

FEBRUARY 2005

C. Ford Runge will speak on ending hunger to advance global security

Globalization, a relatively recent addition to our lexicon, continues to evolve, embracing more and more human activities. Beginning with trade, then the flow of capital—now the phenomenon includes the diffusion of labor and manufacturing to more economical locations. And, the advent of global communication networks is extending and accelerating this process.

The benefits are many—increased trade and commerce, ease of travel, improved standards of living, and better world health. But, there are costs as well—preventing the spread of disease, guarding the safety of the food network, protecting the environment, and securing the world from the misuse of nuclear materials. Nations, and individuals, will draw their own balance sheets on the costs and benefits. And, while the results may differ, the process continues apace.

Because of this growing web of interactions, we are at a time in history when the contrast of wealth and abundance with poverty and deprivation can disrupt a precarious global equilibrium. Ending severe deprivation may be critical to global peace and stability. Although reducing hunger is an important step toward global peace and security, it seems to be a distant goal.



Our February speaker, Dr. C. Ford Runge, Distinguished McKnight University Professor of Applied Economics and Law, bears good news. Important new research findings and forecasts show that the goal of reducing hunger can be reached by 2025 through new and renewed institutions, scientific innovation, global economics and investment, and sustainable environmental practices.

Professor Runge, a native of Wisconsin, received his Ph.D. in Agricultural Economics at the University of Wisconsin, an M.A. in Economics as a Rhode's Scholar at Oxford, and his B.A. at North Carolina, Chapel Hill. His service includes: staff person for the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Agriculture and Science, diplomacy fellow working in USAID on food and trade, and assistant to the U.S. Ambassador to the general agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT) in Geneva in 1988. From 1988 to 1991, he served as the first director of the Center for International Food and Agriculture at the University of Minnesota. In addition, he has consulted for a number of international economic and environmental organizations and private companies.

Professor Runge's publications include a wide range of articles with emphasis on trade, agriculture, and natural resources policy. He has authored five books, the most recent: *Ending Hunger in Our Lifetime: Food Security and Globalization*. At our February 22 luncheon meeting, Professor Runge will present major findings from his most recent research as he addresses the topic, "Food Security and Globalization."

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

FEBRUARY
LUNCHEON MEETING

Featured Speaker

C. Ford Runge, U of M
Distinguished McKnight Professor
of Applied Economics
"Ending Hunger in Our Lifetime:
Food Security and Globalization"

When
Tuesday, February 22, 2005
11:30 a.m.

Location

Conference Room ABC
Campus Club, Fourth Floor,
Coffman Memorial Union,
East Bank Campus, U of M

Cost

\$12 per person (tax included)

Reservation Deadline Thursday, February 17

To reserve your place(s),
send a check, payable to the
University of Minnesota Retirees
Association, to David Wark at
1313 5th St., SE, Mpls, MN,
55414; call 612-379-3854; or
e-mail him at wark@umn.edu.
Reservations requested after
February 17 will be placed
on a waiting list.

Cancellations must be received
by noon Wednesday, Feb. 16.

Free Parking

For two hours of free parking in
the East River Road or Weisman
Museum garages, bring your
ticket in for validation.

Board Meeting at 10 a.m.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In my last column, I reported on several successful Board initiatives on behalf of UMRA members. Recently, another of these efforts has born fruit. We've now reached agreement with Joel Maturi, the University's director of athletics, to create a schedule of discounted ticket prices for men's and women's intercollegiate athletic events. The new schedule is now in place. For details, read the Newsletter story in the next column.

Many of us continue to depend on our University e-mail accounts following retirement. There are good reasons why we should do so, including no monthly charges and free access to the Internet. As a story on a following page explains, those of us who use the University's e-mail system are now obligated to make changes in the security protocol of our e-mail software if we're to continue to use the system after July 5. Read the story carefully, including its explanation of how to get help if you need it. Don't get caught short!

The Board is actively tracking a number of other issues of interest to UMRA members. High on the list are two important documents—one, a resolution passed by the University Senate in April 1998, and the other a Regents Policy adopted in July 2000. Both have to do with the rights and interests of emeritus faculty. More information concerning the two documents, as well as UMRA's efforts to bring them to the attention of all faculty and assure their effective administration, will be forthcoming in the weeks immediately ahead. In the meantime, you can access the documents via the new link titled "On Your Behalf" on the association's Web site.

The Board is also exploring the idea of recommending that appropriate, counterpart policy statements be developed for civil service and P&A retirees. Members of the Board and I welcome any information or advice you may have on this important issue.

Cordially,

John Howe, President

Intercollegiate Athletics to offer discounts to UMRA members

Building on recent agreements to secure special UMRA member discounts with the University Bookstores, Rec Sports, and the Campus Club, the Board has now negotiated ticket price reductions with the Department of Intercollegiate Athletics. By the time this Newsletter arrives in your mailbox, UMRA members will be able to claim a significant discount—amounting to more than 30 percent off the regular price—on tickets to all men's and women's intercollegiate athletic events for the remainder of the winter season and the upcoming spring season. The arrangement includes the following sports: men's and women's basketball, men's wrestling, men's and women's gymnastics, women's hockey, men's baseball, and women's softball. The only sport not included in the new discount program is men's hockey. Discounts are also available on season tickets for spring baseball and softball.

The discount program for UMRA members, including both individual game and season tickets, also will be available for all sports (again excluding men's hockey) during the 2005–06 school year. The Athletics Ticket Office has downloaded a list of current UMRA members into its computer data base. To secure your discount, you have only to identify yourself as an UMRA member at the ticket counter in Mariucci Arena, or when calling the ticket office at 612-624-8080.

Many thanks go out to Joel Maturi, director of Intercollegiate Athletics, and associate Mark Coyle for being so responsive and making this new program possible. We now have yet another good reason to cheer on the Gophers!

Web site adds "On Your Behalf"

Association members will notice several recent improvements in the UMRA Web site. Some represent little more than necessary housekeeping, but others strengthen the site's capacity to provide important information. You'll see a new link titled On Your Behalf, which, over the coming months, will offer a changing menu of information on issues under consideration by the Board and of importance to UMRA members (as well as to retirees generally). When you go to www.umn.edu/umra and click the "On Your Behalf" link, you'll see that the first several entries detail the recently negotiated membership discounts at the University Bookstores and Intercollegiate Athletics, and another, the Faculty Bill of Rights. Other items will appear as UMRA's agenda continues to evolve.

E-mail ALERT!! University e-mail users will need to reconfigure before July

On December 15, those of us who use the University e-mail system received an important message from E-mail Administration. It announced that the increased vulnerability of communication systems in today's computing environment requires that we switch from our presently insecure e-mail protocol to a new one that encrypts data sent to and from our computers. Historically, e-mail user names and passwords have been sent over the network in "clear text." This means that the data is not encrypted or obscured in any way, and hence is vulnerable to being intercepted. The University's Office of Information Technology is mandating that as of July 5, 2005, the transmission of clear text passwords will no longer be allowed. Users will be required to use what is called the SSL protocol.

The December 15 message noted that current versions of e-mail software that many of us use (such as Outlook, Macintosh Mail, or Eudora) will support the new SSL protocol with minor reconfiguration. Some users, however, may need to upgrade or change to a more secure software program. For instructions on how to make the necessary changes (as well as for a list of e-mail software that will no longer be supported by the University), go to www.umn.edu/securecom.

UMRA rep reports on 2005 health benefits enrollments; turns attention to 2006

Well, the final figures for the 2005 open enrollment for University retirees 65 and over are in, and they bear a striking similarity to those for the year before, with some 1,867 versus 1,862 enrolled (1,323 single, 544 family coverage). Once again, Blue Cross/Blue Shield's U of M Retiree Plan remains the most popular option taken (983 or 52.7 percent), followed by HealthPartners 65+ (516 or 27.6 percent), UCare for Seniors (215 or 11.5 percent), and Medica's Group Prime Solution (153 or 8.2 percent).

As for dental coverage, a total of 1,563 early retirees and 65 and over retirees along with disabled participants elected to sign up (1,192 single, 371 family). Delta's Preferred/Premier option was selected by 65.2 percent (1,019) of the enrollees, followed by HealthPartners Dental at 12 percent (187); University Choice, 9 percent (140); HealthPartners Dental Choice, 7.8 percent (122); Delta Preferred option, 6.1 percent (95).

Overall, 2005 appears to be somewhat of a watershed year for University retirees as far as the cost of coverage is concerned, compared to that of counterparts in the private sector nationally. According to a study by the Kaiser Family Foundation and Hewitt Associates, reported in the December 15, 2004, issue of the *New York Times*, retirees who receive health benefits from their former employers saw their premiums rise an average of 25 percent this year, reflecting the continuing erosion of retiree health benefits among the nation's large employers.

The more computer literate among us can probably handle the task ourselves by clicking this address and following the instructions. Those of us who are less computer savvy, however, are likely to need more hands-on guidance. If you need help, contact the staff of your former department or office, or call the Technology Help Line at 612-301-4537. We have been assured that Help Line consultants will walk UMRA members through the procedure. If you have continuing trouble with conversion, please contact Judy Howe (at j-howe2@umn.edu or 651-645-2584).

Student-staff directories available

UMRA members interested in having a copy of the 2004-05 *University Student-Staff Directory*, and no longer able to secure one via their home department or office, can obtain one at either Coffman Union or the St. Paul Student Center at no cost. They're available as well through the U Bookstores for \$2. Add \$4.95 if you wish to have one mailed to you—and don't forget to ask for the 10 percent UMRA discount! One can, of course, go online and use the Directory Search on the University home page to locate individuals or departments.

In a survey of some 333 large employers with 1,000 or more employees, including one-fifth of the Fortune 500 companies, 79 percent said that they increased premiums for retiree health benefits this year. Forty-five percent increased their co-payment requirements for a range of health care services, with some 53 percent specifically increasing the co-payments for prescription drugs. In addition to requiring retirees to pay a larger share of premiums and other costs, about 8 percent of the firms took action last year to end all subsidization for their future retirees, and another 11 percent indicated that they planned to do so next year. The winds of change, they are a-blowing, and they don't bode well for the nation's retirees.

One final note: With the new Medicare Prescription Drug benefit scheduled to go into effect in 2006, a number of our members (including yours truly) have expressed apprehension over the impact of this new federal law on our University health plan. Toward that end, we are pleased to have been invited by Employee Benefits to sit in on a series of four informational meetings with participating carriers to explore this issue. We'll share with you the results of these discussions in subsequent issues of the Newsletter.

Ted Litman

UMRA Representative to the Benefits Advisory Committee

Campus Club welcomes retirees

It's been two years since the Campus Club reopened after the lengthy renovation of Coffman Memorial Union. Although the reborn club feels comfortably familiar, much is new and exciting as well. With the best food for miles around and wonderful facilities, the club is still "Where the University Community Meets." Here is a sampling of what goes on.

In addition to the regular Monday through Friday lunches, club members (and their guests) gather in the bar one Monday evening each month for continuing wine classes. Bar manager Tim Hutchens offers pertinent insights on the evening's selections: champagne, sparkling wines, and fine vintages from Australia, Spain, the Rhone Valley, and other points of origin.

The club also organizes an array of special events such as the Klezmer Brunch, Octoberfests, Single Malt Seminars, Jazz con Tacos, Terrace Grill Dinners, and special brunches on Easter and Mother's Day.

Thursday Dinners—a long-time club tradition—continue to evolve. The club also serves an annual fresh lobster dinner. New dining themes include the Baker Street Buffet (featuring recipes inspired by Sherlock Holmes) and Fiesta II with sangria and tapas in the bar, followed by authentic Spanish dishes served buffet style.

If you haven't been to the club since it reopened or would like to try another visit, call Phil Platt at 612-625-1442. He will gladly accommodate you and can talk with you about the club's special faculty/staff retirees membership rate. Consider the club when you're planning special group occasions. It offers some of the most attractive views and venues in town.

Volunteer as a conversation partner

Fifteen young men and women enrolled in master's and Ph.D. programs are seeking help with conversational fluency. The Center for Teaching and Learning Services (TLS) is looking for volunteers interested in meeting with international teaching assistants for whom English is a second language. Gain rewarding experiences from this intergenerational encounter, and learn about other cultures, languages, and academic fields.

Conversation partners meet with ITAs, one on one, to help them perfect their spoken English skills. The time commitment is about an hour a week. Topics for discussion and instructional materials are provided by the TLS Center. Parking is validated. For additional information, call Caroline Rosen in the TLS office at 612-625-3017.

Sign up for this program as well as other volunteer opportunities by calling the Retirees Volunteer Office at 612-625-8016.

University of Minnesota
McNamara Alumni Center
Room 264, Suite 250
200 Oak Street S.E.
Minneapolis, MN 55455-2002

The logo for the University of Minnesota Retirees Association features the letters 'U', 'M', 'R', and 'A' in a stylized, overlapping arrangement. Below this, the text 'University of Minnesota' is written in a serif font, and 'Retirees Association' is written in a smaller, italicized serif font below it.

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