

UMRA U NEWSLETTER

A Communication of the University of Minnesota Retirees Association

FEBRUARY 2017

February speaker addresses assumptions, urging us to question the questions we ask

Sometimes it seems that our politicians, policy experts, and scholars devote excess energy to seeking answers before reflecting critically on the questions. Our February luncheon speaker urges us to reexamine the often unspoken assumptions that drive our intellectual inquiry and advocacy alike. His title: “On Asking the Right Questions.”

Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer, associate professor of Justice and Peace Studies at the University of St. Thomas, is an activist scholar whose life and work are focused on addressing the political, economic, faith, and foreign policy dimensions of hunger and poverty.

He has worked continuously since 1978 as a writer and public speaker addressing peace and justice issues. A few sample titles



from among his thirteen books illustrate his intellectual range—*Authentic Hope: It's the End of the World as We Know It but Soft Landings Are Possible; Saving*

Christianity from Empire; Harvest of Cain (a mystery novel set in El Salvador); *Water More Precious than Oil*; and *Brave New World Order: Must We Pledge Allegiance?*

Nelson-Pallmeyer has long operated in the boundary zones between academia and the public sphere, and his experiences have been as broad as his interests. Within academia, in addition to more than two decades of offering courses under the Peace and Justice,

Political Science, and Theology rubrics at St. Thomas, he has taught at Metro State University and Augsburg College. He has also led travel seminars to Mexico, Southern Africa, and Central America for Augsburg's Center for Global Education (CGE); co-directed CGE's James Mayer House of Studies in Managua, Nicaragua; and led a St. Thomas January term to Cuba.

Outside the academy he has served as national coordinator of the Politics of Food Program, Clergy and Laity Concerned, New York; program director of the American and Lutheran Church in America's Hunger and Justice Project in Minnesota; member of the board of the Nobel Peace Prize Forum; and consultant to Social Action Ministries and Small Christian Communities, Pax Christi Catholic Church, Eden Prairie. He founded the Minnesota Arms Spending Alternatives Project and made runs for Congress—in 2006 for the Fourth District DFL nomination and in 2007–08 for the U.S. Senate seat.

Nelson-Pallmeyer's priority concerns include: how and why the United States became a permanent warfare state with few seeming to care; alternatives to violence; climate change and ecological challenges; inequality; and pathways to meaningful social change. In his view, all of these areas illustrate failure to ask the right questions. In preparation for his luncheon session with us, he asks UMRA members to think about other examples from their own experience.

— Chip Peterson, UMRA president-elect and Program Committee chair

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

FEBRUARY LUNCHEON MEETING

Tuesday, February 28, 2017
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Featured Speaker

Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer,
associate professor, Justice and
Peace Studies, University of St.
Thomas: “**Questions We Ask**”

Location

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

Menu

Beef Bolognese over Pappardelle
pasta, coffee and tea.

For vegetarian or gluten-free
options, please request when
making your reservations.

Reservations are required

Deadline: Thursday, February 23
Prepayment of \$16 per person

To reserve your place(s), you
may send your check payable to
UMRA to UMRA Reservations,
c/o Judy Leahy Grimes,
1937 Palace Ave., St. Paul, MN
55105-1728 or reserve online at
[https://umra.umn.edu/events/
lunch](https://umra.umn.edu/events/lunch)

Or, contact Judy before
Feb. 23 at 651-698-4387; e-mail:
Jleahy4654@aol.com.

Please honor the reservation
deadline date; if cancellations are
necessary, please call by Feb. 23.

Parking

All University ramps with UMRA's
discount coupon — \$6 for the day.
Other ideas: ride the LRT Green
Line; ride the Campus Connector
bus from St. Paul; come early and
visit in the Campus Club lounge.

UMRA NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT

UMRA offers social time before luncheons

As those who have experienced it know, the UMRA lunches have become so popular, the luncheon room is filled to capacity with tables and people. That makes it difficult to move about the room before the lunch to find and make contact with friends.

In an attempt to find a solution for this, we have arranged for a social time in the spaciousness of the Campus Club Bar and Lounge just down the hall from our ABC luncheon room. Beginning this month, in February, plan to come early before the UMRA luncheon and enjoy coffee together. This social time will give you a place to meet and chat with friends and make some new friends in comfortable surroundings—enjoy a cup of coffee, plenty of room to move about, and, of course, great views from the windows.

We have arranged with the Campus Club to try this for the four remaining lunches this year. There is no need to RSVP for this, nor is there a charge. And for those of you who do come early for coffee and conversation in the bar, please let UMRA Board members know if you think this is something that should become a permanent event before each luncheon.

The board knows that building and maintaining community is very important for us retirees. Our monthly luncheon speaker and workshop programs provide us with new tools for living and intellectual stimulation. But just as important is time to connect with friends.

The Board will continue to seek opportunities for UMRA members to connect with others as a community. And if you have suggestions or wish to assist with this or in planning another event, please communicate with me or one of our board members

— Donna Peterson, President 2016–17
dcp@usfamily.net

Climatologist Mark Seeley reports statistics, indisputable pace of climate change



Seeley noted this January makes 17 consecutive warmer months and record-breaking precipitation in Minnesota. Globally, statistics show that each successive year is warmer. Climatologists interact with many other disciplines that are all seeing changes affecting agriculture, construction, water quality, and more. “We need to get on the same page. It is a gross error in judgment to ignore this.”



Following his January talk, Dr. Seeley signed some of the books he has authored on weather and climate for many interested members. Shown here with fans Jeanne Markell, who introduced him to his UMRA audience, and Mike Markell.

Care Guides can assist families with the difficult decisions of health care

UMRA Care Guides continue to be available for consultation when members are confronted by an unexpected health care situation, especially involving long-term care. To speak to a Care Guide, call the Center on Aging, 612-624-1185.

In a joint project led by the UMRA Cares Committee and the University Center on Aging, Care Guide volunteers are trained and supervised by the Center on Aging. They have available the center’s information resources to assist you with decision making. All discussions are confidential.

February workshop leader will discuss non-drug practices in managing pain

Following the luncheon on February 28, UMRA will present a workshop focused on understanding and discussing the benefits of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) a program in the practice of managing pain without drugs.

This workshop will be led by Sue Flannigan, a nurse practitioner who has worked in a Fairview family practice clinic for 25 years and Hazelden Betty Ford treatment center.

She is board certified in Adult, Gerontology and Women's Health Care. Her interest in health promotion and preventive health was influenced by her background in public health.



Personal meditation and awareness practices led her to become a teacher of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction. She is also working on integrating mindfulness tools in pain management, chronic illness, women's health, and chemical dependency.

Ms. Flannigan says that learning to turn off the stress response through mindfulness practice helps reduce pain. These practices have been brought into mainstream medicine over the last 30 years by Jon Kabat-Zinn, who developed the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program.

Thirty years of research have shown benefits in dealing with anxiety, depression, addictions, the aging brain, pain management, chronic illness, resilience in the workplace, and facilitation of learning in educational settings. The presentation will present short mindfulness practices that can be used in daily life.

The workshop begins at 1:30 p.m. in Campus Club ABC following the UMRA luncheon. You need not to have attended the luncheon to participate in this workshop. Everyone is welcome.

— Earl Nolting, UMRA program committee

Food for Thought from the Cares Committee

The good physician treats the disease;
the great physician treats the patient who has the disease.

— William Osler

Something new!

February 28

Come early to visit with friends over coffee
in the Campus Club Bar & Lounge

See page 2 for details.

OLLI offers teaching opportunities

“A Health Club for the Mind!” That is how members describe the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (or “OLLI”) here at the University of Minnesota. OLLI is a community of lifelong learners who are actively engaged in a volunteer-led, high-quality, educational, cultural, and social organization.

Those who join OLLI may choose from more than 300 non-credit classes throughout the year, as well as participate in a number of social and special interest activities. OLLI is affiliated with the University's College of Continuing Education and the national Osher Lifelong Institute and the Bernard Osher Foundation.

My name is Gary Hanson, interim executive director of OLLI, based at the University of Minnesota. One of my responsibilities is to ensure that we continue to offer courses to our members that are high in quality, relevant, and timely. **These courses need course leaders**, and I can't think of a more fertile area to explore for potential course leaders than the wealth of teaching talent that exists in UMRA.

OLLI courses are typically six or eight weeks long with 90-minute sessions once a week. Course leaders determine the content of the course, and we try to locate a class site that is convenient to the course leader. OLLI currently holds classes in 38 different sites around the Twin Cities.

We offer courses in the arts, social sciences, physical sciences, and a catch-all miscellaneous category. While we are interested in courses in all areas—given what is currently going on in the domains of physics, cosmology, astronomy, and biology—we are particularly interested in beefing up this part of our curriculum.

If this sounds like a fit for you, and if you might be interested in talking about creating and leading a course for OLLI, we would be very interested in meeting with you. You may contact me at 612-625-3964 or hanso268@umn.edu.

We would also like to hear from any member of UMRA who might be interested in learning about and possibly joining OLLI.

— Gary Hanson, interim executive director, OLLI

Photo Club members learn about the magic of using the Lightroom program

The UMRA Photo Club welcomes photographers of all abilities. Most of us are struggling amateurs who like to take pictures and want to get better. We benefit from the kind help we get from each other.

The next meeting will be held at the Washburn Library, 5344 Lyndale Ave. South in Minneapolis, from 1 to 3 p.m. on February 10.

Dick Kain will continue his demonstrations on using Lightroom. Dick welcomes all questions, and in February he will work on pictures that Photo Club members bring. If you cannot make this meeting, good books and web-based videos talk about how to use Lightroom, but it is hard to interrogate these options the way you can Dick.

A number of Photo Club members gather before the meeting for lunch. Please contact Judith Garrard, jgarrard@umn.edu, for information about the February meeting or to be added to the Photo Club mailing list.

The March meeting will be Friday, March 10.

— Craig Swan, Photo Club chair

Who do you know who's retiring?

If one or more of your colleagues, friends, or neighbors have retired recently or are even thinking of retiring from the University, be sure to share the good news that membership in UMRA is waiting for them.

Membership recruitment brochures are available at the sign-in table at each luncheon program. Or contact John Anderson, chair of the Membership Committee, at ander049@umn.edu, to obtain copies of the UMRA brochure.

1666 Coffman residences for sale

For colleagues and friends who may be thinking about joining the 1666 Coffman community, three units are for sale.

116 Morris, \$180,000, 1020 Sq. Ft., 2 Br, 2 Baths; First Floor NE corner unit. By Lynden Realty, Barbara Swadburg, 651-271-8919.

308 Morris, \$194,900, 1018 Sq. Ft., 2 Br, 2 Baths; South Facing on Courtyard. By Steve Townley, Re/Max Results 651-644-3557.

207 Morris, \$194,900, 1020 Sq. Ft., 2 Br, 2 Baths; South Facing on Courtyard. By Steve Townley, Re/Max Results 651-644-3557

More information is available online: 1666coffman.com.

— Eve Brown, chair, 1666 Coffman Promotions

Bookshelf Notes—

Insights on living from the wisdom of dying

On Living by Kerry Egan was published in 2016 by Penguin Publishing. This review was written by UMRA member and Past President Ron Anderson, who says this book is about finding “joy in living.”

I have a list of about 500 books on suffering, and while I added this book to the list, it is more about joy than suffering. And, while it is written by a chaplain who has sat with hundreds of dying people, it is more about living and the meaning of living. But mostly it is a quick read that can make you feel good and change how you think about living and dying.

Despite her role as a chaplain, Egan notes that she rarely discussed God or religious subjects with her patients. Mainly, when people talked at all, they discussed their families, “because that is how we talk about God. That is how we talk about the meaning of our lives.” Family is “where our purpose becomes clear.”

The author's view is: “Attempting to find or make meaning is the central task of the spiritual life.” She concludes that, “We do not get to cut off someone's suffering at the pass by telling them it has some greater purpose. Only they get to decide if that's true.”

A major side story in the book consists of the author's brush with drug-induced psychosis that lasted many months and, while ruthlessly traumatic, led to insights that enhanced her understanding of the people whose stories she told. Her transitions between realities undoubtedly enhanced her humility, open-mindedness, and love.

On caregivers, she noted that “pretending they have super-human strength...deprives them of the help they need.” In addition, she argues that “it deprives the dying of the comfort and companionship they need.”

One elderly woman uttered this simple but deep truth: “It's a beautiful life and then you leave it.” This wisdom came after watching mortuary attendants struggle for a half hour to get her beloved, overweight husband lifted out of a third-floor apartment with no elevator.

Kindness from another, the author says, is the best way to alleviate the suffering of the soul. This magnificent book shares incredibly moving stories that show how you can live meaningfully from beginning to end. It is comforting and a shining light.

Book Club meets third Fridays

The UMRA Book Discussion Club has been meeting since March of 2011. We meet at 2 p.m. on the third Friday of every month except December at the 1666 Coffman Building, which is on Larpenteur Avenue near the University's campus in St. Paul.

Our book for January 2017 was *The Song Poet: a Memoir of my Father* by Kao Kalia Yang. Next readings are:

February 17	<i>A Man Called Ove</i> by Fredrick Backman
March 17	<i>Lab Girl</i> by Hope Jahren
April 21	<i>The Underground Railroad</i> by Colson Whitehead
May 19	<i>The Rosie Project</i> by Graeme Simsion
June 16	<i>Sing for your Life</i> by Daniel Bergner
July 21	<i>H is for Hawk</i> by Helen MacDonald
August 18	<i>The Kitchen Boy</i> by Robert Alexander
September 15	<i>The Undoing Project</i> by Michael Lewis

This group reads a variety of both fiction and non-fiction books. The list reflects the books that are chosen for each month by a member who then acts as discussion leader. New members are welcome. Contact Pat Tollefson for more information (p-toll@umn.edu).

If you would like to organize another UMRA book group in your area of the metropolitan area, Pat is happy to mentor you in the start-up.

What have you been reading?

Whether you are in a book group or just like to read on your own, we invite you to share your thoughts about books and recommendations for reading with other UMRA readers by contributing to the "Bookshelf Notes" column. Just write a few lines (350 words or so) and send your book review to Earl Nolting, enolting@umn.edu.

Welcome new members to UMRA

Please give a hearty welcome to two new-member households who have recently joined UMRA. Please greet them at luncheon meetings and UMRA events.

Rita Rocheford and Colleen Convey, Classroom Technical Services, Bargaining Unit
3315 Garfield Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55408
612-824-6216; 612-819-2013;
rmrocheford@earthlink.net

Sharon Danes and Robert Milligan, Family Social Science, Faculty
1618 Rosehill Circle, Lauderdale, MN 55108
651-647-0831; 612-625-9273; sdanes@umn.edu

URVC seeks volunteer judges for school debate and academic competitions

We are in the season of judging, a veritable vortex of opportunities to find gratification in the intellectual pursuits of a youthful generation and to use our well-crafted skills for evaluating their endeavors. Consider volunteering to act as judges for the following projects. Contact the University Retirees Volunteer Center, urvc@umn.edu, to register your choice.

- 1. Urban Debate League Judges.** Regional tournaments for middle school student teams are taking place in February and March on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 3:15 to 7:15 p.m. (dinner is included). Interest in history and evaluating debaters on argumentation, logic, and public speaking skills are suitable for judging. The debate theme this year is: The U.S. federal government should substantially increase its economic and/or diplomatic engagement with the People's Republic of China. Judge training programs are available online. Contact URVC for schedule.
- 2. Twin Cities Regional Science Fair.** The Regional Science Fair serves hundreds of middle and high school students and thus requires lots of judges and readers. Project judging takes place on Friday, February 24, at the University Field House. Assignments begin at 3:30 p.m. unless pre-assigned. Judging runs from 4 to 9 p.m. Judges are needed both within expertise and outside. Parking and a light supper are provided. **Research paper online judging** provides two weeks to read and score papers (February 3 to 19). No need to be in town to provide this valuable service for middle and high school students.
- 3. History Day Competition.** 2017 theme: "Taking a stand in History." Regionals and State Final: Judges work in teams of two to examine entries and evaluate. Optional in-depth judge training is available at the Minnesota Historical Society on February 21 (6–8 p.m.) and February 25 (10 a.m.–noon). Twin Cities' regional competitions take place March 14, 18, 23, and 25. The State Final is on April 29 at Coffman Union. Free parking and meals provided. Experienced judges are preferred for the finals. Judging categories are exhibits, documentaries, performances, and websites. Judges need not be historians.

For more information, get in touch with URVC

— Alan L. Kagan, Project Director,
University Retirees Volunteer Center
urvc@umn.edu

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McNamara Alumni Center
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Minneapolis, MN 55455-2002

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Website: <https://umra.umn.edu>
UMRA's phone: 612-626-4403

In Remembrance

We report the passing of UMRA members as we learn of losses to our UMRA community. Since the Newsletter was published in November, we have received news of the following. Our condolences to the friends and families of:

Patricia Benson, General College retiree, died November 21, 2016. She was an UMRA member from 1993 to 2009.

Santa L. Ferraro-Benoit, retiree from Boynton Health Service, Medical Administration, died December 28, 2016. He was an UMRA member since 2009.

Warren Y. Gore, member of the Rhetoric Department faculty, died January 17, 2017. He had been a member of UMRA since 2008. His wife, Ki Ki Gore, continues as an UMRA member.

Evelyn Hurwicz, died November 22, 2016. She and her husband, Leonid Hurwicz, Department of Economics, previously deceased, were UMRA members, 1998–2009.

UMRA Cares Committee is here for support

For assistance and support in the event of the death or serious illness of an UMRA member or family member, please e-mail us at umracares@umn.edu or call 612-626-4403, and leave a message for UMRA Cares.

Thanks to the Center for Spirituality and Healing for helping to sponsor UMRA's February Newsletter. CSH offers UMRA members discounts to some of their programs. See below for information on an upcoming special program on February 27 at half-price.

CENTER FOR SPIRITUALITY & HEALING 

**HOW GRATITUDE HEALS, ENERGIZES,
AND TRANSFORMS LIVES** *with Dr. Robert
Emmons*

Gratitude encircles much of what we do and who we are. Its power derives from a need that is deeply entrenched in the human condition—the need to give thanks. Across the life-span, research has shown that gratitude generates a positive ripple effect through every area of our lives, potentially satisfying some of our deepest yearnings—our desire for happiness, our pursuit of better relationships, and our ceaseless quest for inner peace, health, wholeness, and wellbeing.

Learn more and register at
z.umn.edu/WellbeingLecture

Use code: **UMRAGratitude**
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csh.umn.edu