

UMRA UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

MARCH 2008

Bill Doherty to speak in March on American Family Life in a Consumer Culture

University of Minnesota Family Social Science's Professor William J. Doherty will be the speaker for our March UMRA meeting. His title is "American Family Life in a Consumer Culture."

Author of *Putting Families First: Successful Strategies for Reclaiming Family Life in a Hurry-Up World* (co-written with Barbara Carlson), *The Intentional Family*, *Take Back Your Kids*, and *Take Back Your Marriage*,



Doherty is a renowned public speaker with wide recognition both nationally and internationally, whose audiences find him engaging and stimulating.

He is director of the Marriage and Family Therapy Program at our University and is a past president of the National Council on Family Relations.

Having earned his degrees at the University of Connecticut and St. Paul's College in Washington, D.C., he studied philosophy, theology, and child development before his doctorate in family studies.

He has been a therapist for couples, for families, and for persons focusing on parenthood along with teaching many courses in family education.

His research interests are democratic community building with families, citizen health care, marriage, fatherhood, and community engaged parent education. At

present he has grants for a family formation project for working with "urban unmarried new parent couples who aspire to forming families." In a second project, "Parenting Together," he and his associates focus on first-time fatherhood from anticipation of parenthood in pregnancy through infancy and early childhood, examining educational intervention for strengthening father-child bonds and fathers' involvement with their children. His third project, "Community Engaged Parent Education," asserts the premise that parenting always has public dimensions and investigates "comprehensive parent education [that] must address both the personal and public dimensions of parenting."

We in UMRA can look forward to both our education and enjoyment when Bill Doherty comes to speak to us on March 25. — Gayle Graham Yates

Menu for the March luncheon

Salmon Niçoise Salade, rolls, coffee or tea, rice pudding dessert. Please note: Vegetarian and gluten-free meals are available upon request; please make your request when sending in your reservations.

Reminder to all: Be an early bird—send prepayment for your lunch when you make your reservations and pay \$12 per person, rather than \$14 at the door on the day of the luncheon program.

And, the Membership committee reminds us we can invite a prospective member to the next lunch program — UMRA's Treat!

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

MARCH
LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday
March 25, 2008
11:30 a.m. — 1:30 p.m.

Featured Speaker

William J. Doherty, professor and director, Marriage and Family Life, University of Minnesota

"American Family Life in a Consumer Culture"

Location

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

Cost

Prepayment, \$12 per person;
\$14 at door for those not prepaid.

Reservation Deadline

Thursday, March 20

To reserve your place(s) and take advantage of prepaid price, send a check, payable to UMRA, to Ben Zimmerman, 2225 Folwell Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108.

Contact him at 651-645-1662 or by e-mail: zimme003@umn.edu.

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

Parking

Parking is available in the East River Road Garage at UMRA's membership discount, \$4.50 for the entire day.

Board Meeting at 10 a.m.

UMRA NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT

On Reading

“Reading is funner than playing,” our eldest grandchild, Jessica, proclaimed in the spring of her kindergarten year when her two-years-younger cousin Sage and twin brothers David and Justin went outdoors to play, and she stayed behind to read aloud to her adults. She with the other three offspring of our offspring are, of course, Garrison-Keillor-style Minnesota children—“above average”—whatever average means.

Now as a second grader, Jessica keeps her mother, Natasha, herself a voracious reader, on her toes supplying her daughter with appropriate books from the library and other book sources, this child being emotionally and developmentally a seven-year-old but a very advanced reader. Well before second grade, Jessica and her dad, Ian, read through all the “Little House on the Prairie” books, the copies of which he still had from his childhood, with him reading to her at first and her increasingly reading on her own. Then, they started the Harry Potter books and had read them all in time for the seventh and final one to be published the summer of 2007.

In this way more than any other I identify with this grandchild of mine and feel assured that her life will be fine as she grows up and lives to become our age, retirees and UMRA members. When I was Jessica’s age in rural Mississippi, my teacher-mother ordered books for me, mailed from the state lending library in Jackson, and she had to ration how many I could read per day because my eyes got sore from reading so much at times. Reading has been my lifelong chief activity, as I suspect it is for a large portion of educated people of our generation; and for me, and I suspect for many UMRA members, it has been a key both to professional success and personal pleasure.

Exchanging e-mails with ailing and housebound UMRA member Doug Pratt recently, I learned that he is spending a lot of his time quite happily reading. This plant biologist reads the journal *Science* but tells me his “eclectic” reading list has included *My Antonia* by Willa Cather, *China Wakes* by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, *Plan B 2.0: Rescuing a Planet Under Stress* by Lester Brown, and *American Theocracy* by Kevin Phillips. He is looking forward to Al Gore’s *Assault on Reason* and Madeleine Albright’s *The Mighty and the Almighty*.

When I visited my friend and our retired former colleague, Shirley Clark, in Oregon last September, a major

exchange was about books we were reading. She was doing a book review for her book group on Walter Isaacson’s *Einstein* biography, which I am now reading and relishing, though neither Shirley nor I know very much about physics. She also introduced me to the Michael Pollen books on food, *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* and *The Botany of Desire*. As soon as Pollen’s fourth book *In Defense of Food* came out in January, I was one of its first consumers.

My friend Virginia Watkinson in Cambridge, England, is a retired librarian, and she regularly sends me book recommendations. She introduced our family to Alexander McCall Smith’s “The No. 1 Ladies Detective Agency” books before anyone else we knew in the United States had seen them. These books, which have become international best sellers, are set in Botswana and are true to Botswana culture according to our daughter Natasha, who spent her Peace-Corps years in that southern African country. As a young professor, I was rather scornful of detective fiction—never read it: it was beneath me—until my friend and graduate-school office mate Mary Bednarowski and I were passing the time on the airplane flying back from an American Studies meeting in Mexico, and she made me a list of whodunits that she thought I should read: Dorothy Sayers, Agatha Christie, Josephine Tey. By now I have read all the books by those mystery fiction writers and more, often waiting for the next one to come out by somebody like Tony Hillerman. Once in England our family went to Shropshire just to see the setting for the Brother Cadfael mysteries by Ellis Peters. Just as for fiction “classics” we have visited Yorkshire to learn the sites of the Brontë novels and have paid close attention to Jane Austen’s English whereabouts.

A joy of our retirement years for those of us who are readers is the freedom to read widely, to read without the bounds of our professional areas and without the restraints of the fear—that at least I have had—that we might not know enough to read certain books. We know enough to learn. We know enough to explore good writing in whatever genre it comes. It is one of the many pleasures of our achievement of our years. I hope that is true for you, as it is for me.

Would you like to send me a title of a book you have enjoyed reading lately, along with your name? We could publish reading recommendations in a future newsletter.
— Gayle Graham Yates, President

What Gray Gophers are doing...

David Wark was installed as president of the American Society of Clinical Hypnosis at its recent meeting in Chicago.

Roger Stuewer founded a new quarterly journal, *Physics in Perspective*, ten years ago and continues to work as its co-editor as well as to edit the "Resource Letters of the American Journal of Physics," to give talks at conferences, most recently in Berlin (July) and Hamburg (October), and to serve on the Council of the American Physical Society.

Advice on e-mail accounts and Internet connection

We have noticed that many e-mail addresses in our directory are no longer valid. Please check your directory and send any corrections including your new email address to Carl Jessen (c-jessen@umn.edu). If you would like to forward mail coming to your University account to your new account, please do the following:

- Go to the Internet and type www.umn.edu/adcs in the address line.
- Once there, pick "Internet Accounts."
- On the next screen, pick "Set E-mail Forwarding."
- This will take you to a log-on screen; log on with your University account information.
- On the next screen choose "Set E-mail Forwarding" and this will bring you to a screen for changing several things. At the top you will see the "Forwarding" change option.
- Enter your new e-mail address in the box for "Other" and CHECK that option.

—Judy Howe

UMRA Board moves ahead on small grants and retirees' center initiatives

At its February meeting the UMRA board heard reports and discussed at length, two committee projects that are in process. The first, the Small Grants Working Group, chaired by John Howe as a section of the Retirees Center Committee, reports ongoing work on its proposal, which was accepted by the board in January. Funding for a pilot program of three years for research and professional grants for up to 10 retirees at up to \$5000 each will be sought within the University this spring; we hope to begin the program by next fall. In the next two or three weeks, committee members will be meeting with University officials including someone from the Graduate School dean's office, the University Foundation, and the President's Office.

The Retirees Center Committee, also chaired by John Howe, reported for discussion a detailed prospectus of ways a center could serve the retirees personally and profession-

ally, ways it could serve the University, and on how such a center might be formed, whether simply institutionally or as a place. After much discussion, the board approved the basic idea of the proposal and authorized John Howe and the committee to proceed with more specific planning for both an ambitious and a less ambitious version of a plan for a retirees center and to report back to the board in March.

In mid-March, the board will have a "workshop style" meeting to discuss long-standing issues for the organization that regular meetings have not been able to accommodate. These include expanding or dividing the responsibilities of the officer group, the possibility of paying for help with some of UMRA's work, the need for and character of our liaison relationships, the particulars of UMRA's relationship with the URVC, and the organization's "history project" for which the University gave us money some years ago.

UMRA liaison report: Regents Meeting

In February, President-elect Hal Miller attended the Regents' meeting as UMRA's liaison representative. The following is his report:

Two items of particular interest were reported to the Regents at their February meeting: fund-raising and financing the future of the University.

Vice President Fischer reported that in December the University raised \$38.8 million, capping off a good year with more than 16,000 gifts coming to the institution. Fundraising for the football stadium is within \$10 million of the goal. Of interest is that the stadium effort has produced an additional \$40 million for academic purposes.

"Financing for the future" was the title of President Bruininks' report, asking the question "what will it take to finance the future of the University?" Five key financial strategies were considered: state support, stabilizing tuition at a reasonable level of support for core educational costs, increased sponsored funding, increased private support, and aligning resources by cost reductions and increased productivity. Under tuition, considerable attention was given to the affordability of the University for current and future students. An interesting item was that for 2007-08, state appropriation and tuition and fees revenue will total \$1.2 billion: 44 percent from the state appropriation, and 56 percent (\$648 million) from tuition. By comparison, in 1997-98 the state allocation was 71 percent of revenue while tuition and fees were 29 percent of the total. The greatest change in that relationship occurred during the state shortfall in 2002-03.

In the Big Ten public institutions, 2007-08 Minnesota

Continued on page 4

resident undergraduate tuition and fees (\$9,598) rank fifth behind Penn State, Illinois, Michigan, and Michigan State. The shrinking percentage of state support vs. increased dependence on tuition prompted a vigorous discussion by the Regents.

— Hal Miller, UMRA President-elect

Nominating Committee Seeks Suggestions

At the Annual Meeting and Festive Luncheon on May 27, the Nominating Committee will present a slate of officers and board members. We always need a president-elect, because Current Occupant Hal Miller will receive an automatic promotion to president, and we have several board member slots to fill. This year we also need candidates for secretary and treasurer; Judy Howe and Ben Zimmerman have both served with distinction for three years.

The committee would like to receive suggestions from members, who of course are more than welcome to volunteer themselves. Please contact the chair of the committee, Past President Frank Miller by phone (612-331-2145) or e-mail (mille005@umn.edu). Thanks for your help.

—Frank Miller, Past president and chair

For intriguing activities, take a look at U of M Volunteer Center opportunities

Two lively possibilities to volunteer are coming up...

“A Day in the Life of...” Mike Zerby’s class in journalism is looking for retirees who’d be willing to have a student follow them about for a bit with a camera, recording the life of a retiree. You needn’t be doing anything glamorous or exciting; the purpose of the project is to give students experience—you would be making it possible.

If you’re intrigued, call either the Retiree Volunteer Office (612-624-8016) or Mike Zerby at 763-571-5378.

The University Theater Department is presenting *The Wiz*, a musical version of L. Frank Baum’s *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and needs ushers for its evening performances. **Dates: April 11, 12, 16, 17, 18, and 19.**

When you usher, admission is free, of course. Sign up with the URVC office: 612-624-8016.

—Helen Briggs, UMVC Communications Secretary

Visit the UMRA Web site,
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.

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

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



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