

P E O P L E

VI Eugene Cruz-Uribe

Membership

The overall goal of the membership program is to provide people who have an interest in the ancient Near East with an opportunity to exchange ideas, obtain information concerning these areas, and learn more about the research and excavations taking place in that part of the world. The success of our membership program in the past seven years has been due in large part to the efforts of Bernard Lalor, who left the Institute last October to take a position as administrative assistant in the Department of Geography. His work as membership secretary was so successful that the need for a permanent part-time assistant became apparent; and this work is now being carried out by the newest member of the staff, Malinda Winans. In addition, the volunteer efforts of Albert Haas have again been stimulating and productive. It is our hope to be able to expand the offerings and services of this office without increasing the membership dues.

Last October, in honor of the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Oriental Institute, a special dinner and a lecture by Colin Renfrew on the Near East in prehistoric times were held. The following night Oscar White Muscarella presented a lecture on forgeries of ancient artifacts. The Members' Lecture Series this year emphasized the Art of the Ancient Near East. Individual lectures were given on the art of Iran, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Islam, and the Hittites. The lectures in April and May discussed the origins of writing and literary criticism of the Gilgamesh Epic. After each lecture a reception was held in the museum galleries, where members could discuss the lecture with the guest speakers. Due to the popularity of the post-lecture receptions, they will remain a permanent feature of the lecture program.

This past year our Education Courses included discussions on Kingship in Egypt; Women, Tribes, and Law in Mesopotamia; History and the Bible; Egyptian Hieroglyphs; Egyptian Monuments; and Mesopotamian Royal Cities. Next fall we will offer our courses in conjunction with the University Extension Division in order to attract more participants (including more new members) and possibly to expand our offerings.

Our Tour Program began the year with plans for a trip to China in

October 1980. Within three days of its announcement, the tour was filled and a long waiting list was begun. In March a full tour to Egypt led by Bruce Williams explored many sites on the Nile. Because of political uncertainties, our tour to Syria was cancelled at the last minute. For 1981 we are planning five more archeological tours: Egypt, Tunisia-Sicily, Europe, and two of China.

The year was capped by the successful dinner, "Sand, Salt, and Sherds," held to raise funds for the Turkish Archeological Salvage Project. Members and their guests dined among the antiquities in the museum galleries while serenaded by roving minstrels.

While these are only the highlights of last year's program, the other membership offerings, for instance, use of the archives, discounts at the Suq, the monthly "News and Notes" (edited by our friend Elda Maynard), and Member's Day (to be held again this fall) illustrate that our programs are a success; and that is due to the interest and enthusiasm of our members.