

SEPTEMBER 2018

Bill Doherty to speak about communicating across political cultures

We must not be enemies. The mystic chords of memory ... will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.

—Abraham Lincoln, 1861



Our era may be the most divisive in the U.S. since the Civil War. Yet polls suggest even the hyper-partisan yearn for greater unity and civility. Our September speaker, William Doherty, Ph.D., is doing something about it. In a talk entitled, “Beyond Polarization: Bridging the Red/Blue Divide in Communities,” he will tell us about a remarkable nationwide effort to help people with differing views learn to speak and listen respectfully to each other.

Doherty, a professor in the U of M’s Department of Family Social Science, directs the department’s Citizen Professional Center, which seeks to prepare professionals for effective

democratic engagement with communities. He has developed a model of grassroots organizing among parents and other citizens around cultural, community, and health issues. As a therapist, he works with couples on the brink of divorce.

Drawing on these various strains, Doherty co-founded a citizen initiative to help restore the fraying social fabric in American society following the 2016 presidential election. Since then, Better Angels (better-angels.org) has spread to 25 states and been featured widely in local and national media.

Doherty has played a pivotal role in developing Better Angels’ system of workshops. Ranging in length from a couple hours to a full weekend, the workshops bring together equal numbers of “reds” and “blues” to seek common ground. Several principles guide the workshop exercises. Participants should seek to understand rather than to change minds, make “I” statements rather than statements presented as facts, voice only their own opinion and not characterize the other side’s. The end goal is to reach, in Doherty’s words, an “accurate disagreement” that can lead to mutual understanding.

To illustrate Doherty’s techniques: in one exercise, while blues observe, reds discuss stereotypes they think blues harbor about them. Then reds listen to a similar conversation among blues. In another, blues may discuss the balance between LGBT rights and religious freedoms while reds observe, after which reds discuss an issue while blues listen. In all exercises, a direct conversation between the two sides follows.

Whether you are concerned about the body politic or panicked about political tempers at your next Thanksgiving dinner, this promises to be a stimulating session.

—Chip Peterson, immediate past president

For a summary of President Eric Kaler’s remarks to UMRA’s Annual Meeting in May, go to umra.umn.edu/news/2018-05-kaler-annual-mtg

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

WEST WING RECEPTION AND MEETING AT A GLANCE

Tuesday, September 25, 2018
 4–6 p.m.

“Beyond Polarization: Bridging the Red/Blue Divide in Communities”

Featured Speaker
 William Doherty, professor
 Department of Family
 Social Science
 and project director
 Citizen Professional Center

Location
 West Wing, Campus Club
 Fourth Floor
 Coffman Memorial Union

Buffet menu
 Light appetizers, coffee and tea.

RSVP by Monday, September 17
 Prepayment of \$20 per person.
 Annual prepayors, please make reservations for this event.

Reserve and pay online at
UMRA>Events>Luncheon Reservations
 Or, send your check payable to
 UMRA to:
 UMRA Reservations
 c/o Judy Leahy Grimes
 1937 Palace Ave., St. Paul MN
 55105-1728
 Or, contact Judy before the deadline at 651-698-4387 or
jleahy4654@aol.com.

Parking
 \$6 maximum in University ramps with UMRA’s discount coupon.
 No reservations for this event.

Advocacy, accessibility, and communication addressed at leadership retreat

As we start the new year for UMRA, I'm excited by the opportunities and challenges ahead. Many excellent programs and services have been developed by the UMRA membership over the years, and I'm confident we will continue to find even more ways to enhance the experience of retirees and UMRA members.

UMRA leaders gathered on August 9 for the organization's biennial planning retreat. The 25 participants included board members, committee chairs, University liaisons, communication coordinators, and affinity group facilitators. Chip Peterson opened the session with an overview of UMRA, and John Anderson provided an update on membership and philanthropy.

John reviewed a remarkable report UMRA had requested from the University of Minnesota Foundation (UMF), which revealed that 77 percent of UMRA members are financial supporters of the University. Since the initiation of the U's "Driven" campaign in 2011, our members have made gifts and commitments totaling more than \$22 million. In fact, 94 percent of UMRA members have given to the U during their lifetimes, and the cumulative total of all their gifts is \$40.7 million! This revelation of UMRA's financial clout provided additional energy to the day.

The retreat participants then broke into small groups to explore opportunities and challenges in three areas: advocacy, accessibility, and communication. Below are summaries of their discussions.

Advocacy, facilitated by Bill Donohue. Recommendation: UMRA should seek to have input in the search for a new University president. Retreat participants were encouraged to recommend individuals for the search committee, and UMRA will seek to have a role in the search and final recommendations. The group also discussed the selection of new regents and what role, if any, would be appropriate for our organization. The group suggested UMRA leadership communicate directly with the appropriate administrators to pursue these ends. Other topics considered: working with UMF to develop support for the Professional Development Grants for Retirees program; working with the U's Center on Aging to support their work; promoting UMRA across the University; and developing opinion pieces on such topics as legislative appropriations and regent selection.

Accessibility, facilitated by Peggy Mann Rinehart. Recommendation: UMRA should pursue establishing regional meetings across the metro area to allow retirees to engage with each other without enduring trips to campus. These meetings could include live streaming or podcasts of UMRA speaker events or could develop into social clubs. Other topics considered: focusing some workshops on issues of death and dying; exploring ride-sharing services; engaging Center for Aging graduate students in UMRA's programs; providing assistance from the parking garage for members coming to meetings; recording speaker presentations for access online.

Communication, facilitated by Claudia Parliament. Recommendation: Continue improving the UMRA website but move cautiously in creating content for Facebook, Twitter, or other social media channels. Other topics considered: collecting information on how colleges and departments engage their retirees; developing "best practice" awards for units doing exceptional work with their retirees; increasing outreach regarding UMRA as a resource to the University community.

The Board and I are interested in your reactions regarding the ideas raised in these discussions. Please let us know what you think. Your input will provide an important foundation for the work of the Board in the coming year.

— Jerry Rinehart, UMRA president, 2018–19

Thank you to the University of Minnesota Foundation for helping to sponsor our September newsletter.



Tax-free giving to the U

If you're 70½ or older, you can give up to \$100,000 directly from your IRA to charity, without paying federal income tax on the withdrawal. If you'd like to make a gift to the U or pay off a pledge, consider this tax-wise giving option.

PHONE 612-624-3333

EMAIL plgiving@umn.edu

WEB give.umn.edu/waystogive



The U of M Foundation does not give tax or legal advice. Please consult your professional advisor before making a gift.

Welcome to UMRA's board, committees, and affinity groups

With the beginning of our new program year, UMRA welcomes new faces and continuing members to its board and to its growing list of committees and affinity groups.

Board of Directors, 2018–19

Members of UMRA'S board are elected to three-year terms and may serve two consecutive terms. All officers serve one-year terms; the secretary and treasurer may be reelected annually. The officers and members elected to new terms during UMRA's May Annual Meeting are indicated in **boldface**.

Jerry Rinehart, president

Bill Donohue, president-elect

Lynn Anderson, secretary

Carl Adams, treasurer (continuing his service)

Chip Peterson, immediate past president

Vernon Cardwell

Frank Cerra

Will Craig

Cathy Lee Gierke

Judy Leahy Grimes

Cherie Hamilton

Jeanne Markell

Kathleen O'Brien

Claudia Parliament

Richard Poppele

Kaimay Yuen Terry

Gloria Williams

Committees

Much of UMRA's work is conducted by standing committees whose members are appointed, technically by the president but in practice usually by their chairs. The current list of committees includes:

Communications and Outreach: Provides oversight and guidance to newsletter editorial team and website team and seeks to raise UMRA's profile within the University. Chair: Claudia Parliament, cparliam@umn.edu

Council of Past Presidents: Advises president and board upon request. Chair (immediate past president): Chip Peterson, c-pete@umn.edu

Executive: Develops board agendas, coordinates work of committees, serves as short- and long-range planning committee. Consists of current elected officers and immediate past president. Chair (president): Jerry Rinehart, g-rine@umn.edu

Luncheon: Handles logistics of luncheons. Co-chairs: Judy Leahy Grimes, jleahy@aol.com, and Ben Zimmerman, zimme003@umn.edu

Membership: Recruits new members, manages membership database and discount program. Chair: John Anderson, ander049@umn.edu

Nominating: Annually proposes officer and board candidates for election by members. Chair (immediate past president): Chip Peterson, c-pete@umn.edu

PDGR: Oversees annual professional development grants for retirees, including publicity, selection, and fundraising. Chair: Richard "Dick" Poppele, dick@umn.edu

Program: Recruits and supports speakers for monthly meetings. Chair (president-elect): Bill Donohue, donohue@umn.edu

Social Activities: Arranges social events, tours, etc. on an irregular timetable. Chair: Cherie Hamilton, pimentamalageta@hotmail.com

UMRA Cares: Provides support to spouses/partners and families grieving a death or coping with hospitalization or disability. Chair: Ron Anderson, rea@umn.edu

UMRA History: Compiles and organizes material for an annual UMRA contribution to the University Archives.

Chair: Gloria Williams, gwilliam@umn.edu

Workshop: Arranges living well workshops offered in conjunction with most monthly meetings.

Chair: Ron Matross, matross@gmail.com

Affinity Groups

These are informal, self-governing subgroups, organized around a common interest. After board approval of their establishment, each group defines its own focus, activities, and leadership. At present they include:

Book Club: Meets monthly except December to discuss a book previously read by all, and to choose future readings. Contact: Pat Tollefson, p-toll@umn.edu

Journal of Opinions, Ideas, and Essays (JOIE): Manages online journal (pubs.lib.umn.edu/index.php/joie) to provide a digital venue for retirees (and others) to publish articles that do not fit easily into conventional academic journals. Editor and Chair: Bud Clawson, claws001@umn.edu

Photo Club: Meets monthly during the academic year, except December, to share photos, discuss various aspects of photography, and organize an occasional photo shoot. Co-chairs: Craig Swan, swan@umn.edu, and Sheri Goldsmith, golds009@gmail.com

Retiree Financial & Legal Issues Group: Meets 3–4 times a year, often with an expert facilitator. Coordinator: Andy Whitman, awhitman@umn.edu

University Retirees Volunteer Center (URVC): A separate organization that enjoys a cooperative arrangement with UMRA by announcing volunteer opportunities in the UMRA Newsletter and through overlap of members and volunteers. UMRA's president-elect serves on the URVC board. Contact: urvc@umn.edu or 612-625-8016.

— Julie Medbery, UMRA Newsletter editorial team

This is a new column. Please let me know if there is an UMRA member you would like to see featured.—Kristine Mortensen, coordinating editor, akm@umn.edu

HELLO, my name is Ron Matross

Hometown: Lander, Wyoming (but grew up in Montana)

When did you become a member of UMRA? 2013

What was your very first job? Mowing lawns in Gardiner, Montana (the north entrance to Yellowstone Park)

What was your occupation when you retired from FT work? Senior analyst in the Office of Undergraduate Education, where I worked on enrollment management issues, including admissions and retention.

Where were you in 1968? I was a senior at Columbia University in New York City. My senior year was cut somewhat short by the famous student protest that shut down the campus. My class had a lot of memories to share at our 50th reunion this summer.

If you could learn a new skill, what would it be? Or, if you were an Olympic athlete, what would your sport be? I would be a guitar playing singer-songwriter or, if I were an Olympic athlete, I'd be a cyclist.

Do you have a favorite place on the U of M campus? I enjoy sitting on the plaza in front of Northrop, looking out over the campus. The mall looks the way a university campus should look.

What is a fun fact about you we might not know? Not exactly a fun fact, but I had a liver transplant at the U of M hospital 23 years ago.

What is something you currently enjoy doing? I like to ride my bike two-plus hours a day. I also race in the American and World Transplant games, Olympic-style competitions for people who have received transplants. Last summer, I competed in Malaga, Spain, and this summer in Salt Lake City. I won medals in both competitions.



Ron Matross with his daughter and granddaughter in Spain

Upcoming workshops

Are you a current retiree who purchases supplemental health insurance through the University of Minnesota? Or a new retiree who is considering doing so? Then mark your calendar for the Health Benefits Workshop on **Tuesday, October 23, 1:30–2:30 p.m.**, following the UMRA luncheon meeting. A representative from the U's Office of Human Resources will give an overview of the benefits to be offered in the coming year and provide comparisons between the different plans available to retirees.

Additional workshops currently scheduled include: **November 27**, "Disruptive changes, losses, and resiliency," a presentation by Ted Bowman, author and consultant who specializes in change and transition.

January 22, "Mindfulness meditation," a panel discussion led by UMRA member Ron Matross.

February 26, "Finding the best long-term care facility," a panel discussion led by UMRA member Ron Anderson.

Welcome new members to UMRA

Please give a hearty welcome to 35 new members who have joined UMRA since May. Encourage anyone you know to attend our monthly meetings, greet all newcomers, and help introduce them to other members.

- Barbara Anderson, Office of Undergraduate Education, Office of Admissions, civil service
- Kathleen Cramer, College of Education and Human Development, Curriculum and Instruction, faculty
- Jeff Crump, College of Human Ecology, College of Design, faculty
- Laura Duckett, School of Nursing (SON), faculty
- Vicki Field (and Roderick Frye), Graduate School, Office of Interdisciplinary Initiatives, P&A
- Mary Ford, Office of the General Counsel, civil service
- Richard J. Goldstein, College of Science and Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, faculty
- Sungok Hong, College of Liberal Arts (CLA), Asian Languages and Literatures, faculty
- Linda S. Kenney, Medical School, Laboratory Medicine and Pathology, P&A
- Madeleine Kerr, SON, faculty
- Arthur Klassen (and Camilla Reiersgord), Medical School, Neurology, faculty
- Janice Kmetz, School of Fine Arts, Department of Art and Design, faculty

- Leslie Koidahl, Controllars Office, Module Support, civil service
- Milan Kovacovic, CLA, University of Minnesota Duluth, World Languages and Cultures, faculty
- Rebecca Kroening, Academic Resource Services, One Stop Student Services, P&A
- Kenneth A. Larson, Office of the General Counsel, P&A
- Albert (and Dorothy) Marden, College of Science and Engineering, School of Mathematics, faculty
- LaVonne Molde, Law School, Law Library, civil service
- Debra Nelson, Law School, civil service
- Janet M. Nielsen, School of Dentistry, Finance, civil service
- George Sheets, CLA, Classical and Near Eastern Studies, faculty
- David Shupe, College of Extension and Continuing Education, Academic Administration, program director
- Stuart Speedie, Academic Health Center, Institute for Health Informatics, faculty
- Madelon Sprengnether, CLA, English, faculty
- Nancy Stenson, CLA, Linguistics, faculty
- Dan Sullivan, CLA, Journalism, faculty
- Mike (and Nina) Sweeney, Medical School, Anesthesiology and Pediatrics, faculty, attending physician educator
- Albert Tims, College of Liberal Arts, Hubbard School of Journalism and Mass Communication, faculty
- Douglas Wholey, School of Public Health, Health Policy and Management, faculty
- Cynthia (and Telford) Williams, Pulmonary Medicine, Cystic Fibrosis Center, staff

For contact information, please visit umra.umn.edu > Contact Us > Member Search (login required)

Book Club meets September 21

The UMRA Book Club will meet on Friday, September 21, at 2 p.m. to discuss *Brat Farrar*, by Josephine Tey. Pat Tollefson will lead the discussion.

We are eclectic readers; our book selections are from all time periods and various genres, and include fiction and nonfiction. In October, Beth Bedell will lead the discussion of *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*, by Margaret Cra-ven, and in November, Kathryn Sedo will lead the discussion of *The Nest*, by Cynthia D'Aprix Sweeney.

The Book Club meets at the 1666 Coffman Building on Larpenteur Avenue near the St. Paul Campus. Newcomers are welcome! For more information, contact Pat Tollefson at p-toll@umn.edu.

Tour the new Bell Museum

The UMRA Social Activities Committee invites you to a 70-minute guided tour of the new Bell Museum of Natural History. We will tour the four permanent galleries to learn about the diversity of life on earth through the lens of the Bell's world-renowned wildlife dioramas.

Date: Monday, October 29, 2018, 1:30–2:40 p.m.

Location: Bell Museum of Natural History, 2088 Larpenteur Avenue West, St. Paul 55113

Cost: \$12 per person. Please write "Bell Tour" on your check memo line and include the participant name(s). Send check to UMRA, McNamara Alumni Center, Room 264, Suite 250, 200 Oak Street S.E., Minneapolis, MN 55455-2022.

UMRA must receive your check by October 5. The tour is limited to 30 so please respond promptly if you would like to participate! An optional Planetarium show is available following the museum tour at an additional cost of \$7 for seniors. Advance reservations are recommended and can be made online at tickets.umn.edu/bell/online or by calling 612-626-9690. Questions? Contact Claudia Parliament at cparliam@umn.edu.

F&L Group meetings to focus on tax-efficient charitable giving

UMRA members have contributed multi-millions to the U of M over the years. The October and November meetings of UMRA's Finance & Legal (F&L) Group will demonstrate how to make contributions to the U and other charitable institutions in tax-efficient ways, and what differences to expect under the new tax law. On October 24, the focus will be on making gifts directly from an IRA, and on how to set up and use a donor-advised fund. On November 14, the focus will be on the new tax law. Both sessions will be held from 2 to 3 p.m. at the John A. Knutson & Co., PLLP (classroom location) at 1781 Prior Avenue North in Falcon Heights, MN 55113. For details, including how to participate remotely using GoToMeeting, please visit umra.umn.edu/news/2019charitable-giving.

Questions? Contact Andy Whitman at awhitman@umn.edu or 612-747-6015

In Remembrance

Edward Fletcher died June 12, 2018. A WWII pilot, Dr. Fletcher worked on the National Advisory Committee for Aeronautics (the predecessor to NASA) and was invited to the U of M Department of Mechanical Engineering faculty in 1959. He is known as the father of solar thermal chemistry. Edward retired from the University as professor emeritus in 2000. He and his wife continued to be active members of the University community and UMRA.

Arvonne Skelton Fraser died August 7, 2018. A liberal arts graduate of the U of M and senior fellow at the Humphrey School of Public Affairs, Arvonne was a founder of the Center on Women, Gender, and Public Policy. She had several distinguished careers. Arvonne ran the political campaigns of her husband, Don Fraser, for the Minnesota Senate and U.S. House of Representatives, and managed his congressional office. She was a founder of the Women's Equity Action League, served in the Carter administration as director of the Office of Women in Development, and was the U.S. representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women. Known as a voice for women worldwide, Arvonne's greatest legacy is her generous mentorship of many men and women. She was a longtime member of UMRA along with her husband.

Herb Isbin died May 12, 2018. Dr. Isbin was a professor of chemical engineering at the U of M from 1950 to 1983. A respected mentor and distinguished scholar, he wrote more than 75 professional publications including a widely used textbook, *Introductory Nuclear Reactor Theory*. Among his many honors was his appointment to the Atomic Energy Commission by President Eisenhower. He was predeceased in 2012 by his wife, Kathy. Both were active members of UMRA.

Doris Manson died April 21, 2018. Doris was a faculty member in the College of Agriculture. She lived to the age of 108. In her retirement, this remarkable woman continued to be a part of the University community. She lived at 1666 Coffman and was an active member of UMRA.

Jack Merwin died July 2, 2018. A member of the Army Air Corps during WWII, Dr. Merwin was a professor in the College of Education for 36 years, serving for seven as dean. He was the co-author of the Stanford Achievement Test and a mentor to many graduate students. In 1974, he was among the first American educators to work with teachers in the People's Republic of China. Both Jack and his wife, Dorothy, were active UMRA members.

— Kathleen O'Brien, Cares Committee

UMRA Cares supports members

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. Also, if you learn of someone who is facing a difficult life challenge, please contact the UMRA Cares Committee.

Photo Club to focus on structures

The UMRA Photo Club is open to all UMRA members who have an interest in photography. Most members bring 5-10 pictures on a flash drive to share for discussion at each meeting. The theme for September is "structures." We meet on the second Tuesday of each month at the St. Anthony Library, from 12:30 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. Many members of the group gather first at 11:30 a.m. for a buffet lunch at the Great Dragon, across from the library. Come to learn how others take pictures and enjoy the good time and fun we have. For more information, contact Sheri Goldsmith May at gold009@gmail.com or Craig Swan at swan@umn.edu.



Photo Club members on the spiral staircase in Bruininks Hall, captured by U of M photographer Patrick O'Leary during a photo shoot together in May.

URVC looks back and ahead

This has been an active summer for the University Retirees Volunteer Center (URVC). The new Bell Museum of Natural History provided opportunities for experiencing both the design and the presentations while serving as greeters. Mock trial jurors evaluated the skill of law students at Mitchell Hamline School of Law in August and in September will experience that of lawyers who are receiving training for legal advocacy.

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A Neighborhood House/Wellstone Center project engaged our volunteers in registering new voters. For arts lovers, the Minnesota Fringe Festival and Caponi Art Park provided opportunities for attending a variety of performances and serving ushering and box office roles. Add to these the tutoring of international students, research studies, and the important fresh produce distributions by Second Harvest Heartland and you can sense the many volunteer needs that confront us.

The administration of these many different volunteer programs has prompted URVC to enlist the technical assistance of a volunteer management platform. Having analyzed several computer programs, URVC selected Better Impact.

We are seeking an administrator to oversee our Better Impact process as well as more office staff for weekly shifts. These are volunteer positions. Your skills and noble desire to contribute are needed. To learn more, please contact John Anderson, chair, URVC Board of Directors.

—Alan Kagan, URVC project director

Alan Kagan stepping down after 20 exemplary years

Alan Kagan, the longtime URVC office manager and projects director, has announced that he will step down at the end of September. For the past 20 years Alan has served indefatigably and selflessly, connecting volunteers with projects. Under his leadership, the number and variety of the projects supported and the number of service hours contributed by volunteers increased significantly; from just eight years ago, the number of volunteers hours doubled from about 5,000 to 10,000 hours.

The URVC board was sorry to learn that Alan has decided to relinquish his involvement because of an urgent need to complete a book for publication. But we recognize his leadership and devotion to volunteerism, and we extend sincere thanks for all he has done.

Alan's success in growing URVC means that just one person can no longer do it all, and that several people will each need to take on a portion of the load.

One option for involvement would be as the **Office Manager**. Duties include producing reports for the URVC Board, assuming responsibility for URVC operations and outreach, training and supervising office staff, and participating in promotional activities.



John Anderson (left) and Alan Kagan

The **Project Director** selects projects that can benefit from volunteer help. Once volunteers are identified, the project director informs the project coordinators.

A third option would be to serve as a member of the **Office Staff**, working for one shift of 3–4 hours per week. Office staff recruit volunteers, maintain records of volunteer effort, and will enter data in the new volunteer software management program to be launched in the near future.

Free parking on campus is provided for all these positions.

If any of these opportunities is something you are ready and willing to do, contact URVC at urvc@umn.edu or call 612-625-8016. Or, if you know someone who might be interested, please submit a nomination to me at ander049@umn.edu or call 651-489-4330.

—John Anderson, chair, URVC board

Book Notes:

Willa Cather, a writer for the ages

Despite being written nearly a century ago, *The Professor's House* by Willa Cather seems timeless. The main theme could easily apply today in its comparison of how much or little we value the natural world compared to materialism and scientific advancement. Herb Sherer led a discussion of the novel, published in 1925, for the Book Club's July meeting.

The protagonist, a Midwest professor named Napoleon Godfrey St. Peter, feels without purpose after completing his magnum opus, a monumental work on the history of the American Southwest.

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UMRA University of Minnesota Retirees Association

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

First Class Mail
U.S. Postage
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UMRA's phone: 612-626-4403
Website: umra.umn.edu

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At the U of M Bookstore in Coffman
www.untech.umn.edu

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His book has brought him fame and sufficient wealth for his family to move to a new, larger home; but he lags behind. After completing what he feels is his life's work, he hangs on to the past and prefers to distance himself from his family by keeping his old study and spending much time in solitude.

Cather illustrates the impact of modern society and science on members of the professor's immediate family, in particular their relationship with the secondary character of the book, the professor's young colleague, Tom Outland, a brilliant scientist, mathematician, and archeologist. Cather's novel also contrasts the history of the people of the American Southwest to the modern life of the 1920s.

Through the book's characters, Cather gives us pause to explore the impact of technology and materialism on our own lives and encourages us to engage in solitude and reflection on the natural world. To quote Cather, "Art and religion (they are the same thing, in the end, of course) have given man the only happiness he has ever had."

—Mary Jane Towle, Book Club member