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Wisconsin delegates
To A. I. A. convention

Delegates who will represent the Wisconsin Architects Association at the convention of The American Institute of Architects in New York City, June 24 to 27, are Joseph J. Weiler, Edgar H. Berners, Leigh Hunt, Francis S. Gurda, John E. Somerville, John J. Flad, Ellis J. Potter, Maynard W. Meyer and George E. Foster.

The importance of the design of buildings in forming environments for human activity will provide the theme of the 84th annual convention which will have the Waldorf Astoria as its headquarters.

The theme of the convention will be developed in its program to illustrate the formative influence of the architect's work, whether in the design of a modest individual house or of an entire city. The meeting will be addressed by leading members of the profession and guests especially chosen for their ability to contribute to the theme.

Arthur C. Holden, New York architect and convention committee chairman, heads a group that is arranging visits to buildings in New York, tours, inspections of architectural offices and other activities that will further illustrate the idea of architecture as a factor in man-made environment.

The great gain in building technology which has given today's architects unparalleled resources with which to create new environments, will receive special emphasis. The theme of the building products exhibit, "Structural Resources for Architectural Design," will carry out this idea. Executive arrangements for the exhibition have been undertaken by the Producers' Council, 1001 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

* * *

Activities of the Milwaukee division

The Milwaukee Division of the Wisconsin Architects Association was fortunate in securing Philip Will, Jr., F.A.I.A., nationally known architect of Perkins and Will who has offices in Chicago and New York, for the guest speaker at the May 22 dinner meeting at the Joe Deutsch Cafe. Abe Tannenbaum is the May program chairman.

Urban Peacock is chairman of the dinner meeting to be held Thursday, June 22, at 6:30 P.M. at the Joe Deutsch Cafe. This is to be strictly a business meeting by request of the members. A good time to get your gripes off your chest, says Art Reddemann.

Roger M. Herbst was program chairman of the April meeting held at the Underwood Hotel, when Conrad Pickel and Associates gave an illustrated talk on "Art and Ornamental Glass".

How the office of Magney, Tusler & Setter is run

As told to Wisconsin Architects by Wilbur H. Tusler, Minneapolis

I have had the rather doubtful honor of being on the Judiciary Committee of the Institute for the last three years, and you would be surprised at the number of cases that come up where the architect had no agreement, no contract written or verbal, with the owner. There is one case now where there was no discussion of fees whatsoever. You wouldn’t think that any architect would be a poor enough business man to do that, but there are some.

Now, this was supposed to be a talk on the small office, medium and large. The large isn’t here, so we will have to say just the small and medium. To start out and describe what we are talking about, I will explain this definition of the three offices. A small office is one where the draftsman knows the architect and the architect knows all the draftsmen. The second office, the medium sized one, is where the draftsmen know the bosses but the bosses don’t know all the draftsmen, and the third office, the large one, is where neither one would know the other if they met on the street.

I met a man up at the laboratory a month or so ago and after passing the time of day he said, “Where do you work?”

I said, “Magney, Tusler & Setter.”

He said, “So do I. I hope I see you again sometime.”

Now, as I look at it, taking the small office first, it has certain advantages and disadvantages. The contact of the client with principal, as Mr. Yost said, I think is a great advantage of a small office. He can know personally all his clients. I can’t. I have to speak to everybody in the elevator because they might be a client of ours.

Then he has a knowledge; he knows all the jobs that are going through, and if something happens he knows just what is happening and the position of that job and can answer questions, and there is a continuity of design. He is doing all the designing and his work will show his touch year after year. With us we may get some brilliant youngster in who has an influence. He leaves and goes with one of our competitors, unfortunately; somebody else comes in, and although we have one of the partners who is a designer, he can’t do everything, so that our design will not show what continuity. It will change. That, I think, is a disadvantage.

The disadvantage of a small office: An architect has to spread himself too thin. By that I mean one day he is doing a residence, next time he is doing a church, and then he is doing a hospital, then he is doing a library, and it is impossible for one man to be thoroughly versed on all those different parts of the work unless he works a lot harder than I am able to. I think they have a higher overhead than we have in a larger office. We don’t charge that much per hour for our men and we do make a difference between principal’s time and the draftsmen. I will explain that a little later.

Then with the small office there is a lack of flexibility. By that I mean if a client comes in with some job that he has to get out in a hurry, you have probably seven, eight draftsmen. They are working on jobs. You can’t take your whole force and put them on this job. If you are running a gang of thirty, forty draftsmen, you can always steal seven or eight here and there and put them on this other job and run it right on through. So that way I think they do have a little more flexibility in a larger office.

Then there are vacations and illness. Now, if Morgan would go down to Florida for two months, I think his office would have a very serious time.

MR. YOST: That is why I have a partner.

MR. TUSLER: I can go down for two months and when I come back I say, “I’m back,” and they say, “Oh, have you been away?”

Now, a large office can specialize — the principals. As I say, one man can devote himself to hospitals, another to schools, another to this and that building and get to know something about them, so that he is called in and helps and probably governs the design of that type of building that he is most familiar with.

Then there is a greater flexibility in the drafting room, and a lot of prospective clients are influenced by size. If you go in for a job and they ask you how many men you have and you can say, “We are running an office of seven or eight,” and another one will say, “I am running forty or fifty,” they are unfortunately impressed by that, where the smaller office may in reality do a better job.

Now, the disadvantage of a large office is that lack of personal touch, the difficulty of coordination. You may have part of your office galloping along on the job and the mechanical way behind and nobody pulling the two together, which is most embarrassing. Then you might find in a large office some man would know how to do a certain thing well and somebody else wouldn’t be acquainted with that and he would start and do a lot of research on that or do it in a way that wasn’t acceptable, and it is that carrying information back and forth which is hard.

Now we come to our office, which is the medium sized office. I don’t know all the draftsmen. However, I think this size office has the advantage over a small and large office. We can specialize. I mean certain of us can get familiar with different types of buildings, and we are small enough to retain personal contacts with our clients. We have to divide them up between us.

MR. VON GROSSMANN: Mr. Tusler, I believe the last time I talked to you you had around a hundred men in your office. Do you have that many now?

MR. TUSLER: As of yesterday noon it was eighty-two.

MR. VON GROSSMANN: In Milwaukee I imagine our largest offices are about twenty, twenty-five people. We consider those big offices here.

MR. TUSLER: Maybe I should be talking about the big office. We have more continuity in design because we don’t have so many jobs but what my partner can then watch the design year after year and influence it. We do have that flexibility. We have enough draftsmen so we can rob one job and get a crew together to take care of a job that has to go through in a hurry. Coordination still is a problem, but not as it would be in an office with 200 or 300 men, and fortunately we are large enough to impress clients in size and we use that quite frequently.
Now, in our office there are three partners: Magney, who takes care of the solicitation and engineering; Setter, who takes charge of the design and the production — Magney has charge of the jobs up until the time it comes to contract signing, and then I take care of contracts, but Setter grabs hold then and takes it through the sketches, basics and working drawings. When they are finished it comes back in my lap for the letting of contracts, advertising for bids and supervision.

Then Setter specializes on schools and I sort of take hospitals under my wings. We have three junior partners now and four associates, and different ones specialize in different parts of the work. One of them does mostly schools; another works on hospitals under me; another does residential, alterations and small work; another one spends most of his time on telephone work; another one heads the drafting room and correlates the jobs between the mechanical and the general work. We do all branches of electrical in the office. Then he has the job of handing government contracts and working with the government. Then we have a man associate who takes care of heating, plumbing and ventilating. Another one takes care of electrical.

Now, we started out. We had the brilliant idea that each one of these associates would act as an independent architect; he would solicit his own work; he would take care of it and run it through and watch the sketches and right on through supervision, but still would have the advantage of the advise of the other members and the advantage of the pool of draftsmen. That didn't work. Each man then was expected to know all about contracts and all about working drawings, sketches and supervision, and we got into more trouble until we gave that up.

Now each job goes through. After the job is secured, one of the office, the principals or associates, is a contact man. He is the one who keeps the contact with the owner all through the job, but it goes through the regular drafting room just like any other job. He watches it, but the general draftsman takes hold. He follows it through; it is checked and supervised, and he is merely the contact on the job. We have a little trouble at times in the break between the man who goes out and tells how good the office is and gets the job, and the contact that then follows through, particularly if the service of the office is not quite as good as the man who goes out and tells them in the beginning it is. He says, "I want that first man back here to tell us his story again."

Now, in our solicitation we have a clipping service which helps us greatly on school work so we can keep track of bond elections and things like that. We have a personal relations counsel, a man and his assistant, whom we employ by the year, and they sit in with us and they write the articles that go into the architectural journals. They contact the people who furnish material for our jobs, so they use our photo-
graphs that we furnish them in their advertising; they write articles. If we are having a school letting, they not only write an article for the paper in that town but in the circle all the way around for fifty or sixty miles. Well, you continue doing that year after year and you are bound to make an impression so that when they think of an architect, we hope they think of our firm. Anyway, it has worked out very well and it has taken a lot of the load off my shoulders. I don't have to sit down and write an article when I have two or three other things that I am supposed to do.

MR. VON GROSSMANN: Are they on a part-time basis or are they on your staff?

MR. TUSLER: No, they run a separate organization. They only do this part-time for us. They have tried to get into the office one day a week. We know they will be there on Mondays, so we gather our problems together. We have a file basket for them. Anything that comes in during the week goes to them.

QUESTION: Would you be willing to say what you pay for that service?

MR. TUSLER: Yes. We pay $400 a month, and they figure that that returns them about $5.00 an hour. That is the basis on which we work. Now, several architects have tried that with large advertising firms and it just does not work. They cannot get through their heads that we are not selling soap, and it takes a long time of education which an architect can't afford to give. This man was a former newspaper man. It is a small organization. There are just two of them in it. He has caught hold and grasped what we are trying to do. We spent quite a little time educating him, but it is working out splendidly.

Now, those of you that were at the regional convention in Chicago may have noticed our exhibits there, or photographs and drawings of buildings. They all come out on a standard sized card. We have our name in a certain color that is always the same down in the corner, and we can take a whole stack of those to a school board or hospital board and pass them around the table. Formerly we had some big sheets, some small sheets; we tried to file them and keep them. We never could find them. They were bent. This way they are always the same size, and in our consultation room we have two levels that we can hang them on, and if we have got a school group, we flash to the walls with schools. You will find if you standardize on your method of presentation, everything the same, covered with cellophane to keep them clean, that you will have a lot less trouble and it looks much more businesslike when you come in and everything is the same, the colors always the same on the name plate, and its works fine.

Contracts I have touched on. We have a rule in the office that we will not put a pencil to paper until we have a written contract, and then we insist on having a program agreed upon and approved by the owner, signed by him, before we start sketches. Then on completion of sketches we get a complete approval in writing from the owner on those, and then we start what we call basics, which are really working drawings. They are at the scale of working drawings, but on those we try to show every bit of plumbing, furniture and everything else to see how it will work, to see that there is room, and then that is done on a transparency so that it won't interfere with the

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working drawings, and that is part of the working drawings. We just take the outline of the building without the furniture and go right on with the working drawings, but those are taken off and they are signed by the owner so that he knows where everything goes on that job, and you would be surprised how much that will save in the making of working drawings when everything is settled before you actually start and get into them. So you know where your mechanical work is.

When a job comes in and a contract has been signed we start sketches after programming. Sketches are approved. Then the men that worked on sketches with the job captain on these basics so you get them two departments tying together. You don’t have sketches taken from the design department and thrown into the drafting room for their interpretation, but the two of them work together, and sometimes the man that does the designing will go right on through as job captain, and that tying together is important. And on these basics we pull in our mechanical, and we pull our structural in even on the sketch date so that we know that things are going to work.

We are particular as we go along to have a definite information on cost. We have a bunch of forms here and I know some of you will say, “I would rather practice architecture than fill out forms all my life,” but it does save you trouble. We have one that is called “Preliminary Information,” where we put the client’s name, the name of the contact in our office. And then we have “Program.” We then put the date when the program is completed and signed. We have “Budget” and we put the amount there so that we won’t have an indefinite amount for budget and then find out later that we were thinking of one thing and the client was thinking of another — I mean money-wise. Then we have “Survey Received.” We put down the date, soil test data, and our office review sketches. Then we go on this side and go through on working drawings. That means if you keep that up you won’t forget, for instance, the industrial commission and find you have come along and lost contracts and they have not been approved or they haven’t been to the state board of health for approval.

Now, in a small office maybe you don’t need that. I think it would be easier if you kept a form like that. However, we try for our own protection to get a contractor to say what the building will cost, and we try to get the owner to name the contractor, if possible. Now, some times we can hit the estimate closer than the contractor, but we want the contractor to takes the responsibility off our shoulders. Maybe that is a selfish way of looking at it, but if the owner feels that he selects the contractor that gives the estimate, he has a little more confidence and also the owner then can’t come back to you and say you were completely wild.

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on it — not that the owner isn’t at times, too — I mean the contractors estimate wild.

I explained the basics to you, and they show up on our progress record. We have a cost review. When we finish our basic, because, as you know, when you go from sketches to working drawings they sometimes creep up in cubage and square foot costs, so we try to review our costs at that time and, as I say, get the owner’s approval of basics, and at that time we have an outlined specification and a room-finished schedule. So that we sit down and go over the whole think with the owner and he knows pretty thoroughly at that time that is going into the job, so he is not surprised later.

Then on our working drawings, also on our sketches, we do just as Morgan has said that he does in his office, set up a number of hours allotted to that part of the work, and we check as we go along. Any associate in the office has the privilege of going through our job records, our ledger, to see what the job is costing us, and any job captain, can through the head draftsman find out how his job is running, and we check as we go along to see whether they are exceeding or keeping within the budget that we have set up. We don’t wait until the job is finished and then discover we have lost money. That is too late.

Now, taking the bids and letting contracts falls over into the supervision end. We have one head man there. He has an assistant and a secretary. They change from stenographers to secretaries after they pass a certain wage scale. Then we have four that work out of the office, and then we have five on jobs; where they get over a certain size we put on a constant superintendent, and when a job is finished, the working drawings are finished, then it is up to the supervision department to check that set of drawings.

They are supposed to get a set of prints and go through and check dimensions and everything. Now, that might be while they are out for figures. Sometimes you are pushed so that you can’t take the time to go through and check before they go out for figures, which is a little costly if you have to reprint some of the sheets, but a lot less costly to find it then than after you are half way through the job and find that something doesn’t work out.

Now, a lot of this that I am giving you is theory. There are times when you get in a rush and you don’t do all these things, and in our office we try to make a memorandum of every conference, every important decision, every telephone call that is important to the job. This memo will come through and come over my desk telling who was at the meeting, when the meeting was, and the subject. First we tell what was done at the meeting, what was decided, and copies go to the owner, to different parts of the drafting room and to the contractor if he is interested in that phase of the work. Occasionally the owner will call back or write back and say, “Well, that isn’t my understanding of what took place at the meeting. I didn’t mean that. We shouldn’t do it that way.” Well, catching it at that point saves us a lot of money. Otherwise we might gallop along in drawings and get a lot of this.

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down and then have a misunderstanding later.
Also it is surprising, particularly on financial mat-
ters, how poor the owner's memory is after a couple
of months, but if you pull a memo out of your file and
say, "Here is the meeting that you and so and so were
at, in which this was agreed on as to the certain
amount of money," he looks it up and says, "Was I
there?" It is surprising how much refreshing it takes
at times. Also if you get into a lawsuit or anything,
those things are most helpful to put them in as evi-
dence or use them as reference.

(To Be Continued)

NORTHEASTERN DIVISION MEETING,
WISCONSIN RAPIDS, APRIL 7TH

Upon invitation of Donn Hougen, the Northeastern
Division meeting was held at the new Mead Hotel
in Wisconsin Rapids. The members and guests were
welcomed and royally entertained by our host, Mr.
Hougen. With the luxurious appointments of the new
hotel as a background, cocktails were served in the
lounge.

After dinner President Wallace H. Brown opened
the meeting. There were twenty-eight members pres-
ent and twelve guests, some of whom traveled close
to two hundred miles to attend.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and
approved.

Edgar Berners gave a short talk on the operation
of The Board of Examiners, and indicated some of
the problems and how draftsmen can prepare for the
examination. He remarked that a graduatae can now
take the examination immediately after graduating
instead of waiting three years.

Motion was made and carried that the next meeting
be held on the second Monday in June at the hotel
in Weyauwega.

A discussion followed on the meritorious building
competition recently conducted by the association.

After the business meeting adjourned our host pre-
sented a colored sound movie of the steel fabrication
and erection of the U. N. building in New York. Mem-
bers were, then, conducted on a tour of the new Mead
Hotel, which closed an interesting and enjoyable
evening.

The Mead Hotel of which Mr. Hougen was archi-
tect, placed first in Class II, Commercial in the North-
eastern Division in the Honor Awards Program con-
ducted by the Wisconsin Architects Association.

T. H. IRION, Secretary
Original structure was designed by Walker & Eisen, architects. E. A. Evans was structural engineer. William Simpson Construction Co. was contractor. Addition was designed by Claude Beehler, architect and Herman Spackler, associate architect. Bealty & Clar were the structural engineers on the job and C. L. Peck was the general contractor.

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It's never too late to Ruminante
By ELIZABETH SCOTT HUNT

In those issues of our magazine that came out on the heels of the convention, there was no room for thorough coverage of that grand get-together in February. Is it too late now? Let's say NO. It's never too late to ruminante.

It was the best one — the Third Annual Convention of the Wisconsin Architects Association, that is — they've ever had. That's what they said. And thanks to Arthur O. Reddemann, Program Chairman, and his Committee.

Perhaps the approval was due to the let-down, the informality of the annual dinner on Friday evening, February 8, that bridged the seriousness of the annual business meeting the night of Thursday, February 7, the seminars of February 8, and again on Saturday.

What with the convention being scheduled for dates that conflicted with those of speakers galore approached to appear on any of the three days, it looked to the very end, that the entire program would be a dud. Then swiftly it took shape and there never was a better convention. The lectures, the seminars, all were tops. And then that unforgettable evening of Friday, February 8.

Alfred Shaw, F.A.I.A., of Chicago was the principal banquet speaker. Conceded to be one of the country's foremost architects, actually you'd tell him, skip the architecture and go in for public speaking. He was that good, and that fun. He told you facts, but he made you roar with laughter. The February issue carried the gist of his talk.

Said President Herbst, during the formation of the program, "Let us have music." So there was music. The Musical Strolling Duo. Take a gal with personality who can sing and play the accordion, and a dapper young man who can play the guitar and likewise sing, and you have something that sets the ball a-rolling. Community singing and no inhibitions. Solos. Barbershop quartets. Up to the microphone, Mrs. Alvin Grellinger, a very, very, lovely soprano, to do "My Hero." Greg Lefebvre, a swell tenor who had kept his talent hidden, lo these many years, giving forth with "I Had a Dream." Mrs. John Brust warming the hearts with "My Wild Irish Rose." And not to be outdone, the gallant Mr. Shaw outdoing himself with a parody of something or other, most ably augmented (at least it seemed so then) by audience volunteers. And there were those hilarious stories by Mark Pfaller that only Mark Pfaller can tell.

Leave us say, a good time was had by all.

But a good time was had by all during the entire convention. And that includes, for the greater part, the seminars.

PLEASE MAKE OUT YOUR CHECKS TO THE WISCONSIN ARCHITECTS ASSOCIATION . . . NOT TO THE SECRETARY.
It was nice having the L. Morgan Yosts as dinner guests on Friday night, and again on Saturday. Mrs. Yost came up from Chicago with Mr. Yost who was to be the moderator at the Saturday morning seminar on “Small Office Practice.” It was equally nice meeting again H. Wilbur Tusler, Regional Director of the North Central States District, who arrived on Saturday morning. However, Mr. Tusler came not in his official capacity as Regional Director, but to carry out his part in the Saturday morning seminar with his findings on “Medium Office Practice.”

At the conclusion of Mr. Tusler’s talk, President Herbst said, "Mr. Tusler is a very modest man when he speaks of his office as a 'medium size office.'"

Probably, the architects found this Saturday morning seminar to be the outstanding of the entire convention. Mr. Yost’s talk was covered in the March issue of the Wisconsin Architect. Mr. Tusler’s talk starts in this issue and will be continued in forthcoming issues. It is exceptionally constructive. Don’t miss it.

Another whom it was so very nice to meet, W. A. Piper, Secretary of the Wisconsin Registration Board of Architects and Professional Engineers. It was reassuring, though a trifle embarrassing, to learn from Mr. Piper that even the State is kept in ignorance of the changes of addresses of Architects, even as we. However, we felt better when he assured us that the Engineers are equally lax in notifying the Registration Board.

Thanks to the Producers’ Council for the cocktail party they put on preceding the banquet. And for the door prizes they presented the architects. The Council had interesting exhibits on the mezzanine.

The W. H. Pipkorn Company had a very interesting exhibit of its Modernfold Doors. And there was the Pittsburgh Plate Glass Company exhibit. We lingered there. As a housewife who has wielded the brush on walls and woodwork with sorry results, swashing more paint on the human anatomy than on the inert walls, but has never admitted defeat, we struck a stance before the exhibit of Wallhide Rubberized Satin Finish. An optimistic eager beaver, we oggled the instructions.

“Anyone can apply new Wallhide Rubberized Satin Finish to interior walls and ceilings with certainty of satisfactory results,” it said there. "It glides onto walls with astonishing ease — lap-free, streak-free . . ." Ha! Lap-free! If anybody can invent a paint guaranteed to keep off our lap when we’re knee-deep in interior decorating, that’s for us.

Up to the fifth floor to Room 510 to call on L. J. Novotny and see his Ranch-Type bathroom cabinet, christened Ranch Type "because of the accent on width and simplicity in design yet equally popular for all styles of modern architecture. "After peering into that "First quality frameless, polished bevel plate glass mirror," you wondered, not being a glamor girl, if it had been wise, your fixed, fascinated gaze into that startlingly clear mirror. What that did to your morale, shouldn’t happen too.

At the closing luncheon on Saturday noon, Edgar H. Bomers asked that a vote of thanks be given William G. Herbst who had answered the call of the Executive Board to take over the presidency for the remaining of the year 1952.

The afternoon was given to the viewing of the exhibits of the Honor Awards Program.

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