

NEW YORK CHAPTER

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

O C U L U S

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THE YEAR'S WORK IN REVIEW

These summaries of committee activities have been much condensed from reports submitted to the President and filed in the Chapter office. They speak strongly of the loyal service the chairmen and their committeemen have rendered the Chapter during the 1954-55 season. Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick has estimated one hour's preparation for each minute in the pulpit. Some such generous ratio must be applied to every line of text in the following reports to evaluate them at their true worth.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE -- Robert S. Hutchins, Chairman

22 regular meetings were held during the year, a quorum being present at each meeting. All matters which have come before the Committee and all actions taken are recorded in the minutes on file in the Chapter Office where they are available to members. The Committee reports the election to Honorary Associateship of Mr. Alfred H. Barr.

ADMISSIONS -- Eldredge Snyder, Chairman

Twelve meetings were held during the year when 86 candidates were interviewed, 61 for Corporate and 25 for Associate membership. It is noted that the number of candidates far exceeded that of any corresponding period in the history of the New York Chapter.

AWARDS -- Robert W. Cutler, Chairman

The Committee assisted generally and advised those Committees who are charged with specific awards. A questionnaire will be sent to Chapter members regarding an exhibition of work in the development stage, as well as work by Younger Architects.

BRUNNER SCHOLARSHIP -- L. Bancel LaFarge, Chairman

Evaluated ten applications, as opposed to twenty last year.

Ralph E. Myers' project for a continuation of his previous work "Architecture - U.S.A." was preeminent, for which he was again awarded the main Scholarship in the full amount of \$2,400. A secondary award of \$500 went to Addison Erdman for completing the manuscript of his projected book "Hospital Planning." A third award of \$150 was made to Mrs. John M. Gilchrist for completing Indexes on Library of Congress forms, describing in detail the Municipal Art Society's "List of Historic Structures in New York City."

The committee feels concern over the problem of finding recipients worthy of the very considerable grants which have been almost doubled by a recent accession from the Brunner estate.

BY-LAWS, Harry M. Prince, Chairman

Continuing much effective work of its predecessors in recent years the By-Laws Committee submitted a final draft to The Executive Committee on February 1, 1955 of a complete revision of the Chapter By-Laws. It contained many suggestions and recommendations of Chapter members, including methods of nominating and electing Chapter officers, and nomination for Fellowships voted on at a Chapter meeting last March.

This draft has been reviewed by The Executive Committee, and is expected to be ready for distribution to the membership in the near future. This will be the first complete revision of the By-Laws since the inception of the Chapter.

CIVIC DESIGN, Robert Weinberg, Chairman

The Current Affairs Subcommittee under Theodore Hood watched calendars of the City Planning Commission, the Board of Estimate and other City agencies. Upon its findings the full committee has recommended action to the Executive Committee. Among current affairs there taken up have been: the site for the School of Industrial Arts, support of Senator Mitchell's bill to protect areas of architectural significance, recommendations regarding the zoning ordinance, new buildings in the Grand Central area, planning for 3rd Avenue, improvement of Astor Place — Cooper Union district, major bridge and highway improvements and several others. The committee has been working with the Architectural League and the Fine Arts Federation on improving the appearance of the City and sponsored the meeting reported in this issue.

EDUCATION, Otto Teegen, Chairman

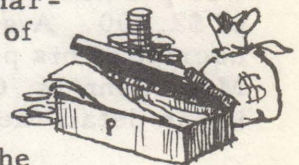
Except for two meetings devoted to problems of registration posed by the Committee on Younger Architects, the Committee has been studying how to implement an Architect-in-Training program for local operation. It has been decided to proceed with putting such a program into effect among some twelve or fifteen offices next September.

FEES AND CONTRACTS, Lathrop Douglass, Chairman

The Committee has been studying the existing official A.I.A. agreement forms which, due to changing conditions appear to be inadequate from a business point of view. Co-operating with the national A.I.A. the Committee has prepared draft forms for three different Owner-Architect Agreements together with circulars of information. Daniel Schwartzman, liaison with the national A.I.A., believes they will be of assistance as a starting point of their own program. The drafts have been submitted to the Executive Committee of the New York Chapter for appropriate action.

FINANCE, Robert B. O'Connor, Chairman

The Committee has continued to work with the investment advisory service of Franklyn B. Kirkbride. It is reported that the rise in the securities market has materially increased the value of our invested funds. The status of the funds as of April 30, 1955 is as follows: Brunner: Market value \$153,379.00, Income - \$6,356.00; LeBrun: Market value \$42,755.00, Income - \$1,796.00; Contingent Reserve Fund: Market value \$50,163.00, Income - \$1,955.00. The total value of the securities increased during the year from \$190,828.00 to \$246,297.00, while the income rose from \$9,476.00 to \$10,107.00



FIFTH AVENUE ASSOCIATION - Francis W. Roudebush, Chairman

As the Fifth Avenue Association Awards are given biennially and this is an off year, the Committee has not had to meet.

HISTORICAL BUILDINGS - Ferdinand Eiseman, Chairman



Protested the proposed change of the use of the fine Governor's Room at City Hall from a museum to offices; proposal abandoned, at least for the present. Considerable effort was made to prevent the destruction of "Boscobel" a distinguished and exquisite Hudson River mansion. The principal elements of the facade will be incorporated in a house to be erected on Long Island. The Municipal Art Society's recording of historical buildings in Manhattan is proceeding. The Committee would like to hear from members who would be willing to devote even a small amount of time to the effort of the recording of historical buildings in Sullivan, Orange, Putnam and Rockland Counties and the southern half of Dutchess and Ulster Counties.

HOUSING - John Hancock Callender, Chairman

The Committee brought its two-year-study of the upper West Side to completion and submitted its report to the Executive Committee. "Riverside - A Study of Housing on the West Side of Manhattan," the report consists of 78 pages of text, 20 maps and charts and 38 tables. A parallel study by Allen Burnham on the history of the New York apartment house was also sponsored by the Committee. Part I covering the period up to 1890 is now completed. Part II from 1890 to the present will be completed within the next few months.

HOUSES - George Cooper Rudolph, Chairman

The Committee held six meetings during the year. The Small House Consulting Panel was under the direction of Philip G. Bartlett, who reports nine inquiries for full architectural service, six for supervision, two each for specifications and advice on purchase, and about 175 miscellaneous questions. It is recommended that this service be continued. The major project of the Committee was an exhibition of development houses designed by Chapter members, Theodore Hood in charge. The results: two houses featured on the "Home" TV show during a talk by the Chairman. The services of a member retained by a developer.

LE BRUN SCHOLARSHIP - Benjamin Lane Smith, Chairman

Because the income from the LeBrun Scholarship Fund was this year insufficient, the Committee decided that no scholar would be selected. It is expected and hoped that sufficient funds will be available in 1956 to permit an award.

LEGISLATION - Herbert Lippmann, Chairman

In cooperation with the Architects Council and the New York State Association of Architects, the Chapter made its opinion felt in the following matters: two bills intended to permit corporations to practice engineering and these were defeated in Committee with our efforts. Four bills amending the Labor Law (construction sections) were passed on to the Governor for signature; these bills remove some contradictions in City and State interpretations of mixed occupancies of a factory and non-factory. A bill amending the public housing law to permit loans to non-profit housing companies was passed.

Committee also met and discussed the State Finance Law #135, requiring four contracts instead of one for public construction in the State and is considering what action could be effective to alter this situation.

MEETINGS, Walter O. Cain, Chairman

The Committee on Meetings reports the following events during the year:

December 3, 1954, attended by 100 members and wives, officially observing the beginning of the Fall-Winter "Season". Jan. 18, 1955: "Light in Architecture" Exhibition in collaboration with The Architectural League and the Illuminating Engineers; Jan. 21: Membership Committee Cocktail Party; Mar. 23: Anniversary Dinner held successively at the Museum of Modern Art, The Whitney Museum of American Art, and The University Club; April 5: A preview of Ralph Myer's Brunner Scholarship Work; April 15: The gala Circus Party, in collaboration with The B.A.I.D. and The Architectural League; May 10: How to Build a Better-Looking New York, Dr. Edwin Burdell, moderator; May 13: Membership Committee Cocktail Party; May 17: Pre-Convention Luncheon; June 1: Annual Meeting - Election of Officers. In addition to these general meetings, several hundred committee meetings were held to carry out the multitude of specific objectives comprising the members' interests.

MEMBERSHIP - Roger G. Spross, Chairman

The Committee has prepared a list of all registered architects in the area, not members of A.I.A. Two cocktail parties were held for persons on the list. Letters of congratulations and invitations to join are being sent to each architect on passing his State registration examination. The membership has been approached through mailings and Oculus items to nominate new candidates. It is noted that 104 new members have applied for Chapter membership this year.

PUBLICATIONS - Richard B. Snow, Chairman

Has brought out nine issues of OCULUS, covering briefly most of the Chapter events held during the season, and containing also occasional book reviews, notes of members' activities, and announcements. The customary admonitions to fill in that form, notify the Chapter office, or pay those dues have not been absent from the pages of VOL. XVI, which closes herewith.



PUBLIC RELATIONS - Kenneth K. Stowell, Chairman

Each Chapter member was sent a copy of "A Pocket Guide for Better Public Relations," Courtesy of Architectural Forum. A questionnaire was sent to the membership on P.R. activity, attitudes and suggestions. Results were published in the Oculus and reprinted in Architectural Record. Releases reporting Chapter activities have been sent to the press. The panel of speakers available for Schools, Clubs, Civic Bodies, etc. has been revised. There is a panel of advisors to be called on in answering inquiries from the public, manufacturers, associations and the press.

TECHNICAL COMMITTEE - Howard H. Juster, Bruno Funaro, Co-Chairmen

Sponsored five luncheon meetings: New Swedish Architecture, Plastics in Building, New York State Building Code, Sweets' Catalog Service. An evening meeting of Stage Lighting co-sponsored with the American Institute of Electrical Engineers. The Round Table Discussion Groups have been active. Stores and Shopping Center Group under Richard Belcher, Hospital Group under Alonzo Clark, Heating and Air Conditioning Group under Harold R. Sleeper. School Group under J. Stanley Sharp. This group is preparing a report, "School Programming" for Chapter distribution. The Committee has been studying a method for obtaining comparative Performance Data on building materials. A letter of explanation and questionnaire have been sent to all Chapter members; answers are awaited.

THE APPEARANCE OF OUR CITY

The appearance of New York City came in for examination at May 10th supper meeting at the League. Sponsored jointly by the Chapter's Civic Design Committee, the Architectural League and the Municipal Art Society, the meeting reflected the growing concern for the aspect and the functioning of our metropolis.

Dr. Burdell, President of Cooper Union was the moderator and introduced the speakers, William Demarest of William White & Sons, Charles Agle, architect and planning consultant, Goodhue Livingston of the City Planning Commission, Ernest Neufeld speaking for Department of Public Works Commissioner Zurmuhlen, and Christopher Tunnard, Yale Professor of Town Planning.

The necessity for proper architectural planning and respect for buildings of historic value was approached from different angles. Mr. Demarest was concerned chiefly that new buildings provide the greatest economic returns on the assumption that this has produced the spectacular New York we see from the harbor. Mr. Agle felt that the city was becoming dehumanized and treeless, that basic new planning controls had to be introduced. Commissioner Zurmuhlen opposed any overall control that he felt would lead to an aesthetic dictatorship since New York's diversity was a part of its growth. Mr. Livingston proposed a consolidated transport authority for the New York Region as a first step toward the correction of its self-strangulation. Professor Tunnard cited the new Supreme Court decision recognizing the right of a community to zone for aesthetic protection. By combining a respect for past construction with a concern for adjacent construction, he said the look of our cities would improve.

These opinions, supplemented by the active expression of opinions from the floor indicated the increasing alarm felt for the future of New York unless its growth is more directed and planned.

THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY

For some unchallenged reason the Report of the Secretary has hardened into the form of a bald recital of figures — so many members gained — so many lost — so many Student Associates. These statistics, while vital to the welfare of the Chapter, in themselves give no hint of the many complex situations which confront the Secretary, and the many decisions he is called upon to make in the public and Chapter interest. He is an important point of contact between us and the public. His august office calls for the cunning and firmness of a Bismarck and a diction approaching the great epistolary stylists of the eighteenth century.

How to refuse without offense, for instance, the pressing offer of a noted distiller to provide refreshments at all meetings of the Executive Committee in return for the privilege of printing his brand mark at the bottom of Chapter forms and stationery; how to evaluate the suggestion received from the mother of an unmarried daughter that an attractive photograph be posted on the Chapter bulletin board with a brief statement of availability; what sound advice to return to an inquiry on livery stables as an investment, with data on the proper storage of grains and clearances for chaises, surreys and gigs.

The Secretary might well encounter such questions as these, and even more difficult ones in any typical week. What a shallow and misleading custom, therefore, which confines his report to a few lack-luster digits. Let us resolve that the Secretary's Report to the Chapter henceforth be the rich human document his distinguished office demands, and not a mere counting of noses.

NEW BOOKS

DESIGNS FOR LIVING by Katherine Morrow Ford and Thomas H. Creighton - Reinhold Publishing Corporation \$5.95

Offering in the words of its subtitle, 175 examples of Quality Home Interiors, this is a well organized presentation of the best that is being done in American domestic interior design today. All of the interiors shown have in common the fact that their planning and decoration have been worked out as an integral composition. It requires a real measure of control on the part of the architect to accomplish such a result and he must also have a client who will permit this condition. In these houses open planning has been brought to an advanced state, in most instances the kitchens and dining areas being separated from the living rooms by banks of cabinets or even by counters. It appears that the double acting door has finally gone the way of the dumbwaiter. On the other hand, judging from one photograph, the wood encased bath tub may be due for a re-entry.

Stylistic variation according to region is quite striking. There is the smooth design sometimes set off with an Oriental flavor found on the West Coast, the very bold and energetic forms of the Middle West and the clean and somewhat spare styling of the work done in New England, all as might be expected, but of great interest when presented all together.

Each area of the house is treated separately, Halls and Stairways, Living Rooms, Dining Areas, Kitchens, Baths and Dressing Rooms and all the others. The photographic illustrations are uniformly handsome and the accompanying captions and descriptive material are interesting and suggestive. This is a valuable addition to an architect's library that should also have its appeal to the discerning layman.

NEW HORIZONS IN COLOR by Faber Birren Reinhold Publishing Corporation - \$10.00

The use of color is an elusive thing. We are continually learning more about the physiology of sight, the physics of color and light transmission and the chemistry of color reproduction. We can analyze light sources for intensity and spectral characteristics. We have developed such excellent systems for color codification as the Ostwald and Martin Senour. But when it comes to color selection for a particular installation, the choices are still arbitrary, personal and based on that indefinable something called Sense.

Faber Birren has recently completed a book, New Horizons in Color which demonstrates how extensively a serious color consultant can investigate the various arts and sciences on which color impinges -- psychology, medicine, physiology, sociology, literature, art, and still be completely subjective in evaluating and criticizing aesthetic results. "Dark forms will rest uneasily and unhappily on light ones." "Dark blue looks better with pale green than deep green looks with pale blue." "Primary lines seem to have architectural stability." These reactions could as easily and with equal rationalization be expressed in reverse.

However, his description of color as identification in industrial work is clear and non-controversial. The use of color for designation of process piping, for safety in the use of dangerous machinery, for cleanliness in the use of factory spaces depends not on liking or disliking various colors and their application but in using color as a method of increasing the effective order within a building.

(continued)

NEW BOOKS

New Horizons in Color (Continued)

The sections on residential, commercial and institutional use of color reflect the author's taste, which in turn is based on his pragmatic evaluation of public taste. Since this public taste is constantly changing, often under the controlled prodding of textile dealers and merchandise experts, conclusions based on this are fleeting and temporal. Even in the section of psycho-decor the conclusions are based on samplings of opinion.

In contrast with Jacobson's Basic Color, this book suffers in having few illustrations of color in color.

PRE-CONVENTION MEETING

The Chapter voted favorably on seven motions to be presented to the National Convention at its Pre-convention luncheon meeting on May 17th. After the names of the elected delegates were read the motions submitted from the Executive Committee and from the floor were debated, amended and voted on. The following were adopted:

1. NCARB be given recognition as the coordinating body on registrations and financial assistance be provided for the NCARB.
2. That the Institute recommend wherever possible the award of public building commissions on the basis of competitions.
3. That \$10,000 annual income instead of \$6,000 be the line at which AIA National dues will step up.
4. That a Survey similar to The Burdell Commission's be undertaken on the question of the practice of architecture as a business.
5. That the AIA nationally prepare a complete statement of aims and purposes to present to the members.
6. That the membership be polled on the subject of present methods of electing officers to the National body.
7. That the Institute publications be restudied by a committee including architects and architectural journalists.

A final motion instructed the Executive Committee to notify all other Chapters that the New York Chapter would present these motions to the Convention.

Delegates selected to attend the convention in Minneapolis are Messrs.:

Sleeper	Lathrop Douglass	Richard Stein	Keally
Hutchins	Grossi	Axline	Bastow
Creighton	Ferriss	Barrows	Bauman
Alonzo Clark	Goldstone	Abramovitz	Frederick Frost, Jr.
Del Gaudio	Erdman	Gruen	Woodbridge
Schwartzman	Holden	Mills	Kilham
Edgar Williams	Lopez	Jansson	Robert O'Connor
Ballard	Ketchum	Arnaud	Perry Coke Smith
			Nathan

NATIONAL INSTITUTE AWARD

Gordon Bunshaft, partner and chief of design of the firm of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill, has been named winner of first prize in architecture of the National Institute of Arts and Letters.

The award, the first the institute has given in architecture, was based on Mr. Bunshaft's over-all contribution to architecture. It was presented to Mr. Bunshaft by Ralph Walker at the academy on May 25.

APPROVED

Francis Keally as Chairman of the Committee on Competitions, American Institute of Architects, announces the Institute's approval of the USA Tomorrow Manhattan Re-development Competition. For details address Mr. Maxwell Levinson, Editor, USA Tomorrow, 210 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N.Y.

FAR EASTERN EXCHANGE

Among several excellent publications which the Chapter receives in exchange for OCULUS and which range transcontinentally from Central New York's "Straight Edge" to the Texas Society's "Texas Architect", none is more interesting or unusual than the FESA News Letter. FESA means Far East Society of Architects, whose membership is made up of Japanese architects and Western architects practicing on an assignment in the Far East. Nathan Harris, A.I.A. (Western) is president.

Their goals and problems as expressed by President Harris parallel our own with remarkable exactitude. (Attend meetings; get members; pay dues; support News Letter) Noted architect Edward D. Stone, even more noted since March 23rd, was a guest at an FESA dinner last fall. He liked it. The truly international flavor of the FESA News Letter is the result in part of printing the text in parallel columns of English and Japanese. The New York Chapter is happy to trade shop talk with the FESA.

VALEDICTORY APPRECIATION

The editor feels grateful to Richard Stein and Fenwick Wall for their excellent collaboration during the year. Who knows but that in the haze of OCULUS anonymity some of their admirable prose may be attributed to him. Many thanks to Mrs. Henkel and Miss Oheimer for whipping the text into shape, to Miss Anne McLemore for typing it and to Miss Emma Carlson for printing it.

CANDIDATES

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

Corporate Membership Anastasios Catsanos

Associate Membership

Martin Warren Berlow
Seymour B. Gellar
John Fred Lorenc

Sponsors: Harmon H. Goldstone and Roger G. Spross
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Sponsors: Frederick E. Allardt, Jr. and Donald A.
MacCornack

Laurence Urdang

Sponsors: Walter McQuade and Vernon Read

IN MEMORIAM

...frater, ave atque vale!

Roderic B. Barnes	George McAneny	William C. Osborn
William M. Dowling	Henry J. McGill	John Sloan
Emil Fels	Eugene V. Meroni	Henry A. Smith
Charles P. H. Gilbert	Michael J. Mongiello	Edward R. Tauch
Charles Henry Hahn	Laurence G. Noyes	William Van Allen

VISITORS, Hugh Ferriss, Chairman

The Committee points with pride to the new Guest Book (invented by Mrs. Henkel, who has also assisted with various foreign languages). The book now contains signatures, plus some appreciative words, of the visitors from abroad, each of whom received such courtesies as lunch at the League and visits to various New York buildings and drafting rooms.

An informal luncheon was given in May to the sixteen members (from as many states) of the A.I.A. Committee on Schools.

The Committee reports that at the end of the eight busier months of the Chapter's fiscal year, it has spent less than one third of its budgeted allowance.

YOUNGER ARCHITECTS

No special committee on Younger Architects was appointed this year but the Report prepared by the previous year's committee was the subject of a Chapter meeting in December and considerable action has been taken as set forth in the published Report of the Special Meeting of the Executive Committee, April 5, 1955.

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MEDAL OF HONOR - Arthur Loomis Harmon, Chairman

The 1955 Medal of Honor was awarded to Edward Durell Stone and presented to him at the Anniversary Meeting on March 23rd. The Committee recommended Olindo Grossi as recipient of the Sidney L. Strauss Award. The New York Society of Architects unanimously accepted this suggestion.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE - Jonathan F. Butler, Chairman

Reports very few cases of a serious nature for 1954-1955. Has some unsettled business to complete before the end of the year. As usual, has had to deal with many inquiries which are not properly the responsibility of this committee.

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY Harmon H. Goldstone

It is recorded with regret that fifteen members have died during the past year. There has been a net gain of 41 in Chapter membership accounted for as follows:

	Corp- orate	Asso- ciate	Stu- dent	Unas- signed	Non-Res- ident	Emeri- tus	Honor- ary	Total
May 1, 1954	670	144	30	8	5	36	7	900
Gains								
New Members	33	20	29	2	-	-	1	
Transferred	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Internal	6	-	-	-	-	8	-	
	42	20	29	2	0	8	1	102
	712	164	59	10	5	44	8	1002
Losses								
Died	11	-	-	-	-	2	2	
Transferred	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Internal	8	5	-	-	2	-	-	
Graduated	-	-	13	-	-	-	-	
Resigned	2	2	-	1	-	-	-	
Terminated	5	1	-	-	-	-	-	
	33	8	13	1	2	2	2	61
April 30, 1955	679	156	46	9	3	42	6	941

REPORT OF THE TREASURER, Ronald Allwork, Chairman

The Chapter's fiscal year begins on October 1st. Income is derived from dues, document sales, interest on the Reserve Fund and other sources. Disbursements include administrative expenses, dues to other organizations and miscellaneous expenditures.

The following is a summary of income and disbursements for the eight month period beginning October 1, 1954:

Income	\$ 32,213.32
Disbursements	21,632.14
8 month balance 5/1/55	10,581.18
Year-end balance 10/1/54	7,541.88
Total balance 5/1/55	18,123.06

Arnold W. Brunner Fund, Principal	100,676.06
Income Account	4,512.81

LeBrun Scholarship Fund, Principal	29,992.56
Income Account	4,761.55

Lavanburg Housing Fund, balance	348.31
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Contingent Reserve Fund (Chapter)	28,874.99
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Audit reports as of September 30, 1954 are on file at the Chapter Office.