

Oculus Forum Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor:

In response to Herb Oppenheimer's statement on the condition of the profession in the August **Oculus** and in support of Dick Stein's call for the "widest participation in defining the problem" in the September **Oculus** may I offer these comments:

Must we now in this time of "immediate calamity" be satisfied with "thoughtful involvement in order to keep our offices afloat?" We do not all have offices. Both principals and employees are struggling to keep working in the profession. What creature but the architect when facing annihilation guides has actions along such tepid lines as to advise architects to encourage the building industry in their (!) new humility to listen to our "limited wisdom?" Since the characterization of the profession's condition in New York City, and he might have added the whole country, is indeed a calamity, then our response must be proportionate. This is not just an "environmental crisis" but an economic and political crisis as well.

We architects must demand work to build and rebuild New York. We cannot accept at face value that there is no money because the Federal Government must spend close to \$100 billion dollars a year for armaments. We cannot accept the principle that corporations and banks must have their existence and profits guaranteed by the government but that architects and architecture are expendable. We must insist that government at all levels initiate construction wherever private enterprise does not feel that it has the financial incentive to build. We must support those politicians who favor government participation in massive public construction.

We must involve the NY Chapter's committees and encourage new thinking on all aspects of the profession, as Stein suggests.

The Chapter must become a forum for the expression of views and policies and their implementation by all professionals and non-professionals in the construction industry including our unemployed members. We must challenge the administration in Washington's disregard for the public welfare if we are ever to see architecture become revitalized once more.

Marvin Mills, AIA

Approved Charter Revisions

The proposed City Charter revisions 1 through 6 which the voters approved on November 4 included provisions fought for by the Chapter. These were noted in the November **Oculus** and are repeated here:

- The Comptroller may provide for submission of disputes arising under contracts to impartial arbitration.
- The Comptroller shall be prohibited from revising the terms of a contract with the City after its execution.

How the revisions are to be implemented is not yet clear, but architects with city contracts should note that these revisions are now in effect.

GL

Roy Friedberg Letter on Unemployment

Make a note to read the Letters to the Editor Column in the upcoming issue of the **AIA Journal**.

Roy Friedberg, Chairman of the Fees & Contracts Committee, wrote a letter in response to an article titled "Survey of Firms Charts Decline in Employment" by Mary Osman, Associate Editor, in the September **Journal**. Her article referred to an AIA regional questionnaire prepared to obtain employment information in architectural firms. The results are to be used to "prepare actions to government and others to alleviate the current situation."

Mr. Friedberg says that the **Journal's** conclusions are misleading because its survey used the last quarter of 1973 as the base point, and unemployment is indicated to be only about 10%. He points to the recent spot survey which the Chapter conducted on changes in overhead costs for firms in the New York area. A portion of the Chapter's survey asked for the number of employees for 1972 through mid-1975. According to these figures, the cumulative drop was 52%.

Friedberg expressed hope that the AIA would conduct a more comprehensive overhead study requesting the employment level for each of the past three years on a national basis rather than regional, as this would provide a more accurate evaluation of what is obviously a serious unemployment situation in the profession at the present time.

Executive Committee Actions November 5, 1975

- Heard representatives of The Architects' Technical Assistance Center (TATAC) describe its purpose and the reasons why it deserves continued Chapter support. The question of the Chapter's relationship with TATAC will be on the agenda of the December meeting.
- Some questions had been raised concerning the solicitation of advertisements for the proposed NYSAA yearbook. Messrs. Roger Hallenbeck and Carl Petrilli, representing NYSAA, explained the plans, which would involve the assistance of some architects in identifying possible advertisers. The procedure was considered to be satisfactory.
- Approved the Housing Committee's draft of testimony on the proposed Housing Quality zoning legislation to be presented at the Planning Commission hearing November 19.
- Approved a technical change in wording in Article 4 of the Chapter Bylaw concerning sustaining members, as directed by the AIA Board.
- Supported an effort by the Boston Society to have the Institute cover expenses incurred by Chapters greeting foreign visitors.

Candidates for Membership

Information received by the Secretary of the NYC/AIA regarding the qualifications of candidates for membership will be considered confidential:

Corporate

Carmi Bee
Bruton L. Shatz
Madan Pribhdas Vazirani

Associate

Massimo Cardillo

James Stewardson Travelling Scholarship \$2,000

The application forms for the 1976 James Stewardson Travelling Scholarship will be available after January 1 at the Chapter office.

The Scholarship is open to draftsmen below the age of 40 with a minimum of three years architectural experience in the New York area in a capacity other than that of principal.

James Stewardson was a distinguished British citizen who served for forty years as a chief designer in the prominent firm of Delano and Aldrich. He was a specialist in Georgian design, and responsible for the American Embassy in Paris, Japanese Embassy in Washington, elegant New York City clubs such as the Brook, Colony and Knickerbocker, and country residences for such families as Whitney, Vanderbilt, and Lindbergh. His heart remained with the Renaissance architecture of Europe, which he hoped he could share with the young designers in this country through his traveling scholarship. He returned to England shortly before he died. (See enclosed special announcement.)

1976 Brunner Scholarship Opens

The applications for the \$5,000 Arnold W. Brunner Scholarship for 1976 will be available at the Chapter office this month.

The purpose of the Scholarship is to further the development of architecture in the U.S. by granting one or more Scholarships, usually annually, for advanced study in some special field of architectural investigation which, in the judgement of the Chapter, will most effectively contribute to the practice, teaching, or knowledge of the Art & Science of architecture. (See enclosed special announcement.)

Residential Design Awards Program: Single-Family and Multi-Family Housing

This will be the fourteenth year of the Residential Design Awards Program, which is sponsored by the Small Offices Committee.

Residents of Metropolitan New York may submit any number of houses, apartments and multi-family housing within 100 miles of New York City completed or renovated since January 1, 1972. Members of the Chapter may submit such houses, apartments, and multi-family housing no matter where they are located. Projects in the design stage will be judged separately from those already built. (See the enclosed announcements and entry forms).

Material Needed For Book

Chapter member Richard Dattner and Roger Guilfoyle are writing a book based on projects in which citizens improved their physical environment primarily through their own effort — demonstrations of the positive effects of community action. The number to call is 247-2660.

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