

# UMRA UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

*A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association*

NOVEMBER 2010

## Celebrate the success of the Professional Grants for Retirees program, November 23

At the November meeting, we depart from the usual schedule of guest speakers to celebrate the accomplishments of UMRA's Professional Development Grants for Retirees program. Unique among American research universities, this program provides grants of up to \$4,000 for faculty, P&A, and civil service retirees from the Twin Cities and coordinate campuses who require financial assistance to pursue projects related to their research, instructional, or other work history and that contribute to the educational, scholarly, and academic reputation of the University.

Begun during the 2008-2009 academic year and supported by funding from President Bruininks and assisted by his vice presidential colleagues, the Professional Development Grants program has, over the past two years, funded 26 grants to support ongoing projects by retirees from the Twin Cities, Duluth, and Morris campuses.

At the November UMRA luncheon, three awardees from cycle one will give brief presentations of their grant supported work.

Professor Emeritus Paul Weiblin of the Department of Geology and Geophysics will talk about the characterization of rocks discovered on Minnesota's Gunflint Trail that were formed from an ancient meteorite event of "great interest to scientists working on the early history of the earth." Mary Lou Fellows, Everett Fraser Professor of Law Emerita, will discuss her work on a 1,000-year-old Anglo-Saxon will of a Christian widow and slave owner. And, Professor Emeritus Kim Munholland of the Department of History will tell us about

the "Gravediggers of France," imprisoned by the Nazis at the Chateau d'Itter during the closing years of World War II.

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Earlier this month, the Call for Proposals announced the 2010-2011 cycle of awards. The word went out via e-mail to the Twin Cities Deans, Directors, and Department Heads list-serv; it was distributed by the chancellors' offices at Duluth and Morris; and a U.S. mailing went to all Twin Cities faculty and P&A retirees of record. In addition, an announcement was sent to the UMRA list-serv and a notice was requested of "Brief" and other publications.

The deadline for submissions this year is December 10. In cooperation with Associate Vice President for Research Frances Lawrenz, UMRA's Professional Development Grants Committee will appoint a committee of retirees to review this year's applications and recommend funding awards. Vice President for Research Timothy Mulcahy will announce the winners in February. A copy of this year's Call for Proposals, as well as information on the winners in cycle one and two, is available on the UMRA website at: [www.umn.edu/umra](http://www.umn.edu/umra).

There will be ample time at the meeting on November 23 to ask questions of the presenters about their projects, assess accomplishments of the Professional Development Grants program to date, and lay plans for its future.

— John Howe, chair  
UMRA Professional Grants Committee

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

NOVEMBER  
LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday  
November 23, 2010  
11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

**Featured Speakers**  
Recipients of the first round  
of Retiree Professional  
Development Grants

**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 reservations that  
are not prepaid.

**Reservation Deadline**  
**Thursday, November 18**  
To reserve your place(s) send  
a check, payable to UMRA,  
to UMRA Reservations, Betty  
Radcliffe, 806 Carla Lane, Little  
Canada, MN 55109.  
Contact her at 651-484-5676 or  
[bpradcliffe@comcast.net](mailto:bpradcliffe@comcast.net)

Please honor the November 18  
reservation date; if cancellations  
are necessary, please let us know  
by noon November 18.

**Parking**  
Parking is available in the East  
River Road Garage at UMRA's  
membership discount, \$5.00  
for the entire day.

**Board Meeting at 10 a.m.**

UMRA NEWSLETTER

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### *Exploring the West Bank Arts Quarter*

A couple of weeks ago I was on the West Bank exploring the Regis Center for Art, the facility for the Department of Art first occupied in 2003. It consists of two buildings linked by a skyway across 21st Avenue South in the center of the West Bank Arts Quarter. Nearby are Rarig Center, the Ted Mann Concert Hall, Ferguson Hall, and the Barbara Barker Center for Dance.

What an impressive concentration of culture and an opportunity for collaboration in the arts encompassing theater, music, dance, and of course, art!

Within the Regis Center for Art there are over a 140,000 square feet of art production space, classrooms, faculty offices, wood and metal shops, kiln and foundry facilities, and public gallery space. Specialty workspaces in the Regis Center for Art are filled with equipment essential for work in painting, photography, print making, ceramics, and sculpture as well as creative work in wood, metal, and pottery. When I walked through the corridors of the instructional portion of the building complex, there were impressive numbers of student works on display. It was a veritable feast—showcasing the artistic talent of a multitude of students. The corridors were filled with students, busily doing a class assignment of analysis and evaluation; observing, commenting about technique and critiquing the works.

Especially noteworthy in this complex is the Katherine E. Nash Gallery, which exhibits the work of renowned local, national, and international artists. An important mission of the Nash Gallery is to provide a venue for the exhibition of the work of department faculty as well as candidates for the Master of Fine Arts degree.

When first established, the Nash Gallery and its exhibits were located in the lower concourse of Willey Hall. The expanded and cohesive space in the Regis Center is worth your attention as a destination. For information about current and forthcoming exhibits, you can consult the Nash Gallery website at [nash.umn.edu/events](http://nash.umn.edu/events).

Obviously, the Regis Center for Art is a vital centerpiece of the West Bank Arts Quarter!

— John Anderson, UMRA President  
[ander049@umn.edu](mailto:ander049@umn.edu) or 651-489-4330

## UMRA — asking for your opinions

UMRA is your organization. What do you like? What do you think should be changed? To find out your thoughts about improving the experience of being part of UMRA, a survey questionnaire was sent to the e-mail member list-serv about a month ago. A number of members responded and we are grateful for their input; however, there are many who have not yet shared their thoughts.

To give you another chance, we will be sending the survey again by e-mail in mid-November. We would appreciate hearing from you. A paper copy will be available at the November luncheon if you would prefer to respond then. If you don't use e-mail and wish to participate, call John Anderson at 651-489-4330 to respond by telephone or ask that a paper copy of the survey be mailed to you. We would love to get your input!

If you have already responded—thank you—there is no need to respond again!

## Volunteers needed for raptors, students

Does the idea of birds of prey and their relationship with humans and the environment excite you? Here is an opportunity to volunteer at the University's Raptor Center on the St. Paul campus. Lobby assistants are needed to play a vital role by greeting the public and providing information about the Raptor Center. Tasks also include assisting in administrative projects and merchandise sales. Training is provided.

Volunteers commit to one four-hour weekly shift for a three-month period. Openings are for morning or afternoon shifts Tuesday through Friday and afternoon shifts on Saturday and Sunday. For details, call the University Retirees Volunteer Center, 612-625-8016, or e-mail [urvc@umn.edu](mailto:urvc@umn.edu).

## Mentor a child in reading without leaving your home!

Using technology, you can help raise "high-needs" 3rd to 5th grade students' standardized test scores, helping them become better readers, writers, and thinkers. Through the ePals Foundation program, In2Books, volunteer ePen Pals are matched with students and concurrently read books and exchange on-line letters to extend reading comprehension.

Volunteers first view a 10-minute training tutorial and write a letter of introduction to a prospective ePal student, who will be selecting books for them to read concurrently and discuss over e-mail. Help and examples are available online and the students' teachers are involved in the conversations. For information on registering and the approval process, which includes a background check, contact the University Retirees Volunteer Center by e-mailing [urvc@umn.edu](mailto:urvc@umn.edu).

## Retiree Health Benefits update: Open enrollment runs from Nov. 1 to Nov. 30

Now that the new academic year is well under way and the trees have lost their color and shed their leaves, it is that time once again for our University retirees to begin thinking about reviewing, continuing, or changing their medical and/or dental coverage under the U Plan for 2011.

### The Medical Plan

We are pleased to report that overall, our retiree monthly medical premiums are slated to rise a modest 1.3 percent next year.

More specifically, with the exception of a 6.2 percent or \$20 per month increase in the monthly premium cost (to \$347.75) for Blue Cross/Blue Shield's U of M Retiree Plan, the costs for the other three plan options will remain either the same (\$275 for Medica's Group Prime Solution) or decline—\$251.30 for Health Partners Freedom Plan, down 5 percent, or \$13.20 per month and \$243 for U Care for Seniors, down 8.6 percent or \$23 per month.

On an annualized basis, Blue Cross/Blue Shield's U of M Retiree Plan, which relies on the use of a deductible rather than co-pays as a means of cost sharing, remains the most expensive option, offered at \$3,929.52 per enrollee, followed by Medica's Group Prime Solution at \$3,300 per enrollee, Health Partners Freedom Plan at \$3,015 per enrollee, and U Care For Seniors at \$2,916 per enrollee.

In addition to the cost of coverage, other changes in the University's retiree medical plan for 2011 include:

- The deductible for outpatient services under the Blue Cross/Blue shield option will increase from \$155 to the anticipated increase in the Medicare Part B annual deductible for 2011.
- Enrollees in both Blue Cross/Blue Shield's U of M Retiree Plan and Medica's Group Prime Solution will receive a 50 percent discount on \$25 brand drug co-pays from most drug manufactures once the total brand drug costs for the plan and the enrollee reaches \$2,840. This is a component of the new health care reform law that is mandated to be implemented in 2012 but that drug manufactures are encouraged to implement next year.
- In contrast to the above, rather than offering a brand drug co-pay discount at the time of purchase, both Health Partners and U Care for Seniors have opted to lower their 2011 premium rates from 2010.
- Because of funding cuts by the Federal government for private fee-for-service plans like Medica's Group Advantage Solution under health care reform, that plan option will no longer be offered through the U Plan in 2011. In its place, however, University retirees residing full time outside the state will still be able to receive medi-

cal care coverage under the U Plan through either the Blue's U of M Retiree Plan or Health Partners National, a new offering by Health Partners at the same rates and benefits as its Freedom Plan.

### The Dental Plan

As for dental coverage, our members will be pleased to find that the annual premium rates for retiree only and retiree plus spouse and/or same sex domestic partner coverage for next year have risen a modest 3.4 percent. Delta Dental PPO is the least expensive option at \$409.80/\$870 followed by Health Partners Dental at \$447/\$957.00, Health Partners Dental Choice at \$486 /\$1,026, Delta Dental Premier at \$487.80/\$1,028.40, and University Choice at \$551.40/\$1,166.90. A significant addition—the annual maximum for dental benefits per person per contract year has been increased from \$1,500 to \$1,800 under both the Delta Dental and Health Partners options.

**Not changing anything?** For those of you who are not planning to make any changes in either your medical or dental coverage plans next year, there is nothing you need to do during open enrollment, and your current medical and dental plan coverage will continue for 2011.

— Ted Litman, UMRA Representative to the University Benefits Advisory Committee

## Welcome new members

Please give a hearty welcome to a members who have recently joined UMRA. Greet them at the next lunch program and add this information to your 2009–2010 directories.

Andrea S. Gilats, College of Continuing Education  
240 Spring Street, #501, St. Paul, MN 55102-4477  
651-224-3327; 612-624-5314 agilats@umn.edu

Jean Herron, Pediatrics  
1106 Ryan Ave. E., Maplewood, MN 55109  
651-765-2896; 612-624-0438 herro002@umn.edu

Mary M. Wrobel, Writing Studies  
966 Como Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55103  
651-488-6961 wrobe005@umn.edu

## In Memoriam

We report the passing of UMRA members as we learn of losses to our UMRA community. Our condolences to the family and friends of:

George K. Olson, Curriculum and Instruction faculty,  
d. September 24, 2010, at age 90.

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3. Mail both to the address above.

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Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Other Info \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## News from UMRA's discount partners

**University of Minnesota Bookstores:** When you come to the UMRA meeting on November 23, you might want to drop into the U of M Bookstore, on the union's ground floor for a bit of holiday shopping. The bookstores are hosting their annual holiday sale November 22-24 and the 26. Although UMRA's 10 percent discount does not apply to sale merchandise, you may save from 20 to 80 percent off almost everything that day, with free gift wrapping too! For a preview and more information, go to [www.bookstore.umn.edu/holidaysale.html](http://www.bookstore.umn.edu/holidaysale.html).

The U of M Bookstores are also starting a Reader Rewards program. With the annual purchase of a Reader Rewards card (\$20), you save 15 percent on general books, online or in the stores, on already discounted New York Times best-sellers, and featured book sales. The Rewards program offers free shipping on online orders and the ability to apply the 15 percent discount to already discounted books, which can amount to a savings of 36 to 38 percent.

**Osher Lifelong Learning Institute:** OLLI reminds you that UMRA members are entitled to a one-time year's membership at a discount (\$175 rather than the usual \$195). The membership is good for one calendar year from when you join. Among the upcoming courses OLLI is of-

fering: Roger Jones, professor emeritus of physics, will be doing a short course this winter on a new book by Stephen Hawking. See this and more than 250 courses, trips, and activities on the OLLI web site: [cce.umn.edu/olli](http://cce.umn.edu/olli). Or call 612-624-7847 for further information.

## Kudos to UMRA volunteers

UMRA could not operate without those members who have stepped forward to take on the work of the organization and its committees. The *more* is not only the merrier, but the *more* gets so much more done, which benefits us all.

This month, please thank Betty Radcliffe, who will be taking your lunch reservations. Make it easy for her by contacting her early (see page 1). Thanks to Judy Leahy Grimes who took luncheon reservations in September and October.

Special thanks are due to Earl Nolting, treasurer for two years, who does yeoman work in negotiating the discounts now available to UMRA members. And thanks to Harlan Hansen for chairing the Membership Committee for two years, enriching it with a wealth of ideas and enthusiasm!

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Keep current on UMRA news, programs, and discounts  
with a visit to the association's new and ever-improving  
web site: [www.umn.edu/umra](http://www.umn.edu/umra)

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