

## SECURITY

### Margaret Schroeder

Oriental Institute Museum Security was very busy with the special events leading up to the opening of the Mesopotamian Gallery in September and October, its opening weekend October 18 and 19, 2003, and the gratifying increase of visitors we have seen ever since the opening.

We have begun to implement new periodic “refresher sessions” for guard training, and quarterly meetings both to discuss procedural problems and to get guard feedback on problems and suggestions for improving visitors’ experiences, traffic flow, and tour organization.

Margaret Schroeder has been participating in meetings of security personnel from cultural institutions throughout the Chicago area. These meetings seek to find solutions to problems common to tourist venues, and to pool resources and manpower in special events, manpower shortages, or emergency situations. Also, the Chicago museums are forming a Midwestern chapter of an organization that accredits museum and cultural institution security officers and seeks the adoption of an “acceptable practices” code for North American cultural institutions.

As a new member of the Smithsonian Institution’s Cultural Property Protection board, Margaret helped plan the February 2004 conference in Washington, D.C.: “Security Is a People Business.” At the conference itself, Margaret co-chaired a session on university and library security, helped introduce speakers (and tried futilely to repair PowerPoint computer hookups), and presented a paper on “Theft in Libraries and Museum Special Collections.” An expanded version of the paper presented in February was published in the June 2004 issue of the ASIS (The American Society for Industrial Security) magazine *Security Management*.

Margaret attended the Smithsonian board meeting June 21, 2004. The board is busily planning the February 2005 conference, which will be held at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas. The hope is that the change of venue from Washington, D.C. to other locales every three years can enable people from small cultural institutions or those with low budgets, who might not be able to afford to travel all the way to Washington, to attend a conference closer to them. This year’s conference in Las Vegas should draw many people from the West Coast or Southwest whom we have never met before, or whose last conference might have been the one held in 1999 in Los Angeles in conjunction with the Getty Museum in Malibu.

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