

NEW YORK CHAPTER

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COMING EVENTS

The Technical Committee and the Civil Defense Committee announce joint sponsorship of a Round Table Discussion on "Atomic Blast Protection Need Cost No More". The purpose of this discussion is to give the practicing architect the latest information on when and how blast protection measures should be advocated to a client.

A panel of experts from Structural Engineering and Civil Defense fields will be our guests, among them Boyd Anderson, Morris Ketchum, Jr., Fred Severud and Paul Weidlinger. The date is Tuesday, December 2nd, Luncheon at 12:30 P.M.

THE CIVIC DESIGN COMMITTEE AT CITY HALL

The Civic Design Committee reached a plane of true public service in Chairman Walter H. Kilham, Jr.'s presentation of their report on the Metropolitan Association of Real Estate Boards' "Critical Analysis of the Plan for Rezoning New York".

The occasion was the City Planning Commission's sixth public hearing at City Hall on the Harrison, Ballard & Allen Zoning Plan. At the hearing the Association, through the chairman of their planning committee, Henry H. Davenport, opposed the HB&A plan and proposed instead retaining the existing law modified to include desirable features of the HB&A plan. Representatives of 25 organizations, many of them strongly favoring the new plan, were heard. The Commission reserved decision.

The members of the Civic Design Committee, Messrs. Chu, Frost, Jr., McHugh and Woodbridge, each analyzed in considerable detail a specific topic in the "Critical Analysis". From the authoritative data which this study afforded, Chairman Kilham was able to draft a report not only specific in detail but so broad in the philosophical aspects of its concluding paragraphs as to win praise at the hearing from Commissioner Lawrence M. Orton for the statesman-like point of view throughout the whole report.

The complete text of the report is available at the Chapter Office for more intensive study but the following passages from the concluding paragraphs are noteworthy:

"Though a great deal of thought and research has gone into the "Critical Analysis", the conclusion is inescapable -- that it seeks to reduce all zoning changes to a minimum expressing satisfaction with building plans as they exist, and leaving conditions as nearly as possible as they are today. We cannot believe that this is in their best interest. The life blood of the real estate business, with a commission in every deal, is CHANGE.

The second conclusion is that framers of the New Zoning Regulation still have a great deal of work to do. The coordination of the practical aspects of the new code is highly necessary and we believe the City Planning Commission should have the staff to do this. The New York Chapter is glad to offer its services in any way it can be of assistance to the Commission.

We now come to the major point. What kind of a city is it we are trying to live in? The proposed Zoning Law must not be considered a substitute for a Master Plan. ... It is designed to implement that Plan once it is made. We believe the City Planning Commission should at least establish policies that should be a guide to the future development of this City.... The establishment of the principles by which that growth and development should take place, we feel, is the first duty of the City Planning Commission. We urge their immediate consideration -- we would be glad to support the Commission in the task."

PAN AMERICAN CONGRESS -- A Report from Julian Levi

The 8th Pan American Congress of Architects in Mexico City, October 20th to 25th was truly a notable and unusual event. The Organizing Committee invited individual architects from Europe as "Guests of Honor" as well as Frank Lloyd Wright, Gropius and myself from the United States. The Mexican Government participated actively. After a private reception to official delegates and Guests of Honor in his office, President Aleman opened the Congress with a brilliant ceremony attended by his ministers and the Diplomatic Corps in the Palace of Fine Arts. The Mayor, in a crowded meeting at the City Hall, conferred the City's Medal of Distinguished Visitor upon Ceas of Italy, Vago of France, Wright, Gropius and me. The Minister of Foreign Affairs had a buffet reception, the Minister of Social Service a luncheon, the Federal District Department a lunch on the shore of the floating gardens at Xochimilco and so on.

The Congress was not all entertainment though I must add to the official events the lunch under tents in the gardens of Pedregal, followed by a procession of Indians in native costumes from all parts of Mexico -- a most colorful and beautiful spectacle -- and also the lunch in one of the open air "Frontons" at the University City still under construction.

Plenary sessions in the mornings heard 10-minute papers on Low Cost Housing, Health Centers and University Cities. A seminar open only to official delegates in the late afternoon, discussed the papers and wrote "Conclusions"

Exhibitions from most of the American countries formed an important part of the educational value of the Congress. Morris Ketchum organized and hung the U.S. exhibits. It merits a little article all alone which I hope Morris will write soon.

The site of the Congress -- the new University City about 12 miles out from the center of Mexico City -- provided an exciting and unique setting. In this short memo it is impossible to do justice to its conception, plan, use of materials and of color. The many architects involved worked as a huge team. They said, "it is the labor of Mexican architects working for Mexico." In spite of their desire for anonymity, they all are full of praise for Carlos Lazo, who headed the group and was the president of the Congress. This was particularly gratifying to me for Lazo came to the U.S. some 10 years ago on the Delano and Aldrich Fellowship. His travels and studies here, added to his native ability, have been justified by his meteoric career.

UNDER 40

For many years the New York Chapter has been endeavoring to attract young architects to its membership roster, without too much success. This season, however, prospects are brighter. For, on November 13th, speaking before 70 members, associates, students and guests at an "under-40-years-of-age luncheon" (where "eavesdroppers over 40" -- and there were many -- were welcome), President Hugh Ferriss launched a new campaign to determine what is wrong and to correct what his administration feels is an unhealthy situation.

Chaired by under 40-er Arthur Douglass, the meeting produced some interesting comments. Roger Halle deplored the fact that 899 (99.9%) of the 900 members are 25 years of age or over, 873 (97.0%) are 30 or over, 821 (91.2%) are 35 or over and 744 are 40 or over. If in some other countries, such as Venezuela, a substantial percentage of the architects are under 30, might it not be advisable to seek to achieve this goal in New York? He feels that the present age divisions are in part a result of present registration laws in our state. "As I understand the regulations, a candidate must be at least 25 years of age; with existing educational and experience requirements the minimum age before he is licensed to practice usually works out to be 28 years. This is considerably higher, for example, than the medical profession.

Alfred Ash suggested that the A.I.A. is of use only to practicing architects who are on in years. Younger architects cannot ordinarily command sizeable commissions, anyway. He also stressed the importance of studying client relationships both in school and in the discussion groups of the A.I.A. In reply, Roger Halle suggested lowering the age restrictions while making the examinations even tougher, in that way keeping the most competent and promising group within the profession.

John Jansson noted a general impression amongst candidates that the tests are geared to keep out young practitioners. In addition, he suggested that the Albany business administration should be made more efficient. Richard Stein feels the profession as a whole is not professional enough. The lectures and discussions are not carried on at a professional level. He suggested setting up a committee responsible to younger men's needs and gripes.

First-year Columbia architectural student Blackton laid the blame directly on the A.I.A., but suggested for better student-professional relationships: (1) student jobs and work projects under A.I.A. auspices in summer, and (2) a combined A.I.A.-student research committee on a non-commercial basis. Four Cooper Union student members -- Messrs. Willenski, Zimmerman, Small and Goldberg -- declared that, for lack of an A.I.A. program their chapter had to stir up its own activities. Arthur Douglass regretted that the A.I.A. never pitched in to interest these students and hoped that something would be done to the future to retain contact with the student members after they graduate.

Much interest was aroused by the proposal of Walker O. Cain. His thesis was that in New York's intensely urban environment, where many people go for days without seeing a blade of grass or a jet of water, the basic problem is that of humanization, and he proposed that a group of the younger architects explore the aesthetic and technical resources which might be used in solving this problem.

In a post-mortem discussion of the gathering, President Ferriss hoped that further investigations into the matter would produce a concrete program.

RADIO PANEL

Listening to the radio on Wednesday, October 29th, it was pleasant and encouraging to hear an extemporaneous discussion entitled "The Integration of the Arts" as part of the Third Annual Art Festival of New York City's Radio Station WNYC. The discussion was sponsored by the Architectural League and introduced by Albert Butt, President of the League. The panel members were Max Abramovitz, Architect; Fred Severud, Engineer; Janet Darling and Richard Webbel, Landscape Architects; Joseph Kiselewski, Sculptor; and Lumen Winter, Painter.

Although the discussion was a familiar one to architects, it was especially gratifying to realize that the arguments were being followed by the largest audience yet to hear about the sometime split between the architect and the engineer; the lament concerning the exclusion of the sculptor and painter due to the lack of funds at the last minute; the increasing responsibility of the architect as a coordinator of all the highly technical and diverse elements that are now part of every major building.

The point was proposed that the architect of today seemed less concerned about beauty than in former times. This thesis was ably explored with the panel finally agreeing that the greatest responsibility lies in getting the client or the public to want architecture rather than a mere shelter. The concluding note was the realization that programs for public education in art are desirable and should be encouraged in every community.

A BOUTONNIERE



Most other men go home at four,
But midnight oil I can detect
Beneath the plainly-lettered door
That bears the title, "Architect".

I think that we should doff our caps
(a gesture suffering from neglect)
To those creative, modest chaps
Who bear the title, "Architect".

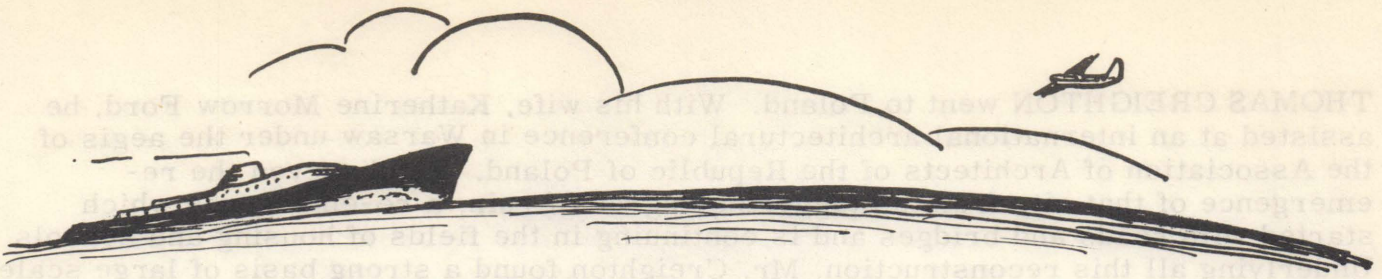
To those whose active minds begat
These buildings tall, that stand erect,
A toast, and all the honor that
Befits the title, "Architect".

And so if I were asked to say
The man whose task I most respect,
I'd vote for him, without delay,
Who bears the title, "Architect."

-L.F.

WITH THE COMMITTEES

A recent request by President Ferriss for progress reports from all Committee Chairmen brought a gratifying early season picture. Of course, just as all men are equal but some are more equal than others, so all committees are active but some are more active than others. The general level of work already accomplished or projected, however, forecasts a busy and fruitful Chapter season and will be reported fully in a section of the next OCULUS.



OUR TRAVELING ARCHITECTS

FREDERICK J. WOODBRIDGE returned in August having spent a year lecturing at the American Academy in Rome. While abroad, Mr. Woodbridge traveled about Italy with his family, visited Greece, and later France and England. An excellent amateur photographer, he has built up a collection of 800 colored photographs. While most of these pictures are of antique subjects, there are some of modern buildings in the North of Italy. Mr. Woodbridge feels that these modern commercial buildings are the most interesting that he has seen in Europe. He reports that there is great interest in city planning throughout Italy where the big cities have grown tremendously during the past twenty years. Although many municipal housing projects have been built to care for this increase in population, especially in Rome, Mr. Woodbridge does not believe that they are in any way better than the American version of the same.

ROBERT CARSON has recently made quite literally a flying trip to Europe, spending most of his time in Italy. He found the food as good as ever and the people looking well and dressing well. Mr. Carson was not especially impressed with the more ambitious of the new buildings, preferring the many small shops which are to be found in Rome and Milan. In his judgment, the design of these shops with their furniture and lighting is very smart. Mr. Carson made overnight stops in Paris and London while flying home.

RALPH WALKER attended the September Conference of Artists sponsored by UNESCO in Venice as a representative of the State Department. He also sat as a member of the executive council of the International Union of Architects -- same city, same month.

LAWRENCE WHITE has given us a very pleasant glimpse of his travels in the following lines:

"My wife and I flew abroad last spring and stopped over in Portugal for three strenuous days. The high spots were the surprisingly green-and-white square in Lisbon, one of the handsomest squares in Europe; the beautiful and playful summer palace at Queluz, a pink stucco building with beautiful garden statuary; the monumental kitchens in the lower palace at Cintra and at Battahla, and the interesting group of buildings at Tomar.

We were impressed by the cleanliness of the country and the simple and excellent housing units.

We stopped off again for nine days in Spain, but confined ourselves to Madrid and Toledo. We spend a pleasant evening with the Eric Guglers, going native on Spanish dishes. We went to Rome, staying at the Academy, and motored up to Florence with the Fritz Woodbridges. Then we spent about two weeks in Paris where we saw the Welles-Bosworths, and home.

Although our program was very strenuous, I was able to make a few quick sketches."

THOMAS CREIGHTON went to Poland. With his wife, Katherine Morrow Ford, he assisted at an international architectural conference in Warsaw under the aegis of the Association of Architects of the Republic of Poland. He observed the re-emergence of that city from a staggering degree of ruin, a re-emergence which started with roads and bridges and is continuing in the fields of housing and schools. Underlying all this reconstruction, Mr. Creighton found a strong basis of large scale planning.

GEOFFRY LAWFORD made a hurried visit to Florence but is not talking international architecture. It was a family affair.

And ROBERT JACOBS refused to have anything to do with a busman's holiday. Here's what he has to say about a vacation in northern Newfoundland:

"We holed up in the bush about 200 miles northwest of Gander for two weeks on the River of Ponds, beating this river up from dawn to dusk for Atlantic salmon. This was at Lee Wulff's camp and being with Lee is a great experience. He is an explorer, artist, writer and one of the greatest fishermen and hunters in the world today. There's nothing like two weeks of bed, book, bottle and rod.

There were eight of us and we each took in 13 rod days and about 30 salmon apiece. Natives looked disparagingly on the speckled trout, which they term mud trout, and when a 3-1/2 lb. Brookie grabs your Jock Scott, your guide curses that your salmon cast has been spoiled. In the afternoons when the salmon are slow you can go to a small hole and pick up 30 or 40 brook trout, on a #14 dry fly, averaging around two pounds apiece.

The country is rugged and very beautiful, very similar to the Fjords of the coast of Norway; lots of snow on the mountains even in late July. I will not stop until I can get a job from the Air Forces, Army or Navy, which will take me there on business, as well as pleasure."

STREAMLINED SPECIFICATIONS STANDARDS

The latest addition to the specification writer's reference library is **STREAMLINED SPECIFICATIONS STANDARDS** by Chapter Member Ben John Small, recently published by Reinhold. The first of three proposed volumes (subsequent treatment of mechanical work and equipment is planned) makes its appearance in three pads with a total of 980 pages, designed for actual working use or reference filing. Included are 62 architectural trade sections representing an exhaustive compilation, selection and editing of many recognized and accepted standards of specification writing presented in "streamlined" form by one of the most persistent advocates of this style

As Carl J. Ebert, A.I.A., states in the Foreword, "However, the value of the book extends beyond the circle of those who have adopted or plan to adopt the streamlined method. Those who prefer not to omit articles, verbs and phrases of repetitious character will discover that the book is of equal value to them... He has provided the busy and often hard-pressed specification writer with a comprehensive working document which will lighten his load and speed his progress".

CANDIDATES

Information regarding the qualifications of the following candidates for membership will be considered confidential by the Admissions Committee:

Corporate Membership

Arthur S. Douglass, Jr.	Sponsors: Edgar I. Williams and E. James Gambaro
Charles Evans Hughes	Sponsors: George C. Rudolph and Gordon Bunshaft
Albert Kennerly	Sponsors: Kenneth M. Young and Walter F. Noyes, Jr.
Robert K. Posey	Sponsors: William S. Brown and Gordon Bunshaft