



## SEASONS GREETINGS

The staff of Ehlinger & Associates extend Seasons Greetings to all of our friends who receive the Newsletter. Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Happy New Year.



## NOTRE DAME, PARIS

Bishop Maurice de Sully began the construction of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris in c. 1163, and it was completed in 1325, almost 200 years later. Notre Dame is typical of French Gothic cathedrals being the quintessential example. Located on the Isle de France in the middle of Paris,

it rises alone and magnificent from its flat island site. It is the ultimate French urban Gothic church of the townsfolk, originally a public meeting place for the common people, as well as a religious and ecclesiastical monument.

This issue's signed limited edition print by Ladd P. Ehlinger is of the western facade, which is probably the finest and most characteristic in France and served as a model for numerous later Gothic cathedrals. Containing the main entrance, the view is spectacular due to the vista created by the removal of buildings after World War II which were in the space of the plaza in front of the Cathedral from medieval times, obscuring the view. The outline tracings of the walls of these removed buildings were used as different colored stone in the paving patterns in the plaza to echo their historic locations. Equally spectacular is the view from the left tower of the western facade. All of the splendor of Paris is available in successive panoramic views. This tower is open to the public and serves as a strenuous test of one's cardiovascular system, as there is no elevator to the viewing level of the arcaded screen that connects the two towers (approximately 120' high) only stairs at a rather steep angle.

The western main facade has three deeply recessed portals with successive encircling tiers of statued niches. The central doorway is divided by a statue of Christ on a pillar. Above the three portals stretches a band or frieze of statues depicting the kings of France. Above this in the center is a wheel window the great rose window of exceptional beauty. Flanking the rose window are high coupled windows, over which again is the pierced arcaded screen or frieze that was previously mentioned that connects the two towers.

The main facade of Notre Dame shown in the print functions as a portal to another world. Architecturally, it hints at the other world in the view by teasing one with the partially visible buttresses on either side.

The remainder of the exterior of the building is composed of the typical Gothic fare walls pierced by large windows, braced by incredible flying buttresses, decorated by gargoyles and finials. The east end has very slender flying buttresses with chevet chapels nestled between them along with the view of the delicate fleche (*literally an arrow, actually a tower shaped like an arrow over the crossing, the intersection of the nave and the transepts*) soaring 300' above the ground presents an ephemeral ambience. This is one of the few Gothic buildings of which it is difficult to decide the view that is the most interesting. In a future print we shall show the remainder of the exterior, say from a three quarter view from the rear.

The plan of Notre Dame is on a bent axial line. It is unknown whether this was intentional or an accident and is a major flaw in an otherwise beautifully engineered compressive stone structure. Nevertheless, it is a typical Gothic plan: with a wide nave and double aisles, transepts of a shortened projection almost in line with the nave aisles, and an exceptional chevet with double aisles and radiating chapels between the buttresses. The interior has been said to be impressive but somber with a nave arcade with cylindrical columns with Corinthianesque capitals that carry pointed arches and shafts to support the ribs of the lofty sexpartite stone vaulting that is approximately 110' high and spans about 36'.

## MORE ON SELECTING AN ARCHITECT

Last issue we discussed those rational standards or criteria that an Owner should address in the process of selecting an Architect to design his project. The addressing of the rational criteria alone will not solve the problem totally it will only bring the Owner closer to the final step of addressing the irrational criteria.

The irrational criteria devolves to one

final result: the Owner and the Architect have to decide to trust one another and enter into a contract. Trust is an irrational state of being that may be arrived at by a rational method.

The rational method to arrive at trust of one another involves a series of mutual interviews, wherein both the Owner and the Architect interview each other, beginning with general, nonthreatening (in the psychological sense) topics of discussion and questions, and then moving toward more intimate, vulnerable and more threatening areas of discussion as each feels more comfortable as the method progresses. This method was developed by Dr. Stuart Rose of Professional Development Resources, and is called "*The Mandeville Techniques*".

The *Techniques* involve asking each other open ended questions and "tell me" statements, questions that begin with What, When, Where, Why, How and Who; never questions that begin with Is, Should, Could or Would that can be answered with a "yes" or no. Each attempts to give feedback to the other, and to document the discussions by summarizing what was said, both verbally and in writing, usually by the Architect. By following this rational process, both the Owner and the Architect will develop feelings for each other (which are irrational) that are crucial to the success of the Owner's project, and ultimately lead to a relationship of trust. It is how each responds to the questions, how forthright each is within the process that determines whether or not trust develops.

The first and beginning plateau in the areas of discussion has to do with *Presenting Concerns*. Here the Architect is interested in discovering what the Owner has in mind; what the scope of his needs are. In turn, the Owner is interested in the Architect's experience in particular type projects like his. This phase can take a short time or it can take years. Ultimately, the goal in this phase is to program the project and for the Architect to determine exactly what it is. For the Owner, the goal is to determine whether or not the Architect is qualified by experience to do this project.

The second plateau in the areas of

discussion has to do with the *Project History*. The Architect is interested in whose idea the project is within the Owner's organization; who developed the idea; who is for it and who is against it; what is the funding source for the project; what design professionals have been preselected (soils engineers, surveyor, interior designers, etc.); and who within the Owner organization will work with us. Similarly, the Owner wants to know who in the Architect's organization develops and implements ideas; how the Architect can fund the operating capital he will need to produce the project if selected; and who will be working with the Owner.

The third plateau of the areas of discussion has to do with *His History and Expectations*. The Architect wants to know how the Owner's representative got involved in the project; how he feels about the project; his role in the project now and later; who in the Owner's organization decides that the Architect gets the contract, and how the success or failure of the project affects him and others within the Owner organization. The Owner wants to know what makes the project a success for the Architect having a happy, satisfied Owner or winning a design award from the Architect's peers; and what the role of the Architect's rep will be throughout the project.

The final plateau of the discussions has to do with the *Architect's Expectations*. The Architect wants to know what other architects the Owner has worked with in the past and what the Owner feels about these experiences and why; if the Owner is considering other architects and if so, who; what kind of architectural firm does the Owner have in mind to design his project (large or small, only those experienced in his building type, etc.); if the Owner expects the Architect to compete for the contract against other architects and if so, how; what kind of fee structure the Owner has in mind; what are the time frames for the contract; what are the estimated dollars for the construction budget; and how was it arrived at. The Owner wants to know if the Architect is like others that he is dissatisfied with; more about the Architect's firm; how he competes; how he charges for his services; if

he can perform within the necessary time frame; and can the Architect work to a reasonable budget.

Usually many topics in the rational framework we are describing will come up in the discussions out of sequence, depending upon the nature of the Owner and how secure he feels about any particular topic. All topics should be covered however to avoid surprises after a contract is entered into, which surprises can sometimes be unpleasant.

If both sides are satisfied with the interviews as they progress and conclude, the result is a proposal that is accepted with a meeting of the minds, and ultimately a relationship that produces a good building and a satisfied Owner. Obviously, the interviews take a lot of time, especially if the Owner considers other architects simultaneously. It should be apparent that the topics named here are "openers", and that there will be many other items discussed as these questions lead to others. The end result is worth it however, especially when you consider the amount of money expended on the building and the alternatives that occur if the Owner and the Architect don't take the time to rationally get to know each other irrationally.

There are alternative irrational methods that are used by some, maybe even most Owners that lead to random, unpredictable results. Architects are selected by an Owner: because they are a friend of the Owner; because they are a customer of the Owner; because a friend recommended them; because they won a design award; because they are related to the Owner or the Owner's relatives; because they have done favors for the Owner in the past; and in the case of political bodies, because they made campaign contributions. Any one of these coupled with the Mandeville Techniques is OK, but when coupled with an Owner's desire to spend little time, leads to disastrous results.

## ARCHITRIVIA

The following is an architectural grocery list:

Butter: to spread an architectural component, such as mortar, roofing cement, putty, or sealant.

Orange Peel: a type of poor surface finish on paint resembling the surface of an orange.

Gumbo: a type of organic, unstable soil.

Popcorn: an unsatisfactory weldment.

Gingerbread: V i c t o r i a n architectural ornamentation.

Banana Oil: a type of paint solvent with a banana odor.

Waffle Slab: a type of reinforced concrete structural slab resembling what you eat.

Mushroom: a type of concrete column that flares at the top, sometimes used with waffle slabs.

Saltbox: a type of simple wood frame, wood siding house predominantly in New England.

Nut: the female connector that goes with a bolt.

Scallop: a decorative shape in the form of an arc.