

NEW YORK CHAPTER

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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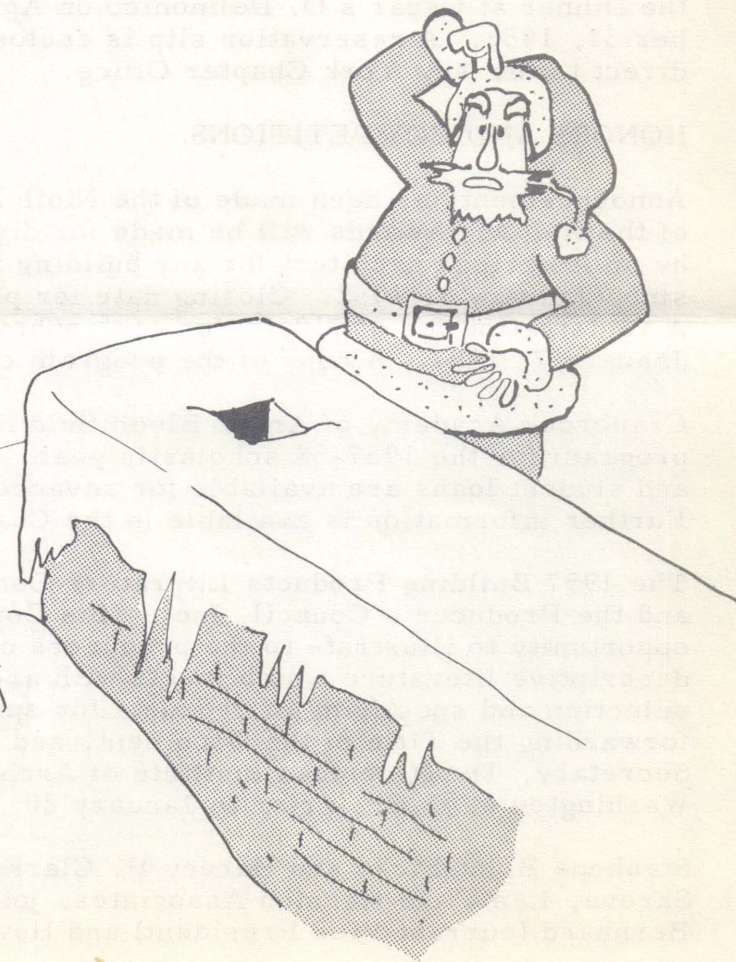
COMING EVENTS

January 10, Thursday	Pine Room - 12:30 P. M.	Luncheon in Honor of Visiting Architect Maxwell Fry from England
January 17, Thursday	Gallery A - 12:30	"Regular Meeting" Election of Committee on Nominations
January 23, Wednesday	Gallery A - 12:30	Hospital Study Group "Psychiatric Unit in the General Hospital!"

As 1956 draws to a close, the American Institute of Architects concludes its 1st 100 years. Founded in New York City by 13 architects back in 1857 the Institute has now grown to 122 chapters and 10 State organizations serving the whole of the U.S. and its possessions.

With this the December issue the Oculus extends to each and every member its heartiest greetings for a very Merry Christmas. As a new century beckons we of the New York Chapter will embark on a program of increased service to society, to our fellow architects, and to the profession as a whole.

MERRY
CHRISTMAS



ARCHITECTS' WEEK

Mayor Wagner has agreed to proclaim an 'Architects' Week' in connection with the Centennial celebration on February 23rd. Commander James P. Farrell, the mayor's aide, is working with Daniel Schwartzman of the Committee on Centennial Observance on the text of the proclamation.

CENTENNIAL MEMENTOES

Before the Centennial Year is over, architects will have several mementoes of the founding of the American Institute of Architects. A commemorative medal is being made by Sidney Waugh, the sculptor. Gyorgy Kepes, who teaches at M.I.T., is working on designs for Centennial china. A competition for the design of a Centennial Stamp has been approved. The bronze tablet marking the origins of the Institute at 111 Broadway in New York is being completed. Forthcoming next year will be a book by Dean John Burchard of the humanities department at M.I.T. on the history of the Institute. For those who like the personal touch, there will be Centennial stationery and stickers which they may attach to their correspondence. The Commemorative Tablet Luncheon will be held at the Federal Hall Museum (U.S. Treasury Building) on Saturday, February 23, 1957 at 12:30 P.M. The Commemorative Tablet will be erected after the Luncheon ceremonies at 111 Broadway, one block from the Museum.

FOR DINING OUT

Arrangements for the Centennial Dinner to be held at Oscar's O. Delmonico, 56 Beaver Street, near William Street, on Thursday, April 25th, cocktails at 7:30, have been completed. Ample parking space available. The gourmets on the Dinner Committee have chosen an excellent cuisine fortified with wine at each table. Mrs. Margot A. Henkel, our Executive Secretary, says you cannot make your reservations too early if you wish to attend the dinner.

Due to limited capacity for the Commemorative Tablet Luncheon on February 23rd and the Dinner at Oscar's O. Delmonico on April 25th, reservations should be in by December 31, 1956. A reservation slip is enclosed. Please mail it together with your check direct to the New York Chapter Office.

HONORS AND COMPETITIONS

Announcement has been made of the Ninth Annual Program of National Honor Awards of the A.I.A. Awards will be made for distinguished accomplishment in architecture by an American architect for any building in the United States, or abroad, completed since January 1, 1952. Closing date for preliminary submissions is March 1, 1957. A registration fee of \$10.00 for each submission must be sent with an entry slip by January 7, 1957. A copy of the program can be seen at the Chapter Office.

Cranbrook Academy of Art at Bloomfield Hills, Michigan announces its scholarship program for the 1957-58 scholastic year. A number of scholarships, tuition grants and student loans are available for advanced students in architecture and other fields. Further information is available in the Chapter Office.

The 1957 Building Products Literature Competition has been announced by the Institute and the Producer's Council, Inc. This Competition provides the architect with the opportunity to illustrate to the producers of building products the type of technical and descriptive literature which meets with architect's requirements in the appraising, selection and specifying of products for specific uses. Nominations can be made by forwarding the Title of the Document, and the Name of its Producer to the Technical Secretary, The American Institute of Architects, 1735 New York Avenue, N. W., Washington 6, D.C., prior to January 20, 1957.

Stanhope Blunt Ficke and Harvey P. Clarkson have been admitted to partnership in Shreve, Lamb and Harmon Associates, joining Arthur Loomis Harmon, Harold C. Bernhard (current Vice President) and Howard F. Vanderbeck.

REPORT ON TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MEETING "CHAPTER MEMBERS' WORK ABROAD"

The Technical Committees' November 7th dinner meeting was attended by 105 chapter members and their wives who listened to addresses and were shown slides by eight of their distinguished colleagues on the subject "Chapter Members' Work Abroad". This subject provided an excellent opportunity for exchange of information and for the mutual appreciation of the significant contributions being made in various parts of the world by our chapter members. Introduced by Ben John Small, Committee and meeting chairman, here in principle is what each had to say:

REINO EDVARD AARNIO was asked by the chairman to describe the United States Pavilion which he had recently designed for the International Trade Fair in Stockholm, held last September. Mr. Aarnio was presented to the meeting as something of a dividend and his description and photographs delighted every one present. Mr. Aarnio had recently been awarded a citation by the Veterans of Foreign Wars for this work. The original commission directed him to arrange a United States display in space to be provided by the exposition officials. When he arrived in Sweden, however, he discovered that no such space was available and that a new, completely permanent type of structure would have to be erected if America was to have an exhibit. The design for such a building was created in a matter of days, involving pre-stressed concrete roof framing members, an all glass facade and masonry side walls. The photographs illustrated an extremely lovely, light, airy structure, beautifully conceived as a background for the equally gay exhibits.

WILLIAM S. BROWN partner in the firm of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, reviewed his office's experience with the Istanbul Hilton Hotel. This 300-room, reinforced concrete structure, overlooking the Bosphorus, was conceived in 1950 under joint sponsorship of the Government of Turkey, the E.C.A., and the Hilton Hotel organization, providing the architects with three clients. A working arrangement with a Turkish architect, Sedad Eldem, was established. He was in New York during the preliminary stages and then organized a staff in Turkey together with key S.O.M. personnel to complete the working drawings. Bids were taken in 1952 with competition among American, Italian, Dutch and German contractors. The German firm of Dyckerhoff & Widman and Julius Berger were successful. Labor forces were recruited throughout Europe. With the exception of reinforcing steel, native tiles and carpeting, most materials had to be imported from abroad. Very little was obtained in the United States; the bulk came from Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Scandinavia. Very successful use was made of local building techniques, such as the rough textured stucco finishes and precast concrete grillages. Design motifs, stemming from the Turkish heritage, were employed successfully to give local character and continuity to the spirit of the building. These include the "flying carpet" entrance and the fountain composition in the interior patio. As a very modern building in a very ancient city, its impact on the surrounding hills had to be carefully studied. Orientation of the building itself was considered not only to capitalize on the marvelous view but also to provide visual interest from the many vantage points throughout the city.

LATHROP DOUGLASS

spoke with particular reference to South America. He emphasized the differences which occur in the two neighboring capital cities of Caracas and Bogota. Although located in the same general continental area, these two cities make for very different architectural approaches. In Caracas hot sunlight bathes the city during the daylight hours, but the nights are cool. The city life reflects the brightness and lushness of its surroundings. Much of the architecture is bizarre and colorful, sometimes to the point of grotesqueness. Bogota, on the other hand, is cold, grey and misty. Its temperature ranges in the low 50's. The overhanging clouds and chilled air create a sun problem diametrically opposed to that of Caracas. Buildings are monochromatic, rectangular masses, with extensive glass areas to capture whatever sun exists. The overall effect is greyness, although with a solid, substantial look to it. Mr. Douglass showed examples of his own work in these two cities, reflecting these conditions.

The Creole Petroleum office building in Caracas faced all offices north and south with wide projections over all windows to provide for summer and winter sun angles. With this orientation to avoid the hot sun, no air conditioning was necessary. In another large office building in Caracas the offices faced east-west. To offset the resultant radiant heat, central air conditioning was installed.

Moving to Bogota, Mr. Douglass showed the Esso Building. Here again, the orientation problem was significant. Local pressure forced the adoption of the conventional east-west exposure despite the provision of one of the few central heating systems in Bogota. An interesting aesthetic element in the Esso Building was the use of colored spandrels, which although of a rather subdued blue color, were for Bogota unusually gay and exuberant. This may have established a trend.

GANNETT HERWIG

partner in the firm of LaPierre, Litchfield & Partners,
took us from the tropics to Greenland's icy mountains.

He convincingly illustrated his problem by turning out the lights, instructing his slide projector operator to turn on the equipment, pointing to the glaring empty screen, and saying "Here is the site"! The contrast between the South American Andes and the Greenland Ice Cap could not have been more vivid in emphasizing the different problems architects must face. Their most appalling problem was that of foundations. What does a building rest on where the snow is two miles deep? Various solutions were examined in the light of testing and observation. It was found, for example, that the snow layers which accumulated each year added increments of pressure to the surface of the ice mass without building up the surface elevation. With this phenomenon as a starting point, a submarine design was developed, based on identical cylindrical units made up of curved, 8 gauge corrugated steel. Within these long cylinders, living compartments, rectangular in shape, were constructed in somewhat the same fashion as vehicular tunnels. This was insulated to maintain a 70 degree temperature in the living space and a temperature in the outer space of 35 degrees. (The surrounding snow was calculated to be minus 20 degrees.) These cylinder elements could be joined together in clusters, with long communicating corridors and branches of living units stemming therefrom. Vertical communications are established by means of cylindrical shafts to which sections can be added. The problem of thermal balance was crucial as unequal heat losses to the surrounding snow could cause serious shifting and settlement of component units. Original units installed three years ago have sunk twenty feet. However, because of a peculiar phenomenon of melting snow around the top half of the cylinders, which seems to provide a lubricating film over the shell, thereby reducing the effect of the superimposed load, no flattening of the cylinders has occurred.

ALBERT MAYER of Mayer, Whittlesey & Glass discussed broad aspects of his firm's work in Israel and India, particularly with respect to climatological discoveries. He pointed out that these two countries, while both tropical, present very different architectural problems, since one is dry and the other humid. They also have wide temperature variations, both day-night and seasonal.

As a result of M.W. & G's work much helpful design criteria have been established. Some have been based on local building traditions, some on empirical observation, and some on the basis of theoretical calculation. Lengths of buildings and spacing between buildings were very carefully studied to arrive at optimum planning. It was found that wind currents passing over buildings could bypass a second building in line if the space between were too small. With two-story buildings, front to back spacing of five times the height proved to be minimum to avoid this bypass. Similarly, the wind wrapping itself around ends of buildings developed low-pressure suction effect. Similarly, the relationship between opening sizes on the windward and leeward sides were found to be most important. Somewhat paradoxically, maximum air movement inside the building occurred when the windward openings were kept smaller than the leeward openings, in a ratio of about 1 : 2-1/2. Certain native developments were found to have significant application. For example, many local buildings were constructed with extremely thick walls to insulate against sun heat. While this worked for day operation, it worked in reverse during the night. Planning in very hot areas, therefore, continued the use of thick walled structures for day time operations but utilized extremely light screen walls for night time occupancy. These screen walls were in some cases constructed of straw fabrics which served for visual privacy, rain protection, and a certain degree of security, but permitted maximum ventilation without absorbing any sun heat. In dry areas similar straw window hangings by wetting them down were used as crude air conditioning systems.

JOHN C. B. MOORE of Moore & Hutchins, told of his firm's appointment by the Battle Monuments Commission to undertake the design and development of a cemetery and memorial in North Africa just outside Tunis, commemorating United States Servicemen who died in the African campaigns of World War II. In 1949, Moore & Hutchins were asked for a design so that reburial of 3600 dead about to be undertaken, could proceed immediately. No time was permitted for a visit to the site. With the aid of aerial views, however, the problem was tackled and the initial commitments were made. After these early decisions, time was available for a visit to the site and for deep reflection on the spiritual nature of the problem. An unhurried pace was permitted so that the fullest and most careful thought and study could be given to the eventual total composition. In addition to the burial area of approximately eight acres, a chapel, a space for campaign maps, and a suitable setting for inscription of the names of the missing were included.

Drawings were made at metric scale by the architects in the office in New York. A local architect was chosen to represent them in Tunis, but contracts were negotiated and supervision carried out by the Rome office of the Battle Monuments Commission. Difficult foundation problems were discovered, primarily since the cemetery was very near the site of ancient Carthage. Cisterns and other underground vaults were encountered. Although all finishing materials were imported from Italy, including stone and marble, the local contractors and craftsmen were excellent. However, completion of the proposed design has been seriously handicapped by the slow growth of trees. It could be expected in this type of problem that the softening effect of vegetation would be most important. The architects conscientiously planned the eventual enrichment of the area by carefully integrated landscaping.

ISADORE ROSENFELD of the firm of Isadore & Zachary Rosenfield, showed very interesting slides of an 800-bed tuberculosis hospital for Puerto Rico. Mr. Rosenfield reviewed the basic structural considerations such as earthquake and hurricane protection, which is mandatory in the Caribbean Island area. The hospital group, composed of several elements with connecting passageways, was kept low and was built of reinforced concrete. Both of these design decisions reflected consideration for earthquake protection and concrete was chosen because of its availability and local labor experience and excellence with this material. Window openings were designed without glass but were provided with protective cement asbestos panels for use in high windstorms and hurricanes. This window design recognized the peculiar climate conditions of Puerto Rico, where shade, coupled with prevailing breezes, gives excellent protection against the otherwise brutal sun. A most interesting aspect of the hospital design concerned mandatory planning standards. Since this structure had to satisfy requirements of the U. S. Public Health Service, and since those standards did not reflect the climate and social psychology of an area like Puerto Rico, exceptions had to be made by the Surgeon General himself to enable the project to proceed on the basis of the architect's understanding of the problem. These standards particularly applied to privacy and space considerations. Mr. Rosenfield pointed out that the average Puerto Rican would probably feel very unhappy if he were obliged to occupy a private hospital room. His natural gregariousness was therefore recognized in developing this hospital almost exclusively on a ward system.

FRED N. SEVERUD of Severud, Elstad, Krueger, spoke not as an architect, but as a structural engineer working closely with an architect on an overseas problem calling for the closest possible integration of structure and design. In collaboration with Hugh Stubbins, Mr. Severud faced an extremely provocative commission -- to create a symbol of democracy inside the iron curtain. This assembly hall, to be erected in Berlin, with West Germany paying approximately half the cost, was to convey the American spirit of democracy to Europeans. Although a place of public assembly, its use was to be exclusively for speech -- free speech. No consideration was given to music or drama. Since the structure was to be located very near Tempelhof Airport, acoustic problems were paramount. The accepted scheme (developed after many false starts) could perhaps be described as a quarter of an orange peel, creased from apex to apex, with the points acting as hinges and the curved edges acting as arches. The arches, leaning at 45 degrees, were to be tied together across the folded roof area by cables. The cable system was conceived of not only to restrain the arches, but also to serve as supports for the main roof membrane. Although similar forms have been created, they have been generally of the shell design type involving complex formwork, expansion joints and monolithic pouring of the enclosed area. This was, in fact, the technique suggested by the firm of Dyckerhoff & Widman who were approached by Mr. Severud in accordance with accepted German practice, where the contractor also serves as designing engineer. Engineers of this firm expressed interest in the project but since they had had extensive experience with shell structures they were insistent upon designing the building that way. Mr. Stubbins and Mr. Severud were equally determined and successful in executing it in the cable restrained arch system for the construction joints dictated by the shell type design would have been fatal to the acoustical requirements.

NEW YORK STATE ASSOCIATION CONVENTION, OCTOBER 25-27, AT LAKE PLACID

Headed by Chapter President Robert W. Cutler, a delegation of nineteen members of the New York Chapter attended the Annual Convention of the New York State Association of Architects at Lake Placid, October 25th, 26th and 27th.

Perhaps the most important action of the convention was the decision to establish, on January 1, 1957, a New York State Association office in New York City and to employ an Executive Secretary. Under discussion for the past six years, the matter came to a head on the Convention floor where it was recognized by all that the growth of the Association's membership and the extent of its activities have passed the point where its officers and committeemen can be expected to carry out their duties without paid assistance. It is also recognized that the income from "The Empire State Architect" and other sources can be materially increased under the efficient management of an Executive Secretary and can contribute largely to his support. As it will be necessary for the Association to feel its way in the implementing of this decision, it was agreed that the first year be financed out of current assets, after which the additional amount of financial support needed from the constituent organizations to cover operating expenses will be determined, except that in no case will the increase be more than \$4.00 per capita for any one year. Once it was satisfied that in so doing it would not be committing its membership to an increase in dues, the resolution was supported by the New York Chapter delegation as finally presented by Resolutions Committee Chairman Harry M. Prince.

The Association's officers of the past year were all unanimously re-elected for 1956-1957 and are as follows:

President: Trevor Rogers, Buffalo-Western New York Chapter
1st Vice President: Harry Prince, New York Chapter
2nd Vice President: John W. Briggs, Central New York Chapter
3rd Vice President: Frederick H. Voss, Westchester Chapter
Secretary: Simeon Heller, Queens Chapter
Treasurer: Martyn N. Weston, Brooklyn Chapter

At a meeting of the A.I.A. Chapter Presidents with Regional Director Matthew W. Del Gaudio, the following were elected to serve on the New York Region's Judiciary Committee for 1956-1957.

Harold Sleeper - Term expires 1959 New York Chapter
Walter Brach - Alternate Long Island Society Chapter
Egbert Bagg - Term expires 1958 Central New York
Adolph Goldberg - Term expires 1957 Brooklyn Chapter

The Convention was well attended and was graced by the presence of both A.I.A. President Leon Chatelain, Jr. and Past President George Bain Cummings. Once one learned to find one's way about its labyrinthine complex, the Lake Placid Club made delightful convention headquarters. A full report on the convention is being prepared by J. Stanley Sharp, the Chapter's accredited delegate to the New York State Association of Architects.

HOSPITAL STUDY GROUP

The November 29th Seminar of the Hospital and Health Committee, second of a series, dealt with the subject "Clinical Laboratories." Under the chairmanship of Miss Mary T. Worthen, the meeting, attended by about 50, was addressed by Dr. Alfred A. Angrist, Director of Pathology at New York's Alfred Einstein College of Medicine, and by Sam Wertheimer of Skidmore, Owings and Merrill. The main points made by the speakers were (1) that the rapid changes currently affecting all medical development are tremendously increasing the work loads in related laboratories, (2) that each individual hospital's problem creates an individual programme, (3) that utmost flexibility must be built in to the laboratory building to accommodate year-to-year fluctuating directions of bacterial and chemical research requirements, with all partitions and mechanical services demountable and accessible for rapid conversions.

On November 10th, Hillside Psychiatric Hospital, Queens, was the subject of a field trip in which about 25 participated. A 200-bed pavilion type hospital which has been in operation for several years, this building provided general orientation in the subject, which is to be followed up in the forthcoming January 23rd Seminar, "The Psychiatric Unit in the General Hospital". A detailed announcement will be sent at a later date to the Chapter membership.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Historical Buildings

Louis B. McCagg

CANDIDATES

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

Corporate Membership

John Peter Veerling Zachary Rosenfield William B. Heller George Nemeny

Associate Membership

Eric Joseph Pick Sponsors: Frederick G. Frost, Jr. and Carl J. Carlson

The Oculus Staff joins with the New York Chapter in expressing its sincere condolences to Frank G. Lopez and his family for the untimely death of Mrs. Lopez.