

MEMBERSHIP

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Publications and Marketing

With the assistance of the Publications Office, the Membership Office continues to publish *News & Notes*, the quarterly Members' magazine. The fall 2009 edition highlighted new findings at the Ubaid-period site of Tell Zeidan in Syria and the Misty and Lewis Gruber Electronic Publications Initiative, which provides free PDF downloads of all Oriental Institute publications on ancient Egypt to the public. The Winter 2010 issue introduced the special exhibit *Pioneers to the Past: American Archaeologists in the Middle East, 1919–1920*; provided a first look at the Oriental Institute's new excavations in Israel and Marj Rabba; and featured the *Chicago House Bulletin*. The spring 2010 edition took a closer look at the objects brought back to Chicago by James Henry Breasted on his 1919–1920 trip to the Middle East and introduced recent archaeological discoveries in the Persepolis Plain of Iran. The summer 2010 issue reported on the 2009 season at Tell Edfu and New Media efforts at the Oriental Institute. The Membership Office is greatly appreciative of the Publications Office for their hard work and guidance in producing *News & Notes*, as well as to all of the authors and staff contributors who provide exciting and engaging articles and program notices each quarter for our Members.

Since October of 2009, the Membership Office has been publishing the *E-Tablet*, our e-newsletter, with great success. Over 6,000 friends and supporters of the Oriental Institute receive the *E-Tablet*, which keeps them up to date with news, events, and announcements. The *E-Tablet* is published monthly, on the first Tuesday of the month, and is free to the public. To sign up for the *E-Tablet*, visit our Web site (<http://oi.uchicago.edu>) and click on "Subscribe to our E-Newsletter" at the bottom of the page.

In addition to the *E-Tablet*, the Membership Office has been involved in launching and maintaining several new media platforms with the assistance of the Museum and Public Education. Members are encouraged to visit the Oriental Institute page on Facebook, the Oriental Institute Twitter stream, and our Web site to interact with and learn more about the Oriental Institute and our online community.

Student Memberships

As part of the University of Chicago's Art Pass program, the Oriental Institute began offering free Membership to all university students in May of 2010. Currently, we have sixty-two new student Members. The Membership Office is partnering with Public Education to develop new outreach efforts and student-only programming for University of Chicago students. Through this effort, we aim to increase student awareness of the Oriental Institute, make the Oriental Institute an integral part of the student and campus experience at the university, and become an active participant in student events.

Events

Members enjoyed a wide variety of events in 2009–2010. On July 8, 2009, members of the James Henry Breasted Society were invited to the Research Archives for *A Feast of Knowledge: Libraries and Archives, Past and Present*. Attendees enjoyed a private viewing of collection highlights from

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the Research Archives as well as several rarely exhibited objects from the Museum. In November, our 2009 events schedule came to a close with an exceptional lecture for our Associate Members by renowned scholar Dr. Elizabeth J. Wayland Barber entitled “Women’s Work, the First 20,000 Years: Women, Cloth and Society in the Ancient Near East.” Dr. Barber traced the origins of cloth production in the ancient Near East and presented the audience with replica cloth samples that she recreated using ancient methods and technologies.

Our 2010 events schedule got underway early on January 11, as over 150 Members attended the Members’ preview for the special exhibit *Pioneers to the Past: American Archaeologists in the Middle East, 1919–1920*. Members were treated to a private viewing of the exhibit a day before it opened to the public, pith-helmet-shaped souvenir cookies, catalog signing by Chief Curator Geoff Emberling, and 1920s jazz music in the Doris Holleb Family Special Exhibit Gallery. In February, Members of the James Henry Breasted Society attended *Voices from the New Past*, a unique evening of storytelling. Breasted Society Members were treated to a retelling of some of James Henry Breasted’s adventures from his 1919–1920 journey to the Middle East by Director Gil Stein and Chief Curator Geoff Emberling, as well as personal stories from the field as told by current Oriental Institute faculty. In April, the Oriental Institute held its annual Members’ event *Passport to the Middle East: Check Out Our Digs!* Members were invited to learn more about the Oriental Institute’s seven active excavations in the Middle East by visiting with dig directors at stations distributed throughout the galleries.

In addition to Members’ events, Oriental Institute Members enjoyed a comprehensive Members’ lecture series in 2009–2010 with topics ranging from underwater archaeology to burial rituals and historical forgeries:

- *After the Revolution: Oriental Institute Archaeology in Iran* — Abbas Alizadeh (October 2009)
- *The Sea of Galilee Boat* — Shelley Wachsmann (November 2009); co-sponsored by the Chicago chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America
- *Headless Ancestors and Ghouls: Understanding the Plastered Human Skulls of Jericho and the Origins of Agriculture* — Ian Kuijt (December 2009)
- *Searching for Ancient Sam’al: Four Seasons of Excavation at Zincirli in Turkey* — David Schloen (January 2010)
- *Death’s Dominion: Chalcolithic Religion and the Ritual Economy of the Southern Levant* — Yorke Rowan (February 2010)
- *Biblical Archaeology, the Limits of Science, and the Borders of Belief* — Nina Burleigh (March 2010)
- *Tracking the Frontiers of the Hittite Empire* — Ann Gunter (April 2010)
- *Meluhha: The Indus Civilization and Its Contacts with Mesopotamia* — Mark Kenoyer (May 2010)
- *Exploring the Roots of Mesopotamian Civilization: Excavations at Tell Zeidan, Syria* — Gil Stein (June 2010)

The Oriental Institute Members’ lecture series aims to bring a varied selection of the most recent work and scholarship on the ancient Near East to our Members and the local community. This year, eight of these lectures were recorded with the support of Mind Online, the University of Chicago’s online resource for educational video content. Video recordings from the 2009–2010 Members’ lecture season as well as past seasons are available to view for free on the Oriental Institute Web site: <http://oi.uchicago.edu/getinvolved/member/events/recordings.html>.

Members' events would not be possible without the hard work of many dedicated Oriental Institute staff members and volunteers, and the Membership Office is thankful for all of their assistance with a very successful 2009–2010 events season.

Travel

In the past year the Oriental Institute offered two travel programs to the Middle East. In November 2009, Dr. Nadine Moeller, director of excavations at Tell Edfu, and Foy Scalf, head of the Research Archives, escorted twenty-one travelers through Egypt on the travel program *Splendors of the Nile*. Dr. Moeller and Scalf introduced their travelers to the wonders of ancient Egypt, took them on a seven-day cruise down the Nile, and treated them to a behind-the-scenes tour of the Oriental Institute's excavations at Tell Edfu. In April of 2010, University of Chicago Professor John E. Woods and Oriental Institute Publications editor Leslie Schramer (M.A. 2002) guided fourteen travelers on a much-anticipated Oriental Institute travel program to Iran — *Iran: Persia and the Splendors of Empire*. Travelers spent two weeks exploring this fascinating country and visiting past Oriental Institute excavations including Chogha Mish and Persepolis.

Plans for several future Oriental Institute travel programs are currently underway. Dr. Yorke Rowan will be escorting a small group of travelers to Israel in October of 2010 on the travel program *The Holy Land: Heritage of Humanity*. This travel program will provide a comprehensive look at Israel, from prehistoric burial sites to the modern-day beauty of Tel Aviv's White City, and it includes a private tour of the Oriental Institute's newest excavations in Israel, Marj Rabba. In March of 2011, Dr. Robert Ritner will lead *The Wonders of Ancient Egypt*, and in August/September of 2011, Dr. Theo van den Hout will lead *In the Footsteps of the Hittites through Turkey and Syria*. Additionally, a future travel program to Iran led by Dr. Abbas Alizadeh and a tour to Syria by Dr. Gil Stein are in the works for 2012 and 2013. 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. Our Members learn directly from some of the most eminent scholars in the world, at sites the Oriental Institute has been working on and researching for almost a century. For more information on Oriental Institute travel programs, contact the Membership Office at oi-membership@uchicago.edu, or visit our Web site at <http://oi.uchicago.edu/getinvolved/member/travel.html>.

Administrative Notes and Benefits

Thanks to the hard work of marketing intern Amanda Sorensen (A.M. 2010), Oriental Institute Members can now receive discounts at several Hyde Park eateries and cultural venues:

- 15% off dining and live music on Wednesday at Piccolo Mondo (1642 East 56th Street)
- 15% off dining on Tuesdays at Park 52 (5201 South Harper Avenue)
- 10% off dining Monday–Friday from noon to 5 p.m. (excludes alcoholic beverages) at Chant (1509 East 53rd Street)
- 15% off dining on Mondays at Cedars Mediterranean Kitchen (1206 East 53rd Street)
- 10% discount on theater tickets (limit four per Member) at Court Theater (5535 South Ellis Street)

To receive these discounts, a valid Oriental Institute Membership card must be presented to the establishment staff at time of purchase.

Beginning in July of 2009, the Membership Office began processing Membership renewals on a quarterly cycle. This is a departure from the previous donation-based renewal system and

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monthly renewal cycles employed in previous years. The renewal quarters are based on the four seasons: spring, summer, fall, and winter. All Members will receive two renewal notices by mail: one at the beginning of the quarter, and one at the middle of the quarter. The decision to move to a quarterly renewal cycle was made after analyzing and assessing past renewal practices and current industry practices, and so far has proven to be efficient and cost effective. Membership renewal rates this year have reached as high as 72 percent, almost 20 percent higher than standard projected rates for comparable cultural institutions. In addition to mailing in membership renewal forms, Members are encouraged to renew online, which is quick, easy, cost effective, and secure. An online renewal form is available on our Web site at <http://oi.uchicago.edu/getinvolved/member/electronic.html>.

This year, there were two staffing changes for the Membership Office. In July, Maeve Reed joined the Oriental Institute as the new Membership Coordinator, replacing Sarah Sapperstein, who left the Oriental Institute to work with the University of Chicago's Office of Alumni Relations and Development. In August of 2009, we were sad to lose Brittany Luberdia (AB 2009), the Membership Programs Assistant, who graduated from the University of Chicago with a degree in art history and took up a curatorial fellowship at the Dallas Museum of Art. Following Brittany's departure, Bethany Page Bouldin (AB 2011) joined the office in September of 2009 as the new Membership Programs Assistant and has been doing an excellent job managing the Membership database, hosting events, and responding to Members' inquiries.
