

## MEMBERSHIP

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### Statistics

At the close of the fiscal year, the Oriental Institute had 2,441 active members. Between July 1, 2006, and June 30, 2007, 349 new members joined the Institute.

### Publications

With the assistance and guidance of the Publications Office, the Membership Office continued to publish *News & Notes* on a quarterly basis. The Fall 2007 issue focused on the special exhibit European Cartographers and the Ottoman World, 1500–1750: Maps from the Collection of O. J. Sopranos, and featured articles by Special Exhibit Curator Ian Manners, as well as highlights on the work of Erich Schmidt and the move of the Chicago Hittite Dictionary into the third floor office formerly occupied by the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary. In Winter 2008 our members were introduced to the science behind the conservation of the Oriental Institute collection, as well as the annual *Chicago House Bulletin* of the Epigraphic Survey. Spring 2008 featured an exclusive look at the special exhibit Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past with a special article by McGuire Gibson. This issue also featured articles on the Research Archives and the Syriac Manuscript Project as other ways the Oriental Institute is involved in the conservation and protection of the ancient Near East. In Summer 2008 we celebrated the accomplishments of our archaeologists and researchers in the field as we put the focus on fieldwork, highlighting Nadine Moeller's excavations at Edfu, Egypt, and Geoff Emberling and Bruce William's work with the Oriental Institute team in Sudan.

### Events

2007–2008 was a year full of events for members and supporters of the Oriental Institute. In an effort to regularize the events schedule and inform members of events earlier, we announced the entire 2007–2008 Members' Lecture series schedule in the early fall; as a result, we saw increased attendance to all the lectures and events throughout the year. The academic year began with the very successful film premiere of *Iran: Seven Faces of a Civilization*.

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Special Exhibit Curator Ian Manners joined us soon thereafter, giving members a behind-the-scenes look at some beautiful and rare maps on display for the special exhibit *European Cartographers and the Ottoman World, 1500–1750: Maps from the Collection of O. J. Sopranos*. This members' preview was preceded only the day before by *Maps and Martinis*, a special event exclusively for Breasted Society members, celebrating the collection of O. J. Sopranos and thanking him for his leadership on the Visiting Committee of the Oriental Institute.

Fall Members' Lectures followed, with presentations by Allison Thomason of Southern Illinois University on Neo-Assyrian palace artifacts, and Scott Branting of the Oriental Institute on modern mapping techniques of ancient Pteria, now known as Kerkenes Dağ.

Winter 2008 brought a visit from Dr. Harald Hauptmann of the Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities, who spoke to members on a new picture of the Neolithic Revolution in the Near East.

February saw the visit of Terry Wilfong, a University of Chicago alumnus now a professor at the University of Michigan, who spoke on oracles as indices of anxieties in late period Egypt; in March, David Schloen presented the latest finds from the Oriental Institute excavations at Zincirli, Turkey.

In April we were pleased to introduce Dr. Nadine Moeller, the newest member of the Oriental Institute faculty and director of excavations at Edfu, one of the most important sites in the study of urban development in Egypt. Dr. Moeller presented the history of Edfu and the latest excavation results in her lecture on April 2.

Not long after, a record group turned out for the opening of the special exhibit *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past*. The evening opened with a member and VIP reception in the Research Archives, giving our guests a chance to chat with Oriental Institute faculty, researchers, and special guests, including Donny George, former Director of the Iraq National Museum in Baghdad. This reception was immediately followed by a lecture presented by Dr. McGuire Gibson and was attended by our special guests as well as the public community, bringing our total headcount to well over 160. We learned throughout the evening that many public patrons had heard about the event during an NPR broadcast featuring Drs. Gibson and George. The evening concluded with an exhibit viewing and candlelight vigil marking the five-year anniversary of the looting of the Iraq Museum. The vigil, presented in conjunction with SAFE/Saving Antiquities for Everyone, was part of an international vigil network, where academic and cultural institutions held public moments of remembrance.

In spring we saw the visit of two scholars: Larry Stager of Harvard University and Stuart Tyson Smith of the University of California at Santa Barbara. Dr. Stager presented the most recent finds and updates on excavations at Ashkelon, a Philistine city in modern-day Israel. Dr. Smith spoke at the last Members' Lecture of the year, examining the rise of the Nubian Dynasty of Kush as a kingdom both independent of and closely related to Egypt.

Before the year came to a close we celebrated our wonderful researchers in the event *Passport to the Middle East: Desserts in the Desert*. This wine-and-dessert event, generously sponsored by Treasure Island Foods, brought our members and patrons together with scholars and researchers in the Oriental Institute Research Archives and Museum galleries to enjoy a selection of wines, cheeses, and desserts. Members and patrons had the opportunity to meet scholars and learn about their projects; specialized gallery tours and artifact question-and-answer sessions proved to be highlights of the evening. This special, bi-annual event would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of Director of Development Monica Witczak and Special Events Coordinator Kaye Oberhausen, along with the Oriental Institute Visiting Committee Events Committee. Special thanks are also due to the many volunteers who helped the evening run smoothly.

In the coming year, we will be exploring possibilities of Web casts, podcasts, and recordings of Members' Lectures and other lecture events for distribution across membership and other public communities.

## Travel

2007–2008 was an exciting year for travel, bringing new itineraries and new friends on international and domestic journeys.

In October 2007 I had the pleasure of escorting a group of sixteen passengers to San Diego, California, to visit an exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls at the San Diego Natural History Museum. We were accompanied by Dr. Norman Golb, Ludwig Rosenberger Professor of Jewish History and Civilization in the Department Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and at the Oriental Institute. Dr. Golb presented a lecture on the Qumran region and the theories of the Scrolls' origin, authorship, and interpretation. The event proved to be a great success; our passengers were open-minded, understanding, and eager to learn. Professor Golb led the group through the exhibit and illuminated the manuscripts as our group got up close and personal with these ancient writings.

March 2008 brought a new itinerary and some new faces on our trip to Egypt: Unseen Egypt, escorted by Dr. Robert Ritner. This itinerary allowed our passengers to see some of the most exclusive sites in lesser traveled parts of the country and took us through Middle Egypt, the Fayoum, and Lake Nasser regions.

In April/May of 2008, Dr. Clemens Reichel embarked on a journey with twenty members and patrons of the Oriental Institute through the Umayyad past of Jordan, Syria, and Spain. Originally planned as a trip only through Syria and Spain, the addition of the stop in Jordan due to flight complications was a welcome opportunity to visit some rarely seen sites in the desert.

Each of these itineraries, both thematically based and built from the ground up by the Oriental Institute and our travel operators, were new ventures for all involved, and each presented their own challenges, not limited to medical emergencies and spreading wildfires. Oriental Institute travel programs are unique in that our passengers experience exclusive site visits and on-site learning privileges not enjoyed by other institutions or travel groups. Even through obstacles and oddities faced by our passengers, appreciation and accolades are due to the scholar-escorts of our trips, who consistently go above and beyond the call of duty both at home and abroad. Additional travel information is available on the Oriental Institute Web site, <http://oi.uchicago.edu>.

## Administration and Behind the Scenes

The Membership Office grew and changed significantly in 2007–2008.

The Membership Office is pleased to announce the graduation of Ms. Tanvi Solanki and Mr. Joseph Apodaca from the College at the University of Chicago. Both Tanvi and Joey have been a vital part of this office for more than this fiscal year alone, and I am personally immensely appreciative of their patience and help in the office and at our many events.

We are also happy to report that Room 233 is now home to both Oriental Institute Membership and Special Events. In fall 2007 the Membership Office was pleased to welcome Kaye Oberhausen as Special Events Coordinator at the Oriental Institute. Kaye assists in event planning throughout the Institute, including academic conferences and special VIP events, and works primarily through Development/Membership.

Most of the fiscal year administrative duties have been focused on the integration of membership as a benefit of donorship, extending the benefits of membership to donors who give gifts to

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any project or program at the Oriental Institute. We also printed new membership cards with new imagery of the Development Office, moving toward a consolidated branding of the Institute.

Work has begun to form an extensive cooperation with the Office of Philanthropic Affairs at the University of Chicago, who can help raise money for our Annual Fund and Membership through otherwise untapped University of Chicago communities who may not have experienced the Oriental Institute Museum or programs. The OPA will be helping us construct acquisition mailings and solicitations based on best fundraising practices, and reach a variety of potential donor communities we otherwise would not have access to.

Furthermore, in a fluke of discovery during an annual office-cleaning excavation, Monica Witzcak unearthed record of Oriental Institute involvement in a pan-Chicago organization called the Chicago Cultural Cooperative. This organization, composed of over twenty membership and subscriber institutions, is a forum for networking and list-exchange management between institutions in Chicago. The group has provided us with fruitful opportunity to share and learn best practices in membership, development, patron services, and other community relations items, as well as gain access to otherwise untapped donor communities across the city of Chicago.

The North American Reciprocal Museum program, accessible to our Associate and Breasted Donors (\$100+) has expanded to include well over 150 institutions across the North American continent and has just added a select few popular attractions in Central America. Any Associate or Breasted Oriental Institute Member need only present their membership card with the small “North American Reciprocal” gold label on it to enjoy the benefits of a NARM institution’s membership during their visit. For more information about this program and for a list of participating institutions, please contact the Membership Office.

## Publicity and Advertising

The Membership Office has seen great success in the continued use of html e-mail reminders and announcements for our events, travel programs, and other opportunities. As more members sign onto the Web, we hope we will see increased traffic to <http://oi.uchicago.edu>, where our events calendar holds up-to-date information on travel programs, lecture and special exhibit events, as well as museum and research information here at the Institute.

Thanks to the hard work of our IT team both at the Oriental Institute and the University of Chicago, our patron communities can now sign up for membership online at [oi.uchicago.edu](http://oi.uchicago.edu). Similarly, members can renew anytime online by clicking the “Join Online” link in the Get Involved page of the Web site; because new members and all online submissions are still processed manually in the Membership Office, we are able to determine if your submission is a renewal or new member signup. Members or patrons may also give the gift of membership to a friend or family member using this online form. As always, we continue to accept gifts, renewals, and gift memberships by phone with credit card, by mail, and by fax. We do not recommend sending credit card information through e-mail, but will gladly call back anyone expressing interest through this electronic means.

We have developed somewhat of a consistent media presence, both in the Chicago vicinity as well as in national publications. This is very much the fruit of the tireless efforts of Emily Teeter, whose report is featured earlier in this volume, as well as our many wonderful researchers who continue to work on groundbreaking projects that speak to people from across our country and around our globe. Due to the success of last year’s advertisements in *Archaeology Magazine*, we will continue to use that publication as a means of advertising, along with exploring other venues for advertising for programs that welcome Chicago as well as other regional audiences.

The Membership Office has purchased advertisements for our new travel programs: Egypt and the East, departing March 2009, and Splendors of the Nile, departing November 2009. By the end of 2008 we will have been featured in two issues of *Archaeology Magazine*, with a targeted, global readership of over 600,000 both in paper and Internet subscriptions. We will explore text/classified ads during this year to experiment with money-saving advertising methods, as well as frequency and repetition of advertising.

Many thanks are owed to Tom Urban and Leslie Schramer in the Oriental Institute Publications Office for their enduring patience, diligence, and kindness in coordinating design and publication projects for members and supporters over the past year. With the recent increase in postage, we are exploring ways to consolidate more information into less frequent but more graphically appealing, high quality event notices that we hope members and donors will not only use to learn about our events, but also enjoy as visual representations of our institution.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the entire Oriental Institute research and administrative staff for their support over the past year. Special thanks go to Emily Teeter, Norman Golb, Robert Ritner, and Clemens Reichel for their kindness and leadership for our travel program and other programming. A thank you to Geoff Emberling, McGuire Gibson, Katharyn Hanson, Erik Lindahl, and Adam Lubin for their patience and help with organizing Museum events in our galleries for members and supporters. A special thank you also to Carole Krucoff, Jessica Caracci, Wendy Ennes, Cathy Dueñas, and Terry Friedman for their kindness and support of membership and our programming.

Finally, a very big thank you to Gil Stein, Steve Camp, Monica Witczak, Kaye Oberhausen, Marianna Perlinac, D'Ann Condes, and Carla Hosein for their patience, support, and enthusiasm for the Membership Program and its future. Over the next year, members can look forward to increased Members' benefits and a wider variety of event formats and locations. Additionally, we will be working on new graphic advertising and announcements for our events, increased public and media outreach, and more opportunities for families to enjoy both programming and membership at the Oriental Institute. I look forward to a great year ahead.

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