

NEW YORK CHAPTER

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

O C U L U S

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COMING EVENTS

EDUCATION

The Committee on Education announces a supper meeting on Wednesday, May 5th, at 6:30 p.m. at the Architectural League. The discussion will be based on the answers to the questionnaire circulated by the Committee, and will focus on the role of the young college graduate in the architect's office. A more detailed announcement will be mailed to you, but mark down May 5th now.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Another very important date for Chapter members is Thursday, June 3rd, 7:00 p.m. The occasion: A public relations workshop presentation by Walter Megronigle and Anson Campbell of Ketchum, Inc., The AIA Public Relations Counsel. This is jointly sponsored by The Chapter and the New York State Association. Architects from New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and the Philadelphia Chapters are all invited to attend. This workshop evening has been very warmly received in other regions. A more detailed announcement next month.

DESIGN IN SCANDINAVIA

From April 19 through May 16 there will be shown at the Brooklyn Museum an Exhibition of Design in Scandinavia. The show comprises over seven hundred examples of glass, china, steel, silver, furniture and fabrics from Danish, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish designers and work shops. The setting of the Exhibition has been designed by a Danish architect who was chosen through a four nation competition.

The Exhibition, which is a travelling one, opened at Richmond, Va. in January and will visit a series of museums throughout the United States and Canada during the next three and a half years. Honorary patrons are the Kings of Denmark, Norway and Sweden and the Presidents of Finland and of the United States.

ARCHITECTURAL SCHOOLWORK IN THE UNITED STATES

The Architectural League announces an Exhibition, April 20-May 7, 1954 depicting basic subjects being taught in 17 leading Architectural Schools invited to participate in preparing this coordinated visual survey. Panels representing a balanced curriculum will be shown by the institutions participating. The Exhibition will display "books appropriate for the architectural training library" supplied by leading publishers in this specialized field, and will feature a Roundtable Program for discussion of results expected from architectural education, to be held at 8 p.m. Thursday, April 29 at the League. Sibyl Moholy-Nagy will be Moderator.
No Tickets or Fees.

THE 85th ANNIVERSARY

The 85th anniversary meeting at the Metropolitan Museum turned out to be one of the most entertaining and delightful affairs the Chapter has held.

It opened with a reception in the spacious Medieval hall, to the accompaniment of music. After due exchange of greetings and gossip between long lost friends, and an appraisal of the newly opened Medieval and Renaissance galleries, everyone moved to the new -- the brand new -- auditorium.

Here Hugh Ferriss opened the meeting, introducing among the speakers, Roland L. Redmond, the Museum's President, Francis Henry Taylor, the Director, and Robert Moses, City Construction Coordinator. Mr. Taylor gave a brief historical survey of the Museum in relation to its architects, past and present. Mr. Moses laid it on the line, and in doing so, produced some amusingly acrid and quotable indictments of the state of the profession as he sees it.

The Chapter's Medal of Honor was presented to Harvey Wiley Corbett, cited for his long and distinguished career in architecture and for his "buildings that have enhanced the skylines of many cities". The national AIA award for industrial architecture went to Harrison, Abramovitz and Abbe, Architects, and Arthur Houghton, President of the Corning Glass Center. Awards were also presented to the winners of the newly instituted journalism competition.

Then the company proceeded, again to music by the strings reinforced with a magnificent trumpet, to the champagne supper by the side of the pool. The champagne was excellent, the setting was festive, and the mood gay; and everyone was hesitant to leave when the parting signal sounded. Geraldine Ruegg gave a program of music for the harp during the supper.

A generous expression of thanks to his Committeemen appears elsewhere, but here we can record ours to Hugh Ferriss for having conceived this fine evening in its perfect setting, for working patiently and craftily to bring about its realization and for running it through on time.

NEW FELLOWS

Congratulations go to Chapter members Harry Royden Dowswell and Percival Goodman who are among 21 members from chapters throughout the country chosen for advancement to the rank of Fellow at the 86th Convention in June. Mr. Dowswell is cited for Science of Construction, and Mr. Goodman for Design and Education.

Many of us remember with pleasure an interesting meeting planned and carried out by Mr. Dowswell a season or two ago which consisted of half-a-dozen simultaneous seminars on technical subjects conducted by distinguished guests. Mr. Goodman's recent work, particularly in his impressive synagogues, has been characterized by an unusually successful synthesis of architecture and its companion arts, sculpture and painting.

SEQUEL TO THE PRESIDENT'S WARNING

In our issue of February 5, our President, Hugh Ferriss appealed to members to write to Albany protesting the passage of three bills then in Committee in the Assembly and in the Senate. One of these bills would have permitted corporations to practice engineering. The intent of the other two was to prohibit New York City from retaining architects in private practice on public works. It is encouraging to report that all of these bills expired in Committee.

ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE GOLD MEDAL

During the month of March the Architectural League held an exhibition and premiated entries for its Annual Gold Medal Award. The classifications were for Architecture, Design and Crafts, Engineering, Landscape Architecture, Mural Decoration and Sculpture. The Gold Medal in Architecture was given to Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, for Lever House, an award with which there can be small complaint.

SUGGESTION FOR A NEW COMMITTEE

Robert C. Weinberg writes to amplify his suggestion for a committee devoted to preserving information on buildings of historic significance. "What I have in mind is this", says Mr. Weinberg. "When and as we hear through the press or otherwise that a building of historic and/or architectural significance has been sold for demolition or is to be materially altered or demolished by its present owners -- and where expectation of 'saving' it is out of the question -- this is the moment when the owners might be most approachable for the purpose of obtaining plans and other documents about the building, and giving permission for it to be photographed, inside as well as out, perhaps measured, and perhaps giving architects an opportunity to acquire by purchase or otherwise, for themselves or their clients, detachable parts of the building that might be used elsewhere or incorporated into some other structure.

"I have discovered from experience that buildings, especially private houses, presently owned and occupied by elderly people are generally inaccessible for this purpose, even in anticipation of their probable demolition in the near future. But as soon as it is discovered that the occupant has passed away and/or the building is changing hands with a view to demolition, that is the very moment at which one can most easily approach those in control to obtain or make records of permanent value to historians and the profession at large."

As a footnote to this suggestion, Mr. Weinberg is concerned at present with a private residence designed in 1907 by the New York architectural firm of Mann and MacNeille, and built so stoutly as to be highly resistant to alterations. In order to avoid the tedious process of probing for soft spots through which ducts and/or conduit can be snaked, Mr. Weinberg is anxious to have a look at a set of plans. Anyone who has information about Messrs. Mann and MacNeille, their successors, heirs or assigns, is requested to communicate with Mr. Weinberg at 400 Madison Avenue, New York 17, New York.

THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE

A provocative analysis of the human skeleton in structural terms was presented by Fred Severud, in a talk given at Pratt Institute on March 31, the last in a series sponsored jointly by The Chapter and the schools of architecture of Columbia University, the Cooper Union and Pratt Institute. Mr. Severud stressed his great respect for the dynamic and completely logical structural qualities of the human skeleton, from which architects and engineers can learn much of practical value simply by observing how their own bodies react to physical tasks. For example, the simple act of lifting an object may involve column action, torque, cantilever action, etc. Mr. Severud's evident regard for the human skeleton as a perfect structure was further underscored by humorously unfavorable references to evolutionary theory. He was very ably assisted by Raniero Corbelletti who made deft illustrative sketches of the anatomy as Mr. Severud spoke.

On April 6th, at another of their excellent luncheon meetings, the committee introduced Felix J. Samuely, distinguished British structural engineer in an illustrated presentation of space frames and stressed skin construction. Mr. Samuely addresses himself to the engineer's perennial problem, spanning large spaces with economy of material. His techniques for achieving this, using members conceived and computed three-dimensionally result in new and interesting forms.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Max Abramovitz has been elected Vice President of the New York Building Congress, to serve for three years. He was inducted into his new office at a luncheon meeting on April 1st. His partner Wallace Harrison as Honorary Chairman introduced the distinguished guest speaker Robert Moses.

Jeffrey Ellis Aronin has made several television appearances in connection with his book, "Climate and Architecture", most recently on The NBC Home Show, March 26th.

Katherine Ford and Thomas Creighton discussed their new book "Quality BUDGET HOUSES" with Mary Margaret McBride on radio station WABC on April 8th.

Matthew Del Gaudio will be honored at a dinner tendered him by The Architects Council on April 28th at the Tavern on the Green, Central Park.

Ben John Small, always a productive writer in his field, announces the immediate publication by Reinhold of a new volume dealing with specifications, "Architect's and Engineer's Check List". He is also collaborating with Louis Axelbank, M.E. on a book scheduled for Fall publication. Mr. Small is chairman of the A.I.A. -- Producers Council Product Literature Competition for 1954, whose winners will be announced at the June Convention.

Lewis G. Adams has been elected President of the Architectural League, to succeed Daniel Schwartzman. Congratulations to Mr. Schwartzman on a vigorous and successful administration and to Mr. Adams for his coming year of bright prospects and hard work.

THANKS TO THE ANNIVERSARY COMMITTEE

To Walker Cain who was general manager until March 25, when an illness in the family called him to Ohio; thereafter, to Geoffrey Platt. To Tony Allwork, manager of the Reception in the Galleries; and to Arthur Douglass, manager of the Supper (and general admissions to the Museum). To Dick Kimball, stage manager in the Auditorium, and to his assistants, Ferd Eiseman and William Wilson. To Bob Hutchins, for various suggestions. To Matt Del Gaudio, who helped received the guest Presidents of neighboring Chapters. To Miss Linn Erickson and the ladies who ably assisted. To Mrs. Margot Henkel, who was of utmost help throughout.

And to Frank Voorhees, who was the power behind the scenes in getting the Auditorium finished in time for what he called our "sneak preview". To Larry White who was our liaison with the Museum Trustees. And to Francis Henry Taylor, without whose interest (expressed over a year ago) the affair would have been impossible.

For high point of the evening, my own vote is for the Supper March when, entering the great hall, we heard Purcell's stirring "Trumpet Voluntary". Dick Snow was Toscanini for the music throughout; our thanks to him and his deftly assembled orchestra.

Hugh Ferriss

TRAVELLING THESIS

"Living in the City", an exhibit including a series of models, drawings and photographs, developed by architecture students at Pratt Institute as a public service in the educational field, will be prepared for the Board of Education of the City of New York within the next few weeks. It will be exhibited in the city high schools as part of the High School Museum Program. Members of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects have volunteered to help with advice and critical guidance.

The work will be done as a group thesis by seniors Patrick Raspante, Warren Bendixen, and Robert Jacaruso. Olindo Grossi, Chairman of the Pratt Department of Architecture, prepared a similar exhibit, "Architecture and Planning", five years ago, as a Brunner Scholarship project. That study has been on exhibit in various high schools continuously since its completion.

THREE DIMENSIONAL STAINED GLASS

After years of experimenting with light refraction, Ruth Maria Kilby has developed a method of fusing glass on glass to achieve a 3-dimensional stained-glass window. Kilby Glass is the fusion of large chunks, smaller pieces and dust of colored glass, polished and coarse. Using these as though they were paint, Mrs. Kilby has created a new medium of color expression.

Examples of Mrs. Kilby's work will be on exhibit at the Architectural League starting April 27th.

MYSTERIOUS CASE

On the morning after the Chapter's Anniversary Meeting at the Metropolitan Museum, the TIMES and TRIBUNE carried accounts indicating that our ceremonies had been rudely interrupted by a general, acrimonious debate on a current building project (the proposed Coliseum). This was somewhat surprising to those who had been present and who knew that nothing of the sort had occurred. Both papers later published corrected reports. It is apparent that unknown to us, some party or parties sought to intrude upon our proceedings with an item that was not remotely connected with our agenda. A Memo. of President Ferriss' Sherlock Holmes work on this case has been delivered to the Chapter's Executive Committee, to the Metropolitan Museum and to our guest speaker, Hon. Robert Moses. It may also be read at the Chapter office by members interested in mystery stories.

INSTITUTE AWARDS

The 1954 Medal Awards to be presented by The American Institute of Architects at its 86th Annual Convention in Boston, June 15-19, were announced on April 17th. The Fine Arts Medal will go to sculptor Julian Hoke Harris of Atlanta; and the Craftsmanship Medal to Maria Montoya Martinez, the Indian potter from the Pueblo village of San Ildefonso, New Mexico. Honorary memberships will be awarded to Morton O. Withey of Madison, Wisconsin, and Dr. Richard Eugene Fuller of Seattle, Washington. The Gold Medal is not to be awarded this year.

SIGNS ON THE JOB

Members are reminded that the official porcelain enamel signs 20" x 32" are available for identifying the architect at the construction site. These signs bear the name of the architect and the legend "Member of the American Institute of Architects". Order them from Staley Signs, Inc., 515 Park Avenue, Indianapolis 6, Indiana. Single signs \$22.85 each. 5 signs alike, \$100.00. Mrs. Henkel has a picture of the sign at the Chapter office.

CANDIDATES

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

Corporate Membership

Ralston Harold Miller Sponsors: Lester S. LaPierre and Clarence B. Litchfield

Richard J. Winn Sponsors: Roy S. Bent and J. Gordon Carr

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