

UMRA UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

JANUARY 2011

Anatoly Liberman will entertain “Where is the English language going?” January 25

Language is the heavenly glory and infernal bugaboo of the human race. We are, individually and collectively, the bearers and witnesses of our native tongues, the final arbiters of who belongs or doesn't belong to our language community. Slovenly diction and appalling grammatical blunders of the younger generation fill us older folks with a kind of smug despair. The decline and fall of English is the object of our righteous indignation; after us, the deluge.

Still, even among well-educated speakers there is widespread insecurity. Years ago, I learned to dread the inevitable response from anyone discovering that I was a professor of English: “Oh, I'll have to watch my language!” Do you dare to split an infinitive? Would you know it if you did?



Does it matter?

Professor Anatoly Liberman of the Department of German, Scandinavian, and Dutch, will remind us that manners and usage have been deteriorating since the dawn of history. English is no exception to this trend, so the miracle is that we can still understand one another. His talk will explore the development of modern American English in the course of one generation. He will comment on the courage of editors and teachers—and on the futility of their efforts. It will also, as he slyly informs us, contain some irrelevant remarks on word origins and otiose personal reminiscences.

Professor Liberman received all the existing degrees in the former Soviet Union (now Russia), in the former city of Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) and has been teaching at the University of Minnesota since 1975, with occasional interruptions for Harvard, Germany, and Italy. His main areas of specialization are linguistics, medieval literature, folklore, and poetic translation. Among his nearly 600 published works, 18 are books. The latest among them: *Word Origins... and How We Know Them* (2005), *An Analytic Dictionary of English Etymology: An Introduction!* (2009), and *A Bibliography of English Etymology* (2010). *Word Origins* was a selection of the Book of the Month Club and the History Book Club.

Professor Liberman can be heard several times a year on MPR in the program “Midmorning” with Kerri Miller, and his blog “The Oxford Etymologist” appears every Wednesday on the website of Oxford University Press. The three questions he says he answers most often (not counting “where are you from?” the moment he opens his mouth) are whether he is retired (no), whether he has had a bypass (no), and what the origin of “uff da” is (nothing to speak of).

After Professor Liberman has enlightened us on the path the English language is taking, there will be ample opportunity for pursuing the issues he raises with the kind of well-phrased, precisely modulated, grammatically impeccable questions that UMRA members are famous for.

— Cal Kendall, UMRA President-elect

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

JANUARY
LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday
January 25, 2011
11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Featured Speaker
Anatoly Liberman, U professor
“Where is the English
Language Going?”

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, January 20
To reserve your place(s) send a
check, payable to UMRA, to
January UMRA Reservations, Ben
Zimmerman, 2225 Folwell Ave.,
St. Paul, 55108. Contact him at
651-645-1662 or zimme003@
umn.edu

Please honor the January 20 res-
ervation date; if cancellations are
necessary, please let us know
by noon January 20.

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 University's nooks and crannies

Our University is so comprehensive that it encompasses many venues unfamiliar to many of us. Continuing my exploration of places I never visited during four decades on campus, I recently stopped by the St. Anthony Falls Laboratory (SAFL).

Located on the north side of Mississippi River just below the St. Anthony Falls and nearby the Stone Arch Bridge, SAFL has been part of the U since the mid-thirties. One could almost say the laboratory is located “in” the Mississippi because some of the river flows through the site and high-water marks remind occupants of floods that have twice invaded the laboratory.

The original laboratory was constructed through a federal cost sharing process, the Emergency Relief Appropriation Act of 1935, one of the “stimulus” programs of the Great Depression. Cash-strapped, the University contributed local limestone blocks for the building. Now SAFL is about to come full circle with a 2012-13 renovation funded by the current recession’s stimulus program, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

A research unit of the Department of Civil Engineering, SAFL is also affiliated with the Department of Geology and Geophysics, as well as the Department of Ecology, Evolution & Behavior. Faculty, staff, and students apply the science of fluid dynamics to the control and restoration of streams; they track the movement of sediment on the Earth, harness untapped sources of renewable energy, and even help design life-saving biomedical devices. Hydrology is also relevant to biomedical applications ranging from drug delivery to removal of kidney stones.

SAFL makes use of the constant water source and the power associated with the drop in elevation at the falls. A diversion canal begins above the falls and brings a steady supply of water to the laboratory’s many specially constructed waterways and flumes that simulate situations occurring in the natural world. These allow modeling of changing parameters on the impact of flowing water on the scouring of stream banks and sediment deposition.

This place is not stylish, but it is impressive—full of pipes and valves, barriers of metal and concrete, gravel, silt, electronic sensors, computers, and above all, water. The power of moving water is evident and studied in detail. Staff and students measure aspects of water in motion learning how to limit and control its impact. They monitor water quality in streams and lakes, work on restoration projects, and study the interaction of freshwater aquatic life with the motion of the water that surrounds it. They examine how forces as disparate as floods, coastal storms, earthquakes, and landslides impact sedimentary layers, revealing much about the past as well as how current practices will affect the future.

I visited SAFL shortly after the big December snow storm, so I did not get to see much of the outdoor aspects of the site that would be especially interesting to observe in a warmer season. So if this venue interests you, visit after the spring thaw! In the meantime, you can visit in comfort online at www.safl.umn.edu. See photos and learn how SAFL is making a difference for water quality and energy both here and throughout the world.

— John Anderson, UMRA President
ander049@umn.edu or 651-489-4330

UMRA members surveyed

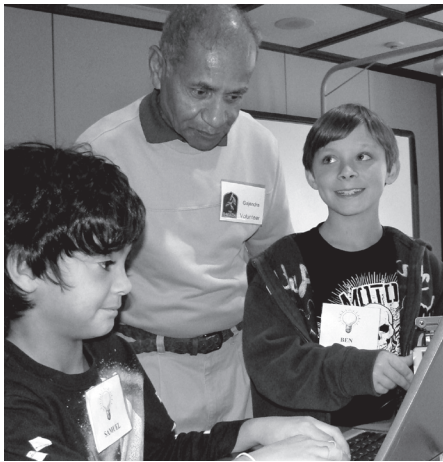
The results are in! Thanks to the nearly 60 members who responded to the recent UMRA survey. On average, responders attended four luncheon meetings in the past year. Two thirds liked the Campus Club location and one third asked that other options be explored (half on-campus and half off-campus). Two thirds indicated that luncheons are a good value, although several members expressed interest in different menu selections and/or restoring the dessert course. In the ranking of reasons for attending UMRA luncheons, interesting speakers was clearly first choice; second choice was seeing University friends and colleagues.

Memorable speakers included a broad array, but most mentioned were Larry Jacobs and Brian Atwood. Several excellent suggestions were offered for future speakers. For the question regarding developing new activities, approximately equal interest was indicated in the four categories listed: workshops to develop skills (computers, internet), seminars on matters of personal planning (investing, elder law, health benefits), tours and attending events (music, theater, art), and special interest groups (writing, books, games). Several respondents supplied special comments that have been referred to the UMRA board and/or pertinent committees.

Thanks to all who responded; you will help guide choices for our organization as we plan for the future.

Creativity takes on new flavors after retirement

Creativity does not end when retirement begins. Whether we continue our career activities, shift to avocations we have previously enjoyed, or develop new interests, this can be a satisfying period of life. For me, it was initially to put aside teaching and research for a return to musical performance and a new commitment to volunteering, the management of the University Retirees Volunteer Center. But “volunteering” is a structure and not the content, which can lead to an infinite variety of activities. Through URVC each of us can serve the University and community in many ways and, in so doing, provide for self-expression and personal enhancement mentally, socially, psychologically, and physically.



For example, Gajendra Kumar Patel, retired mechanical engineer, is a URVC volunteer who assists the Bakken Museum’s weekly Inventors’ Club. He also volunteers in St. Louis Park schools as a “Journey to India” storyteller

for first graders and an Intergenerational Art assistant for third graders. Recently he developed a new creative skill: poetry. In October he gave his first public poetry reading. Here are a few of his “Six-Word Twitter Story Poems”:

- Christmas: Happy! Family gathering, gift exchange.
- Resolution: Commitment! New success to beware.
- Scientist: Creative process thought changes thing.
- Wisdom: Adopted idea adored by others.

Sample his longer poems at umn.edu/umra/volunteer.php

To pursue your own volunteer adventures, you are invited to call the center at 612-625-8016 or e-mail urvc@umn.edu

With our good wishes for a year of rewarding activities,
Alan L. Kagan, Project Director,
University Retirees Volunteer Center

Start the New Year right — invite friends to lunch

Add to the fun by encouraging a fellow retiree or an about-to-retire colleague to join you for the January program and let them sample UMRA’s collegial luncheons as a prospective member. It’s UMRA’s treat! Just call in to alert us when you make your reservation; give us their names for the name tags, and help us welcome them that day.

Wanted: webmaster for UMRA pages

Ron Anderson, who has served admirably for several years as UMRA webmaster, has indicated that he would like to step down from this role by the end of this year. Our sincere thanks to Ron for his excellent service!

UMRA leadership will be looking for someone to fill this important position. Changes to the UMRA website need to be made on a monthly basis so that information about forthcoming luncheons and other events is always current. Obviously, some technical experience is an important qualification. If this is something that you can and would like to do for UMRA, please contact John S. Anderson at ander049@umn.edu or 651-489-4330.

Forthcoming: On-campus events to note

Fest of Words, January 27, 5 p.m. Campus Club
“The Encyclopedia Americana: Made in Germany?”
Prof. Emeritus Gerhard Weiss, German, Scandinavian, and Dutch; dinner, reservations required: 612-626-7788

School of Music, music.umn.edu/events/index.php
Symphonic and University Bands, Wednesday, February 16,
7:30 p.m. Ted Mann Concert Hall

Symphony Orchestra, Monday, March 7
7:30 p.m. Ted Mann Concert Hall—Stravinsky,
Petrouchka; Sibelius, Seventh Symphony

University Libraries

First Fridays—Presentations based on materials from the University Libraries special collections and archives.
February 4, noon—Black History Month, Archie Givens, Sr., Collection of African American Literature, Rm 120, Andersen Library, West Bank

University Theater

February 11-19—William Shakespeare, *The Winter’s Tale*
8 pm, Stoll Thrust Theater, Rarig Center, West Bank

News from UMRA’s discount partners

The University of Minnesota’s Center for Spirituality & Healing January offerings will help start the New Year off right with programs designed to put you in control of your health, your work, and your life. For more information, please visit www.csh.umn.edu. (When registering, choose UMAA/UMRA seating at checkout for 10% discount.)

Taking Charge of Your Health: Making Lasting Lifestyle Changes, Friday, January 21 (8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.) at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Living on Purpose Workshop on January 26 (9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.) at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. Uncover your deferred dreams and the purpose that still defines your life.

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

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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 _____

Welcome new members

Please give a hearty welcome to new members who have recently joined our merry band of retirees. Greet them at the next luncheon program and add this information to your 2009–2010 directories.

Elizabeth S. Belfiore, Classical/Near Eastern Studies, faculty
9 North 4th Ave. #102, Minneapolis, MN 55401
612-359-6934 esb@umn.edu

Michael Dennis Browne, English, faculty
2111 East 22nd Street, Minneapolis, MN 55404
612-214-0080 mdb@umn.edu

Debra S. Caldwell, HPM ResDAC, P&A
9433 Dartford Rd., Woodbury, MN 55125-3586
651-739-2482 dsc0124@comcast.net

Willard and Jane Miller, School of Mathematics, faculty
4508 Edmund Blvd., Minneapolis, MN 55406
612-724-1397, 612-624-7379 miller@ima.umn.edu

Ronald and Judy Phillips, Agron. & Plant Genetics, faculty
797 Country Lakes Dr., Lino Lakes, MN 55014
651-484-9522 phill005@umn.edu

Judson Sheridan, Genetics, Cell Biol Development, faculty
430 Vadnais Lake Dr., Vadnais Heights, MN 55127
651-787-0424, 651-208-4280 sheri012@umn.edu

Diane Fay Skomars, UM Development Dir., P&A
463 Hartley Place, Duluth, MN 55803
218-260-7309 dskomars@d.umn.edu

Richard and Gail Weinberg, Inst. of Child Development
Richard, faculty / Gail, P&A
3638 Oakton Ridge, Minnetonka, MN 55305-4439
952-933-7625, weinb002@umn.edu

In Remembrance

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

Ivan Fletcher, Boynton; d. October 11, 2010 ; his wife,
Teena, continues her UMRA membership

See the latest photos in UMRA's web album;
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
