



# University of Michigan Retirees Association

Volume 9, No. 1

September 2005

## UMRA Social Hours—Fall 2005

(Meeting times and locations are on page 2)

**September 8: Women at the University of Michigan—Progress, Prospects, and Problems.** Carol Hollenshead, Director of CEW, the Center for Education of Women and Chair of the U-M President's Advisory Committee on Women's Issues, will speak.

**October 6: UMRA Annual Meeting: Elections, State of the Organization, and Benefits.** President Doug Woolley will report on the status of UMRA, with an opportunity for retirees to ask questions and make suggestions. Treasurer Don Thiel will present the annual financial report. Then, four members of the UMRA Board of Directors will be elected from the Nominating Committee's slate and/or nominations from the floor. After the election, a representative of the U-M Benefits Office will provide an update on retiree benefits. Light refreshments will be served, and members will have ample opportunity to meet each other and renew acquaintances.

**November 10: Looking to the Future: 100 Years at the Arb and Botanical Gardens.** Robert E. Grese, Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture and Director, Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum

**December 8: Building a Better Art Museum.** James Steward, Director of the University Museum of Art and Professor of the History of Art, will review the planned expansion of Alumni Memorial Hall Museum of Art, built in 1904.

## — Elsewhere in This Issue —

- UMRA's Spring Tour of the New Life Sciences Institute.
- Senior Travel and Alternative Medicine in Recent Social Hours.
- A Retiree's Experience in Project Genesis—the WCC Reading Program.
- UMRA Hiking/Walking Group.
- A Request for Readers' Reminiscences.

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## Social Hour Details

UMRA Social Hours are held most months during the academic year on second Thursday afternoons from 3 to 5 PM. All U-M retirees and their guests are cordially invited to attend. The gatherings include light refreshments – coffee, sliced fruit, cookies, and soft drinks. Social Hour programs begin at 3:15 PM and continue until about 5:00. Announcements about programs are made in this newsletter, in the University Record *Events* notices, and at <[www.umich.edu/~hrra/umra/](http://www.umich.edu/~hrra/umra/)>, the UMRA web site.

## Meeting Location

Social Hour gatherings are held at the Best Western Motel, 2900 Jackson Road, Ann Arbor. Parking is plentiful, and easy access to the meeting room is gained by using the ballroom entrance at the rear of the building. Handicap access is good. Other venues are used from time to time. Please check the meeting notices on Page 1 to find the latest information.

### The University of Michigan Retirees Association Newsletter

2072 Administrative Services Building, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1432

The Administrative Services Building is located at the intersection of Hoover and Green Streets. Parking is available nearby.

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## UMRA Visits the Life Sciences Institute

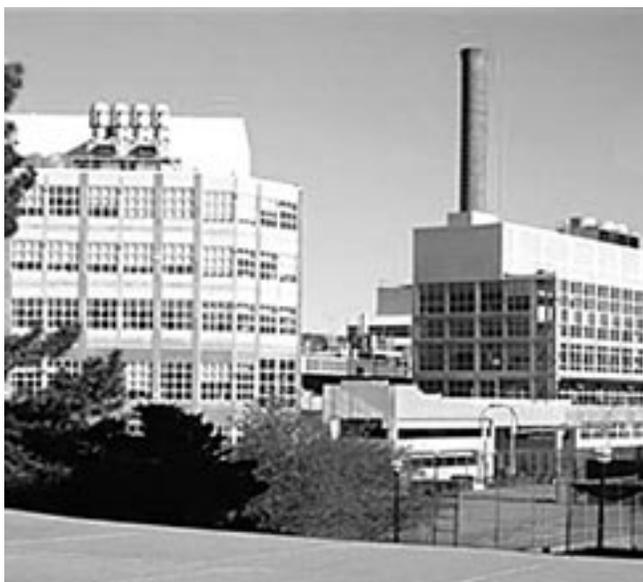


Photo by Springer

Reported by Robert Springer

Last March 31 we gathered in the glassed-in third floor lobby of the new Life Sciences Institute overlooking Palmer Field, and beyond that, Stockwell and Mosher-Jordan. Following a brief welcome and introduction by Robin Stephenson, Director of Communications and James Alford, Director of Operations, Mr. Alford began the tour by leading us through the ground level area housing the mechanical equipment supporting the facility. For an area usually thought of as “the basement” this is a large, well-lighted space housing the computer room and the equipment supplying the upper levels with fresh super-filtered air.

At this point we broke into three groups each of which toured a different level of the building. Ms. Stephenson and Mr. Alford each led one group, while Pat Urban, the Outreach Coordinator, headed the third. We saw each floor to be remarkably open. They are the size of a football field but each has but four laboratories. Without walls, the labs are open and hold technicians from two or three different groups. This is another way that interdisciplinary cooperation is encouraged. While each worker has a desk and a work bench (four to a bay), savings in expense and space are achieved by the sharing of equipment rooms. Faculty offices are not scattered through the

laboratory areas but are grouped together. The Life Sciences Institute is described as much more than just a new building. “It is a new unit of the University, a new culture, a new focus on collaborative, multi-disciplinary science that builds on U-M’s culture of collaboration.”

Ordinarily, when the University is about to open a new facility, we have an image of faculty and staff working cheek to jowl among packing boxes anxious to fill up that new space. LSI is, indeed, past that move-in phase and has been operating for one year. Still, a recruited scientist may need a semester to a full year to wind up their affairs and make the move to Ann Arbor. So, full occupancy may not be realized for five to seven years. Ms. Urban, when asked about recruiting, replied: “It’s going very well! We now have 11 scientists on board, out of an eventual 25 to 30, and there are several more offers on the table right now. So, we’re nearly halfway in a process we expect to last several more years. We’re attracting top-notch scientists interested in cross-disciplinary, collaborative science.”

Every member of the LSI faculty has an academic appointment in another department, such as the Medical School, LSA, Pharmacy and so on. The Institute faculty and staff is a blend where different kinds of scientists can bring their labs together to collaborate on common problems. This interaction is important, because the collaborations should extend well beyond the physical walls of the Institute to encompass many parts of the campus.

Currently there are three “Centers” within the Institute designed to foster collaboration within and beyond LSI. A *Center for Chemical Genomics* will bring scientists together to use chemical diversity to solve biological questions, and a *Center for Structural Biology* will study the physical structure of the smallest biological components. Third is a *Center for Personalized Medicine*, which will bring scientists and non-scientists together to focus on the impact of the biological revolution on healthcare, business and society in general.

**Continued on Page 4**

**Continued from Page 3**

What is the science about and how is this different? "We're looking at how life works at the level of molecules and cells. Many different kinds of science need to be applied in concert: math, engineering, physics, and chemistry, as well as biology. We're trying to foster a creative, collaborative process."

Will the University begin a biotech industry in Ann Arbor? Ms. Urban explained that the discoveries made in labs wouldn't serve hu-

man health if they never become products. "The Life Sciences Institute is very interested in making this sort of technology transfer a seamless part of what we do. Whether by licensing of discoveries, or possibly establishing new companies, LSI's innovations should help society, the community, and the University. LSI would very much like to see Ann Arbor become a vibrant local biotech economy such as San Diego or Boston."



Pat Urban answers questions



James Alford describes the computer facilities

Photos by Beutler

## Project Genesis - Helping Others to Read

Readers of this newsletter will recall that for the past few years UMRA has endeavored to recruit volunteers for *Project Genesis*, the reading program at the Washtenaw Community College. George Warner Williams, an UMRA member, provides a summary of his experiences as a volunteer. In addition, Nicola Geyer, the Volunteer Coordinator for Project Genesis, provides an update on the project in the hope that more volunteers will now step forward.

### **George Williams has this to say:**

Washtenaw Community College has a laudable open-enrollment policy for residents over 18 years old. This policy results in a special responsibility to help students who, for many reasons, want to enter college but don't have the reading proficiency to manage college level courses. Project Genesis and its volunteers fill a crucial role in helping these students increase their reading proficiency. At the end of June, I finished my second year of volunteering two hours a week with Project Genesis. It has been fun and a rewarding experience. Volunteers work with students one-on-one in the WCC Reading Center. The student selects material to read aloud that is at an appropriate level determined by their instructor. The volunteer reads silently and coaches the student when appropriate. This involves helping to sound out words and checking meanings of new words and passages. Coaches are available to question and to help the students read and understand the material, but the focus is on the student reading aloud and figuring out how to read and understand the material on their own. We are not conversation partners nor does Project Genesis teach English as a second language. A training session at the beginning of the semester is required for the volunteers, but preparation is not required each time the volunteer helps in the Reading Center. I've thoroughly enjoyed the work with Washtenaw students and recommend it to retirees. It's a rewarding opportunity to help students succeed in college and to meet WCC students and the faculty in this excellent program.

### **Nicola Geyer provides an update:**

The Reading Department at Washtenaw Community College is looking for people who love to read to participate in Project Genesis, a reading assistance program that provides one-on-one support for students who are working to improve their reading skills.

Due in part to the efforts of our current coaches the reading program has become a resounding success. In fact, the program has proven so successful in moving students toward college level reading that WCC is adding 10 new classes and 200 new students to the program this fall. As a result, we are seeking many new coaches to work with these students in their drive to read fluently and effectively.

Volunteer coaches help WCC students with vocabulary, phonics, and comprehension checks. Coaches and students discuss stories, and coaches provide invaluable background knowledge – all of which directly impact reading development. It is the individual attention that volunteer coaches give our students that is a major factor contributing to their success.

In the three years since our program was first offered we are finding that, in addition to completing their assignments and attending class regularly, students who work with volunteer coaches on a regular basis exceed our expectations and are able to advance two or more reading levels at the end of only one semester. By improving their reading skills students have a greater opportunity to reach their college goals, obtain better jobs, and find a love for reading.



Project Genesis is now looking for volunteers for the fall semester who can give one or two hours per week - daytime and evening hours are available - starting September 6. Please consider joining your fellow retirees in this worthwhile program! For more information, contact Nicola Geyer at (734) 477-8722 or email <[ngeyer@wccnet.edu](mailto:ngeyer@wccnet.edu)>

## Meeting Notes

The UMRA program committee, chaired by Vice President Pat Butler, organized a series of rewarding programs for the 2004-2005 Social Hours. Here are summaries of the April and May meetings. Of course, the optimum way to experience the presentations is to be present in person! To this end, the new meeting space at the Best Western Hotel provides lots of seats in a comfortable environment.

### April-Integrative Medicine

The April Social Hour featured Dr. Monica Myklebust, Medical Director of the University of Michigan Integrative Medicine Clinic (UMIMC). Her talk was entitled *Integrative Medicine – Blending the Best of Conventional and Alternative Medicines*.

The Integrative Medicine Clinic is an interdisciplinary program and part of the U-M Health System committed to the thoughtful and compassionate integration of complementary therapies with conventional medicine through the activities of research, education, clinical services, and community partnerships. As a healing-oriented approach to medical care, integrative medicine takes into account the whole person (body, mind, spirit, and emotion), including all aspects of lifestyle. It emphasizes therapeutic relationships and uses both conventional and alternative therapies. The UMIMC has ties to the Program on Integrative Medicine at the University of Arizona, directed by the celebrated Dr. Andrew Weil.

The Center is located in the U-M Briarwood Family Practice facility, and is staffed by doctors certified in Family Medicine together with professional health-care support personnel. Therapies offered are integrative medicine consultation, anthropomorphic medicine, holistic women's health, an integrative pharmacy, holistic nutrition, massage therapy, and acupuncture.

Appointments can be scheduled by calling (734) 998-6649. The web site is [www.med.umich.edu/umim/index.html](http://www.med.umich.edu/umim/index.html).

### May-Senior Travel

The May meeting brought forth a large audience, and the fruit and cookies at the refreshments table were consumed with gusto.

Speaker Fred Beutler presented a pleasing variation on the typical travelogue. He entitled his talk "A Traveling Senior Encounters India."

Instead of dwelling entirely on the fascinating experiences derived from a trip to India, Beutler described some of the difficulties typically encountered by senior citizens (and even by the youthful) when travel abroad is undertaken. These include, but are not limited to, crowded airports, slow security searches, long airplane flights in uncomfortable seats, food and lodging difficulties, and so on. However, in the case of this journey, the experiences he enjoyed in India more than made up for the inconveniences of travel. Some of the awe-inspiring sights of India were presented to the audience in a fine set of photographs taken during the trip.

Beutler provided his perspective on touring India as a senior citizen, describing adventures, exotic places, safety precautions, religious practices, ideas and concepts, food, the climate, roads, monsoons, and elephant rides. He certainly kept the attention of his audience, and the audience responded with questions and comments.

Interesting comments were put forth by people in the audience who have long personal acquaintance with India – having been born there, having lived there, or by having made frequent visits.

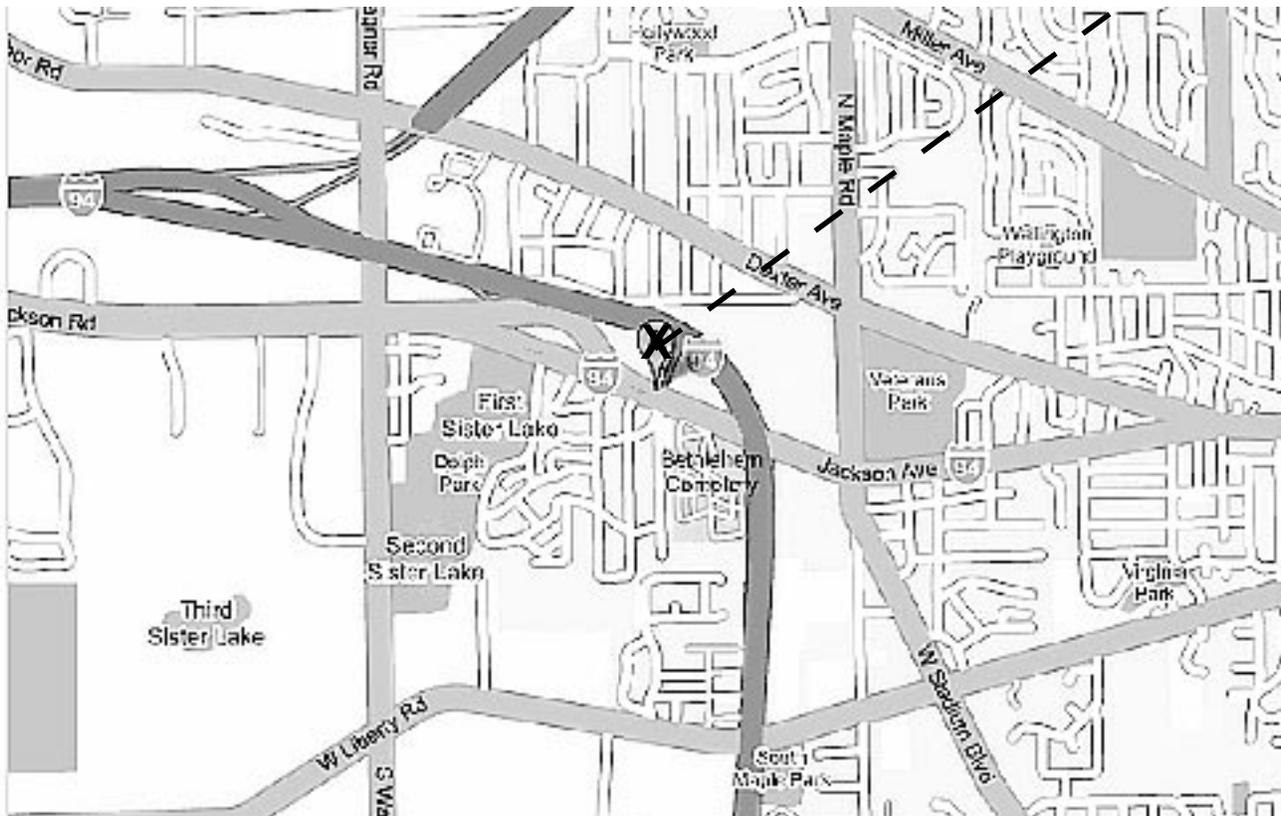
## Announcing an Opportunity for (Another?) 15 Minutes of Fame!

What special events do you remember from your University of Michigan career?

- Were you on campus for the Haven Hall fire?
- Or when part of the Field House roof blew away?
- Were you around in the mid-60s when Washtenaw County Sheriff Harvey lumbered up to a student demonstration in an armored car?
- Or when the same sheriff assigned seven patrol cars to confront a UFO sighted near Dexter? (The UFO consisted of glowing swamp gas...)
- Or when the old Econ Building burned down on Christmas Eve, 1980?
- Or when the Geography Department was abolished in 1982?

There are dozens of stories that UMRA people can share. Reminiscences about department or staff people or comments about the student body are also welcome. So, in future issues this Newsletter will publish some of the best. Please send your story (200 words or less) to the newsletter editor, by mail or e-mail using the address on Page 2.

**The Best Western Motel is located at 2900 Jackson Avenue. — ➤**  
**The Ballroom entrance at the rear is closest to our meeting room, / ➤**



Don Thiel, UMRA Treasurer, sends this reminder: "UMRA dues remain \$7.50 for the coming year! You should already have the renewal letter or will have it shortly. Please return your dues to 2072 Ad Services Building, 1009 Green St., 48109-1432"

## **The UMRA Hiking/Walking Group**

Sandy Sipkin, leader of the group, advises us that the next UMRA outing will be held on Wednesday, September 21st at 10 AM. She will send an e-mail to the present hiking/walking group members with details about where the trek will be held and where to meet. UMRA members interested in learning about or joining the group can call Sandy at (734) 747-8785 or email her at "Sandra Sipkin" <ssipkin@comcast.net>. Ask to be placed on her announcement list.

**Remember the October 8 Annual Meeting!**  
**See page 1 for details**