

# Famed lecturer urges frugality for mankind

By ELAINE HALLECK

A communications satellite weighing one-quarter of a ton circles the earth outperforming 75,000 tons of undersea cable.

A family lives in a geodesic dome built in a fraction of the time it takes to put up an ordinary house. The dome weighs much less than its conventional counterpart, yet retains heat more efficiently and has greater stability in an earthquake.

These are examples of doing "more with less," the principle energetically stated by R. Buckminster Fuller in a symposium held at The Raleigh House in Southfield.

The symposium was organized by the Sheet Metal & Air Conditioning Contractors National Association.



sociation (SMACNA) and dealt with the energy crisis and its effects on the construction industry. Fuller was the keynote speaker in the seminar, attended by 500 Detroit-area architects, engineers and construction, automotive and mechanical air handling executives.

UNDER HIS name on the placard was "architect, author, lecturer," but his list of qualifications is long. He is also the inventor of the geodesic dome, a poet, writer, designer, philosopher, prophet, etc.

Fuller spoke to the assembled

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construction executives about things like "cosmic accounting," a system by which man must pay for the energy he uses. Thus, by this method of accounting, each gallon of petroleum costs \$1 million when all the time and natural forces that went into its development are considered.

Obviously, he pointed out, man must seek less costly (and more abundant) energy sources. He said man can develop the technological expertise to take advantage of "cheaper" energy, such as sun, wind and wave power.

One big problem Fuller sees for industry is the time lag. Because of poor communication or inefficient organization of energies, man continues to use the old ways when better ways are already known.

Thus, in the ancient Palace of Knossos on Crete are found plumbing systems which are the same as those now in use. Progress has been made, but not applied.

GENERALLY, he said, the time lag in the automotive industry is 10 years and 25 years in the building industry.

Fuller's speech was studded with words like "comprehensivist," "design science revolution" and "degeneralization." He developed many of the concepts in his younger years.

During the 1920s, when the

## 3 promoted to positions

Harley Ellington Pierce Yee Associates has promoted three executives to fill executive positions.

Moving from firm executive to senior firm executive is Paul Brown of Bloomfield Hills, FAIA, who has been with the company for 35 years. Brown's responsibilities include management of major accounts.

Advanced to firm executive are Joseph M. Stout, AIA, of Birmingham, specializing in educational, civic and housing facilities, and Manfred Stryk, P.E., of Southfield, a specialist in the structural design of buildings, parking decks and industrial facilities.

Harley Ellington Pierce Yee Associates in Southfield is one of metropolitan Detroit's largest architectural, engineering and planning firms.



P. Brown

J. M. Stout

world was less receptive to such maverick thinkers and Fuller's self-confidence was at low ebb, he undertook a two-year moratorium on speech.

Believing it was critical to know how to use words precisely, he examined his language and came up with a personal and highly technical vocabulary.

Today, at 78, he points out matter-of-factly that he also foresaw the energy and resource crises man is experiencing.

FOR A MAN who says he hasn't had a new idea in 50 years, Fuller has a wealth of fresh insights on energy, design, architecture, history, politics, education and the universe.

Largely self-educated (he was ousted from college in his freshman year and holds no formal degrees), he likes to look at the big picture. He sees a historical trend toward specialization. This, he said, has the effect of partially blinding man: He becomes unable to see the most efficient way to do things.

Mankind is bogged down, Fuller said, and wasting tremendous amounts of energy in making war and arming against one another. This is because man operates on the erroneous assumption that there are not enough resources to go around.

Acting on this assumption, man hoards what he needs (and more) for his own family or nation and tries to destroy those who would take some.



R. Buckminster Fuller, famed architect, author and lecturer

## Today's investor

## Company bargains to buy back stock

Q. I received a letter from a company offering to buy my stock. They offered more than the stock is selling for, but it's quite a bit less than I paid for it. Should I take the company's offer, and why did the company make this offer?

A. What you should do really depends on what you think the company is worth currently and may be in the years ahead, and if you think you can use the money better elsewhere at this time.

The company, in my opinion, is fairly speculative but has had a reasonable record. Earnings per share for 1973 are less than six times the \$14 you are being offered. On that basis, the company is offering you more than you could get if you sold it on the open market.

Only the management of the company knows why they have made this offer, but there could be several factors involved. The book value of the company is above \$18 a share so, if the company buys back shares at \$14, it is increasing the value and the earnings per share of the remaining shares.

The company is taking advantage of the current situation in the stock market where the stock is

selling less than its asset value. There may also be the hope that this action will help raise the price at which the stock sells.

Q. Is it better to invest in preferred stocks rather than common stocks?

A. When preferred stocks are first issued, they are likely to give you a bigger dividend than common stocks. In bad times, the dividend on the preferred may become stable than the common. The price of the preferred will be affected by interest rates.

But if the company continues to grow, its common stock may increase in value and the dividend on it may eventually outpace that paid by the preferred. Your upward opportunity is limited in the preferred; it is not in the common.

The best of two worlds is a convertible preferred. It gives you the good dividend that is characteristic of the preferred and the opportunity to convert into common if the company is very successful and the common stock becomes more valuable.



He claims man can do a lot more with a lot less

FULLER HAS a myriad of facts and figures to back up his contention that there is enough to go around. Once everyone is convinced of this, he said, man is well on the way to solving technical as well as social and psychological problems. When people see the world as a good and nurturing place to live, there will be no widespread feelings of meaninglessness.

Man's function, he said, is applying his mind to bring order into an inherently disorderly universe.

Fuller's broad viewpoint was related more specifically to construction industry problems by the other panel members: Paul R. Achenback, chief of the National Bureau of Standards; Ben Paddock, president, City National Bank of Detroit; and Louis Mihaly, manager of planning and supply, Marathon Oil Co.

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