



O C U L U S

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VOL. XII, NO. 1, OCTOBER 1950

COMING EVENTS

Tuesday, October 10 — Field Trip — 600 Fifth Avenue
— to see Robertson Q-Floor, perlite plaster,
Gritcrete concrete.

Tuesday, October 17 — Pre-Convention Lunch

Tuesday, October 31 — Lunch. Technical Committee will
present: "Specifications and Your Cost Budget."

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, November 2, 3, 4, — State
Convention, Hotel Syracuse.

STATE CONVENTION

The Convention being held in Syracuse on November 2, 3 and 4, 1950, is one of the most important in the history of the New York State Association. It has been proposed that a staff be employed to carry on the activities of the Association, which will necessitate higher dues. Since the New York Chapter contributes more than one-third of the total Association dues now paid, we are all vitally concerned, so as many members as possible should plan to attend the Convention. Those who will attend are urged to notify the Chapter Office immediately so that the Executive Committee may select the 24 delegates who will be the official representatives. Send reservations directly to the Hotel Syracuse.

Advance news of the Convention appeared in the May-June 1950 *Empire State Architect*. The State Association recently announced some of the highlights of the program. Certificates will be awarded for winning designs exhibited by members, as well as for best displays shown by commercial exhibitors.

Seminars will be conducted on traditional versus modern architecture, landscaping, and fire prevention. Ralph Walker, President A.I.A., will be the first speaker at luncheon on Thursday, November 2. George Sokolsky, author, columnist and authority on Far Eastern affairs, will address the annual convention dinner on November 3. General Lucius D. Clay, wartime administrator of occupied Germany and present head of the Civil Defense Commission of New York State, will discuss the European and domestic situation at an earlier meeting.

Wives of members are cordially invited to attend, and a special Women's Program has been arranged for their entertainment.

At the first Chapter meeting of the year (luncheon, October 17) all members will have an opportunity to air their views on the important questions to come before the Convention (See Chapter letter of September 18) and to help formulate Chapter policy and resolutions for presentation at the Convention, which may affect our annual dues.

The Nominating Committee of the State Association has placed in nomination the following slate:

President.....H. V. Murphy, Brooklyn
1st Vice-President.....I. Seelig, Brooklyn
2nd Vice-President.....L. A. Waasdorp, Rochester
3rd Vice-President.....M. Wolfe, Buffalo
Secretary.....J. W. Briggs, Rochester
Treasurer.....M. A. Cantor, Brooklyn

According to Rule 10 from the Rules for the 1950 Convention, "All resolutions shall be submitted in triplicate to the Chairman of the Resolutions Committee, Harry M. Prince, 101 Park Avenue, New York 17."

CITIZENS' HOUSING COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

In the Summer 1950 Oculus report was made of the expression of objection made by the Executive Committee to a published statement purported to be made by Ira S. Robbins, Executive Vice-President of the Citizens' Housing and Planning Council of New York, Inc., to the effect that certain work to be undertaken by the City Planning Commission could best be done by members of the staff of public agencies rather than by private architects.

Mr. Robbins has since stated that the excerpt from his letter to Mayor O'Dwyer has been misinterpreted. His feeling, he later stated in a letter to the President, was that: "CHPC believes that the City Planning Commission should retain consultants from time to time to undertake specific tasks and to act as advisers to the Commission and its staff... The method by which the New York City Housing Authority operates with a staff and consultants furnishes a good precedent."

CIVILIAN DEFENSE COMMITTEES

At the Board of Directors meeting of the New York State Association of Architects held on September 9, 1950, it was unanimously voted to form a State Civilian Defense Committee, to consist of representatives from each of the constituent members, who will pledge themselves to work in conjunction with the A.I.A. National Defense Committee, to conform to their plans, and to offer assistance to the State and Federal agencies in charge of Civilian Defense.

The Joint Committee of Architectural Societies of the Metropolitan Area, of which the New York Chapter is a member, has organized a Civilian Defense Committee to represent greater New York, Westchester and Long Island in the belief that such a joint overall committee could more effectively and efficiently deal with city officials. Matthew Del Gaudio is Acting Chairman of this Committee and the New York Chapter is represented by Perry Coke Smith, delegate to the Joint Committee, and Harold R. Sleeper.

A Chapter Civilian Defense Committee has been appointed, to act in an advisory capacity to our representatives on the Joint Committee. Chairman of the Chapter Committee is Morris Ketchum, Jr., and members include: Thomas M. Bell, J. Gordon Carr, Matthew W. Del Gaudio, Frederick G. Frost, Geoffrey Platt, Alfred E. Poor, Greville Richard, Harvey Stevenson, and Frederick J. Woodbridge.

More information on membership participation will be published in Oculus as soon as decisions and directives are issued by our Committees.

20th ANNIVERSARY OF ARCHITECTS' EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

The following letter written from Europe by Julian Levi, Founder of the Architects' Emergency Committee, to Max Foley, currently Chairman of the Committee, summarizes the history of the Architects' Emergency Committee. The OCULUS is happy to extend its congratulations and its best wishes for future success.

"This Autumn will mark the 20th Anniversary of the birth of the Architects' Emergency Committee. At that distant time not one of us suspected the gravity of the situation, the length of its duration or that, the crisis past, the Committee would continue to fulfill a useful function.

In those dark days of dire necessity we of course sought positions for our growing list of unemployed. As the positions were pitifully few we had to create useful projects that did not interfere with established activities or jobs.

To accomplish these purposes we had to seek funds — first for administrative costs and then for relief loans and for the publicly established relief salaries to be paid on our own projects.

I am proud to recall that the architectural societies and individual firms, in spite of their precarious position, furnished the modest sums needed for the administration fund. The relief fund grew beyond all expectations, thanks to our wives, sisters, sweethearts and to the public.

I am also proud to recall that not one cent of that relief fund was ever diverted from its purpose.

In spite of the tragic necessity the experience was an inspiring one. The members of the Committee, its sub-committees, its Women's Division, all rose to the occasion. Their creative ability and devotion overcame all difficulties.

On the score of devotion let me pay tribute to Mrs. Nelson whom, at the very start, we were fortunate to enlist as executive secretary, and whose management of the office contributed more to our success than most of us suspect. The greatest tribute to her is the sheaf of letters she has received from the men and women she personally mothered on behalf of the Committee. Even at as late a date as the A.I.A. Convention in May at Washington, a number of architects, from different parts of the country, expressed to me their gratitude for Mrs. Nelson's understanding treatment of their problems at a time when a friend in need was a friend indeed.

The emergency of the 1930's no longer exists, but I am happy that the Committee continues to render service to the profession in finding work for those seeking positions. We are not conducting an employment agency. Better than that, we are offering, without any remuneration, friendly cooperation to all who bring their problems to us. It is not an obligation nor is it a responsibility. It is an evidence of the fine spirit of comradeship that animates the architectural profession."

SURVEYORS OF UNSAFE BUILDINGS

A few places are open on the Chapter's list of nominees for Surveyors of Unsafe Buildings compiled by the City in accordance with Paragraph 2.2.4.4.1 of the Building Code. Members wishing to be considered for this list may send in their names to the Chapter Office. Requirements are a minimum of 10 years experience in building construction and 3 years residence in New York City immediately preceding appointment.

When a member on the list is called upon for a survey, the City will pay a fee of \$25.

LE BRUN

The first written report has been received from Ralph E. Meyers, recipient of the 1950 Le Brun Traveling Scholarship. An experienced traveler, he has covered several thousand miles by car through France, Spain and Portugal. Mr. Meyers has visited principal cities and other points of interest in these countries, recording his travels by photography and movie films. His report contains many succinct comments of human and civic interest as well as architectural.

The LeBrun Fellowship was established by Pierre Le Brun to promote artistic, scientific and practical efficiency of the architectural profession and is awarded annually on the basis of a national competition among young draftsmen and architects.

NEW PUBLICATION

Contractor's Digest, terming itself "The Building Trades Leading Monthly Newspaper," circulated to Contractors, Sub-contractors, Architects, Engineers and Realtors in Greater New York is a new arrival on many Chapter Members' busy desks. The first issue of this new publication, which is issued to those in the building industry without charge, contains articles on a wide variety of subjects such as new building-projects, materials and construction techniques, interior decoration, insurance, government programs and regulations, etc.

The works of architects are not neglected, there being news of contracts awarded to architects and a number of illustrations of architects' renderings, as well as announcement of the booklet "Selecting an Architect" issued by the Public Housing Administration and purportedly based on recommendations of well-known architects including several of our Chapter members. The A.I.A.'s action in setting up its National Defense Committee is also reported at some length.

Our best wishes go to this enterprising and comprehensive publication. Let us hope that it will be another medium through which the scope and value of our profession's services and activities will become better known, and let us hope that architects will cooperate in helping to achieve this result.

DISPERSAL OF FEDERAL OFFICES

The A.I.A. has recently given much attention to the discussion in Congress of the proposed dispersal of federal office buildings with a view to securing greater safety for Washington in the event of possible expansion of hostilities abroad.

The General Services Administration, which contains the Public Buildings Service, early in September revealed the existence of a two-year-old secret plan calling for the construction of \$140,000,000 worth of new government office buildings in four centers in Maryland and Virginia, lying from twelve to fifty miles distant from the White House. Each group would be connected with Washington suburbs by new access roads and would accommodate 10,000 employees. The buildings would be standardized permanent structures scheduled for completion within eighteen months.

The project obviously offered unusually large planning opportunities and hazards, and the Institute, in a press release dated September 9, pointed out that it made urgent the enactment by Congress of a bill to reorganize the National Capital Park and Planning Commission in such manner as to give it authority to act beyond the limits of the Federal District. Another release two days afterwards called the attention of Maryland and Virginia to the challenge to create new residential communities serving the new government centers. The Institute warned that prompt action by state and county planning commissions was needed if attractive and well planned new towns, rather than future residential slums, were to result from this sudden opportunity. The exhibition of the redevelopment of central areas and the planning of new towns in Great Britain, currently on view at the Biltmore Museum of Art, was cited as a good example of the kind of planning that would be possible in the Washington metropolitan area, should it be decided to decentralize the Federal office buildings.

The whole proposal, however, led to such heated discussion in Congress, its less bitter opponents holding that any dispersal, even if necessary, was futile unless carried into the Middle West, that consideration of the idea was indefinitely postponed. But the recommendations of the Institute retain their validity, regardless of whether or not the Government's plan should be accepted now or in the future, changed or unchanged.

NATIONAL PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The A.I.A., in Memo From The Octagon, has announced that it is establishing a National Committee on Public Relations. The Committee's duties will be to formulate a public relations policy, subject to Board approval, and to recommend means of promoting a needed national public relations program for the profession to satisfy the increasing demands of the membership. This is a most important committee, and we wish it all success.

HOUSING RESEARCH

In its bulletin *From the Octagon*, dated September 11, the A.I.A. deplors the fact that the only national building research program of any consequence, namely that conducted by the Housing and Home Finance Agency, had its funds for contract research cut approximately in half by Congress in its session just closed. The slash was unopposed save by the Institute, which made public a letter to Raymond M. Foley, HHFA Administrator, asking him to support the program more vigorously in the light of its potential contributions toward more economical and efficient building.

The Institute urged Congress to make good its previous promise to undertake a long-range program of housing studies, including building code reform, modular coordination, and similar measures, and pointed out with worthy soundness that a time of national emergency like the present was one in which such projects should be expanded rather than curtailed.

N. P. A. REG. 1

Of special concern to architects is the anti-hoarding order or inventory control regulations issued by the National Production Authority of the Federal Government and effective on September 18, 1950.

The purpose of the new controls is to prevent accumulation of materials by suppliers and manufacturers beyond what is required for normally scheduled operations. The intent of this Bill is to prevent stocks of essential materials from falling into the hands of hoarders and gray market operators. More far-reaching, however, to the architect is the placing of such items as steel, copper, rubber, aluminum, lumber, cement, sheathing, lath, gypsum and other building wares within the category of scarce materials.

In this respect the pinch is being felt with increasing severity by building contractors when placing orders. A spot check among builders discloses shortages or extended periods of deliveries on steel, cement, rubber and copper.

A.I.A. SURVEY

The A.I.A. reports that the forms for the 1950 Survey of the Architectural Profession which were sent to all members have been returned from about one-fifth of the profession. The Post Card Survey is 41% complete. All Chapter members are urged to complete their forms and return them as soon as possible to Washington as a full response is exceedingly important to the work of the Survey Commission.

A.I.A. BULLETIN USAGE

While you are going through your Abeyance File to find and complete the Survey Questionnaire perhaps you will also find the brief questionnaire sent to you by the Chapter late in August on the subject of your use of the material in the A.I.A. Bulletin. If you have not done so already it would take only a brief moment or two to check off the appropriate answers and mail the questionnaire to the Chapter Office.

"BLUEPRINT OF A WORKING ARCHITECT"

To express our appreciation of an article written by Aline B. Louchheim, Associate Art Editor of the New York Times Magazine, on the relation of an architect to his client, the President wrote the following letter to her:

"The Executive Committee of the New York Chapter, American Institute of Architects, has asked me to express to you, on behalf of the Chapter, our enthusiastic appreciation of your "Blueprint of a working Architect," which appeared in The Times Magazine of September 10, 1950.

"We feel that your delightfully written article has contributed immeasurably to the public's understanding of the role of the Architect. Hurrah for our side!

"Best of luck to you."

Miss Louchheim replied:

"Will you convey to the New York Chapter, America Institute of Architects, my sincere gratitude for its appreciation of "Blueprint of a Working Architect?" I am extremely flattered that the article should have met with the favor of this professional group.

"I have had requests for reprints of the article (from as far away as South Dakota and Tennessee as well as closer by) and it has even been suggested that the A.I.A. might be interested in undertaking the reprint, distribution and sale of the piece. The Times will give reprint rights, but does not do reprints itself. If the A.I.A. would be interested in some such arrangement, I would be happy to discuss it with you."

NEW LOOK

The Chapter's thanks and congratulation are offered to Ronald Allwork and a special committee for the recent redecoration of the office in the Architectural League building.

The east and west walls have been lined with storage cabinets whose doors from a continuous pattern of bold squares. New chromium lighting fixtures, a new pale green rug, and even new typewriters have been installed. The rug, an item of unexpectedly discontinued stock specified by the architect, was secured through the ingenuity of Miss Eleanor Pepper. Mr. Allwork, who not only prepared the necessary drawings, but in addition to devoting much time to supervision of the work contributed more than a little physical assistance, wishes to indicate his appreciation of the interest and efficiency shown by Sheppard-Pollak, Inc., the general contractors.

Mrs. Allwork, the decorator for the project, describes the pleasant color used on the walls as a deep, warm beige, but Chapter members are invited to inspect the results and to contribute to the still-unfinished discussion their opinions as to whether it more nearly suggests chocolate or coffee, with or without cream.

SAVE FEBRUARY 28TH!

The 82nd Anniversary Dinner of the New York Chapter will be held at the Hotel Biltmore on February 28th. Be sure to mark this date on your calendar now. Complete information on this key event will be published later.

PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASSES

Members who would like further practice in public speaking are invited to join the Effective Speaking Course sponsored jointly by the Chapter and The Architectural League for a series of ten sessions beginning October 19. These classes will be conducted by Mrs. Harold Sleeper at a weekly luncheon on Thursdays at 12:30 p.m. in the Pine Room. The fee of \$10.00 for the course will go to The League Building Fund. Enroll by calling or writing the office of The Architectural League before the first meeting, October 19.

A.I.A.-PHA CONTRACT AGREEMENT

The A. I. A. is to be congratulated that differences with regard to provisions of current PHA contract 1915A have been successfully resolved. Many items which appeared controversial because of different interpretations were reworded or omitted. Some required specific revisions involving definition of services to be rendered. All changes will be the subject of a circular to be issued shortly by the PHA to local authorities.

Active in the negotiations were chapter members Clarence Litchfield, Chairman of the Fees Committee and our President, Harry Prince, Housing Fees Committee Chairman.

LETTERS ABROAD

This summer there was forwarded to the Chapter via "Letters Abroad" and the Architectural League a letter to the Voice of America from a student of architecture at the Technical University of Munich on behalf of a group of fellow students. This letter expressed a desire for an exchange of ideas with American specialists and requested addresses of architects interested in such an idea.

Any chapter members who would care to follow this up should write to Ekkehard H. Messerer, Paul Hoechst Str. 50, Muenchen - Pasing, Bayern-U.S. Zone.

CANDIDATES

According to the By-Laws of the Chapter, names of candidates for membership shall be submitted to all members before consideration by the Committee on Admissions. Information received regarding the qualifications of the following candidates will be considered confidential:

Corporate Membership:

S. Robert Greenstein

Sponsors: Lester Maxon and Paul Schulz

Robert Hays Rosenberg

Sponsors: Gerson T. Hirsch and Marcel Breuer

Frank P. Malaspina

Sponsors: William J. Jensen and James C. Mackenzie

Harvey Grebe Matheys

Sponsors: Aaron G. Alexander and Howard S. Patterson

Associate Membership:

John Milton Hiller

Sponsors: Elliott L. Chisling and Oscar H. Murray

Robert B. Hudspeth

Sponsors: John N. Richards and Michael B. O'Shea
(Toledo, Ohio)