

UMRA UNIVERSITY NEWSLETTER

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

NOVEMBER 2011

November luncheon features three UMRA grant recipients and results of their work

Following on the heels of our successful luncheon last year and back by popular demand, we present three representatives from the grantees who have received UMRA Research Grants. Three grantees from the second cycle of grants (2009-2010) will report on the results of their work.

On November 22 we will hear from Alan Lathrop, retired manuscript curator of the University Libraries; William Zimmerman, professor emeritus of physics; and James Tracy, professor emeritus of history.

Professor Lathrop used his grant to complete a monograph on the practice of medicine and surgery in the China-Burma theater of war during World War II. The work is based largely on an unpublished diary of Captain John Grindley of the Army Medical Corps, who described his experiences in China, Burma, and India in fascinating detail under some of the worst climate, terrain, and savage combat conditions on the planet.

Professor Zimmerman studies super fluid helium. When the temperature of gaseous helium is lowered substantially, the gas liquefies. When it is brought to a few degrees above absolute zero, the liquid helium undergoes a remarkable transition in its physical properties. If an electrical current is passed through the liquid helium at a temperature close to the transition point, the transition is altered in a way that allows it to be studied in a more experimentally convenient fashion. Professor Zimmer-

man was assisted in this work by two REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) physics students who will use the research for their senior projects.

Professor Tracy is a scholar of medieval European history and is especially interested in the 16th century conflicts between the Christian states of the Hapsburg Empire, the Venetian Republic, and the Republic of Dubrovnik and the Ottoman Empire. The Christian states did not get along well with one another, and each had a different strategy in its conflict with the Ottomans. Professor Tracy's research focused on documents in the Venetian archives, examining the strategy by which Venice sought to defend its increasingly narrow strip of Dalmatian coastline against the Ottomans.

There will be ample time at the meeting on November 22 to ask questions of the presenters about their projects.

The Call for Proposals for the 2011-2012 cycle of awards went out last month. The deadline for submissions this year is December 9. A copy of the Call for Proposals with instructions on how to submit it, as well as full information on all the PDGR grantees' projects from cycles one, two, and three can be found on the UMRA website at: www.umn.edu/umra. Just click on "Grants for Retirees."

— Martin Dworkin, member, Professional Development Grants Committee

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

NOVEMBER
LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday

November 22, 2011

11:30 a.m. – 2 p.m.

Featured Speakers

Representative recipients
of the Retiree Professional
Development Grants, round 2

Location

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

Cost

Prepayment: \$14 per person;
\$16 at door for reservations that
are not prepaid.

Reservation Deadline

Thursday, November 17

To reserve your place(s) and
prepay, send a check, payable to
UMRA, to UMRA Reservations,
c/o Judy Leahy Grimes, 1937
Palace Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105.
Contact her at 651-698-4387 or
jleahy4654@aol.com

Please honor the November 17
reservation date; if cancellations
are necessary, please let us know
by noon November 17.

Parking

Parking is available in the East
River Road Garage, with UMRA's
membership discount coupons,
\$6.00 for the entire day. (Coupons
will be available at the meeting.)

Board Meeting at 10 a.m.

UMRA NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT

By the time this column reaches you, the goblins of Halloween will have slunk back to their dark abodes, pumpkins will be viewed as ingredients for pies, and you should have received in the mail a letter of solicitation from John Howe and myself.

Four years ago this month, the University Senate adopted a Resolution on Retiree Benefits, which was subsequently endorsed by then President Bruininks with his statement: “The University values the extraordinary contributions and experience of its retired faculty and staff. The president wholeheartedly supports additional improvements to the coordination and facilitation of retiree service in campus activities.” Among other things, the Senate Resolution recommended that the University develop a process “to invite all retiring employees to contribute their skills to the University.”

In the four years since this resolution was adopted, progress on its implementation has been uneven. There is as yet no systemwide process to invite retirees to contribute their skills, but UMRA has taken the initiative of instituting, with University support, the Professional Development Grants for Retirees (PDGR) program. This program is specifically designed to enable retirees—whether faculty, P&A, or civil service—to pursue projects that contribute to the educational, scholarly, and academic reputation of the University.

In the first three years of its existence, the program has awarded grants of as much as \$4,000 to a total of 36

retirees from 10 different colleges on the Twin Cities campus as well as Duluth and Morris. Cycle four of the program is now under way. The deadline for proposals is December 9. (See www.umn.edu/umra/grants.php).

Although cycle four is fully funded for 2011-12, the program’s future funding is less assured. As John Howe explained in last month’s Newsletter, in view of the uncertainties of continued University funding, the UMRA Board is undertaking an ambitious campaign to raise an endowment for the PDGR program.

In advance of the campaign, the PDGR Committee and the UMRA Board together have, as of this writing, pledged \$17,350. Before approaching the larger community of retirees and outside donors, we are asking individual members of UMRA to demonstrate their interest and commitment by making a pledge to this endowment fund. To be able to say that a high percentage of the UMRA membership has contributed will be the most compelling case we can make for outside support. Any amount, however small, will make a difference. If you have put aside our letter in the press of holiday preparations, let me urge you to take it up again and give as generously as you can.

This being our last newsletter of 2011, I want to wish you all a happy holiday season!

— Calvin Kendall, UMRA President
kenda001@umn.edu

Museums make for exciting volunteer action

Museums are fascinating places to enervate our intellects and senses. Volunteering in such a stimulating atmosphere can keep us physically and mentally fit as well as contributing to the museum visitors we serve. The University Retirees Volunteer Center can offer you projects at several museums that might spur your interests.

Minnesota Children’s Museum, St. Paul

“Night at the Museum” – prepare project supplies on the 3rd Tuesday of each month from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m.

“Day at the Museum” – greet guests and participate in activities with children on the 3rd Sunday monthly, either 9:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. or 12:30 to 4 p.m.

Weisman Museum – with the new expansion of the U’s art museum, there will be a variety of volunteer opportunities. URVC will provide free parking.

The Bakken Museum of Electricity – Assist “young scientists” in learning at Saturday special activities: the Inventors’ Club, LEGO Robotics, and Super Science Saturdays. Bakken also offers the public an opportunity to stage special events and birthday parties. Science background is not required. Gallery training is provided.

American Swedish Institute – Greeters or docent training

Eastcliff (the University president’s home) docent training

If you are interested in applying your talents and interests to the exciting world of education that museums provide, e-mail your inquiry (urvc@umn.edu) or call the URVC office at 612-625-8016.

U Plan Health Benefits Update: Medical premiums to cost retirees less, dental more

If you are insured under the U Plan for retirees, you should already have received information from the University about open enrollment scheduled to run from November 1–30 this year. It is time again for those of us 65 years of age and older to begin thinking about reviewing, continuing, or changing our medical and/or dental coverage for 2012. With that in mind, here is a summary of what is new for retirees who are insured under the U Plan for retirees.

The Medical Plans

We are pleased to report that the monthly premium cost per enrollee for retiree coverage is slated to decline an average of 2 percent next year, led by Medica's Group Prime Solution at \$261, down \$14 or 5.1 percent; followed by Health Partners Freedom and National Choice offerings at \$242.80, down \$8.50 or 3.4 percent; Blue Cross Blue Shield's U of M Retiree Plan at \$337.75, down \$10 or 2.9 percent; and U Care for Seniors at \$244, up \$1 or .4 percent per month.

On an annual basis, Blue Cross Blue Shield's U of M Retiree Plan, which relies on the use of a deductible rather than copays as a means of cost sharing, remains the most expensive plan offering at \$4,053 per enrollee, followed by Medica's Group Prime Solution at \$3,122 per enrollee, U Care For Seniors at \$2,928 per enrollee and Health Partners Freedom and National Choice plans at \$2,913.60 per enrollee.

In addition to the premium costs, other changes in the medical plan offerings next year include:

For Health Partners' Freedom and National Choice, Medica's Group Prime Solution and U Care for Seniors plans, office visit copays will increase from \$10 to \$15. Also, once the enrollees' out-of-pocket prescription drug expenses exceed \$4,700, the Catastrophic Pharmacy benefit level applied will be the lesser of the drug cost or \$10 copay for generic and \$30 for brand drugs, which means that they will likely continue to pay regular prescription copays through the entire year.

For Blue Cross Blue Shield's U of M Retiree Plan, the outpatient services deductible may increase from \$162 if the anticipated increase in the Medicare Part B annual deductible for 2012 occurs. Moreover, once the member's and the Plan's total drug costs reach \$2,930, they will receive a 50 percent discount from the drug manufacturers on \$30 brand drug copays.

The Dental Plans

If our retirees can take some comfort in that their medical coverage premiums will cost them slightly less next year, that will not be the case for those of us with U Plan dental coverage. We will see premium costs increase anywhere from

\$2.88 to \$30 for Retiree Only and \$6 to \$50.49 for Retiree and Spouse/Same sex Domestic Partner coverage next year, depending on the plan option selected.

Overall, on an annualized basis, Delta Dental PPO remains the least costly option for Retiree only and Retiree and Spouse/Same sex Domestic Partner coverage at \$412.68 and \$864.00, followed by Health Partners Dental at \$457.56 (+\$10.56) / \$967.44 (+10.44); Health Partners Dental Choice at \$497.88 (+\$16.68) / \$1,049.64 (+\$23.61); Delta Dental Premier at \$505.44 (+ \$17.64) / \$1,052.76 (+\$24.36); and University Choice at \$581.40 (+\$30) / \$1,216.89 (+\$50.49).

On a final note, if you are not planning to make any changes in either your medical or dental coverage next year, there is nothing you need to do during open enrollment, and your current coverage will continue for 2012.

Also, if you haven't already done so, remember to get your flu shot for a healthy 2012.

—Ted Litman, UMRA Representative to the Benefits Advisory Committee

Visit Health Benefits Fairs on U Campus

November 8 – St. Paul, Student Center North Star Ballroom, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

November 9 – Minneapolis, Coffman Memorial Union Great Hall, 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Talk with health and pharmacy benefit managers and retirement investment representatives. Participate in wellness activities including flu shots funded by UPlan Wellness.

Upcoming luncheon programs

January 24 — Marla Spivak, distinguished McKnight Professor of Entomology (named the "Bee Queen" by *Wired Magazine*).

February 18 — Joanne B. Eicher, Regents Professor Emerita of the Department of Design, Housing, and Apparel. Joanne is editor-in-chief of the *Encyclopedia of World Dress and Fashion* (10 vols), from Oxford University Press, 2010.

March 27 — Eric Kaler, president of the U of M

Luncheon speakers have not yet been scheduled for April 24 and May 22. If you have ideas or suggestions, please contact a member of the Program Committee: Ron Anderson (chair), Calvin Kendall, Craig Swan, Julie Medbery, and John Anderson.

— Ron Anderson, Program Committee chair

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City, State _____
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E-mail _____
Other Info _____

Welcome new members to UMRA

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

Joan Marie Sigmundik, Extension, Civil Service
1697 Cty Road C East, Maplewood, MN 55109
651-770-2666, sigmu001@umn.edu

Miriam Butwin, University Press, Civil Service
520 5th Street S.E. Minneapolis, MN 55414
612-379-0145

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:

Frederick Cooper, Art History faculty, died September 25, 2011. His wife, Helen B. Foster, continues as member of UMRA.

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



Following on the heels of an extraordinary summer evening photographing the Mississippi River, members of the UMRA Photo Club enjoyed an outing together again at the U's Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in September. Pictured are John Anderson, Ellie Kendall, and Jean Kinsey. The winter months ahead will offer indoor opportunities for sharing and learning before the group ventures out again. If you are interested in joining the club and practicing your digital photography, contact leader Vic Bloomfield, victor@umn.edu.