



POTOMAC VALLEY ARCHITECT

AMERICAN INSTITUTE
OF
ARCHITECTS

SEP 15 1958

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Vol. 3, No. 1

Official Publication, Potomac Valley Chapter of Maryland, AIA September 8, 1958

The Architect's High Task

(Reprinted from Architectural Forum—July, 1958)

According to Sir John Wolfden, vice chancellor of Reading University in Reading, England, it makes a difference to man's heart and soul if he is surrounded by gracious buildings or mean ones. This was the theme of his recent talk before the Royal Institute of British Architects.

Architects' works are so damnably permanent. We can ignore music which offends us; we can, if we are fools enough, shut our ears to poetry; we can even, if we feel like it slash a picture with a palette knife. All these we can destroy, or ignore; and we can treat them, if we are so disposed, as ephemeral nonsenses. But you cannot just ignore buildings; you cannot ignore the house you live in. It is there, and, for good or ill, you have to live with it. But even the permanence and obviousness of a building are not, of course, the main things about it. The main thing is the simple fact that architects' works are all around us, that they are, in a very real sense, the background of our daily lives. The influence of that background may be incalculable, but it is assuredly very real.

I believe that it makes a difference to man's very heart and soul if he lives in a gracious and civilized house, and it makes a difference to his heart and soul if he lives in a mean and squalid tenement. Why this should be I cannot explain. But Plato knew it: "Beauty, the effluence of fair works, shall flow into the eye and ear, like the health-giving breeze from a purer region, and insensibly draw the soul from earliest years into likeness and sympathy with the beauty of reason."

Your influence is not at its strongest when it flows from what is spectacular or dramatic or

aiming at effect. The unobtrusive natural good manners of a building or a crescent or a square can be, I humbly suggest, more influential than something which shouts louder. We do not need to be professional psychologists to appreciate the profound and lasting nature of insensible or unconscious influence; all good education is based on it.

Let those who will argue about the true, the beautiful and the good. There is no ultimate conflict between them. There cannot be any such conflict, for they are all part of the nature of the eternal and the divine. It is your high task to embody them all, to materialize these forms, to make for all of us things beautiful and true and good to be the background whose ceaseless influence will make our humble ordinary daily lives more true, more beautiful and more good.

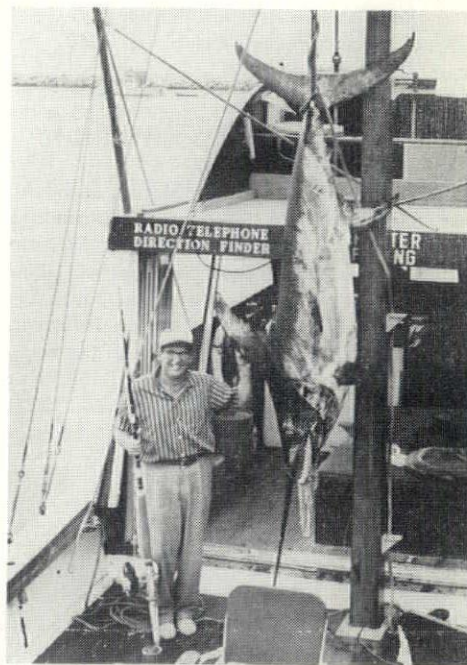
P. V. A. Needs News

For the forthcoming issues of the P.V.A. we would like to hear from the members regarding the work that they now have in progress, and construction that is planned for the future. We would like to print one or two photos or renderings each month so we may all keep abreast of the Chapter's progress. Send your story, together with 8x10 glossy prints, to Ben Elliott. With your cooperation we will be able to make this a regular monthly feature. If your picture is used you will be billed just for the engraving costs for making a cut

Elliott in New Home

Ben Elliott, aftersome delay, has moved to his newly-constructed home in Potomac. Ben acted as his own contractor. Good luck, Ben.

Ron Hooks Broadbill, Beach-Hops on Vacation



Ronald Senseman, architect and candidate for the House of Delegates, hooked and landed the greatest game fish of all, "The Broadbill Swordfish," off Block Island, Friday, August 22nd. The Broadbill weighed 395 lbs., measured 12 ft. and was landed on 54 thread line and 14/0 reel in 1 hour and 35 minutes. Ron has caught many marlin but this was his first chance at a Broadbill. Dr. Sutton, Ron's cousin, and Harry Judson were also along on the Sea Squirrel II, out of Port Judith, Rhode Island. Besides fishing, Rod added flying time in his record in the 1 hour and 30 minutes from Washington to Rhode Island in addition to the beach-hopping between Martha's Vineyard, Nantucket and Cape Cod, all in his very plush Bonanza.

POTOMAC VALLEY CHAPTER
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8485 Fenton Street, Silver Spring, Md.
JU. 9-2546

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

12 Noon, September 8, 1958—Stone
House Inn
Four Corners, Silver Spring, Md.
October Meeting—October 6, 1958

Committee Appointments

Charles B. Soule, our newly elected president, has announced the following as Committee Chairmen during his term of office. We are confident that these men will perform their duties in the conscientious manner that marks the steady advance of this Chapter. However, it is only with full cooperation of all the members that they will be able to fulfill their duties to the optimum level:

Public Relations and Publications

Benjamin P. Elliott

Building and Zoning Codes

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Education

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Programs and Meetings

Eric W. Andberg

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Theodore Cromar, Jr.

Registration & Legislation Committee

Paul H. Kea, Ron Senseman

School Buildings

Dana B. Johannes

Report of
Education Committee

Andrew MacIntire and George Schoneberger, members of the Education Committee, had the opportunity of meeting with their counterparts in the Baltimore Chapter of the A.I.A. As previously reported, our Chapter is attempting to establish a School of Architecture in the University of Maryland, which effort has aroused interest in the powers that be. The Baltimore Chapter has paralleled this by attempting to interest Johns Hopkins in a similar arrangement, as well as investigating other colleges which might be closer to them than the University of Maryland. Their very active committee, headed by Mr. Francis Jencks, has conferred with officials at Johns Hopkins and St. John's in Annapolis and has engaged in considerable research in a fine effort to direct the formation of an architectural school to best serve their chapter's needs and interests. Both committees agreed that should either chapter succeed in interesting any authorities in the formation of an architectural school of quality, that the other chapter almost certainly would join in supporting a top flight school regardless of location. The possibilities of a school at Hopkins or elsewhere appears to be remote and that Maryland University may be the most feasible and the direction in which our combined efforts might be directed. They agreed upon the exchange of information and the keeping of one another posted and informed as to progress and developments. Mr. Alexander Cochran, a member of the National Committee, suggested the calling for Octagon Assistance in a formal survey and our committee replied that this had been offered and would be ultimately of great good but that we did not wish to incur a great amount of research and work until such time as Dr. Elkins was ready and willing to receive it and further so that such a survey report, when made, would be current at the time it would be considered. The Baltimore Chapter committee is a large and a very active one staffed with qualified personnel. Andy and George felt somewhat like the crew of a PT boat going aboard a carrier but an evening of good fellowship was the result.

Gene Glasgow's Mother
Passes on in S. Dakota

IT IS WITH DEEP REGRET that we announce the passing of gene Glasgow's mother in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. We are sure that every member of the Potomac Valley Chapter extends the sincerest sympathy to a man who has extended himself so fully in the interests of our architects.

Gene left suddenly in May, just a day or two before the Special Awards Issue was published. His assistant Fred Bowers carried the ball from there.

CHAPTER NOTES

DANA JOHANNES expects to be doing quite a bit of flying between here and Clearwater, Florida since he and his family have moved to that fair city. Dana will no doubt keep an eye on the affairs of the new Johannes & Murray office in Florida as well as frequent checks on the Silver Spring and eastern shore offices. Dana's drawing board is located under Palm Tree #5.

LAST SPRING Mrs. Paul H. Kea was involved in a serious automobile accident when the accelerator on her car stuck. She suffered two broken legs and other injuries and has since been confined to Prince Georges Hospital. She is on the mend, however, and Paul expects her to be home the first of September. Mrs. Kea is a valuable member of the office and has been sorely missed—but we hope she will be back at the old stand shortly. She is in very good spirits and cheerful, in spite of missing a long over-due vacation taking them to the West Coast.

V. T. H. BEINS informs us that he drilled an artesian well this summer. (Editors Note: Although we have not seen him, he has probably developed some rather striking biceps during his summer activity.)

ANDREW DONNALLY spent his weekends this summer cruising around the boys in his brand new 16' outboard with a whopping 40 hp motor.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Andrew Donnally announces the opening of his new office at 4933 St. Elmo Avenue, Bethesda. The new firm will be known as Andrew V. Donnally and Associates.

The new firm of Bagley-Soule' and Associates is comprised of Marion L. Bagley and Charles B. Soule', with offices at 8555 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase.

The resignation of Mr. David Scull, a member of the Park and Planning Commission, necessitates a new appointment being made by the County Council. On behalf of the Potomac Valley Chapter, our new president sent the following wire to the president of the Montgomery County Council, Mr. Wilbur N. Baughman:

"The Potomac Valley Chapter of the American Institute of Architects respectfully urges the County Council to appoint an architect to fill the recently vacated post on the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. We stand ready to aid the Council in any way possible in the selection of a qualified and experienced planner for this important position. Signed Charles B. Soule', President, Potomac Valley Chapter, A.I.A."

Our Chapter can be proud of the prompt step taken by Mr. Soule' to further the aims of all architects.

Chapter President Flies to Convention Educational and Entertaining Visit



Senseman addresses Chapter Officers at National Convention. On the right is Paul R. Hunter, Chairman of Chapter Affairs Committee

The representatives of the Potomac Valley Chapter, Weppner and Soule, left via Senseman Air Service, Tuesday afternoon. Frontal action reported west of the mountains. We tried going over and around the disturbance, but got mixed up inside and ended up under and in the deep South. After passage of time and the storm, proceeded to Cleveland, embarrassingly late, but undaunted.

Since the A.I.A. Journal carried complete coverage one can cover the convention in an easy chair. This is free too. However, there is a real thrill in attending a convention and I think it should be everyone's desire to attend and to take part. There is no substitute for being at the right meeting at the right time. The Wednesday morning discourse, "An Anthropologist Looks at Architecture" was stimulating, enlightening, and downright humorous in its frankness of the perfectly obvious. As an anthropologist, the speaker likes to look at things and not just read about them. As Architects, yes and as draftsmen, if we had a little more of the anthropologist in us we could do a better job. If you have not read this, you should by all means do so immediately.

As expected, we had the sliding discussion in the Capitol front and took our stand in favor, but to no avail, and again the Institute is out in left field, but they did put up a good fight and (depending on which side you were on) it was a good fight.

Then, of course, we did the usual visiting in Cleveland. The weather was delightful and the local architecture most interesting, especially delighted with the interior of Eric Mendelsohn's synagogue.

I was impressed by the number of awards given this year. It seemed like every one was in the act, but it always is impressive and I am always sorry that I am not better acquainted with the background of the awards winners.

The banquet was very interesting. The speaker, William Hazlett Upson, was so well versed on Russia that you had the feeling you too had been there. His comments on the comparison of their educational system with ours was well worth the entire evening. In summary, the convention, while coming on the heels of the Centennial Celebration, was one that will be remembered, regardless. We surely hate to see our most capable President on the sidelines. I am sure history will say he is the greatest. Our hats off to President Chatelain and a job well done.

Next year you all should try to go to New Orleans.

Ronald S. Senseman, A.I.A.

HERE and ELSEWHERE

The Special Awards issue of the P.V.A., in June, has elicited many favorable comments from different sources, including a very kind letter from E. B. Morris, Jr. Ron Senseman reports that while he was at the Convention many other chapters requested copies of this publication to be used as a model for their own issues. He, of course, obliged. These other A.I.A. chapters expressed admiration that a comparatively small chapter should undertake such a sizeable project.

The Washington Evening Star devoted the complete front page of a Sunday Real Estate Section to pictures and write-ups of the awards. It is gratifying that the chapter received this recognition.

Public Relations Survey

St. Louis, Missouri Chapter of the A.I.A. recently conducted a survey of all chapters in the country in regard to their public relations programs. 30% of the 136 organizations responded and of those reporting 20% had no active public relations program; public relations budgets per organization varied from no budget to \$15,000; average budget per corporate member per year amounted to \$20.00; average budget for gross membership per year amounted to \$13.00; 17% of the responding organizations have public relations counsel; average annual fee for those reporting fees varied from \$500 to \$4800. Of the 136 organizations, 56 have separate publications. The Potomac Valley Chapter was one of those reporting chapters and it is interesting to note that our budget per corporate member per year for the last year amounted to approximately \$40—double that of the national average. Candid observance would indicate that we have done twice as much for our size than the average public relation conscious chapter.

Baltimore-Washington Architects' Report

As you are all aware, there is a new quarterly publication "Architects' Report" being put out by the Baltimore Chapter of the A.I.A. The first issue will feature schools—not necessarily public—but independent schools as well. We believe that most of our local architects will do well to submit exhibits as this will be a valuable public relations tool for the Baltimore-Washington area. Presently there will be many other categories featured: religious buildings, commercial and residential developments, hospitals and industrial buildings. The charge for these exhibits is nominal and we believe there are many of our members who have something of interest to contribute.

Correction

We are very sorry that in our Special Awards Issue of June the name of the Eisen-Magers Construction Co., Inc., was misspelled. To help minimize this error, their ad appears on the back page of this issue.

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