

OCULUS

NEW YORK CHAPTER THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS



JUNE-JULY 1965

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NEW YORK CHAPTER, JUNE 1965



MAX O. URBAHN

ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS

President Wilson brought the gavel down with finality and, savoring these final moments, turned over the meeting to his successor. On this second day of June, the New York Chapter had a new president: Max O. Urbahn.

It had been an exciting year; a year marked by many successes and many accomplishments. Landmarks preservation, a popular crusade, had become a hard political fact. Final touches were being made to the new fee schedule. The formidable voice of the Chapter had been brought to bear on the inequities of the Housing Redevelopment Board program; and its repercussions were still being felt at Albany. The prestige of the Chapter had gone undiminished and its members were sought. Robert Cutler had been named president of the N.Y. Building Congress. George D. Brown, a key figure in the Mitchell-Lama statements, was to be sworn in as the only architect in the 21-member N.Y.C. Board of Higher Edu-

cation. It had been a year of hard work and sustained pressures. There was the silent task of guiding long-range campaigns: the Board of Education program, the development of equal opportunities, the coordination of 36 active committees. Now, at the last meeting of the year, the final problem of succession had been resolved and the Chapter had chosen those who would lead it in the coming year:

President: Max O. Urbahn

Vice President: David F.M. Todd

Secretary: Owen L. Delevante

Treasurer: H. Dickson McKenna

To the leadership and prestige of the New York Chapter, President Urbahn brings the luster of a distinguished architect known in national and international circles. Head of the firm bearing his name, Mr. Urbahn is a "space age architect," the managing partner of the combined architectural-engineering organization known as URSAM, the creator of the Vertical Assembly Building for Project Apollo at Cape Kennedy, and the designer of the Launch Control Center for NASA's moon-shot program.

To chapter endeavors and interests, Mr. Urbahn will bring an authority and audacity bred from a deep familiarity with city and Institute affairs. A participating member of the White House Conference on Natural Beauty, Mr. Urbahn is a member of the Fine Arts Federation, the National Institute of Architectural Education and the New York State Council of School Superintendents. He was recently named chairman of the Architectural Advisory Committee of the New York Board of Trade. He is also serving the AIA's Gov-

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MEDAL OF HONOR TO BREUER

One of Mr. Wilson's last official acts was the presentation of the Chapter's highest award, the Medal of Honor, to Marcel Breuer FAIA, "in recognition of distinguished creative design for construction and industry; of outstanding architectural design achievements in many parts of the world showing a truly consistent character; of significant contributions to the profession through many years of teaching at the Bauhaus and Harvard; of the ability to recognize the importance of and to use all the visual arts in the creation of a complete architectural environment."

Marcel Breuer was born in Hungary. He studied and taught at the Bauhaus. At the invitation of Walter Gropius, he came to the U.S. in 1937 and taught at Harvard for nine years. He opened his New York office in 1946.

RUTKINS MEMORIAL AWARD TO NORVAL WHITE

Also honored by the Chapter at the annual meeting was Norval White, who received the Harry B. Rutkins Memorial Award "for his creative leadership and devoted service to the Chapter, the profession and the community."

Mr. White is chairman of the Chapter's Housing Committee and former chairman of the now defunct Younger Architects Committee. He served on last year's Nominating Committee, and was a member of the Urban Design, Admissions, Exhibits and Chapter Goals Committees.

Norval White is perhaps better known for his principal role as

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AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS
NEW YORK CHAPTER

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ELECTION OF NEW OFFICERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ernment Liaison Committee and on the N.C.A.R.B.

Past President Wilson will continue to play an active role in Chapter affairs as he assumes his new duties as a member of the Chapter's executive committee. Also elected to serve on the committee was Mr. Norval White, chairman of the Housing Committee and winner of the Chapter's Harry Rutkins Award. Brother Cajetan J. B. Baumann, Lewis Davis, Richard Roth Sr. and Emanuel Turano will continue on the committee.

Members of the elective committees chosen at the meeting were:

Committee on Fellows:

Michael L. Radoslovich
William B. Tabler

Jury for the Medal of Honor and Awards of Merit:

Danforth W. Toan
Ladislav L. Rado
Gordon L. Schenck

Committee on Professional Practice:

Frank G. Lopez
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Representative of the New York State Association of Architects:

E. Allen Dennison

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John L. Wilson

CHARLES THOMSEN

AWARD TO NORVAL WHITE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

chairman of AGBANY, a group which desperately sought to prevent the destruction of Penn Station. A member of the board of NYCCE, he is also a trustee of ARCH, vice-chairman of Manhattan Community Planning Board No. 8 and a director of the Municipal Art Society.

ABRAMS MADE HONORARY ASSOCIATE MEMBER

Charles Abrams, cited for his "contribution to architecture through his endeavors to provide better human shelter," has been identified with the housing field since 1933. As a member of Mayor LaGuardia's administration, he laid the groundwork for the laws and procedures for public housing in America.

Author of "Man's Struggle for Shelter," Mr. Abrams has helped formulate housing policies for 16 nations. He has participated in United Nations housing missions to Turkey, Pakistan, India the Philippines, to name a few. He is presently engaged in a major study of urban renewal in the U.S. for the Ford Foundation. He was recently appointed chairman of Columbia's Division of Urban Planning, one of three divisions, recently created in a major reorganization of the School of Architecture.



MARCEL BREUER

To a great form-giver of architecture, the Chapter's highest award, the Medal of Honor.

BOOKS

Living Architecture: Mayan. Text and photographs by Henri Stierlin. Plans by Georges Berthoud. Grosset and Dunlap, New York, 1964 (English Ed.) 192 pp. illus.

This volume, first in a series of works describing important architectural epochs, supplies a treasury of startlingly handsome photographs of Mayan work in Mexico and Central America. It also, in readable text, supplies archeological information, critical comment and Mayan building techniques.

The series is intended particularly to advance the layman's appreciation of architecture (volumes on Egyptian, Baroque, Roman and Gothic architecture are in preparation) but there is no writing-down: Architects will find technical discussion, plentiful keyed plans and clearly drawn details as well as the 80-odd amazing shots of plazas, buildings and sculptured details. And for those architects whose acquaintance with the Mayan stops at Chichen Itza the wealth offered by other sites is eye-opening.

In fact, the layman might have been given a few more handy explanations; definitions of "pisé" and "binder molding" for example, or a plan showing how chambers are "linked to the exterior only by means of right-angled corridors." The rather arbitrary assumption that a pillar is always rectangular and a column always square may have come from a translation difficulty. A reminder that Mayan stucco facings were painted in what might seem a "barbarous" way to modern eyes is countered by a general note describing "shining white facades."

A few text references to photograph page numbers where such photographs are not in the immediate group under discussion would save scurrying about, although leafing back through the plates in search of a particular one is in itself rewarding. And a more detailed explanatory map of Mayan territories, including boundaries of the Peten region often mentioned in the text, would be welcome.

ELIZABETH COIT, FAIA

ART WORK SUBMISSION FOR N.Y.C. SCHOOLS — 3 TOWARD A NEW POLICY

by GRAY TAYLOR, A.I.A. *School Committee*

This is the third installment in the debate initiated by OCULUS to examine the Board of Education policies on artwork in its building program. Last May, Vice-President Todd launched the debate and found more timidity than boldness in the Board's "didactic standard of personal opinion" while Ronald Allwork AIA, President of the Architectural League, expressed the need for defining the objectives of such a policy.

In this issue, Gray Taylor AIA of the Chapter's School Committee examines the pitfalls inherent in the Board's present criteria and outlines the recommendations of his sub-committee toward a more equitable and challenging program.

The School Committee has been interested in art submissions for New York City schools for some time. We have discussed the ills of the present system at some length and offer the following:

First—the present allowance for art work is too low. It is now well below 1% of the total construction funds. We strongly urge that an art work cash allowance of 1% be included for New York City schools. In cities such as Boston and Philadelphia, ordinances have been in force since 1959, stipulating that "an amount not to exceed 1% of the total dollar amount of any construction contract for a building, bridge and its approaches, arch, gate or other structure or fixture to be paid for either wholly or in part by the City, shall be devoted to the Fine Arts . . .". We believe New York City should have a similar ordinance. The use of art helps support the architectural concept and furthers the pleasure of the viewer. It is not intended to be a substitute for good architectural design. However, when funds are restricted to the bare essentials or purely utilitarian, the potential of the architect is limited.

Second—At present the work of the artist is initially reviewed by the Board of Education. Sometimes the artist must submit several sketches and original concepts are changed; and in many instances diluted to the point where there is no longer strength or meaning. Finally, the art work is brought to the Fine Arts Commission for review. It would seem far better and more logical to us that people knowledgeable about art and architecture should be the prime reviewer, not the Board of Education. As the Art Commission meets but once a month and has a full agenda for each meeting, it might be well for the Art Commission to appoint a reviewing committee, possibly composed of members of the Aesthetics Committee of the New York Chapter of the A.I.A. This group would take suggestions and recommendations from the Board of Education, selection of the artist being by the Architect, and consider the concepts and ideas of both architect and artist. All presentations to this committee would have architect and artist present. When the artist's sketches were approved by the committee, then they would be presented to the Fine Arts Commission for formal approval. We believe an arrangement such as outlined would tend to improve the art work now being incorporated in New York City schools. Selection of art work should not be a Board of Education function, and we believe it would be most happy to avoid the criticism of the past by placing the responsibility in other hands.

Third—after artists are approved for an art commission, they are asked to work on sketches, many times often revised, for a considerable length of time for no pay. It is possible for an artist to make several sketches and have them all rejected, and ultimately the decision made to have no art

work. In this case, the unused allowance would be returned to the Board of Education, and the artist would be unreimbursed. This, of course, is a highly unfair practice. There should be an agreement between artist and Board of Education, and payments made at various stages of development. Perhaps payments should be authorized at approval of the initial concept, final concept, completion of the art work, and upon final installations. Better still, a system of prepayments would give the artist some money for supplies and equipment, so that he would not be financing the design and fabrication from his own pocket.

LETTERS

Dear Sir:

I note with pleasure from current issues of OCULUS that my old friend Bill Ballard is at last being recognized by being made a Fellow of the Institute. This word to you is only to ask you to correct the impression given by your write-up of him that he attended Columbia and Fontainebleau—(true) but did not attend anyplace else (false!).

Bill is a member of the Class of 1927, Princeton, graduated from the Department of Architecture there in '27, then went to Columbia and Fontainebleau, but returned to Princeton to take his graduate degree under Jean Labatut, whom he had met at Fontainebleau in 1932 . . . Under the circumstances, I think you will agree that Princeton should come in for its proper share in the credit of having turned out an architect like Bill Ballard.

RAYMOND A. RUGE, A.I.A.

We are grateful to Mr. Ruge for setting the record straight and for an informative thumbnail sketch of Mr. Ballard's academic pursuits.

SPECIAL REPORT ON HOSPITAL COSTS

NYS REGULATORY AGENCIES AND HOSPITALIZATION COSTS *by the HOSPITAL AND HEALTH COMMITTEE*

The growing cost of hospitalization in New York State is the persistent concern of the Hospital and Health Committee of the New York Chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Our efforts are concentrated in two principal directions:

1. To reduce actual hospital construction costs.
2. To devise hospital facilities that can provide more economical and effective medical care.

It is obvious that a hospital that is housed in an obsolete building cannot provide first-class medical and nursing services—nor can it operate efficiently. Unless old and obsolete hospitals are constantly being replaced or modernized no state can provide its citizens with adequate and economical health services.

As hospital architects, this is the area of our prime responsibility but we are frequently frustrated in our efforts and embarrassed by our inability to provide new and improved facilities when they are needed. We are sometimes asked: "Why did it take two years just to add an X-Ray room to our hospital?" or "Why does it take so many years to build a hospital that by the time it is finished the men who started it are no longer around to use it?" There is no one answer to these questions. After all, a modern hospital is the most complex machine ever conceived by man to house and heal the sick. It cannot be designed and constructed overnight. However, much of the time and expense in building a hospital is spent in attempting to obtain the approval of a multitude of Federal, state, municipal and private agencies and departments, each one of which has rules and regulations; and which requires submission of building plans and other data deemed to be significant for examination, evaluation and review.

As approval by these bodies is mandatory, and as their function is regulatory rather than advisory,

the hospital seeking to improve its efficiency or extend its service has no recourse but to submit to the delays and frustrations those applications create. Each such submission involves cost. Every delay results in more expenditures.

These frustrations are compounded by the fact that most of these agencies are understaffed and that the persons they employ are frequently underpaid and sometimes incompetent. The examiner's only defense against departmental rebuke is the strictest interpretation of their code. As the exercise of judgment is dangerous, the examiner tends to "go by the book" even if his decision may run counter to common sense.

When a disapproval is received, there are always means available to appeal the adverse decision but these means are frequently so costly and so time-consuming that the hospital is forced to direct the architect to comply or abandon the project. Should a hospital decide to fight a disapproval, the course to be followed requires judgment, experience and usually a good deal of time and money. Generally, the architect will first seek out the examiner responsible for the disapproval and attempt to convince him to reverse his decision. Failing this, he may go over the examiner's head to his superior. Such administrators frequently do have some limited discretionary powers but they are frequently loathe to undermine the authority of the examiners unless the architect's arguments are overwhelming. Failing at this level, the architect may begin to work his way up through the hierarchy of the agency. This may be a simple structure as in most municipal agencies, or more complex. A disapproval of a Hill-Burton application by the state agency for example may be appealed to the regional office and then, if necessary, to the VSPHS in Washington.

Finally, most state and municipal legislation offer some formal ave-

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nue of relief from administrative decision. This generally takes the form of a permanent appeals board, with powers to reverse the decision of the departments and, within limits, to grant variances from the provisions of the act or code under their jurisdiction. Such boards generally set up their own special and highly complex procedures which must be followed by applicants if they wish to have their case reviewed and presented in public hearing. Conducting a case through such boards is generally beyond the competence of most hospital architects. Hospitals, disappointed in the decision of the board, do not have to give up here; they have the right to insist upon review by the courts. The cost, this time, and the uncertainties of such a succession of procedures are so prohibitive that some influential hospitals have found it more expeditious to have "special" legislation enacted that would exempt them from the regulation that stood in the way of their development.

The fact is that experienced hospital architects practicing in New York State are so aware of the disaster a disapproval by any one of the many agencies may bring to a project that they tend to advise their clients against any proposal that might even risk a disapproval. Thus, an artificial limit is set on advances in hospital design and construction that could effect savings in hospital costs.

The partial list of approving agencies gives some idea of the complexity of this problem. While no single project would require approvals from the entire list, each of the agencies claims jurisdiction over hospital construction in New York State.

The type of health facility, its geographical location, its financing, and its ownership determine the applicability of these agencies' requirements.

Jurisdictions are frequently overlapping. This results not only in unnecessary duplication, but sometimes when their requirements differ, in conflict between agencies. When this occurs, the hospital becomes a helpless third party to the conflict.

to approve or disapprove without

Requirements differ, not only in kind, but in extent; one agency may be concerned only with preliminary proposals while another may be concerned only with final working drawings and specifications; one agency may require submissions of only a single application while another may require a whole series of applications, plan reviews, and building inspections extending through the entire building process; one agency may publish a comprehensive code of requirements, such as the N.Y.C. Health Dept., while another, like the N.Y.C. Fire Department, may prefer to keep its standards to itself, thereby giving itself the freedom

limitations, or make demands for alterations even after completion of the building and the issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy.

This, then, is the general situation under which architects in this State have been operating for many years and despite these difficulties have succeeded in making some very real progress. The situation today, however, has undergone a very radical alteration by the introduction of the Metcalf-McClosky legislation which has been superimposed upon this regulatory structure and the question must now be faced as to whether or not our medical facilities can continue to develop under this now unimaginably complex situation.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

AGENCIES WITH JURISDICTION OVER HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION

FEDERAL AGENCIES

Bureau of the Budget	Department of Justice
Department of Defense	Department of Labor
Department of Air Force	U.S. Housing & Home Finance Administration
Department of the Navy	—Community Facilities Administration
	—Office of Education
	—Office of Vocational Rehabilitation
Veterans Administration	—Public Health Service

STATE AGENCIES

N.Y.S. Department of Health
 N.Y.S. Hospital Facilities Program
 N.Y.S. Division of Hospital Review and Planning
 N.Y.S. Bureau of Maternal and Child Care
 N.Y.S. Bureau of Tuberculosis Control
 N.Y.S. Narcotic Control Section — Executive Division
 N.Y.S. Environmental Sanitation
 N.Y.S. Department of Mental Hygiene
 N.Y.S. Department of Social Welfare
 N.Y.S. Department of Public Works
 N.Y.S. Department of Labor
 N.Y.S. Education Department

MUNICIPAL AGENCIES

(VARIES, DEPENDING ON LOCATION, THE FOLLOWING IS FOR N.Y.C.)

Planning Commission
 Building Department
 Fire Department — requires separate filings for oxygen, sprinklers, interior fire alarm, exterior fire alarm, refrigeration, standpipe, fire prevention, involving a number of bureaus.
 Department of Water Supply, Gas and Electricity
 Department of Health
 —Division of Hospitals and Institutions
 —Maternity and Newborn Division
 Department of Hospitals
 Department of Air Pollution Control
 Department of Highways

The Metcalf - McClosky Act

The Metcalf-McClosky Act was put into effect in October of last year with the laudable intent of eliminating the unnecessary duplication of medical care facilities and providing for their better distribution by controlling the construction or extension of any private, voluntary or municipal medical institutions on the basis of public need. By these means, it is clear the State has acquired the power and assumed the responsibility of determining whether or not the hopes and aspirations of any medical institution may or may not be fulfilled. To the State Department of Social Welfare, the State and Regional Hospital Review and Planning Councils and every State agency and department previously concerned with the design of hospitals and nursing homes (see previous list) have been assigned this awesome responsibility.

Into this elaborate administrative machine must, of course, be fed information and it was with considerable shock that hospital architects first obtained their application forms from the Area Office of the State Department of Social Welfare. The forms, some fourteen pages in themselves, require complete data on the institution itself, including the financial reliability of its directors, the competence of the staff, and many other details. In addition, demographic information concerning the population within the hospital's catchment area and the kinds and qualities of existing services now provided within that area are required. This kind of information is often not easily available to the institution and may require extensive research. We are particularly concerned by the requirement of the submission of complete prelim-

inary plans even before approval of the project in principle is given. Not only will such architectural talent be wasted on projects that never proceed but hospitals are loathe to spend the time and the money that is really necessary to design these projects properly when the effort is so highly speculative. Unfortunately, once a project is approved, it must proceed without substantial change, no matter how badly its original conception proves to be.

The administrator of the act, Mr. Antonio A. Sereri, at a recent meeting of our Committee, admitted the current inability of his department to evaluate these applications but stressed the point that the only "safe" course he could follow would be strict observance of each and every provision of this Act and expressed the hope that in time the administrative machinery would be strengthened and improved. His assurances did little to modify our view that the Metcalf-McClosky act as it now stands will:

- 1) Discourage needed modernization.
- 2) Increase the time necessary to complete a project.
- 3) Reduce the quality of architectural and engineering design.
- 4) Increase the cost of hospital expansion and improvements.
- 5) Reduce the efficiency of hospital operations.
- 6) Postpone advances in medical service.
- 7) Discourage long range institutional planning.

A solution to this problem is urgently needed, bureaucratic obstruction must be ended. In its place be provided the kind of guidance that is needed in the development of the health service of this State.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES

Hospital Review and Planning Council (Required)
 Joint Commission for the Accreditation of Hospitals
 National Board of Fire Underwriters
 The Insurance Carrier



GEORGE D. BROWN

GEORGE D. BROWN ON BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

George D. Brown, member of the New York Chapter and partner in the firm of Brown Guenther-Battaglia Galvin, was sworn in by Mayor Wagner along with Dr. Loyd H. Bailer as new members of the Board of Higher Education. The 21-member Board is also the Board of Trustees of the City University of New York. Its members are appointed by the mayor for nine year terms and serve without pay.

Long active in the profession, George Brown is a former member of the N.Y. Chapter's Executive committee and Vice Chairman of its Fees and Contracts committee. He is also a former member of the Board of Directors, and Chairman of the Fees and Contracts committee of the NYSAA. He is on the Board of Directors of the Citizens Housing and is serving on the Cardinal's Committee of the Laity for Catholic Charities.

His prior activities in public service include four years as executive secretary, NYS Division of Housing, and consultant to the NYC Housing Authority, the City Planning Commission, HRB, and the Civil Service Commission.

George Brown's architectural practice is as diversified as his service to the profession. It includes housing and educational projects as well as medical facilities.

He is a graduate of Columbia College and of the Columbia School of Architecture.

A.I.A. membership pins are now available to all members. The new pin, which officially replaces the maroon octagon-shaped pin, features the A.I.A. eagle and column symbol atop a maroon enameled bar with the letters A.I.A. in gold. Pins may be ordered directly from the Institute for \$3.00 each.

MEMBERSHIP

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

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

Corporate

John D. Evans
Minor L. Bishop
Burton Wm. Berger
Wei Foo Chun
David E. Glasser
William A. Godsall
David Schwerd
August F. Ventura

Professional Associate

Roger S. Blaho
Micha Koepfel

Associate

C. Richard Hatch
Orest Prypkhan
Stephen D. Jakobs
Joe Y. Fuchida
Roy R. Thomson
Howard F. Itzkowitz

CANDIDATES

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

Corporate

Paul Sheldon Cooper
Bruno R. Marus
Laurie Mutchnik
Maurer
Stanley Maurer
Rolf H. Ohlhausen
Charles A. Platt
Mildred Popkin
William Charles Shopsin
David Isadore Smotrich
Theodore Wei
Frank W. Munzer
Peter Gale Moore
Irving Teich

Professional Associate

George J. Rehl
Charles Theodore Eglil III
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John J. Andres &
Gordon J. Wise
Sponsors:
C. Gates Beckwith &
Leon S. Barton, Jr.

Associate

George M. Gabor
Theodore Maggos
August Mario Petrone
Peggy Cottom Winslow
Sponsors:
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COMING EVENTS

September, 1965

Chairman Luncheon Pine Room Thurs. Sept. 23 at 12:30
NYSAA Pre-Convention Luncheon Dining Room Wed. Sept. 29 at 12:30

October, 1965

Regional Council Conference Concord Hotel Kiamesha Lake, New York Sun. Oct. 10
NYSAA Convention Concord Hotel Sun.-Wed. Oct. 10-13

November, 1965

Chapter Fall Opening Meeting Dining Room Wed. Nov. 10 at 7:00

January, 1966

Membership Cocktail Party Dining Room Wed. Jan. 12 at 5-8
Nominating Committee Luncheon Dining Room Tues. Jan. 25 at 12:30

February, 1966

Anniversary Dinner Thurs. Feb. 17 (Lent starts Feb. 23 and ends Apr. 17)

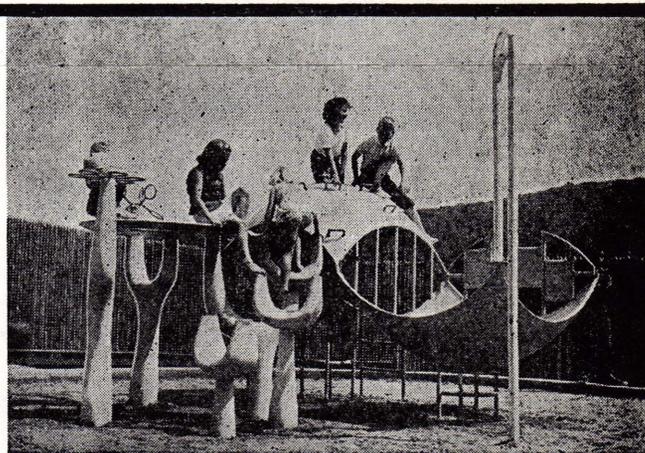
May, 1966

A.I.A. Pre-Convention Luncheon Dining Room Wed. May 11 at 12:30
Membership Cocktail Party Dining Room Wed. May 25 at 5-8

June, 1966

Annual Luncheon Dining Room Wed. June 1 at 12:30
A.I.A. Convention Denver, Colo. June 26-July 1

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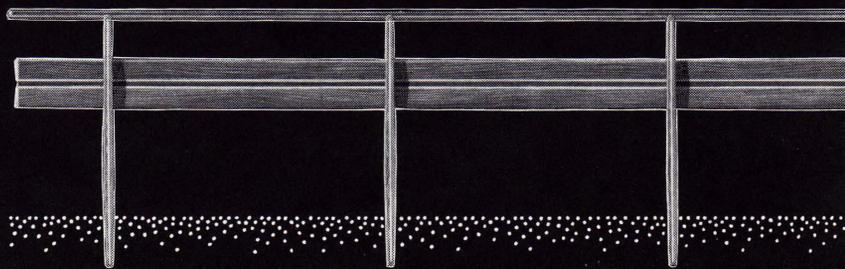
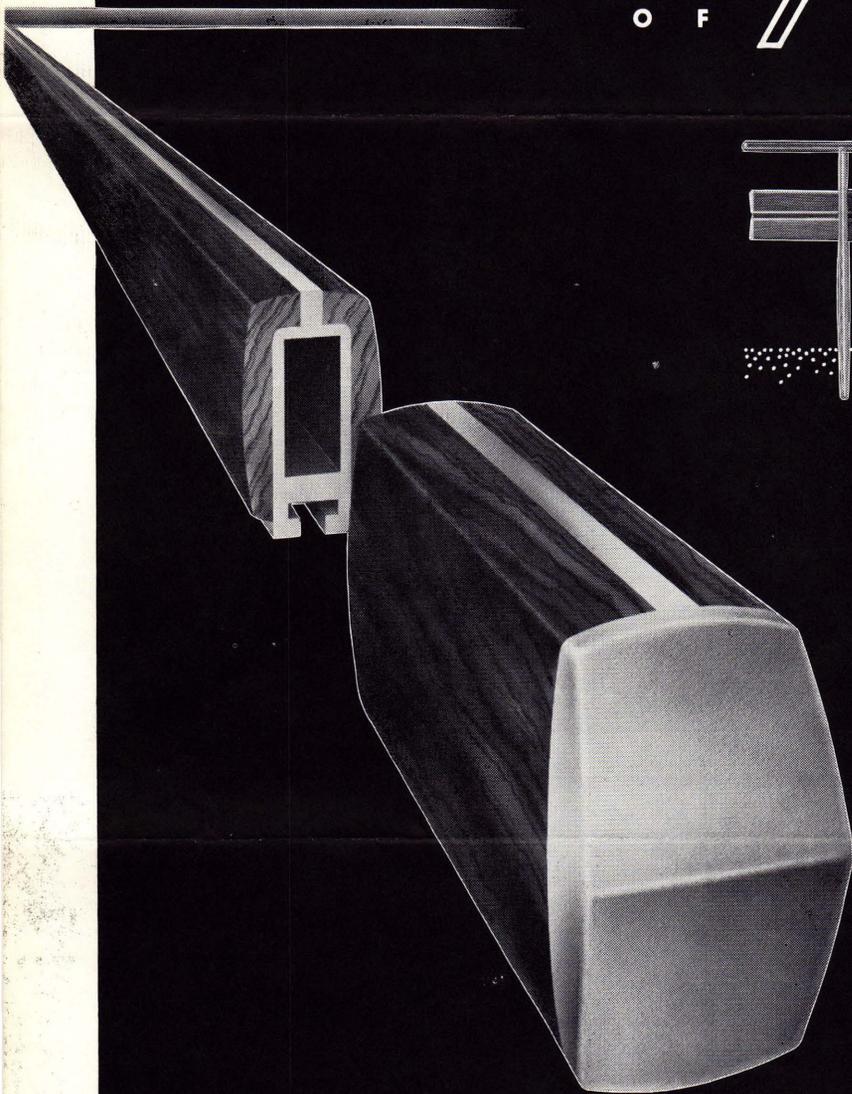
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