

## MEMBERSHIP

### Cynthia Echols

As in past years, the Membership Office worked to strengthen existing service areas and introduce new programs for the benefit and enjoyment of our many patrons. We opened this year with “Romancing the Past,” a 75th Anniversary Gala at the Hotel Intercontinental on October 7. Some three hundred guests attended the dinner, which included a champagne toast by Honorary Chair Bill Kurtis, a silent auction of photographs and collectibles from the Near East, remarks by Robert McCormick Adams, Secretary Emeritus of the Smithsonian Institution and former Director of the Oriental Institute, and after-dinner dancing to the music of Larry Eckerling and his orchestra. This festive event raised \$50,000 toward the Institute’s Legacy Campaign for climate control, renovation, and expansion. We thank the many docents and supporters who made this event such a great success.

Special events for the James Henry Breasted Society included a buffet dinner in September with Barbara Mertz (an Oriental Institute alumna and Egyptologist), who has made not one but three names for herself: under her own name, author of respected nonfiction Egyptology texts; as Barbara Michaels, author of suspense novels; and as Elizabeth Peters, author of award-winning mysteries. In April Society members and guests joined Professor Robert Braidwood and Oriental Institute Associate Linda Braidwood for a dinner talk, “Alarms and Excursions: Our 123 Years with the Ancient Near East,” at the University Club. Professor McGuire Gibson and Research Associate Tony Wilkinson entertained the Society and other guests in June with a University Club dinner talk on “The Other Side of Sheba: New Discoveries in Highest Yemen.”

A number of special members’ events drew large audiences this past year. In January Professor Norman Golb discussed his new book, “Who Wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls?” and autographed copies. The Annual Dinner in May, marking the close of our seventy-fifth anniversary year, was enjoyed by over two hundred members. This year’s dinner featured a display of photographs and prints from the Museum Archives, a computer display of options for renovated Museum galleries, and a Conservation demonstration. In early June, Egyptologist Kent Weeks of the American University Cairo presented an illustrated talk on his recent discoveries at Tomb KV 5 in Cairo. The noontime lecture attracted a standing-room-only crowd to Breasted Hall. In November the Museum hosted a Members’ Preview for “Ayla: Art and Industry in the Early Islamic Port of Aqaba,” a new temporary exhibit showcasing the fieldwork of Research Associate Donald Whitcomb. And in December the Membership Office hosted a cake and champagne party to celebrate the Oriental Institute’s seventy-fifth year.

The Wednesday evening lecture series brought a variety of expertise and instruction to members and guests during the past year. In November Kenneth Kitchen, University of Liverpool, spoke on “The History and Chronology of the Pre-Islamic Kingdoms of Southern Arabia.” Dennis Pardee, Oriental Institute and Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (NELC), presented “Recent Discoveries at Ras Shamra-Ugarit” in December. As a cosponsored lecturer with the Archaeological Institute of America, David Schloen, Oriental Institute and NELC,

presented "Recent Excavations at Ashkelon" in January. Norman Golb, Oriental Institute and NELC, spoke on "New Developments in the Search for the Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls" in February. In March and April, respectively, Thomas Levy, University of California-San Diego, spoke on "Subterranean Towns in the Negev Desert, ca. 4500-3500 B.C." and William Peck, Detroit Institute of Fine Arts, spoke on "Ongoing Excavations at the Precinct of the Goddess Mut at Karnak"; both these lectures were cosponsored with the Archaeological Institute of America.

The Travel Program offered two departures in 1994/95 with Oriental Institute Archivist John Larson as tour leader: a tour of Boston museums with Egyptian collections in October and a two-week tour of Egypt in March. Assistant Curator Emily Teeter led a special Egypt Revisited tour in early March for James Henry Breasted Society members. In the year ahead we hope to offer more opportunities for travelers, including departures to Iran, Egypt, Syria, and Paris/Berlin. The membership response to expanded program offerings at locations other than the Institute and to a greater variety of tours was encouraging. We will be exploring more such offerings in the year ahead. This past year we introduced another innovation: an Oriental Institute tote bag for members only. A small number of bags are still available as premiums for membership upgrades.

The Membership Office owes much to the many staff, faculty, and volunteers who so graciously and generously assist with planning and programs. In particular we thank Thomas Urban in the Publications Office for his expert production of *News & Notes* and the *Annual Report*; Jean Grant for her event photographs; Emily Teeter for her counsel on tours and travel; and Joe Searcy for his set-up assistance. This year marked a transition in office staffing with Melanie Jansen resigning as Membership Coordinator in March to pursue a career in the travel industry. We thank Dionne Herron, Office Manager, and Diane New, Project Assistant to the Director, for so ably and efficiently taking up many tasks as we recruit a new Membership Coordinator. To our volunteers, including Charlotte Collier, Mary Jo Khuri, Janet Helman, and Margaret Foorman, we can only say "thank you" for a wonderful year of service.

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