



POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

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AN ARCHITECT'S REPLY

Written by Grinnel W. Locke, Editor of the Baltimore Chapter's Architect's Report, to rebut a not too flattering summary by "Uncle Dudley" in the Union News of Townson of a series of squabbles between clients and their architects. Our reprint is with the kind permission of the Baltimore Editor.

As a regular reader of The Union News I always enjoy your column and its vivid descriptions of whelpings, coon hunts, summer jaunts, expensive wives, fox hunting and other family problems. This past week's subject was slightly different in character but even more interesting to anyone who has been connected with the building industry some twenty-six years.

You have performed a small public service by bringing Mr. and Mrs. Jones' building problems out into the open, particularly their relations with their architect. However, it seems that by coming to no constructive conclusion you have probably put the damper on many dream castles, as well as left the misunderstood architect in a rather unfortunate light.

There is no doubt that many projects fail to materialize because the low bid exceeds the client's budget. There is equally little doubt that there are definite reasons for this situation, most of which can be cured with a little foresight and forbearance.

First and foremost let us remember that almost all of our fellow citizens have had a reasonable amount of experience with a hammer, nails, saw, tinsnips and paint and the faithful old plumber's helper. Some of them even have a friend with a soldering iron and volt meter. All of this makes them "builders" qualified to undertake almost any project particularly when faced with an architect's fee. Familiarity with patent medicines, the thermometer and scalpel would breed equal contempt for the medical profession if it weren't that sticking oneself with a sharp instrument hurts, and even though very few of us understand high finance or the law and only consult their practitioners on rare occasions and only then in times of dire necessity.

The doctor, lawyer, investment banker and architect are all carefully trained professional specialists in very complicated fields of endeavor.

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Yet despite their highly developed skills they seldom, if ever, will guarantee the results of their work. No, sir, the doctor won't guarantee that the operation or treatment will be successful; in fact, the patient may even die! The lawyer won't guarantee to win the case; his client may even go to jail. The investment broker won't guarantee to make money for his client; he may even lose some of it. Nor can an architect guarantee a building in advance against the ravages of any of the elements including the effect of the client's imagination and desires on the total cost. What any one of these men will guarantee is to exert their very best, professional skills and efforts to solve the clients problems and it is for this alone that they are paid.

Here's where the constructive advice comes in. To get the full benefit of any professional advice, we must be prepared to bare our souls to the advisor in question, at least with regards to the question in hand. The doctor must have as complete a history as he can get on our ache or pain before he can prescribe any treatment or start to carve us up. The lawyer must have all the facts, as shameful as they may be, before he can help us. The investment banker must know whether we want steady income, long term capital growth or want to take a flier on something really risky. As much as it hurts, we must overcome the natural tendency to either brag and dream beyond our dreams or to conceal our true wealth and intentions from our architect. His job is to convert his client's words into drawings from which a small army of various kinds of mechanics can build the client's dream castle. If the architect and his client can arrive at a very definite understanding as to exactly how much and what kind of a building is expected and how much money is available to build it, the chances are that the final

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LOOK FOR THE "AIA" . . .

In this, as in any community, leaders of the architectural profession are usually members of the American Institute of Architects. To you, the letters "AIA" after an architect's name is an assurance of professional and personal integrity, for it signifies he has met the high ethical standards of this national organization.

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5. An Architect who has been retained as a professional adviser in a competition shall not accept employment as an Architect for that project.
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 - (b) He is paid by salary, fee or royalty for his architectural services and does not participate in any profits of the aforesaid enterprises which would influence his professional integrity.
7. An Architect shall not engage in building contracting.
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9. An Architect shall not attempt to supplant another Architect after definite steps have been taken by a client toward the latter's employment.
10. An Architect shall not undertake a commission for which he knows another Architect has been employed until he has notified such other Architect of the fact in writing and has conclusively determined that the original employment has been terminated.

11. An Architect in soliciting work shall not divide fees except with professionals related to building design, and those regularly employed known to be associated with his office.

12. An Architect shall not use paid advertising nor use self-laudatory, exaggerated or misleading publicity.

13. An Architect shall not solicit, nor permit others to solicit in his name, advertisements or other supports toward the cost of any publication presenting his work.

14. An Architect shall conform to the registration laws governing the practice of architecture in any state in which he practices and he shall observe the standards of practice established by the local architects' professional body.

15. An Architect shall at no time act in a manner detrimental to the best interests of the profession.

AN ARCHITECT'S REPLY

Continued from Page 1

cost will almost always be very close to the budgeted amount. To boot, the client will have a pretty good investment.

However, as most people are loth to expose their souls and particularly their pocketbooks and it is so easy to take patent medicines and sedatives, to invest in chinchillas or Canadian wilderness and to build next year's slums with the aid of Kustom Konstruktion Service that it will be a long time before we live so properly that we won't need lawyers.

With apologies for being so long winded, your old reader and admirer,

KEN HAMMER
(Pen name of Mr. Locke)

B-CC High Girls Helped Build Chapter

A highly important factor in the background of the Potomac Valley Chapter, and one entirely unrecorded by its historians, was the operation, during World War II, of the Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School Architectural Trapping Society.

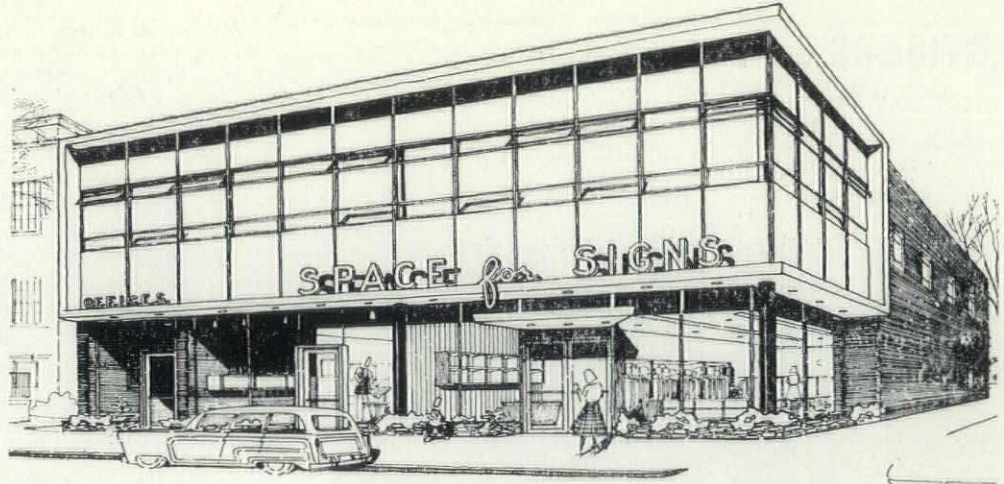
This was an organization of beautiful young ladies who set their caps and traps for handsome officers on leave here. Ring leaders were the sorority sisters Pat Maphis, Marjorie Ault and Mary Thompson. Being in position to pick and choose, they set their caps high and any officer trapped had also to be an architect.

You have read in these columns how big Commander Soule' blew into Washington with nothing so much in mind as a typical sailor's leave—but then Pat spotted him and, along with other ideas, any he had about returning to the Chicago area to practice went into discard. Same thing of course happened to Lt. Van Donnally, of the Air Corps, who today might be practicing in West Virginia except that Marjorie set her pretty lamps on him during a Washington leave and gave him a double whammy.

In this issue you learn a little more about our Secretary, Stan Arthur, than you may have known before, and including the fact, this former combat Lt. Col. of the Army lost all chance of ever returning to Louisville, Ky. to practice when, most fortunately, of course, he dated Mary here.

The historical point, obviously, is that, to get going, a chapter must have eligible members. Pat, Marjorie and Mary deserve a nice round of applause for getting settled down here men who could be prominent among the charter group.

The \$100,000 Vaughan Building is not one of Architect Stanley H. Arthur's bigger jobs, yet is an example in a store and office building, at the County Building corner, of how much Arthur designs have contributed to the smart, modern appearance of Bethesda's Wisconsin Avenue. The editor used this rendering, too, because it illustrated how much more effective a fine artist's pencil drawing is for reproduction than are wash and other types of renderings.



You Can't Swamp Stan Arthur He Knows How to Take it Easy

When Mary Howard Thompson Arthur, with daughter Susan, 7, lugs home the bags of weekend groceries she and the neighbors are apt to hear noisy, near-music rocking the Arthur home at 7405 Ridgewood Ave., Chevy Chase.

There will be the squawk of a clarinet its reed being well vibrated by Stanley, Jr., 14, and the blaring of a trumpet lipped by Bruce, 10. The pounding accompanist on the piano will be Stan, Sr. Our secretary recently took up piano playing so (1) he could play in the family orchestra and (2) so he can



Stanley H. Arthur

sentimentally belt out a couple of songs meaning a great deal to him. One of these tunes is "My Old Kentucky Home" because Stan is a native of Louisville in the blue grass state. The other is, "We're Loyal to You, Illinois," lively number of the University of Illinois where Stan was graduated with a B.S. degree in architecture in 1937.

Mary will even let her husband peck out a few army tunes. They will be reminiscent of the five years the former Lt. Col. Arthur spent with the Corps of Army Engineers and when he was commanding officer of an airborne battalion in the South Pacific and participated in the invasions of Hollandia, New Guinea, and Manila, P. I.

After all Mary is sentimental, too, and she singled out Col. Arthur one time when he was on assignment in this area. (See story, "B-CC Girls Helped Build Chapter" on Page 2.)

Stan Arthur is a man who has learned to "take it easy", as they say, and who has the serenity that comes to a solid citizen who is devotedly married, a good dad, thoroughly and talently wrapped up in his profession and who knows how to relax, not only at the ivories, but, better yet, with his paint brushes and sketching pencils. You look at one of artist Arthur's renderings and you will pause and look some more and so do the newspaper editors. His water colors and sketches have been shown in exhibits in various parts of the country.

This architect did practice in Louisville and also in Cleveland before Mary really got him to see the light. Here he did a turn with Ring Engineering and a Washington architect before he opened his own office in Bethesda in 1951. You don't move far up or down or around Wisconsin Ave. before you see nice examples of Stan's designing skill. There's the Vaughan Building, the \$350,000 Medical Arts Building, the \$380,000 improvements and additions to Columbia Country Club, First Federal Savings & Loan, and a group of stores at Highland Ave. On his boards or under construction are an office building for Jim Gibbons, the big parking garage for Chevy Chase Chevrolet and others. And you may run into Rotarian Stan anywhere for he is chairman of the Roads and Streets Committee of the B-CC Chamber of Commerce, while serving three other Chamber committees.

He is being selected for church work—the fine Congressional Heights Presbyterian Church, for example—and he has had a growing list of school assignments including completed addition on 3 schools and under construction a new Ashburton Elementary School and additions to Radnor Road Elementary. And as if all this local work wasn't enough to warp a man's drawing board, Stan Arthur has opened a branch office in Frederick. There, as an interesting diversion, he is designing a mobile court.

But if Stan is swamped with enough work, civic demands and calls from his orchestra for a jam session we'll tell you exactly what he will do. He will pick up his water colors and hookey off to a colorful fall spot. The result will be a painting you would like to have in your living room.

COUNTY ARCHITECT APPOINTED

The chapter's former member John Blake Murphy of Kensington, on recommendation of County Manager M. L. Reese, has been appointed to the newly-created position of County Architect.

Although the chapter opposed the Reese-sponsored bill providing for this position, it is glad to see it filled by a man with such excellent qualifications and liked by all members.

"Murph" received his Bachelor of Architecture and Engineering degrees at Catholic University. While active in the Chapter he was associated with the Bethesda architectural firm, Rinaudot & Coupard, and, more recently, with Chatelaine, Gauger & Nolan, Washington.

President Ted Englehardt was promised "Murph" the full cooperation of the Chapter in the performance of his responsibilities.

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