

UMRA UNewsletter

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

NOVEMBER 2006

Larry Jacobs to discuss the November election results and American politics

Are we headed for an upheaval in American politics? Professor Larry Jacobs says that “the 2006 elections are shaping up as a tsunami.” When we welcome him to the UMRA luncheon in November, he will review the election results and discuss their impact on policy making in Washington and Minnesota.



Lawrence R. Jacobs is the Walter F. and Joan Mondale Chair for Political Studies and director of the Center for the Study of Politics and Governance in the Hubert

H. Humphrey Institute at the University of Minnesota. He is also professor in the Department of Political Science. He received his Ph.D. from Columbia University and B.A. from Oberlin College.

Dr. Jacobs’s most recent books are *Healthy, Wealthy, and Fair: Health Care and the Good Society* (with James Morone, Oxford University Press, 2005), *Inequality and American Democracy* (with Theda Skocpol, Russell Sage Press, 2005), and *Politicians Don’t Pander: Political Manipulation and the Loss of Democratic Responsiveness* (with Robert Y. Shapiro, University of Chicago Press, 2000). He also authored *The Health of Nations: Public Opinion and the Making of Health Policy in the U.S. and Britain* (Cornell University Press, 1993) as well as several edited volumes and numerous articles in the *American Political Science*

Review, World Politics, Comparative Politics, Journal of Politics, Public Opinion Quarterly, Presidential Studies Quarterly, and other scholarly outlets.

Jacobs’s research has been published and discussed in a number of national media outlets including the BBC, National and Minnesota Public Radio, ABC, NBC, CBS News, CNN, CSPAN, MSNBC, and publications as wide ranging as the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Economist*, *Washington Monthly*, *New Republic*, *Congressional Quarterly*, *National Journal*, as well as local newspapers, *Pioneer Press* and *Star Tribune*.

He has made regular presentations at the National Press Club and is a political analyst for WCCO, CBS’s Minnesota affiliate.

Jacobs’s work has been recognized by a number of prizes. *Politicians Don’t Pander* received the Goldsmith Book Prize from Harvard University’s Shorenstein Center for Press and Politics, the Neustadt Book Prize from the American Political Science Association, and the Distinguished Book Prize in political sociology from the American Sociological Association. Dr. Jacobs also received a prestigious Robert Wood Johnson Investigator Award in Health Policy Research. He chaired the Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy convened by the American Political Science Association.

We look forward to our discussions with Larry Jacobs on November 28.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

NOVEMBER
LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday
November 28, 2006
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Featured Speaker
Lawrence R. Jacobs, University of Minnesota professor in political science, “American Politics in Upheaval: What Happened and What’s coming?”

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
Wednesday, November 22

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 him at 651-645-1662; or e-mail him at zimme003@umn.edu.

Reservations requested after Nov. 22 will be on a waiting list. Cancellations must be received by noon Tuesday, Nov. 21.

Parking
Parking is available in the East River Road Garage. With your UMRA membership card, parking is \$4 for the entire day.

Board Meeting at 10 a.m.

UMRA NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT

En route to Santa Fe in mid-October, my wife, Cynthia, and I decided to have a look at the Daniel Libeskind addition to the Denver Art Museum. Having read the fine article in the *New York Times Magazine* featuring that structure as well as the new Guthrie Theater, we were ready for an invigorating sight.

By mid-afternoon we arrived at lovely Civic Center Park. The gold on the state capitol dome was gleaming in the Rocky Mountain sun. The sparkling skin of the museum's addition (9,000 titanium plates) contrasts with the stolid stone (or concrete) of the main building, which appears to have been imported from the Maginot Line.

Dismayed as we tried to negotiate passage through the varied sharp angles of the interior, Cynthia remarked, "Fortunately for the Twin Cities, the Guthrie chose a respectful and yet inspired architect." Later I asked this daughter of an architect for a critique and she responded, "In their chaotic disjunction, the angles and planes aggressively dominate the works of art and those who would come to contemplate them." The day was saved by some words of Jorge Luis Borges chiseled beside the Public Library entrance across the way: "I had always imagined paradise as a kind of library." Not designed by Libeskind, I trust.

Seven years of drought in the Southwest ended this summer, at least in the Santa Fe area, and the mountains are already dusted with snow. Between Denver and Santa Fe, the streams, usually dry in the fall, are glistening with water and the cottonwoods beside them are resplendent in yellows and golds. The Japanese maple gracing our living room windows is beginning to turn. Not bad working conditions for the writing of a travel journal...I mean newsletter.

Absorbed in the reverie of the trees, I am grateful for the electronic and social infrastructure—pretentious words meant to be ironic—that allows me to "create content," as they say these days, in Santa Fe, and to know that the indispensable Ginny Hanson will correct my errors and transform my "content" into the polished document that you now hold in your hands. I also want to thank Pat Tollefson, the chair of our Membership Committee, for organizing the reception on November 17 (see article page 4) and for managing the renewal reminders; Al Linck for maintaining the lists of new retirees and sending invitations; Secretary Ben Zimmerman for the formidable task of managing lunch reservations; Treasurer Judy Howe for keeping the books; Carl Jessen for membership list management; and Past President Warren Ibele for discharging my responsibilities while I am in Santa Fe.

Frank Miller, President

UMRA representative reports on U advocacy efforts by the Alumni Association

In several meetings of the UMAA Advocacy Committee the theme has been the legislative session: how the association can be an advocate for the University's budget request and how we can support the transformation now under way. Senior Vice President and Provost Tom Sullivan spoke about the long-range plan to make the University one of the top three public research universities in the country.

Frank Cerra, vice president for Health Sciences, spoke about the new personnel, buildings, and research needed to move the health sciences toward this goal. Associate Vice President Mary Koppel discussed research currently being done and introduced Meri Firpo, M.D., Ph.D., who has just been recruited from San Francisco to join the stem cell research team here. Dr. Firpo spoke about her own work.

Associate Vice President for Legislative Relations Donna Peterson attended meetings regularly to keep the committee

informed about plans for advocacy at the legislature. She is impressed with the committee and UMAA because they are well informed and they work hard for the University.

The most recent speaker was Richard Pfitzenreuter, U vice president and chief financial officer, who discussed the biennial budget request that will be presented to the Regents at their next meeting. Among other things, the University will ask for bonding authority for several research buildings essential for achieving the transformation now under way. The committee suggested some changes in the draft of a fact sheet about the legislative request.

The Alumni Association is ready to do its part in the continuing effort to obtain the resources necessary for the University to reach its goals.

Sally Howard, UMRA Representative
U of M Alumni Association

Grants Program for U retirees

Inspired by a program of grants at the Andrew Mellon Foundation, John Howe and Kim Munholland, both retired from the history department, wrote a proposal for a small grants program for retirees. The goals would be these:

- to support continuing scholarly research with the goal of publication or other presentation
- to support the development of research-related courses and other instructional activities
- create ways for the University to make better use of the energy and talents of retirees
- to support other kinds of continuing professional development
- to bring specific benefits and scholarly recognition to the University.

At its September meeting, the UMRA Board endorsed further exploration of the idea, and an ad hoc committee is now being formed with Kim as chair. So far, members of the committee include Bob Holt, John Howe, Warren Ibele, and Vern Ruttan. There are several others whom I have in mind to ask, and I also eagerly seek volunteers. I would like to have civil service and P&A retirees as well as faculty from a variety of fields. Please contact me at 612-331-2145 or mille005@umn.edu.

Oh, how I long for the days when I was chair of this or director of that, and I could walk down the hall and say, “What would you think about doing such and such, and would you serve on a committee to get it going?” Asking for help in the pages of a newsletter seems a curiously remote way of doing business. Yet I would like to see broad participation in this effort, so I urge you to step forward and say, “You can count on me.”

—Frank Miller, President

Volunteering is good for your health

In the recent annual report of the Retirees Volunteer Center, Alan Kagan cites the claim in a Health Partners brochure that volunteering is good for your health. His own experience leads Alan to endorse this claim, and I believe that many other volunteers would agree.

So...do something for your health as well as for somebody else and find out what opportunities are available through the Volunteer Center. Marion Watson e-mailed to UMRA members a list of musical and theatrical events needing ushers, some of them on the Minnesota Centennial Showboat. For details call the Volunteer Center, 612-625-8016.

—Frank Miller, President

Health Benefits: Open enrollment must be completed by November 30

By now you should have received information in the mail from Employee Benefits regarding this year’s open enrollment, which is scheduled to run from November 1st to November 30th. The good news is that if you are not planning on making any changes in your medical and /or dental coverage, you do not need to do anything, and your enrollment will continue as is.

If, on the other hand, you are planning to make a change in your medical/dental coverage, you will need to re-enroll, using the form provided in the materials the University has sent you.

In either case, if you are going to remain within the UPlan for retirees, DO NOT SIGN UP FOR MEDICARE PART D elsewhere, because it is already incorporated in the prescription drug coverage under all of our U Plan retiree medical options.

Benefits Fair is for retirees too — Nov. 8 and 9

Finally, if you want more information, or need assistance, plan to attend this year’s Benefit Fairs, scheduled for:

Wednesday, November 8 at the St. Paul Student Center, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Thursday, November 9 at Coffman Union’s Great Hall, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Free flu shots will also be available at the fair.

For further information, you may call Employee Benefits at 612-624-9090 – option 2; or 1-800-756-2363 – option 2.

Ted Litman, UMRA Representative
Benefits Advisory Committee

**INVITE YOUR FRIENDS
to come to the reception for
prospective members, November 17**

See article on page 4

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS—Come to the reception for prospective members, Nov. 17

We all know someone in our acquaintance who has retired from the University but hasn't joined UMRA as yet. This is your opportunity to introduce them to the association, its programs, and camaraderie.

Bring them to a special get-acquainted reception in their honor at the Campus Club on:

Friday, November 17, 2:30 to 4 p.m.
Campus Club, East Wing, Rooms A and B

Refreshments will be served while they stroll among tables of information that should be of interest to all retirees. The following groups have been asked to display materials and have someone there to answer questions: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Volunteer Center, 1666 Coffman Residence, and University of Minnesota Women's Club.

All UMRA members are urged to invite recent and pending retirees, and better yet, to attend with them.

No R.S.V.P. is required, but please put November 17 on your calendar and invite your retired friends to a lovely afternoon at the Campus Club where they can find out what UMRA is all about. We hope to see you there.

—Pat Tollefson, Membership Chair

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

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.

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