

Doin' The Zoo

Janet Burnham

Those of us who visited zoos as children will remember animals in cages with cement floors. Sad. All is different now, and the Philadelphia Zoo is a pioneer, designing increasingly natural habitats for the animals in their care. Every resident has a name and distinct personality and is appreciated for his or her uniqueness.

Our Zoo is the nation's oldest. It was chartered in 1859, but the impending Civil War delayed its opening until 1874. In addition to its animals, the Zoo is known for its historic architecture, which includes Solitude, the country home of William Penn's grandson, as well as sculpture, botanical collections of over 500 plant species, groundbreaking research and fine veterinary facilities.

The Philadelphia Zoo developed the first-in-the-world animal exploration trail called Zoo360, a campus-wide network of see-through mesh trails allowing animals to roam around and above Zoo grounds. Do not miss the perky meerkats who have their very own maze with ground-based trails and lookout towers for frolicking and exploring.

Every birth at the Zoo is greeted with joy and wonder, especially when the little guy or gal represents an endangered species. Ajabu, a western lowland gorilla, is about one year old. Lucky for mom Kira and us, his birth was helped along by specialists from the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine, Presbyterian Hospital and Thomas

Jefferson University Hospital. Ajabu means miracle in Swahili.

Abigail's proud giraffe parents are Gus and Stella. She is affectionately called Abby. The Victoria crowned pigeons are quite the lookers and when you visit the McNeill Avian Center they strut their stuff unencumbered by cages. It is their turf, not yours.

We share the planet with these spectacular creatures. There are those who believe that we should not have zoos at all, and I get the point, but zoos raise our awareness of the importance of conservation and, in many cases, are protecting species that would disappear without them.

The Philadelphia Zoo makes me happy. ■

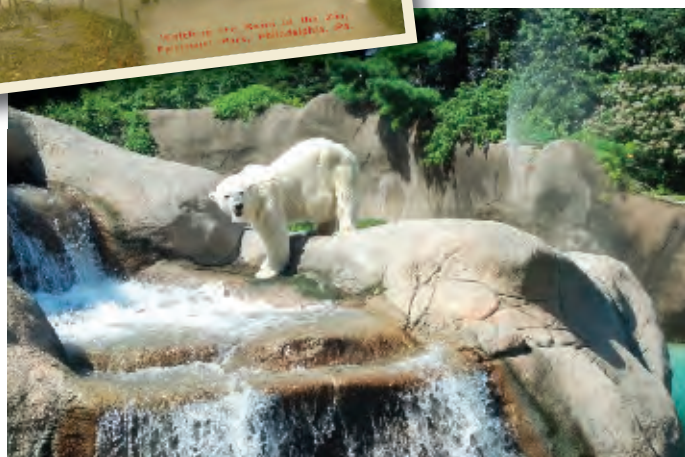


Picture by Janet Burnham



Then & Now

This 1920s postcard shows the Philadelphia Zoo's polar bear cage as it was back then.



Today, Philadelphia Zoo's polar bears live in a natural habitat designed to mimic their home in the wild as closely as possible.



Zoo360 is a campus-wide network of see-through mesh trails that allow animals to roam around above Zoo grounds.

Ancient Artifacts Shine in Penn's New Middle East Galleries

Lynn Miller

In April, the Penn Museum (University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology) unveiled its dazzling new Middle East galleries, the result of a \$5 million renovation.

The exhibits now present some 1,200 objects, more than half of which have never been on display before, all beautifully lighted in spacious rooms where the accompanying texts are both easy to read and satisfyingly informative. The narrative theme linking 10,000 years in the history of Mesopotamia and Persia is that of the journey of humankind from small villages to complex urban environments. Looking back that far into our past reveals great changes in how we live. But visitors should also come away with a greater awareness of what remains changeless in our species, and how much we share — in our aspirations and the challenges of living in society — with our far-off ancestors. Take a 21 or 42 bus on Walnut Street to Penn to immerse yourself in this amazing world from the past.



The entrance to the galleries



A bas-relief of a Genie from the Palace of Ashur-Nasir-Pal, Nimrud, Iraq, from ca. 883-859 BCE

Some years ago, museum officials decided to undertake dramatic reconfigurations of all the galleries. These showcasing the Middle East are the first to be completed. The reason for starting here, according to the Museum Director, Dr. Julian Siggers, was in part because this was the region where the museum itself began. Founded in 1887, the Penn Museum sent the first U.S. archaeological expedition to the Middle East where its team explored ancient Nippur. The University has since excavated more than forty additional sites in the region. Its resulting collection is one of the greatest anywhere and, because it is entirely the product of scholarly exploration by Penn's

own archaeologists and anthropologists, is more cohesively tied to its physical context than is usually the case in museum exhibitions. As one official put it, "this is one of the few places in the world where you can tell a truly archaeological story about the objects that are on display."

Two ingenious novelties in the renovated galleries will charm the most sophisticated adults as well as children. A number of reproductions of things on display in nearby cases are designed specifically so that museum-goers can pick them up, feel their weight, and get a clear sense of their use. One example is a clay mold for making copper tools — hammerheads or bludgeons, perhaps — ready to be fastened with

thongs onto wooden handles for action. Another bit of technology presents a quickly moving slide show of daily life within an ancient Middle Eastern city. There are nicely rendered artists' sketches of merchants haggling, women cooking, children playing, and priests invoking the gods. Drawn to scale and life-size, these figures come alive in a time and place we distant visitors can enter, too.

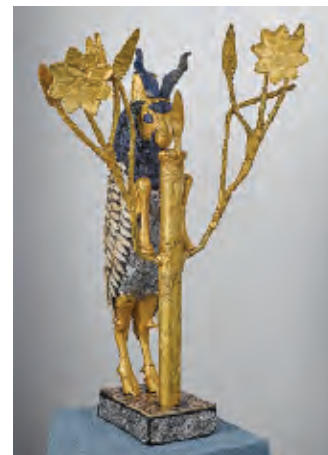
Three of the most dazzling artifacts are neighbors in the central gallery featuring Ur, the Great City, inasmuch as they all came from the Royal Cemetery there, which a Penn team excavated in the 1920s. All three date from approximately 2450 BCE. A bearded bull's head and shell plaque once decorated a large lyre.



Ostrich Egg



Group of Footed Bowls



Ram in a Thicket

The animal's head and horns are of gold, its beard made up of carved stones of rich blue lapis lazuli. Below it are inlaid depictions in carved shell of rather amiable looking wild animals seemingly at peace with the men in their midst. Then come objects from the tomb of Queen Puabi, a monarch who left this world in style (her style also included the sacrifice of several of her servants, buried with her to serve her in the afterlife). Her amazing headdress contains more than thirty feet of solid gold ribbons looped in swags to make a kind of snood about her



Game Board

enormous head of hair. Gigantic loops of gold hung from her ears and a golden comb of cut-out flowers flared over the top of her head. Thousands of colorful beads hung on more than 80 strands cover her torso. Nearby, the remarkable Ram in the Thicket stands on its golden hind legs to nibble the golden leaves from a golden tree. Its amazing furry back is rendered in feathery bits of shell and lapis, details the visitor can plainly study now that the ram is displayed, not in a niche, as it used to be, but in a glass case you can walk around.

Some of the objects that are less dazzling to look at are at least as remarkable. Cuneiform tablets tell the story of how humanity learned to write and do mathematics. One such example is the "First Day of School Tablet" from Nippur, which constituted early notebook technology for some long-ago child. One of the world's oldest

wine jars, dating from at least 7,000 years ago, still held wine residue when it was excavated in the 1960s. A ca. 1500 BCE clay tablet from the same city illustrates an irrigation system. Such urban settlements required increased social organization to construct and maintain their water systems, which became essential for effective agriculture and the survival of larger urban populations. The complexity of creating and maintaining such irrigation projects, not to mention competition for controlling their use, may explain much about how and why the earliest rudimentary bureaucratic states came into being.

The Penn Museum has put in place an unusual extra benefit for those who visit the galleries on weekends. Four Global Guides, individuals who have recently resettled in Philadelphia from their homelands in Iraq and Syria, have been hired and trained to interpret the galleries.



Bull Headed Lyre

In addition to sharing their own stories about life in their native countries, they can acquaint visitors with more about the ancient history of the sites featured in the Middle Eastern galleries. Their guided tours are offered on weekends — check with the Museum for specific times — and are free with Museum admission. No reservations are needed in advance.

Those with the time and energy should also visit "Cultures in the Crossfire: Stories from Syria and Iraq," which runs through

continued on page 19



Footprint in Brick



Nizami Manuscript



Queen Puabi's Regalia



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Ancient Artifacts

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November 25th. This special exhibition considers what's at stake in the ongoing destruction of our cultural heritage in such war-torn places as Nimrud, Aleppo, and Palmyra. Here you can see documentary film clips, contemporary art work, and much more that responds to the themes of displacement and the threat to the remains of the region's ancient cultures.

Two Hopkinson House residents play important roles at the Penn Museum. Dr. Jane Hickman is editor of *Expedition*, the museum's quarterly magazine; its spring 2018 issue is devoted to the Middle East galleries. Dr. David Silverman, a noted Egyptologist, is Eckley B. Coxe, Jr., Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. ■



Frieze of Bulls



Painted Pot

Pictures provided by Penn Museum



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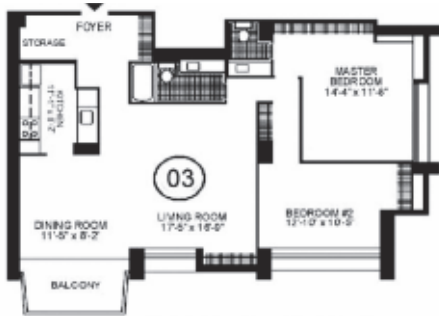
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Fresh Berries Are a Sign of Spring!

Jane Hickman

Our local grocery stores are having sales on berries — strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries —

because this is the time of the year that all berries are abundant. Berries are a good source of vitamins C and K, antioxidants, and

other nutrients. And they can be used in a variety of ways: in desserts, salads, smoothies, and special drinks. ■

Chefs' Corner

Note: If you have a favorite recipe, we would love to test it and put it in this column. Send your recipes or requests to jhickman@upenn.edu. Thank you!

Mixed Berry Cobbler

Ingredients:

Filling:

- ½ cup sugar
- 1½ tablespoons cornstarch
- 7 cups (1¾ - 2 pounds) mixed fresh berries (cut large berries in half)

Dough:

- 1½ cups unbleached all-purpose flour plus more for surface
- ¼ cup sugar plus more for sprinkling
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 5 tablespoons chilled unsalted butter, cut into ½" cubes
- ½ cup chilled whole milk plus more for brushing
- Vanilla ice cream

Directions:

Filling: Position a rack in middle of oven and preheat to 400 degrees. Whisk sugar and cornstarch in a large bowl. Add berries to bowl and toss to coat. Transfer berry mixture to a 2-quart baking dish about 2 inches deep. Set aside to macerate [soak and soften] while making dough.

Dough: Whisk 1½ cups flour, ¼ cup sugar, baking powder, and salt in medium bowl. Add butter; using fingertips, rub in butter until coarse meal forms. Add ½ cup milk and stir just until dough forms. Gather dough into a ball and transfer to a lightly



floured surface. Gently knead five or six times, then pat or roll dough into a 9 x 6 inch rectangle. Cut dough in half lengthwise, then crosswise three times, forming eight rectangles. Arrange biscuits ½ inch apart over fruit. Brush tops lightly with milk

and sprinkle with sugar. Bake until fruit is bubbling and biscuits are just cooked through and golden all over, about 35 minutes. Let cool at least 30 minutes; serve with vanilla ice cream. Cobbler can be made up to three hours ahead. Rewarm at 350 degrees if desired.

Strawberry Muddle

Ingredients:

- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup water
- 1½ cups chopped hulled strawberries
- 6 thin lemon slices
- Ice cubes
- 1 750-ml bottle chilled Prosecco

Directions:

Stir sugar and ½ cup water in heavy small saucepan over medium-low heat until sugar dissolves. Increase heat and bring to boil. Cool syrup.

Divide strawberries among six 6-8 ounce glasses. Add 1 tablespoon syrup to each and mash with muddler or handle of wooden spoon. Add lemon slice to each and mash to release flavor. Add several ice cubes to each glass, then fill with Prosecco.



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