hermits found shelter in the shallow caves in the rock face. By the end of the 14th century atop the pinnacles were built 24 separate monasteries of which 5 are still remaining and 4 are still functioning.

It is believed that the building of these monasteries is of an oriental concept and basically of a byzantine style, and being built in the 14th century, they had little if any contact with the fading splendors of Byzantium.
The site chosen for their retreat must have offered one of the most impossible building tasks in history. How were they built? No one seems to know how the first monk reached the top, but legend says he was tied to the foot of an eagle (not an angel) and flown there. But no matter how he got there, he did get there, and the monastery was built, and 23 subsequent monasteries were built. The varied appendages to varied interpretations of style seem to have a natural growth void of an architect's labored design. They have offered crude but serenely quiet spaces, arcaded cloisters, dark warm chapels, bright sunny gardens, and undescrivable panoramic views. The visitor does not immediately see the monasteries upon entering the pinnacled area, but once within the horseshoe enclosure, one feels great excitement upon looking up and seeing the first of these man-made growths clinging to the top of a rock shaft. Within the span of a few moments, one is brought into the Eastern Middle Ages. The ascent is continued, passing below the first 3 of the existing 5 monasteries, to the base of the highest pinnacle whereon clings the monastery of the Grand Meteor.

In the 14th century, such a visit would include being hoisted in a basket up the remaining distance from the base of the pinnacle to the monastery, or climbing a rope ladder, neither of which was replaced until it was broken. However, now access can be made by stairs which have been carved out of the stone.

The inaccessibility of the monasteries obviously protected the monks from invading marauders who could not reach the monastery, and who could not wait out the months it would take for the monks to exhaust their water and food supply which were stored atop the pinnacles.

One enters the monastery complex by way of the windlass which also offered the entrance space for 14th century visitors arriving in a basket. This protrusion over the face of the pinnacle offers a clear vertical ascent by rope. The wood-planked covered walk worn by many years of quiet use, leads to the cloister and monastery area planned with chapels, dormitories, dining hall, orchard,
gardens, and quiet retreats with open vistas. The cold shadows in the arcades blended by soft reflections from enclosed gardens give a peaceful and comfortable release from the hot sun. The beautifully small chapel with exquisite frescos housed in dark enclosures with small light shafts penetrating the cool mist offers a pleasant space for the worshiping monks with their black robes and candles. Outside the chapel hangs the resonating board whereon a regulated chant is hammered.

In the garden shaded from the crisp sun by the orchard trees, one can enjoy hours of studying the exciting brick patterns and textures on the walls of the byzantine church, with its twin domes and narrow arched windows.

The view down the canyon from atop the Grand Meteor is difficult to describe, and must be seen to be appreciated. The moist green valley, darkened in spots by the late evening shadows of the rocks and punctured by these dark grey shafts, presents an unbelievable backdrop for the red brick and tile monasteries that can now be seen from above.

These impressions of the Grand Meteor are representative of the other 4 functioning monasteries. The unedifying struggle for power, the contest for arable land; thus violation of christian ideals emptied the proud buildings on the towering summits. Wind and weather have cleared the black rocks of all but the remaining monasteries. These are manned by a total of 20 monks and remain as a witness of a rapidly vanishing way of life.

Mr. Larsen, a native of Utah, received his Bachelor of Architecture degree from the University of Utah, following which he has been affiliated with two Danish architectural firms in Copenhagen, Denmark. The information for this article was obtained while recently traveling through Eastern Europe and Greece. Reprinted from Utah Architect, Fall-Winter 1968-69 issue.
BEACH RESIDENCE FOR MR. & MRS. S. DOUGLAS FLEET
Figure "8" Island, North Carolina

Architect: Oxenfeld & Newkirk, AIA, Wilmington, N. C.; Owner: Mr. & Mrs. S. Douglas Fleet, Richmond, Va.; General Contractor: J. Fred Murray, Wilmington, N. C.; Photographer: Pete Knight and Raleigh News and Observer.
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WACCAMAW BANK STARTS BUILDING

Construction of a new headquarters building for the Waccamaw Bank and Trust Company in Whiteville, N. C. has started and is scheduled for completion in the late summer of 1969.

The project was designed by the firm of Leslie N. Boney, Architect, Wilmington. The new structure will be three stories high and will house all home facilities and operations. Exterior is basically white stone and bronze-colored glass and metal. Interior materials will include teakwood paneling and fabric wall covering, terrazzo and carpeted floors, with white Indian marble used at various locations. A ramp is provided on the West Webster Street side for wheel-chair customers. Also included are on-site driveways for the drive-in window, and ample parking space for 40 vehicles.

Leslie N. Boney, Jr., FAIA, head of the architectural firm, says "The new building will make a major contribution to the esthetic growth of downtown Whiteville, and will be something in which the entire region can take pride."

SEMINAR ON DRUG ABUSE

Drug abuse was the topic for a two-day seminar held at the Institute of Pharmacy in Chapel Hill. Representing the AIA and N. C. Association of Professions at the November 13-14 seminar were: Wm. W. Dodge, III, AIA of Raleigh, Education Chairman for NCAP; Robert L. Clemmer, FAIA, Hickory, 2nd V-Pres. for NCAP; and John E. Ramsay, FAIA, Salisbury, member of NCAP.

The Seminar was co-sponsored by the North Carolina Association of Professions; the North Carolina Highway Patrol and the State Bureau of Investigation. W. J. Smith, President of the N. C. Association of Professions and Executive Secretary for the N. C. Pharmaceutical Association presided over the sessions.

Drug abuse being one of today's modern social problems is on the increase according to the authorities participating on the program. Law enforcement officers, pharmacologists, physicians, and educators warned that teenagers, young adults, or anyone else who "experiments" with narcotics or many of the so-called "nice" drugs, such as AMPHETAMINES AND BARBITURATES or who uses them carelessly for medical purposes—is asking for trouble. The Amphetamines drugs are sometimes called pep pills or bennies. The Barbiturates are sleeping pills, sometime called "goof-balls".

The first day was given to the identification, origin, and medical use of drugs. The mis-use was emphasized by four films which are now available upon request from selected sources. The first, LSD-25 is a dramatic color-film taking the audience on a "trip", horrid as it can be and showing how little is actually known about the drug. Authorities claim a sharp reduction in the use of LSD since statistics have proved it can cause generic deterioration on the new born. Law Enforcement officers reported on the known facts about LSD use in North Carolina.

A second film shown was a "premier" showing of THE DISTANT DRUMMER. This film has just been released and is available through Hospital Care-Blue Shield, Durham, N. C. The other two films, TRIP TO WHERE and DRUGS AND THE NERVOUS SYSTEM are equally as effective in teaching the growing danger of Drug Mis-use and Abuse—world-wide.

The second day featured speakers from the N. C. Highway Patrol and the State Bureau of Investigation. Drunken driving was one of the major topics presented with Lt. Col. Edwin C. Guy of the Highway Patrol and Dr. Fred W. Ellis of the UNC School of Pharmacy discussing Chemical Testing to determine alcohol content in the blood of drivers.

William J. Skinner of Philadelphia, representative of Smith, Kline and French, closed the two-day program with a report of the Legal Implication of drug abuse.

SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Stephen T. Barnhill of Durham has been awarded the Mid-State Tile Co. Scholarship for study in N. C. State University's internationally recognized School of Design.

A junior, Barnhill was named to the honor as a result of "his outstanding scholastic merit in the School of Design" according to Dean Henry Kamp-hoefner. The scholarship was presented to Barnhill by Nesbit P. Rodgers, executive vice president of Mid-State.
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write us.
James E. Biggs, AIA, Hickory, was presented the first annual Brotherhood Award by the Hickory Jaycees... A. G. Odell, FAIA, Charlotte, was selected one of the jurors for the Portland Cement Association's 7th annual Architectural Scholarship Awards Program... Joseph Hall, AIA, Asheville, is serving as the 1st Vice President of the Asheville Art Museum Association for 1969... J. N. Pease & Associates' Classroom Building, for Central Piedmont Community College, Charlotte, was selected as one of 15 outstanding examples of college building design... Betty Silver, Executive Secretary of the N. C. Chapter AIA, is serving as President of the Carolina Society of Association Executives this year. In this capacity, she presided over a dinner meeting honoring the North Carolina congressional delegation at the Sheraton Park Hotel in Washington on February 17. N. C. AIA President Norman Pease, Jr. was among the sixty guests present.

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Acoustics, Inc. .................................................. 22
Andco Industries Corp. ...................................... 21
Borden Brick & Tile Co. ...................................... 23
Brick & Tile Service, Inc. ................................. 2
Delph Hardware .................................................. 20
Giant Portland Cement Co. ............................... 21
Mabie Bell Exposaic Inc. .................................... 21
McDevitt & Street Co. ........................................ 22
Ezra Meir & Associates .................................... 22
Moland-Drysdale Corp. ...................................... 19
Peden Steel ....................................................... 5
Producers' Council Inc. ..................................... 20
Renfrow Distributing Co. ................................... 19
Sanford Brick & Tile Co. .................................... 21
Stone's Southern School Supply ........................ 5
Watson Engineers .............................................. 19
J. D. Wilkins Co. ................................................ 4
Zonolite Div., W. R. Grace & Co. ....................... 19

CALENDAR OF EVENTS
Apr. 1: Durham Council of Architects, Durham Hotel, 12:30 P.M., Sam Hodges, AIA, President.
Apr. 2: Charlotte Section, NCAIA, Charlottetown Mall Community Hall, 12:30 P.M., Sherman Pardue, AIA, President.
Apr. 10: Raleigh Council of Architects, YMCA, 12:15 P.M., Horace Taylor, AIA, President.
Apr. 10, 11, 12: Annual Meeting, South-East Region of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture.
Apr. 21: Winston-Salem Council of Architects, Twin City Club, 12:15 P.M., Lloyd G. Walter, Jr., AIA, President.
May 16: Eastern Section NCAIA, Southern Pines.
July 10, 11, 12: North Carolina Chapter AIA, Summer Meeting, Blockade Runner Hotel, Wrightsville Beach.

PLAN TO ATTEND N. C. CHAPTER AIA, SUMMER MEETING, JULY 10, 11, 12, BLOCKADE RUNNER HOTEL, WRIGHTSVILLE BEACH.

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