

NEW YORK CHAPTER

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ANNIVERSARY DINNER

The 84th Anniversary Dinner will be held on Tuesday, February 24th at the Biltmore Hotel. While the Dinner Committee would not reveal details, word has reached the OCULUS that the program will have an entirely new approach. Plans have been crystallized to make the evening a "family affair" with a program designed for the entertainment of the ladies as well as gentlemen. Our informant implied that due to the character of the program, members who value their reputation cannot afford to be absent. Notices and reservation blanks will be mailed to all members early in February.

FIRST ANNUAL PROGRAM OF HONOR AWARDS FOR CURRENT WORK
NEW YORK CHAPTER, A. I. A.

In order to encourage professional and public recognition of exceptional achievement in architecture within the metropolitan area and in support of the annual nation-wide program of the National Honor Awards for Current Work conducted by the Institute, the New York Chapter has established its own program of Honor Awards for Current Work. The subject this year is SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

All entries shall be public, private or parochial school buildings, school building groups, or alterations or additions to existing school buildings for any age group below college level and not exclusively planned to accommodate junior college grades. The buildings must be located in, or within fifty miles of the boundaries of the City of New York, completed since January 1, 1948, and designed by a registered architect or architects practicing professionally anywhere in the United States. Each entrant may submit as many different projects as he chooses.

A registration fee of \$15.00 shall be paid in advance for each entry. All entries shall be shipped before March 16, 1953, to Committee on Honor Awards, New York Chapter, A.I.A., 115 East 40 Street, New York 16, N. Y. The Committee will furnish a program giving full details.

In general, it is required that entries be mounted on 40 x 40 sheets of composition board of aluminum. There shall be photographs of the exterior and of the classrooms and at least one detail. Floor plans and one elevation shall be at the scale $1/16'' = 1'0''$ at least. The site plan may be at a smaller scale. Blueprints should not be used. In addition, there shall be typewritten information covering cubic content, pupil capacity, cost, area, a concise statement of requirements, type of construction, materials and mechanical systems.

The jury will consist of four corporate members of the A.I.A. experienced in school design but not members of the New York Chapter, A.I.A. and one layman of prominence in the educational field. (Continued)

HONOR AWARDS (Continued)

Each project will be judged not as in competition with other entries but on the basis of the solution of its own individual problem. One exhibit will receive First Honor Award for Distinguished Accomplishment in Architecture and an Award of Merit in Architecture will be given to as many entries as the jury deems to be deserving.

Awards will be made during the month of April 1953 when announcements will be released to the National Press. As many entries as space will permit will be displayed for two weeks following the judgment at 115 East 40 Street, New York City and it is intended to give as wide publicity as possible to the premiated entries.

MEETING OUR WOMEN MEMBERS

December 12 was the occasion of an unusually pleasant luncheon meeting organized by President Hugh Ferriss. It was to meet and hear the views of the women members of our Chapter, who number 17. Of this total we were honored by the attendance at the luncheon of 14, percentagewise a staggering success. It is customary in recording events of this nature to include a complimentary word or two touching on the appearance and charm of the guests. Well, they all looked fine, especially - uh - that is, they all looked just fine. *

In answer to Mr. Ferriss' question as to how the Chapter could make its activities and meetings of more interest to the women members, Eleanor Pepper, (when has she ever failed to produce a sound and pertinent idea), said that the way to develop a real interest in the Chapter is to work for it. She pointed out, perhaps to the embarrassment of various committeemen present, that there is not one woman serving on a Chapter Committee so far this season.

The women generally expressed interest and willingness to serve on the committees, in spite of the difficulties pointed out by Elsa Gidoni in scheduling committee work with employees' office hours. Indeed, Ida Webster, who runs her own show, thinks it harder for the employer than the staff to find the necessary time. Almost all the panels would offer interesting opportunities. To cite only one example, Elizabeth Coit suggested the possibility of a woman serving on the Visiting Architects Committee.

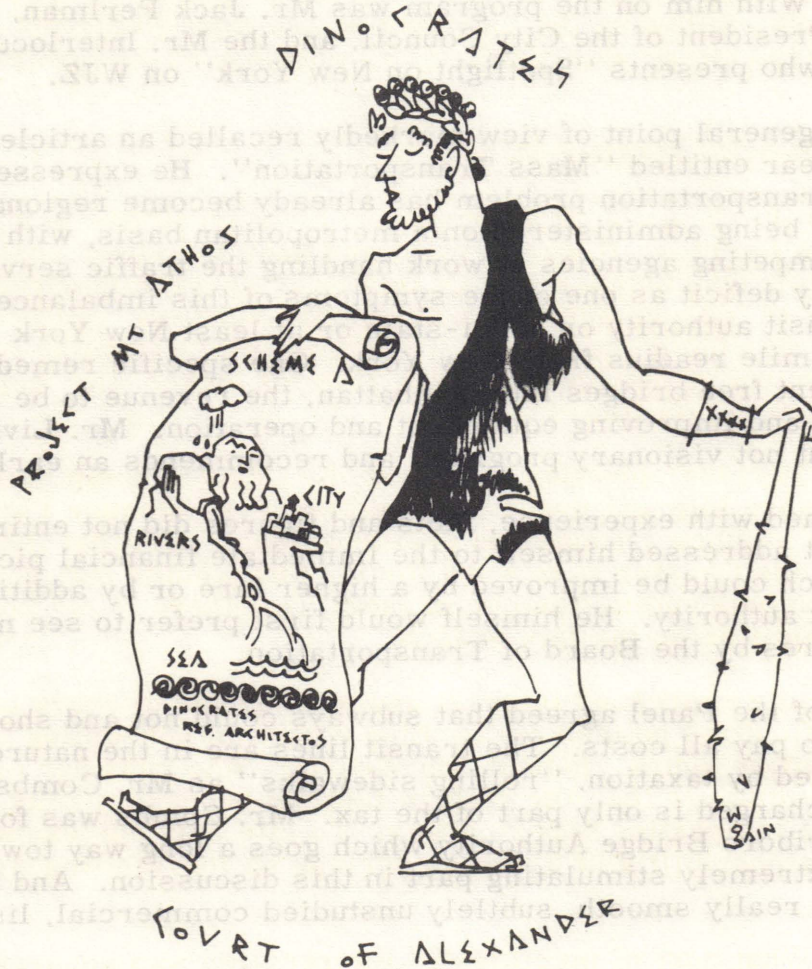
On the question "What sort of meetings?" the reaction was apparently unanimous. Well expressed by Marcia Meade and seconded by Berta Jobin and Manon Peyrot it may be paraphrased "What is interesting professionally to men architects is interesting to women architects". Good meetings should draw women members without specialized programming. However some of them feel, as Beatrice West and Judith Turner told us, that their acquaintance among the membership is not large enough to make them completely at home at the Chapter Meetings. This condition should yield promptly to the relatively simple expedient of appointing a host or hostess for each meeting. Here is one member who readily volunteers to wear the White Carnation.

President Ferriss' luncheon was delightful, fruitful. Men: welcome women to our meetings; appoint them to your committees and pile on the work. Women: volunteer, know the Chapter organization, serve! Come to meetings! You will be welcomed, honored, and introduced!

A MEMORANDUM TO THE CHAIRMAN, PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

THE METHOD OF APPROACHING ALEXANDER, PRACTICED BY DINOCRATES THE ARCHITECT

from Vitruvius



"Trusting to the gifts with which nature had endowed him, he put off his ordinary clothing, and having annointed himself with oil, crowned his head with a wreath of poplar, slung a lion's skin across his left shoulder, and carrying a club in his right hand, he sallied forth to the royal tribunal". Astonished at such an appearance Alexander asks who he is and what he wants. He replies: "A Macedonian architect who suggests schemes and designs worthy your renown. I propose to form Mt. Athos into the statue of a man holding a spacious city in his left hand, and in his right a huge vase, into which shall be collected all the streams of the mountain, which shall thence be poured into the sea".

REGIONAL TRANSIT AGAIN

The reappointment of Goodhue Livingston, Jr. to the City Planning Commission will be gratifying to many chapter members including those serving on the Civic Design Committee which officially endorsed him for this office.

On December 27, a few days before his reappointment, Mr. Livingston was heard in a long, lively and extremely well-informed radio discussion of New York City's transit problem. With him on the program was Mr. Jack Perlman, Legislative Assistant to the President of the City Council, and the Mr. Interlocutor was George Hamilton Combs who presents "Spotlight on New York" on WJZ.

Mr. Livingston's general point of view markedly recalled an article in the February OCULUS of last year entitled "Mass Transportation". He expressed the conviction that New York's transportation problem has already become regional in character, although it is still being administered on a metropolitan basis, with many conflicting and needlessly competing agencies at work handling the traffic services. He regards the serious subway deficit as one of the symptoms of this imbalance which might be resolved by a transit authority on a Tri-state or at least New York - New Jersey scale embracing a fifty mile radius from New York. One specific remedy he has in mind is a toll on the present free bridges into Manhattan, the revenue to be applied to easing the subway deficit and improving equipment and operation. Mr. Livingston regards this as a long range but not visionary program, and recommends an early start.

Mr. Perlman, armed with experience, facts and figures did not entirely differ with Mr. Livingston but addressed himself to the immediate financial picture of the subways and bus lines, which could be improved by a higher fare or by additional taxation sanctioned by a transit authority. He himself would first prefer to see more efficient operating procedures by the Board of Transportation.

All the members of the Panel agreed that subways could not and should not charge a fare high enough to pay all costs. The transit lines are in the nature of other public facilities maintained by taxation, "rolling sidewalks" as Mr. Combs expressed it, in which the fare charged is only part of the tax. Mr. Combs was formerly General Counsel for the Triboro Bridge Authority which goes a long way toward explaining his knowing and extremely stimulating part in this discussion. And by the way, if you want to hear a really smooth, subtly unstudied commercial, listen to one of Mr. Combs'.

REMINDER

Will those members who have not yet returned their proxy to the Chapter, please do so. May we also urge that you complete your work folders. The office constantly received requests for architects who do a particular type of work and the answer must come from the folders received. At the present moment, the file is by no means representative and in no way fulfilling its purpose. The office recently received a request for an architect who did industrial buildings. The man making the request indicated that he had been looking for two weeks for just the right man for his \$1,000,000 job. From the file were extracted approximately 16 folders that indicated experience in industrial work; of these, the gentleman chose 6 names and couldn't give thanks enough. So, hurry, hurry.

"FOR STUDENTS ONLY" MEETING

This meeting got off to an early start when Robert Hutchins introduced Martin Pilch, a graduate of Dundee School of Architecture, Dundee College of Art. Mr. Pilch spoke ably and easily on "Architectural Education in Scotland". His remarks and observations give a good report on the educational methods employed in Great Britain in training architects. Architectural schools are smaller and there is a great deal of competition between the students. The school head is close to the individual student and knows his work and his attitudes towards design. Since progress in design is the criterion for the student's advancement this relationship with the school head is the most important in placing the student in an office at the time of his graduation. Conversely a student, who is just about getting along may be advised to get into another sort of work. There is a strong emphasis in the schools upon the professional character of architectural practice rather than the business or commercial aspect. The student is prepared for a career of community service, not looking to soar into the heights of high finance.

Small classes, long criticisms, few examinations and low marks distinguish the system. There are many compulsory competitions to occupy the student during his school years, judged by practicing architects. There is also a strong interest in measured drawings and in good detailing. Mr. Pilch observed that more and more Architects in Great Britain were entering the fields of town planning, furniture and industrial design. With this trend, Mr. Pilch felt that the standards of design were being raised in each field where the architect invests his talents. The relationship between the architect and the student is closer in Great Britain than in the U.S.A. and Mr. Pilch urged that we find ways to recreate that liaison between these phases of architecture.

It does seem that Mr. Pilch has observed correctly the separation in this country between the student and the architect. This is a loss to both; for the architect must give of his knowledge in order to continue his own growth.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

Mary Worthen has furnished this information about the Women's Architectural Association, a chapter of which flourishes in this city as well as in Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco and several other centers.

This organization had its inception in the early 20's at Washington University, St. Louis, where a women's honorary society for architecture and landscape architecture was founded. This subsequently developed several other chapters. In the late 30's a group of its members in New York founded the present Association.

The Women's Architectural Association includes in its membership women who are working in architecture, landscape architecture, and the decorative arts, and women trained in those fields who may now be practicing the important art of housewifery. Its organization is informal and is based on mutual interests in the general field, rather than rigorous professional requirements. A New Year Greeting to our sister society!

EXPERT

Those of us who know something of Robert Carson's work regard him as a gifted and successful practitioner of architecture. To the listening and reading public, however, he is rapidly gaining stature as a dendrologist.

Some time ago he was quoted authoritatively in the "New Yorker" on the subject of the ginkgo tree (*Ginkgo biloba*), with several specimens of which he has enlivened mid-town Fifth Avenue. And during the intermission of a recent Philharmonic broadcast he talked informatively and in considerable detail on the Christmas tree (*Arborum noelensus*), its isolation, transportation and decoration in lengths up to 85 ft. Any recent word for us on the Dutch elm disease, Dr. Carson?

CANDIDATES

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

Corporate Membership

Judith Beth Turner

Sponsors: Walter F. Noyes, Jr. and Gordon Bunshaft

Associate Membership

Martha Jeanne Crawford

Sponsors: Charles W. Beeston and Russell M. Krob

Members will certainly recognize Walker Cain's black-and-white magic in the portrait of Dinocrates on page 3. Last month's Christmas decoration was by Jeffrey Aronin. Jim Short, a chapter well-wisher if not a member, has been generous with his work in past issues and we look for no change. The editor has occasionally slipped in a sketch.