



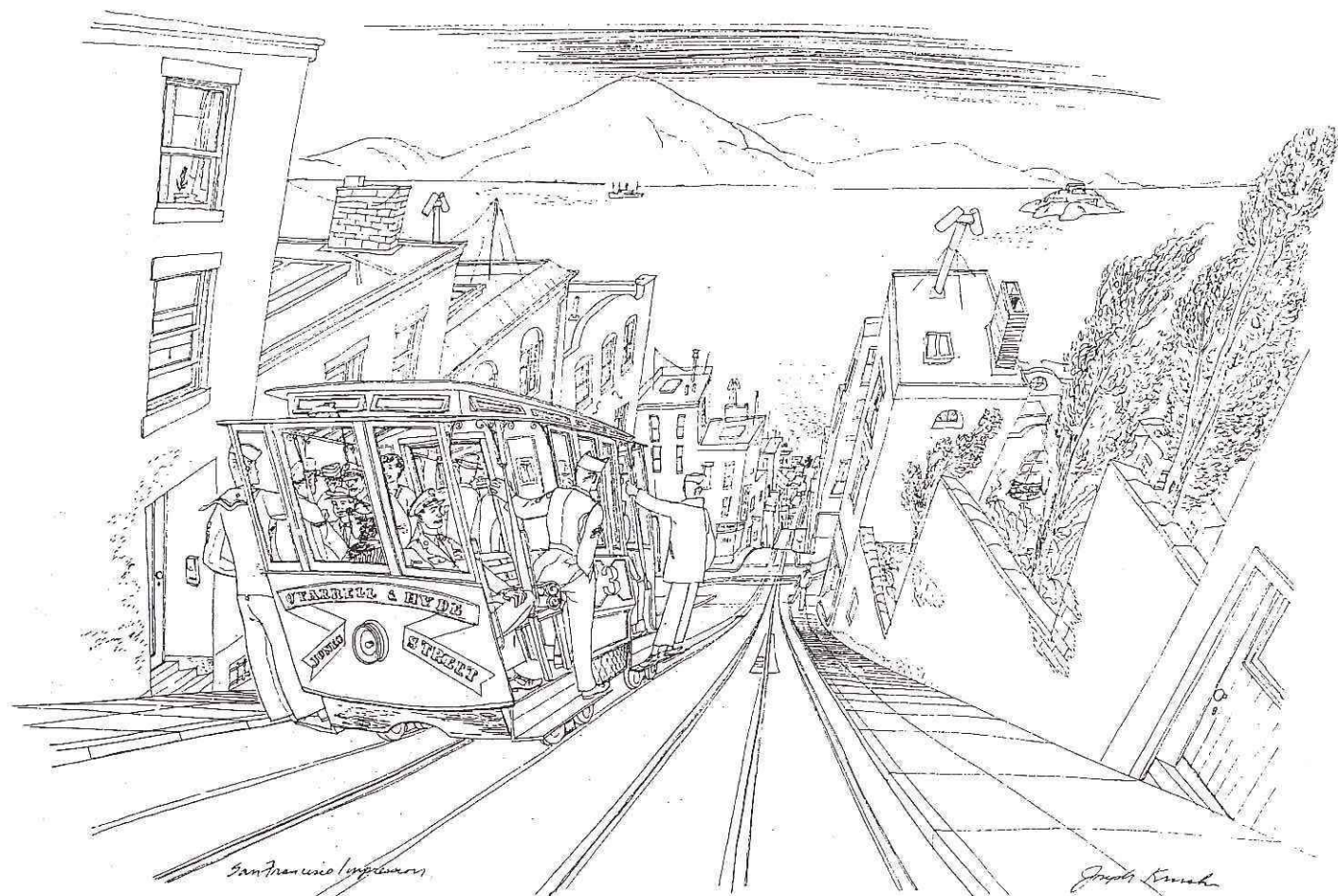
# Origin OF THE Emblem

AND OTHER RECOLLECTIONS OF THE  
1945 U.N.  
CONFERENCE

DONAL McLAUGHLIN

Chief of Graphics  
Presentation Branch  
Office of Strategic Services





Joseph Krush made this sketch entitled San Francisco Impression the very first Sunday after our contingent arrived in San Francisco. After each of us got a copy, it was hung on our bulletin board. Someone in the next office asked for and got a copy – then two or three other requests were filled and by the time the conference ended, we had printed and handed out over 1000 copies including a second sketch of the same scene from another point of view (See inside back cover.)

Cover: Photograph of the  
United Nations Charter.  
Courtesy U.S. National  
Archives.  
Calligraphy by Stephen Kraft

# Origin of the Emblem and Other Recollections of the 1945 U.N. Conference

**Donal McLaughlin**

*Chief of Graphics, Presentation Branch  
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*Edited by*

**Jennifer Truran Rothwell**

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## The Origin of the U.N. Emblem

The design of the lapel pin - which unknown to us then would become the United Nations emblem - had a special meaning and significance for all of us in the Presentation Branch. Roosevelt's idea of a United Nations was being hailed everywhere. Well, not by the Chicago Tribune and Col. McCormick, nor by publisher Henry Luce. But certainly among all liberals. And we were all young liberals.

I invited a brainstorming session so that our whole staff could have a crack at solving the "problem" of the lapel pin. The problem: how to incorporate a pictorial image along with the words, "The United Nations Conference on International Organization, San Francisco, 1945" (quite a mouthful) in a one and one-sixteenth inch diameter circle. The manufacturer had agreed to make the pin on condition that we use their stock lapel pin in view of the shortage of time. In other words, no odd or irregular shapes.

Some of the designs that came out of this session, and the problems with them:



World projection with chains representing nations linked in peace. (Linked in peace, but also a world in chains.)



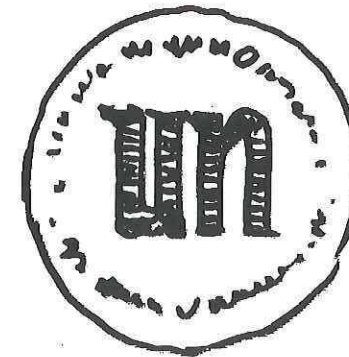
Nations bonded symbolically with the mortar of cooperation, with bricks guarding the olive branch of peace. (Could be a trademark for the Structural Clay Products Institute.)



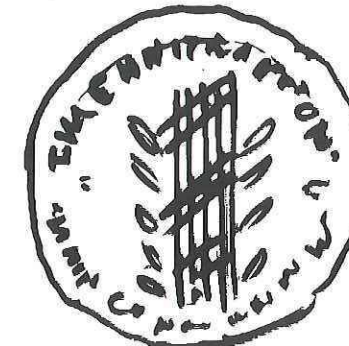
Orthographic global projection. (Eastern hemisphere gets the short end of this design.)



Two hemisphere projections overlapping. (Hackneyed - made famous on the Gulden's Mustard label.)



Lower case Roman letters readable upside-down. (Interesting typographically, but meaningless to half the world.)



Bundle of rods (fasces) secured in cooperation with olive branches. (Shades of Mussolini's Fascisti.)



Azimuthal equidistant projection showing all countries in one circle. (Good, but no room for copy, also a tendency to spin.)

Of all the world projections, the most appropriate was the azimuthal equidistant one, wherein all land masses are shown on one circle. We had used it earlier, around the time of El Alamein, when the course of the war was going against the Allies and Wendell Wilkie made his famous One World speech. We were doing charts for air distances for bombing, as I remember it, and wherever you went had to be approached via the North Pole.

While our brainstorming had produced a number of designs, none seemed really suitable. After this stalemate, and with time running short, I retired to my office and finally came up with a solution that, simple as it may seem, provided a breakthrough. By liberating the elements from the tyranny of the circle, I was able to accommodate both the text and a "one world projection" in an unusual and distinctive way, while still rendering the copy comfortable to read.

I gave the rough design to staff artist Ivan Spear to draw up. He added the softening touch of crossed branches of laurel, inspired by the Philco Company's logotype. Later, recognizing that laurel was the symbol of victory, I asked Joe Krush to change the leaves to olive for peace on the final artwork. The State Department promptly approved the design.

We mixed a color for the field, a smoky blue not found in any member nation's flag, and christened it Stettinius Blue in honor of the head of our delegation. Floating on a sea of pure white was the bright gold of the land areas, the wreath, and the text. The pin, which we also called the button or badge, was made of jeweler's enamel.

An identical pin but substituting flame red instead of smoky blue was struck for identifying members of the Press.

An enlarged working drawing of the design was shipped posthaste to Bastian Brothers in Rochester, N.Y. I don't remember the size of the order - certainly several thousand - but shipment had to go directly to San Francisco so that I never had a chance to check out the final pin.

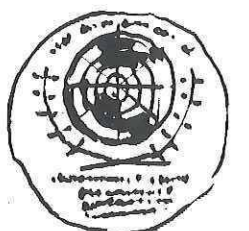
As our train neared San Francisco my concern continued to mount. Upon arrival, it was with feelings of faintness and anxiety that I approached the registration desk to get my credentials. I'll not forget my first look at the pin; wow, it was beautiful! I still have it.



The Philco logo



The design without leaves ...



... and with.



The pin, actual size



menu from the Pre-Con  
Special

Some from RR in dining club up brown - Crowds  
gather at every roadside stop to gaze at the conference celebrities  
who are heading into Texas on a great tour of the U.S. Chicago  
Kansas City, Detroit, Kansas, El Paso, Palm Springs, Los Angeles, SF  
Pro-Con Special

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE  
on  
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION

San Francisco, California  
April 25, 1945

DINNER  
April 19, 1945

Chilled Apple Juice		
Cream of Chicken	or	Consommé en Tasse
<hr/>		
No. 1 - Omelette with Chicken Livers, Fresh Mushrooms.....	\$1.25	
No. 2 - Pan Broiled Lake Trout, Maitre d'Hotel.....	1.35	
No. 3 - Fried Young Chicken, Corn Fritters, Cream Gravy.....	1.60	
(No. 4) - Roast Prime Ribs of Beef, au Jus.....	1.75	
you green peas	Green Peas	Buttered Carrots
	Potatoes Saute O'Brien	Candied Sweets
<hr/>		
Combination Salad, French Dressing		
<hr/>		
Strawberry Sundae		Blueberry Pie
<hr/>		
Fig Pudding, Brandy Sauce		
<hr/>		
Coffee	Milk	Tea

Rock Island  
Route of the Rockets

On Board the Pre-Con Special  
en route to San Francisco

About a week before our staff headed west, we packed a crate with supplies and equipment for a nine-week safari. It arrived there the same day we did. Our scout had already commandeered enough drafting stools and tables in San Francisco.

We went out on a special train called the Pre-Con Special. The route took us to Chicago, south all the way to Texas, west through New Mexico and Arizona to San Diego, and then up to San Francisco. It took four days and four nights.

There were maybe seven or eight coaches carrying all the people from the State Department, who were working on the Conference. Our Presentation staff had the last coach before the dining car. We did a lot of singing. "Rum and Coca Cola" was one of the popular songs then. And I remember learning the words to "On Top of Old Smoky." Everybody

had to come through our coach including very proper dignified State Department diplomats. But after a couple of days things warmed up, and people would stop to sing along with our rowdy bunch.

Keep in mind that the war wasn't over yet. Everybody was absolutely sick and tired of it. When Hitler died right in the middle of all our preparations in San Francisco, there was this huge expression of release and relief. I remember one movie they showed us (the U.N. Secretariat had arranged a series of films, made in the different Allied countries, for the delegates in San Francisco). The Nazis had this big stadium in Nuremburg where they held these enormous spectacles. On top of the super grandstand was a swastika which must have been at least 25 feet tall. And this film had a spectacular shot of it as the US Army Engineers blew it up in a thousand pieces. It was a spectacular symbol of the whole war, what we had fought against. I never saw it again, but it was the most welcome film shot I'd ever seen.

At Work in San Francisco

Our Presentation Branch was responsible for many aspects of the U.N. Conference, everything from Order of the Day postings to setting up the press room to charting the Dumbarton Oaks proposals.

We put out a photographic brochure on the chairmen and delegates from all 50 nations that signed the Charter. I designed a memorial plaque to FDR to be placed in Muir Woods. The plaque was later cast in bronze. And there were many other Secretariat services: city maps and guides, sound recordings of the U.N. Plenary Sessions, and photographic coverage for the U.S. Secretary of State.

First in importance was remodeling the Opera House where the Plenary Sessions were to be held. Oliver Lundquist and Jo Mielziner designed the stage setting, which featured four huge pylons representing the Four Freedoms.

We had come prepared to assign an editor-designer team to each of the committees working on the U.N. Charter. We expected to provide visual aids that would help clarify procedural points. But the State Department nixed that idea. In the world of diplomacy, statesmen need elbow room on specifics. This was a dis-



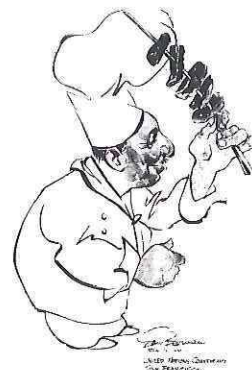
appointment, since we had just spent three years in the war effort doing this very thing for the military, that is, the visualization of substantive problems of policy. Eero Saarinen was particularly good at that sort of thing. He turned out to be a real whiz-bang, demonstrating that architects can move from three dimensions to two.

The concluding events of the Conference called for President Harry Truman to give a speech before the Plenary Session, and then to accompany the U.S. delegates to the Veterans Building to sign the Charter. I was in charge of the design of the Veterans Building setting and worked with Dr. Warren Kelchner on the staging of the ceremony. A State Department chief, Kelchner was a veteran of many previous international conferences, including Yalta and Dumbarton Oaks.



On the beach at Seal Rock. Barefoot Lynn Olsen with Joe Krush, Jack Becker, and the author. The sea monster turned out to be a piece of hose.

Sunday - our day off. Lolling on the grounds of the OSS Barracks in the Presidio, left to right: Sam Berman, Gene Tourville, Georg Olden and the author.



Chef Mardikian - caricature by Sam Berman. Honorary Chef who prepared delicious breakfasts and spectacular lunches in the Opera House basement, Mardikian also owned a famous restaurant. Anyone wearing the Conference pin never had to wait in line for a table - he was a great host.

We are in an atmosphere of dazzling, splendor - the ministers of 49 nations and their advisers - strange costumes - stranger languages - rich hotels teeming with the diplomatic crowds of the world - food beyond description - wines - liquors - private cars for ones beck + call - free movies - The best <sup>films</sup> of each nation - All San Francisco stands in awe and is ready to accord the courtesies of the city to wearers of the Conference Button (which we designed).

Excerpt from a letter to the author's family



## The Signing of the Charter

A great effort went into the staging of the ceremony which Life magazine compared to a "hollywood production." I prepared a flow chart to avoid hitches in guiding delegates and visitors to the right places inside the building. Each delegation would be escorted through the foyer, its guests dropped off at the visitors gallery, and the delegates led to a briefing station where they were instructed on where to stand so that they would be in "camera range" when they signed the document. At the right moment, they were escorted to a holding area in the wings.

It was agreed that the stalking and crawling antics of the still photographers at the opening Plenary Session were an unwelcome distraction to the proceedings. To avoid repetition, we arranged a meeting with the media the day before, and set some simple restraints on their mobility - mainly a 12-inch high rope railing set back from the table on a 25-foot radius. The motion picture people, perched high on their scaffolds in the rear, were delighted to have their field of vision thus unobstructed.

The 50 countries signed in alphabetical order beginning at 10 a.m. on June 26. Barney (Ed Barnhart) and Jim Hart, along with a naval officer, did the delegate briefing. The Chinese delegation was first to sign and brought its own equipment - brushes, inkstick and mortar - and called for a Dixie cup of water. While the world waited, they ground a fresh batch of pure, dense black Chinese ink.

From there on, things went smoothly and on schedule. Dr. Kelchner of the U.S. State Department - he was the very image of a gentleman of the old school - greeted each new delegation as they entered. My role in the proceedings was to be all over the place. One moment, I happened to be in the corridor outside the briefing room when the Soviet delegation arrived with Andrei Gromyko at its head. He stopped in front of me as if to say, "What do I do next?" As I explained the briefing room and its purpose, I noticed some dust on his Chesterfield collar. I simply brushed it off naturally as I talked. He took no notice, but I thought later that some Soviet bodyguard could have floored me for such impertinence.

The ceremony was proceeding smoothly

as the afternoon wore on, but suddenly there burst a dozen dark-clad security figures from a side door. Everybody backstage stopped in their tracks. In walked President Truman, Secretary of State Stettinius and the American delegation.

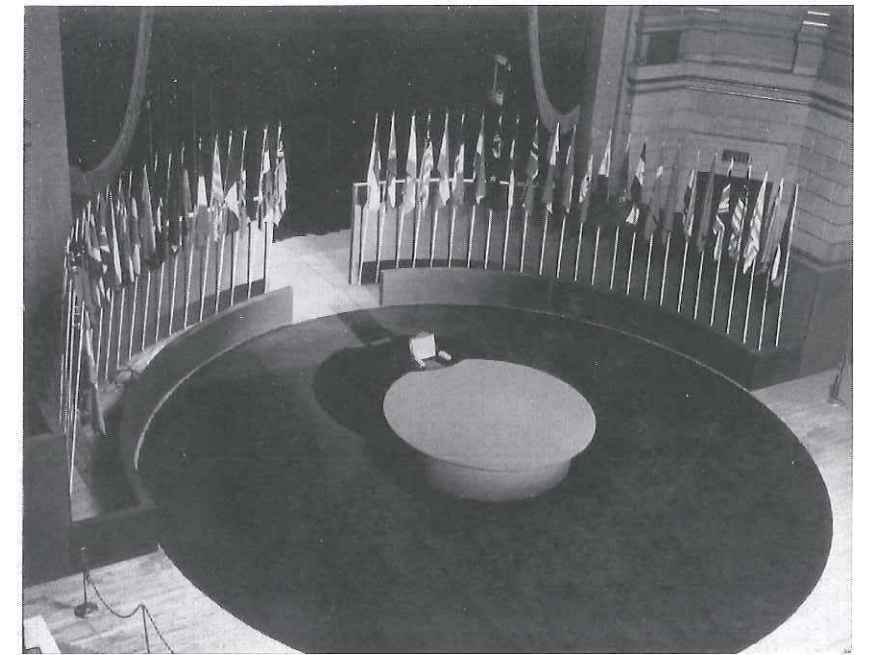
Stettinius requested that the Charter be brought backstage so that he could take his time with his signature. When asked what he would do next, he said that he would pretend to sign the Charter when it was returned to the table. Bluntly informed that the telescopic cameras shooting the action could detect fly shit on the page, he melted and called for pen and paper, dropped into a chair, and practiced his signature five or six times on the back of an 8x10 photo that Dick Wilson handed him.

So the show went on without a hitch, until the final delegate of the final country got up from the table.

Then pandemonium broke loose as the "paparazzi" leaped the rope barricade and rushed to the table for close-up photographs. Dr. Kelchner, overwhelmed, threw his body over the Charter and called out "McLaughlin! McLaughlin!" I rescued him like a football referee untangling players to get at the ball. The Charter was safe, but the two Sheaffer pens were missing from their marble base. Should someone, someday claim to have the original pens, they should be returned to the U.N. as stolen property. The Sheaffer Company replaced the pens next morning. My hope is that the scene was captured by the motion picture people - Fox Movietone or Paramount was there.

I took the Charter upstairs under a Military Guard. Joe Krush, Marian Emrich our OSS historian, Charlotte Park and John O'Hara Cosgrave were up there, and my secretary, Edith Ferrara. Our photographer, Sam Rosenberg, took pictures.

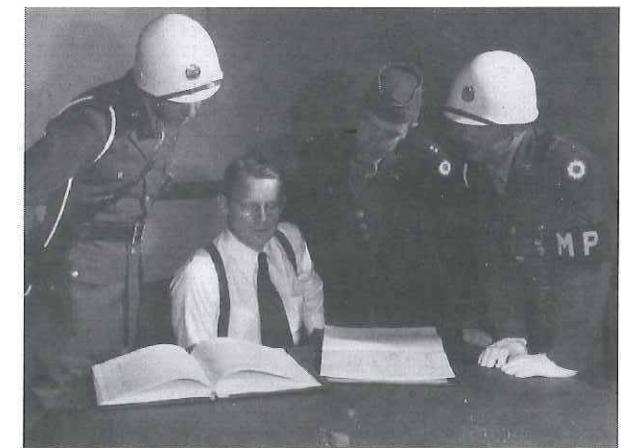
We had to wait for a State Department guy to authenticate both documents before we could erase the pencil lines. We had previously calqued soft pencil guide lines on the Charter pages where each signatory was to position his signature. This ensured that, even though the number of signatories from each nation varied, the signatures would look presentable, not sprawled or crooked or squeezed. The guidelines now had to be carefully erased with Artgum.



The setting for the signing. This shot was taken the night before the ceremony about 3 a.m. Note the absence of the U.N. emblem. Artists were still working on it at this late hour. It was installed on the rear curtain about one hour before the show opened.

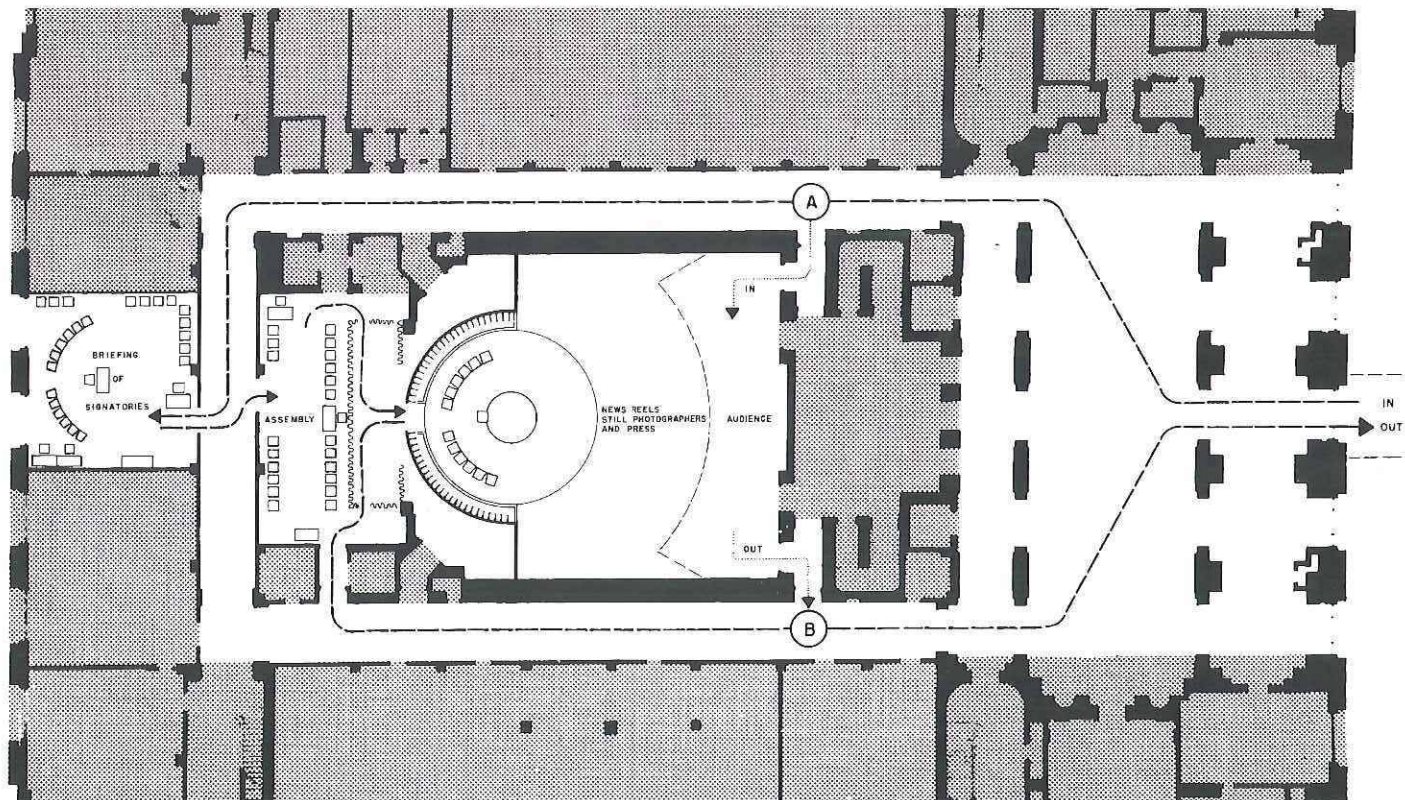
It fell to Alger Hiss, the State Department official who headed up the U.N. Secretariat, to fly the Charter to Washington, DC for hand delivery to President Truman the next day. While the Charter was wrapped in a parachute for safe passage, Hiss noted with mild irony that he himself had not been provided with one! He found Truman and his crony General Harry Vaughn, both fresh from San Francisco, relaxing over bourbon and branch water when he arrived at the White House. Alger, who had shared a platform with them during the solemn Signing Ceremony, asked the President what had caused his barely suppressed mirth while a delegate from South America was delivering the closing address. It seems that Vaughn leaned over and pointed out the polished gleam on the delegate's very bald head, whispering "Pipe the 'Simonize' job."

The Charter now rests in our National Archives.



Looking quite calm and relaxed, which was far from the truth, McLaughlin inspects the Charter and Interim Agreement after the guidelines for the delegates signatures had been erased. (Note 'Artgum' in the foreground.) Sam Rosenberg took the shot about 10:30 at night on June 26, 1946. Alger Hiss later delivered the two documents to the White House.

Plan showing Charter signing ceremony, main floor, Veterans Auditorium. Each delegation had a starting time for signing the Charter. They also received this road map which directed them to the briefing room. Here they were shown where to approach, where to stand, and where to sign in order to be "in camera range" (the magic phrase.)





## The Emblem Becomes Official

I resigned from the OSS and on September 1, 1945 opened an office in Washington - Presentation Associates. I didn't hear any news of the U.N. emblem for almost a full year. Then, on August 7, 1946, I got a call from Dave Zablodowsky, now Acting Chief of the U.N. Presentation Service in New York. It seems that the U.N. General Assembly needed to approve of the emblem, which was stamped in gold on the cover of the Charter, in order to make it official. Dave said the matter was coming up for a vote, and did I have any suggestions for improving the design. I immediately mailed back three thoughts, to wit:

- (1) For aesthetic and political reasons, shift the land masses a quarter turn to the left.
- (2) Extend the map to include the rest of Chile, Argentina and New Zealand.
- (3) Add new parallels of latitude to strengthen the circular pattern.

Two of these "before and afters" have been the subject of some speculation. I originally designed the pin with the United States on the vertical axis. Our source map showed North America in this position. There was no question in my mind that the honor of being the host nation at the birth of the U.N. called for this.

So it was in the spirit of noblesse oblige that we shifted North America to the left, giving more balance to the design, and making it so that the map didn't look upside down to the Soviets. Zablodowsky noted that the quarter swing to the left fortuitously landed the vertical position on the International Date Line, one of the first instances of genuine international action.

### U.N. to Award a Medal Like Red Emblem

BY CHESLY MANLY  
(Picture on page 5)  
17 times Tribune Press Service  
New York, July 30 - The 39th 1950

Medal of Korean War



Insignia for the U. N. medal the "spider web" seal of U. N. (top), which will be awarded to 300,000 Americans fighting in Korea and to the families of 12,000 men killed there, and the official state seal of Soviet Russia (below), to which it is strikingly similar.

Zablodowsky dwelt more at length on including all of Chile, Argentina and New Zealand on the final emblem. The only reason they had been omitted from the original was that our Rand McNally source didn't extend that far south, and we had been in too much of a hurry to find one that did. Argentina and Chile were never "lopped off," as a Herald Tribune article on the new emblem reported.

The revised design, redrawn by our former staff member Jack Becker, was presented to the U.N. General Assembly for adoption as its official emblem on November 19, 1946. The U.N. Presentation staff did change our Stettinius Blue to a bright blue, the official color of about a dozen national flags, including that of the Malagasy Republic. Had he known, I'm sure Mr. Stettinius would have disapproved. The design passed without a hitch.

My continuing interest in the emblem prompted me to write Zablodowsky two days later with a couple of final suggestions:

We all noted with pleasure that you for once have gotten a favorable press (Herald Tribune, November 19). The news article referring to the new design of the seal amused and interested all of us because the pixie hand of Zablodowsky was everywhere in evidence. I have something more than gentle criticism to offer, however, on the new seal.

- (1) It is slightly cockeyed.
- (2) Owing to the pale, delicate concentric circles whose lines are of surgical thinness, the black branches of peace have every intention of smothering the world. I suggest that you heavy-up the circles or, better yet, send us an enlarged photograph of the thing and let us make a graphic suggestion.

A later note on the history of the U.N. seal was provided when I received a long distance call on July 30, 1951. My caller was Chesly Manly, a reporter for the Chicago Tribune, who had been referred to me by the United Nations office in New York. Manly was tracking down the designer of the emblem in the hope of uncovering a Red plot. "Was I aware of the strikingly similar design of the Soviet State Seal?" he asked.

The Chicago Tribune was very much against the whole idea of the United Nations. And this was at the height of the Red scare, McCarthy time, and here he was tying us in to the Soviets. It was a cheap shot and despite my protestations, he printed the story. Fortunately, it didn't fly.



## Leading Lights of OSS Presentation

Here are a lot of the leading lights in Presentation. We were absolutely dedicated to winning the war. And we worked our asses off for three years doing it. The head of our group was Hubert C. Barton, an economist with the Federal Reserve Board before the war. He was later banished by the State Department, and went down and became an economic advisor to the governor of Puerto Rico and stayed there for 40 years. And I saw the accolades and tributes to him after he died four or five years ago. That's his wife, Marie Barton, on his right. I don't remember the woman on his left - that's the mystery person. Oliver Lundquist coordinated our efforts in San Francisco. There's Eero Saarinen, who designed the St. Louis Arch and Dulles Airport. Dick Wilson was producer, director and associate of Orson Welles. Over at the other end is Jim Hart, who became chancellor of the University of California at Berkeley. Edward Barnhart wrote a magnificent defense, or history, of the Nisei in camps in World War II. Ian McClellan Hunter was a Hollywood scriptwriter. He and Dalton Trumbo wrote the script for *Roman Holiday*, which won an Oscar. There's Dave

Zablodowsky, who was chief of our editorial section. He was a Columbia grad, a brilliant guy, and a liberal. I couldn't believe it when he was later accused by Whittaker Chambers of being a courier for the Communist Party. Peggy Lindsay became quite a movie editor. That's Donal McLaughlin lighting one cigarette from another. Next is my secretary, Edith Ferrara. The guy in back is Jo Mielziner, who became famous as probably the greatest theatrical designer on Broadway in the 40's and 50's. Up front is John O'Hara Cosgrave, one of our great illustrators. As you can see, he was in the army. Most of the guys were in the army, but they were allowed to wear civilian clothes.

Members of the Graphics Division assigned to the U.N. Conference include: Jack Becker, graphic artist; Sam Berman, caricaturist; John O'Hara Cosgrave, illustrator; Edith Ferrara, secretary; Joseph Krush, illustrator; Eric Mose, artist; Georg Olden, cartoonist; Charlotte Park, artist; Ivan Spear, graphic artist; Ben Thompson, architect; Gene Tourville, airbrush artist.

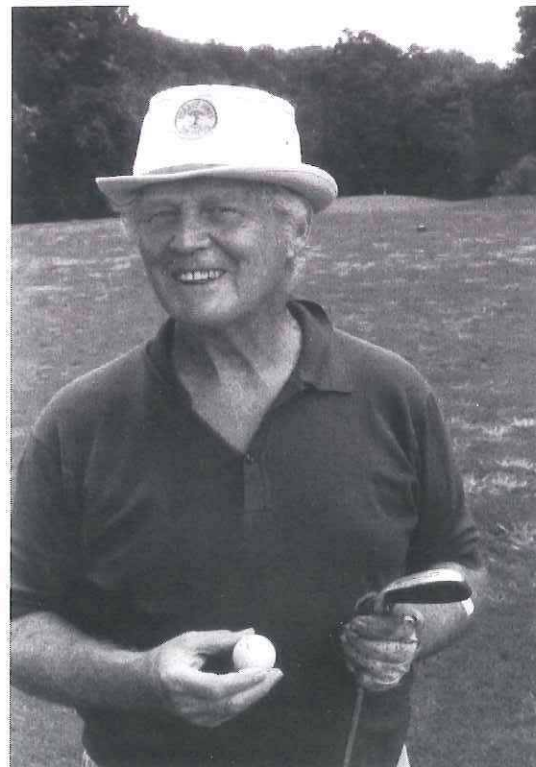
OSS Presentation Branch Staff.

Standing: Jo Mielziner.  
Sitting (back row): Jim Hart, Edward Barnhart, Ian Hunter, David Zablodowsky, Marie Barton, Hu Barton, "Mystery Person", Oliver Lundquist.  
Sitting (front row): Peggy Lindsay, Donal McLaughlin, Edith Ferrara, Eero Saarinen, Richard Wilson.  
Prone: John O'Hara Cosgrave.



## Acknowledgments 1995

In writing of my recollections of the San Francisco United Nations Conference including "Origin of the U.N. Emblem", my immediate family – my wife Laura Nevius McLaughlin, and my children Coille Hooven, Brian McLaughlin, and Karen McLaughlin Gallant – should be credited with pushing me into action. Most of my associates of those days are gone but among the few survivors who have encouraged me, freshened memories and provided early documents include Oliver Lundquist, Joseph Krush, Charlotte Park and Marie Barton of my OSS days. Laurence MacDonald, Dr. Milton Gustafson at the National Archives and Marilla Guptil of the U.N. Archives were helpful in digging up material from 50 years ago. Frank Gallant read the manuscript with the sober editor's eye for mental and grammatical lapses of the author. Mark Corrinet, historian and longtime collector of United Nations artifacts, gave the project his blessing. Virginia Steele Wood graciously put the Library of Congress at my disposal. Barbieri & Green, fun loving, intelligent partners, were responsible for the graphic design.



The author celebrating a recent hole-in-one at the Falls Road Golf Club, Potomac, Maryland.  
Photo: Brian McLaughlin

## About the Author

Donal McLaughlin, son of an architect and grandson of an architect, is also an architect, born in 1907, and now semi-retired and living in Garrett Park, Maryland.

He attended public schools in New York City. After special courses at Columbia and New York University and ateliers Corbett-Smith and Lloyd Morgan, and travel to Europe where he was exposed to Paris, Barcelona and the Bauhaus, he entered the Yale School of Architecture. A BFA degree in 1933, and in 1937 the diploma of the Beaux Arts Institute of Design completed his formal education.

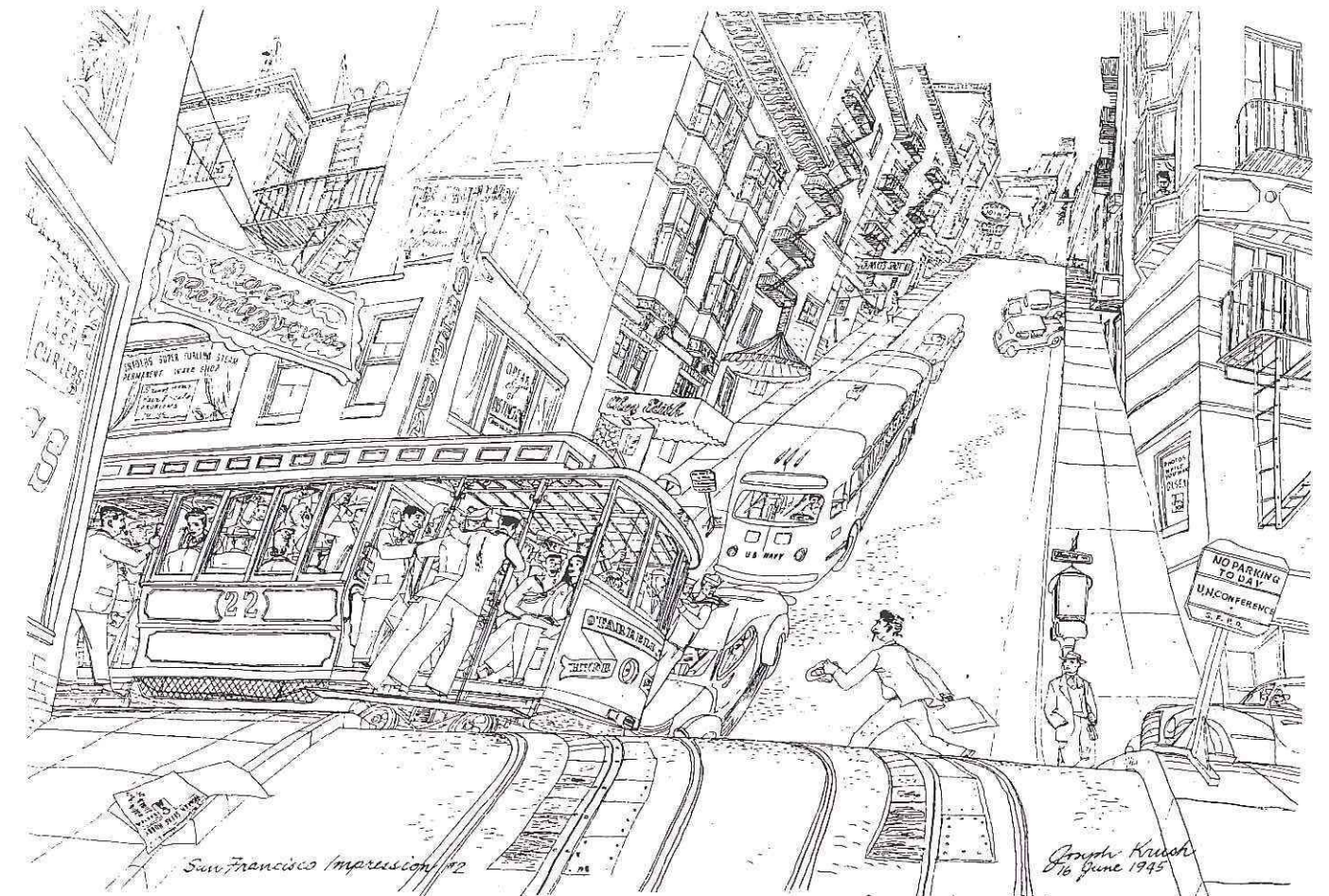
In the 1930's in the New York offices of Walter Dorwin Teague and Raymond Loewy, industrial designers, he worked on exhibits for the 1939 New York World's Fair and other projects such as suburban department stores for Macy's and Lord&Taylor. Later in association with James Gordon Carr, he won the competition for the design of Tiffany's 57th Street store interiors. During this same period he designed the new bottle for Pepsi-Cola.

Designing the new war room for President Roosevelt and the Joint Chiefs of Staff brought him to Washington with the Coordinator of Information (COI) which became the Office of Strategic Services (OSS). Three years there as Chief of the Graphics Division in the Presentation Branch paved the way for the next forty years in Washington. As head of Presentation Associates, his studio specialized in Graphics and Exhibit design and production. Clients included the National Bureau of Standards, the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the American Chemical Society, and the American Watch and Clock Industry.

In 1977 he designed the logotype for the Society of Victor Invictus, and in 1993, the Great Seal of the Town of Garrett Park.

These days are spent remodeling garages, graphics for the Town, or when the weather permits, heading for the golf course.

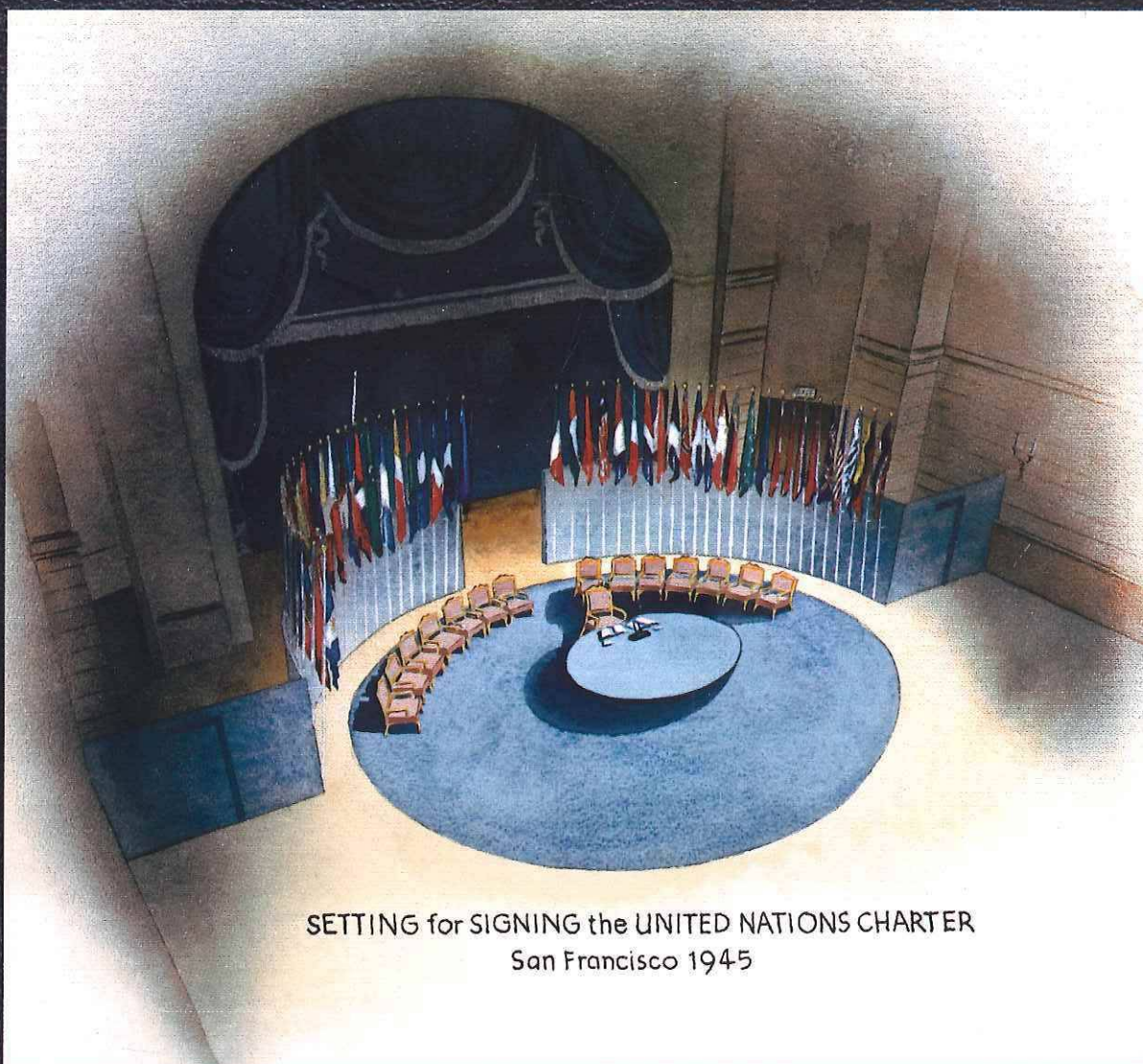
Donal McLaughlin  
Box 234  
Garrett Park, Maryland 20896



Back cover: Sketch of the Stage Setting of the Signing Ceremony, dated 13 June 1945. The row of chairs shown was eliminated from the final design.

San Francisco Impression #2 became almost as popular as Impression #1, particularly with our Presentation staff. Certain passengers in the cable car are recognizable – John Cosgrave, Sam Berman, Charlotte Park. Gijon Mill, the famous photographer, is loping across the intersection, window and marquee signs carry our names, and the discarded newspaper (left foreground) headlines a "marital problem" of Marie Barton. The artist himself appears surveying the scene in the right foreground.





SETTING for SIGNING the UNITED NATIONS CHARTER  
San Francisco 1945

*Among the recollections . . .*

- How one of seven designs for the emblem was picked
  - Why Argentina was omitted from the map
  - Why the emblem on the Charter is not official
  - How the author dusted off Andrei Gromyko
- How Chairman Stettinius held up the signing ceremony while he practiced his signature