

UMRA UNewsletter

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

FEBRUARY 2015

February's program features discussion with Michael Osterholm on the Ebola epidemic

Internationally recognized expert in infectious disease epidemiology Michael T. Osterholm, Ph.D., M.P.H., will speak at UMRA's February meeting on the topic "The Ebola Epidemic: Where we've been, where we're at, and where we are going."

Professor of Public Health, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy, and a 15-year veteran as state epidemiologist in the Minnesota Department of Health, Dr. Osterholm is largely responsible for making Minnesota one of the premier states in proactive public health protection.



His gift for informing and educating the media and his fellow citizens about the important dimensions of public health science, preparedness, prevention,

and health promotion has earned him frequent interviews on local as well as national public radio stations.

His straight talk on subjects such as influenza, bioterrorism, and pandemic preparedness has thrust him into a global role as advisor and consultant to the highest levels of the World Health Organization and U.S. gov-

ernment agencies: NIH, FDA, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), and the Department of Defense.

In 2008, Professor Osterholm was named to the University of Minnesota Academic Health Center's Academy of Excellence in Health Research, and the same year he was appointed to the World Economic Forum Working Group on Pandemics.

He is a member of the National Academy of Science, Institute of Medicine (IOM), and the Council of Foreign Relations. Impressively, he is a recent recipient of the McKnight Presidential Chair in Public Health, one of the University's highest faculty honors.

Dr. Osterholm was a special advisor to Health Secretary Tommy Thompson after 9/11 on issues related to bioterrorism and public health preparedness. He has served on the CDC's National Center for Infectious Diseases Board of Scientific Counselors and is former president of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists. He was a reviewer on an IOM report on chemical and biological terrorism.

Michael Osterholm's passion for and dedication to research and education about the public health implications of infectious diseases have won him many honors.

Always on the cutting edge, always informed, always entertaining...and sometimes scary, Dr. Osterholm promises to be a great speaker for our February luncheon.

— Jean Kinsey, UMRA President-elect and Program Committee chair

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

FEBRUARY LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday, February 24, 2015
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Featured Speaker

Michael Osterholm, director,
U of M Center for Infectious
Disease Research,
"The Ebola Epidemic"

Location

Conference Room ABC,
Campus Club, Fourth Floor,
Coffman Memorial Union

Menu

Persian-spiced Roast Chicken with
Cardamom Rice and Squash
For vegetarian or gluten-free
options, please request when
making your reservations.

Reservations ARE Required Deadline: Thursday, February 19.

Prepayment of \$16 per person;
Annual prepayers **must** also make
reservations.

To reserve your place(s), send
your check payable to UMRA to
UMRA Reservations,
c/o Judy Leahy Grimes,
1937 Palace Ave., St. Paul, MN
55105-1728

Or, contact her before the dead-
line at 651-698-4387; e-mail:
Jleahy4654@aol.com.

Please honor the reservation
deadline date; if cancellations are
necessary, please call by Feb. 19.

Parking

Parking is available in the East
River Road Garage; with UMRA's
discount coupon — \$6 for the day.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

In the Bleak Mid-winter

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) puts some arresting public service ads on television. They are long and show suffering dogs and cats and are hard to watch without being drawn into the dire situations of these animals. I confess that I can hardly watch them.

Currently the SPCA sponsors one titled, “In the Bleak Mid-winter,” with neglected animals suffering in the cold. The title and first stanza are taken from the poem by the Victorian poet, Christina Rosetti:

In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan,
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone;
Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter
Long ago.

The poem was written in the early 1870s and is about Mary and Joseph looking for shelter in Bethlehem before Jesus was born. It dwells on the simple surroundings of Christ’s birth, in a stable amidst animals. It was made into a Christmas carol in 1906 set by Gustav Holtz.

For many Minnesotans who stay here through our own bleak mid-winter months, the first stanza has a familiar ring. As I write this, shortly after the beginning of the New Year, and with several days of below zero wind-chill, I wonder why I choose to spend another January and February here.

Rosetti’s poem, though it starts off with winter scenes familiar to Minnesotans, isn’t really a weather poem. It has more to do with attitude and point of view: how does one function in dark times when nature and life situations seem unyielding?

As a Christian, Rosetti wrote of how the coming of Christ would bring relief from the bleakness of the mid-winter of life. She began a later stanza with the words: “When He comes to reign....” and promised blessings and hope as a result of that reign.

But, by this time in our lives we have had to cope with discouragement and to understand that there are seasons and places where our times stand “hard as iron,” and a

reign of peace and prosperity is hard to see. Loss of loved ones, turn of fortunes, pain and discomfort of aging—all of these are challenges to our ability to respond positively.

With world events—the recent rise of ISIS, Boko Haram, and wholesale slaughter of innocent people including school children—we fear for the millions who are facing threats every day. As extremist cells in Paris and other European cities emerge—can we be far behind? “When He comes to reign” seems far off when, among others, the followers of the Prince of Peace are targets of militant extremists all over the world. In the face of 21st century dangers, how can we find Rosetti’s assurance of a rescuer sent by a loving God to thaw out the bleakness of the mid-winter life?

As we look out our windows into the bleak physical and philosophical mid-winter, we look for attitudes we can bring to bear on such bleakness.

A mid-January celebration comes to encourage us—the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Faced with paralyzing racial prejudice, Dr. King endorsed a view that civil rights are essential to democracy, that segregation must end, and that all people should reject segregation absolutely and nonviolently. We celebrate the life and ideas of a man who inspired a nonviolent confrontation with wrong and led us toward a more civil society saying, “Every step toward the goal of justice requires sacrifice, suffering, and struggle; the tireless exertions and passionate concern of dedicated individuals.”

As we seek to live well in our retirement years, it’s tempting to withdraw into our private worlds seeking comfort and convenience. Quoting Dr. King again: “the ultimate measure of a man [or woman] is not where they stand in moments of comfort and convenience, but where they stand at times of challenge and controversy.”



To help dispel the bleakness of the mid-winter around us, retired or not, we may, at times, need to enter the fray and stand up to the challenges of injustice and immorality.

— Hal Miller, UMR President
miller@umn.edu

February 24 workshop: Stepping toward more agile and creative minds

Following the UMRA luncheon program in February, the UMRA Program and Cares committees are pleased to present a workshop to challenge our minds and examine new paths to creatively and adaptively meet new opportunities.

Associate Professor Wilma Koutstaal, U of M Department of Psychology, will be our guide.



No matter what our age, our brains are constantly and dynamically adapting to our environments. Latest findings in a number of scientific disciplines underscore the fact that we can all be more creative, and we can all be more mentally agile throughout our lives. But sustaining mental agility requires us to challenge ourselves in new ways, integrating our minds, bodies, and emotions.

In this workshop with Professor Koutstaal, we will look at recent research that points to practical ways we can all work toward more agile and adaptively flexible minds. Drawing on cognitive and brain sciences research from her lab and from her two recent books, *The Agile Mind* and *Innovating Minds*, she will help us understand how a new framework can make us all more creative and agile thinkers and doers.

We will explore, for example, such questions as:

- How can we shape our environments and guide our activities to keep our brains adaptively flexible and alert?
- Do we allow ample opportunities for making deliberate efforts at creativity as well as being receptive to what our efforts at change reveal?
- How can we use “detail-stepping” effectively, relying not only on more familiar ways of thinking but also paying close attention to details and unique instances?
- Are we setting specific creativity goals, and are we rewarding ourselves and others for “learning to vary?”

The workshop aims to provide each of us with short-term and long-term routes to agile and change-receptive minds.

Plan to attend this workshop from 1:30 to 2:30 p.m. on February 24 in the Campus Club ABC Room. All members, guests, and visitors are welcome.

Sharing our ideas and resources—

From the Cares Committee desk

In this issue of the Newsletter, the Cares Committee offers a look at Aging in Europe from an interesting article to be found in the *National Council on Family Relations Report Magazine*, winter 2013, by social psychologist Giovanna Giancesini, Alma Mater Studiorum University, Bologna, Italy.

Giancesini observes that a unique historical combination of declining fertility and declining death rates seems to be responsible for the prediction that the proportion of persons over age 65 in Western Europe will grow faster than any other age group.

Increasingly, seniors and families in Europe are choosing multigenerational households or part-time help for seniors remaining in their own homes. Households of grandparents, parents, and younger children provide for the shared experience of raising children, and children gain sensitivity and awareness about grandparents’ needs as they age.

Expectations must change, Giancesini cautions, because the later years of life are a different stage. “As individuals become older they gradually feel a desire to spend less time doing and more time being; action moves inward, life becomes more meditative, and the world becomes a quieter, less hurried place. Thus, active, engaged, and vital aging does not mean productive aging. Celebrating efficiency and insisting on the productivity of the elderly will put the last stage of life on the same level as other stages, setting up a power struggle and abandoning the moral and spiritual value of aging and stripping old age of its meaning.”

Discussing the concept of resiliency, Giancesini says, to the degree that elders have the ability to be resilient, to adapt to the challenges and adverse effects facing them, they can survive the physical limitations and emotional pain that may arise. Developing this resiliency is possible for seniors of all cultural and social backgrounds, she says, despite physical and cognitive impairment. Genetic factors play a role and people differ, but the ability to recover from illness or injury can mean those individuals will do better in future stresses.

Take-away: If one can sustain a resilient orientation and continue to improvise and remain positive despite physical changes and declines, the aging process will be more enjoyable.

— Harriet Reiss, UMRA Cares Committee

NOTE: If you have a book, resource, or idea to share, please contact a member of the UMRA Cares Committee, email umracares@umn.edu, or call 612-626-4403.

Survey shows strong interest in workshops about managing our retirement funds

Last month the UMRA Board asked you to complete a survey online to determine member interests in workshops on financial planning and funds management during retirement. Thank you to all the respondents for helping with this effort.

The strong response we received will be very helpful to the task force that will be guiding the development of these educational sessions.

— Vernon Eidman, UMRA Representative,
U Senate Retirement Subcommittee

Survey results

The survey listed 11 topic areas, and respondents were asked to check all topics that interested them enough that they might attend a workshop on that topic. The percentage of respondents who checked each of the statements ranged from 22 to 56 percent, suggesting there is considerable interest in each of the areas listed.

- 01 Estimating the probability that your resources and investment strategy will fund your full retirement35%
- 02 Investment strategies to meet economic fluctuations and life style changes.....32%
- 03 Managing the costs of healthcare, health insurance, and long term care56%
- 04 Taking required mandatory distributions (RMDs) from your accounts33%
- 05 Managing the payment of income tax on your retirement income and resources36%
- 06 Options and implications of gifting to charity and relatives and how to time the gifts53%
- 07 Choosing socially responsible, green investing22%
- 08 Implications of owning, managing, and passing on real estate30%
- 09 Managing transfer costs (gift and estate taxes, probate and trusts43%
- 10 Selecting and using a financial planner28%
- 11 Selecting and using an investment manager24%

One unit at 1666 Coffman available, \$184,900

A second floor corner unit in the U retirees' condominium is for sale. It has 1020 sq. ft., 2 Bdrms, 2 Baths, 2 Balconies, Kitchen, Living/Dining Room, and a built-in bookcase/entertainment unit. To see pictures, go online to www.stevetownley.com. For information about the community, see the website: 1666coffman.com or contact Eve Brown, Promotions Chair, 651-451-3197; evebrown@comcast.net.

Be the volunteer you wish to be

Our society is a needy one. We are unfulfilled in our desire to accomplish the good. The University Retirees Volunteer Center (URVC) can bring you into synch with that polarity.

Here is a sampling of current projects URVC is coordinating to serve the University, the community, and you. If these do not satisfy your personal appetite, complete a volunteer profile (see the urvc.umn.edu website) and express your specific interests. We will do our best to find a fit for you.

1. Speech and interview judges for the Academic Decathlon – February 22
National History Day judges – Metro regionals in March and on May 2
2. Ushers for School of Music concerts and Kevin Kling's *Seven Dwarfs* at Rarig Theater
3. English conversation facilitators for the U's international T.A.s; classroom tutors for all age levels and immigrants
4. Food packaging at Second Harvest Heartland warehouse; medical supply packing
5. Textbook recording for blind students
6. Hospital and nursing home assistance
7. Mock trial jurors at University of Minnesota Law School and William Mitchell Law School
8. Scholarship application readers for CLA
9. Museum greeters, docents, and classroom assistants

The needs represent so much variety, there's something for everyone. Contact urvc@umn.edu today!

What the UMRA Book Club is reading; join in the lively discussions this semester

The UMRA Book Club meets on the third Friday of every month at 2 p.m. at the 1666 Coffman Building, off Larpen-teur Avenue near the St. Paul campus.

This special interest group was founded in March of 2011. We read both fiction and nonfiction books as chosen by a member who then acts as discussion leader for that book.

The book we read for January was *The Art Forger* by B.A. Shapiro. The next books we will be reading are as follows: *Diary Of Anne Frank* for February; *The Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd for March; *Destiny Of The Republic* by Candice Millard for April; and *All The Light I Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr for May.

New members are welcome. Contact Pat Tollefson, [p-toll@umn.edu], for more information.

Design for the future and design for all ages: themes for UMRA January program, workshop

A capacity crowd greeted January's speaker Tom Fisher, dean of the College of Design, who predicted a future very different from our present—one more sustainable and connected and environmentally aware. Dr. Fisher elaborated on how "the third industrial revolution" is already under way as evidenced by the shifts in city design and density, social media, and networking among the generations coming up.

He envisions a return to a world where proximity of living, working, and making will enable people to relate to each other, their work, and the environment through network connections that facilitate innovation and problem solving.



Left: Kathleen O'Brien, program committee member, takes the opportunity for some lighthearted conversation as she prepares to introduce Dean Fisher at the January luncheon meeting.



Above: The University's new Benefits director, Kenneth Horstman, attended UMRA's January board meeting to introduce himself and talk about working together for the benefit of U retirees and their concerns.



UMRA programs offer opportunities to engage with inspiring speakers and interesting colleagues. Energized by Dean Fisher's presentation and vision, Rosa Maria Cueva Peterson enjoys a one-on-one conversation with him in an after-program moment.

Workshop shows how effective design can support "aging in place"

More than 50 people attended the third workshop in the series on housing choices led by Marilyn Bruin and Becky Yust, professors in the College of Design. Applying the principles of Universal Design, they showed how one's current home can be modified for comfort, safety, and conveniences, allowing us to remain in our homes and neighborhoods where we are socially connected.

If you missed this workshop, search online for a set of videos about **Smart House: Livable Community**, a 2011 collaboration between the Goldstein Museum for Design and TPT.

Making downsizing matter

With help from member Barb VanDrasek, UMRA will be compiling a list of places that need the things that our downsizing can make available to people in need. Get in touch with Barb [vandr002@umn.edu] to offer information about organizations or professionals you know of or have worked with. See the January Newsletter for her article.

Lunch, learn, and laugh with members of the UMRA Photo Club, February 20

The UMRA Photo Club will next meet on Friday, February 20, at the Hennepin County St. Anthony Public Library (2941 Pentagon Dr., N.E., St. Anthony) from 1 to 3 p.m.

All are welcome for fun, fellowship, and fotos. Come at noon for the buffet lunch (with senior discount—what a deal!) at the Great Dragon Restaurant just across the parking lot from the library.

The agenda for most meetings is sharing photos, photo tips and ideas, and a large dose of good fellowship. From time to time we meet at locations around the Twin Cities for a photo shoot, and there is an active e-mail exchange of ideas, tips, writings, and online galleries about photography.

Please contact Craig Swan [swan@umn.edu] or Jean Kinsey [kinsey@umn.edu] so we will know to expect you and add your name to the contact list for updated information.

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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 _____

UMRA's phone: 612-626-4403

Welcome new members to UMRA

Please give a hearty welcome to new members who have recently joined UMRA. Greet them at luncheon meetings, and add them to your UMRA Directory lists.

Mary Cornils Baich, School of Public Health,
MHA Program, Faculty
52 Groveland Terrace #114, Minneapolis, MN 55403
510-501-1542; maryolson.baich@gmail.com

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1234 W. Minnehaha Pkwy, Minneapolis, MN 55419
cell: 612-986-4950; landline: 612-827-2316
ygarrard@umn.edu; judith8772@gmail.com

David A. Shores, Chemical Engineering and Materials
Science, Faculty
455 Ripley Ave., Maplewood, MN 55117-2481
651-774-7357; dshores@umn.edu

In Remembrance

We report the passing of UMRA members as we learn of losses to our UMRA community. Since the Newsletter was published in January, we thankfully have heard of none. If you become aware of a family in our midst who is in need of assistance or support, please notify the UMRA Cares Committee at umracares@umn.edu or call 612-626-4403, and leave a message for UMRA Cares.

Thank you to the U of M Center for Spirituality and Healing for its sponsorship of UMRA's February 2015 Newsletter. Check their website, csh.umn.edu, for additional upcoming class offerings.

CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY & HEALING 

UPCOMING CENTER PROGRAMMING

Heart Health

Wellbeing Lecture Series

Dr. Stephen Devries

April 14, 2015

<http://z.umn.edu/Devries>

Inspired Cooking for Healthy Lives

Three-night cooking course led by

Spoonriver Chef Brenda Langton

<http://z.umn.edu/InspiredCooking>

DID YOU KNOW? The Center offers a wide variety of mindfulness programs that begin soon. Visit z.umn.edu/MBSR

csh.umn.edu