



NEW YORK CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
115 EAST 40th STREET

NOVEMBER, 1947

COMING EVENTS

Wednesday, Nov. 12 Dinner

The Chapter will welcome
New Members
New Ideas
New Business

Tuesday, Nov. 18 Lunch

Technical Committee will present:

Integral Waterproofing &
Floor Hardening

Tuesday, Nov. 25 Lunch

Educational Committee will present:

Professor Clinton V. Cowgill,
Vice President of NCARB to
discuss national registration

Tuesday, Dec. 2 Lunch Plus

First Field Trip to the
Benjamin Moore Paint Plant

AT LONG LAST

On the morning of Sunday, November 2, we opened our baby blue eyes to discover a cataclysmic metamorphosis. The New York Herald Tribune displayed as a caption on one of its pages the word "Architecture".

Under that heading appeared a long, well written article by Frederic Gutheim, setting forth the proposals of the Chapter for developing the East Midtown section of the City, in connection with the United Nations approach. Featured with the article were photographs, maps, and, *mirabile dictu*, the faces of Frederick J. Woodbridge, Geoffrey Platt and Robert C. Weinberg of our Committee on Civic Design.

Recognition of the fact that architects and their opinions constitute news has been long in coming. Our hats are off to the Herald Tribune for its pioneering cooperation. It is our understanding that Mr. Gutheim will continue to write on architects and their work, separating such articles from the former obscurity of the real estate news. He is eminently qualified to do the job, and every Chapter member should help him to gather his material.

On October 8 when the Civic Design Committee presented its plan for the United Nations' environs, representatives from the Herald Tribune and the New York Times were present. For some reason, the Times was willing to

be scooped. We hope those who establish the policies of that paper will marshal its type fonts to follow the precedent established.

Meanwhile, here are three ems and a couple of ens for the New York Herald Tribune.

FRIEND AT COURT

Does your Congressman know you? Your Washington Senator? Your State Senator or Assemblyman? Ten to one he doesn't know any architects, or at least very few. And why? Because architects don't bother to make themselves known to their elected representatives.

The Institute is launching a campaign to make our lawmakers more keenly alive to the importance of the architectural profession in this country. There is no more effective way of doing this than through personal contact.

Ralph Walker has been appointed Chairman of a new Chapter Committee on "The Architect and Governmental Relations." He is asking you, and every Chapter member, to send a postal card to Miss Waters to say how well you are acquainted with the men for whom you voted in the last general election.

Do you know them only by sight or well enough to call them (or any one of them) by their first names?

And do they know you well enough to call you by your right name?

CANDIDATES

The following have applied for Institute membership:

1. William N. Breger
Sponsors: Olindo Grossi
Walter B. Sanders
2. Henry Fagin
Sponsors: Henry S. Churchill
Talbot Hamlin
3. Max Kandel
Sponsors: Ben C. Bloch
Simon Breines
4. David Moed
Sponsors: Harvey Wiley Corbett
Leonard G. Fienen

And for Chapter Associateship:

1. Arthur Herbert Hunt
Sponsors: Yusuf Meer
Earl H. Strunk

ALL WORK AND LITTLE PLAY

The practicing architects of New York State who foregathered at the Commodore Hotel during the last days of October were faced with a formidable program of business sessions and panel discussions scheduled for the 1947 State Association Convention of Architects.

Undaunted, the delegates settled down with a seriousness of purpose to three days of intensive work, all aimed towards solving practically the many problems which face the architect today.

Matthew del Gaudio, who was serving his third term as President of the Association and who had worked untiringly for months on the many factors which go to make up a successful Convention, was rewarded by a record attendance. At the banquet an all-time high was reached when over 750 members, wives and honor guests taxed the capacity of the Grand Ballroom.

An encouraging sign was the increasing interest of local officials in the work of the Association and the *entente cordiale* apparent at this Convention between architects, producers and representatives of city departments augurs well for the future and bespeaks the present day architect's practical approach to his job.

For lighter fare, the Convention program offered a description of "Simultaneous Interpretation", i.e., how a speech at the U.N., delivered in Chinese, can come out of an I.B.M. machine in English; also an exposition to the "ladies" by Mr. Newbold Morris on "Public Works and Long Range Planning".

The official report of business transacted will no doubt appear in the next *Empire State Architect*. As for the part played by this Chapter, be it said for the record that 92 of our members registered and took part in one or another of the sessions.

As official hosts to the Convention, the Chapter set up a Reception Committee of Chapter members and their wives, divided into teams covering each day, and headed by our hard working President and his wife, Mr. and Mrs.

Sleeper, who were on hand throughout the Convention.

Panel discussions and talks by experts in the fields of schools, hospitals, planning and current trends in construction were features of the very excellent program. For this we are indebted to Dale Badgeley.

At the Wednesday lunch, attended by some 400 people, Max Abramovitz gave an interesting and enlightening description of the development of the plans for the "World Capitol", illustrated with slides.

Arthur Holden on Thursday delivered a searching and well presented analysis of a most timely subject, "Who Decides What's To Be Built?"

Several ante-rooms adjoining the ballroom were given over to two exhibits, one of manufacturers' products, manned by our friends of the Producers' Council who also took part in some of the sessions; the other a large and representative showing of architectural work throughout the State, which Eleanor Pepper helped substantially to arrange. Among the prizes handed out here, one gold seal went to the entry of the New York Chapter embodying the result of its studies in "Housing for Paraplegics." In view of the significance of the subject this award was doubly gratifying. Special Mention was also made of the entry by our Committee on Civic Design and Development showing their plan for redeveloping the East Midtown area of Manhattan.

Edwin A. Salmon, A.I.A., Chairman of the City Planning Commission and member of this Chapter, was designated by Mayor O'Dwyer to welcome the delegates officially to New York. At the banquet Mr. Salmon had a further opportunity to express some of his views to the architects, also did Douglas William Orr, President of the Institute, who voiced some sound and well phrased thoughts on the ideals for which architects should strive today. By way of contrast the toastmaster of the evening was Roger Allen who as usual brought with him from Grand Rapids a pocketful of witticisms which kept his audience wreathed in smiles.

Before adjourning, the Convention elected as its new President, C. Storrs Barrows of Rochester, to whom we extend all good wishes for a successful administration.

HOMESEEKERS' HANDBOOK

Apologies to Gerald L. Kaufman, for having given his book the wrong title in the October OCULUS. Also for having omitted the name of George W. Stewart, publisher, of 67 West 44th Street, who met Mr. Kaufman as a result of an announcement, in the OCULUS for June, 1945, that

Mr. Stewart was in search of an author to develop a book for the guidance of homeseekers.

The author has confessed to us, however, an ulterior motive hidden in the chapter on "The Architect." Here is told the story of what professional service means—while subtly suggesting the dangers of building without it.

SIDNEY L. STRAUSS

On October 24th, the last day of the New York State Architects' Convention, the delegates present were deeply shocked at the announcement of the sudden death of Sidney L. Strauss.

Mr. Strauss had been General Chairman of the Convention and as such had presided the night before, apparently in good health, at the Annual Banquet.

A tireless and energetic worker, he spared no effort in bringing together his fellow architects, not only for the personal pleasure it gave him but in the hope of achieving the ultimate unification of the profession.

His zeal and enthusiasm were evident throughout the Convention. Here he was at his best. Here he used his last ounce of vitality in the interest of his profession.

OCTOBER MEETINGS OF THE CHAPTER

On October 8th a dinner was held for the purpose of presenting the Chapter's proposals for the development of the East Midtown Section in connection with the much discussed approach to the U.N. site. Frederick J. Woodbridge, Chairman, and his Committee on Civic Design had prepared a bang-up program which was presented by Robert C. Weinberg, with maps, lantern slides, and a most informative talk on the complex issues involved. There was an encouraging turnout of members, and delegations from the City Planning Commission and the Board of Estimate were present.

What influence the Chapter's proposals will have upon the thinking of the City officials, remains to be seen. At least if the vigorous efforts of our Committee have served to focus official attention on the need for long range planning their work will not have been in vain.

On October 28th, the Housing Committee held a luncheon meeting to discuss its aims and to ask for cooperation. Chairman Arthur Holden outlined a comprehensive and ambitious program which proposes to investigate and analyze public housing since its modern inception in 1936. The committee has in mind an ultimate report

based upon its findings which will present both a critique and a list of constructive suggestions for improvement.

Other speakers were Elisabeth Coit, Henry Churchill and Perry Coke Smith. The subject matter included the relationship between architect and local housing authority, and the recommendation that the Chapter take a stand against the provision in the proposed 1948 City Capital Budget to use some of the housing funds for school buildings.

The Housing Committee proposes to hold a series of open meetings to keep members informed of developments and to encourage membership participation. This is an important and extensive program, being administered earnestly by a capable committee, and its first presentation deserved a wider audience. It is hoped that all Chapter members will come forward with criticisms of existing housing and suggestions for betterment.

HIGH HONOR

With pride we report the appointment by President Truman of our fellow member, Julian Clarence Levi, to serve as Chairman of the American Delegation to the VI Pan-American Congress of Architects in Peru. The Congress took place in Lima the latter part of October.

The architects of this State, convening in New York at the same time, cabled their greetings to the Congress, assuring their fellow architects of the Americas that "we work together in striving to enrich the world with an art that knows no national boundaries."

We look forward to an interesting report from Mr. Levi when he returns, on the work of the Congress as well as on his experiences in South America.

STABILIZATION

It is no news that construction costs are high and may have a tendency to go higher if not checked. It may be news that a serious attempt is being made in New York City to stabilize costs at approximately their present levels and to keep them from rising.

An agreement is pending between the labor unions and the building trades employers to freeze wages, to limit overtime, to remove objections to time and labor saving devices, and in other ways to improve conditions.

The proposal is to start the operation of this new contract on January 1, 1948, and to have it run until June 30, 1950. When a ball is thrown into the air, it must come to a stop before it starts to descend. The agreement, if adopted, may prove to be the first step in a program to lower prices. In any case it will make possible the preparation of more nearly accurate estimates in construction costs.