

Report on Cabinets of Curiosity June, 2023

Cabinets of Curiosity is a series of outings for UMRA members, proposed and curated by retired Professor of the History of Science Sally Kohlstedt. UMRA members are invited to visit unique collections of the University of Minnesota, with interpretation by their curators. The outings are produced by Sally with a team including Cathy Lee Gierke, Kathy Jensen, and Jan Morlock.

Our goals for the Cabinets series have been:

- To learn and be delighted;
- To provide opportunities for UMRA members to get to know and enjoy each others' company in small groups;
- To offer access to fascinating University collections and interaction with their curators;
- To engage new UMRA members.

To date, each of the outings has “sold out,” with capacity ranging from 20 to 30 participants. On each occasion, we have offered an option to gather after the tour at an area restaurant for refreshments and conversation, with about half of the tour participants opting to remain for the social time. All of the outings to date have been on the Twin Cities Campus proper. Sally has taken care to select destinations on both the Minneapolis and Saint Paul areas of campus.

The events have been promoted through articles on the website, the UMRA newsletter, all-member emails, and the Facebook group. On two of the three occasions to date we have sent a “sneak preview” invitation to UMRA members who have joined in the last 18 months to reach out to new members. As a result, a significant portion of the participants have been new members. Registrations for the events have been managed through the website.

Outings to date:

February 8, 2023, Bell Museum tour with retired curator and exhibit director Don Luce

March 8, 2023, Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine

June 21, 2023, tour of outdoor research areas on the St. Paul Campus, with UMES Land Director Andrew Scobbie

Outings on the calendar for Fall, 2024 include an October 3 visit to the Bell Library of rare books and manuscripts on the West Bank; and a November 7 visit to the Goldstein Museum of Design on the Saint Paul Campus. Events being planned for Spring Semester, 2024 include a trip to the insect collection at the Entomology Department and to the Natural Resources Library special collections, all at Hodson Hall; and a curator's tour of the College of Biological Sciences exotic plant collection.

—submitted by Jan Morlock, member of the Cabinets of Curiosity volunteer team