

## readers like NEWS REPORT

January, 1959, saw the introduction of P/A NEWS REPORT, an expanded feature of the magazine designed to present news of the field—new buildings, personalities, technical developments, reference data for professionals—in a sprightly, easy-to-read fashion. Reaction to P/A NEWS REPORT has been most gratifying, as the following remarks from readers show:

*Dear Editor:* I find your P/A NEWS REPORT an interesting supplement to P/A. I particularly like the format. It's pleasing to see digests of interesting subjects in these days of bigness. I'm no judge of readership, but I'm sure it receives a high rating at Giffels & Rossetti.

L. ROSSETTI  
Giffels & Rossetti  
Detroit, Mich.

*Dear Editor:* . . . Sincerely feel that it is superior to similar features in other publications. May we express the hope that it will be continued in essentially its present form.

D. G. MURRAY  
Murray-Jones-Murphy  
Tulsa, Okla.

*Dear Editor:* I was very pleasantly surprised to find the NEWS REPORT in P/A. It is truly a mirror of architecture and art. I hope that the NEWS REPORT will continue to come to my home every month.

V. SENUTA  
Stone & Webster Engineering Corp.  
Boston, Mass.

*Dear Editor:* . . . We like it very much and would like to encourage you to continue with the same type of format. We especially like the reliable news of architectural products. . . .

A. W. ALEGRE  
Alegre & Harrison  
Reno, Nev.

*Dear Editor:* P/A NEWS REPORT is excellent. Let's have more and let's go!

E. A. WIBERG  
Executive Vice-President  
American Society of Mechanical Engineers  
Tuschmidt & Associates  
Chicago, Ill.

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## snow-melting in 1911

*Dear Editor:* In the article, "Snow-Melting with Wrought-Iron Pipe," in FEBRUARY 1959 P/A, credit is given to the Rochester (N.Y.) Gas & Electric Corporation steam-heated sidewalk constructed in 1925 as the first recorded installation of a mechanical snow-melting system. I would like to record an earlier one.

The street and entrance sidewalks in front of the "Amlot" apartment house, 360 Genesee St., Utica, New York, were equipped with snow-melting pipes when that building was built in 1911. The builder and designer was my father, Fenton W. Johnson, who was not an architect but included designing apartment houses and snow-melting systems among other accomplishments.

The apartment-heating system is steam but I believe he used a converter and piped low-temperature hot water under the sidewalks. The system worked well for a number of years and created a great deal of comment in Utica. I was not aware that my father invented the system, but he may have done so.

I believe that a later owner let the pipes freeze up in the early '20s and they probably were never repaired.

HUGH B. JOHNSON  
McGaughan & Johnson  
Washington, D. C.

## quantity vs. quality

*Dear Editor:* I thought I detected in your NEWS REPORT on the Grand Central City project (MARCH 1959 P/A) a note of concern. This mere note should have been a roar of protest and indignation. What is going to be inflicted on this helpless city challenges all rational and decent standards with a triple offense: sociologically, esthetically, and ideologically.

It is most unlikely that any of the gentlemen who finance and design this "world's largest" office building have ever descended to subway level at 9 A. M. or 5 P.M. They have never witnessed that

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REINHOLD

George A. Sanderson, Feature Editor of PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE, died April 12 of a heart attack at his home in New York. He will be sadly missed by his colleagues and by his friends in many parts of the country.

George had been a valued member of the P/A Staff since 1944, when he came to the magazine from duties in the Office of War Information — a wartime assignment that interrupted his journalistic career after working with *Newsweek*, *Sweet's Catalog*, *Architectural Record*, and for a time in California, as Building Editor of *Sunset*. A native of Massachusetts, he attended Groton and held degrees from Yale and MIT. Before journalism called, he worked as an architect in California and in Boston.

George was warm and sympathetic to work with, although an editor with strong views about personalities, events, and architecture—especially design quality. His desire was always to document good work and to applaud the fine men of the profession. Architects found him an ever friendly critic.



**George A. Sanderson**  
**1906-1959**

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nightmarish moment when the crowds are caught in total paralysis because no one can move. They have never heard women scream, literally, scream with pain being punched into the subway cars so that the doors may close; they have never watched the older workers cling frantically to platform columns for fear of being pushed onto the tracks. Those people do not live in New England villas. They live in tenements in the Bronx and Brooklyn. They have to catch that train or be late and lose their jobs. The indignity of their way to work, the brutality of their meal hour when thousands try to grab a cheap bite along fountains and counters, shows in their faces and their manner.

Esthetically, there was one moment of relief for the eye in the linear wasteland of our avenues. The Grand Central Tower

had an outline, a profile, a play of light and shadow that reminded the weary senses that someone once had cared to provide a solid substance as a syncope in the amorphous mass of indifferent shapes. So modest have we become in our claims for visual identification that even the eclecticism of 1929 has been gratefully received. Together with the Terminal Building, the tower provided human scale and architectural personality: something even to attack, but of its own character. This now will be lost against the umptiest glass curtain wall which boasts as highest design achievement one more facet than Ponti's Milan edition, or the "Zeckendorf Hotel" (illustrated two pages later in your NEWS REPORT). But, oh, how beautiful does its narrow side photograph! Cleopatra's Needle is a piece of wet liver compared to this "sleek

beauty." Yet no one will ever see it that way. The model shot is a fraud, as all such shots are: what we will see is the refrain of a very old song.

In the passionate arguments that have gone back and forth about this project, the participation of two of our most renowned educators has stirred the deepest protest. Those kind enough to look for apologies have pointed out that Roth would have built "the world's largest," anyhow—with or without the pedigrees of Gropius and Belluschi. For anyone engaged in the education of young architects, this is a dreary justification. By blurring over the lines of ideal and compromise, our standards go down the drain. This would be true in any case where an architect of fame is willing to sell out to a promoter. In the case of Gropius and

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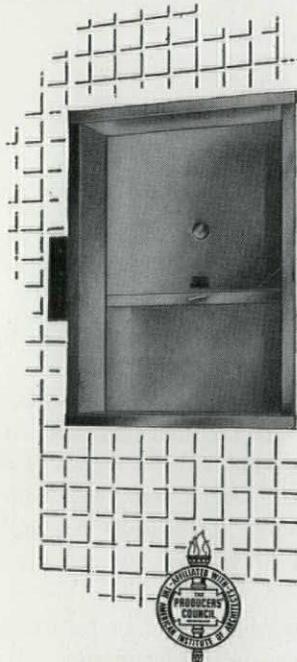
Belluschi it is a profound tragedy. There is no need to analyze this tragedy and its implications. All that is needed is to quote verbatim a few sentences from the much publicized speech, "Apollo in Democracy," Dr. Gropius gave in 1957 on the occasion of receiving the Hanseatic Goethe Prize:

"Instead of leading by moral initiative, modern man developed a mentality which leans mechanistically on quantity instead of quality and serves predominantly utilitarian ends instead of building up a new spiritual faith. . . . In our technological society we must passionately emphasize that we are still a world of human beings, and that man must stand in his natural surroundings as the center point of all planning and building. Until now we have so worshipped our new idols,

the machines, that our spiritual concepts of value have slipped away. Therefore we should first re-examine the fundamental relationships between man and man, and between man and nature, and not yield to the pressure of special interests or short-sighted enthusiasts who see mechanization as an end in itself. *Only too often nowadays we still meet with a deep-rooted tendency to avoid far-reaching concepts of planning, and, instead to set down inorganically a number of unrelated partial improvements. . . . This thought of helping regain cultural balance has dominated my life.*"

SIBYL MOHOLY-NAGY  
Pratt Institute  
Brooklyn, N. Y.

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### fame everlasting

*Dear Editor:* Hello—after many years of silence! The reason for writing, among other things, is to mention the curious phenomenon which persists: people still seem to think I am writing my OUT OF SCHOOL series for P/A. It is the damnest delayed action, I run into them at meetings, conventions, and on the street. Then recently I received a letter from a young professor at Midwestern University as follows:

"Recently I was interested in reading several of your OUT OF SCHOOL articles for P/A in 1950 and 1953. In fact, I've assigned them as reading for the office-practice course which I teach. It is my belief that continuous and consistent co-ordination of the various planning and design professions is essential to the successful development of any project concerned with the physical environment. With effective co-ordination, we may well create an environment within which man may more fully enrich his physical and spiritual values. As a designer, I feel that the form of our physical surroundings undoubtedly plays a more important role in the formation of attitudes and culture than most people would assume."

Such—apparently—is immortality.

CARL FEISS  
Planning and Urban Renewal Consultant  
Washington, D. C.

### p/a awards praised

*Dear Editor:* Needless to say, we were deeply honored and flattered that our project was selected for top honors by PROGRESSIVE ARCHITECTURE. We were convinced that we had an outstanding con-

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