

UMRA U NEWSLETTER

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

OCTOBER 2005

Dr. Ronald Phillips will speak in October on the “Golden Era of Plant Genetics”

Near the midpoint of the last century, once called the century of physics by some science historians, discoveries in biology began to lay the groundwork for what increasingly appears to be the “century of biology.” The symmetrical structure of DNA was discovered by Crick, Watson, Wilkins, and Franklin in 1953. By early 1998, the publicly funded Human Genome Project



was in a race with Craig Venter, supported largely by private funds, to map the entire human genome. Molecular Biology, once confined to the study of

viruses and of bacteria, expanded to provide investigators with incisive new tools for exploring the most hidden recesses of plant and animal cells. The field has also created new recombinant DNA technology, which may have profound influences on the future of our species.

The results of research in genetics and molecular biology have been, and continue to be, applied to both plants and animals, sometimes with startling results. Some cereal crops can now be genetically modified to block the effect of certain herbicides. Antibiotics kill microbes by interfering with the construction of their cell walls, thus blocking bacterial growth. These are just two examples of many applications, which can have important health, economic, and social implications.

Ronald Phillips, Regents Professor and McKnight Presidential Chair in Genomics, is a vital participant in contributing to this remarkable advance in the understanding of biological processes. Professor Phillips holds B.S. and M.S. degrees from Purdue University, he earned his Ph.D. from the University of Minnesota and did postdoctoral study at Cornell University.

In innovative work, Dr. Phillips joins plant genetics techniques with research advances in tissue culture and molecular biology to enhance the understanding of the basic biology of cereal crops, and thereby improve these species. His research program at the University of Minnesota was among the first programs in modern plant biotechnology related to agriculture.

Dr. Phillips is a founding member and former director of both the Plant Molecular Genetics Institute and the Center for Microbial and Plant Genomics. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences.

Through peer reviewed journal articles and abstracts, contributions to and editing of books, and service as chief scientist of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in charge of the National Research Initiative Competitive Grants Program, Dr. Phillips has shaped and guided research in genetics crop science. He will address for us, “The Golden Era of Plant Genetics.”

It is a pleasure to welcome a friend and colleague to UMRA’s October meeting.

—Warren Ibele

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

OCTOBER
LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday
October 25, 2005
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Featured Speaker

Ronald Phillips, Regents
Professor and McKnight
Presidential Chair in Genomics

“The Golden Era of Plant Genetics”

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, October 20

To reserve your place(s),
send a check, payable to the
University of Minnesota Retirees
Association, to Ben Zimmerman
at 2225 Folwell Avenue, St.
Paul, MN 55108; call 651-
645-1662; or e-mail him at
zimme003@umn.edu.

Reservations requested after
Oct. 20 will be on a waiting list.
Cancellations must be received
by noon Wednesday, Oct. 19.

Parking

Parking is available in the East
River Road garage at UMRA’s
membership discount. See page 2
for directions.

Board Meeting at 10 a.m.

UMRA NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As I noted in the September UMRA Newsletter, the enhanced “benefits and privileges” that we now enjoy as retirees of the University of Minnesota and members of UMRA should be complemented by an expansion of “opportunities for service.”

The University Volunteer Center has, of course, long been active in this arena and some of their current activities were cited in last month’s Newsletter. I have invited the Volunteer Center to provide us with personal accounts of volunteer experiences from time to time so that UMRA members may understand in some detail the satisfaction that accompanies volunteer work.

There is no dearth of opportunities for voluntary services. It can be argued that never has the University’s need for such services been greater. I urge our members to explore the range of volunteer service compatible with their interests and capabilities.

In keeping with this theme, the UMRA Board, at its September meeting authorized a scholarship grant for a trial period. The grant is a gift of \$1,000, for each of three years, to the Center on Aging. The gift will be used to provide a tuition grant for one student in the center’s course: “Advocacy Leadership for Vital Aging,” and it will be administered through the College of Continuing Education. The grant will be designated as the University of Minnesota Retirees Associate Tuition Scholarship. Greater detail on the Center on Aging and the annual course on advocacy leadership will be covered in an article in next month’s Newsletter.

The UMRA Board will be pursuing yet other possibilities for serving the University and its programs of instruction research and service. In the meantime, we encourage you to look into the types of volunteer activities that interest you, and to see where you, too, can be of service to the University.

Cordially,
Warren Ibele, President

Parking arrangements for monthly meetings to change in October

For several years UMRA and the Campus Club have shared the cost of parking for UMRA members who attended our Tuesday luncheon programs. This year, two factors have converged to bring a change to this practice.

When the Campus Club reopened following the completion of the Coffman Union renovation, it had a limited subvention from the University administration to assist in recruiting Campus Club members. Your parking was paid for by an agreement between UMRA and the Campus Club to subsidize the cost of parking. That subsidy has ended.

Fortunately, the reduced parking rate for UMRA members, which your association negotiated with Parking and Transportation last year, was initiated on July 1 this year. This eases what could have been a jolt.

Even more fortunately, because of UMRA’s \$4.00 for All Day agreement, this change makes it possible for members to come to campus for the meeting, and visit other campus sites (e.g., the Weisman Art Museum or the University Bookstore) while being spared “running parking meter anxiety.”

But, remember, you have to use the East River Road Garage in order for your discount card to be accepted. So, if you have found that particular ramp a little confusing, here’s a little suggestion:

To minimize the distance from the East River Road Garage to the Campus Club, try using the Washington Avenue approach.

- TURN SOUTH on Church St. S.E. (between Jackson and Hasselmo Halls)
- TURN RIGHT (west) on Delaware, passing below Coffman Union.
- When you are at the southwest corner of Coffman Union, TURN LEFT (south) to enter the East River Road Garage.
- Use Level A or B to park, then follow the signs to enter the basement floor of Coffman Union.

For an online map of this area, go to <http://onestop.umn.edu/Maps/ERivRdGar/>

We recommend that, on meeting days, you come early, enjoy the campus, and stay to visit for awhile.

Meetings planned for Medicare Part D

Meetings will be held for University of Minnesota retirees on the impact of Medicare Part D on their retiree medical plans during the University's Health and Benefits Fairs on the Twin Cities and Duluth campuses. An additional meeting will be held at 1666 Coffman.

Benefit counselors will be available during the fairs to assist retirees with any changes they care to make during open enrollment. Open enrollment for 2006 will be held November 1 through November 30, 2005. Retirees who wish to make changes in their medical and/or dental plans will need to do so during this time frame.

- October 27 — Duluth Campus Health and Benefits Fair
Kirby Student Center Ballroom
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 - » Medicare part D Retiree Meeting
Kirby Student Center – Garden Room
1 to 2 p.m.
- October 28 — 1666 Coffman, Falcon Heights
 - » Medicare Part D Retiree Meeting
Coffman Residence Social Room
10:30 a.m.
Watch for a posting in the residence.
- November 1— Health and Benefits Fair, Minneapolis
Coffman Memorial Union – Great Hall
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 - » Medicare Part D Retiree Meeting
Coffman Memorial Union – President's Room
Two Options: 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. or
1:30 to 2:30 p.m.
- November 2 — Health and Benefits Fair, St. Paul
St. Paul Student Center – North Star Ballroom
10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
 - » Medicare Part D Retiree Meeting
St. Paul Student Center – Room 110
Two Options: 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. or
1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

As details become finalized, additional information about the plans will be published in the Employees Benefits Newsletter, which will be in your mailboxes in mid to late October.

— Maggi Aitkens, University Benefits

The Retirees Volunteer Center always welcomes more volunteers

Whatever your skills and interests, we'll welcome you to join in our many ongoing projects: Please call the Volunteer Center office at 612-625-8016, for more information or to register your interest.

— Helen Briggs, Communications Chair

Discounts for UMRA members continue

In addition to providing opportunities for staying in touch with and continuing to contribute to the University, UMRA offers its members the benefits of several valuable discount programs that remain in effect during 2005 and 2006. The Board invites members to take advantage of these programs and invites comments about them, as well as other discount programs you would like the Board to consider.

PARKING

UMRA members may now claim unlimited, single-day parking for \$4 at any of the three following facilities: the Gortner Avenue Ramp in St. Paul, the East River Road Garage behind Coffman Union on the East Bank in Minneapolis, and Lot 86 next to the Law School on the West Bank. The discounted rate is available at any time of day, on any day of the week. The single exception is if the facility is accommodating a special event. To claim the discount, simply ask for the UMRA discount and show your membership card to the attendant when exiting.

UNIVERSITY BOOKSTORES

Discounts of 10 percent are available to UMRA members on books and other in-store merchandise at the University Bookstores on the Minneapolis and St. Paul campuses. The only excluded items are textbooks assigned for specific courses, electronics, medical reference books, academic caps and gowns, and college rings. Discounts may not be combined with other discount programs or Bookstore offers, and do not apply to special orders. Just show your UMRA membership card at the cash register.

INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

UMRA members can now claim up to 30 percent off regular prices on individual game tickets for all men's and women's intercollegiate athletics, and significant discounts off season ticket rates for some sports. The only sport not included in the discount program is men's hockey. Identify yourself as an UMRA member by showing your membership cards at the ticket counters in individual sport venues.

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UMRA membership discounts — continued

REC SPORTS

Discounts are also available to all retirees for semester or year long memberships at Rec Sport facilities on the St. Paul and Minneapolis Campuses. For details, contact the membership offices at either venue.

CAR RENTALS

The UMRA Board has clarified that faculty, P&A, and civil service retirees can continue to take advantage of the University's National Car Rental discount contract for personal and business travel, whether in the U.S. or abroad. Contact your former department or office for information concerning the discount program, including the contract number.

HONOR ONE RESTRICTION

As a condition of these discount programs, the Board has agreed that UMRA membership cards will not be "loaned" to friends or other family members. Success of these programs requires that members honor this restriction. If you have questions or suggestions concerning any of the discount programs, contact John Howe via e-mail (howex002@umn.edu) or by phone at 651-6435-2584.

Correction to UMRA officers list

To encourage your active participation in UMRA affairs, the September issue provided a list of officers to contact. We are reprinting it with a note to advise you that we have made a correction in the e-mail address for Ben Zimmerman, UMRA's secretary.

OFFICERS

President: Warren Ibele, 612-377-1075,
e-mail: ibele001@umn.edu

President-elect: Frank Miller, 612-331-2145,
e-mail: mille005@umn.edu

Secretary: Ben Zimmerman, 651-645-1662,
e-mail: zimme003@umn.edu

Treasurer: Judy Howe, 651-645-2584,
e-mail: j-howe2@umn.edu

Past President: John Howe 651-645-2584,
e-mail: howex002@umn.edu

**For additional information about
UMRA and its activities, visit the association's
Web site at www.umn.edu/umra.**

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



**Have you changed your
address, e-mail, or phone?**

1. Print new information below.
2. Cut out this form and address label.
3. Mail both to the address above.

Name _____
Address _____
City, State _____
Zip _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____
Other Info _____

First Class
U.S. Postage
PAID
Mpls., MN.
Permit No. 155