

MUSEUM EDUCATION PROGRAM

Joan D. Barghusen

100



MUSEUM

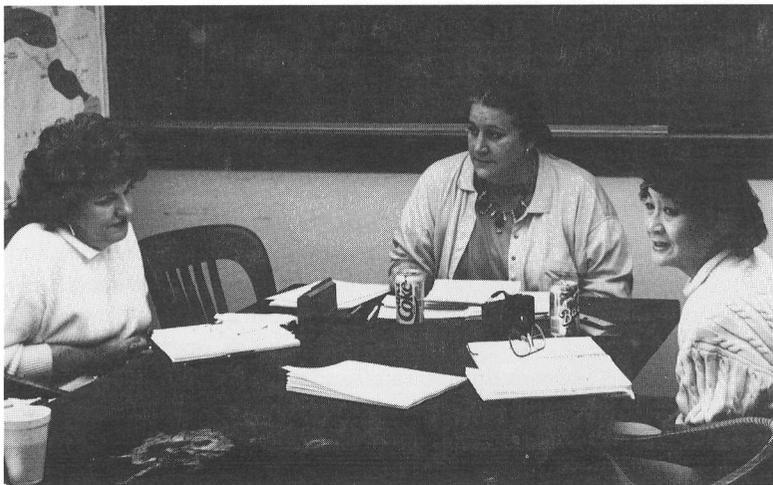
Activities of the Museum Education Program during the past year reflect the broad approach to diverse audiences this program has always maintained. On the assumption that it is desirable to attract people of various ages and levels of background to visit the museum, our outreach takes varied forms, designed to encourage interest in the artifacts, culture, art and history of the ancient Near East. ▼ As part of its regular annual activities, the Education Office sponsored seven quarter-long members' courses this year on topics as diverse as *Hittite Literature* and *History of Islamic Civilization*. We also offered weekly special interest tours for adults throughout the summer, Sunday films and slide talks throughout the year, and presentations to teachers as requested at educational in-service meetings. *Featured Object Brochure No. 8* was published, featuring the Assyrian human-headed winged bull, one of the most popular of the museum's exhibits. In addition to the text, written by Karen Wilson, the brochure includes a translation by John Brinkman of the entire inscription carved on the colossus. "Kingship in the Ancient Near East" was the topic of the third annual symposium for members, held in November 1989. The presenters included Oriental Institute faculty and staff members

McGuire Gibson, Karen Wilson, Harry Hoffner, and Lorelei Corcoran; Margaret Root from The University of Michigan and John Russell from Columbia University completed the roster of scholars who made presentations to an audience of approximately 250 participants.

Alongside its offerings for the adult museum visitors, the Museum Education Program has always emphasized programs for young children, valuing them as enthusiastic visitors now and potential audiences in future years. We continue to offer craft workshops in the winter and special interest tours for young children in the summer months when the docents are less involved with school groups.

For several years, we have maintained the children's adventure sheets, self-guiding gallery handouts that children can use to focus their visit and find objects of particular interest. These adventure guides are used by children independently, or by families, with parents and children working together. Over the years these sheets have drawn enough comments and questions from other professionals that, this past year, we focused attention on them in a display at the Marketplace of Ideas held as part of the annual meetings of the American Association of Museums. The Marketplace of Ideas is an exchange of information within professional circles about programs and activities that have worked effectively for the presenting institution. Besides the 150 or so people who visited our display table, picked up our printed material and samples, and engaged us in conversation about this program, we continue to receive inquiries about the adventure guides from other museum professionals interested in adapting these ideas for their own galleries.

A new project designed primarily for young children was completed this year with the publication of *Voyage to the Past: A Coloring Book and Guide to The Oriental Institute Museum*. This 32-page book contains line drawings



Instructor Manuela Lloyd teaches the Members' course "Boats and Trade in the Ancient Near East." Docents Dorothy Blindt and Kay Matsumoto attend.

of museum objects to be colored and a simple text emphasizing the relationship of the natural world of plants and animals to the lives of the ancient people represented in the museum. The drawings depict objects from all the galleries and include such favorite displays as the Assyrian winged bull and the bull's head from Persepolis as well as everyday objects such as a basket, a decorated bowl and a wooden spoon. The book also includes a hieroglyphic alphabet and cartouche for writing names in hieroglyphs and a map of the ancient Near East. We expect this coloring guide book to appeal not only to children and their parents, but also to teachers who will use the images to illustrate and enrich their classroom study of ancient civilizations.

The Museum Education Program was the recipient of a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. Howard Haas to honor the 50th wedding anniversary of Mr. and Mrs. Albert Haas. This gift is being used for the development of a videocassette presentation highlighting the artifacts and the work of The Oriental Institute. Scheduled for release in Spring, 1991, this videotape can be used in schools to portray the sweep of ancient Near Eastern history as it can be seen in the galleries of The Oriental Institute Museum; at the same time it will help viewers develop an appreciation of the contributions of The Oriental Institute to the study of ancient civilization and an awareness of its on-going work.

We gratefully acknowledge the award of a generous grant from the Women's Board of The University of Chicago. These funds are being used to enhance Sunday program offerings for families and to initiate special publicity efforts to announce them.

A pressing need for assistance in our office has been alleviated with the addition of the permanent part-time position of program assistant. Terri Barbee, our new program assistant, comes to us with several years of experience in the world of tourism and has taken over major responsibility for the smooth functioning of museum visits, enrollments in classes and workshops, publicity releases and many other administrative aspects of our work.

Since its inception in 1980 the Museum Education Office has shared quarters with the Volunteer Guide Program in a small office which grew even smaller with the growth of both programs. Our space problems were considerably ameliorated this past spring with the move to Room 202, a space large enough for us to function in a more efficient, productive and orderly manner. We continue to share this space with the Volunteer Guide Program and the shared space has historically been a factor in the successful implementation of both programs, as it holds open the doors of communication between education staff and volunteer guides that is vital to both endeavors.

We acknowledge our considerable debt to the help of talented and dedicated docents and other volunteers in activities that require special expertise; Kitty Picken and Georgie Maynard are invaluable in assisting with the children's craft workshops and Joan Hives continues as consultant

for craft projects, computer graphics, and other creative endeavors. Volunteer Chairman Emeritus Peggy Grant co-authored the script for the developing videotape project. The on-going cooperation of Janet Helman, the volunteer chairman, remains a cornerstone of the Education Program and I express my appreciation once again for her help and counsel at all levels of our very interdependent work.

The efforts of staff, faculty and docents join together in making possible the broad range of activities described in this report. To all these people I extend my sincere gratitude for their willingness to make possible this varied outreach to a public eager to share in their interest and work in the study of the ancient Near East.

Instructor Frank Yurco teaching the popular Members' course "History of Ancient Egypt."

