

MEMBERSHIP

Maria Krasinski

The Membership Office had a busy year in 2003/2004. Membership renewals are steadily on the rise, setting us up to begin a dedicated new members campaign in Spring 2005. *News & Notes* continues to deliver reports on the latest research in the field and in Chicago, and we are scheduling a consistent calendar of engaging Members' lectures and events.

The opening of the reinstated Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery and the Yelda Khorsabad Court occupied much of the summer and fall. Rebecca Laharia shared responsibility with a small team, including Emily Teeter and Carole Krucoff and headed by then Development Director Debora Donato, for the planning of public relations and special events surrounding the opening. The gallery opening attracted a very wide audience of people interested in learning about ancient Iraq.

Membership played a key role in supporting the Director's Dinner on September 30, 2003 — a dinner and preview of the Jannotta Gallery attended by more than 140 guests. Donny George Youkhanna, Director of the Iraq Museum, gave the keynote speech. Membership also partnered with the Director's Office to facilitate Mr. Youkhanna's visit during the opening, assisting in the organizing of a public address by Mr. Youkhanna regarding the protection of Iraq's cultural property in the aftermath of the looting of the Iraq Museum.

On October 1, 2003, we hosted a preview of the Jannotta Gallery for the Oriental Institute Membership. The preview, along with an elegant catered reception, brought over 500 members to Hyde Park. Finally, a membership table was set up at the public opening of the gallery to answer questions about the Oriental Institute and pass out literature.

To celebrate the ongoing museum reinstallation, members of the James Henry Breasted Society were treated to a special viewing of stone reliefs from the interior of the Khorsabad Palace, which will form the first gallery in the East Wing (opening in January 2005). Laura D'Alessandro, Head of Conservation, spoke on the challenges of conserving and reinstalling the massive and fragile reliefs, while then Museum Director Karen Wilson explained the imagery and placed the reliefs in historical context.

The Members' Lecture Series continued this year with four lectures. On October 22, 2003, Nicolas Wyatt presented "Did it Begin in Ugarit? A Comparative Study of Royal Ideology." In February 2004, Gideon Avni, Director of the Excavations and Surveys Department of the Israel Antiquities Authority, presented, "From Christianity to Islam in the Holy Land: An Archaeological Perspective." We co-sponsored the Chicago Society of the Archaeological Society of America's first annual Robert J. Braidwood Memorial Lecture on March 17, 2004. The talk "To Euphrates and Beyond: Searching for the First Farmers in the Near East" was given by Andrew Moore, Director of the Jericho Project. Most recently, David P. Silverman, Professor of Egyptology at the University of Pennsylvania, gave a lecture entitled



Donny George Youkhanna, Director of the Iraq Museum, gives the keynote speech at the Director's Dinner celebrating the opening of the Mesopotamian Gallery

DEVELOPMENT AND MEMBERSHIP

“Working in the Shadow of the Step Pyramid: Insights into Burial Practices in Middle Kingdom Saqqara” on April 14, 2004.

The Membership Office published four issues of *News & Notes* and the 2002/2003 *Annual Report*. On November 19, Membership and Education presented “Mosaic: A Concert of Traditional Middle Eastern Music,” featuring acclaimed Chicago musicians performing a rich medley of Arabic, Turkish, Shephardic, and Armenian music. In addition, Membership supported the Development Office with its Visiting Committee meetings.

This was a bustling year for the travel program, as tours set off across the country and around the world. In August 2003, Research Associates Emily Teeter and Clemens Reichel presented *New York Double Feature: The Best of Ancient Near East and Egyptian Exhibits*. Reichel led a tour of Metropolitan Museum of Art’s special exhibition “Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium BC from the Mediterranean to the Indus,” while Teeter guided travelers through the Brooklyn Museum’s newly reinstalled collection of Egyptian artifacts. Rescheduled by popular demand, *The Oasis of the Western Desert* tour of Egypt returned in March 2004. Escorted by Professor Robert Ritner, this trip was a resounding success. Another trip abroad, *Crossroads of Empires: From Cairo to Crete*, set sail in April 2004 aboard a sailing ship accompanied by Emily Teeter. Emily also escorted members to *The Quest for Immortality: Treasures from the Egyptian Museum, Cairo* at the Milwaukee Public Museum in May 2004. Stay tuned for more exciting and adventurous tours in the upcoming year.

The year 2004 also marked the return of the Oriental Institute’s gala *Romancing the Past*, held on May 20 at the Drake Hotel. Over 200 people attended this event, honoring Peggy Grant as the third recipient of the James Henry Breasted Medallion, an award recognizing volunteerism and dedication to the Oriental Institute. Membership was heavily involved in planning the event and, in addition, took on the task of sending invitations, coordinating RSVPs, and designing and writing the content of the programs.

Many people helped bring the events and programs of the Membership Office to fruition. Special thanks go to Christina Abraham, Membership Assistant, whose dedication and attention to detail saw all our members through the renewal cycle. Congratulations to Christina on her recent graduation from the University of Chicago with a Masters degree. Emily Teeter, in her role as Special Projects Manager, gave invaluable guidance and assistance to the Travel Program. In addition, Emily and former Assistant to the Director Nicole Torres kept things running while Rebecca took maternity leave in January. Along with Nicole, Thomas Urban, Editor, and student assistant Leslie Schramer, both of the Publications Office, took on extra responsibility for the completion of the Spring *News & Notes* during that time. Kirk Schmink, Assistant to the Director of Development, often lent a hand, especially with tasks related to the gala. And Toby Hartnell typed and sorted innumerable addresses for the gala invitations. Many thanks to all of you.

We were also very fortunate to have the assistance of a number of excellent and skilled volunteers. David Ray and Henriette Klawans staffed the Membership booth at the public opening of the Jannotta Gallery. Henriette also lent her beautiful handwriting to the gala invitations, as did Sophie Bloom, Joe Burgess, Hazel Cramer, and Agnes Zellner. Gala chairs Janet Helman, Carlotta Maher, and Mari Terman, as well as Mary Shea and Margaret Foorman, reviewed and personalized the invitations. Djanie Edwards lent invaluable assistance in setting up the silent auction at the gala. Jo Lucas worked on updating the Oriental Institute scrapbook kept in the Director’s Office. Kavita Rajagopal helped with numerous projects including address manage-

ment for the gala and Erin Herral designed the brochure for the Travel Program, *Splendors of Western Turkey*, and developed the prototype for a new Travel Program web page.

Membership Director Rebecca Laharia left the Oriental Institute in July to move to New York City. Her remarkable efforts in revitalizing the Membership Program have positioned us to move forward to accomplish even more in the coming year. Maria Krasinski, former Education Programs Assistant in the Museum Education Office, became the new Membership Coordinator in late June.

Production Editor's note: Maria brings her background in graphic design, her familiarity with the Oriental Institute, and a fresh perspective to the Membership Office. I am confident that you will see the mark of her creative energy throughout the Membership Program.
