

MEMBERSHIP

Melanie Jansen Marhefka

T*he past year has been one of change and growth for the Membership Office. In January 1991, with the appointment of Melanie Jansen Marhefka as Membership Coordinator and Dionne Herron as Development Office Manager, the Membership Office was able to separate and expand its functions to ultimately benefit a wider audience.*

The primary focus of the Membership Office this year has been the redesign of the membership giving and benefits structure. The restructuring of the membership program involves the reclassification of members by contribution levels. Traditionally, all members, from basic to sponsoring levels, received identical membership benefits regardless of the amount of the gift. The new plan will differentiate benefits received by members, according to their place in the structure as indicated below:

Members of the Institute

Basic	\$30
Student	\$15
Sustaining	\$50

Associates of the Institute

Supporters	\$100
Contributors	\$250
Sponsors	\$500

The James Henry Breasted Society

Society Patrons	\$1,000
Director's Circle	\$2,500

The benefits of basic membership include a subscription to the Institute's quarterly newsletter, a copy of the *Annual Report*, and invitations to all Institute programs such as lectures, special events, exhibit previews, and the Annual Dinner. Basic members also receive a 10% discount in the Suq and a 20%

discount on most Oriental Institute publications. Other benefits include opportunities to enroll in classes, seminars, symposia and workshops, join tours sponsored by the Members' Travel Program, and use of the Research Archives. Members who join at higher levels will receive all basic benefits as well as gallery and basement tours, champagne receptions, dinner lectures, and other events planned exclusively for upper-level members. All members will also be able to subscribe to the quarterly Acquisitions List of the Research Archives, a service which will begin in January 1992.

A major advance in the control of membership and giving information was made with the conversion of data from index cards and an antiquated database to the University's Alumni Development Database System (ADDS). Over the course of three months at the beginning of the year, the Membership and Development Offices painstakingly verified all members of and contributors to the Institute. Information Services then attached the appropriate involvement code to each person or entity. Having this information on the University's main-frame gives the Institute access to the most accurate membership data available. A screen devoted exclusively to the membership and giving information of all Oriental Institute contributors is currently being developed to the specifications set by the Membership and Development Offices. This dedicated screen will allow for even more flexibility in adding and manipulating data, coding members, and entering remarks and salutations. All three people in Membership and Development were certified in the data-entry and retrieval processes for ADDS, so that when the separate Oriental Institute screen is up and running they will be able to update data and run reports directly from the Institute. We would like to extend our thanks to Joan Scheffke, Rita Jedlowski, Eric Scheele, and John Bowman of Information Services for all of their help and expertise.

Another priority of the Membership Office is the expansion of the Members' Travel Program. In June 1991 the Travel Program offered three trips for the 1991-1992 season, two of which (Eastern Turkey and Yemen), filled almost to capacity within a month of being announced. A tour to Egypt in November 1991 was specially designed for Institute members by Assistant Curator Emily Teeter, who, in addition to being an Egyptologist, was once an independent tour operator. Her knowledge has proved invaluable in the planning and improvement of Oriental Institute tours.

The members' lecture series in 1990-1991 was host to a number of world-renowned scholars who gave talks on topics ranging from Hellenistic Egypt to underwater excavations at Caesarea Maritima. Each lecture was followed by a reception in the galleries. The Institute was also pleased to sponsor a late afternoon lecture on the excavations at the Assyrian city of Durkatlimmu by Professor Dr. Hartmut Kühne, of the Free University of Berlin.

The schedule of members' lectures was augmented by several other special events in the spring of 1991. The first of these events was the Assyrian Evenings, a series of three informal gallery receptions planned around the molding of the Assyrian winged bull by artisans from the Louvre (see entry under Museum, pp. 91-92). Each of the evenings featured a brief talk on the history or conservation aspects of the work done on the bull. Every one of the Assyrian Evenings brought close to one hundred people into the Museum, record attendance for

Wednesday evenings on non-lecture days. The talks were filmed by the local Assyrian television station for broadcast in a news show about the bull.

Another event, also presented as part of the activities surrounding the molding of the bull, was a gala lawn party held behind the Institute. This party, sponsored by Lafarge Coppée on a flawless spring day in early May, was attended by over 250 artists, media persons, museum officials, scholars, and Institute volunteers.

The highlight of the 1990-1991 season was the Annual Dinner, this year held to benefit the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary. The halls of the Institute, sumptuously decorated in black, gold, lapis, and peacock feathers, were swelled by a capacity crowd that included members of the Visiting Committee, Institute volunteers, and representatives from Chicago's Assyrian community. Entertainment was provided by the cuneiformists of the Institute, who gave dramatic readings from ancient Mesopotamian texts. We are most grateful to Peggy Grant and Mary Schulman for their help and unfailing good humor in helping to produce the program. The dinner brought in close to \$19,000 of unencumbered monies for use by the Assyrian Dictionary in obtaining matching funds from their grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities.