

THE NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
115 EAST 40th STREET • JUNE, 1941 • ALBERT G. CLAY, EDITOR

SPECIAL MEETING

One of the first acts of the new administration of President Harvey Stevenson was to call a special Chapter meeting held at the Architectural League last Tuesday, June 24.

Mr. Stevenson presented his program for the year. He said, "There is only one objective—the strengthening of the profession. Most of the steps toward this end have been begun by Mr. Frost. There appear to be four mutually related steps: 1. Public relations (government and private). 2. Unification and membership. 3. Defense efforts. 4. Housing (large and small scale)."

Acting immediately on this program, the meeting touched in succession on each of the four steps.

T. Merrill Prentice brought before the Chapter the report of the Special Committee on Public Relations (so-called \$4000 Committee. This committee engaged the firm of Baldwin, Munson & Mann to study our problems and attempt to clarify the relationship of the architectural profession with the public. A digest of the report of their findings and suggested practical measures for improving our relations with the public was given to each member at the meeting and is enclosed with this OCULUS. Several copies of this complete report are on file at the Chapter office where they are available to members.

A motion was made and carried that the report be accepted and that the activities of this Chapter be coordinated with the recommendations contained therein.

The Chapter passed a vote of confidence in the work of the Special Committee and instructed them to investigate and submit to the Executive Committee a program for inaugurating a campaign based on the report.

Mr. Stevenson spoke of unification of the profession, declaring that "Now, if ever, is the time to be realistic." In this connection he read from a message recently written to the Architectural League by its president, Frederick J. Woodbridge:

"I have not the slightest doubt of the urgent need for a more perfect union of all the creative professions. They are all suffering not only from lack of work but an actual attack from those who believe them superfluous luxuries of a prosperous world of peace. Each of our groups by itself is restricted in its scope and power. We will most surely hang separately

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NECROLOGY

While those present at the annual meeting stood, the names of members of the Chapter who died during 1940-1941 were read from the report of the Secretary:

William S. Post	1901
William Lee Stoddart	1925
Carl F. Grieshaber	1911
Chester H. Aldrich	1907
Philip Hiss	1934
William MacMurray	1929
Arthur C. Jackson	1907

CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP CANDIDATES

The names of the following men have been presented:

For Institute Membership

- John T. Briggs
Sponsors { Albert G. Clay
Lorimer Rich
- John Hamilton Coulter
Sponsors { Albert G. Clay
Lawrence G. White
- Howard B. Dearstyne
Sponsors { J. Andre Fouilhoux
Wallace K. Harrison
- Philip Ives
Sponsors { Theodore E. Blake
Phelps Barnum

GAINS

Henry Boak
Gabriel Di Martino
William Hamby
Michael Meredith Hare
George Kosmak, Jr.
George Nelson
Raymond Olson
Roger Wade Sherman
Lester D. Claude Tichy
Konrad F. Wittman

LOSSES

Burnett C. Turner transferred to Northern California Chapter.

R. Stanley Sweeley transferred to Washington, D. C. Chapter.

UT INFRA (ECHO)

Dear Editor: I was very much amused to read, in the April issue of OCULUS, the article entitled "Ut Infra" and vouch for the accuracy of "J.T.H.'s" statements. My experience with the shabby old gentleman differs only in the fact that the locality was at Highlands, New York, instead of Mattituck, Long Island.

His approach was by asking for my chief draftsman, who is away from the office now on Defense work. Upon being informed of this fact, he inquired if somebody else could draw a set of plans for him. The amount requested this time was \$1.00. H. V.

ANNUAL MEETING

Harvey Stevenson was elected President of the Chapter at the annual meeting held June 4 at the Architectural League. The luncheon which preceded the meeting was attended by 75, of whom 7 were introduced as new members.

The apartment house medals were awarded after a report by Leopold Arnaud as chairman of the jury making the awards, which were as follows:

Medal in Group 1 (houses over six stories) to George F. Pelham, Jr., for the design of Castle Village.

Medal in Group 2 (houses six stories or under) to Horace Ginsbern for an apartment house at 252 East 61st St.

Medal in Group 3 (group housing) to Albert Mayer for Thorneycroft Homes in Forest Hills.

At the request of the Chairman, Harvey Stevenson gave the Chapter a summary of events at the annual A.I.A. convention held last month in California. Altogether 295 attended the convention, of whom 117 were delegates. We were represented by 7 delegates.

Richmond H. Shreve was duly elected President and was installed at the annual dinner which was the final event of the convention. Another elective office filled by one of our Chapter members was that of State Association Director. The new incumbent of this office is Matthew W. DelGaudio.

Mr. Stevenson reported that the business of the convention flowed along smoothly, the delegates having been so softened up by the long train ride and the relaxing effect of the climate in the Yosemite Valley that they promptly agreed to each and every resolution brought before the convention.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Our retiring President, Frederick G. Frost, gave an account of the activities of the Chapter in his annual report which follows:

Today marks the end of my second term as President of this Chapter. I believe that during these two years we have grown, not only in number, but in strength. Our membership seems more closely knit—as architects we are pulling together better than we ever have before. This may be due partly to the hard times we have been living through, but I believe it is also due to a much more democratic feeling that now exists amongst us.

From what I know of other Chapters, I believe we are the most active as well as the largest of all Chapters. We publish a monthly bulletin, we have many committees, possibly too many and possibly too large, although this year a sincere effort has been made to make each committee effective. And a great deal of what we have done has been for the benefit of the profession at large.

Specifically, this year we offered to all registered architects in the Metropolitan area Certificates of Award for excellence in Small House Design, and we invited our neighboring societies to join us in judging the entries. This was the first attempt to raise the standards of small house design and also to bring together in a cooperative effort the architectural societies in this area.

At one of our meetings we invited the Brooklyn Chapter to join us and this was the first time in history that these two Chapters had joined in a meeting.

When the private architects' participation in city work was threatened by the suit known as Curran vs. Gehron this Chapter stepped in and voted to use a portion of its Reserve Fund to defend that suit. As you know, the decision was in our favor, and the bill for legal services was \$1900 odd dollars. We invited all architects whose contracts with the City would be affected by that decision to contribute towards the expenses. We have so far collected about \$700, so that the Chapter's contribution has been approximately \$1200.

More recently we have made an attempt to find some solution to the precarious situation in which the profession finds itself today. You will remember that I wrote letters to some 15 heads of Government bureaus and departments, asking for a statement as to the status of the private architect in defense construction. As most of the answers were non-committal—though pleasant—we discussed the matter at some length in the Executive Committee, after which the Chapter, on the recommendation of the Executive Committee, voted to set aside \$4000 of its Reserve Fund in order to define and clarify the architects' position with relation to the Government and society.

\$1000 of this has already been used in the employment of a public relations firm to study the situation and recommend a plan of procedure. We hear a great deal of talk on all sides about a publicity campaign for architects, but to my knowledge we are the first Chapter actually to have voted money for that purpose. Already we are receiving letters of en-

couragement and offers of cooperation from other Chapters.

Our Education Committee has a speakers group who go out on call to various schools and vocational groups and explain the functions of architects and architecture.

Our Public School Committee has produced a pamphlet on "How to Select an Architect" for school buildings. This pamphlet has been approved by the N. Y. State Association of Architects, and in fact is being printed and distributed by the State Association to all School Boards and State Departments of Education of New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

One thing I have tried to do during my Presidency was to resurrect some of the Chapter's activities which had been abandoned and almost forgotten. Thus, the Chapter's Honorary Associate membership has been revived, and was bestowed last February on the Mayor of New York City. The Chapter's Medal of Honor was revived and was given last year to Raymond Hood (posthumously), and this year to Clarence Stein. The Apartment House Medal was likewise revived, and this year's awards are to be made today. Dean Arnaud will report on them later in this meeting.

Our LeBrun Traveling Scholarship of \$1400 was awarded last year after the Chapter had voted to make certain changes in the Deed of Gift to permit the winner to travel in the United States. The scholarship is to be offered again this year.

The first Arnold W. Brunner Scholarship of \$1200 was awarded last year, and this year the Chapter is offering a second award for the same amount.

The New York State Association has now become a member of the Institute. This is something the Chapter approved and in fact urged many months ago, and is another step towards unification of the profession. In this connection, I am happy to report that one of our own Chapter members, Matthew DelGaudio, was elected at the recent Convention in California as the State Association Director of the Institute for a three-year term.

One of our most recent endeavors was to appeal to the architects of America for funds for our colleagues in Great Britain, and on May 1 we sent a draft for \$2600 to Sir Ian MacAllister to be distributed among the most needy members of the R.I.B.A. and their families.

We have been active in legislative matters. The members of our Legislative Committee have called on various councilmen to discuss some of the city bills with them and we have sent

numerous telegrams to Albany, both to the Legislators and to Governor Lehman, regarding the passage of State bills. All of this is uphill work, but in some cases our efforts have been rewarded, as in the case of the Urban Redevelopment Bill and some of the Multiple Dwelling Law amendments.

We have formed several special committees since the beginning of this season, notably one to study changes and modifications in the present Chapter Schedule of Fees, and one to study partial services. A very important new committee is that on Civilian Protection which was appointed with the full approval of the Mayor. The Chapter is also represented on the official national committee, known as the National Technological Civilian Protection Committee, on which I am serving as the architect member.

Our By-Laws have for many years needed revising and bringing up to date. A year ago Robert O'Connor took on the onerous task of completely rewriting them, and last fall the revision and adoption of our new By-Laws became a fait accompli. Minor modifications may, of course, be required from time to time—one is to be voted on today—but the major work of revision is accomplished and will last us, I hope, for many years.

Last September the N. Y. State Association of Architects held its Third Annual Convention at Rochester, to which this Chapter sent 24 delegates. As you know, we are one of the constituent member bodies of the State Association, and out of every \$15 dues paid to the Chapter \$2 goes to the Association. This money is used by the Association primarily to maintain a representative at Albany during the sessions of the Legislature whose duty is to keep an eye on all legislation affecting our profession and to warn us when action is necessary.

Your Executive Committee has met regularly once a month during the season, with occasional intermediate meetings when special matters arose. I have been present at every meeting of the Executive Committee, and have also attended as many of the other committee meetings as possible, since your President is a member ex-officio of all committees. As I have already said, we have tried to make each committee in the Chapter effective, and every chairman has been asked to submit a résumé of his committee's work for the year. Time will not permit the reading of these today, but they will be on file at the Chapter office and we will try, as we did last year,

to give brief reports of each in the OCULUS.

Right here, I would like to say a word about the OCULUS. Unlike the Committees, which can meet and act at will, the OCULUS must always appear on schedule. We have been particularly fortunate in our editor, Albert Clay, who has attended every Chapter meeting, and has given a great deal of his time in producing an informative, concise and readable monthly bulletin for the Chapter.

I have touched on just a few of the highlights. I would like to be able to tell you in more detail of some of the fine work accomplished by the individual members of the Chapter, and especially the chairmen of our many committees. I have been impressed by their willingness to take on a job when I asked them and their sincerity and earnestness in carrying it out. I want to express to each and every one with whom I have worked during these past two years, and especially to the members of the Executive Committee, my sincere thanks and appreciation for this spirit of cooperation. It is this spirit which has made it possible for me to carry on a truly strenuous and time-consuming task.

I believe I am leaving the Chapter in good running order. We have no debts. Our bills are paid. Last December we adopted a budget for the year beginning January 1, 1941, and so far we have kept within that budget, and with our good Treasurer acting as watchdog over our funds we shall continue to keep within it.

Our Treasurer is too modest to tell you of one very good thing he has done for us. Most treasurer's reports, as you know, are far too difficult and complicated for the average layman to understand. Our Treasurer has worked out a simplified form of report which he presents to us each month, so that each member of the Board can see at a glance how our funds are being used.

Many interesting and excellent ideas have been proposed by our committees. The development of these ideas and the carrying on of the Chapter will fall to the new officers who will take office today.

They are worthy successors to the present regime, and I commend them to you, but they must have your help and cooperation. I urge you sincerely to give them the same loyal support you have given us this past year, in order that the Chapter may continue to develop in strength and leadership of the profession in this country.

Respectfully submitted,

FREDERICK G. FROST

COMMITTEE REPORTS

As announced at the June meeting of the Chapter, the OCULUS prints synopses of annual committee reports. Omitted are those reports which were mentioned in the President's report. It is hoped that perusal of these reports will give members an idea of the functions of our committees, and some idea of the amount of work which goes into their activities. We begin with:

COMMITTEE ON MEETINGS—Willis N. Mills, Chairman

Early in the year, the Committee on Meetings planned to synchronize our monthly meetings with the National Defense effort. The intent was to include some discussion of Civilian Protection or National Defense in the program of each meeting. Because of limited time and the fact that other important subjects had already been scheduled, this objective was not entirely effective this year. Only two of our regular meetings included this subject in the discussion.

The following outline is a brief review of the major subjects discussed at our regular meetings this year:

\$4000 Fund for public relations counsel or for other purposes to make the "architect more useful."

Quentin Reynolds—talk on personal experiences.

Anniversary Dinner — talk by Mayor LaGuardia.

Pre-Convention Meeting—report by Civilian Protection Committee.

Your Committee believes that the meetings can be improved if the members of this Chapter will freely criticize and suggest topics for discussion. Such cooperation will not only be an invaluable guidance to the Committee, but will also, in our opinion, increase the attendance and membership by confining the discussion to subjects of genuine interest and real importance to the members of this Chapter and the profession.

BUILDING CODE—Alex. S. Corrigill, Chairman

This committee was appointed by the President in August 1940 to handle the approval or disapproval of suggested changes in the Building Code received from the Secretary of the Joint Committee. The unfortunate death of Carl Grieshaber, one of the members, occurred after only two meetings had been held.

The Committee has reviewed information received from the Secretary of the Joint Committee, and has reported to the President on approximately a dozen matters, including bills affecting the Building Code and requests from City authorities for expressions

of opinion. We believe that no such matters requiring reports are now pending.

CIVIC DESIGN — Ely Jacques Kahn, Chairman

This Committee has concentrated its work on several distinct programs:

1. Defense — After the Committee had arranged for one of its members to check activities in other cities our Executive Committee turned this study over to a special committee.

2. Study of Battery Park — The Committee asked James MacKenzie to serve as professional adviser in checking all factors involved in the replanning of Battery Park. This program involves the competition for the tunnel buildings, the attitude taken toward the destruction of the old Castle Garden, and the possibility of holding a general competition for this area.

3. Foley Square — Lorimer Rich, representing also the Municipal Art Society, is studying the program for this competition which will include a complete solution of this area.

4. City Plan — Careful consideration has been given to the published program of the City Planning Commission and their actions have been approved in principle.

COMPETITIONS—Lorimer Rich, Chairman

Only two meetings were held due to the fact that there are so few competition prospects. The Memorandum on Competitions which was approved last year has been printed and a copy sent to each member.

One of these was a competition for a medical library in Washington which was set up by Congress last year in a \$130,000 appropriation. After considerable correspondence and negotiations the War Department decided that the competition was not feasible and appointed architects.

Another item considered was a request for information on the conduct of an architectural competition for a school board in Connecticut. Our Committee furnished this information with the hope this job would develop into a competition within a few months.

A Preliminary Budget of the City carried an item of \$50,000 for a preliminary study for a new Kings County court house. Our Committee tried without success to stimulate an architectural competition for this very important building. The appropriation has since been withdrawn.

EDUCATION — John C. B. Moore, Chairman

In routine activities the Committee has maintained its usual contact with architectural education in the New York region. The service of vocational information has been continued and

talks have been arranged for the benefit of high school and private school students who consider entering our profession.

The response to our usual letter of announcement has not been very enthusiastic. Only a total of nine requests for conferences were received. These were arranged for, and acknowledgment is made to the members of the Chapter who responded to Graham Erskine's call.

Another year we propose to formulate more precise information concerning the profession, basing the material on questions we have been asked this year and distributing this information prior to arrangement of conferences.

Applications for Mentors under the plan of the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards is practically nil, due apparently to reluctance on the part of recent graduates to register with the National Council for this purpose.

The threat to discontinue the School of Architecture and Allied Arts of New York University has been a matter of grave concern to our Committee. In December we passed a resolution expressing the Committee's belief in the high quality and unique contribution of the School to architectural education in New York, and giving encouragement to the members of the faculty who were at that time endeavoring to find means to continue the School. These efforts have been renewed at different times during the past months, but we regret that no solution has yet been found.

The holder of the 1940 Brunner Scholarship, Truman J. Mathews of Santa Fe, New Mexico, made a preliminary submission of his work. This comprises photographs of various structures and details of early southwestern architecture. These photographs were considered of exceptional merit as to subject matter, historical point of view of the author, and quality of the photographs themselves. The Committee is entirely satisfied with the choice of this first holder of the Scholarship and with his capacity to complete a thorough and vital study of an unusual phase of architectural history.

The Brunner Scholarship was awarded this year to Hobart B. Upjohn. Mr. Upjohn's work is to be the history of the A.I.A., from the formation of the Institute in 1857 to 1900. A substantial beginning has already been made by Mr. Upjohn who has the documents, the personal interest and the ability to make a valuable contribution to the Chapter and to the Institute. Honorable Mention was made to Mrs. Lois Wilson Worley of St. Louis, Missouri.

FIFTH AVENUE ASSOCIATION—Lucian E. Smith, Delegate

After some 48 new buildings and alterations were personally inspected, the Association's first prize was awarded to the Tiffany Building, and the prize for a store front was awarded to 57 E. 57th Street.

LEBRUN SCHOLARSHIP — Francis Keally, Chairman

James W. Breed, winner of last year's scholarship, has completed his six-month tour of the United States and Mexico. The trip was successful from every point of view.

A new competition is now being prepared and will be given out some time during the summer.

LEGISLATION—Charles C. Platt, Acting Chairman. Mr. Platt prefaces his report as follows:

"In the extended absence of Mr. Foley, Chairman, for the last two months of this administration, I have the honor to report in his stead, though not as intimately familiar as he with the innumerable details of his work and unsparing expenditure of time he devoted to the duties of this chairmanship. I take this occasion to pay tribute to him for the energy, efficiency and diplomacy he brought to the activities of our Committee."

Victories have been won both in the Legislature and the City Council in opposing the well-organized efforts of certain interested groups to prohibit the employment of the private architect in public work. On the other hand, our efforts were not successful toward enlarging the sphere of the architect's practice, particularly in upstate sections, by including through legislative enactment buildings under the 30,000 cubic foot and \$10,000 cost limits now permitted to be done without employment of an architect.

These two measures are perennial, recurring each year and meeting exactly the same fate each year. The cost and volume exemption does not seriously affect the city practitioner but the public works measure does, and many ingenious approaches are resorted to by each side. The latest suggestion from our angle is to have incorporated in bills containing appropriations for public buildings a clause specifying the architect's fee and paving the way for his engagement.

BOOK REVIEW

"This Business of Architecture" by Royal Barry Wills. We have been asked by the OCULUS to review this recent book. Addressed to "Young Men in Architecture," we find in it mostly the author's version of a manual of office practice, set down in not too heavy a vein—such as "Keeping Your Overhead Underfoot."

We commend not only to young men approaching professional practice, but to the rest of us as well, the chapter on "Stalking and Capture of Clients." You may not endorse the 55 maxims laid down, but you will be surprised with their diversity. We checked them off ourself and felt that we had been neglecting several very green pastures. P.

SPECIAL MEETING (Cont.)

as things are going. Let us not do too little too late."

Enlarging upon the topic of the Chapter's relation to defense, Mr. Stevenson said, "We cannot escape the fact that preparations for defense and the protection of civilians will color every activity of the profession during the coming year. I am therefore asking every committee which will be shortly appointed to keep this fact constantly before them and to consult with the existing committee on Civilian Protection to see how any part of the work may be oriented toward this common end."

Mr. Stevenson then read a letter recently received from Mayor LaGuardia in which he noted the fact that the "valuable studies" of the Chapter along the subject of air raid shelters and allied problems had been brought to his attention and that he hoped shortly to examine them with care. The Mayor closed by saying, "I will certainly want your cooperation in this matter and will get in touch with you again shortly."

Mr. Stevenson reported that in the field of large scale housing an excellent report has been made by our committee headed by Perry Coke Smith. Director Swope of the New York Housing Authority has promised to discuss these questions in an informal meeting with several of the architects most familiar with housing.

In the field of small scale housing a concrete report of our Committee on Small Houses was presented to the Chapter by Don E. Hatch. This report contained a suggestion for possible Chapter cooperation with an organization called the Monthly Small House Club. The members of this club are lending institutions interested in small houses.

After discussion a motion was carried to the effect that this report be accepted and that the president of the Chapter be authorized to appoint a committee to investigate thoroughly all phases of this plan, and to advise on possible cooperation with the club along the lines outlined. The motion stipulated that the committee be specifically advised that it is not empowered to make any financial commitments.