

## MUSEUM EDUCATION PROGRAM

**Carole Krucoff**

Reaching out to new audiences and creating new partnerships for programming were the guidelines for the Museum Education Program this past year. Collaboration with campus organizations, area museums, and community groups led to a full schedule of programs that ranged from seminars and symposia to festivals and holiday celebrations. In addition, two multi-year grants continued to support outreach programming for two special audiences—Chicago-area families, and teachers and students in the Chicago Public Schools.

## School and Teacher Services

More than six hundred 6th and 7th graders from the Chicago Public Schools visited the Oriental Institute this year on field trips they never would have taken without the assistance of a major grant from the Polk Bros. Foundation. Part of a three-year project, these students and their teachers were piloting materials and activities designed to integrate Oriental Institute resources into the public schools' world history curriculum. This is a significant endeavor since the Institute's educational program—widely used by suburban school districts and private schools—is either unknown or unused by most of Chicago's public schools.

During the past school year, the staff of the Museum Education Program, the curators of the Oriental Institute Museum, and William Pattison and Sara Spurlark, consultants from the University of Chicago's Department of Education, have been meeting regularly with a panel of 6th and 7th grade teachers from six different Chicago public schools. Selected to represent the city's diverse population, these schools also reflect educational needs that range from bilingual programming to special education to opportunities for the gifted. Using resources identified by the curators, the teachers' panel is developing prototype classroom and museum approaches to meet a wide variety of student needs.

New approaches the teachers have developed for museum visits include docent-led tours in Spanish for bilingual education classes, multiple field trips that enable students to focus on a particular culture during each visit, and guided tours followed by question-and-answer sessions with Oriental Institute archaeologists. Many of the museum's docents have been involved in shaping and evaluating these approaches. A group of docents has also volunteered to serve as members of a project advisory committee; members this past year were Debbie Aliber, Bernadine Basile, Charlotte Collier, George Junker, Jo Lucas, and Dorothy Mozinski. The entire committee has offered important advice and assistance.



**Assisted by museum docent Christel Betz, students from Bass Elementary School gather information about ancient Egypt as part of a Chicago Public Schools outreach program supported by the Polk Bros. Foundation. Photograph by Jean Grant**

Classroom outcomes are also a crucial aspect of the Polk Bros. Foundation project. Results this year have ranged from a class recreation of a wall-sized Egyptian tomb painting to the presentation of an ancient banquet using information gleaned from original sources. Evaluation of all classroom and museum activities is underway; the overall goal is production of a museum/schools curriculum enrichment program that can be used effectively by teachers and students across the entire public school system.

Other museum/school collaborations took place this year. Susan Buta, Kenwood Academy chemistry teacher, returned to repeat the Museum Education Program designed to introduce her high school students to ancient science and historic conservation. Oriental Institute staff, including Laura D'Alessandro, Conservator; Charles Jones, Research Archivist; Raymond Tindel, Registrar; and Tony Wilkinson, Research Associate, shared their expertise during behind-the-scenes student visits. This year, a new procedure reinforced student learning—Laura's demonstrations of chemistry techniques used to conserve ancient artifacts were replicated by the students when they returned to their chemistry laboratory back at school. This unique program was given city-wide recognition when National-Louis University highlighted the Kenwood Academy/Oriental Institute partnership during an educators' conference on new approaches for museum/schools collaboration.

Partnerships in programming greatly expand the Museum Education Program's resources and abilities to reach many different audiences of teachers and students. A prime example is another collaboration based on the sciences that began this past year. The Oriental Institute has joined the University of Chicago's Department of Astronomy and the Office of Special Programs to offer inner-city high school students an introduction to ancient astronomy in collaboration with the Adler Planetarium. Janet Johnson, Professor of Egyptology, has developed a curriculum outline on the role of astronomy in ancient Egypt. During the next school year, she will present lectures and join educators from the other partner groups to involve the students in projects that include replicating an ancient Egyptian star clock and creating calendar models.

Two additional joint programs reached other audiences. During the winter, the Artifact Center at the Spertus Museum of Judaica and the Oriental Institute's Museum Education Office jointly planned and presented a pilot outreach program with District 181 of the Hinsdale Public Schools. This program brought three hundred 6th and 7th grade students from Hinsdale to visit Spertus, where they experienced the process of archaeology on a "dig" at the Artifact Center's reconstructed tell. The students then came to the Oriental Institute where museum exhibits showed them actual results of archaeological excavations in the ancient Near East. Another collaboration, this time with the Lincoln Park Zoo, concentrated only on teachers, offering a joint seminar on "Ancient Animals" that was attended by forty educators from metropolitan-area private, public, and parochial schools.

### **Public Programming**

Designed to attract and serve many different audiences, the public programs offered by the Museum Education Program this year also benefited from collaboration with other groups. An important example is "Archaeology for the 1990s and Beyond," an Oriental Institute Symposium co-sponsored by the Chicago Chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America. Nearly two hundred participants, many of whom had never taken part in an Oriental Institute event, came to Mandel Hall

to hear some of the Oriental Institute's finest scholars discuss how archaeology is done today, what it can tell us about the past, and what it will be like as we enter the twenty-first century. Serving in his role as president of the Archaeological Institute of America-Chicago Chapter, Lanny Bell offered the symposium's introduction. Featured speakers were Oriental Institute faculty and staff members William Sumner, Tony Wilkinson, Ashlan Yener, McGuire Gibson, Mark Lehner, and John Sanders.

Other adult education programming included a full calendar of eight-session courses and one-day mini-courses that drew more than three hundred participants. Eight-week courses offered this year included: Ancient Egyptian Life and Society, taught by Peter Piccione; Ancient Egyptian Law and Ethics, Parts I and II, by Frank Yurco; The Land of the Bible: Ancient Palestine in the Bronze and Iron Ages, by Timothy Harrison; Tale of a Tell: The Archaeology of Ancient Megiddo, by Timothy Harrison; Nomads of the Middle East, by Abbas Alizadeh; Medicine and Magic in Ancient Egypt, by Peter Piccione; History of Ancient Palestine, by Timothy Harrison; Egypt and the Ancient African Kingdoms of Nubia, by Frank Yurco; Art and Archaeology of Mesopotamia, by Augusta McMahon; and Land of Plenty: The Economy of Ancient Egypt, by Frank Yurco.

Mini-courses included Art and Artisans of Ancient Egypt, taught by Assistant Curator Emily Teeter and former Oriental Institute Preparator Phil Petrie; Dine Like an Egyptian, a cooking course taught by docent and professional chef Mary Jo Khouri; and An Eye for Antiquity, taught by Archivist John Larson and Kathleen Gibbons, Director of Education at the Smart Museum of Art. Co-sponsored by the Smart Museum, this course complemented the Smart Museum exhibit "An Eye for Antiquity: Photographs from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. William Knight Zewadski."

Hieroglyphs-by-Mail, the popular correspondence course, was offered twice this year. Peter Piccione taught an intermediate version in the fall; Emily Teeter taught a beginners' course in winter/spring. And Cuneiform-by-Mail joined the roster of courses this past fall with Billie Jean Collins as instructor.

More informal adult education opportunities were available throughout the year at gallery talks, drop-in events, and special lecture programs for the general public. Faculty, staff, docents, and guest lecturers who generously offered their time to present Wednesday evening gallery talks included Lanny Bell, Janet Helman, Kitty Picken, Rita Picken, Mary Shea, Emily Teeter, and Frank Yurco. In addition, special interest gallery tours organized by docent captain Debbie Aliber were offered by the docents every Friday morning during the months of July and August.



**Myrette Katz and Lilian Swenson prepare kibbeh at Dine Like an Egyptian, a cooking course offered in March. Photograph courtesy of Mary Alice Regnier**

A new drop-in program for artists began this year—"Sketching in the Galleries" is now available every Wednesday evening. Interest in this program is growing; we hope to present an informal exhibit of sketches next fall. Drop-in tours, with no reservations needed, were also a regularly scheduled feature, taking place following the films shown on Sunday afternoons. In addition, the Sunday docents, led by captains Steve Ritzel, Teresa Hintzke, and Janet Russell, continued the popular thematic presentations begun last season. This year's presentations included tours on "Love and Romance in Ancient Egypt" for Valentine's Day, "Women in Ancient Egypt" for Women's History Month, and "Sports and Games in the Ancient Near East" for Chicago Day.

Valentine's Day provided the opportunity to begin a new series of free lectures for the general public. Co-sponsored by the *Suq*, Dr. John Foster, Professor of English at Roosevelt University, presented a reading of ancient Egyptian love poetry from his book *Love Songs of the New Kingdom*. In March, another holiday program celebrated *Naw Rouz*, the Persian New Year. Co-sponsored by the Nima Cultural Institute and Reza's Restaurant, this event drew near capacity crowds for a reception, a special presentation on the holiday by Mahvash Amir-Mokri, and a slide lecture by Abbas Alizadeh. Last in the series was "An Age-Old Problem: Collection and Competition for Water in the Ancient Near East," a lecture presented in April by Tony Wilkinson in conjunction with Earth Day.

Activities for children took some new directions this year, thanks to the on-going creativity of docents Kitty Picken and Annette Teaney. "Hijinks and Hieroglyphs," a five-session history and drama class for children ages 7-12, resulted in a delightful public presentation in Breasted Hall. "Jewels of the Past," a one-session workshop, invited children to see and discuss ancient jewelry on view in the museum and to create their own version of an Egyptian-style broad-collar necklace.

Summer tours for children have been a Thursday morning tradition since 1982. This year, Thursday captain Kitty Picken developed several new theme tours, followed by hands-on activities that allowed each child to take home a related craft project. Allison Wickens, a summer intern from Grinnell College, supervised this Museum Education program that served nearly two hundred children. Education staff also reached the community's children with "museum-on-the-go" activities offered for youngsters at the 57th Street Children's Book Fair and the Crossroads International Student Center Spring Fair.

A new program for children of University of Chicago alumni took place in June, when the Museum Education Program held two hands-on museum workshops for youngsters accompanying their parents to Reunion Weekend. Tours for adults were also offered, as they were for two other university events—New Students and Parents Orientation Day in September and the annual Humanities Open House in October. Outreach to the university community, begun last year, continued with our second New Students' Open House, co-sponsored by the *Suq*. Also, university clerical support staff were invited to Lanny Bell's second annual "Scribes and Secretaries of Ancient Egypt" tour on Professional Secretaries' Day in April.

Much of the success of public programming depends on effective publicity. This year, Kaylin Goldstein, Programs Assistant, skillfully initiated a year-long publicity campaign that brought the museum's programs more media attention than ever before. Assisted by William Harms of the University of Chicago's News and Information Office and Emily Teeter, Assistant Curator of the Oriental Institute Mu-

seum, Kaylin used a desktop publishing program to produce and widely distribute a series of handsome brochures, flyers, press packets, and Museum Calendars of Events. Her efforts resulted in extended coverage in both university and Chicago-area media, including the *University of Chicago Chronicle*, the *Maroon*, and the *University of Chicago Magazine*, as well as the *Hyde Park Herald*, *Chicago Parent*, the *Chicago Reader*, *Crain's Chicago Business*, the *Chicago Sun-Times*, and the *Chicago Tribune*.

Thanks to Kaylin's efforts, Family Programs, a major Museum Education Program initiative, received excellent press coverage this past year. Funded by a generous two-year grant from the Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust, the Family Programs project began with a half-year evaluation study by Jerome D'Agostino, a professional museum evaluator who is a Ph.D. candidate in the University of Chicago's Department of Education. This study has given us invaluable information on approaches for reaching families and for involving them in effective educational activities.

Each Sunday from October to June is Family Day at the Oriental Institute Museum, with activities that range from tours and hands-on craft activities to major special events. Storytelling, creative dramatics, "You Can Be a Pharaoh" video interviews, and "Ancient Earth," featuring recycling activities for Earth Day were among the many programs offered this year. Special Family Program Events included: the *Second Annual Mummy's Night* on the Wednesday before Halloween and *Discover Nubia! Day*, which featured a recreation of a traditional Nubian village wedding. Performed by the Nubian Cultural Center of Canada, this festival of traditional music and dance came to us following acclaimed performances at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. Other Special Family Program Events included *Chicago Day*, featuring activities highlighting the new exhibit "Sports and Games



***On Discover Nubia! Day, performers from the Nubian Cultural Center of Canada recreated a traditional Nubian village wedding in James Henry Breasted Hall. This family event, held in conjunction with Black History Month in February, was supported by the Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust. Photograph by Jean Grant***

in the Ancient Near East,” and the second annual Family Day, offered in conjunction with the Smart Museum of Art. It has been a rewarding experience to see how these museum programs inform and inspire children and their parents as they discover the fascinating world of the ancient Near East.

Much of the success of the Family Programs Project is due to its staff—Museum Education Program interns Amanda Geppert and Bridget Baker and volunteers Adrienne Runge and Lisa Alswang. Supervising the entire program is Carol Redmond, who joined the Museum Education Program as Education Outreach Coordinator last fall. Carol holds an MFA from the Art Institute and is a skilled educator with experience at both the Art Institute and the Chicago Children’s Museum. As Outreach Coordinator, Carol is also actively involved in supervising the Oriental Institute/Chicago Public Schools Collaboration supported by the Polk Bros. Foundation. It is a pleasure to have her with us.

In a year of growth and expansion, support and guidance is very much needed. Thanks go to faculty and staff for generously sharing their knowledge and their time. A special thank you to the docents for providing ideas, encouragement, and support at every turn. Docent coordinators Cathy Dueñas and Terry Friedman offer Museum Education the same creativity and inspiration they provide to the Volunteer Program. Janet Helman and Bud Haas remain invaluable mentors. The interest and involvement of each and every one of you are the best assurances that the Museum Education Program will continue to enjoy on-going success.

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