



POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

Vol I, No. 1

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October 1, 1956

NOW HEAR THIS!

THIS LAUNCHES the first cruise among the members, editors, builders and others, of our chapter's official monthly bulletin—it is a sort of shake-down cruise to see if we are set up for smooth sailing. There is need for the members of the Potomac Valley Chapter to know what the other members are doing. There is need in connection with our officers and committee members (in whom emphatically we have the utmost confidence and far-reaching reliance) to know, nevertheless, what in heck they are doing.

We shall, from time to time, publish architectural opinions which will, like all other opinions, be concurred in by some, opposed by others. This is excellent. In our case, those who concur will find great satisfaction in it, experiencing improved digestion, steadier nerves, less tendency to slice. On the other hand, readers opposing will realize whipped-up blood circulation, accompanied by improved astigmatic conditions, less housemaid's knee, better concentration on driving in traffic when there are blond pedestrians in evidence. Thus we hope to be of great general assistance.

Further possibility exists. Of course, all architects are shy and retiring, non-advertising. Theoretically they get red in the face whenever they see their names in print. That is based on the out-moded philosophy that art and inspiration purr, never roar. We are jumping out of that stuff. This purr routine is too old-fashioned. As soon as the fellow invented the word "public relations" for the act of making identifying noises about architects, we were on our way.

This sheet is to be part of the identifying noise — not big, nor accompanied by very wide circulation, but, we hope, eager, interested and earnest. Architects names will appear in it. It will strive to be a small but active part of the build-up that leads to the result that architects names should be associated with the better buildings, as are artists' names with pictures.

The magazines, for instance, of the Michigan and of the Pennsylvania state A.I.A. societies are large ambitious publications which press that idea. We will not, for the time being, be of so heavy calibre but will aim at the same target, the same Architectural Idea.

The main thing now, and for all issues, is that we want all officers and members of our architectural crew aboard. Let the editor, Gene Glasgow, have not only your comments, but your contributions. He has a broad back and seaworthy legs to stand the rough waters of your criticisms, a typewriter that will give off sparks under your constructive encouragement.—EDWIN B. MORRIS, SR.

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER OF MARYLAND
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

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GENE GLASGOW ASSOCIATES, Editors
200 Kensington Office Building, 10315 Kensington Parkway,
Kensington, Md.—LOckwood 5-0800—5-0801

CHARLES B. SOULE, Chm., Public Relations Committee
7720 Wisconsin Avenue, Bethesda, Md.—OLiver 6-4441

HISTORY

EVENTS LEADING TO THE CHARTERING OF
THE POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER

BY V. T. H. BIEN, DIRECTOR

Editors' Note: Much of the following historical summary was contained in an address delivered by Mr. Bien before the Washington Chapter in 1953. It is regretted that, in the necessary condensation to fit limited space, the flavor of many of the director's personal and humorous comments have had to be omitted.

IN MARYLAND the prelude to any architectural organization came with the state registration law enacted June 1, 1936.

Those of us then practicing were granted registration under the "grandfather clause"—an implication I and others rather resented. By July we had set up the Maryland Society of Architects with Frederick A. Fletcher, President; John J. Zink, Vice President and F. L. W. Moeble, Secretary, all of Baltimore.

The constitution provided for sections and I found the 40 to 50 architects who resided here, or had their offices in the two counties, were immediately interested in a section to give attention to our local problems. In no time we had organized the Washington-Metropolitan Section of the state society and I had the honor of being its first president.

In 1939 we had an exhibit which more than proved the talented work of the frogs in our puddle matched the architectural designs being created anywhere. We had a high grade jury including Clyde Fritz, Baltimore; William Dewey, Cleveland (now Washington) and R. Stanley-Brown. Arthur L. Blakeslee had designed a fine certificate and presented it to the winners at a "Court of Awards" meeting attended by more than 100 people. The pictures and drawings remained on exhibit at Silver Spring's Blair House for some time.

In 1940 I persuaded the parent society to hold a state-wide exhibit which brought out a larger showing of fine work.

A number of members served in the war and all had their war-connected activities but we continued to hold meetings and, as did other state societies to gain strength and influence. These societies might well have dominated the profession except that the Institute began to recognize the situation and to make proposals for "unification."

MEETINGS

First Monday of Every Month
at 12 o'clock noon

NEXT MEETING

Monday, October 1
Stone House Inn, Silver Spring

First proposal of the exclusive A.I.A. provided only for representations at conventions and Maryland only had one delegate as compared with 10 or a dozen from the Baltimore chapter though our numbers exceeded theirs. Even our one member had to be a corporate A.I.A. member. This was flagrantly unfair. Un-American!

In fighting for a more equitable solution we developed the "Maryland Plan for Unification," then abandoned it to support a similar plan of Pennsylvania architects who were farther along in their negotiations. Our Free State group especially felt A.I.A. should represent all architects registered to practice. Finally, in 1943 the Institute agreed to recognize registration (along with character and professional qualifications) as gratification for corporation membership.

With this and other A.I.A. encouragement, the M.S.A. put on a vigorous campaign to induce architects to join up. By January, 1947 all, or nearly all of our members were in the Institute and the Maryland Society was disbanded.

When this came about, however, we of the two counties found ourselves back just about where we were 10 years before. Our business was nobody's business and I and several others began to do something about it. We ultimately proposed a separate chapter for our group. We found that in an area like our two counties, if under another chapter, we must be released by it. We were included in the Baltimore Chapter's jurisdiction. Baltimore objected.

The Washington Chapter came up with the suggestion we become a Division of that Chapter. This did not give us all we had set out to get but, at the time, it was in many respects a happy solution. We could have our own officers, conduct our own meetings, handle our own affairs and the parent chapter paid our bills. We accepted the proposal and elected Ronald S. Senseman as President and to be a member of the executive committee of the Washington Chapter. I was the secretary.

We continued as a Division until about a year ago. We had increasingly felt the handicaps inherent to just being a branch. This was particularly frustrating in dealing with public bodies such as county officials and the legislature. Larry Johnson, of Bethesda started to get signatures for a charter. We were at first opposed by our parent D.C. Chapter but, later, some of its most influential members swung over to our side. So we became a chapter. The charter was formally approved April 1, 1955.

Dana B. Johannes continued to serve and so
(turn to page 3)

MAN WHO IS AT HOME IN THE AIR, ON THE LAND AND SEA — AND WITH THE CHAPTER'S GAVEL — SENSEMAN

On a given Monday Ron Senseman's drawing board may have to be tilted at a rakish angle to make comfortable his talented but stiffened right arm.

The condition results from a successful Sunday tussle with as many as five marlin.



RONALD S. SENSEMAN

He may also be up in the air—with a gold card, that is, showing he has logged more than 100,000 flying miles while covering buildings he has designed for construction throughout this and foreign lands.

The personable, informed Potomac Valley Chapter's president is always relaxed because he is mentally at home in many fields. A collector of old china candle sticks, for example, will find he has met his equal in Ron who does that too. For

the same reason the philatelist had better not get too gay in his conversation around the architects' leader. Ron knows his stamps.

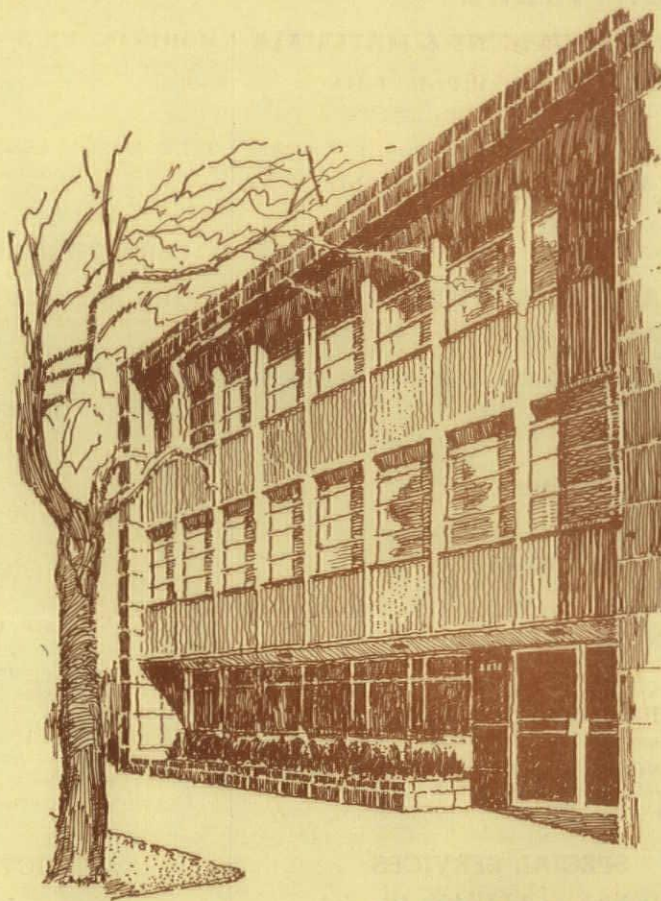
Ron Senseman spends too much time in church to entertain the slightest notion he is any part of the indispensable man. Yet, as he heads the Maryland architects for the third time, he is casting a lengthening shadow that succeeding presidents may profitably follow in the manner of the shadow of Ted Lewis.

ON THE BOARDS

The building which has the benefit of a Potomac Valley Chapter's registered architect's services has insurance for good design and good construction. It is created to meet the special desires and particular needs of the owner. A few examples of buildings on the members' boards, or under construction, are cited below.

Soule & Donally. That's not a miniature pentagon you see in ElNido, Va. Get closer and you'll find the amazingly beautiful, octagonal St. John's Catholic Church with cathedral glass on each of its eight sides. Chuck and Van accomplished its construction for under \$100,000, seating 750 people. The Bishop and all members of the parish are naturally elated.

Ten Englehardt. The quiet, efficient Ted goes about his business, including many public buildings, (as at the U of Maryland) and, regularly, it is announced he has been commissioned to do another lulu. It's Ted who has the architectural and engineering contract for a new five-story \$3,000,000 biologics standards laboratory at the National Institutes of Health, Bethesda.



Drawing by Edw. B. Morris, Sr.

THE MODERN PARK OFFICE BUILDING at 7705 Georgia Ave., N. W., Washington, D. C., was designed by President Senseman to provide an unusual amount of natural lighting. His offices, with a regular personnel of 20, one of the largest architectural organizations in the Metropolitan Washington Area, occupy the entire top floor. A pleasant, comfortable, pick-up-a-relaxing-magazine-while-waiting-reception room leads to the distinguished architect's private suite, a conference room (where the chapter's executive committee enjoys luncheon meetings), a huge, light-as-day drafting room and the firm's own printing department.

HISTORY — Continued from page 2

was our first president, an honor we all felt he richly deserved. At the next regular election of officers in June, 1955, Ronald S. Senseman was made president with the present slate of officers which was re-elected to serve during A.I.A.'s 100th anniversary year.

The Chapter had thrived beyond my fondest hopes, and we are still solvent. Long live the Potomac Valley Chapter of Maryland, A.I.A.!

Ronald S. Senseman. A listing of all jobs on Ron's boards would take a catalogue. He's in a plane as much as Eisenhower or Stevenson these days looking after an excitingly interesting job in Curacao. It's a \$3,000,000 hospital for the Dutch Government, Netherlands, Antilles.

Johannes & Murray. Dana and Lee are experienced in all types of buildings, certainly in school design and construction. Right now they have four Maryland schools on their boards including the big (\$1,500,000) Chesapeake Junior and Senior high school near Chesapeake, Md.

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