

# Oculus

## Chapter Fights Back on Omaha Firm's Selection for West Point Project

In July the US Army Engineer District selected an Omaha, Nebraska based firm for the architectural services for Building 606, a major hospital conversion project, at the US Military Academy at West Point New York. Out of approximately 75 firms who responded to the original CBD announcement, it was believed that around 15 of these were New York City firms with extensive health facilities background.

Inasmuch as one of the four criteria listed in the CBD notice of Mar. 14 was proximity of the office to the project site, it was felt by the New York City architects who did respond, that the Corps did not follow its own mandate in selecting from local firms.

A letter of complaint was sent by Chapter President Peter Samton to Lt. Col. Chisholm of the Corps on July 19, with copies to Congressmen from Manhattan and Senators Javits and Moynihan; Representative Koch, and Senator Moynihan, we note, followed this with additional letters. The matter was also referred to the National AIA Federal Agencies Committee who in a telephone call on July 22, brought the matter to the attention of Mr. Lee Garrett, Chief of

*continued on page 6*

## Office Practice and Small Office Committees Finalize Plans for Seminar Series

A first for the Chapter is the Fall seminar series on Office Practice. The four programs are listed below. Each seminar will begin at 5:00 p.m. at Chapter headquarters.

●Nov. 2 Fees and Costs - Donald J. Stephens, FAIA, of Donald J. Stephens, Associates, Albany. Mr. Stephens headed the Task Force on cost-related fee compensation for AIA and will cover compensation methods, job cost determination, contractual provisions and "avoiding the pitfalls."

●Nov. 16 Financial Management - Irving Schwartz, CPA of Schwartz & Hofflich, Norwalk, Ct. with over 50 clients in the environmental design professions, Mr. Schwartz has been financial adviser as well as accountant or auditor for most of these firms. He has participated in similar seminars for the Connecticut Society of Architects.

●Nov. 30 Insurance and Legal Matters - Peter Kelly, Esq., partner, Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, Hartford. Mr. Kelly is counsel to the Connecticut Society of Architects and has broad experience in the liability insurance area.

●Dec. 14 New Business Development - Ms. Carol McConochie, Weld Cox Associates, Phila-

delphia. Ms. McConochie is a consultant in marketing and is Managing Editor of the Cox Letter.

Each seminar will be of two hour's duration, featuring the principal speaker who will address the entire group for a half hour. Immediately thereafter the body will be divided into groups of 10 "students" for about 1 hour of informal discussion, led by a Chapter member having special expertise in areas relating to the principal subject. The main speaker will circulate among the groups, participate occasionally and pick up the matters of greatest concern, difficulty or interest. Finally the entire group will be reassembled and the main speaker will spend about 15 minutes summarizing his observations on the discussions.

A fee of \$25 has been set for attendance at the 4 sessions, and a transcript of the proceedings of each session will be distributed to the attendees. Priority will be given to members of the Chapter, otherwise admission cards will be issued in order of receipt of application because of limited space. Admission to individual sessions at \$8 per session will not be considered until the series' subscriptions have been met. □

Alan Schwartzman



## Chapter Expresses Disappointment with N.Y.TIMES Home Design Issue

The Chapter registered its strong disappointment with the recently published New York Times annual magazine issue on Home Design appearing in the Sept.25'77 Sunday edition.

In the past the Times had included in such similar issues the best and most innovative works of architects and designers.

It would appear that a major policy shift on the part of the Times editors has caused virtual abandonment of this practice resulting in an issue where the words "architecture" or "architect" are literally not to be found.

In addition, and equally troubling is the magazine's seeming inability to sift quality work from the conglomeration of fashion. The title "The Best of the Top Designers" is not substantiated, instead there is a rather strong flavor of commercialism which becomes apparent when simply comparing the cover showing a known interior designer with the overleaf where the same designer once again appears only this time in a paid advertisement in a wholly different setting.

The issue could have been more appropriately called "Fashions of the Home" than "Home Design." □

*Denis Glen Kuhn*

## N.Y.POST Abandons Architectural Issues

In a letter to the New York Post, Chapter President Peter Samton expressed the Chapter's concern for the abandonment by the Post of all coverage connected with those "vital and persistent issues that deal with making New York a livable city."

Subsequent to the letter, in a conversation with the Assistant to the Publisher, the Chapter learned that the Post no longer has an individual assigned to researching and reporting architectural issues alone.

The Post has asked us to submit a list of specific subjects we feel should be covered. Members of the Executive Committee are pursuing this matter. □

## New York State Architects can Advertise their Services Starting this Month

Starting this month Architects in New York State are permitted by the Board of Regents to advertise their fees for specific routine services in the print media and also to advertise on radio and television as long as prices are not listed.

This is against the AIA Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct. Individual AIA members will have to decide for themselves if they are to abide by the high standards of their professional society or succumb to the further commercialization of the profession foisted upon them by the Board of Regents. □

*Denis Glen Kuhn*

## Candidates for Membership

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

### Corporate

Jack Gonchor  
Charles Koty

### AIA Associate

Michael Ressler

## New Members

The NYC/AIA Welcomes the following New Members:

### Corporate

John Klausz

**New York Chapter  
The American Institute of Architects**  
20 West 40th Street  
New York, New York 10018  
212/730-1221  
George S. Lewis, Executive Director

**Executive Committee 1977/78**  
Peter Samton, President  
Charles E. Hughes, 1st Vice President  
George A. Dudley, Vice President  
Joseph Wasserman, Vice President  
Stephen A. Kliment, Secretary  
Anna M. Halpin, Treasurer  
Jonathan Barnett, Director  
Michael McCarthy, Director  
Rosaria Pionelli, Director  
John Belle, Director  
Roy Friedberg, Director  
Robert A. M. Stern, Director

**Oculus Committee**  
Denis Glen Kuhn, Editor/Chairman  
Albert Barash  
Stephen N. Carter  
Mary Jane Clark  
Bonnell Irvine  
Lawrence Levine  
Kenneth T. Lydon  
Kenneth Ricci  
William C. Shopsis

Stephen A. Kliment  
Secretary, NYC/AIA  
Cathanne Piesla  
Chapter Staff Member



## Membership Fails to Participate in Chapter NYSAA Meeting

On Wed. evening, Sept. 28 there was a well publicized Chapter meeting at which Bill Rose, President-Elect of NYSAA, and Marty Schaum, NYSAA Legislative Counsel gave an in depth review of the architect's relationship to the New York State government. There also were some bylaws to change for which we needed to meet a quorum of 25. We barely did it. Some 25 to 30 people out of a membership of 1500, or about 1 in every 50 chapter members came. Is it any wonder why our profession often fails to control events which directly effect its work. It was said before, but is worth repeating, there is a wealth of talent available within our membership but only by working together can we really do something about the severe problems facing our profession. It should be apparent by now that a new government at City Hall is bound to make significant changes which will affect architects. Inroads have already been made into the campaigns of the various candidates by the Chapter. Greater chapter involvement can make a difference and membership participation and ideas are needed at both the committee level and at Chapter events. □

Peter Samton

## Executive Committee Deplores RIDC's Methods of Choosing Architect for New Housing ; Other Actions Taken

By ignoring the four finalists of the '75 competition to select an architect to design 1000 units of new housing on the north end of Roosevelt Island, the Island's Development Corporation has done nothing illegal but has shown a deplorable disregard for sound procedure. The Executive Committee voted to convey this viewpoint in a strongly-worded letter to the Corporation's executive vice-president, Christine Flynn.

In other actions, the Executive Committee:

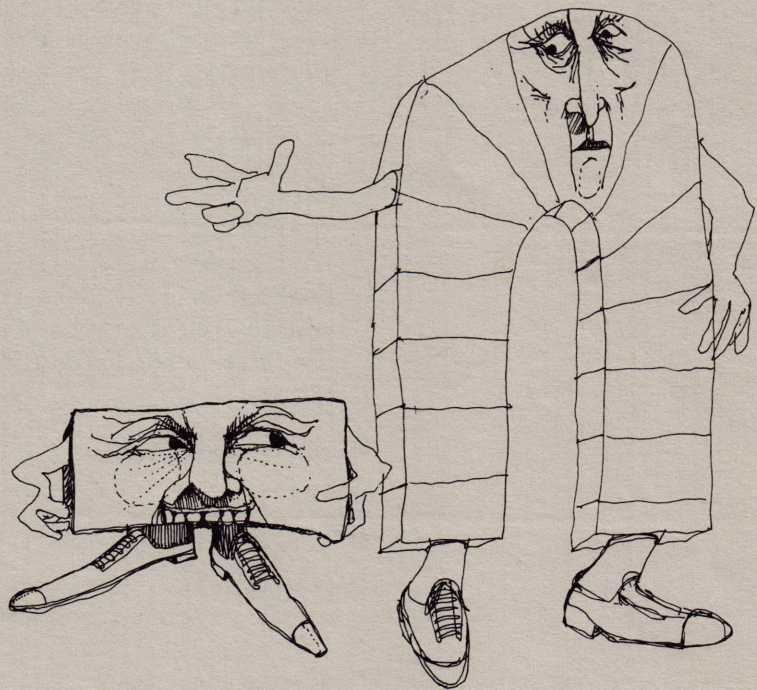
- Was concerned over the conflict between national AIA policy and the new rules of the New York State Board of Regents over what makes for unprofessional conduct, especially in the matter of advertising. The Committee was afraid AIA members may

resign rather than not take advantage of marketing methods permitted by the State but not by the Institute.

- Approved the development of position papers in such areas as A/E selection, architectural work done in-house by City agencies, consultant contracts with the city and the appointment of city officials. The papers will be presented to and discussed with mayoral and other candidates for city offices.

- Endorsed continuing pressure on the Museum of Modern Art to revise its present plan for a high-rise apartment tower in mid-block on West 53rd Street. The museum should show a greater concern for the urban fabric of the block and the character of the existing Museum structures. □

Stephen Kliment



A single brick rightly envious of the attributes of an arch.

Drawing by Albert Lorenz.



## Political Affairs Committee Gets Ready for Election

The Political Affairs Committee, Herbert Oppenheimer, Chairman, was formed in July of this year so that the Chapter could evaluate the mayoral candidates present the Chapter's views on major issues involving the profession to them and seek their support.

To familiarize the candidates with the Chapter and its views, the Committee held pre-primary meetings with the candidates (covered in the Sept. OCULUS). Since that time the Committee has formulated four position papers that have been sent to the candidates representing the Chapter's views regarding architectural work done in-house by City agencies, Westway, The Convention Center and NYC's Housing policy regarding goals, objectives and proper utilization of existing programs.

A meeting with the candidates has been tentatively scheduled for late October to be held at Cooper Union to give each candidate an opportunity to present their views on the issues raised by the Chapter.□

*Maryjane Clark*

## CPC Acts on MoMA Expansion

The Chapter's statement to the Planning Commission on the Museum of Modern Art's expansion plans, including a residential tower mid-block on 53rd Street, was mailed with the Sept. OCULUS. It recommended that the CPC reserve judgment until certain elements were more thoroughly studied, including cost estimates and - especially - the effect of the design on the urban, low-height character of 53rd Street. Shortly afterwards, chapter representatives expressed these reservations informally in greater detail at a CPC executive session.

The Commission went on to approve the proposal subject to certain conditions which reflect the Chapter's concerns. Its long report noted that "the architects are moving in the direction of a facade that respects and harmonizes with the scale of the Museum's existing east wing as well as with the scale and tone of the adjacent brownstone buildings to the west," but it went on to require "that the final designs be presented for certification, that the plans in fact conform with standards discussed in this report relating to the scale and character along West 53rd Street."

The Commission, study concerned - as was the Chapter - with the loss of some garden space, also required that the Museum study the feasibility of landscaping and opening to the public the roof of the new three-story restaurant building on the northeast wing.

*George Lewis*

## Architects in Industry Committee Prepares Directory

A new directory listing 117 Corporations and 194 staff architects in the Greater New York Area is now available to the Chapter membership. The listing was compiled by the Architects in Industry Committee last spring after completion of an exhaustive research effort. Company name, address, staff architect and title are included. Eric de Varis committee chairman urges the membership to use the directory as a means to improve communication between the profession and corporate management. Copies are available upon request at Chapter headquarters.□

*Jack L. Kesten*



## The Municipal Art Society Saves Landmarks and gets High Marks on Polishing the Big Apple

It's good to be lopsided when you do it the Municipal Art Society way. The Society marches with a staff of five and a Board of Directors of 31 - 7 of whom are architects. For once, "too many captains" works.

### ●A few quotes from the leadership:

The present President, Frederic S. Papert, is also President of the 42nd Street Redevelopment Corp. He is somewhat new to urban planning and says, "I'm impressed. The Society is a most articulate spokesman for livable cities and rational conservation."

A former President, Charles E. Hughes, AIA, on looking back, "We have many organizations concerned with finances, politics and so forth. The Municipal Art Society is a unique, nonprofessional group that is primarily concerned with the physical appearance of the city fabric."

The quotable Executive Director, Margot Wellington has lots to say including, "Unfortunately, government is not perfect. Shouting at bulldozers is ok but we offer an early acting mix of professionals and citizens."

### ●Some Background:

It was born 85 years ago, with architect Richard Morris Hunt as President plus an assortment of sculptors, architects and big shot citizens. One of its first involvements was the proper placement of Saint-Gaudens statue of General Sherman. It's still there, in the Plaza at Fifth and 59th.



Commodore Vanderbilt surveys the Municipal Art Society Save Grand Central Rally last April.

New York's famous reform Mayor Fiorello La Guardia sought advice from the Society as to modernization and beautification of New York. Several results including the present Mayor's Panel of Architects, which came about in 1935.

### ●A few Credits:

Among many, many credits, the Society was instrumental in the creation of the Art Commission in 1898, the City Planning Commission, late 1930's, and for a crowning touch, the Landmarks Preservation Commission in 1965. Rescue work includes the Jefferson Market Courthouse, the Astor Library as well as the running defense against intrusion into Central Park. Among the losses, we regret the passing of Pennsylvania Station and the Brokaw Mansion. As to thorns in our side, the excessive tax penalty against the Seagram Building continues.

### ●Coming up:

The MAS is offering a first for this fall - a training program for masonry facade restoration. This is offered to the skilled mechanic and other qualified persons who are involved in restoration and maintenance.

The course will be held at the Mechanics Institute, one of our oldest evening technical schools. In the future this program, called RESTORE, will expand to include training for other trades.

### ●Final thought:

The mixed membership of the Society has the welcome mat out for architects who would like to take part. □

Bonnell Irvine



## Chapter Fights Back on West Point Project

*continued from page 1*

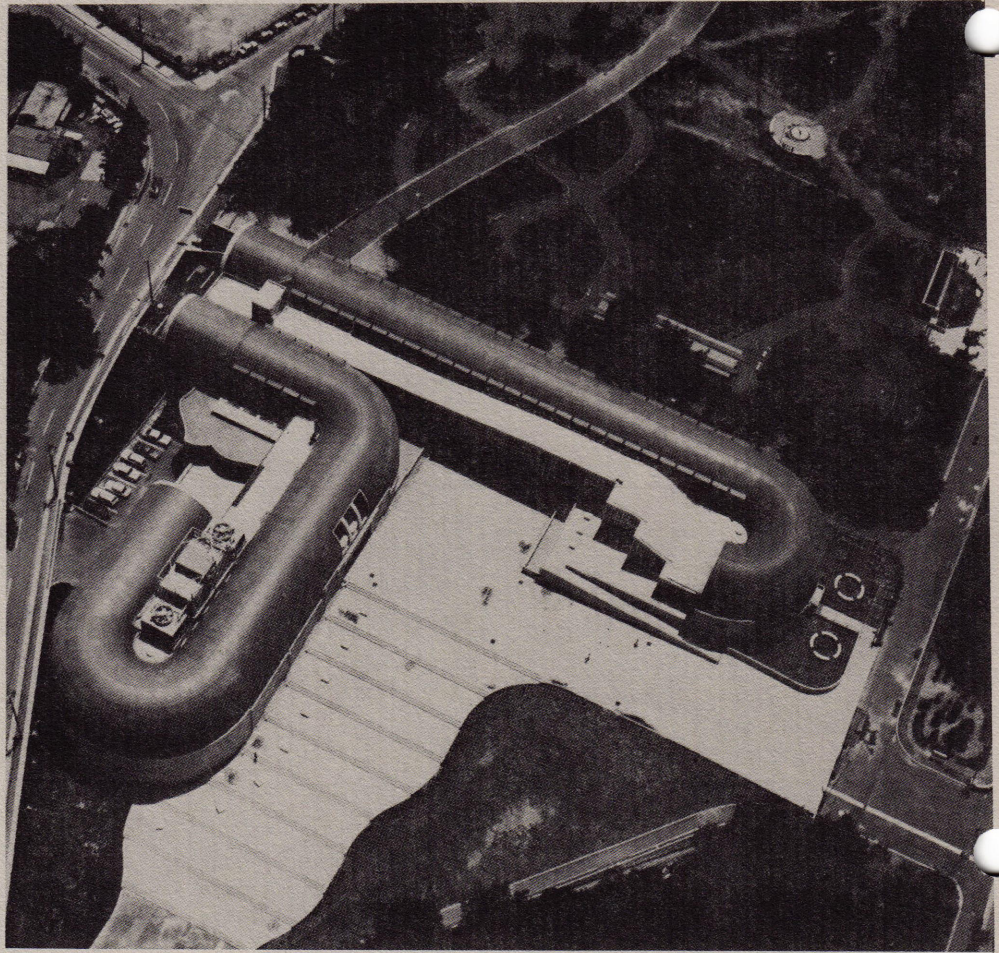
Engineering Division of the Office, Chief of Engineers in Washington. Responses were received from the local level by Samton, Representative Koch and Senator Moynihan defending the selection on the basis of "specialized experience" based on a program the firm prepared pertinent to this conversion in 1971 while working on a 65 bed hospital at West Point and minimizing the importance of site proximity.

Architects in New York City do not make it a practice to respond to CBD projects outside our geographic area, where office proximity is listed as a factor regardless of priority. Further, time and money is involved in making any response to CBD notices, and it was felt the Corps was unfair not to make known to all parties responding that other factors were being considered.

It is the Chapter's position that with at least 15 highly qualified health facilities design firms from New York City expressing an interest in the project that the local Corps was not correct in going outside the geographic area in selecting a firm, especially in light of the depressed economic market in New York City. The prior program work by the Omaha firm was simply not sufficient justification for the selection over local firms who were as well or better qualified.

While it appears as if the initial selection will be maintained, the matter is not yet closed and Corps is now aware that the NYC/AIA is vitally interested in insuring that the interests of

## Isozaki to Speak at Chapter



*The Chapter has taken advantage of the national AIA's October 26-27 Design Conference, to ask one of its participants, Arata Isozaki, Japanese Architect and Educator to come to the Chapter to speak on Oct. 24. See October Calendar, enclosed for further details. Photo is of Isozaki's Kitakyushu Central Library. Photo is furnished through the courtesy of Cooper-Hewitt Museum, The Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of Design. □*

New York City architects are being protected and that similar occurrences will not be accepted lightly. The National AIA has also been instrumental in giving assistance to us in this matter, and has received word from Corps Headquarters in Washington that they have reviewed the matter with the district with the hope that future selections will be made from firms in the New York City area. □

*Roy Friedberg*