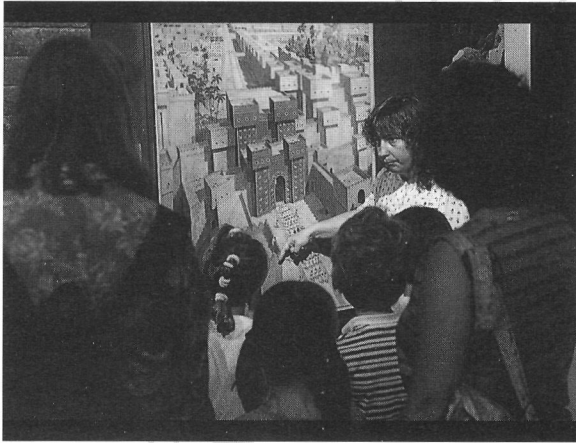


## EDUCATION PROGRAM

*Joan D. Barghusen*



*Docent Kitty Picken helps a group in the Children's Special Interest tour understand the archaeological evidence for this artist's rendering of ancient Babylon.*

**T***he academic year 1990-91 marked the tenth anniversary of the Museum Education Program. Established when the position of Education Coordinator was created in fall 1980, the Education Program has played an active role in the Museum's mission of public education. Today, ten years after its inauguration, the Museum Education Program includes in its educational outreach materials and activities for adults and children, school groups and the general public, Institute members and non-members.*

Each of the past ten years has seen the addition of some new feature to the roster of Education Program offerings. In 1990-91 this new feature was the addition of Wednesday evening members' courses. While members' courses have been a regular Saturday morning activity for many years, the Wednesday

evening classes became feasible only in the fall of 1990 when the museum extended its hours on Wednesdays until 8:30 p.m.

Taking advantage of the opportunity to reach out to new audiences, the Museum Education Program instituted a schedule of Wednesday evening members' courses, with topics chosen especially for high interest and general appeal. *Mummies, Myths and Tomb Robbers* was the intriguing title of the first Wednesday evening members' course, offered in the Fall Quarter. Taught by Egyptologist Frank Yurco, this class helped participants separate myth from historical fact in popular presentations of ancient Egyptian events. Students viewed and discussed the Hollywood film *The Mummy*, in its original 1930s version, and a seldom-shown Egyptian film about tomb-robbers, *The Night of the Counting of the Years*. Subsequent Wednesday evening courses were *The Idea of the Trojan War in History and Myth*, taught by Ronald Gorny, and *Signs and Wonders upon Pharaoh: The Exodus and the Israelite Settlement in Canaan*, and *Women in Ancient Egypt*, both taught by Frank Yurco.

In the Saturday morning schedule of members' courses, Frank Yurco's Egyptian history sequence, requiring six quarters to complete, began its cycle in the fall quarter. This is the second time the history sequence has been offered in recent years, and it continues to attract a large number of serious and dedicated students, most of whom take the entire cycle of classes. Other Saturday morning members' courses included *Coptic Egypt*, taught by Terry Wilfong, who was guest curator of the museum's temporary exhibit "Another Egypt: Coptic Christians in Thebes," as well as *Boats and Trade in the Ancient Near East*, by Manuela Lloyd, *Introduction to Semitic Religion* and *From Alexander to Muhammad: Late Antiquity in the Ancient Near East*, both by Brannon Wheeler, and *Ancient Egyptian Mathematics and Science*, by Frank Yurco.

A total of 254 students attended members' courses in 1990-91. Of these, sixty-one were new members who joined the Oriental Institute to enroll in the course. Forty-two of the students were Oriental Institute docent guides who attend courses not only for personal enrichment but also as a way to broaden the perspective they bring to museum tours.

*Magic and Medicine: Healing Arts in the Ancient Near East* was the topic of a day-long symposium which attracted over 200 participants on November 3, 1990. This was the fourth annual symposium sponsored jointly by the Education and Membership offices. The presenters included Oriental Institute faculty and staff members Robert Biggs, Erica Reiner, Walter Farber, and Robert Ritner, as well as Gary Beckman from Yale University and Peter Nash of Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary.

The Hieroglyphs-by-Mail correspondence course continues to be popular each time it is offered. Participants take about a year to work their way through beginning aspects of the ancient Egyptian grammar. The stalwart and successful are rewarded with an opportunity to continue into Part II of the course, which explores the intricacies of the verbal system to complete the study of ancient Egyptian grammar. Twenty-three students were enrolled in this course when it began in March 1991.

Outreach to younger members of the museum audience is an important component of the Education Program. Saturday morning Winter Workshops engage seven-to-twelve year old children in craft activities related to museum objects. Children in the 1991 workshops constructed chariots inspired by Mesopotamian models and figures of Marduk and his team of dragons; they also made scale models of the burial chamber of King Tut, including mummies in decorated cases. These workshops regularly fill to their capacity of 24 children, the number determined by the limited working space available.



*Docent Kitty Picken tells a group of children in the Summer Special Interest tour the story of how the Assyrian human-headed bull came to the Oriental Institute.*

Summer Special Interest Tours for children were given on Thursday mornings in July and August as they have been annually since 1982. Led by captain Kitty Picken, the Thursday morning docents have become accomplished in the art of interpreting esoteric objects for young minds in these special tours. At each tour time, a dozen or more children, some as young as five years old, gather in the lobby where the docents meet them and take them to look at artifacts selected to illustrate a special topic, such as pyramids and mummies or the work of an archaeologist. After the tour, children can continue their gallery visit with a pencil and paper activity designed to complement the theme of the tour. Young "experts" who have attended these tours can often be heard afterwards in the gallery recounting information to accompanying parents, siblings, and friends.

The Museum Education Program received a special gift in 1990-91 to implement a curriculum enrichment project involving a small group of Chicago teachers. The teachers will receive various educational resources developed by the Museum Education Program to use with their classes, including Teacher's Kits, Art Project manuals, slides, and a videotape, now in the final stages of production, which describes the collection and work of the Oriental Institute. A special aspect of this curriculum project will be an on-site visit to each class by a graduate student in archaeology. Other support services will be made available to the group as needed. Evaluations from teachers in this project will then be used by Museum Education Program personnel in creating and revising materials and services for teachers.

Participating in various professional, community or university events is often part of the agenda for Education Program staff. This past year, the Museum Education Program was one of the sponsors of the University of Chicago's first Arts Day on Campus, an event to acquaint teachers in the Chicago public schools with campus organizations offering programs for teachers and students of art. Again this year the Museum Education Program sent representatives to the annual 57th Street Children's Book Fair, a local celebration of the return to school; graduate students manned a table at which children could learn to write their names in hieroglyphs and make cartouches in ancient Egyptian style. Each of these community outreach events helps us widen the circle of friends from which our audiences come.

Maintaining the programs developed over the past ten years and initiating new ones imposes a heavy administrative burden with flyers to write, mailing lists to develop, registrations, class lists, fee payments, etc. This load is lightened by the efforts of Program Assistant Terri Barbee with her resourceful ideas, calm good sense, and all-around efficiency.

The Museum Education Program enjoys the on-going and steadfast support of Volunteer Chairman Janet Helman and the able participation of dozens of museum docents, whose talents and energies are indispensable to many projects of this office. The expertise and assistance of Oriental Institute staff and faculty are generously given and gratefully acknowledged. Very special thanks are extended to docents Kitty Picken and Peggy Grant and volunteer Joan Hives; many aspects of the Museum Education Program have been enriched by their inspiration and long-standing creative participation.

On the threshold of its second decade, the Museum Education Program rests on a foundation of broadly based projects designed to serve diverse segments of the museum audience. Constructed over a period of ten years with the cooperation of Oriental Institute administration, faculty, staff, docents, and friends this foundation has established a firm base on which the Museum Education Program can continue to build.