

O C U L U S

N E W Y O R K C H A P T E R

115 EAST 40TH STREET, NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

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COMING EVENTS

January 8, Thursday

School Seminar

Gallery A, 12:30 P.M.

January 13, Tuesday

Hospital and Health

Committee Discussion

Gallery A, 5:15 P.M.

January 19, Monday

Technical Committee

Gallery A, 5:15 P.M.

January 27, Tuesday

Nominations Luncheon
Meeting

Gallery A, 12:30 P.M.

DEW LINE

The DEW (Distant Early Warning) Line is a presentation arranged by the Technical Committee for 5:15 on January 19, 1959, in Gallery A.

Mr. Gannett Herwig, partner in the firm of LaPierre, Litchfield & Partners, will discuss design and construction problems in connection with the installation of the 58 warning stations in the Line which stretches across the top of the North American Continent from the western tip of Alaska to Baffin Strait. His talk will be illustrated by a documentary film, prepared in color for the U. S. Air Force by the Western Electric Company, showing all phases of the operation.

RADIO ISOTOPES IN HOSPITALS

This meeting is a "must" for those interested in "Planning for the Use of Radio Isotopes in Hospitals" since material on the subject is limited. This lecture, sponsored by the Hospital and Health Committee, is one of the first to be offered to architects, and will be given by Dr. Joseph Greenberg on Tuesday, January 13th.

Dr. Greenberg is Director of Isotope Laboratories at the Long Island Jewish Hospital. He is also Consultant to the Radio Isotope Laboratory at the U. S. Naval Hospital in St. Albans, N. Y., and Research Collaborator with the Brookhaven National Laboratories on Long Island.

AT LEAST ONE SEMINAR . . .

In viewing the results of the first seminar meeting, run by a Chapter committee under the Programs Committee recommendation, we took the liberty of asking guest Raymond A. Ruge to expand a little further upon his theme.

It has been recommended by members that we take our Public Relations with us to all our political, social, sports and professional organizations and explain as private citizens the fallacies in comments such as Miss Thompson's and Mr. Gerosa's.—Ed.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

November 17, 1958
Cornwall, N. Y.

Thank you for your flattering note of November 14. I am pleased and surprised to note that my remarks struck a spark, and will gladly do what I can to fan it into a flame.

It seemed to me that the Architects assembled at the Seminar Luncheon were in 100% agreement that in some way our profession, and we as members of it, had been maligned by the poorly informed, if not deliberately misinforming, Miss Thompson. The thing which finally drove me to my feet was the failure of anybody to recognize in this innocuous little article two extremely serious charges against our profession, and one ridiculous weakness on our part:

Charges: (1) The Architect and the Contractor are placed side by side as equals in her sentence, saying: "There must be somebody who wants such schools—probably Architects and Contractors . . ." Fallacy here: the Architect is represented as having a PROFIT motive. Only the Contractor has this motive, and we know it. But does John Public?

(2) I sense here a deliberate smear to the effect that the Architect is not above *padding the program to increase his fee.*

Weakness on our part: Miss Thompson's article appeared originally in the *Ladies Home Journal*—huge circulation among the general public, distaff side—where PTA's, etc., have their ardent workers. It was then reprinted in *Readers' Digest*—circulation unlimited. Every doctor's office, etc., etc., etc. I would wager that every member of every school board in the land has read this article, or at least been told about it—(which could be even worse).

Where have our rebuttals appeared? RECORD, FORUM, etc., etc., etc. Who reads these? The PTAs? The hardware merchant on the School Board? They never even knew these publications existed.

This is pathetic, if we are going to offer a rebuttal—and in my opinion we can no longer slide along, allowing the public, whence come our public work commissions, to know practically nothing about us. End of speech!

Raymond A. Ruge
A.I.A.

NECROLOGY

Ralph Wilson Weirick, longtime member of the N. Y. Chapter, died July 27 in Orlando, Florida.

HOSPITAL AND HEALTH

The Hospital and Health "buffs" were out in force at the November 17th meeting for the first of a series of discussions arranged by the H and H Committee. The functional organization of hospitals was clearly outlined by John G. Steinle, Hospital Management Consultant, stressing the necessity of establishing both program and objectives, and the operational procedures desirable to fulfill same, before any actual planning is undertaken. Alonzo W. Clark III emphasized the paramount importance of circulation analysis, the "flow" within the building complex of all the myriad goods and services which must ultimately reach the patient with minimum labor and confusion. Questions and discussion added to the effectiveness of the meeting.

FALL DINNER MEETING

The Fall Dinner Meeting was enhanced by a warm, informal address by our Chapter President L. Bancel La Farge after welcoming and introducing a substantial new membership. Mr. La Farge stressed the importance of the role being played by key A.I.A. Committees in defending our profession and taking the necessary civic action against the adverse Gerosa report and the Thompson article. He lauded other committees who are promoting our profession effectively (wider indexing of historic buildings, Washington Square redesign, improvement in plan processing at the Building Department).

Public Relations Chairman Lathrop Douglas appealed to the membership for further voluntary contributions to our Public Relations Program (Gottlieb & Assoc.) without which we could not have taken a decisive stand in the press on the Gerosa report.

The meeting was climaxed by a talk by Mr. H. Creston Doner of Toledo, Director of Design and Color at L. O. F. With the aid of exciting and colorful slides presented in rapid-fire succession, Mr. Doner revealed effectively the contrast of Aztec stone palaces and pyramidal temples with present day Mexican glass-walled skyscrapers and university buildings. Mr. Doner's brilliant, blue brocade jacket and Mrs. Doner's matching sheath coat provided additional color-on-the-spot!

"PORTRAIT OF AN ARCHITECT"

A fascinatingly frustrated person passing as an exhaustingly exacting esthetic expert on the basis of being able to develop, in an impossibly short interval of time, and after innumerable changes, an infinite series of incomprehensible answers calculated with slide-rule inaccuracy from vague assumptions based on debatably documented data taken from ill-informed apprehensions and painstakingly produced with instruments of problematical precision by a pleasant peasant of dubious reliability, indeterminate integrity, but monumental mentality, for the avowed purpose of beautifying, amazing and confounding a defenseless and unsuspecting citizen who was unfortunate enough to have asked for the conclusions in the wrong fashion in the first place.

—Arizona Architect

LETTER TO THE MAYOR

November 18, 1958
New York, N. Y.

My dear Mayor Wagner:

On behalf of the New York Chapter, American Institute of Architects, I wish to protest in the most emphatic and strenuous terms the remarks made by Controller Lawrence E. Gerosa as reported in last Sunday's press and at yesterday's hearing before the Board of Estimate concerning alleged gross waste and extravagance against the Board of Education in its recent and current school building program.

Inferentially, Mr. Gerosa's charges are sharply directed against the commissioning of our leading private architectural firms by the Board of Education as encouraging waste and extravagance.

This accusation is characteristic of an uninformed point of view as to basic economical planning—a specialty of the well-trained and thoroughly experienced architectural firm. Besides, the private architect, in closest collaboration with his consulting engineers and with his client—in this case, the Board of Education—can qualify as no one else in the specialized realm of distinguished design and of wise selection of materials and equipment directly related to low maintenance costs. Indeed, in the taxpayers' interests of long-range economy, it is shortsighted to build ugly, cheap and questionably planned schools with little regard to function, cheerfulness and upkeep.

The taxpayers of New York City may now judge for themselves the attractiveness and efficiency of the new schools recently completed—designed by private architects. The important beneficiaries are their children now attending these schools.

The New York Chapter intends to support to the limit the Board of Education's rebuttal to Mr. Gerosa's allegations.

Respectfully yours,

L. Bancel LaFarge, President
New York Chapter, A.I.A.

ADVISORY SUB-COMMITTEE

The Advisory Committee of the Education and Scholarship Committee is formulating a program for advice and information to persons interested in the study of Architecture. To supplement past procedure of providing certain documents prepared by the Institute, the committee felt that personal contact would be of great value to the prospective student.

Rather than confront the applicant with the full committee it was agreed that each member, in turn, would be assigned to talk with the applicant. The committee plans to enlist the services of faculty members of the local schools of Architecture as additional personal contacts.

"A NIGHT IN PUERTO RICO"

The Architectural League and the New York Chapter, A.I.A., co-sponsored the League's exhibit, "Architecture—Puerto Rico, Old and New," and celebrated it with a dinner on November 20. This appreciation of the work of our friends was met with warm response, and was extremely well attended—including many from Puerto Rico. Program Chairman was Jose A. Fernandez, A.I.A.

HERE AND THERE

Leon Chatelain, Past President, A.I.A., will lead a "Round the World Trek" in February. The trip is being organized by the United States Travel Agency, Washington, D. C.... Also for globe trotters: the R.I.B.A. extends welcome to A.I.A. members at their British Architects' Conference, June 10th-13th in Cardiff, Wales... Edward D. Stone and Mrs. Stone have been touring Russia (equipped with slides representative of good U. S. architecture) at the personal invitation of the Presidium.

Bancel LaFarge extended the Chapter's congratulations and support to P. J. Reidy on his appointment as Commissioner of Buildings; and to the Downtown-Lower Manhattan Association, Inc., for their "broad, imaginative and farsighted" redevelopment plan... Three Chapter members have been nominated to fill a vacancy in the Fine Arts Federation of New York: William F. R. Ballard, William Platt, and Robert W. Cutler... William B. Tabler urged "more sense to building codes" in a speech for the N. Y. Chapter of the Construction Specifications Institute... Stanley Sharp gave a good defense of the architects' position re the Gerosa affair over CBS-TV... Morris Ketchum gave a major speech, "Living with Architecture," at the Western Mountain District A.I.A. Regional Conference at Denver, Colorado, and also authored a study on downtown shopping districts in the October Architectural Record... There's a worthwhile article, "Planning the Large Vocational High School," by Chapter member Leon A. Geborsam in the August issue of The School Executive... Voorhees Walker Smith Smith and Haines received the 1958 INSTITUTIONS Magazine Interiors Award for the employee cafeteria in the Travelers Insurance Co., Hartford, Conn....

Robert A. Jacobs is chairman of the Architects' and Engineers' Division 1958-59 drive on behalf of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies... Bradford N. Clark of Eggers and Higgins is Advisory Committee Chairman for the New York Construction Industry's Boy Scouts of America Lunch-O-ree to be held at the Waldorf-Astoria on Wednesday, Feb. 4. Robert W. Cutler is a Co-Chairman of the fund-raising luncheon.

October 1958, Journal of the AIA, reprinted from May 1958 Journal of the RAIC, W. A. Watson says in an article entitled The Architect and the Package Deal, that in a poll taken among the Ontario Association of Architects on: "Do you consider it unethical for an architect to be a partner or employee of a package deal contractor?" The answers were "yes," 63.3 percent, and "No," 20.8 per cent with the remainder undecided.

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

John A. Hlavaty
Bernard G. Horvitz

OFFICE PRACTICE COMMITTEE

Brother Cajetan J. B. Baumann

EDUCATION STUDENT CHAPTER

Richard Stein

THE NEW YORK SCHOOL AFFAIR

An extremely dignified and effective press conference was staged on November 20 by the Chapter and Al Frantz (of Edward Gottlieb & Associates), to discuss the Gerosa Report. A good proportion of the New York press was represented—and favorably impressed, to judge from the subsequent newspaper items. The Chapter was represented by L. Bancel La Farge as Chapter President; John C. B. Moore of Moore and Hutchins; B. Sumner Gruzen of Kelly & Gruzen; Stephen Nolan, Partner of Chapman, Evans & Delehanty; Richard Roth, Sr., of Emery Roth & Sons; J. Stanley Sharp of Ketchum & Sharp; Robert Jackson Smith, Partner of Eggers & Higgins; and George S. Johnston of Harrison & Abramovitz. All gave prepared speeches and made themselves available for interview.

Excerpts from Mr. LaFarge's talk follow:

Like you, we architects are here in a triple role.

First and most important, we too are citizens, and as citizens are deeply concerned that our children, your children and *all* American children get the best possible education.

Secondly, we too are taxpayers. We grumble about taxes, and we don't enjoy paying them any more than you do. If it were true that money is being squandered on school construction, we would be as quick as you to sound off.

Third, we are architects, and as such are pledged to serve the public to the very best of our ability.

You have been informed that \$100,000,000 have been wasted in school building in the last eight years. *These figures are pure poppycock.*

No architectural firm depends on public school work for survival. But when an architect accepts a school commission, it is his duty to contribute daring advance in design, anticipating the future and a better City.

Children from drab home surroundings should find in school a first peep view of a richer life.

Of course costs can be whittled on any building project. But such niggardly, penny-pinching tactics defeat the ideal!

Do we want our schools to be mistaken for factories, prisons, or warehouses for automobile parts?

Another illusion of Mr. Gerosa's is his theory of standardization in school building design.

Such stark thinking would inevitably result in stark education, stark surroundings, stark minds—and a stark American future.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The New York Chapter extends its welcome to the following new members:

LEON R. LEVY

HARVEY MEYER

JOHN MONAHAN

PETER B. VAN TASSEL

ARTHUR F. WALLACH

IRWIN D. WEISBERG

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND GEROSA

The need for a continuing public relations program for the Chapter was strikingly demonstrated in late November, when political attacks were launched over "waste," "architectural frills" and "unusual designs" in New York's schools planned by private architectural firms.

"Without our public relations counsel, Edward Gottlieb & Associates, and our account executive, Al Frantz, the Chapter could not have prepared the presentation it did," said L. Bancel LaFarge, president of the Chapter, at the Fall Dinner Meeting. "Statements were written quickly, a press conference called, and special interviews arranged for individual papers—while this subject was still top news in the press and over the air.

But this public relations program will not continue through 1959 unless it receives adequate financial support from Chapter members. In short, if you haven't sent in your contribution, make out a check and get it in the mail today!

Since the last issue of *Oculus* the following firms have contributed to the program:

Adams & Woodbridge, Ronald Allwork, John H. Barry, Richard G. Belcher, Boak & Raad, Rudolph G. Bolling, Briggs & Wood, Chapman, Evans & Delehanty, Alexander D. Crossett & Associates, Fordyce & Hamby, Fulmer & Bowes, Gehron & Seltzer, Nejat Gokbelen, Herbert B. Gracer, Grad, Urbahn & Seelye, Olindo Grossi, Victor Gruen, Halsey, McCormack & Helmer, Inc., Hood & Manice, Ives, Turano & Gardner, Kahn & Jacobs, Henry Klumb, William Lescaze, A. Gordon Lorimer, Francis L. S. Mayers, Herman Neumann, Pomerance & Breines, Isadore & Zachary Rosenfield, Emery Roth & Sons, Frederick Saphier, Daniel Schwartzman, Alfred Shaknis, Starrett & Van Vleck, Taylor & Levi, Lester C. Tichy, Voorhees, Walker, Smith, Smith & Haines, Charles N. and Selig Whinston and Frederick G. Frost, Jr. & Associates (corrections).

NEW BOOKS

TITLE 1 SLUM CLEARANCE PROGRESS—HOUSING

By the New York City Committee on Slum Clearance, Robert Moses, Chairman. 8½" x 11", 26 pages, September 30, 1958, illustrated.

This report, an illuminating document on a pressing problem facing our metropolis, is of interest since it exposes us to the myriad difficulties imposed on great numbers of people by the Committee's decisions. To uproot masses of people, as is necessary with a program such as this, where problems exist as to race, creed, color, language, business and school, etc., is a tremendous undertaking and the committee has shown awareness of this. The dollar volume and number of housing projects completed and proposed, as indicated by the report, is evidence of the vigor with which the problem of slum clearance is being attacked.

CANDIDATES

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

Corporate

ROY FRIEDBERG

HERBERT S. HOWARD, JR.

WARREN THOMAS NAGLE

DANIEL REMETA