

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Meghan A. Winston

The 2010–2011 event schedule was an exciting one for the Oriental Institute! We welcomed over 800 guests through a variety of events, including two Members' previews, an Iranian film premiere, and a dictionary completion celebration. We also welcomed many different groups, including the American Research Center in Egypt, the American Oriental Society, and the Women's Board of the University of Chicago. It was truly a pleasure to host our Members and donors, who make the work we do here possible.

#### Visible Language Members' Preview

On September 27, 216 Oriental Institute Members enjoyed an exclusive preview of *Visible Language: Inventions of Writing in the Ancient Middle East and Beyond*, a special exhibit showcasing some of the earliest writing systems in the world.

After Gil J. Stein, director of the Oriental Institute, welcomed all guests, Geoff Emberling, research associate and chief curator of the Oriental Institute Museum, introduced Chris Woods, associate professor of Sumerian, as the guest curator of our newest exhibit. During his talk, Woods helped Members understand the origins of written language through ancient cuneiform tablets, hieroglyphics, and Chinese characters.

Following Woods' lecture, guests were invited to tour the exhibit and to enjoy a reception with food from Amazing Edibles Catering in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery. Members enjoyed delectable hors d'oeuvres in addition to a special expansion of the Suq, which featured specially ordered merchandise and autographed copies of exhibit catalogs.

A special thank-you goes out to Steve Camp, Chris Woods, Geoff Emberling, Emily Teeter, Maeve Reed, Erik Lindahl, and Adam Lubin for all they did to ensure the night's success.

#### Behind Closed Doors: An Evening with Oriental Institute Registrars

On November 8, we invited forty-one Associate Members to join us for cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and a behind-the-scenes look at Oriental Institute Registration. Beginning at 6:00 PM, guests were treated to a twenty-minute presentation by Helen McDonald, Oriental Institute registrar, regarding the registration process as a whole.

Following the presentation, guests broke into smaller groups and took exclusive tours of the registration and organic storage areas. As part of this special evening, we invited registration volunteers Jim Sopranos, Janet Helman, and Lisa Heidorn to showcase the different projects on which they have worked, which were on display at different stations situated throughout the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery. All food for the evening was provided by Occasions Chicago Catering.

A special thank-you goes out to Maeve Reed, Helen McDonald, Jim Sopranos, Janet Helman, Lisa Heidorn, and all others who ensured the night's success.

## Records of Their Time – A James Henry Breasted Society Event

On December 1, thirty-seven James Henry Breasted Society Members met at the Art Institute of Chicago for a personalized tour of the special exhibit Ancient Chinese Bronzes from the Shouyang Studio: The Katherine and George Fan Collection. After a greeting from James Cuno, president of the Art Institute of Chicago, the tour, lead by Visible Language curator Christopher Woods and University of Chicago professor Edward Shaughnessy, covered the ancient Chinese bronzes, which highlighted the historical and technical elements of China's most prized cultural possession – its writing system. Following the tour, guests enjoyed cocktails, hors d'oeuvres, and a seated dinner at the nearby University Club. The menu for the evening included duck spring rolls, lobster bisque, grilled chicken breast, and a citrus cheesecake.

A special thanks goes out to everyone involved who ensured the night's success.

## Before the Pyramids Members' Preview

On March 28, 210 Oriental Institute Members enjoyed an exclusive preview of *Before the Pyramids: The Origins of Egyptian Civilization*, a special exhibit showcasing hieroglyphic writing, architecture, and the origins of kingship – some of the most fundamental aspects of ancient Egyptian civilization.

After Gil J. Stein, director of the Oriental Institute, welcomed all guests, Geoff Emberling, former research associate and chief curator of the Oriental Institute Museum, introduced Emily Teeter, research associate, as the guest curator of our newest exhibit. During her talk, Teeter helped Members understand the Predynastic and Early Dynastic periods of Egypt through a discussion of ancient pottery, statues, and palettes.

Following Teeter's lecture, guests were invited to tour the exhibit and to enjoy a reception with food provided by Amazing Edibles Catering in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery. Members enjoyed delectable hors d'oeuvres in addition to a special expansion of the Suq, which featured specially ordered merchandise and autographed copies of exhibit catalogs.

A special thank-you goes out to Steve Camp, Emily Teeter, Maeve Reed, Erik Lindahl, Brian Zimerle, and Adam Lubin for all they did to ensure the night's success.

## 2011 Post-Doctoral Seminar – Iconoclasm and Text Destruction in the Ancient Near East and Beyond

From April 8 to 9, the Oriental Institute welcomed fourteen scholars from various universities spanning North America and Europe for its annual post-doctoral seminar. Participants who arrived on Thursday night were treated to a dinner at the University's own Quadrangle Club.

On Friday evening, various Oriental Institute professors, in addition to conference participants, attended a small reception for our guests in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery followed by a trip to Chicago's Chinatown, where attendees dined on dumplings, wonton soup, Mongolian chicken, and other delicious dishes.

To round out the weekend, we enjoyed one last session of papers as well as a pizza lunch. A special thanks goes out to Mariana Perlinac and Natalie May for all they did to ensure the weekend's success.

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***Incredible Isfahan* Film Premiere**

On April 27, the Oriental Institute invited 250 Members and friends to witness the premiere of *Incredible Isfahan: Discovering Persia's Past*, brought to us by Iranian documentary film-maker and director Farzin Rezaeian. After an introduction by Professor John Woods of the University of Chicago's Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, guests took in the first public screening of the film. Afterwards, guests enjoyed an elaborate northern Iranian dinner provided by Masouleh restaurant. Fare included beef and chicken kabobs, multiple salads, and other Middle Eastern delicacies.

A special thanks goes out to Carole Krucoff and Abbas Alizadeh for all of their hard work.

**Feast with the Pharaohs: The 2011 Oriental Institute Gala**

On May 2, the Oriental Institute invited 240 guests to feast with the pharaohs as it celebrated its 92nd year with an ancient Egyptian-themed, black-tie gala. As guests arrived, they mingled, enjoyed cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, and bid on a plethora of silent-auction items in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery.

Afterwards, attendees convened in Breasted Hall to listen to a presentation by Gil J. Stein, director of the Oriental Institute. The highlight was the presentation of the James Henry Breasted Medallion to O. J. Sopranos, longtime Member, donor, and friend of the Oriental Institute. After the medal ceremony, attendees also enjoyed a slideshow honoring all five emeritus Oriental Institute directors — Robert McC. Adams, John Brinkman, Janet Johnson, Bill Sumner, and Gene Gragg — and their various contributions to the Oriental Institute.

Following the presentation, guests participated in a live auction in Breasted Hall. Auction items included a catered dinner for ten in the Oriental Institute Museum galleries with University of Chicago paleontologist Paul Sereno, and a retrofitted museum case customized by Oriental Institute preparator Erik Lindahl. During dinner in the Museum galleries, guests enjoyed an elegant plated dinner, including filet mignon and lemon soufflé cake, served by Calihan Catering, Inc. Throughout the evening, guests were entertained by Environmental Encroachment, an acting troupe whose members dressed as a belly dancer, a pharaoh, a pharaoh's attendant, and a variety of other Egyptian personalities. Finally, to complement our Ancient Egyptian feast, guests were given individually wrapped chocolate pharaohs as favors.

Special thanks goes out to everyone who worked tirelessly to ensure the evening's perfection. A particularly special thank-you is extended to the Gala committee — Deborah Halpern, Andrea Dudek, Margaret Foorman, Mari Terman, and Susan Geshwender — without whom this event would not have happened.

**Donny George Memorial**

On June 1, the Oriental Institute hosted 200 Members and friends of the Chicago Assyrian community in celebration of the life of Donny George Youkhanna, Iraqi Assyrian archaeologist, anthropologist, and scholar. Beginning at 7:00 PM, guests listened to a lecture given by McGuire Gibson, professor of Mesopotamian archaeology and director of the Oriental Institute expedition to Nippur, Iraq. After the lecture, guests joined Gil J. Stein, director of the Oriental Institute, in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery to dedicate and exhibit case to Dr. Youkhanna. Attendees also enjoyed an array of cocktails and hors

## 2011 ORIENTAL INSTITUTE GALA PHOTO GALLERY



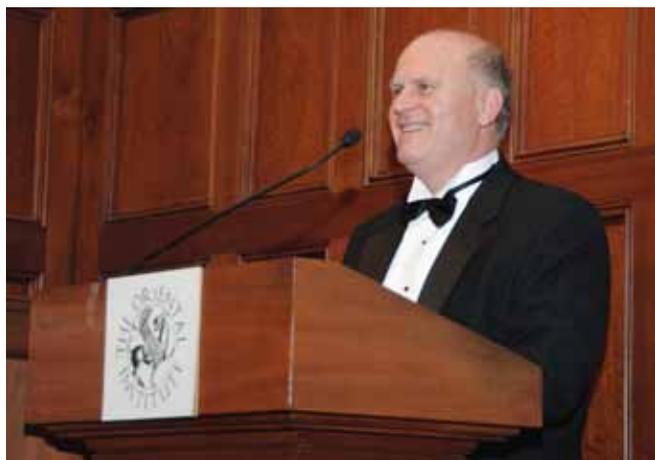
*Guest check in and receive their BidPals to participate in the silent auction*



*Caterers and performers wearing Egyptian costumes and headdresses entertained guests with dancing, juggling, and music*



*University of Chicago President Robert Zimmer*



*Gil Stein delivering a presentation honoring emeritus directors of the Oriental Institute*

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2011 ORIENTAL INSTITUTE GALA PHOTO GALLERY



*Gil Stein presenting the Breasted Medallion to O. J. Sopranos*



*Breasted Medallion recipients past and present: (left to right) Carlotta Maher, Margaret Grant, O. J. Sopranos, and Janet Helman*

## 2011 ORIENTAL INSTITUTE GALA PHOTO GALLERY

Guests enjoying dinner in the Yelda Khorsabad Court of the Oriental Institute Museum: (counterclockwise from left) Janet Johnson, Greg Mueller, Betty Mueller, Don Whitcomb, Nicole Suzann Williams, Todd Schwebel, Liliana Lark, and Lawrence Becker



Clockwise from top left: Thomas and Linda Heagy with Ray Johnson and Jay Heideli; floral arrangement by Plants Alive and place settings provided by Calihan Catering, Inc.; Gala attendees Oriental Institute Visiting Committee Chair Harvey Plotnick, Todd Schwebel, and Lawrence Becker; Scott Branting, Morag Kersel, and Yorke Rowan

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d'oeuvres provided by Amazing Edibles Catering, including chilled beef and chicken skewers, summer pasta salad, and mini cupcakes.

### **Chicago Assyrian Dictionary Celebration**

On June 6, we celebrated the completion of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, which took ninety years to complete. The first part of the day-long event featured a symposium, in which scholars from various American and European universities recounted their experiences in working collaboratively to create the dictionary. After the symposium portion, guests enjoyed a reception in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery featuring a light hors d'oeuvres artfully presented by Amazing Edibles Catering.

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