

NEW YORK CHAPTER

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COMING EVENTS

The second of the Technical Committee's interesting luncheon meetings on METAL-WALLED BUILDINGS OF PITTSBURGH will be held on Tuesday, March 24th when the ALCOA BUILDING will be reviewed.

The Architectural League is holding its annual Blood Bank Day at the Red Cross Center at 70 West 40 Street on March 27th. Members wishing to contribute should notify the League office. Cancellations, if necessary, should be made directly through the Red Cross at MU 9-1000. Although most of the contributions are sent directly to Korea, the League maintains a bank for the use of those architects who contribute and their families.

On the evening of April 14th, there will be a dinner meeting on "BUILDING TODAY'S SCHOOLS". The panel will consist of representatives of both city and suburban public school systems, one educator and four chapter architects. The panel will discuss educational systems, school planning problems and the kind of schools that are now going up in city and country, and attempt to tell the public of greater New York what they are getting for their school taxes. This topic is as timely now as it was at the beginning of the Chapter year when the event was first proposed. Such a promising treatment of these important agenda should produce a stimulating evening, and a good house.

ANNIVERSARY DINNER

On Tuesday, February 24th, the Chapter dined handsomely in the Bowman Room of the Hotel Biltmore. This 84th Anniversary Dinner was preceded by a reception and honored guests included President Glenn Stanton, Regional Director C. Storrs Barrows and representatives from state and local chapters and societies. In addition to the always welcome chapter wives, it was a pleasure to see some of the women members numbered in the company.

After the dinner, Chapter President Ferriss introduced National President Stanton, who gave us a cordial reminder of the coming West Coast AIA Convention and presented National Honor Award certificates to the architects, owners and builders of Lever House.

In presenting the 1953 Medal of Honor of the New York Chapter, William Lescaze, representing the elective committee entrusted with the award, read the fine citation which is quoted in full on the following page.

ANNIVERSARY DINNER (continued)

"GROSVENOR ATTERBURY

ARCHITECT AND INVENTOR

Who devoted a long and full life to searching for the solution of a great many problems of the art and the science of building;

First in the field of town planning, where, as planner and architect, he designed Forest Hills Gardens, Long Island, one of the earliest towns;

Then in the field of industrial housing, when, during the first world war, he served as chairman of the war housing committee and designed an industrial community, Indian Hill, Worcester, Massachusetts;

Then in the academic field, when he was called to the School of Architecture, Yale University, as Research Associate Professor;

Grosvenor Atterbury designed, among several other buildings, the restoration of New York City Hall, and the American Wing of the Metropolitan Museum of Art;

Served as President of the Architectural League, 1915-17; became a Fellow of our National AIA and a member academician of the National Academy;

And finally, because of his special and felicitous gifts of intellectual curiosity combined with practical invention, and because of his ability to further widen and expand the fields in which we architects may serve, and because he invented a method of mass producing building wall units, which have been successfully manufactured since 1950 by Precast Building Sections, Inc.;

The New York Chapter of the AIA is happy to acknowledge such varied, personal achievements and such valuable contributions to the profession of architecture, and takes great pride in awarding its 1953 Medal of Honor to Grosvenor Atterbury, Architect and Inventor."

In Mr. Atterbury's absence, the Medal was accepted by his old friend, William A. Delano.

Ronald Allwork as Mixmaster presided over a varied program of entertainment featuring the AIAires, Zareh Sourian, Morris Lapidus (yes, beneath all that grease-paint and tow there beat the honest heart of Morris Lapidus) and Robert Hutchins. Mr. Hutchins conferred on various fortunate Chapter members a half-dozen citations beyond those mentioned above, but it is possible that these may not become a permanent part of the Chapter records.

OPPORTUNITIES AT TVA

The Tennessee Valley Authority wants experienced architects for specification and design work on a broad program of hydro and steam power plant buildings. Salaries start at \$4450 and \$5325 a year for a 40-hour week. All jobs carry automatic within-grade increases for satisfactory service, liberal vacation leave, sick leave, and retirement benefits. Location of work is Knoxville, Tennessee. Write to Chief, Personnel Office Branch, Tennessee Valley Authority, Knoxville, Tennessee.

RIVAL ATTRACTION

Francis Keally and Morris Ketchum skipped the Anniversary Dinner to journey to Michel's Restaurant on Flatbush Avenue. There they attended a seminar sponsored by the Brooklyn Chapter of the AIA (Vito Battista, Pres.) and were the only two architects on a panel composed of professional men in several allied disciplines. The subject, "The Architect and His Consultants," aroused vigorous discussion from the forum members and spectators.

William Eipel, Structural engineer, felt that architects and clients should call in the services of engineers while projects are still in the formative stage. John Pryke, of Slocum and Fuller, mechanical engineers, agreed, stressing the coordination required among the various offices, and Guy Panero covered the relative costs of engineering services. Landscape architects were Malcolm Kirkpatrick, who noted possible advantages of each profession taking the "lead" at the appropriate time, and Leo Novick, who reviewed the contribution offered by the Landscape architects to a building organization. Carman Varall, Department of Public Works specification writer, deplored the poor courses in specifications generally given by architectural schools.

Wheeler Williams, president of the National Sculptural Society, stated that architects, being artists, owe collaboration to the fine arts. The use of ornament, he said, provides both attractive and marketable buildings, and is thus good business. Leo Friedlander concurred on behalf of the sculptors.

Morris Ketchum corroborated testimony that a far too common mistake is bringing in the consultants too late. His firm starts working with them at the very outset; in the case of shopping centers for example they do not commence a project until economic surveys have been undertaken. Francis Keally summed up the evening's discussion by alluding to the new University of Mexico as a distinctive instance of the cooperation possible between architects, engineers, sculptors, etc. He also cited as an inspiration for us in America, Stockholm's Town Hall, where good design has paid off in the form of added tourist income.

MEMBERSHIP MISCELLANY

Harmon Goldstone has returned from a six months' assignment in Paris with little to say for the winter climate of the French capital. Christmas Day (he claims they call it Noel over there) was the one day the sun shone.

Anthony J. Daidone has been elected president of the Brooklyn Architects Scholarship Foundation.

Harvey P. Clarkson has returned to New York from Cincinnati, and is with Shreve Lamb and Harmon Associates.

Jeffrey Ellis Aronin has been elected to membership in the Royal Architectural Institute of Canada. Membership carries with it the license to practice above the border.

Walker Cain's illustration and the biographical lines of Dinocrates contributed by Geoffrey Platt to the January issue are having a success beyond the limits of the OCULUS circulation. Two requests to republish so far, from journals of impeccable professional standing.

SCHEMATIC FOR A NEW THEATRE

One of the most picturesque campaigns of an architectural nature during the past year or so has been the effort to have the New York City building code amended to permit the construction of theatres within office or residential buildings. If auditoriums might be placed below grade or above the ground floor, valuable space would be created for rental, especially were it possible to build above the stage. At present the entire property must be carried at a loss during dark periods, to be made up in increased rent when the house is lighted. For this reason, legitimate theatre property has not been a popular form of investment, no such construction having been undertaken since 1928 when the Ethel Barrymore was opened.

At the instigation of Howard Cullman, Chairman of the Port of New York Authority and a successful investor in theatrical productions, Ely Jacques Kahn and Robert A. Jacobs have prepared sketches for a theoretical playhouse within an office building as it might be built under the amended code.

The proposed auditorium, which is a large one with balcony, is located one flight up from the street. There is a garage in the basement where patrons may park their cars, ascending by elevator. The street floor, apart from the necessary lobby, is devoted to shops. Above both the auditorium and the stage there are floors for offices much as in a conventional office building.

This proposed change in the code is a very important project, for due to the uneconomic status of most existing theatre buildings, there has been a tendency for them to be removed from the market, one by one. As the list of available houses grows shorter, the same becomes true of the number of productions prepared for each season. A chain reaction is thus established which if not attested may cause the City to lose one of its most celebrated and delightful institutions. The Executive Committee of the Chapter is wholeheartedly behind the amendments which are designed to prevent this loss.

CANCELLATION OF CHAPTER HONOR AWARDS

The Executive Committee at its meeting of March 3rd received the following report from the Committee on Honor Awards for Current Work:

"The Committee on Honor Awards for Current Work regrets to inform you that, as of March 2nd, 1953, the last day for registration, only 9 entries have been received for the Chapter's Honor Awards for Current Work for 1953. We therefore recommend that this competition be cancelled for 1953 with the hope that in 1954 it can again be issued as a new program. We further recommend that it then be made a competition open to any class of buildings completed within the previous five years."

The Committee accepts the recommendation made in this report and has authorized the announcement that the Chapter's Honor Awards Competition has been cancelled for 1953.

Members are asked to bear in mind that the National Honor Awards are unaffected by this decision.

CIVIL DEFENSE MEETING

Two short motion pictures and a brief address were the principal features of a joint meeting arranged by Hippolyte Kamenka, Chairman of the Chapter's Civil Defense Committee and Fred L. Liebman, Chairman of the Civil Defense Committee of the Architects Council.

The first of the two pictures "One Plane, One Bomb, One City" offered a quick review of bombing methods and the effects of the ordinary bombs as used in World War II. There were many shots of the destruction in Germany and England. Then followed some spectacular pictures of atomic explosions and finally pictures of Nagasaki and the devastation wrought there by one plane and one bomb.

The second film was the documentary of an interesting experiment recently made by the United States Air Force. Three B-29 bombers, starting from Europe attempted to reach New York to drop theoretical bombs on the Empire State building. No announcement of the flight was made. Not until the planes had passed Bridgeport were they definitely located and identified as unknown planes, and only as they levelled off for their bombing did the interceptors reach them to attack.

Robert W. Dowling closed the meeting with a discussion of the ruins of Berlin which he visited last summer and the new Soviet housing which is rising along Stalin Allee. He asked that American Architects study these plans and be prepared to counter Soviet propaganda by pointing out their inadequacy and the superior planning being done in the United States and Western countries. He also urged all who would volunteer to train for some civilian defense job in order that each would be prepared to do his part in an emergency.

COMMITTEE ON YOUNGER ARCHITECTS

On March 5th a new committee had its organization meeting. Stemming from an interesting Chapter luncheon meeting held last November 13, the Committee on Younger Architects has as its objective a report on younger architects in the AIA which will be made to the Executive Committee before the conclusion of this year. The Committee includes in its membership Walker O. Cain, Arthur S. Douglass, Jr., Richard Stein, I. M. Pei, John Jansson, Yusuf Meer and Roger Halle, Chairman.

SECOND THOUGHTS ON THE ANNIVERSARY DINNER

The Executive Committee has been thinking over that Anniversary Dinner, too. After an analysis of comments on the recent affair, the Committee entered the following in its minutes of March 3rd:

- (1) Since Anniversary Dinners in the past years have frequently had to be paid for, in part, from general Chapter funds, this year's Dinner Committee is to be congratulated for having made arrangements that cost the Chapter nothing. It is noted that the actual cost of the affair at the Biltmore was \$2344.96 and that receipts from those attending were \$2345.00.
- (2) It is recommended to our successors that future Anniversary Dinner programs be of a different character: simpler, shorter and in a price range attractive to a larger number of our members.

ARCHITECTS ON TV

The Chapter has begun to take advantage of Television in a continuing program to place the Architect and his usefulness before the public.

On Friday, February 13th, from 11:30 to 12:00 PM on NBC-TV network, Alonzo Clark appeared on "MRS. USA". Although this program was not seen in New York City, it was shown across the country and in New England. Mr. Clark, whose subject was "A New Approach to Home Lighting" was the only guest. Slides were shown and lighting fixtures were on hand as models. Mr. Clark spoke on how the Architect can assist the owner in achieving a livable and distinguished house and of the service available to the prospective builder.

On Thursday, March 5th, on "FOOD FOR THOUGHT", WABD-TV, Dumont at 4:00 to 4:30 PM, Ronald Allwork appeared with two other guests on a panel program concerned with home making. Home lighting was again the subject.

The Harrison Ballard and Allen Plan was given an informative treatment by a Radio panel on WQXR February 23rd. Juliette M. Bartlett represented the Women's City Club, and Frederick H. Allen the authors of the rezoning plan. Mr. Allen talked absorbingly of the inception and goals of this already famous Design for Zoning, and Juliette Bartlett gave some interesting examples of its practical application. Alma Dettinger asked questions of studied artlessness to keep the fund of information flowing. It was a fine discussion.

WALLS OF METAL

The first of two technical luncheon meetings on metal-walled buildings took place on Thursday, February 26th, at the Architectural League offering illustrated talks by Richard E. Paret and Robert L. Davison. Mr. Paret, stainless steel specialist of the American Iron and Steel Institute, briefed the gathering on Pittsburgh's Gateway Center. Mr. Davison, research director of Howard T. Fisher and Associates, discussed problems concerning cutting costs through use of stock sections and foresaw many new building techniques in the future if building codes were revised to accommodate them. Bruno Funaro introduced the speakers and led the discussion and will again preside at the March 24th luncheon.

EXHIBITIONS FOR ALL

Hardly a mail but brings the Architect a printed invitation to exhibit some of his recent work. These documents, impressive in their legal draftmanship, seem generally patterned after an invitation to bid on six miles of elevated highway. Opening and closing dates are given a portentous ring. "No less than's" jockey with "A maximum of's" and the paragraphs of fine print suggest the back of a steamship ticket or a municipal bond.

Obviously, "What have you been doing lately?" is not a question one architect asks lightly of another these days.