

MEMBERSHIP

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Statistics

At the close of the fiscal year, the Oriental Institute had 2,115 members. Between July 1, 2004 and June 30, 2005, we gained 209 new members and saw an increase of over 26% in total membership revenue. In June 2005, Membership launched a new member campaign that is thus far proving to be a success. We hope to continue expanding our membership base in the coming year and to provide even more engaging programs and events.

Publications

The Membership Office published four issues of the members' newsletter *News & Notes* in 2004/2005. The fall 2004 issue featured a lead article by Abbas Alizadeh titled "Recent Archaeological Investigations on the Persepolis Plain." The opening of the East Wing galleries was the focus of the winter 2005 issue, while the spring issue highlighted CAMEL Director Scott Branting's excavations at Kerkenes Dağ in his article entitled "Seeing within the Soil: Exploring an Ancient City at Kerkenes Dağ." The summer 2005 issue spotlighted the volunteers of the Oriental Institute and their many invaluable contributions to the Oriental Institute's mission.

Events

This year, the Membership Office partnered with the Archaeological Institute of America to present a rich variety of speakers and topics for the Members' Lecture Series. Each Members' Lecture was co-sponsored by both institutions, enabling us to offer more talks throughout the year.

Oriental Institute Museum Director Geoff Emberling kicked off the series for 2004/2005. His lecture, "On the Origins of Cities in Mesopotamia: Recent Excavations at Tell Brak, Northeastern Syria" brought over 130 people to the Oriental Institute on September 22.

On October 20, Membership, the Education Office, Iran House of Chicago, and the Iranian Cultural Society co-sponsored the premiere of *Persepolis: A New Perspective*, a new documentary from Iranian filmmaker Farzin Rezaeian. Over 500 people attended two sold-out screenings, with standing-room only in the lobby.

A James Henry Breasted Society dinner and lecture by Professor Gay Robins of Emory University took place on October 28. Professor Robins spoke on "Women, Sexuality, and the Construction of Gender in New Kingdom Egyptian Art" at the University Club in downtown Chicago.

In November, the Oriental Institute hosted the Chicago premiere of *The Hittites* and Membership once again co-sponsored the sold-out event with the Museum Education Office and the Consulate General of Turkey.

We also co-sponsored a lecture by Professor Jodi Magness of the University of North Carolina with the Archaeological Institute of America and the Lutheran School of Theology. Held at the Lutheran seminary, Professor Magness spoke about "The Archaeology of Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls."

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After taking a break for the holidays in December, Membership events resumed in January marking the opening of the permanent exhibition *Empires in the Fertile Crescent: Ancient Assyria, Anatolia, and Israel in the East* in the East Wing galleries. Membership was very involved in the events celebrating the opening of the reinstalled and redesigned galleries.

On January 13, Membership and Development hosted the Director's Dinner in the Marshall and Doris Holleb Family Special Exhibits Gallery. About 120 guests attended this event honoring the donors, faculty, and museum staff who were integral to making the new galleries a reality. Remarks by Professor Amihai Mazar from the Institute of Archaeology, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem capped off the evening.

The Members' Preview of the East Wing galleries took place on January 26. Over 150 members braved the winter weather to tour *Empires in the Fertile Crescent: Ancient Assyria, Anatolia, and Israel* before it opened to the public. A catered reception was held in the Holleb Family Special Exhibits Gallery, while films relating to the new exhibition played in Breasted Hall. Many thanks go to the volunteer greeters and "Ask Me" docents in the galleries: Catherine Deans-Barrett, Terry and Bill Gillespie, Ira Hardman, Donald Payne, Semra Prescott, Lucy Sandel, Anne Schumacher, Daila Shefner, and Toni Smith.

The public opening of the gallery was January 29–30, and Membership set up an information table on both days. Thanks to volunteers Gabriele da Silva and Barbara Levin for stepping in to give me a lunch break!

In February, the Members' Lecture Series returned with a talk by Edward Ochsenchlagler of Brooklyn College entitled, "Seeking the Past in the Present: Ethnoarchaeology at al-Hiba in Iraq." Almost sixty members and guests attended this lecture about the history and current plight of the Marsh Arabs in Iraq.

In March, William Peck, Independent Scholar and former Curator of Ancient Art, Detroit Institute of Fine Arts, gave a lecture entitled "Excavation in the Precinct of the Goddess Mut, Karnak: The 2005 Season." Over 100 members and guests heard Mr. Peck speak about his recent research at Karnak, where he had just returned from excavations a few weeks earlier.

On March 31, Membership hosted a James Henry Breasted Society lecture and reception at the Oriental Institute. Georgina Herrmann of the Institute of Archaeology of London gave a talk entitled "Monuments of Merv: Rediscovering Cities of the Silk Road."

Membership hosted two Members' Lectures in April. On April 6, Holly Pittman of the University of Pennsylvania gave a lecture entitled "New Light on Ancient Iran: Unearthing a New Bronze Culture in the Region of Jiroft in the Province of Kerman." Approximately eighty people attended the lecture. Then for something new, we held a Members' Lecture on a Sunday afternoon. Mary Voigt of the College of William and Mary presented "Deities and Dolls: Public and Private Ritual in the Neolithic Near East" to an audience of about sixty.

From that point on, Membership focused its attention on preparing for Passport to the Middle East, the 2005 Annual Members' Event on May 14. The planning committee, composed of Suq Manager Denise Browning, volunteer Andrea Dudek, Research Associate Emily Teeter, Development Director Monica Witczak, and me (Membership Coordinator), worked to transform the Oriental Institute into a Middle Eastern Suq with a large rug bazaar as its center. About 130 members attended the event, which, in addition to the rug bazaar, featured performances by Arabesque dance troupe and Mosaic Middle Eastern music troupe; a lecture by noted rug scholar Peter Stone entitled "The Evolution and Variation of Tribal and Village Rug Motifs"; henna tattoo decoration by Bibya; an Islamic calligraphy demonstration by University

of Chicago graduate student Kaveh Hemmat; palm reading by astrologers/entertainers Victoria Martin and Demetria Nanos; and a Middle Eastern barbecue and buffet.

Thanks to the many volunteers who were so helpful in preparing for and running the event: Rozenn Bailleul-LeSeur, Joe Cain, Gabriele da Silva, Catherine Dueñas, Djanie Edwards, Toby Hartnell, Kate Grossman, Kirk Schmink, Leslie Schramer, Claire Thomas, and Ali Witsell. Special thanks are due to volunteer and committee member Andrea Dudek for her tireless dedication in making this event such a success.

Travel Program

This year saw two international departures and one stateside excursion to visit a museum exhibit. In September, Director Gil Stein led a three-week sold-out tour to see the Hidden Treasures of Eastern Turkey, with stops at Cappadocia, Mount Ararat, Yazilikaya, and Mount Nemrud among others. Kathleen Mineck, Ph.D. candidate in Hittitology at the University of Chicago and a former travel agent, accompanied the group. From January 15 to 16, a group from the Oriental Institute took a trip to Cincinnati, Ohio, to view the Petra: Lost City of Stone exhibition at the Cincinnati Art Museum. Research Associate Aaron Burke escorted the group, giving a supplementary lecture on the history and culture of the Nabataeans. We were also fortunate to have a private lecture with Glenn Markoe, Curator of Classical and Near Eastern Art at the Cincinnati Art Museum and co-curator of the Petra exhibit. March brought the departure of the Wonders of Ancient Egypt tour, escorted by Professor Robert Ritner. Development Director Monica Witczak also accompanied the group on this eighteen-day Egyptian highlights tour that featured sites such as Giza, Luxor (including a visit to Chicago House), Abu Simbel, and Karnak.

Behind-the-Scenes

There were a couple of staff changes in the Membership Office this year, beginning with my arrival in the position just at the turn of the fiscal year last June 2004. Membership Programs Assistant Christina Abraham left the Institute at the end of April 2005 to take up a position at the Council for American-Islamic Relations and to attend law school at DePaul University. Christina was indispensable to the Membership program during her year-and-a-half at the Institute, not only in maintaining membership renewals and office needs, but also by taking on additional responsibilities in times of transition and helping me learn the ropes. Assistant to the Director of Development Kirk Schmink stepped in and very capably assisted with the renewal process and other day-to-day tasks before Tanvi Solanki, an undergraduate in the College, took over the position in May.

In addition to our assistants in the office, Membership would not have functioned half as smoothly as it did this year without the cooperation, effort, and advice of many individuals around the Institute. Tom Urban and the Editorial Assistants in the Publications Office continued to devote their time and patience to the production of *News & Notes* and the *Annual Report*. Emily Teeter put up with my incessant knocking at her door to willingly share her expertise, especially in regards to the Travel Program. Emily, Denise Browning, and Monica Witczak were integral in the planning of the Annual Members' Event. Monica also offered much-appreciated guidance for all membership activities and often stayed late to help set up for members' events. Carole Krucoff and the Museum Education Office presented many helpful suggestions and promising collaborations for programming. Carla Hosein and Olivia Boyd were regular sources

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of cheerful assistance for financial and logistical arrangements. Lastly, Gil Stein and Steve Camp provided sound structure and positive motivation for setting new Membership goals. I would like to thank them and the rest of the Institute faculty and staff for making my first year as Membership Coordinator so enjoyable.
