

INSTITUTE OF MAYA STUDIES

OF THE MIAMI MUSEUM OF SCIENCE

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MEETING NOTICE....Our next meeting, 8 pm, Wednesday, Feb. 21, in the Museum of Science auditorium, will feature a slide presentation on the engineering and structural aspects of Maya buildings by Len Schafer, head of our research section on architecture. Len is a professional architect, well traveled in the Maya area and highly qualified to provide the fascinating technical details on how the ancient Maya earned their reputation as "Master Builders". Plan to attend this very interesting and unusual program.

SURVEY OF MEMBERS INTERESTS....We are delighted at the response of our membership to our program of individual involvement in the activities of the Institute. A high percentage of the forms have been returned, and we urge those who haven't to do so at the earliest opportunity, so that participation in the program can be arranged.

MEETING OF PHOTOGRAPHY COMMITTEE....Associate Director Eugene Dynner who is also chairman of this service committee, has called the first meeting of an IMS group under the membership involvement program. Those who indicated interest in this activity are advised that the meeting will be held in Classroom "C" at the museum, 8 pm, Tues. Feb. 20. Bring slides-photos for projects.

ACTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS....At its meeting Feb. 7, the Board approved a conditional budget for a program of up to 3 guest speakers a year for regular monthly meetings of IMS. Under this program, Victor Segovia, chief archaeologist in Yucatan, is being invited to address our March meeting on the current excavations at an exciting and major new site--Kohunlich, near the Mexican-British Honduran border. The Board also authorized negotiation with the Smithsonian Institution for its sponsorship of a traveling IMS exhibit of color prints of Maya subjects. Under this arrangement we would supply the exhibit and the Smithsonian would circulate it to interested museums, universities, and other groups around the nation. Eugene Dynner will direct assembly of the exhibit and negotiate with S.I. on our behalf.

STELA 24 (NARANJO) IS ALMOST HERE....At long last, our promised treasure is near shipment from Guatemala City on extended loan to the Museum of Science by special arrangement with the Guatemala government. Board members Albert Weintraub and Lew Dorn (director of the museum) have just returned from Guatemala with this good news. The final problem of insurance enroute has been resolved and the stela should arrive in Miami via Aviateca Airlines within days.

It has been a long wait since the picture on page 3 was taken in Guatemala last summer. On that day, Guatemala, for the first time in its history, gave permission for an original stela to leave the country on extended loan. On authority of President Arana and Minister of Education Maldonado of Guatemala, IMS director Lacombe and Guatemala National Museum director Luis Lujan selected a stela for Miami--Stela 24.

This beautiful and well preserved monument has had a stormy history since it was first erected in Naranjo Jan 26, 702 A.D. For 1200 years it lay in quiet dignity among the ruins of Naranjo. Then it again saw the light of day when discovered by Maler in 1905, only to be broken up by thieves 65 years later and abandoned in Belize where police recovered it as it awaited smuggling into the U.S. for sale. Now, after almost 13 centuries, Stela 24 will again be proudly displayed for all to wonder at. Hopefully, stela stealing and wanton destruction of these treasures will soon stop. IMS has shown the way to legitimate acquisition.

Our thanks to Col. Rafael Arriaga, Consul General in Miami and Gabriel Cordovez, Tourism Attache of the Consulate General, for their intercession on the highest governmental levels in Guatemala and unflagging interest in our project "Stelae for Miami". They made our Mission Impossible possible.

IMS LIBRARY IS BORN....If you have any books relating to pre-Columbian Meso-America that you would like to donate to our library, please bring them to the meeting Feb. 21, or advise our librarian Mrs. Pauline Potamkin that you intend to donate books. We have bought a suitable, secure cabinet which will be placed in the library of the museum where the books will be available to our members for study. Last year, our Board appropriated a cumulative fund for the continuing purchase of basic books in the Maya field. Mrs. Potamkin will proceed to set up the library and catalog. From these beginnings, we aim to build a significant collection that will greatly assist us in our program of education and research.



Admiring Stela 24 (Naranjo) at the National Museum of Anthropology and History in Guatemala are Lic. Luis Lujan, director of the museum (left), and Charles Lacombe, director of the Institute of Maya Studies. The two selected the stela for loan to the Museum of Science in Miami.

EDITORIAL APOLOGY.....The Cultural Diffusion section was inadvertently left out of the list of IMS research sections published in the Newsletter of Dec. 28, 1971, Vol. 1, No. 7, page 1. Our apologies to Albert Weintraub, head of this section.

ANOTHER REQUIEM FOR THE MUSICAL STONES OF CHICHEN ITZA?

While in Yucatan two weeks ago, director Lacombe hastened to the 75 shell shaped musical stones piled behind the entrance building at Chichen Itza. Only six months ago, these stones, excavated by Dr. Sylvanus Morley 50 years ago, were almost all intact. Today, sad to report, they are almost all broken up, presumably by the tourists, banging on them to hear the tones. The pure sounds, apparently artificially pitched by varying the size of the shaped stones, ranged from bass to treble, and were obtained by striking the point of the tapered end. Perhaps they might have shed some light on ancient Maya music. Restoration will now be required.

NEWSLETTER

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