

As I mentioned in last month's newsletter, Museum Education and I sat down and designed a plan for the renovation of the LaSalle Banks Room. I have received a quote from Mike Gramhofer, our Project Manager in Facilities Services, and we are currently in the process of working on what are possible renovations for this fiscal year. I will keep you updated on the progress of this project.

Facilities/Building Meetings:

Through a suggestion made by Chuck Jones, I asked a group of OI staff members who were directly or indirectly responsible for public spaces to convene and discuss the various facilities maintenance issues that weighed upon their minds. Needless to say, this meeting proved to be both eye-opening and really productive. With the help of Ray Tindel, Chuck Jones, Margaret Schroeder, Carole Krucoff, John Sanders, and Karen Wilson, I am currently working on implementing different strategies to provide the Institute with much more efficient and effective service. If you have any ideas or concerns, please feel free to contact me. If anyone is interested, our next meeting will be Tuesday, April 15, at 2:00 PM.

Miscellania:

OI Staff/Faculty Meeting

Just a reminder - the next OI Staff/Faculty Meeting is Wednesday, April 30, at 3:30 PM in the LaSalle Banks Room.

My Schedule:

I thought that posting this might be helpful to everyone who needs to track me down for various reasons:
M, W-F: 9 AM - 5 PM
Tuesdays: 8 AM - 4 PM

Recipes:

I don't have any recipes to share... I'll leave that one up to Tom Urban!

+--+

COMPUTER LAB / John Sanders

On March 25 the Oriental Institute signed an agreement with the university's Networking Services and Information Technologies (NSIT) department to take over the serving of the Institute's website. The next few weeks will be busy as we move over 29,000 files (4.3 gigabytes of data) to the new server, and start to discuss how we want to change its "look and feel". We have negotiated for 10 hours per week design and programming time from the NSIT staff. This move will provide the OI with a faster, more up-to-date server, 24/7/365 maintenance of

our website, and access to additional web services down the road - such as back-end database serving, secure credit card transactions via the website, etc.

Norman Golb posted on the OI website an Adobe Acrobat (PDF) version of his article: The De Rossi Collection Of Hebrew Manuscripts At The Biblioteca Palatina And Its Importance For Jewish History.

I have been experimenting with Macintosh System 9 Postscript fonts running under the newer Mac System X operating system. With some initial difficulty, I believe I now know how to handle both TrueType & Postscript fonts, with or without associated keyboards.

I had hoped to be able to switch 2 of the 3 Macintosh computers in the Computer Lab over to System X by now, but a delay in the development of System X drivers for the scanners attached to the computers means that they must continue (by default) to run Mac System 9.

The intermittent AppleTalk problem that is preventing some users, on some occasions, from seeing the Apple laser printer in the basement Archaeology Lab has not yet been solved. NSIT engineers are not precisely sure where the problem lies, but we will continue to work at it until it is solved.

+--+

COMMUNICATORS GROUP / Emily Teeter, Chuck Jones

The third gathering of staff who deal with OI external communications met on Wednesday March 19 at 10:30. John Sanders discussed the issue of metadata and the Dublin Core that dictates how web pages are indexed. Ultimately, NSIT will dictate how the metadata is organized. The question of xml versus html was raised with the comment that xml is becoming standard, and that it can read the existing html. John reported that the OI web site has 28,000 pages, most of which are active.

The redesign of our web site was discussed particularly in the context of the site moving to NSIT (see the COMPUTER LAB report above). Issues of navigation were raised, especially how important and useful a home page is. The posting of news on the home page was discussed and the use of rotating images or news alerts. John reported that most users of the OI web site never visit the home page, and with well-designed navigation tools on each page, the home page is not so important.

Ways in which new pages will be entered on the site were discussed in context of how many gate keepers there should be and what steps there should be from composition of text to approvals by department heads and director (as appropriate) and editing.

John reported the pending contract with NSIT includes ten hours of programming time a week.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday April 16 at 10:30 in the LaSalle room. The agenda will include the presentation of an organizational model for the movement of data from composition to posting on the web, navigation tools,

MUSEUM - REGISTRATION / Ray Tindel

The usual processes continue.

WHERE IS IT?? There are currently some 2,500 objects in transit in preparation for the Mesopotamian Gallery, and objects tend to wander... It finally became necessary to do a complete shelf check which took, off an on, nearly two weeks, but enough of that.

Brad Hafford from the University of Pennsylvania was here for a few days cataloguing and weighing Nippur weights for a forthcoming monograph.

It was nearly forty years ago that Robert McC. Adams made the surveys for his Uruk Countryside and we are now finally registering the underlying material he brought back. It is very interesting to compare the actual sherds with the published drawings, and to ponder how many of the sites still exist.

David Weisberg's tablet publication is about to go to press, and we supplied the Publications Office with the measurements for the tablets, some 147 pieces in all.

The Museum has some 450 Arabic papyri, and we supplied a brief description of how they were acquired for Petra Sijpesteijn who is preparing a report for the newsletter of the International Society for Arabic Papyrology on American collections.

We have also received another shipment of storage cabinets - many thanks to Karen and Laura who wrote the grant - which will now make it possible to unpack just about all of our remaining Egyptian pottery. There are a few inconveniently large jars which remain a problem, however.

In all, we handled over four thousand objects during March, which makes for an abnormally busy month.

+--+

PUBLICATIONS / Tom Holland

As some of you are already aware, the Publications Office is the first "unit" in the Oriental Institute that is now undergoing a self evaluation review of its present procedures for publishing our research in a timely matter and to investigate fresh ideas concerning how best to speed up the present backlog of unpublished titles.

Our internal review will be ongoing through the month of April in consultation with Tom Urban and the four work study students who are now working with us part-time. We welcome any constructive ideas that members of the OI faculty, staff, and students may wish to offer, which might lead to our improving the turn around time for the publication of manuscripts already accepted for our OI series and for forthcoming titles.

Please feel free to e-mail me your thoughts on this subject.

+--+

PUBLICATIONS / Tom Urban

The indexing of OIP 118 (Teeter) and 121 (Hilgert) was completed and the volumes will be sent to press in the next week or so.

As I mentioned before, OIP 120 (Alizadeh) is 95% complete but is on hold until Alizadeh returns from Iran. The material that Alizadeh emailed to us has been incorporated into the manuscript and is being edited.

David Weisberg's volume has been given its initial formatting in PageMaker and the plate section is complete. We thank Ray Tindel for supplying the tablet measurements. At the moment work is being done on the abbreviations and bibliography. We should soon be able to send page proofs to the author.

George Hughes's volume has also been formatted in PageMaker, and several missing photographs were added to the plate section (there's still one missing photograph), which then had to be reformatted. At the moment work is being done on the abbreviations and bibliography.

The scanning and making of illustration pages continues for Tony Wilkinson's volume. A few pieces of oversize artwork may have to be sent out; however, we are going to hire Wendy Ennes to see if she can take usable digital photographs of line art. Wilkinson has submitted the text for his volume.

The scanning and formatting of pages in PageMaker for Helen Jacquet-Gordon's volume continues. Jacquet-Gordon returned the sample pages. Work is also being done on the abbreviations and bibliography.

As many as nine volumes of the CAD are to be reprinted (seven are out of stock and two are low on stock) and we have received five competitive bids. We obtained a purchase order for Eisenbrauns to typeset the Tet volume.

+--+

RESEARCH ARCHIVES / Chuck Jones

Projects Afoot and Underway

Unified Abbreviations List:

This winter staff of the Research Archives has been working on the development of a unified database of abbreviations used in ancient Near Eastern studies. This list, which will eventually be served and searchable on-line, will identify the reference of an abbreviation, and supply the name of the publication or style-sheet endorsing any given abbreviation. At present there are nearly four thousand entries in the database.

Digital Desk Reference:

We continue to work towards the appearance of a Digital Desk Reference, which will include links to all networked resources for the study of the ancient Near East licensed or purchased by the University and accessible to users on the University of Chicago network. The collection of materials indexed in the

Digital Desk Reference will differ from those in Abzu, in that they are not freely available to the public.

Abzu: The new database back-end for Abzu continues to work quite well. At present Abzu includes 5,864 records. In the last few months Abzu had served about thirty thousand searches to about thirteen thousand users monthly:

<http://www.etana.org/abzu>

Items newly added to the database are accessible at:

<http://lib16.library.vanderbilt.edu/diglib/abzu-processquery.pl?SID=&UID=&CID=&auth=&code=abzu&recent=yes&searchstring=today>

Lists: ANE and ANENews:

<https://listhost.uchicago.edu/mailman/listinfo/ane>

<https://listhost.uchicago.edu/mailman/listinfo/anenews>

This pair of lists remains very active. ANE distributes about a thousand messages each month. Between ten and twenty percent of these make it to ANENews - the moderated version of the list.

About twelve hundred addresses are subscribed to ANE; another 550 are subscribed to ANENews.

On-line Catalogue of the Research Archives:

<http://oilib.uchicago.edu/oilibcat.html>

The catalogue has been accessible on the web for a little more than three years. During that time the catalogue has been used by 43,126 discrete users. Of these 7,927 have been repeat users. This works out to 95 users each day. In the first quarter of 2003, there have been 4,259 discrete users, of whom 831 have made return visits. This works out to 127 users each day.

On a personal note: April 1, 2003 marks my twentieth anniversary as Research Archivist at the Oriental Institute.

+--+

PROJECTS

+--+

CHD / Theo van den Hout

The best news of the past period was that we have been awarded another grant from the NEH. We speak of it as the "bridge grant", although that is no official term, but it should bring us from the current grant period to what will hopefully be the beginning of the Challenge Grant period. The deadline for the latter is coming November, so there will be enough to do this summer. Meanwhile work on the next fascicle, S/2, is in steady progress. Final drafts have been written for almost all words beginning with sar-. The following batch of sas-, sat- and saz- is just a fraction of that. The writing of first drafts of t-words is moving forward at a higher pace now with Alice helping us.

+--+

EPIGRAPHIC SURVEY / Ray Johnson

As I write this the Epigraphic Survey is in the final week of its 2002-2003 field season, so this note will be brief. Despite the ongoing siege of Iraq it

remains peaceful here in Luxor, security is excellent, and the overall atmosphere is that of resignation and hope for the best and a swift end to hostilities. Because of Iraq the planned visit of WTTW's Len Aronson for filming was postponed until next fall, and stone conservator Hiroko Kariya postponed her trip as well. Other than that, we continued our normal work routine and made great progress on all fronts. The locals have been incredibly supportive of our work, and as helpful as they can be. Tourist levels have decreased but there continues to be a steady stream of Europeans, and, oddly, I witnessed more American groups in Luxor last month than I noticed during the whole season!

At Medinet Habu, the epigraphic and conservation teams are wrapping things up at the small Amun temple, which we will close on Saturday for the summer. This involves moving our equipment out of the temple, cleaning, and closing up the back sanctuaries, the two doors of which are padlocked, sealed by the inspector with the SCA lead seals, and blocked up with stones. At the moment the conservators have finished the cleaning of the reliefs in the two central sanctuaries, front and back, and the photographers are doing the final publication photos (b&w and color transparency) in the back sanctuary for Volume 1. Tomorrow I will be reviewing the paint collations in that chamber with Brett and Margaret. By Friday everyone will have finished up their work and packed up the equipment and supplies for transport back to CH, along with the ladders and scaffolding, after closing on Saturday. Stone cutter Dany Roy closed his operation on the roof last week, successfully finishing the roof sealing of the entire Eighteenth Dynasty temple including installation of new conduits and channels for directing rainwater off the roof. He also laid several new stone floor slabs in the back 'naos room' and created sandstone wall patches in both central sanctuaries.

At Luxor Temple I continued to coordinate the stacking of sandstone wall fragments onto protected, damp-coursed mastaba platforms with our workmen after Jamie Riley's departure on March 21st. The last of the platforms (for this season) was finished in March in the area of the northwestern Roman gateway. Nine mastabas totalling 90 meters were constructed and are now filled with material dating from every building period of Luxor Temple, as well as Karnak, roughly sorted by category, and we will finish the stacking for the season on Thursday. Thanks to our workmen and Jamie, we have kept to our ambitious goal of getting the bulk of the wall fragments at Luxor Temple up off the ground onto protected platforms by the end of this season, a major milestone in the preservation of this priceless material.

To augment the protective storage program, this past month I designed and had constructed 80 meters of covered aluminum framing units for the treatment and 'hospital' mastabas in the eastern storage area. All of the frames are topped with rainproof fiberglass roofing, and some of the units were designed with a second level of shelving which effectively doubles the amount of stored deteriorating wall fragments. To further protect the fragments from the elements canvas screening is being installed on all sides by CH engineer Nashet. These are bolted into place along the top of the frame, and tied at the bottom. Slit sides allow for ease of access during treatment but can be tied closed.

This past month saw another chapter in the history of Chicago House come to a quiet close with the death of our beloved Chief Engineer, 'Bosh Mohandis' Saleh Shahat Soliman, who was 86. Hired full time by Kent Weeks in the mid-70s, Saleh was one of those brilliant mechanics which every expedition in the field needs

and longs for. He could fix anything and was called upon to do so often in a facility as large and complex as this one. He kept CH maintained and running smoothly for more than 30 years and was a surrogate 'papa' to many of us over the years. We will miss him terribly.

That's all for now. See you all very soon! Best wishes from all of us here.

+--+
INDIVIDUALS
+--++

CHUCK JONES

Early in March Patrick Durusau of the SBL visited Chicago for talks with Jones and others at the Oriental Institute. We managed to fit in demonstrations of the state of XSTAR, METEOR, The Persepolis Fortification Tablet Project, and other. Patrick filled us in on the font development project, and various other enterprises underway at the Society of Biblical Literature.

Jones and Durusau finalized the program for the third joint session of the OI and SBL at the Annual Meeting in Atlanta in November:

Session Title: Massive Scholarly Data Projects: Perspectives and Experiences
Session Description: Principal researchers describe their experiences with some of the largest humanities projects to date dealing with textual resources.

Presider: Charles E. Jones, Research Archivist, Oriental Institute, University of Chicago

(Each presentation is 20 minutes with a 10 minute Q&A period.)

Stephen Kaufman

Title: Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon

Abstract: The Comprehensive Aramaic Lexicon will include all ancient Aramaic, is based on a compilation of all Aramaic literature and will include all modern scholarly discussion of the Aramaic language. It represents a departure from prior partial approaches to the construction of lexicons and offers the potential for data sets and approaches not previously possible.

Steve Tinney

Title: Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary

Abstract: The Pennsylvania Sumerian Dictionary will result in an exhaustive dictionary of the Sumerian language that will be useful for Sumerologists and non-specialists. In addition to the dictionary, the project is developing tools and datasets for the Sumerian language.

Gregory Crane

Title: The Perseus Digital Library

Abstract: The Perseus Digital Library is in part a text collection but also offers a broad range of other relevant resources. It is evolving to offer complex interactions with a variety of source materials to a variety of audiences.

Traianos Gagos

occasional frustration in laying data out in such a way that it can be searched systematically while also retaining the integrity of the original record, with all its idiosyncrasies.

For the museum reinstallation, I finished the draft for the panels in the "Daily Life" exhibit.

And then there is the war in Iraq and the media... it is sad to see that it is a war on Iraq that has focused so much media attention onto Iraq's antiquities and the possible threats to them. On a positive note, the media has shown interest and, hopefully, will make the public more aware of this issue. I have done my share of interviews and offered discussions at these stations:

- Deutschlandfunk (Germany's national radio station, aired on 3/24/03) (<http://www.dradio.de/cgi-bin/es/neu-campus/6757.html>)
- Southern California Public Radio (KCPP), "Air Talk", live on Monday 3/31/03 (<http://www.kpcc.org/programming/airtalk/>) (this station got a good dose of Oriental Institute wisdom that day--three hours later they had Mac Gibson on "Talk of the City" (<http://www.kpcc.org/programming/talkofthecity/>))
- on TV: "Chicago Tonight" on WTTW, together with Tony Wilkinson (4/3/03)

On a happier note, on Friday March 28 I took WBEZ's Victoria Lautman on a tour through the museum and the basement (thanks to Ray Tindel for making this possible) to show her the progress in the Mesopotamian Gallery reinstallation. That interview aired on WBEZ's "Eight Forty-Eight" on Friday (4/4/03) and was rebroadcast on Sunday morning. You can find it on their webpage (http://www.wbez.org/frames.asp?HeaderURL=../schedule/hd_sched.htm&BodyURL=/schedule/848/848.htm), under April 4, provided you can get past the innovative spelling of my name.

+--+

GIL STEIN

Gil Stein submitted the completed manuscript of his edited volume "The Archaeology of Colonial Encounters: Comparative Perspectives" to the SAR Press for peer review. The book presents the papers from an Advanced Seminar that he organized on this topic at the School of American Research in Santa Fe, NM. (<http://www.sarweb.org/seminars/pastseminars/participants/participants00-03.htm>) The papers examine the theoretical underpinnings of current models of colonization, while also presenting case studies from both the Old and New World (Mesopotamia, Phoenicia/Carthage, Greece, Rome, 16th century Spain, Russian and Spanish colonies in California, Oaxacan enclaves in Teotihuacan, Wari, and Inka colonies). Contributors to this volume are: Susan Alcock, Terence d'Altroy, Michael Dietler, Janine Gasco, Kent Lightfoot, Daniel Rogers, Katharina Schreiber, Michael Spence, Gil Stein, and Peter Van Dommelen.

+--+

EMILY TEETER

