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# PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Few people know more about the status of what is being built in America than Mary Jane Lightbown. As assistant to FORUM's managing editor, her assignment is to keep track of every building which promises to be worthy of publication, to post the editors on its construction progress, and to arrange for photography if and when the completed building is selected for publication.

Although Miss Lightbown relies



WALTER DORAN

on the help of two assistants, Gerry Hurley and Jane Johnson, if pressed, she would probably confess that her most important assistance comes from a 17-drawer file cabinet filled with cards—one for every building project she watches over. Each card shows the status of the project on the date of her last letter or phone call from the architect, contractor, or owner—and, hopefully, when it will be completed. Right now there are about 2,200 cards in this file.

Mary Jane comes by her interest in building quite naturally. Her father, the late Cooper C. Lightbown, was a builder and developer in Washington, D.C., and before she joined the FORUM staff in 1943, she had worked in her father's office at everything from product selection to client relations. (While in Washington, she also bought a church ruin and

remodeled it into a house she still uses in Dawsonville, Md.)

As the point of contact between the editors of FORUM and the designers of the buildings they publish, Mary Jane probably communicates with more architects than all of the editors combined. It is to her that architects describe their most promising buildings even before construction contracts are let, and to her they send blueprints, snapshots and basic information once the buildings approach completion. So, it is not surprising that most of each morning's office mail is addressed to Miss Lightbown and that most office visitors are architects. Many are looking for her.

Not all of Miss Lightbown's visitors are architects. Many are photographers, who visit her to report on their travels, to tell her of interesting buildings they have seen, and to negotiate photographic assignments with her. She is responsible for commissioning all of FORUM's photography—some \$25,000 worth a year. (If you want to know what architectural photographers will be traveling to your part of the country when, she can probably tell you.)

Like the editor's judgment of architecturally important buildings, Miss Lightbown's system of keeping tabs on them pays off for FORUM readers. Of the 61 buildings selected by the American Institute of Architects for awards during the past five years, 50 were published in FORUM, 38 of them first or exclusively.

Bulging though it is, there's still room for a few more cards in Miss Lightbown's file of promising buildings. She would be delighted to hear about yours.

—J.C.H. Jr.

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