



## UMMRA INFO

### THE UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA, MORRIS RETIREES ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

<<http://www.morris.umn.edu/ummra>>

VOLUME XII, NUMBER 3, WINTER 2010

#### NOTE FROM THE UMMRA PRESIDENT

*Greetings UMMRA members!*

*Happy New Year from UMMRA! After a beautiful November, winter finally came full force in December. I just wasn't used to those -25 degree wind chills or Christmas blizzards! Over twenty members braved the cold to join in the fun of our Christmas party at the Prairie Inn Gazebo Room. The food was great, the fireplace toasty and the white elephants very creative! Our luncheon at Lillehaugen Inn in November was a special treat--a beautiful setting, perfect weather, and a fantastic meal. We shared with each other interesting stories of how we came to be in Morris.*

*Your Board has many exciting events planned for the weeks ahead. Our First Thursday luncheon in January will be pizza + a buffet at the Pizza Ranch in Morris. A table will be reserved for us in the back. In February, we are invited to the Briggs Library Archives, where we will be treated to lunch by Friends of the Library and have a chance to help identify people (maybe you!) in old pictures. Our Winter meeting will be held in the Prairie Inn Gazebo Room where we will learn about sleep apnea. See the column on the right for dates and times.*

*The 2010 Celebration (50 year birthday for UMM and a 100 year birthday for the West Central School of Agriculture/WCROC) will be ongoing throughout 2010. A jazz concert at the Morris Area Schools Concert Hall in Morris will kick off the celebrations. A few days later, there will be an Open House for two renovated buildings – the Welcome Building on the UMM campus and the Administration Building on the WCROC campus – followed by a Pride of the Prairie Local Foods Market and a Local Foods Dinner that evening. In this newsletter you will find a schedule of some 2010 Celebration events plus special Memories of UMM from Steve Granger.*

*Check <http://2010.morris.umn.edu> for celebration news. Stay Warm,*

*Dian Lopez*

#### ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

February 19: Jazz Concert by UMM and MAHS jazz bands, 7:30 p.m. Morris Area Schools Concert Hall.

February 23: Pride of the Prairie Farmers Market, Oyate Hall, 11:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.; Meal at Food Service, 5:00-7:00 p.m. Community Open Houses at the Morris Welcome Center, 2:30 – 5:30 p.m. and at the WCROC Building, 1:00 – 7:00 p.m.

March 26-27: History of Agriculture Exhibit opens at the Stevens County Historical Museum.

#### FIRST THURSDAY CASUAL LUNCHEONS

January 7, Pizza Ranch, Morris, 11:30 a.m. Buffet. You will be asked to describe briefly what you like about UMMRA. Why should others join? We would like to use this information in UMMRA publicity.

February 11, Briggs Library Archives, 4th floor, 11:45 a.m. Invited luncheon provided by Friends of the Briggs Library. In return, we will help identify people in archived UMM photos.

March 4, Bello Cucina, Morris, 11:45 a.m.

*For rides or more information, contact Dian Lopez on her cell phone at 287-1517 (local in Morris). An email will be sent out before events.*

#### UMMRA WINTER LUNCHEON BUSINESS MEETING

When: Thursday, February 18, 11:45 a.m.

Where: Prairie Inn, Gazebo Room, Morris.

Choose from the menu.

Speaker: Dr. John Stock will discuss Sleep Apnea.

The Annual Meeting will be April 15.

#### LEARNING UNLIMITED WINTER PROGRAM

*Please note differing locations and times.*

January 13: "Understanding Afghanistan: From the glory of the Silk Road to the rise of the Taliban." Morris Public Library, 1:00 p.m. Abdullah Jaradat.

February 10. "Buddhism in Practice: Buddhist precepts and their place in the modern world." Morris Senior Community Center, 1:00 p.m. Clare Strand.

March 10: "Multicultural Students in Morris, Part 1." UMM students from China will share their experiences and perceptions of the United States. Morris Senior Community Center, 1:00 p.m.

## UMMRA MINI-GRANTS

In 2009, UMMRA initiated the award of up to three mini-grants per year. This year's UMMRA recipients of \$300 each are: **Ferolyn Angell** for "Germany 1933-1939, Journals of a Young Woman;" **Karla Klinger** for "What Makes Women's Lives Meaningful in their 70s: Gathering Interview Data;" and **Dolores Lammers** for "A Start at Learning the Art of Chinese Brush Painting." They will report on their projects in future *UMMRA Info* issues.

### SAD NEWS *UMM's mighty oaks are falling.*

**Jim Gremmels**, member of the English faculty and one of the founding 13 faculty in 1960, died at home in Glenwood on September 25. He was a dedicated academician, coach, printer, sailor and a staunch member of the DFL. He was an all-around athlete, inducted into the Augustana, UMM and SD sports halls of fame; he was UMM's first basketball coach. After he retired in 2000, he continued to teach and to assist with coaching.

**Ray Lammers**, faculty member in Theatre Arts from 1962 to 1995, died in Morris on October 29. Ray was Chair of the Speech and Theatre Department, worked with the architects to build the HFA Center in the 70s, and was a 1969 Morse Alumni Award winner. Earlier, while in the Army, he became proficient in Mandarin Chinese, which became a lifelong interest. While in the Twin Cities, he helped host Tyrone Guthrie, who was scouting for a theatre site.

**Dennis Sayre** died at the Stevens Community Medical Center on July 3. He was a UMM employee for 35 years, 32 as a Campus Police Officer, retiring as Lieutenant in 2000. He was a hunter and sportsman and served 6 years as an infantryman with the MN National Guard.

*Our sympathy to their families.*

## A LIST OF VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES?

UMMRA members read to residents of West Wind Village through the Evergreen Reading program. If you are interested, contact Cathy Kemble or Bernice Erdahl. However, many of you have found other meaningful volunteer activities in the region. It would be helpful if UMMRA could provide new retirees with a list of the volunteer possibilities you have discovered. Please let me know what you are doing, what the expectations are, and how an interested retiree can volunteer. Contact [klingerk@hometownsolutions.net](mailto:klingerk@hometownsolutions.net) or call 589-1023.

## RETIREES IN THE SPOTLIGHT

**Tom McRoberts** is a new retiree as of December 30 after 37 years of service. He is known for many roles: as director of Continuing Education and Regional Programs, as well as the Center for Small Towns, and as a superior advisor and program initiator across a breadth of programs, such as international programs and study abroad. Tom received The President's Award for Outstanding Service in 2003, the John Tate Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Advising in 1991, and the Academic Staff Award in 1993.

**Don Reicosky** of the Soils Lab was one of three scientists awarded the 2009 Distinguished Service Award by the Soil Science of America for his years of research on the effects of soil disturbance on soil organic matter. His work improved "understanding of carbon sequestration in soil" and supports worldwide "increase of conservation tillage."

## BITS AND PIECES

□ **Laird Barber** traveled to Lucca, Italy in fall. He presented "The Genealogy of Jesus" for Learning Unlimited in December. He will visit the Everglades in January and Spain in March.

□ Three scholars collaborated with **Bettina Blake** to organize the historically significant family papers she inherited that span four centuries. The resulting privately printed memoir by Virginia Myhaver, *Four Old New England Families*, tells the family history of the Blakes, Waldrons, Stantons and Colbaths within the context of larger historical trends.

□ **Helen Briggs**, who lives in Shorewood, has been working with the Retirees Volunteer Center of the University since a few months after Rod's death.

□ **Fred and Luisa Farrell** traveled to the East in fall to visit family. They will spend February in Peru.

□ **Pat and George Fosgate**, in addition to catering and acting, were in Los Cabos in March, in London and Spain in April, in Morris in September and in Maui in October.

□ **Chuck Grussing** had a featured role in the Morris Play Rights' delightful December movie called "Totally Scrooged." **George Fosgate** had a cameo role. Chuck, along with **Ferolyn Angell**, appeared in the "Adair, Della and Friends" concert in September.

□ **Lucy and Jack Imholte** visited with **Bettina Blake** in Boston in fall and had lunch in her beautiful apartment. They visited Blake House—the oldest house in Boston—and met the house curator. They also visited the Mary Baker Eddy Library with its famous three story stained glass globe.

*Throughout the anniversary celebration, UMMRA Info will feature stories about the early years. If you were here in the 1960s and early 1970s and are willing to contribute, please contact Karla Klinger at <klingerk@hometownsolutions.net>. I asked Steve Granger, Rod Brigg's first hire, to talk about how the campus developed. Here is part one of his rich two-part history.*

### **Memories of UMM, Part One** by Stephen Granger

Next year is the 100/50 year anniversary of the University of Minnesota in Morris. Let us first recall our history. From 1887-1896 the Sisters of Mercy operated a boarding school for Native Americans at the location of the Morris campus under contract with the Federal Office of Indian Affairs. By 1896 this campus consisted of about 14 wood frame buildings. None are still standing.

The Sisters lost their contract and in 1897 the federal government purchased the facility and operated the Morris Indian School until 1909. By 1902 the government had added the first four brick buildings to the campus. One of those buildings, the Boys' Dormitory (built in 1899), is the oldest remaining building on the campus and is now the Multi-Ethnic Resource Center. In 1909, because of a change in policy reducing non-reservation schools, the federal Morris Indian School was closed.

When the school was offered to the state, the Minnesota legislature accepted and turned the facility over to the University of Minnesota for use as an agricultural high school and experiment station. The West Central School of Agriculture opened in 1910 and operated for the next 53 years. However, responding to changing educational needs, the Board of Regents in 1959 announced that the WCSA would be phased out, making way for collegiate classes the following fall. When the University of Minnesota, Morris accepted its first freshman class in the fall of 1960 there were a dozen major buildings available for collegiate use. In addition to the physical facilities, the new University of Minnesota, Morris inherited a wealth of good will and community support from throughout western Minnesota, fostered by five decades of contributions of the University's West Central School of Agriculture.

At its start UMM is said to have been a one year experiment but nobody believed that. It was just that there was no legislative appropriation to run it. The Regents action in October of 1959, announcing that collegiate instruction would be offered on the Morris campus, came after intense lobbying by local citizens led by the West Central Educational Development Association, and earnest negotiations between the University administration and key legislators. Legislators signaled that the University could go ahead on its own to offer a first year of college at Morris.

Rodney Briggs, then associate professor and extension agronomist with the University's Institute of Agriculture, was persuaded in 1959 to accept the position of superintendent of the West Central School and Experiment Station and to engineer a unique undertaking: the conversion of the agricultural high school program at Morris to collegiate instruction. On the St. Paul campus he was a popular instructor, an enthusiastic speaker, an activist faculty member, and a productive research scientist. His background in agriculture was ideal, both to work within the already existing institution at Morris and to sell the endeavor to the rural public.

For Rod Briggs, who was first given the title of Dean, then later that of Provost, the challenge was glorious, the magnitude of the task was majestic. He was to run the Experiment Station, plan the phase-out of the School of Agriculture, develop a first year college curriculum, see how the existing WCSA staff and faculty could be utilized, find new faculty for the college, rearrange facilities, equip laboratories, start a library, find the money to operate, set policies appropriate for a college, sell the concept to the area community, and recruit a student body of appropriate educational interests and academic achievement who were also brave enough to come to a new institution that might not be around for their sophomore year. All of it had to be done and Rod met the challenge.

That first year, the fall of 1960, 238 students came--good students, many of them leaders. Seventy-three percent were men, only 27% women. All but 8% came from within the 35-mile area around Morris. The cost was \$1,003 per year which included tuition, fees, books, room and board. Forty-seven freshman courses were offered. There were 13 new faculty, sold on the collegiate venture by Rod Briggs. Beyond some of the WCSA staff who joined UMM, I was the first new hire; the counselor who would become assistant provost those first years and later head of student affairs. I taught introductory psychology until Eric Klinger arrived in 1962.

I even taught college algebra for a couple of weeks waiting for new faculty to arrive. That first year there was Jack Imholte who taught both history and economics. Later Jack would be the first chair of the Division of Social Sciences, the first academic dean, and, in 1969, UMM's second provost and chancellor. Among the new faculty was James Olson, a young science teacher from the West Central School of Agriculture. Encouraged by Briggs, he stayed on to teach chemistry, finish his Ph.D., and later become chair of the Division of Science and Mathematics. Jim Gremmels, a founding faculty member in English, was also pressed into service as the first basketball coach, and remained a popular teacher at UMM until 2009. Ralph Williams taught and directed the entire music program those first years. You remember them: Dick Burkey, Ted Long, Jack Heald, Bruce Nord, Don Spring, Jay Roshal, Mildred Gausman, Glen Daniels, Judy Schradel.

From the outset UMM needed a campus life, college spirit, and student traditions. Briggs and those first year student leaders fashioned them almost overnight. Beanies at freshman orientation, a reception at the Dean's home, faculty-student retreats, a student newspaper, a yearbook, a student government, student activities and organizations, athletics, a hangout--"Louie's Lower Level"--these and more helped to create a sense of collegiate belonging. Jack Imholte remembers that there was a "homecoming" that first year complete with a faculty-student football game. Rod scored a touchdown but Jack thinks that, according to the play, it was Jack who was supposed to score, but Rod stole the ball and made the touchdown himself. From the beginning, Rod Briggs was committed to a student-centered institution. He was visible and always accessible to students. He knew them all by name and many of their parents as well. Students were the most important asset so, in spite of a small budget, along with new faculty, he soon hired a full student services staff--Herb Croom was Director of Student Services, later in placement and alumni, Iver Bogen in counseling, Charlie Hanna in admissions, Dennis Hagle financial aid, Ted Freed housing, Mavis Drange in records.

The first year "experiment" was successful; the legislature funded UMM the next year. The campus grew quickly; enrollment went to 437. Sophomore courses were added and the faculty to teach them was hired. That year the first four-year curriculum had to be planned; Briggs led the curriculum committee. Degree requirements were set and majors were to be offered in 11 of the 24 academic disciplines represented. Teacher training in secondary education was planned. By the third year, with enrollment at 522, certification in elementary education was proposed. There was contentious debate over this proposal, with some faculty believing that this program diluted the pure liberal arts mission of the college. In 1963 conventional career opportunities for women were more limited. Programs that would attract women were necessary. Briggs insisted on an elementary education program and, as he predicted, more women came to UMM each year thereafter. By the time Briggs left in 1969, women made up 40% of the student body.

Times were not always good. Attacks on the wisdom of having opened a University branch at Morris came from around the state. But such challenges, Briggs said, pulled the campus together. In an effort to foster an institutional rather than departmental perspective, the faculty was organized into four academic divisions--education, the humanities, science and mathematics, and the social sciences --each with a single chairperson. As the faculty grew and the divisions took on more decision making, with never enough resources to satisfy the many needs, Briggs said he was saddened by ideological struggles and the rise of discipline self-interest. But he said it was inevitable.

In 1969 Rodney Briggs left UMM and was succeeded by John "Jack" Imholte, the academic dean, who was to serve as provost, then chancellor for the next two decades. Both Briggs and Imholte set as their highest priority the development of the core faculty. Because there was never enough money to hire experienced senior faculty, they recruited carefully selected young faculty. Because UMM was a college of the University of Minnesota, new faculty had to have the potential to become capable scholars, active in their fields, as well as being gifted teachers and advisors.

The campus grew in the quality of the faculty, its students, and its programs, but not in the numbers of majors or degrees. The campus refused to allow degree programs to proliferate, refused to launch professional programs, refused to offer graduate degrees. Instead campus efforts and resources were consistently focused on a traditional Bachelor of Arts curriculum, with rigorous coursework, taught by an enthusiastic faculty eager to be a part of building the new college.

*Part two will be printed in the spring issue along with Lucy Imholte's memories.*