Samton Calls for More Membership Participation

The first fall issue of OCULUS traditionally carries a message from the new chapter president. It has often been a rallying cry to the membership, a vision of possibilities with which few would quarrel.

Last year Richard Stein stressed the urgency for a massive program of neighborhood and community revitalization and urged the chapter committees to investigate opportunities in these areas. The year before, Robert Gatje noted that the chapter was "embarking upon a broad study of the ways in which concerned citizens and architects can best contribute ideas and services to the resolution of some of the awesome problems confronting our city - and all cities." In 1974, Herbert Oppenheimer's statement in part discussed how we architects... "have been uniquely licensed to maintain the physical quality of life. It is...futile for us to complain that our portion of responsibility has been usurped by the developers, the builders, the politicians and the bankers... we architects are held responsible for the leviathan disorder created by their decisions. But as long as we bear the blame, let us also...

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NYSAA Restructuring: Chapter Meeting Sept. 28

The proposal to make the N.Y. State Association of Architects a council of chapters instead of a membership organization is well advanced. At present all AIA members must belong. A chapter meeting Wed., Sept. 28 at 5:45 - cash bar at 5:00 - has been called to discuss it prior to its being voted upon at the NYSAA convention Oct.

"We need improved communications."

NYSAA represents architects in Albany with the Legislature and the State agencies. That is its main purpose, and it should be able to function quite efficiently if directly controlled by the eleven AIA

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Enclosed with this mailing of OCULUS is a chapter statement recommending "that the City Planning Commission reserve judgment on the Museum of Modern Art's application at this time because we do not believe that the available options have been sufficiently explored." The statement was submitted by Peter Samton at a CPC hearing Sept. 7 on MOMA's application for a special permit involving a 42-story expansion of the Museum.

MOMA's proposal has raised a storm of controversy, largely because of the urban design implications of a mid-block tower on 53rd Street. A special chapter committee consisting of John Belle, chairman, William Conklin, Charles Hoyt, Charles Hughes, and Norbert Turkel met numerous times including a meeting in the office of the architect, Cesar Pelli, and with MOMA director Richard Oldenburg to analyze the financial basis of the proposal. Messrs. Oldenburg, Pelli, Drexler and others presented the design to a packed chapter meeting on Aug. 10, after which the executive and special committees reviewed the discussion over dinner.

On the 22nd in a special meeting the Executive Committee approved the Belle committee's recommendations. It was felt that the statement to be presented to the Planning Commission fairly represented a wide base of chapter opinion.

Chapter Urges Delay
On MOMA Decision

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seek to enjoy the responsibility." And four years ago, during the last mayoral campaign, Tim Prentice suggested... "to further increase the voice of the profession in the public arena, we should constantly look for ways in which the architects can exercise their skills more broadly outside the immediate client-consultant relationship... by becoming increasingly active in the communities."

My point in recalling these statements is to show how the chapter leadership has made repeated efforts to encourage the membership to contribute to the profession's effectiveness in a city that is struggling with the most serious economic and social problems.

While the chapter has established a considerable reputation as a factor in New York affairs, it has really achieved the kind of progress for both the city and the profession that it should? Do not most of us continue to fight our own personal battles rather than join forces? It is ironic that while a remarkable number of New York architects have been recognized individually as spokesmen for design excellence, the city in general, and most of us in particular, would benefit more from greater awareness of "The New York Fifteen Hundred" (NYC/AIA) than from "The Five."

Where the chapter has succeeded in playing a constructive role in city affairs, it has usually been accomplished through the devotion and hard work of a smallish contingent of activists aware of the power they have in coming together as a professional body. Committees with too few active members have influenced actions of the Planning Commission, the Board of Estimate, the Board of Standards and Appeals, the City Council, as well as other city and state agencies and the construction and real estate industries in general.

At the annual meeting in June I stressed the necessity of picking battles and fighting them together - for further organizing the great latent resources of the chapter so it could be a more assertive force and remind the city's leadership of the increasing commitment we all have to making and keeping a livable environment in New York City. Each of us should take advantage of the organization we affectionately call "The Chapter" and participate in those areas where we can both add our skills and, of course, benefit from the input from others. Theodore Roosevelt, one-time New York City Police Commissioner, said "every man owes a part of his time and money to the profession or business in which he is engaged. No man has a moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within his sphere."

I hope that in the course of this year's activities we will see our chapter in operation more like a large office with a significant sharing of responsibility, so that a host of different available talents can be brought to bear on the array of problems facing all of us.□

Peter Samton
Campaign co-chairwoman Bella Abzug and her campaign were also present at the meetings. Ed Koch, who spent 90 minutes at chapter headquarters, was quite critical of civil service inefficiency.

The Political Affairs Committee, Herbert Oppenheimer, chairman, organized the meetings.

George Lewis

Samton Criticizes Murdoch's NY POST Policy

In a letter to Rupert Murdoch, Peter Samton expressed alarm that the Post has sharpened its previously good coverage of planning and historic preservation. "It is disturbing to the N.Y. Chapter/AIA...that the Post would turn away from matters in which so many New Yorkers have a deep interest," he said.

Samton's letter was acknowledged in two brief sentences by an assistant to Murdoch.

Document Sales Reminder

1:00 to 4:00 ONLY

Members are reminded that sales of documents at the chapter office or by telephone are handled between 1:00 and 4:00 in the afternoon. This was instituted a year ago because of reduction in staff.
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chapters plus the New York Society (a non-AIA organization here in the city). Each would have one director on the new board, except that our chapter - with over half the AIA members in the state - would have 3. Upcoming issues such as consolidation of State construction agencies, required continuing education for license renewal, and licensing of interior designers would be addressed more expeditiously than now.

The headquarters would continue in Albany, with a new executive director, Ms. Mildred Wennar (Helene Conroy resigned earlier this year but is staying on through the transition). Martin Schaum would continue as NYSAA's very effective legislative consultant.

In a parallel development, arrangements are nearly complete for the national AIA to collect all individual dues on one bill to include national and chapter dues, and an amount to cover NYSAA expenses (the latter will replace NYSAA dues). Staff time now spent keeping track of dues will be freed, and members will receive one consolidated bill instead of three.

Chapter vice president George Dudley is opposed by Milton Petrides of the Long Island Chapter for the position of president-elect of the New York State Association of Architects. Petrides is a vice president of NYSAA.

The Chapter strongly supports Dudley, who has had very extensive experience in New York State affairs, particularly as Chairman of the New York State Council on Architecture 1967-75.

New York Chapter
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Stephen A. Kliment
Secretary, NYC/AIA
Cathanne Piesla
Chapter Staff Member

Candidates for Membership

Information received by the Secretary of the NYC/AIA regarding the qualifications of candidates for membership will be considered confidential:

Corporate
Edward Blankenship
William Bobenhausen
Donald L. Bostwick, II
R. Scott Bromley
Frank J. Capone
Seymour Churgin
Carl R. Goedcke
Charles Marks
Robin Moore
Takeo Nakata
Richard L. Rice, Jr.
Burton L. Roslyn
Albert G. Saman
Steven I. Steinberg
William A. Swaan
Pak-Cheung Wong

AIA Associate
Donald Lavin
Roger Torriero

New Members

The NYC/AIA Welcomes the following New Members:

Corporate
Henry H. Abernathy
Charles E. Baskett
Peter M. Bernholz
John A. Calazzo
Stanton Eckstut
Joseph L. Fleischer
Anthony Giordano
John P. Hesslein
Douglas R. Hoffman
Carl K.W. Mark
Hortensia Mateos
Richard N. Pollack
Benedetto Puccio
Henry C. Smith-Miller
William T. Springer
Robert C. White
Jane Yu