



Vol. IV, No. 7

# THE OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

115 EAST 40th STREET

MARCH, 1942

ALBERT G. CLAY, EDITOR

## SPECIAL MEETING

Time: Thursday, March 26, at 6:30 sharp.

Place: Architectural League.

Subject: Housing Panel.

Edmund R. Purves, A.I.A. Representative in Washington, has accepted our invitation to attend this special meeting of the Chapter to discuss the possible use of a Housing Panel by the F.W.A. A recent telegram from Mr. Purves states that a revised panel will be accepted.

A discussion of this whole matter will be in order. The dinner will begin promptly at 6:30, in order to allow ample time for the business meeting. This is the second notice you have received. If you have not made your reservation, call the Chapter office at once. Reservations may be cancelled up to noon of the day of the dinner.

## WAR PLANNING DINNER

The Municipal Art Society is celebrating its 50th Anniversary with a dinner at the Ambassador Hotel on Wednesday, April 8 at 7:30. The topic of the dinner is: Our City—Past—Present—Future. The speakers will be Hon. George McAneny, Commissioner Edwin A. Salmon, Chairman of the City Planning Commission, and Ralph Walker, F.A.I.A.

*Post War Planning* in New York City will be discussed at length by Commissioner Salmon. The Mayor and the Boro Presidents have been invited to attend.

This is of great interest to all of us. Members of the New York Chapter are invited. Cover Charge \$3.00. Make reservations at the Municipal Art Society, 119 East 19th Street.

## DEFENSE COURSE

The Chapter is among those groups sponsoring a new and valuable course in Defense at Columbia University.

The course will be given two nights a week for nine weeks and will cover such matters as aerial photography, protective concealment of plants, black-outs, bombing techniques, etc., etc. There will be no fee for instruction, but the enrollment will be limited to forty students.

If interested, kindly communicate with Graham Erskine, care Shreve, Lamb & Harmon, 11 East 44th Street.

## WASHINGTON SITUATION

Our Washington Representative Edmund R. Purves, has been very active. It is impossible to print the entire text of bulletins received from him (all on file at the Chapter office) so we summarize:

**SURVEY:** Although this office does not look around for more work to undertake, the questionnaires submitted by the profession in June 1940 are so obsolete and misleading that we suggest that those Architects who wish to correct or add to their questionnaires do so. Please confine any statements to one typewritten sheet in triplicate in order that copies of sheet may be filed with previous questionnaires.

All statements are checked by governmental agencies and departments making use of them—Factual data is all that is required. Please discourage sending voluminous statements to this office. We have no facilities for filing them.

**DRAFT:** This office has received a number of requests both written and by personal calls from Architects and Draftsmen seeking to obtain special consideration in view of impending induction into the Service. This is the wrong office to which to make such application. If an Architect or Draftsman is within the active draft age, and is physically fit, his place is in active service. The Army or the Navy will determine the particular branch of the Service for which he is best fitted.

**HOUSING:** By executive order of February 24, 1942, the President consolidated the various housing activities of the Government into one National Housing Agency, and named John B. Blandford, Jr. Administrator. The Administrator will perform the housing functions formerly vested in the Federal Loan Administrator, the Federal Works Administrator, and the Coordinator of Defense Housing. The new agency consists of three principal constituent units:

- a: Federal Home Loan Bank Administration.
- b: Federal Housing Administration.
- c: Federal Public Housing Authority.

F.W.A. The F.W.A. although stripped of Housing, still has the Public Buildings Program under its care as  
(Cont. on page 2)

## ANNIVERSARY DINNER

Seventy-five attended the Chapter's Anniversary Dinner held at the Architectural League on Tuesday evening, March 10, and which was called "A Latin American Evening."

To carry out this theme, a number of distinguished guests were present; Wallace K. Harrison, former member of our Chapter and now Assistant Coordinator of Inter-American Affairs, came from Washington where he is working in the interests of Latin-American cooperation, particularly as they affect the creative professions; also Professor Phillip C. Jessup, Director of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and Professor of International Law at Columbia University, who has spent many months in South America in study and research.

We had invited the nineteen Consuls General of the Latin American Republics stationed in New York to attend the dinner, but due to the exigencies of war and also the vagaries of our New York climate, only two were able to come: Hon. S. E. Duran-Ballen and Hon. Rulx Leon, of Ecuador and Haiti, respectively.

A word of greeting in Spanish, carefully prepared by our President, was found unnecessary inasmuch as Mr. Duran-Ballen spoke perfect English and the language of Mr. Leon's country is French. Therefore, Mr. Stevenson extended a gracious welcome in his own tongue.

To Dr. Sigismund S. Goldwater, the Chapter awarded its Honorary Associate Membership. He was present to receive his certificate of membership and to be cited for his invaluable contribution to the art of hospital planning and his outstanding services to the City of New York as Commissioner of Hospitals.

Honorary Associate Membership in the Chapter is bestowed from time to time upon individuals, not architects, who have contributed outstanding service to our profession within the territory of the Chapter. Our other two Honorary Associates are George McAneny and Mayor LaGuardia.

A plea for cooperation between professional groups of North and South America was made in a letter from the President of the Society of Architects

of Uruguay, read in part by Mr. Levi:

"If man, at the call of war, responds with all his wealth, his work and his wits, it is proper that he should exert the same collective effort towards peace. . . . As the planning of the infamous aggression, which has broken out upon the world, required the strict coordination of the entire German intellect, so it is the function of intellectuals to exert the full force of their intellectual capacity in planning now for a better world."

Mr. Harrison paid tribute to the architects of South America when he said there are many things they can show us. While his work in Washington covers many subjects other than architecture, he has found his architectural training of great value. "It is this training," he said, "which permits a man to take something from nothing and make it into something, a part of reality."

Professor Jessup, whose work deals with problems in international law, was nevertheless much impressed during his extensive travels in South America with the architectural gems which he saw there. He said, "I can envisage a future in which there will be no international lawyers but I am sure there will always be architects."

The evening was brought to a close with a few words from Consul General Leon. He spoke charmingly in French, and said that while he could lay no personal claims to our profession, he felt that at heart all men are architects, for are we not all planning and building our dreams for the future!

## MEMBERSHIP

### CANDIDATES

The following names have been submitted for Institute membership:

1. Kent Crane  
*Sponsors:*  
Philip Sawyer  
Lindley M. Franklin
2. George Foster Harrell  
*Sponsors:*  
Walter B. Sanders  
Hobart B. Upjohn
3. Philip Sawyer Lacy  
*Sponsors:*  
Ralph Walker  
Edgar Albright
4. Sylvia Shimberg  
*Sponsors:*  
Maurice Gauthier  
G. E. Kidder Smith
5. Stanley E. White  
*Sponsors:*  
George J. Cavalieri  
Reginald Marsh

## CITY PLANNING MEDAL

The Medal of Honor for City Planning was awarded March 10 to John D. Rockefeller, Jr., by four architectural and engineering societies "in recognition of his unique service to professional ideals in city planning." The four societies joining in this were: The New York and Brooklyn Chapters, A.I.A., the New York Chapter, American Society of Landscape Architects, and the Metropolitan Section, American Society of Civil Engineers.

The medal was given to Mr. Rockefeller to commend his broad vision and initiative which have enabled him to plan numerous civic projects, the influence of which have been inspiring to the present generation and the effect of which will shape and help determine the constructive forces of the future.

The presentation was made by a committee consisting of William Gehron, Ralph M. Rice, A. F. Brinckerhoff and Harold M. Lewis.

Said Chairman Gehron, "It was our original intention to make the award at a dinner to be given jointly by the Societies, but Mr. Rockefeller expressed a wish that the presentation be made as simple as possible."

## PEARL HARBOR

The Chapter has just received a check for current dues from Pearl Harbor. Spencer Smith was given a commission in the Navy last autumn and was sent to the Public Works Office at Pearl Harbor, from where he wrote last October: "They are building out here night and day on a tremendous scale. I am sorry not to be able to attend meetings. If there is anything I can do, let me know."

## WASHINGTON

(Cont.)

the P.B.A. remains one of its constituent agencies.

Announcement has been made of the appointment of John M. Gallagher, Regional Representative for the territory including New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, headquarters: No. 2 Lafayette Street, New York City.

WAR PRODUCTION BOARD: A critical list has been issued for Defense Housing. This reduces use of steel, tin, electric cable, materials for plumbing and heating systems, etc.

See also *President Shreve's article "Conservation of Critical Materials" under Spot News in current issue of "The Octagon."*

ARMY SPECIALIST CORPS: Under

date of February 27, announcement was made of a creation of an Army Specialist Corps to be formed with Dwight F. Davis as head. It is a project to marshal outstanding scientific, technical, labor, and business skills directly into the Army.

The Corps will consist largely of uniformed civilians who are highly qualified in professional, labor and scientific fields, but who do not necessarily have to possess military knowledge and training. The Corps will be under military control and in uniform. It will operate in places wherever needed including the theaters of war. Chiefly needed are mechanics, construction men, and administrative officers.

One underlying cause of the foundation of the Corps lies in the necessity of affording civilian employees the same rights and privileges as soldiers in case they become prisoners of war.

Hints to Architects seeking Commissions in the Service: Approach personnel officers with attitude that architects are necessary. The allergy of the Service to architects stems from a rather peculiar idea that the Service has of architects. In general, the profession as a whole does not seem to have corrected the idea.

Among other things, the Army is interested in your education, administrative experience, qualities for leadership, supervision experience, field experience, structural ability, physical condition, languages, and *prior military service*. The Army is not interested in your B.A.I.D. medals, sketches of houses, cultural trips to Europe, etc.

The Navy has opened enlistments for men with construction experience for enrollment in Class V-6 of the Naval Reserve for assignment to headquarters and construction companies in a construction regiment.

## TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir:

I am referring to the letter to "Dear Ed" in the February number of OCULUS. This vituperation of creative design by whoever is hiding behind the initials of W.H.G. is on a very low level and it is definitely bad taste to print it.

Very truly yours,  
Antonin Raymond.

P.S.—I expect you to print this protest in your next number.

*Note:* The OCULUS prints any and all letters from our members. No one is hiding behind anything. There is only one W.H.G., who actually signed his name to the letter we received.—Ed.