

# TEXAS ARCHITECT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE TEXAS SOCIETY OF ARCHITECTS


**THE GROPIUS CONTROVERSY**

**SPECIAL CONVENTION ISSUE PLANNED**

**RICHARD NEUTRA HEADS SEMINAR**

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**SEPTEMBER  
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## T H E T E X A S A R C H I T E C T

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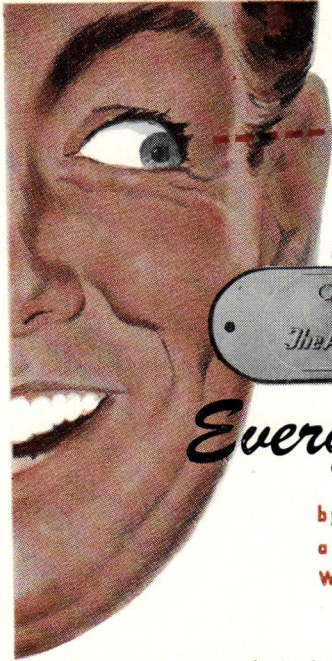
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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**September 15-18**—54th Annual Convention of the American Hospital Association, Philadelphia, Pa.

**October 29-31**—13th Annual Convention of the Texas Society of Architects, El Paso.



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## THE GROPIUS CONTROVERSY

Almost six months ago, Walter Gropius, chairman of the Department of Architecture at Harvard University and a nationally-known member of his profession, spoke before the Chicago Chapter of the AIA.

Mr. Gropius titled his address "The Architect Within An Industrial Society", and made a plea for re-establishing the architect as a true "master builder". His position can be summarized in his own words, taken directly from the widely reprinted text of the Chicago address:

"We all know that in the great periods of the past, the architect was the "Master of the Crafts" or "Master Builder" who played a very prominent role within the whole production process of his time. But with the shift from crafts to industry, the architect is no longer in the governing position he once occupied . . . Deserted by the best of the craftsmen . . . we have remained sitting all alone on our anachronistic brick-pile, pathetically unaware of the colossal impact of industrialization. I believe that we are in a very real danger of losing our grip in the competition with the engineer, the scientist, and the builder unless we adjust our attitude and our aims to meet the new situation."

Mr. Gropius then went on to reveal his specific target, Paragraph 7 of the AIA's 1949 mandatory rules of practice, "An architect may not engage directly or indirectly in building contracting."

This rule, he avers, "represents merely a negative veto and does not try to solve our dilemma constructively." In Mr. Gropius' own words: "I have very great doubt about the wisdom of this new rule which would perpetuate the separation of design and construction; instead we should try and find an organic reunification which would return to us the mastery of the know-how in building. Of course, I know that the intention of this mandatory paragraph has been a good one, namely, to block unfair competition. But I am afraid that it casts away the baby with the wash, that it represents merely a negative veto and does not try to solve our dilemma constructively."

Thus the gist of Mr. Gropius' argument. Beginning slowly, it has built up a most considerable, although healthy, head of steam in architectural circles over the U. S.

Mr. Gropius has the right to his opinions, and there are those who would defend the Gropius position. Furthermore, we see no wrong in healthy controversy. But it is, we believe, our editorial duty to point out where in our opinion Mr. Gropius errs.

The fundamental error, we believe, is in emphasizing "competition" between architects and "engineers, scientists, and builders." Actually, each of these fields is clearly defined, and there is plenty of specialized work in each without infringement or unethical competition. Much of the progress of the past thirty years, incidentally, has been made through a new understanding among architects, engineers, and contractors, concerning their specific relation to building.

(Continued on Page 10)



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Nestling against the towering Franklin Mountains, El Paso is one of the most beautifully situated cities in the U. S. From the vantage point shown above, the tourist can see the peaks of nearby New Mexico; all of prosperous, growing El Paso itself; Juarez, Mexico, with its nearby Guadalupe Mountains; and a glimpse of the Rio Grande, although the boundary river is almost hidden from sight by El Paso's buildings.

El Paso, site of the TSA convention October 29-31, has built more than 7000 new homes since 1946, and 47 new subdivisions have been opened. The city itself, with income based upon cotton, copper smelting, livestock, and many smaller industries, also has three major military establishments, oil refineries, a cement plant, and concentrated railway, bus, and airline installations.

## October Issue Of TA To Feature Convention At El Paso

A special convention issue of the TEXAS ARCHITECT will be mailed October 15 to all TSA members and to the 7900 other readers currently receiving the magazine.

Carrying full details of the El Paso convention October 29-31, the October issue will also have an up-to-date directory of all TSA members by chapter and other features.

### All Rosters Needed

Chapter secretaries are urged to send their up-to-date rosters to David C. Baer, TEXAS ARCHITECT, 1200 Bissonnet, Houston 5, at once. Most rosters have been received, but there were missing lists as the September issue went to press.

Additional copies of the October issue, expected to be the largest TA ever printed, will be distributed to special mailing lists.

## Richard Neutra To Head Seminar Speakers At El Paso

Richard Neutra, well-known Los Angeles architect who is recognized as one of the foremost exponents of modern architecture, will be the principal speaker at seminar sessions at the El Paso convention October 29-31.

Announcement that Mr. Neutra has accepted the invitation to speak at the convention seminar, was made by Charles Granger of Austin, seminar chairman.

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### Karl Kamrath And Son Win National Net Crown

Karl Kamrath, TSA-AIA, formerly a nationally-ranked tennis star, teamed with his son Karl, Jr. to win the father-son title at the national doubles championships in Brookline, Massachusetts recently.

The Kamraths, who play together frequently in Texas tournaments, won a comparatively easy 6-4, 6-3 victory in the final round at Brookline. They dethroned J. Diehl Mateer, Sr. and Jr. of Devon, Pennsylvania, the defending champions.

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### Expanded Shale Producers Form Institute For Information, Research

Producers in America and Canada have organized the Expanded Shale Institute to provide through one authentic source information on their product. Alex R. McVoy, Dallas, is second vice president.

Each member company will name a member of the board of directors. The Featherlite Corporation, Dallas, has designated Harvey Hicks Allen.

#### Headquarters In Chicago

The Institute will employ a full time engineer who is an authority on lightweight concrete to direct the work. A number of applicants are under consideration. Headquarters will be in Chicago.

Mr. Granger said that his committee would complete all details early in October, working in conjunction with E. W. Carroll of the El Paso Chapter, who is local seminar chairman in the convention city.

Other seminar speakers named by Mr. Granger include Buford Pickens of Tulane University at New Orleans, and Don Barthelme, TSA-AIA, of Houston.

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### Houston Chapter Entertains With Buffet, Swimming Party; Five Apply For Membership

The Houston Chapter entertained with a summer party at the Pine Forest Country Club which featured swimming, dancing, and a buffet supper. Paul Jones, TSA-AIA, was program chairman for the affair, attended by more than 100 members and guests.

The following new applications for membership have been approved by the executive committee of the Houston Chapter: corporate, Leon Blum Wooters; associate, Walter S. Symonds, Jr.; junior associate, Robert Wesley Bowles, Robert Warren Lancer, and Mary Lynn Thompson.

New corporate members recently admitted are Robert W. Maurice and George H. Smart.

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### 26-Day South American Tour Planned By Braniff For Architects, Engineers

Braniff International Airways, at the request of Wilder Kenan, a consulting engineer from San Antonio, is reportedly scheduling a 26-day tour of South America for architects and engineers.

The all-expense air tour departs Houston on October 5.

Inquiries may be made through the Braniff district traffic office, 513 City National Building, Houston.