

NEW YORK CHAPTER

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O C U L U S

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THE CONDITION OF THE CHAPTER

This has been a good year for the New York Chapter. We are speaking of Chapter affairs, the general atmosphere, our Chapter's part in the world of architecture generally -- not just of the extent to which architects are privately busy although the health of the profession is, of course, a factor in the Chapter's status. We have had a number of meetings, business, professional and social, on which the various committees have worked hard and enthusiastically; most have been well attended considering the diverse interests of our members. Financially we are just enough more than solvent to permit us to breathe with reasonable ease, although we are by no means wealthy. Our membership has increased at a fairly comfortable rate, and it is broadening as the result of efforts to enrol qualified employees as well as principals of firms. These practical measures of Chapter well-being reflect the more intangible something we have called the general atmosphere, which is hard to define. Perhaps those who attended the annual shindig at the Metropolitan Club sense socially what others who may have missed this gala could gain from several interesting events put on by the Technical Committee, still others from a meeting whose avowed purpose -- admirably achieved -- was to extend the hand of fellowship to new members. At its best ours is a social, an esthetic, a practical and businesslike profession all at once; Chapter activities during the year have reflected all these facets in due proportion.

THE CHAPTER'S INFLUENCE

In addition to running its own affairs the Chapter has participated in many external activities, so that its influence extends well beyond Manhattan Island. The Institute, for example, is making use of Chapter members' capabilities to an extent which may not be realized. Edgar Williams, FAIA, was Chancellor of the College of Fellows. In accordance with custom, the New York Regional Director is this term a "downstater", our own Matt Del Gaudio; the respect in which the Institute's Board of Directors holds him is evidence of both his personal strength and the Chapter's importance. The Chapter has had two members on the Institute's Hospital and Health Committee (Kiff, Chairman; Alonzo W. Clark, III). Charles S. Haines, II has been Chairman of the Nuclear Facilities Committee. Three Chapter members served on the special "task force" Committee on Package Dealers, whose report created excitement at the recent Washington Convention (Gruzen, Lopez, Kiff). Although he is not a member of the Committee on School Buildings, your editor meets with this dedicated group regularly. Matt Del Gaudio has been a member of no less than five committees; Nate Kiff served on three; John C. B. Moore, Lessing Williams and Harold Sleeper each served on two (Williams is co-chairman, Committee on the Institute and the Producers' Council). Leo Arnaud, Elizabeth Coit, Dan Schwartzman, Francis Keally, Edgar Williams, Jeffrey Ellis Aronin and James Newman served on other Institute committees. In all, 25 Chapter members worked on 19 different Institute committees this year.

Chapter members also participated actively in the affairs of other national professional societies such as the American Association of School Administrators, the American Hospital Association, etc. Many of our own activities have acquired national importance -- for instance, the work of the Chapter Office Practice Committee on Public Housing Administration contracts for architects' services, with the Steel Retailers' Institute, on

the Federal Wage and Hour Law, etc., has been widely recognized. On the local level, the Civic Design Committee of the Chapter participated actively in discussions and hearings on the important Amendment 21C to the City's Zoning Resolution, worked on several municipal projects (Lincoln Square, City Hall area, Manhattan Civic Center); in addition, it took a strong position in the Joint AIP-AIA Committee (appointing a Sub-Committee on Design Controls) to provide positive yet acceptable methods for guiding esthetic judgments, a subject of great interest in view of the recent decision by the U.S. Supreme Court that esthetic values are among the acceptable bases for land condemnation proceedings. Our participation in the work of supra-local and state architectural organizations has continued; among these is the 5-chapter New York Centennial Committee of which six Chapter representatives are officers and members.

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES 1956-57

This year's activities were highlighted by the Chapter's active support of and participation in the Centennial celebration. A special Committee was formed for the Centennial Observance representing all five New York City Chapters and chairmanned by Daniel Schwartzman.

Initiating the program was a luncheon, held on February 23rd at the Sub-Treasury Building for the purpose of dedicating a bronze plaque designed by McKim, Mead & White marking the site, at 111 Broadway, of the founding of The American Institute of Architects. The luncheon celebration included the first day of issue of the 100th Anniversary Commemorative postage stamp.

On April 25th a dinner was held at Delmonico's Restaurant, where the 13 original members celebrated the founding of the Institute. The dinner was over-subscribed by New York Chapter members who heard a succinct and provocative address by August Heckscher, President of the 20th Century Fund Inc. Mr. Heckscher challenged the contemporary architect to "capture a quality of space in which modern man instinctively feels at home". He urged that "we gain touch anew with the people whose interpreter and servant (we) are -- with the American land, with the forces of change that run across the continent and are making us over in ways we only dimly comprehend."

Additional centennial year activities are scheduled for the fall by the local student chapters of Columbia, Cooper Union and Pratt, to include student exhibits, a buffet supper and symposium on aspects of our architectural heritage.

Washington: Centennial Convention: Thirty-one delegates and many other Chapter members attended the 100th Anniversary Convention May 14-17th. Held principally in Washington's Sheraton-Park and Shoreham Hotels, two of the outstanding events were, curiously, in other quarters. The session on urban design which was combined with the lecture-concert on music and architecture delivered by the National Symphony and its conductor, Dr. Howard Mitchell in Constitution Hall was, for many, the cultural high point. Starting in a scholarly, careful fashion, this afternoon meeting built up to a tremendous emotional climax. The big social occasion was the boat trip down the Potomac to Mount Vernon: 1800 architects and their wives enjoying free drinks, a dance band, a free dinner of cold fried chicken, salad, coffee and dessert -- is it any wonder George Washington's front lawn was simply littered with tired (?) architects when we stopped there to trudge up hill to the historic shrine?

In contrast, the photographic exhibition at the Nat. Gallery crowded, the crowds carefully herded through, the photographs themselves depicting not so much architecture as the social and economic forces which architecture reflects (and so requiring the careful study which the crowding prevented) -- was, to many, a puzzle. No one could say that of the presentation of the Institute's highest award to two Chapter members; the Gold Medal to Louis Skidmore and the Special Centennial Medal to Ralph Walker, both F.A.I.A.

Each man in his own way -- Skid briefly and from the heart, Ralph at length and with equal sincerity -- made it abundantly clear that the awards were merited. The Chapter delegates took an active part in the limited business sessions, participating vocally in what might have become a filibuster had not the Chair consented to continued business at a session which had been scheduled for other purposes. Almost the only really negative comment heard afterwards was to the effect that everybody had too good a time, that there were too few opportunities for professional interchange in open meeting, too many speeches and not enough time for individual participation and soul searching. But all realized that this was a Centennial and hence bound to be more a celebration than a professional conference; and believe us, it was a Celebration!

Perhaps inspired by these Centennial Observances, the Committee on Historic Buildings has this year neared completion of the recording of all historical buildings in Manhattan including those counties under the jurisdiction of the New York Chapter. The Committee reports that the preservation of historic buildings is a continuing problem as a result of not only complete demolition but also the inconsidered and disfiguring alterations that are often the harbingers of "progress".

Apart from the centennial and historical activities, the New York Chapter celebrated a number of special honors and awards highlighted by the presentation on March 8th of the Medal of Honor to Arthur C. Holden. The citation read in part: "You have devoted your talents to the advancement of your profession, to the betterment of our cities and to achievement through architecture of a high aesthetic purpose". Honorary Associate Membership in the Chapter was conferred upon Charles McKim Norton, Executive Vice-President of the Regional Plan Association, in recognition of the widening architectural opportunities stimulated by his activities in regional planning. The Chapter's honor roll was further added to by the advancement to Fellowship of Barnett Sumner Gruzen and Benjamin Lane Smith.

A "surprise" testimonial dinner sponsored by the New York Chapter, A.I.A., the Architectural League and the National Institute for Architectural Education, attended by 118 members and guests, was held on May 3, in honor of Julian Clarence Levi. The New York Chapter's citation recorded "its respect, its gratitude and its affection" for Mr. Levi "whose sincerity and integrity and whose extraordinary services to his profession exemplify his underlying love for his fellowman."

The 1957 Brunner Scholarship of \$2,400. (plus an additional grant of \$2,400.) was awarded to Messrs. Samuel Ratensky and Richard W. Snibbe for their project, "A Critical Analysis of Large-Scale Urban Housing in Relation to the Urban Pattern." This subject consisting of a study and report that will be carried out both in this country and in Europe, was considered the one most valuable to the profession at large of the twelve new submissions. The proponents' ability to grapple with this subject was well demonstrated in their application. A grant of \$2,400. from the Brunner Capital Bequest Fund was given to Caleb Hornbostel, the 1956 Brunner Scholar, who reapplied this year, in recognition of his progress during the past year on his work. "A Materials Handbook for the Architect."

The public relations benefit in the bestowing of such honors and awards is only in direct proportion to their general circulation among the public. In this regard the Public Relations Committee has been actively exploring whether the New York Chapters should employ a public relations counsel. It was agreed that such a move would be recommended to the Executive Committee together with two choices of firm and also a method for collecting the first year's costs without the necessity of raising the dues. Cheers!!

Even without such public relations counsel there were many notable examples throughout this year of public-directed information particularly in the House Consulting field. One and one half pages on "Selecting an Architect for a Home" appeared in the Personal Business section of the December 1st issue of Business Week pertaining to the advantages in

hiring an architect for residential construction. This same subject was the topic for discussion in January on the radio station WQXR as guests of Miss Alma Dettinger. The House Consulting Committee was also active in the International Home Building Exposition held at the New York Coliseum in the first week in May. An article covering home design appeared March 10th in the Real Estate Section of the New York TIMES through the effort of our Public Relations Committee chairman, Robert Carson.

Public Relations does not stop at home; this year's Committee on Visitors was actively engaged in welcoming a number of distinguished architects from abroad including 50 French architects touring the U.S. as delegates of L'Aluminum Francais. Other individuals receiving the New York Chapter welcome included Professor Werner Heberbrand, Architect of the city of Hamburg, Germany; Monsieur Jean Manoury, architect in charge of Chartres Cathedral; Sir Maxwell Fry, F.R.I.B.A., and Messrs. Kenneth Cross and C. D. Spragg, President and Secretary, respectively, of the R.I.B.A.

On a less international scale there were a number of exciting and memorable meetings and seminars which happily pointed up the ever-increasing participation by the New York Chapter membership. Twenty-six such meetings were held throughout the year between September and May highlighted by the 90th Anniversary Supper Dance held in the Metropolitan Club on March 8th. The Technical Committee sponsored 5 meetings of which two were highly successful dinner meetings with over 100 members and their guests in attendance. The first such dinner meeting on November 7th dealt with "Chapter Members' Work Abroad" consisting of slides and addresses by eight distinguished members. On March 28th the dinner meeting entertained Walter A. Netsch, A.I.A., of Chicago, who discussed the design development of the controversial Air Force Academy. The luncheon meetings dealt with the somewhat indefinable problems of "What's Wrong with our Buildings" and "Mechanical Coordination" as ably interpreted by Al Butt.

With an interest in our physical well-being the Hospital and Health Committee carried on four distinct lines of activity with a separate sub-committee responsible for each. These included a series of eight lecture meetings each devoted to a department or function of the general hospital, augmented by actual visits and hospital tours scheduled on four separate Saturdays. Two round table discussions were held with attendance by invitation only for those specializing in hospital design. Basic groundwork was also laid for research projects which it is hoped will become active next year.

The Committee on Education has endeavored to maintain a close association with the newly increased membership of the student chapters at Columbia and Cooper Union. Toward this end a student discussion period was held in February at which Giorgio Cavaglieri and Benjamin Lane Smith discussed what the architect in practice expects from the recently graduated student.

Apart from these many varied activities directed towards the public relations aspects of our Chapter there is much time and labor spent by additional committee members who serve on the perhaps less glamorous and more prosaic, but none-the-less important, inner-directed committees dealing with the propagation and betterment of our profession and Chapter.

The Committee on Professional Practice reports the review of several charges of unprofessional practice against certain Chapter members who were advised of the infraction of the rules of the Institute and warned of more serious consequences if the violations were continued. In only one instance was the charge referred to the Executive Committee and Institute Headquarters for disciplinary action. In addition to these formal proceedings many questions referring to ethics and practice of Chapter members were answered by telephone or letter.

The sub-committee on Education continued its work on the Architect-in-Training Program started last year. The sub-committee has attempted to ascertain the value of the program but so few returns from their questionnaire were received that no conclusion can be reached except that interest in the program seems casual. Little information as to the success of the Institute's effort in this program has been received. It is the opinion of the sub-committee that the program is basically sound and requires stimulation.

The Membership Committee has this past year concentrated its efforts toward obtaining members from that group of practicing architectural people presently employed by the firms here in the city. Two receptions and dinner parties were held in February and April for prospective members. This year also saw an increase in student members at Columbia and Cooper Union from a previous 37 to a record of 145. Thirty-nine applicants for Corporate membership and 47 applicants for Associateships in the New York Chapter were interviewed by the Admissions Committee. A breakdown of the present Chapter membership follows:

1956-1957 MEMBERSHIP	Bal. For'd 55/56	Gain	Losses	Net	Totals
Honorary	7	1	--	1	8
Emeritus	43	5	6	-1	42
Corporate	745	39(a)	25(b)	14	759
Associate	160	49	14(c)	35	195
Unassigned	13	--	1	-1	12
Students	37	128	20	108	145
Totals	1,005	222	66	156	1,161

(a) 31 new, 3 transfers, 5 internal

(b) 8 deaths, 11 transfers, 5 internal, 1 terminated

(c) 4 internal, 6 resigned, 4 terminated

It is recorded with regret that the following fourteen members have died during the past year:

Grosvenor Atterbury	Lafayette A. Goldstone	Hubert E. Reeves
Archibald M. Brown	Ralphael Hume	Greville Rickard
Cameron Clark	Francis George Morse	Ben John Small
Edwin H. Denby	Oscar H. Murray	Ernest A. Van Vleck
Clarence E. Dobbin		Lawrence Grant White

The following is a summary of income and disbursements for the eight month period beginning October 1, 1956:

Income	\$32,652.19
Disbursements	21,315.00
Balance 5/1/57	\$11,337.19
Year-end balance 10/1/56	8,159.87
Total balance 5/1/57	\$19,497.06
Contingent Reserve Fund (Chapter)	\$42,032.30
Arnold W. Brunner Fund, Principal	136,145.04
Income Account	8,116.04
LeBrun Fellowship Fund, Principal	36,765.38
Income Account	6,027.12

The Publications Committee has been pleased to report on these various activities to the Chapter's membership throughout the year and trusts that the additional Centennial sections and reports that have been included in previous issues of the Oculus have been of special interest. All Committee members and their chairman join in thanking the Chapter's Executive Secretary, Margot A. Henkel, and her able assistant Mrs. Richert for their invaluable assistance.

Your officers and elected committee chairmen, who together with the appointed committee chairmen, submit this report, are gratified that the Nominating Committee has seen fit to renominate them unanimously for another year's service.

Officers:

Robert E. Cutler, President
Harold C. Bernhard, Vice President
L. Bancel LaFarge, Secretary
Aaron N. Kiff, Treasurer

Executive Committee:

Ralph Pomerance
Geoffrey N. Lawford
Alonzo W. Clark, III
Roger G. Spross
Frederick J. Woodbridge
Frederick G. Frost, Jr.

Elective Committee Chairmen:

Hugh Ferriss (Medal of Honor)
Harold R. Sleeper (Nominations)
Harold C. Bernhard (Professional Practice)
Walter H. Kilham, Jr. (Committee on Fellows)

Appointive Committee Chairmen

Alonzo W. Clark, III (Admissions)
Philip Ives (Awards)
Elisabeth Coit (Brunner Scholarship)
Edward J. Mathews (Civic Design)
Benjamin Lane Smith (Education)
Otto J. Teegen (Education Sub-Committee)
Harold R. Sleeper (Fifth Ave. Association)
William Potter (Finance)
Ferdinand Eiseman (Historic Buildings)
Isaiah Ehrlich (Hospital and Health)
Giorgio Cavaglieri (House Consulting)
Daniel Schwartzman (LeBrun Fellowship)
Harold C. Bernhard (Legislative)
James J. Souder (Committee on Meetings)
David L. Eggers (Membership)
Perry Coke Smith (Membership Structure)
George S. Johnston (Office Practice)
Robert Carson (Public Relations)
Frank G. Lopez (Publications)
A. Gordon Lorimer (Technical)
Max Abramovitz (Visitors)

CANDIDATES

Information regarding the qualifications of the following candidates for membership will be considered confidential by the Admissions Committee.

Corporate Membership

Russell M. Boak
Paul Fernand Damaz
Philip Gordon McIntosh

Allen Cramp Parrette
Robert B. Pils
Thomas O. Raad
Charles Gates Beckwith

Associate Membership

Thomas Ernest Kearin
Benjamin S. Miller

Sponsors: Eldredge Snyder and Carroll W. Harding
Sponsors: Joseph Lau and Louis B. McCagg