

A Brief History of the UMM Retirees Association

In 1990, Bettina Blake sent a memo to Fred Farrell suggesting a need for some sort of organization for the upcoming large group of retirees. Farrell took it from there with help and ideas from Laird Barber, Ellen Ordway and Barbara McGinnis. Ellen Ordway, using her UMMRA secretary notes as a model, put together a history from the fall of 1993 to 2005. In May 2005, Ellen, Barbara and Arden Granger met at the UMMRA office and sorted through all notes and memos that had been kept since 1991. Ellen's history alone was four pages long. More work needs to be done, such as adding the names of each year's retirees. (As documented in Vol VIII, #1, summer 2005)

The UMM Retirees Association newsletter, UMMRA INFO, was created and named by Bettina Blake in the summer of 1998 to be used as an avenue of information to the members. Robinson Abbott designed the logo that tops every copy. The newsletter has been published four times a year with printing being done at UMM Duplicating Services. The summer edition is sent to all University retirees, all four editions (summer, fall, winter and spring) are sent to paid members, certain members of the Morris community, and also distributed throughout the UMM campus. Bettina Blake wrote and distributed the newsletter until spring 2000 when Dolores Lammers became editor/historian. Karla Klinger assumed the role in 2006. The full board acted as proofreaders until 2003 when Arden Granger added proofreader to her duties and secretary/ treasurer. Chancellors Schuman and J. Johnson have underwritten the costs of printing and mailing. Copies of all past newsletters are kept on file in the UMMRA office file cabinet - a great source for research about the happenings of UMMRA and UMM since 1998.

Fall, 1993

A meeting of UMM retirees and prospective retirees got together to find out if there was any interest in developing an organization for UMM retirees. The meeting was convened by Fred Farrell. There was substantial support for such an organization.

1993-1994

Several brainstorming meetings were held primarily with Robinson Abbot, Fred Farrell, Leona Classen, Barbara McGinnis, Harold Fahl and Ellen Ordway. The chief goal was to come up with a way such a group could function and ways it could actively contribute to the campus in a significant way primarily by volunteer activities. These meetings were opened to all interested people on campus including staff as well as faculty. A preliminary list of activities and organizational structure was developed during the year and tentative By-Laws were set up.

1995-1996

The organizational, its by-laws and potential benefits and contributions of the

group were fine-tuned. Benefits requested included parking privileges on campus for an annual group fee of \$25.00 paid for by UMMRA, mail slots on campus, copies of **Brief** and the **Weekly Bulletin**, access to email, and ID cards.

The chief organizers during this year were Laird Barber, Nat Hart, Robbie and Rose Marie Abbott, Barbara McGinnis and Leona Clasen, with coordination and help from Chancellor Dave Johnson and Dean Bettina Blake. Laird Barber was President, Rose Marie Abbott Secretary/Treasurer. The By-Laws were revised to ensure that in the future, when possible, there would be at least two staff and two faculty members on the Board. During the year there were 35 paid members.

1996-1997

The group held a number of open meetings and social get-togethers and solicited further ideas and suggestions for activities and participation. The parking permit system was finally implemented in this year. Board Members were: President – Laird Barber; Secretary/Treasurer- Rose Marie Abbott; Members at-Large: Arlene Beseman and Pat Tanner.

1997-1998

Liaison with the Twin Cities Retirement Association (UMRA) was established and a field trip to the Cities to tour 1666 Coffman, the retirement apartments in St. Paul, was organized with guided tours of their facilities. Regular quarterly informal member meetings were initiated. Activities that the group could sponsor, were conceptualized during this year including a Humanities Lecture Series and a way to implement it with grant funds. Board members were: President – Laird Barber; Secretary/Treasurer – Robinson Abbott; Directors at Large – Pat Tanner and Ellen Ordway.

1998-1999

The elected Board Members for this year were: President – Bettina Blake; Immediate Past President and UMRA representative – Laird Barber; Secretary Treasurer – Ellen Ordway; Directors at Large – Dolores Lammers, Charlotte Eul and Doris Benson.

The first Newsletter was started by Bettina and an extensive mailing list established. A concerted effort was made by the board to give the organization widespread recognition, especially in the community, with an attempt to contact and include as many retirees as possible from all branches of the University in the Morris area, such as Extension, and the West Central Experiment Station. Bettina and others procured a grant from the Minnesota Humanities Commission to begin the series of Humanities lectures and programs called the Heritage Preservers Program, with involvement and sponsorship by various community organizations. The first annual reunion of retirees was established in the spring, and the quarterly luncheon meetings of members were continued, primarily social get-togethers with a brief program. UMMRA hosted a two day reception and tour of the campus for the Twin Cities UMRA group. Membership grew to 76.

1999-2000

The Board consisted of President – Blake; Past President – Barber; Secretary Treasurer – Ordway; At large: Charlotte Eul and Avis Brandt. A new position was added into the By-Laws: Newsletter Editor and Historian, filled by Dolores Lammers.

The Minnesota Humanities Commission grant was renewed and the Heritage Preserver Series which gained in popularity with the Morris community, went on for another year. The luncheon meetings continued and the Annual Reunion was held on the same day as the Faculty-Staff recognition dinner. The list of perquisites for retirees were officially recognized and finalized by the Administration. UMMRA members as a group became more active participating as campus organization in a number of celebrations and activities such as in dedications of the new Morris water tower, the Regional Fitness Center (RFC) and in graduation ceremonies, etc. For these events, we designed maroon T-shirts with our gold colored logo, and had made a large maroon banner with our logo. Members also helped out or participated in campus programs such as the Masters of Liberal Arts program, and the Academic Advising program, or served when campus units became short staffed or needed help to train in new people. The Membership increased to 82 paid members. Maurice Tipke replaced Charlotte Eul on the board for the 2000-2001 year.

2000-2001

The Board consisted of President: Bettina Blake; Past President and UMRA Representative: Laird Barber; Secretary-Treasurer: Ellen Ordway; Directors at Large: Avis Brandt and Maurice “Tip” Tipke; Historian/Newsletter Editor: Dolores Lammers.

The membership increased to 86 this year as gradually more faculty and staff retire and publicity through the newsletter advertises our presence in the Morris area. The Heritage Preserver group was again funded and had a topic of “We all Came from Somewhere Else – Immigration.” We are being asked to supply volunteers more often for various events on campus. Therefore we established a Volunteer Committee consisting of Cathy Kemble and Bernice Erdahl who were the contact people for anyone wanting volunteers. They then called a list of members for volunteers. UMMRA was invited to the TC campus for a visit. Two van loads spent the night in the Cities and were joined by other TC members to visit the President's Mansion, Eastcliff, to tour the new McNamara Gateway Building on campus and also the underground Anderson Archives facility. The group attended a Luncheon meeting of UMRA and a dinner at 1666 Coffman Union. We held three luncheon meetings at the Prairie Inn, the last one was the reunion meeting which was held at the time of the Faculty/Staff Recognition dinner with cocktail party at Bettina Blake's house. The LaFave house became available to UMM and although we asked for office space there, we did not get any – at this time. We still do not have an office. This year was the 90th anniversary of the West Central School of Agriculture and the 40th Anniversary of the opening of UMM. There were big Founder's Day celebrations in the fall along with the dedication of the new Science Building. Chancellor Sam Schuman was inaugurated as the fourth chancellor of UMM. A new UMMRA e-mail list serve was initiated this year at UMM. At the annual

meeting in the spring, Fred Farrell was elected the new president of UMMRA. All others will stay on for another year.

<Webmaster's notes- material for the missing years will be added here as it becomes available>

ANNUAL SUMMARIES

2005-2006

Officers for the year were President - Janet Ahern, Past President - Jim Gremmels, Secretary-Treasurer - Arden Granger, Members-at-large: Roger McCannon and Wes Gray. Bernice Erdahl & Cathy Kemble coordinated volunteers, Dolores Lammers edited the newsletter, Phyllis Gausman represented Learning Unlimited, and Laird Barber was the liaison with UMRA.in the TC. Social luncheons were held on the first Thursday of each month. Business meetings/programs were held in fall, winter and spring. On October 19, Lowell Rasmussen discussed changes to UMM's physical plant, particularly the bio-mass plant. The two million dollar wind generator is providing 55% of the campus total electrical needs. The new football field will seat 1500 and have safer artificial grass that doesn't freeze. The renovation of Social Science will be finished in August and will be renamed *Imholte Hall*. On February 15 David Nelson of UMM Student Activities explained the *Adopt a Grandparent* program. On April 27 the annual reunion meeting was held at the Prairie Inn. Former President Jim Gremmels gave retiring Chancellor Sam Schuman Shakespeare volumes from UMMRA. Janet Ahern presented Sam and Nancy with a Prairie Home Companion door mat. Janet read a thank you note from Phyllis Gausman to Evergreen Readers, particularly to coordinators Cathy Kemble and Bernice Erdahl, who find readers. Guest Speaker Sam Schuman mentioned two important UMM initiatives: 1) wind energy (increasing the number of turbines to three and the possibility of a wind farm in partnership with the Mille Lacs Band of Objibwe) and 2) expansion of UMM's international programs to emerging nations. Currently 50% of this year's graduating seniors have had experience abroad. UMMRA hosted the reception for new retirees at the LaFave House that preceded the Annual Faculty/ Staff Recognition Dinner.

2006-2007

Officers were: President - Janet Ahern, President elect - Mary Ann Scharf, Secretary/Treasurer - Arden Granger, Members-at-large - Bill Stewart and Jim Tanner. Bernice Erdahl & Cathy Kemble coordinated volunteers, Karla Klinger assumed responsibilities for the newsletter, Phyllis Gausman represented Learning Unlimited, and Laird Barber was the liaison with UMRA.in the TC. On September 28, UMMRA sponsored a wine and cheese reception for Chancellor Jacquie Johnson. On April 26, we sponsored the annual reception for retirees, faculty and staff with members providing food. On October 18 Peter Wyckoff, UMM Biologist, gave a power point presentation titled *Climate Change in Lake Woebegone*. A few facts: In 100 years, the amount of

carbon dioxide will double; the average spot on earth will be 6 degrees warmer because of greenhouse gases. Minnesota will be 5-20% wetter and slushier in winter and 5-20% drier, more like Kansas, in summer. On February 14 Sue Granger showed pictures of UMM buildings and grounds from the very early days as an Indian School through the present day. She discussed the UMM Historic Preservation Plan. At the April 16 Annual meeting officers were elected and appreciation was expressed to outgoing board members. Chancellor Johnson provided an update, describing new wind and bio-mass initiatives. Blakely Hall will be converted to academic use, and Community Services will be redesigned. Permission is being sought to build a new “green” dorm which can also be used for summer conferences. Musical entertainment was provided by the UMM jazz group *Opposite Day*. Social luncheons held on each first Thursday and open to all UMMRA members were held each month from September through June.

2007-2008

Officers were: Mary Ann Scharf - President, Janet Ahern - Past President, Joan Reicosky - Secretary/Treasurer, Llea Anderson and Bill Stewart - Members at large. Bernice Erdahl & Cathy Kemble coordinated volunteers, Karla Klinger edited the newsletter, Phyllis Gausman represented Learning Unlimited, and Laird Barber was the liaison with UMRA in the TC. The Board reviewed drafts of each upcoming Newsletter, agreed on restaurant locations for First Thursday luncheons, planned the quarterly programs and annual reception for retirees and active faculty and staff, and heard reports on membership and on volunteer needs. The Board is considering setting up a grant program to provide financial support to UMMRA members to participate in life-long learning activities. Laird Barber and Janet Ahern will draft an application process and suggest award criteria for membership consideration. At the October 18 fall luncheon/ business meeting, the membership voted to give \$1000 to the UMM general scholarship fund. Speaker Tina Didreckson, manager of the Morris Theatre, explained the history of the Morris Theatre, its new status as a community cooperative, and estimated costs for needed improvements. On February 21, Eagan Heath, Student Body President and Truman Scholarship recipient, presented a student’s perspective of UMM. Plans for spring events were discussed. At the April 24 annual meeting, board members were elected and appreciation was expressed to outgoing board members. Speaker Chancellor Jacquie Johnson updated us on the new “green” initiatives that will make UMM self-supporting for its energy needs: the new wind turbine, a “green” dormitory, and the biomass project to be erected this fall. She also updated us on student recruitment and budget issues. She reported that Community Services will be renovated to become the new Gateway Center, housing those offices with most contact with the public. The governor has since signed the bonding bill.

2008-2009

Officers were: Mary Ann Scharf - President, Dian Lopez – President elect, Joan Reicosky - Secretary/Treasurer, Llea Anderson and Dolores Lammers - Members at

large. Bernice Erdahl & Cathy Kemble coordinated volunteers, Karla Klinger edited the newsletter, Phyllis Gausman represented Learning Unlimited, and Laird Barber was the liaison with UMRA in the TC.

Annually, the board decides on the agenda and programs for quarterly meetings, plans the annual spring reception for old and new retirees, agrees on locations for First Thursday luncheons, responds to volunteer needs, and oversees *UMMRA Info*. This year we introduced a holiday party. Two special accomplishments were the posting of a web-site at <http://www.morris.umn.edu/ummra> and establishing a mini-grant program to be implemented in August. See the UMMRA web-site for details.

First Thursday Noon Luncheons

We started our year with a September potluck at Marty Kroening's farm and ended with a June 4 potluck at Eastside Park in Morris. During the year, we had lunch together in Chokio, Benson, Starbuck, Terrace, Alexandria and Morris. As part of the October trip to Terrace, we toured the nearby private Barsness Cemetery, an idyllic spot overlooking Lake Ben in Barsness Township. The holiday party at Common Cup with the exchange of popular white elephant gifts will be repeated next fall.

Quarterly Programs

October 16: The fall luncheon/ business meeting was held at the Cozy Café in Cyrus. Speaker Dorothy Rosemier from the West Central Regional Partnership highlighted her organization's mission and goals to make the state energy self-sufficient through linking people, organizations, and resources. Andy Lopez reported on the in-progress UMMRA web-site; Bernice Erdahl reported on volunteer readers at West Wind Village, and Janet Ahern and Laird Barber agreed to investigate designing a mini-grant program to support members' learning activities.

March 23: Lowell Rasmussen, Vice-Chancellor for Finance and Facilities, featured speaker at the luncheon at UMM Food Service Building, explained ways in which UMM is working to become carbon neutral. Andy Lopez demonstrated how to navigate through the new UMMRA web pages. Janet Ahern presented the mini-grant program, which was approved by the membership. Each year UMMRA will award up to \$350 to up to three members to help support their learning activities. Deadline is August 1. Phyllis Gausman described the financial difficulties Learning Unlimited is facing. The membership voted to award the organization \$300 to support the Heritage Day program speaker in spring.

April 23: At the Prairie Inn, Chancellor Johnson discussed changes at UMM in response to the reduction of state funds. The administration will protect the student experience and minimize the impact on employees. She reported that UMM has two Truman Scholars, an honor shared only with Stanford, Wellesley and the Naval Academy. UMM is putting up a second wind turbine. In other business, we elected officers and planned the spring reception for retirees.

2009-2010

Officers were: Dian Lopez - President, Mary Ann Scharf - Past President, Joan Reicosky - Secretary/Treasurer, Llea Anderson and Dolores Lammers - Members at large. Bernice Erdahl & Cathy Kemble coordinated volunteers, Karla Klinger edited the newsletter, Phyllis Gausman represented Learning Unlimited, and Laird Barber was the liaison with UMRA.in the TC.

The Board plans UMMRA programs and agendas for the year, including quarterly meetings, First Thursdays, and special events. The Board oversees *UMMRA Info* and the UMMRA website, determines whether the mini-grant program to support members' learning activities will be implemented, gives money to worthy causes as relevant, and appoints committees as needed. Grants of \$300 each were awarded to **Ferolyn Angell, Dolores Lammers, and Karla Klinger** to pursue learning projects. UMMRA volunteers read to residents at West Wind Village and helped guide parents and new students at orientation and graduation. Particular thanks to our web master, **Andy Lopez**, and volunteer coordinators, **Cathy Kemble** and **Bernice Erdahl**.

First Thursday Events

Carol and Roger McCannon hosted the September 3 picnic on their lovely grounds. Roger talked with us about "Stevens Forward." We also met at Lillehaugen Inn near Benson, the Pizza Ranch and Bello Cucina in Morris, and the Lakeside Ballroom in Glenwood. The Friends of the Briggs Library invited us to help identify photos from the archives, providing lunch in February and cookies in April. We held a successful holiday party in December, reception in April, and potluck at East Side Park in June.

Quarterly Meetings/ Programs

October 15: Margaret Kuchenreuther, Professor of Biology and Environmental coordinator, explained the differences between the new UMM Environmental Science and Environmental Studies majors.

February 18: Dr. John Stock and Alfredo Altamarina presented a helpful power point on Sleep Apnea.

April 15: Chancellor Johnson provided a UMM update. The celebration of UMM's 50 years has begun. The move to the Welcome Center is complete. HECB has invited UMM to adopt the theme "Practicing the Liberal Arts" in its upcoming review. Enrollment was up 100 students in 2009-2010, and enrollment data are up for next year.