



Vol. II

OCULUS

No. 5

THE NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
115 EAST 40th STREET • FEBRUARY, 1940 • ALBERT G. CLAY, EDITOR

NEXT MEETING

Time: 7 p. m., Tuesday, February 27.

Place: Architectural League.

Subject: Anniversary Dinner.

It has been a Chapter custom for years to hold an Anniversary Dinner in February, since it was in February, 1857, that a group of architects in New York City first met to discuss the formation of a society which in time became the American Institute.

The Committee on Meetings has expressed the hope that the presence of a distinguished speaker and guests will make the dinner a memorable occasion, and that the collation prepared will not be considered altogether unworthy.

Ladies are not only invited but they are expected to attend in large numbers. Nevertheless, "black tie" is in order.

SPEAKER

The speaker at the Anniversary Dinner is Charles D. Maginnis whose subject will be "A Provincial Muses on the Metropolis." Mr. Maginnis was the President of the A.I.A. for the last two years. He is of the firm of Maginnis and Walsh of Boston, architects for the Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, Boston College and numerous important churches throughout the country.

The Committee has asked him because his charming and witty addresses at Institute conventions show him to be a particularly stimulating and delightful speaker and probably the most articulate architect of our time.

PILASTERS & TRYLONS

On March 5 the Architectural League opens a dual exhibition to be held at 115 E. 40th St. On the walls of the entire ground floor will be shown a résumé of the masterpieces of the firms whose work has been associated with the noble tradition in American architecture; while the galleries of the second floor will be devoted to the most definite exhibition yet seen of recent modern functional American buildings. This exhibition will be the subject of a Town Hall Chapter meeting to be held next month, at which

the classical and modern schools will be represented by speakers.

JANUARY MEETING

The Chapter meeting held after a dinner on January 16 proved to be a documentary double-header. The "Application for Employment," a copy of which was enclosed with the January OCULUS, was approved after little discussion. This quick action came as a surprise to most present, especially to those who had participated in the hot debate over the earlier draft of this document. It was voted to print this form immediately for use by the members of the Chapter.

Mr. Frost urged members to fill in a copy of this questionnaire and return it to the Chapter office. The information thus collected will be tabulated and made available in the near future. Only 21 copies have been received at press date.

The second document discussed was a proposed "Memorandum on Architectural Competitions" which had been submitted by the Competitions Committee to the Executive Committee and approved by that body. After various amendments to the text were moved and carried, it developed that the sense of the meeting was that this document should be approved, but with the provision that it be sent to all the members as revised for a yes or no vote. The approved form is enclosed with this issue of the OCULUS, with a card on which all members are urged to vote.

President Frost presented to the meeting the guest of honor, Luciano Baldessari, architect of Milan. In reply to our guest's address of greeting, Mr. Frost requested that Signor Baldessari convey to his fellow architects of Italy, and especially of Milan, the Chapter's compliments.

Four new members were introduced: Messrs. Halasz, Harding, Hugo and Van der Gracht. Mr. Levi, as Chairman of the Committee on Meetings, urged all new members to come to meetings and make themselves known, in order that they can be made to feel at home and a part of the Chapter.

MEDAL OF HONOR

The Executive Committee announce that this year the Medal of Honor of the Chapter will be awarded posthumously to Raymond M. Hood. The award will take place at the Anniversary Dinner on Feb. 27. Commenting on this award, Harvey Wiley Corbett said: "In awarding the Medal to the late Raymond M. Hood the Chapter does itself and the profession honor in recognizing the talent of a man of unique and outstanding quality."

"He was known in the profession as 'the stormy petrel.' He stirred the minds of his architectural confreres, always putting out new ideas at variance with the expected tradition, and seeing the problems of the profession in new light. Yet he always developed his ideas with a sound common sense approach."

"Hood was an inspiration to his students. Beyond his actual buildings, his imaginative projects of all sorts and kind evidenced a vision of the architecture of the future, which marked him as an outstanding genius of his period."

"The record of his important buildings demonstrates his great breadth of vision and willingness to change. Starting with the winning design for the Chicago Tribune, which in form and detail followed the then accepted Gothic tradition of skyscrapers, he ran the whole gamut through the News Building, the Chicago World's Fair, Rockefeller Center and the McGraw-Hill Building."

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP CANDIDATES

The names of the following men have been presented:

For Institute Membership

1. Gustave E. Steinback
Sponsors { Bernhard E. Muller
 Eugene J. Lang
2. Donald Thornton Graf
Sponsors { Ralph Walker
 Henry Otis Chapman, Jr.

For Chapter Associate Membership

1. James Carpenter Freer
Sponsors { Richmond H. Shreve
 Serge P. Petroff

2. Robert D. Tyler

Sponsors { Harold R. Sleeper
Serge P. Petroff

Pursuant to Section 6, Paragraph 3, of the Chapter By-Laws, members are requested to submit within ten days for the information and guidance of the Committee on Admissions, privileged Communications relative to the eligibility of the above-mentioned candidates.

NEW MEMBERS

Clarence W. Brazer
Louis Skidmore

LOSSES

Frank H. Bissell, transferred to Connecticut Chapter.

Walter A. Taylor, transferred to Central N. Y. Chapter.

Edward P. Chrystie, resigned.

Vance W. Torbert, resigned.

Frederic C. Hiron, terminated.

William L. Rouse, terminated.

Augustus D. Shepard, terminated.

Edward P. Casey, died Jan. 2, 1940.

COMMISSIONER WILSON INVITES

Commissioner William Wilson of the Department of Housing and Buildings, a Chapter member, was asked to speak at the January meeting on the Mayor's list for 1940, which had been published in the City Record the morning of the meeting. Mr. Wilson said that the list, from which architects may be chosen for city work this year, has been increased to nearly 100. With few exceptions, those who appeared on last year's list reappear, and 27 names not on the 1939 list are included.

The New York City Charter provides that the Department of Public Works may employ private architects for consulting service provided that all contracts shall be made with qualified architects whose names shall appear on a panel of architects approved for the current year by the Mayor and published in the City Record on or before the fifteenth day of January.

The Commissioner went on to talk of the difficulties encountered in his department, and of the many complicated regulations and established customs of long standing which he is trying to simplify. He said he would welcome from Chapter members suggestions regarding departmental rulings, and urged members to go down to the department in person to consult about the details of filing plans rather than to send a representative. He suggested that the Chapter set up a Building Code Committee which might work with his department toward simplifying the Building Code and the Multiple Dwelling Law.

N. Y. WAR MEMORIAL

Definite recommendations as to the character and form of the proposed New York State World War Memorial were formulated at a recent meeting by the Board of Directors of the State Association of Architects. (All Chapter members are members of the State Association as the Chapter is one of the 15 affiliates.)

Arthur L. Harmon, Chairman of a committee considering this subject, reported that the memorial would be considered by the Legislature early in this session, and therefore it was imperative for the State Association to take definite action if it wished to secure a memorial "solemn and commemorative in character." Mr. Harmon suggested that prompt action might help avoid a repetition of such a calamity as presented itself last year when the State actually proposed to inscribe upon an office building and a garage the words "World War Memorial."

After discussion the directors recommended to the American Legion: That the memorial be a monument inspirational in character and exclusively a memorial in purpose, such as a shrine located in a park in the vicinity of Albany, and that this memorial could properly include provision for the housing of archives and for holding memorial services. The directors further recommended that a competition be held among all the architects of the State in an attempt to secure the best memorial possible.

The meeting appropriated the sum of \$100 toward the expenses of a committee to be appointed to prepare a perspective sketch of a memorial along the lines of these suggestions. The sketch is to bear the legend, "Suggested World War Memorial by the New York State Association of Architects," and is to be used to assist the state and the American Legion in visualizing the Association's conception of an appropriate memorial.

The nominating committee presented names of candidates for office for the year 1940. There being no opposition ticket a unanimous vote was cast for the following:

Pres., James W. Kideney, Buffalo Chapter.

V.P., Charles R. Ellis, Syracuse Society.

V.P., C. Storrs Barrows, Cent. N. Y. Chapter.

V.P., Charles C. Platt, N. Y. Chapter.

V.P., Maxwell A. Cantor, Bklyn. Society.

Sec., John T. Briggs, N. Y. Society.

Tr., Matthew W. DelGaudio, Bronx Society.

ANNUAL ADVERSE LEGISLATION

The annual attempt to pass legislation limiting the services of private architects, which seems to be developing into a hardy perennial, has been made in the City Council and in the State Senate. The 1940 attempts occurred simultaneously on January 16. If successful, they will require all architectural work paid for in whole or in part by public funds to be done solely by Civil Service Bureaus, the private practitioner to be engaged only in exceptional cases and then only in an advisory capacity.

The bill before the Senate was introduced by Mr. Weeks, ordered printed, and referred to the Committee on Civil Service. The Local Law was introduced in the Council by Messrs. Burke, Digiovanna and McCarthy, and was referred to the Committee on Labor and Industry.

The Chapter Legislative Committee is girding its loins and planning an attack on this legislation.

HOLDEN ON HOUSING

Arthur C. Holden, Chapter member, is the author of an article in this month's *Atlantic Monthly* entitled, "Housing Comes Home to Congress." In this he presents an analysis of the housing problem and congressional attitude toward it. "Housing as a national issue," begins Mr. Holden, "stems from the crusading spirit of the persistent New Yorkers who have been leaders in housing legislation."

In speaking of the timeliness of this article, the *Atlantic* reminds its readers that in the summer of 1939 Congress refused to increase the authorized loans for housing to be distributed through the Federal Government, but that requests for new and perhaps increased subsidies will almost certainly be presented for action in 1940.

A WARNING

The Chapter has been informed that the Board of Education of the Township of Hohokus, N. J., is sponsoring an architectural competition for a new auditorium for Mahwah School District No. 2. This competition, as now set up, does not contain the safeguards required by the A.I.A. to make it an approved competition. Steps are being taken to request this Board of Education to conform to the standards governing A.I.A. approved competitions.

In the meanwhile members of the Chapter are warned that participation in this competition may cause them to be liable for disciplinary action.

COMMITTEE ON COMPETITIONS