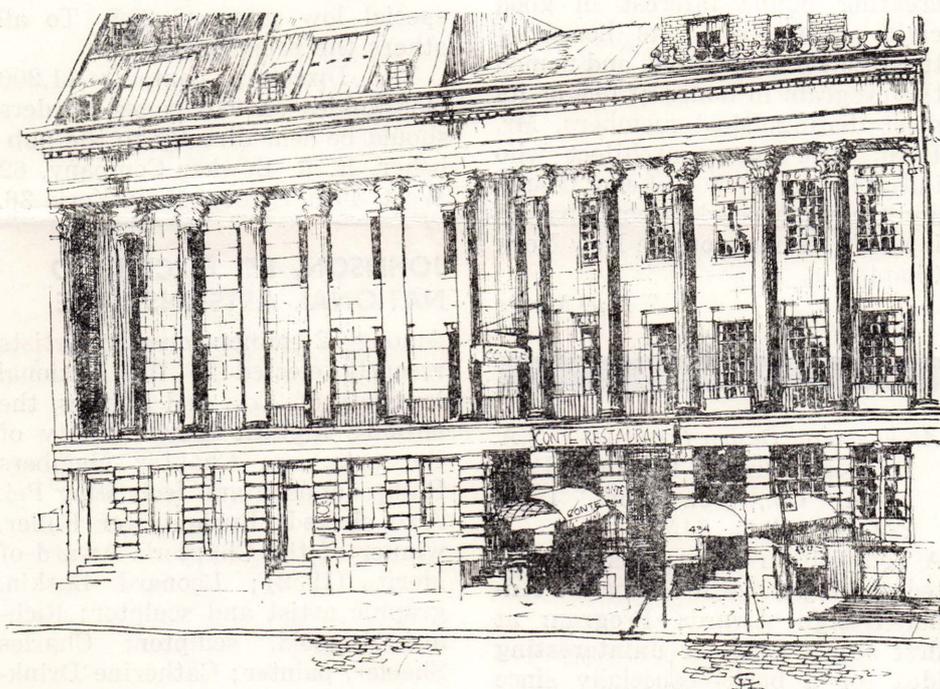


# OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS



APRIL 1963



## NEW YORK LANDMARKS NO. 2 — COLONNADE ROW (1836)

*Sketch and text by James L. Cady*

Colonnade Row (La Grange Terrace) at 428-34 Lafayette St., was designed by A. J. Davis, architect, and built by Seth Geer for John Jacob Astor. The architect patterned the series of connected residences (originally nine) after Lansdown Crescent in Bath.

The marble for the building (originally the entire facade) was cut by Sing Sing prisoners, an economy measure that triggered a local stone mason's riot. The columns are Corinthian in feeling and a continuous railing ran across the colonnade. The entrance to each private house was through a small fenced garden plot, and the ground floor contained the entrance hall, stairway, kitchen, and pantry; at the rear of the house, separated by a small court, were servant quarters. Doric columns originally framed the entrances, and the tall

double-hung windows on the parlor (2nd) floor were replaced by French doors around 1900 when the fourth-floor studios were added to some of the houses. The five houses on the north extremity were presumably removed around 1900 when a stable-garage was built for Wanamaker's.

Of historical interest is the fact that President Tyler and his bride eloped from one of the houses, and that Messrs Thackeray and Dickens visited others. President Lincoln is said to have been scheduled to make his "Cooper Union" address from the second floor balcony of Colonnade Row. Today's long-time residents include Conte's Italian Restaurant and a number of individual tenants who have no intention of moving.

Over the years the patching and alterations have not ruined the de-

sign of Colonnade Row nor seriously affected its scale or dignity (though the four remaining houses are in dire need of repair). It remains the only large scale example of domestic Greek Revival architecture in the city.

Sources: Chapter Historical Buildings Committee file; WPA New York Guide; "Lost Examples of Colonial Architecture"; "Nooks and Corners of Old New York"; residents in building.

*NOTE: Through a printing error, Knight Sturges' fine sketch of the Watson house in last month's issue was credited to P. Geiger. Our apologies to both gentlemen.*

## NELSON NAMED FELLOW

Architect-author-designer George Nelson will be the sole New York Chapter member among 35 advanced to the rank of Fellow of the AIA at the May 5-9 convention in Miami.



Nelson, who was named in the categories of design and literature, is well known in these fields as president of George Nelson & Co., Inc., industrial design; and co-author (with Henry Wright) of "Tomorrow's House" and numerous other books and magazine articles.

Born in Hartford in 1908, Nelson is a graduate of Yale's School of Fine Arts and the American Academy in Rome, winner of the

# OCULUS

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS  
NEW YORK CHAPTER

MARGOT A. HENKEL, Executive Secretary  
115 East 40th Street  
New York 16, N. Y.  
Murray Hill 9-7969

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CONTINUED FROM P. 1

Prix de Rome and Scarab Gold Medal, as well as many more recent honors for his furniture, exhibit, product, and graphic arts designs. Prior to founding his own firm, and his current architectural practice with Gordon Chadwick (Nelson & Chadwick), he had been associated with Time Inc. as co-managing editor and consultant to Architectural FORUM.

The Chapter and *Oculus* extend warmest congratulations to Mr. Nelson for his latest honor.

## IMPROVING NEW YORK

Recently *Oculus* carried an announcement of the first annual Albert S. Bard Award, established by the City Club of New York. Its purpose is "to encourage and promote excellence in civic architecture . . ." and entries may be submitted by any architect registered in New York for any project executed in New York City for any agency of the city government.

The program got started last year when a young architect who is a member of the club was appointed chairman of its sub-committee on Planning and Housing. This sub-committee undertook to draw up recommendations towards improving the quality of design of public buildings in New York City. (The significance of this assignment was impressed upon the chairman when his research revealed that favorable critical men-

tion of the City's public architecture ends with New York's City Hall, designed in 1803!)

The sub-committee's report actually contained eight specific recommendations, including, for example, one of perennial interest to architects—increased fees. But the president of the club considered that the most appropriate recommendation was that of establishing an annual award as a means of creating public interest in good civic architecture. Its board of trustees voted approval, and named the program in honor of one of its most distinguished members, Mr. Bard. The young architect who initiated the idea is Leon Brand, and we are pleased to note that he is also a member of the New York Chapter.

S. Hart Moore

## BOOKS

*Architectural Design Preview*—U.S.A.

By John Dixon. Reinhold Publishing Co., New York, 1962. 224 pp. Illus. \$15.

A compilation of designs submitted to *Progressive Architecture's* Annual Design Awards Program at first seems a rather uninteresting idea for a book—especially since a good percentage of prospective readers already have seen the designs in the magazine. But Associate Editor John Dixon has turned it into a good book with a skillful selection of designs welded together by a fine, restrained text, and excellent reproductions.

The advantage of publishing designs rather than photographs of completed buildings is quite apparent and is emphasized by Thomas Creighton in the foreword to the book. The time lag between an architect's final design drawings and the actual completion of the building may be years. Publishing design drawings therefor shows the more immediate influences and thought of architects in the USA.

The book is divided into building types. Examples are chosen "on the basis of their quality as architecture, how well they satisfy the requirements of the program, and the extent to which they may be prophetic of future trends." It is significant to note that some de-

signs chosen were not award winners, and that the work of 111 architects is represented in the 144 projects included in the book.

Robert Beattie

\* \* \*

The handsomely bound Second Edition of the *American Architects Directory*, which contains listings of all members of the Institute plus a selected list of non-members, is available to AIA members at the special low price of \$15. To all others the price is \$25.

The Directory contains 11,200 biographies on 976 pages. Orders should be sent directly to the publisher, R. R. Bowker Company, 62 West 45th Street, New York 36.

## JOHNSON, PEI ELECTED TO NATIONAL ARTS INSTITUTE

Among 12 eminent creative artists recently elected to the National Institute of Arts and Letters, the nation's highest honor society of the arts, are Chapter Members Philip Johnson and Ieoh Ming Pei. Also elected: Buckminster Fuller, winner of the Chapter's Award of Merit (1952); Leonard Baskin, graphic artist and sculptor; Richard Lippold, sculptor; Charles Sheeler, painter; Catherine Drinker Bowen, biographer; Stanley Kunitz, poet; William Maxwell, novelist; Samuel Eliot Morison, historian, Gilbert Seldes, interpreter of the popular arts; and Nikolai Lopatnikoff, composer.

## LETTERS

Sirs: I was pleased to see the March issue of *Oculus* which had an article about my work under the Stewardson Fellowship. Your article presents a full and balanced treatment and I am thankful. At the moment, I am in the process of joining the A.I.A., so quite soon I hope to be a full-fledged subscriber to your publication.

Edward T. Shiffer  
New York City

Erratum: J. Stanley Sharp, who is serving on the Chapter's School Committee, was inadvertently omitted from the Chapter's Committee Listing mailed to the membership in February.



## SPREADING THE ARTS IN NEW YORK—JOHN MACFADYEN

by Sheldon Licht

In 1960, the New York State Legislature made history when it created a commission to survey the State's cultural resources and determine the role of government in support of the arts. The enabling legislation declared that "the practice and enjoyment of the arts are of increasing importance, and the general welfare . . . will be promoted by giving further recognition to the arts as a vital aspect of our culture and heritage."

After some study, a permanent program was adopted enabling communities of the State to present cultural events at a cost consistent with local conditions. Among those which have been developed are touring companies of the performing arts; the exhibition of original works of art on behalf of regional museums, art centers, and libraries throughout the State; and a technical assistance program to provide consultants in a wide variety of fields to smaller museums, historical societies, and similar institutions. To provide the same professional standards throughout the State, the New York State Council on the Arts defrays a substantial amount of the costs.

In addition to this highly successful program there will be an extension of performances by selected regional symphony orchestras; a county-by-county survey of "architecture worth saving"; a long range art loan program for regional museums from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and other major collections; and a considerable broadening of educational ex-

hibits and performances in public schools.

Executive director of the Council for its two developmental years has been Chapter Member John H. MacFadyen, who was first asked to help out with the initial organization, and then stepped in when the first director was compelled by personal business to relinquish the post.

John has found the problem of organizing and expressing the government's role in the arts as exciting and as demanding as any architectural problem—the work is highly experimental, since it is the first program of its kind. Basically his job is to coordinate and execute his ideas and the ideas of some 200 able advisors. The objective is to give as many people as possible a chance to live with the "living arts." (As John puts it, "Unfamiliarity breeds contempt.") There is no effort to enter into artistic decisions; the Council is there only to support existing institutions and to expose them to new audiences. There is an effort to catch up with the State's rapid suburbanization, in order that people not living in major cities may still have some of the city's artistic pleasures.

Director MacFadyen finds all these problems stimulating, but he feels there should be a two- or three-year tenure for his job to avoid an "ossification" of the system. Modestly, John MacFadyen claims no qualifications for this job. And for a program of this sort, perhaps this is the best qualification to have.

### "DESIGN FOR BUSINESS" PANELS SET BY CHAPTER AND A.M.A.

The New York Chapter AIA has joined with the American Management Association in developing a conference on the theme of "Better Design For Better Business."

The Chapter's participation in the conference, which will be held May 15 through 17 at the Roosevelt Hotel, is a public affairs project developed to create a means by which architects can exchange ideas with management.

On Wednesday, May 15 a panel including Morris Ketchum Jr. and

Walker Cain will discuss "Ugliness Is Costly." The panel will be moderated by Richard W. Snibbe, chairman of the Chapter's Design Committee. On Friday, May 17 Max O. Urbahn will talk on "Better Architecture For Better Business."

Other speakers will include Walter Hoving, board chairman of Tiffany & Company; Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., president of Steuben Glass; Dr. Richard H. Heindel, president of Pratt Institute; C. Nelson Wright, president of Wright Tool & Forge Company.

According to Chapter president Geoffrey N. Lawford, the "conference presents the architectural profession with an opportunity to explain the role and services of the architect to business and, in turn, to get a clearer understanding of management's problems and objectives."

The project was initiated by the Chapter's Public Affairs Counsel working in concert with the Public Affairs Committee.

For further information on the conference contact the General Management Division American Management Association (Astor Hotel), or Chapter headquarters.

### CITY SCHOOLS SEMINAR

The unique problems of planning schools in a big city will be the theme of a two day seminar to be held in New York City on June 6 and 7. The seminar is being jointly sponsored by the New York City Board of Education and the New York Chapter and will be attended by leading educators and architects in the fields of research, administration and design.

The aims of the seminar, according to Frank G. Lopez, Chairman of the Chapter's School Committee, are to improve educational and architectural concepts and to aid cooperation between Boards of Education and architects.

The program will be designed around small working groups in order to allow active participation of all persons attending. The concluding session will be a summary

meeting on the evening of the second day. The work sessions will be by invitation and the final summary meeting will be an open session to anyone making reservation in advance. The seminar will be held at the Carnegie Endowment International Center Building, United Nations Plaza at 46th Street, New York City.

## 27 CHAPTER MEMBERS ON NATIONAL AIA COMMITTEES

Morris Ketchum, Jr. FAIA, Director of AIA's New York Region, has drawn to the attention of *Oculus* that of the Institute's 53 national committees, 27 New York Chapter members are serving on 22 committees for 1963. Seven of the 27 are committee chairmen, 11 are members, and 9 are corresponding members. "The Chapter," says Mr. Ketchum, "is to be congratulated on its outstanding service to the Institute." Members and their committees follow:

Committee on Housing for the Aging: Joseph D. Weiss, AIA, Chairman; Committee on Investments: Benjamin Moskowitz, AIA, Alternate Member; Committee on State and Chapter Affairs: Frederick J. Woodbridge, FAIA, Corresponding Member; Committee on Academic Training: Olindo Grossi, FAIA, Corresponding Member.

Delano and Aldrich—Aldrich-Emerson Fellowships: Lewis G. Adams, AIA, Chairman; John C. B. Moore, FAIA, Member; Lucien David, AIA, Member; Special Committee on Education: Olindo Grossi, FAIA, Member, Ex-Officio; Committee on Office Procedures: Daniel Schwartzman, FAIA, Chairman; Committee on Professional Insurance and Bonds: John Nelson Linn, AIA, Corresponding Member; Committee on Building Codes and Disaster Studies: William B. Tabler, FAIA, Member; James B. Newman, AIA, Corresponding Member; Committee on AIA-Engineers Conference: William Bailey Smith, AIA, Chairman.

Committee on Aesthetics: Richard W. Snibbe, AIA, Chairman; Committee on the Collaborating Arts: Thorne Sherwood, FAIA, Member; Committee on Religious Buildings: Percival Goodman, FAIA, Member; Brother C. J. B. Bau-

mann, FAIA, Member; Committee on Educational Buildings: Michael L. Radoslovitch, FAIA, Member; Committee on Theatre Architecture: Ben Schlanger, AIA, Member; Committee on Public Housing Administration Liaison: Henry D. Whitney, AIA, Chairman; Committee on Urban Design: Clarence S. Stein, FAIA, Corresponding Member.

Committee on the National Capital: I. M. Pei, AIA, Member; Osvaldo Luis Toro, AIA, Corresponding Member; Committee on Preservation of Historic Buildings: Geoffrey Platt, FAIA, Corresponding Member; Committee on International Relations: Robert W. Cutler, FAIA, Chairman; Committee on Pan-American Congress—1965: Philip C. Johnson, AIA, Member; Advisory Council on Pan-American Congress—1965: Wallace K. Harrison, FAIA, Member; I. M. Pei, AIA, Member; Edward D. Stone, FAIA, Member; Robert W. Cutler, FAIA, Member.

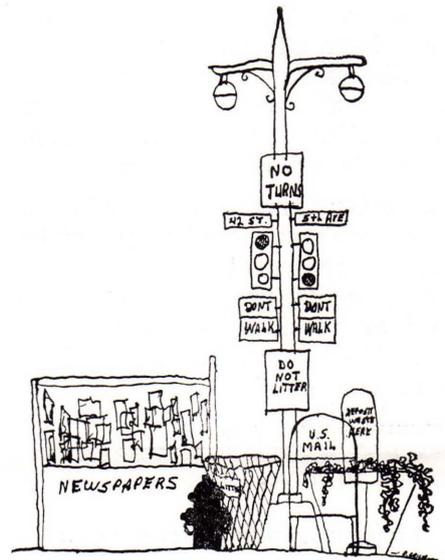
The ugliness comes not only from the general clutter, but from the individual appearance of many items, which are designed with little more in mind than lack of maintenance, and convenience for the police, fire and sanitation departments.

As most bus stops are on corners, the Sanitation Department places most of its 11,000 litter baskets there. This makes sense, as littering is extremely high at this location. However, more specialized items such as mail storage boxes, police call boxes, fire alarm boxes, and others not in constant use don't necessarily have to be placed right near a busy corner and could probably serve most situations in the middle of a block.

But the greatest space-eaters are Manhattan's news stands. They are to some degree a considerable convenience to the pedestrian, yet they crowd many corners, especially where subway entrances have already pre-empted most of the walking space. For example, on the northwest corner of 40th Street and Seventh Avenue only **one** person can pass between the subway entrance, the news stand and a traffic sign without walking in the gutter! One solution would be to relocate news stands at the same intersection so as not to interfere with foot traffic. Another: incorporate the news stands over a new subway entrance.

Architects have proposed before the incorporation into a single, well designed unit all the street corner necessities, placed out of the pedestrian traffic pattern. Each component within this "street utility unit" would have distinctive coloring and/or texture to help avoid confusion. The result could be that all components would be more visible and easier to use.

Toward these ends, the Chapter might well propose formation of an impartial advisory group to help the City pass on the desirability of each piece of its street furniture, its location and design in relation to public need and use. Each City department concerned would be represented, as well as architects, city planners, and the designers of the products themselves. At least it would be worth the try.



Sketch by P. Geiger

## CHAOS AT THE CORNER

By Charles K. Robinson

As most citizens are at least dimly aware, the average street corner is one of the messiest places to be found in any city, especially New York. Fire hydrants, traffic lights, street lamps, fire alarm boxes, news stands, bus stop signs, mail boxes, police call boxes, traffic signs, potted plants and litter baskets—all compete for limited sidewalk space and for the attention of motorists and pedestrians.

## FIRE AND CODES DISCUSSED

Joseph Platzker, Building Code Consultant who served as Commissioner of Buildings & Houses under Mayor LaGuardia, lectured on February 26th on "Fire Safety with New Building Materials." Recent statistical studies show an alarming increase in the number of fires in New York City in the last five years. Causes, building types and point of origin were analyzed. National fire losses exceed one billion dollars annually.

Fire protection afforded by building codes varies greatly due to the wide differences in local building codes. Sixty-six of the largest cities in the United States use their own individual codes while 10 per cent of our smaller cities have no building code whatsoever. In New York State less than 500 of approximately 1500 communities have accepted our excellent state code even though this has been widely promoted for several years.

Mr. Platzker stressed the importance of code revisions to permit the use of new construction techniques and new materials. The delay in accepting plastics under various codes illustrates this problem despite the fact that a large number of state fire marshals and fire insurance companies in replying to his questionnaire indicated that they had observed no fire safety problem in their experience with plastics.

Mr. Platzker recommended AIA support of code revisions on which a coordinating committee is working to bring closer together the three "model" building codes. The AIA should also try to persuade the National Board of Fire Underwriters, who sponsors the National Building Code, to participate in the efforts of this committee.

*E. A. Dennison  
for the Technical Committee*

## PRESTRESSED CONCRETE SERIES

Having successfully published the newly enacted Concrete Section of the New York City Building Code, the Concrete Industry Board is now focusing attention on prestressed concrete.

A Symposium Series on Basic Design of Prestressed Concrete will

be held April 29, May 6, 13, and 20 at Hewitt Hall, Cooper Union, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. under the auspices of The Concrete Industry Board, in co-operation with Cooper Union, the New York Association



## WOMEN'S ARCHITECTURAL AUXILIARY

No, you don't have to bring your husband to come to the W.A.A. "Dutch Treat" luncheon May 1. But it would be interesting for him, too. Prospective members are especially welcome. It will be in the Pine Room, Architectural League, at noon. We will, at this time, make our **third** grant to Architectural Students. The awards given now amount to \$10,000.

The Auxiliary takes this opportunity also to name its Nominating Committee for the coming year: Mrs. John Steinle, Chairman; Mrs. Jule von Sternberg, Mrs. Selig Winston, Mrs. Percival Goodman, and Mrs. Charles Macchi.

The slate they have presented consists of these nominees: Mrs. Ronald Allwork, Mrs. John Bur-

roughs, and Mrs. Lathrop Douglass. Those elected to remain on the Board of Managers are Mrs. Douglas Haskell and Mrs. Samuel Juster. Those retiring are Mrs. Max Urbahn, President, Mrs. Morris Ketchum, Jr. and Mrs. William Delehanty. Immediately following the election of new Board members, the W.A.A. will name the officers. However, this is not too much of a business meeting, so please show up May 1—fun, too, is guaranteed.

The fee has been established at \$5.00. A certificate of attendance will be available. Application may be made to the C.I.B. Office—220 East 42 Street, New York 17, N. Y.

roughs, and Mrs. Lathrop Douglass. Those elected to remain on the Board of Managers are Mrs. Douglas Haskell and Mrs. Samuel Juster. Those retiring are Mrs. Max Urbahn, President, Mrs. Morris Ketchum, Jr. and Mrs. William Delehanty. Immediately following the election of new Board members, the W.A.A. will name the officers. However, this is not too much of a business meeting, so please show up May 1—fun, too, is guaranteed.

### Convention "Coffee"

Mrs. Morris Ketchum, Jr. will be Chairman of our gathering in Miami. It will take place directly after the "Ladies Forum," May 6.

*Hildegard Sleeper*

## COMMITTEE ACTIVITIES

**Technical Committee:** Ten copies each of lectures by Frank Fryberg and J. Platzker will be placed in the Chapter office for members who wish to refer to them.

**Membership Committee:** The committee was informed of recent action of AIA Directors concerning the establishment of the following categories in the Institute and its component organizations: Corporate (national), Professional Associate (chapter)—new category, Associate (chapter), Student Associate (chapter), Honorary Member (national), Honorary Associate (chapter), Honorary Fellow (national). Current categories to be abolished will be Junior Associate and Honorary Affiliate.

**School Committee:** Monthly informal discussion sessions will be held at 5:30 p.m. on the last Wednesday of each month for the next three months in the Bar of the Architectural League. These ses-

sions will be completely informal and open to all interested chapter members.

Final preparations are being made for the two-day Seminar on Schools to be jointly sponsored by the New York Chapter, and the New York City Board of Education on June 6th and 7th.

**Legislative Committee:** Representatives of the Chapter and the Architects Council met Acting Chairman Blaustein of the City Planning Commission on March 14th to discuss problems in connection with interpretations of the new Zoning Laws. A second meeting for the same purpose is being set up with Commissioner Birns of the Department of Buildings.

**Headquarters Committee:** Michael M. Harris has agreed to take over the chairmanship of the committee, which was without a chairman.

*James T. Burns, Jr.*

## COMING EVENTS

- APRIL 23-25 Building Research Institute Spring Conferences,  
Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.
- MAY 1 Hospitals & Health Lecture  
Gallery A, Wed., 5:15 P.M.
- MAY 5-9 A.I.A. Convention  
Miami, Florida (Hotel Americana)
- MAY 14 Technical Committee Lecture  
Gallery A, Tues., 5:30 P.M.
- MAY 19 Modern House Day, New Canaan, Conn.  
Tour of Six Homes and St. Mark's Church  
11:00 A.M. to 5 P.M. Sunday (Benefit)  
Tickets: Mrs. G. S. Ritchie, Fable Farm Rd.
- MAY 22 Reception for Prospective & Newly Elected Members  
Wednesday, 5:30 P.M., Gallery A
- MAY 25 Hospitals & Health Field Trip  
N.Y.U. Teaching Hospital  
Saturday, 10:00 A.M.
- JUNE 5 Nominating Luncheon  
Gallery A, Wed., 12:30 P.M.
- JUNE 6 & 7 School Committee Seminar  
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

## OCULUS DIRECTORY

OCULUS is grateful to the following contributors who helped sustain the costs of this issue.

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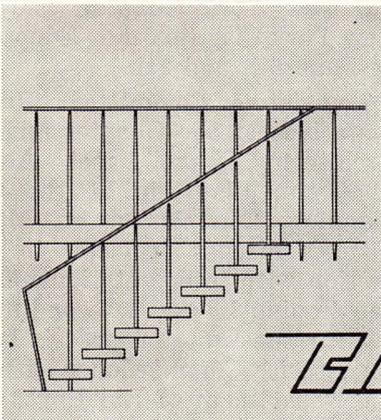
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## CHAPTER BULLETIN BOARD

The fourth Annual N.Y.A.C.E.—A.I.A. Golf Outing has been set for Tuesday, May 21st at Winged Foot Golf Club, Mamaroneck, N. Y. Details of the outing and reservation forms will be sent out soon.

Beginning with the July 1963 issue AIA *Journal* subscription rates for Chapter Associates will be increased to \$4.00 per year (\$3.50 for students). Single copies, \$1.

To help defray the cost of mailing and billing, it is the policy of the Chapter Office to charge a nominal handling fee on mail orders for A.I.A. documents.

A copy of the prospectus, "Summer Course for Architects and Engineers, Nuclear Defense Engineering, Protective Construction" may be examined at the Chapter Office. These courses, sponsored by the Office of Civil Defense and free to qualified professionals, will be held in June and July at George Washington University, Washington, D.C.; the University of Arizona, Tucson; and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Interested members are urged to register as soon as possible.

## MEMBERSHIP

## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

## Corporate

Istvan Botond  
Rosario D'Agrosa  
Harry R. de Polo  
George T. Frank  
Dan Payer  
Joseph L. Russo

Frederick B. Wildfoerster  
Stanley M. Wolf  
Harold H. Hoskins  
(Transferred from  
Southern California  
Chapter)

## Associate

Douglas N. Blauvelt

Robert H. Schofield

## CANDIDATES

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

## Corporate

Nathan Streitman

## Associate

Tamas J. Belanyi

Harold Theodore Graves, II

William Charles Shopsin

Albert M. J. Simon

George Kostro

Walter J. Johnson

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Edward J. Hills  
and William Bailey Smith

Sponsors:  
Michael M. Harris  
and Stephen J. Kagel

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Samuel S. Arlen  
and Michael M. Harris

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Herbert A. Tessler  
and A. Gordon Lorimer

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