

## SPECIAL EVENTS

### Kaye Oberhausen

This year was a busy one for the Special Events Office. The Oriental Institute celebrated its 90th anniversary, had a Breasted Society event about ancient beer brewing, opened an exciting new exhibit about a temple singer in ancient Egypt, and highlighted the work of our conservation staff to our Associate Members. We also welcomed many different groups, including the Chicago Network, Booth Executive MBA program, the concierge community, and many alumni and friends of the University of Chicago. It has been a pleasure to see so many new faces and to welcome our Members and Donors who help make the important work of the Oriental Institute possible.

#### Summer/Fall 2008

##### *The Chicago Network*

In August we welcomed twenty-five members from the Chicago Network for a tour of the special exhibit *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past*, given by Oriental Institute Museum Director Geoff Emberling. The Chicago Network is a premier organization of diverse, professional women in the Chicago area who have reached the highest echelons of business, the arts, government, the professions, and academia. Visiting Committee member Toni S. Smith is a member of this network and extended to the group the invitation to come to the Oriental Institute. Geoff did a wonderful job explaining the archaeological issues facing Iraq since the war began and the group stayed to ask engaging questions. Thanks to Toni for bringing this great group to the Oriental Institute.

##### *Associate Members Event — Preserving the Past: An Evening with Conservation*

On September 8 the Conservation staff of the Oriental Institute presented the latest developments in technology, chemistry, conservation science, and their application to Oriental Institute artifacts in the Museum collection. Our Associate level Members visited three conservation stations set up in the Institute; two in the Museum and one in the Conservation Lab on the Institute's second floor, tucked away behind the Research Archives. For most of our members, this was the first time they had visited the conservators in their laboratory space. Against the backdrop of the Yelda Khorsabad Court, Head Conservator Laura D'Alessandro demonstrated the process of cleaning and preserving a collection of mudbricks from the Neo-Assyrian city of Khorsabad in northern Iraq. Alison Whyte, positioned in the Robert and Deborah Aliber Persian Gallery, talked our members through the process of analysis and treatment of an outbreak of damaging salts discovered on two artifacts found in the Oriental Institute's collection. Monica Hudak and Contract Conservator Jeanne Mandel were



*Oriental Institute Conservation staff, left to right: Laura D'Alessandro, Monica Hudak, Jeanne Mandel, and Alison Whyte*

in the Conservation Laboratory with a display of the Persepolis Fortification Archive tablets and other artifacts, describing the process for cleaning antiquities using a laser that removes dirt and pollutants that would be unable to be removed by hand without harming the artifact. A special thanks to our Conservation staff, the Museum staff, and our Associate Members for making this event a great success.

### ***Breasted Society Event – Babylonian Brews***

On October 29 we welcomed the members of the James Henry Breasted Society to the Oriental Institute for an event in homage to Oktoberfest: Babylonian Brews. By the dawn of history the ancient Sumerians had already perfected the art of brewing beer, and we were delighted to bring history to life by explaining the brewing process and brewing the ancient recipes. Kathleen Mineck, NELC Ph.D. candidate and contributor to the Chicago Hittite Dictionary, presented an informative lecture on the archaeological and textual evidence for ancient Sumerian beer brewing. After the lecture, guests had the opportunity to taste three different ancient-style brews (wine, honey-wheat, and date beers) in replica vessels based on ancient pieces on display in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery. The event was even capped off with an ancient drinking song. David Hammond of Chicago Public Radio's cultural program "Eight Forty-Eight" was at the event; if you missed the fun you can hear his report "Drink Like a Sumerian" on the program archives for November 12, 2008 ([http://www.chicagopublicradio.org/Program\\_848.aspx?episode=30121](http://www.chicagopublicradio.org/Program_848.aspx?episode=30121)).



*Rita Picken, Gil Stein, and Kitty Picken enjoy a quaff, Sumerian style, at the Babylonian Brews event. Photo by Kaye Oberhausen*

### ***Grand Opening of the Kipper Family Archaeology Discovery Center***



*David and Barbara Levy Kipper*

The fall was also a very exciting time for the Oriental Institute Education Department as we opened the Kipper Family Archaeology Discovery Center. David and Barbara Kipper, generous donors to the project, had a fantastic grand opening celebration in the new and improved LaSalle Banks Room on the lower level of the Oriental Institute. Through their generous gift, students throughout the Chicago area can now get a hands-on archaeological experience on this simulated tel. This grand opening celebration included a "first dig" and plenty of congratulations to the entire team for making this new educational experience possible. A special thanks to David and Barbara Kipper for this lasting gift to the Oriental Institute.

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**Winter 2009*****Members' Opening — The Life of Meresamun: A Temple Singer in Ancient Egypt***

The beginning of the year was a busy time for the Oriental Institute Museum as the special exhibit *Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past* closed to make way for the next exhibit, *The Life of Meresamun: A Temple Singer in Ancient Egypt*. Meresamun is a familiar face to our Members, as she has been with the Oriental Institute since the 1920s and is usually on display in the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery. However, this exhibit has been a great way to learn about the life of this ancient woman, both inside the temple and at home, through artifacts from the collection and the newest generation of CT scans that reveal new information about her health and appearance. On February 9 we were delighted to put Meresamun in the spotlight by hosting an exclusive Members' opening for the show. Over 220 people were in attendance. Special Exhibits Coordinator Emily Teeter, curator of the exhibit, and Dr. Michael Vannier, University of Chicago Radiologist, gave two informative lectures highlighting Meresamun's life and health. Guests were welcomed to a colorful lobby transformed into an Egyptian *suq* for the evening and enjoyed delicious appetizers in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery. A special thanks to Gil Stein, Emily Teeter, and Geoff Emberling for their support. Also thanks to Erik Lindahl, Sarah Sapperstein, Denise Browning, Steve Camp, and Alison Whyte for their help in making the evening a success.



*Guests at the opening of the special exhibit *The Life of Meresamun: A Temple Singer in Ancient Egypt*.  
Photo by Anna Ressman*

***Festschrift and Birthday Celebration for Professor Matt Stolper***

February also brought a wonderful surprise celebration for Professor Matt Stolper, the John A. Wilson Professor of Assyriology and Director of the Persepolis Fortification Archives Project. Matt celebrated his 65th birthday and the announcement of his festschrift at a surprise party held in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery. Family, friends, and colleagues traveled from all over to toast Matt and all his accomplishments over his tenure at the Oriental Institute. The celebration also included a lecture by Remy Boucharlat, Senior Researcher at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, University of Lyon, and Director of the Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée. Special thanks to Chris Woods and Gil Stein for helping make this possible and keeping it a surprise.

***The Fifth Annual University of Chicago Oriental Institute Seminar***

Early March brought the Fifth Annual University of Chicago Oriental Institute Seminar — Science and Superstition: Interpretation of Signs in the Ancient World. Postdoctoral Scholar Amar Annus developed a conference that investigated how much we know about the Babylonian theory of signs and hermeneutics of omens, and the scope of their possible influences on other cultures and regions. A wide variety of scholars traveled to present interesting and thought-

provoking papers on this topic. A very special thanks to Mariana Perlinac for her invaluable assistance throughout the weekend. Also thanks to Gil Stein, Chris Woods, Tom Urban, and Leslie Schramer for helping make this conference a success. Watch for the publication of the conference proceedings next spring.

### ***Research Endowment Campaign Dinners***

The Oriental Institute also hosted two Research Endowment Campaign dinners, one in Chicago and one in Washington, D.C. All proceeds from these dinners go into the Research Endowment Campaign fund that helps support key research projects taking place at the Oriental Institute. Janet and Bob Helman hosted the Chicago dinner in their elegant home. New Oriental Institute Research Associate Yorke Rowan spoke about a new Oriental Institute expedition to the Galilee region in northern Israel. Yorke focuses his studies on the Chalcolithic period (ca. 4500–3700 B.C.) of the Southern Levant. Guests enjoyed an interesting lecture and discussion session followed by a delicious dinner. We look forward to hearing more about Yorke's exciting discoveries as he begins his expedition in summer 2009. The dinner in Washington, D.C., was hosted by Annette and Walter Vandaele in their beautiful home. Guests enjoyed a lecture and discussion with Nadine Moeller, Assistant Professor of Egyptian Archaeology, all about the latest results from her excavations in Tell Edfu, Egypt. Nadine presented for the first time the results from the 2008 dig season and discussion continued well into the dinner. The Oriental Institute wishes to express its sincere thanks to Janet and Bob Helman and Annette and Walter Vandaele for graciously opening their homes and underwriting these very special evenings.

## **Spring 2009**

### ***Chicago Society Event***

In early April the Oriental Institute opened its doors to the Chicago Society, a society of donors who give \$2,500 or more to the University of Chicago. Attendees enjoyed a presentation by Emily Teeter and Dr. Michael Vannier about the special exhibit *The Life of Meresamun: A Temple Singer in Ancient Egypt*. Emily and Dr. Vannier brought Meresamun to life with their in-depth research of her life and health. Guests also enjoyed a reception and special viewing of the exhibit. We were thrilled to welcome these special donors to the Oriental Institute and give them an inside look into the exhibits and research taking place at the Oriental Institute.

### ***Romancing the Past – 90th Jubilee***

On Wednesday, May 6, 2009, we welcomed 234 guests to *Romancing the Past*, our 90th Jubilee, where long-time member Rita Picken was honored with the Breasted Medallion for her over thirty years of dedicated service to the Institute. The evening started out a bit wet for some of the attendees as a massive thunderstorm swept over Hyde Park right as the Gala began. However, this did not dampen the spirits of the guests, who enjoyed cocktails, appetizers, and a Near Eastern-themed silent auction. Some highlights of the auction included a Turkish Hereke rug, beautiful jewelry, a pith helmet that once belonged to former Field Director Charles Nims, and a wooden shipping crate once used by James Henry Breasted himself. The closing of the silent auction was a race for some of the guests to put in their last bids in order to ensure their win.



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After cocktail hour attendees filed into Breasted Hall for the presentation portion of the evening. University Provost Thomas Rosenbaum extended a warm welcome on behalf of the University of Chicago; Gil Stein followed by welcoming everyone to the Oriental Institute. This year marks the 90th anniversary of the Oriental Institute as a leader in the field of ancient Near Eastern research. The presentation was also the unveiling of a preview of the newest Oriental Institute film for visitors to the Museum. Len Aronson, director of the film, gave an introduction in which he spoke of the importance of the Oriental Institute. After the seventeen-minute viewing guests enjoyed a 90th retrospective presentation by Director, Gil Stein. Gil managed to fit 90 years of history into 20 minutes and presented an engaging and informative look at the Oriental Institute through the decades.



*Top: Carol Meyer, Bob Smither, and Janet Helman reunite; bottom: George Blossom and Todd Schwebel enjoy cocktails and conversation in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery. Photos by Anna Ressman*

The highlight of the evening was the presentation of the Breasted Medallion to Rita Picken. Gretel Braidwood, Life Member of the Visiting Committee, gave a lovely talk about the impact Rita has had on the Institute in her thirty years of dedicated service. Rita has taken on many roles at the Institute including being a docent, Visiting Committee member, volunteer, and Events Committee member. She is always there to lend a helping hand, including the day of the Gala when she was helping set up decorations with her daughter Kitty.

Museum Director Geoff Emberling then took the stage to be the Oriental Institute live auctioneer. Two live auction items were on the block. The first was a dinner by a French-trained chef on handcrafted hieroglyph china; the second a trip on the Neubauer Expedition to Zincirli. Both items sold to the highest bid-

der to help support the Oriental Institute's projects and programs. Thanks to all the silent- and live-auction bidders!

Dinner was held throughout almost all the galleries in the Museum with twenty-nine tables to hold all 234 guests. Diners were seated at the feet of King Tut, nestled near the Persian Bull, and surrounded by the magnificent relief sculptures of the Yelda Khorsabad Court. The delicious meal included a special surprise: all diners received their very own Breasted Medallion. However, unlike Rita's, these were made of chocolate.

The entire evening was filled with laughter, food, fun, and plenty of wine. Guests shared stories from years past and reunited with friends they had not seen in years. Best of all, the Institute was able to honor a lifelong friend, Rita Picken, who, like the Institute, was also celebrating her 90th year.

This evening would not have been possible without the cheerful hard work and invaluable advice from the Events Committee of the Oriental Institute. Special thanks to Deborah Halpern for her leadership as chair of the committee. Thanks also to Gretel Braidwood, Andrea Dudek, Margaret Foorman, Rita Picken, Kitty Picken, Sarah Sapperstein, Mary Shea, O. J. Sopranos, Mari Terman, and Karen Terras.

A special thanks also to the many volunteers who helped make the evening a huge success. Thanks to Nancy Baum, Susan Bazargan, Gabrielle Cohen, D'Ann Condes, Sue Geshwender, Laura Grimshaw, Lo Luong Lo, Mariana Perlinac, Joann Putz, Deloris Sanders, Ljubica Sarenac, Eudora Struble, James Tillapaugh, Siwei Wang, Carole Yoshida, and Agnes Zellner.

Special thanks to Gil Stein, Steve Camp, and Geoff Emberling for all their support and guidance during this process. Thanks to John Larson for assisting in the gala presentation. Thanks to John Sanders, Erik Lindahl, Brian Zimerle, Tom James, Adam Lubin, Denise Browning, Jessica Caracci, Anna Ressman, Foy Scalf, Leslie Schramer, Tom Urban, Carol Yohanon, and Laura D'Alessandro for going above and beyond to help make the evening a success.

### ***Alumni Weekend***

The Oriental Institute was also thrilled to host two alumni weekend events the first weekend in June. While the University welcomed hundreds of alumni and friends to campus, we opened our doors to the 30th Reunion dinner and the Graham School of General Studies. On Friday evening the Reunion attendees enjoyed cocktails and appetizers in the Edgar and Deborah Jannotta Mesopotamian Gallery, followed by dinner in the breathtaking Yelda Khorsabad Court. Attendees learned about the history of the Oriental Institute from Theo van den Hout, Editor of the Chicago Hittite Dictionary and Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Saturday evening we welcomed back the Graham School alumni for the second year in a row. Attendees got special tours of the Meresamun exhibit from Emily Teeter, and of the Joseph and Mary Grimshaw Egyptian Gallery from Karen Terras. They also got to view all the permanent galleries and see all the Oriental Institute has to offer the University. Special thanks to Emily Teeter, Karen Terras, Theo van den Hout, and Sarah Sapperstein for helping to make these events successful.

### **Acknowledgments**

Thanks to Oriental Institute Director Gil Stein for his guidance and support of the events at the Oriental Institute. Also a special thank-you to Steve Camp and Geoff Emberling for all their help

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to make these events a success. Also a fond farewell and thanks to Sarah Sapperstein, who is a wonderful colleague and friend and who will be greatly missed. Thanks to Denise Browning, Jessica Caracci, D'Ann Condes, Laura D'Alessandro, Cathy Dueñas, Wendy Ennes, Terry Friedman, Carla Hosein, Monica Hudak, Tom James, Carole Krucoff, John Larson, Erik Lindahl, Adam Lubin, Kathy Mineck, Nadine Moeller, Mariana Perlinac, Anna Ressman, Yorke Rowan, John Sanders, Foy Scalf, Leslie Schramer, Emily Teeter, Karen Terras, Tom Urban, Alison Whyte, and Monica Witzak for helping ensure successful events at the Oriental Institute. Next year looks like another busy one for the Oriental Institute — we hope to see you at future events!

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