



University of Michigan Retirees Association

Volume 10, No. 2

November—December 2006

Social Hour Programs

- December 14** **David Winter**
Professor of Psychology
will speak on “Speer’s Plan for Nazi Berlin.”
- January 11** **Theresa Sullivan**
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs,
will speak on Education in the 21st Century
- February 8** **Professor Ralph Williams**
will present “To Double Business Bound: Shakespeare and
The Divided Will”

Results of the October Board of Directors Election

The terms of four members [Robert Green, George Williams, Don Thiel, Gene Smith] of UMRA’s Board of Directors were ending. At the October 12, 2006 UMRA Annual Meeting the membership approved the election/re-election of Robert Green, George Williams, Don Thiel and Ellen Woodman.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Report of BigTen Retirees meeting at Purdue, August 2006.
- For how long should one drive an automobile?
- In Memoriam.
- Seasonal thoughts.

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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 UM retirees and their guests are cordially invited to attend. The gatherings usually include light refreshments—coffee, sliced fruit, cookies, and soft drinks. Social Hour programs begin at 3:15 PM and continue until about 5:00 PM. Announcements about speakers and programs are made in this newsletter, in University Record *Events* notices, and at <www.umich.edu/~hrraa/umra>, the UMRA web site.

Meeting Locations

Social Hour gatherings are held at the Best Western Hotel, 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 will be 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

G-250 Wolverine Tower, 3003 South State, 48109

The Wolverine Tower building is located at the intersection of
Eisenhower Blvd. and S. State St.. Parking is available nearby.

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REPORT ON BIG 10 RETIREES ASSOCIATION CONFERENCE

PURDUE UNIVERSITY, AUGUST 25-27, 2006

REPORT BY FRED BEUTLER

Upon our arrival at the Purdue Union Club Hotel, we were greeted with warmth and enthusiasm. One of the Purdue people, ignoring our protests, even insisted on carrying our luggage to our room. We were informed that the Boilermaker Special was just about to take a tour of the campus, so we were able to see (and appreciate) the beauty of this University.

Except for Minnesota and Northwestern, all the Big Ten schools were represented at the meeting. There were a total of 23 delegates (not counting those from Purdue), 13 of whom brought spouses. The conference program as mailed was updated by the meticulously planned revised Agenda. The twin themes were retirement housing and medical benefits.

As the dinner speaker Friday evening, Senior Vice-president for Advancement Blackwelder spoke on the relationship of PURA to the University, which is entirely supported by Purdue. His relationship to PURA is a close and positive one. He plays a proactive role on PURA's governing board, and is active in obtaining resources for PURA. On the other hand, retirees work on the United Fund with the administration, and volunteer in staffing a help desk and the like. Unlike our Development Office, Purdue is vitally concerned with giving by its retirees. Specifically, Vice-president Blackwelder reported that deferred giving by retirees was up sharply.

Among the information of interest to me, I noted that PURA was not incorporated; it is a creature of the university itself; there are no dues, and all retirees are automatically members. As an example of direct support, I observed that the University's IT support staff tended to the audio visual equipment.

Saturday morning we heard about alternative approaches to senior living. Services continue to be labor intensive whereas technology could provide remote monitoring of activities as well as vital signs. Staffing may become the major problem in the future. Different generations have different expectations, so that the baby boom-

ers may require different facilities from our generation. Purdue has a loose association with a local retirement community. Students help with the fitness center and with pharmacy matters.

Later that morning we participated in an exercise that divided us into three groups. One group dealt with communications and association committees, the second with travel and programs, and the third with university relations and retirement planning. I opted for the third group.

In our group, each delegate described the mode of association at his/her institution. Most notable was the diversity of retirement association relationships with their home institutions. At one extreme, PURA is an integral part of the university structure; at the other is Indiana, which is not only free-standing but also received no assistance (or recognition) from Indiana University. Most associations, however, received at least some support from their universities. The Ohio State University association is treated most generously; it received an annual stipend of \$25,000 plus extensive help in the form of secretarial services, publishing and mailing, space, etc.

In my group, there was barely time to complete the first portion of this project, which was occasionally diverted by irrelevant questions. Apparently, the other groups had similar experiences, for when we came together to report, it became evident that the session had degenerated into a "show and tell" discussion. All in all, this was the least productive session.

With respect to travel and activities, I brought up the question of legal liability, which most associations seem to ignore. Some who were part of their institution felt that they would be protected by the institution. One group used signed waivers in the (I believe false) notion that this would protect them from lawsuits.

Saturday afternoon was devoted to a campus tour that included the Ross-Ade Stadium, the President's House, a new high tech center,

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and one of the two retirement homes. The stadium embodies what Bill Martin is only beginning to implement – private boxes and special seating areas. We were received graciously by the President’s wife, and admired the building and wooded setting. The tech center involves Purdue in cutting-edge research areas such as nanotechnology. The retirement center is the one referred to previously; we viewed a typical retirement apartment, the fitness center, and some of the public areas.

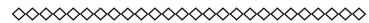
The first Sunday morning presentation began with a discussion of the future of Medicare, and then proceeded to explain the mysteries of Medicare D and its relevance to retiree drug benefits. The presenters have been acting as consultants to PURA, which has been negotiating on behalf of its members (who are not provided with any medical benefits through the university). These considerations are also of practical interest to the retirees of several institutions, but less so for those of The University of Michigan.

In the second morning session, a representative of each University was given the opportunity to describe medical benefits at his/her institution. Most interesting was the PURA situation. It was claimed that the Purdue retirement benefits were exceptionally generous, which compensates for the lack of medical benefits for retirees. With some professional help (see above), PURA has taken the initiative to contract for group medical insurance.

A Big 10 Business Meeting concluded the Agenda. The sequence of host schools was reaffirmed – Penn State next year in particular. It was voted that the specific dates for future meetings be left to be decided by the host institution. The dates for the 2007 meeting at Penn State will be August 17-19. It was emphasized that early mailings to several retirees at each institution were essential to a good attendance.

As a final gesture of “passing the gavel”, the traditional stuffed monkey was put on the back of the PSU representative, Ralph Mumma.

Other business discussions centered on communications among the respective associations. The role of the University of Michigan in maintaining the Big 10 web page was reaffirmed. It was urged that the linked web pages of the respective associations be kept up to date, so that these links could serve to distribute accurate and up-to-date information on each retiree association.



Addendum to Report of Fred Beutler on the Big Ten Retirees Association Meeting at Purdue University

By Patricia M. Butler

Fred Beutler’s excellent report covers the Conference very well. There is no need for me to cover that information again. I attended the Travel Opportunities and Programming discussion group. As has been reported in the past, OSU has extensive travel and program opportunities. They also have staff who take all reservations, etc. Other universities have some travel and somewhat regular programs. Several Retiree Associations offer tax seminars, or programs on wills, Living Wills and Power of Attorney information. OSU offers a Safe Driving for Seniors seminar through the AARP.

Spouses of attendees were treated to a morning with Chef Emeritus Hubert Schmiender. He demonstrated the preparation of “Party Foods.” They made deviled egg chickens, vases and flowers, and turkey and potato mushrooms and roses. Purdue has a culinary arts program. All attending agreed that it was fun and the deviled chickens and vase, etc. were used at the next meal.

IS THERE AN AGE TOO OLD TO DRIVE?

Advancing age brings many changes. Perhaps our second most difficult challenge comes from the combustible engine which many of us consider a personal vital organ without which we cannot survive in our daily life. Yet sooner or later we may be faced with the need to answer the question: should I give up driving? The National Institute on Aging estimates that more than 600,000 people age 70 or older stop driving each year, usually around age 85.

But some of us take life-threatening risks every time we get into a car because we view the loss of our ability to drive as almost the worst catastrophe that can befall us. How and when can we know whether it is time to give up our driver's license? The answer: Take a Course!

Several organizations provide such evaluation for mature drivers.

1. AARP [American Association of Retired Persons] offers an 8-hour Driver Safety Course in two 4-hour sessions spanning two days. There is a fee but the course is open to all regardless of AARP membership. Topics covered include

- Vision and hearing changes
- Effects of medication
- Reaction-time changes

- Left turns and other right-of-way issues
- New laws and their effects
- Hazardous driving situations

To obtain more information one should contact AARP at 1-888-227-7669.

2. The Michigan Chapter of the Automobile Association of America, commonly known as "Triple A" has prepared a computer disk which has instruction materials with hints for safe driving for older drivers. The disk also includes an interactive component which helps evaluate the driver's skills. It is available for \$3 from AAA.

3. The Michigan Resource Center for Health and Safety offers a "Defensive Driving Program" which can also be used to help evaluate our driving skills as we age. They can be contacted by phone at 1-800-487-6709.

In cases of great concern about a senior's ability to safely drive a vehicle, one may contact any Michigan Secretary of State Office and alert them to the suspected problem. If circumstances warrant, the senior driver may be required to take a road test which will determine whether the driver's license is still appropriate or whether it should be suspended.

IN MEMORIAM

The University of Michigan Retirees Association wishes to honor the memory of those members who served the University with their devotion and dedication. [Please alert one of the listed UMRA contacts to include a name in future issues of the Newsletter.]

Maria Holm Coyle April 20, 2006 Retired from the Office of the Registrar
Hazel Hubbard June 4, 2006 Retired from the Diploma Office

Detroit Free Press readers of decades ago may remember the inclusion of a daily poem by Edgar A. Guest. Although some called him a “versifier” rather than “poet” because of his homespun style, with the advent of the holiday season which follows on the heels of an often bitterly contested election campaign, perhaps it is appropriate to at least momentarily return to a simpler spirit. So, here are two of his most popular poems from yesteryear.

Home

Edgar Guest

It takes a heap o’ livin in a house t’ make it home,
A heap o’ sun an’ shadder, an’ ye sometimes have t’ roam
Afore ye really ‘preciate the things ye lef’ behind,
An’ hunger fer ‘em somehow, with ‘em allus on yer mind.
It don’t make any difference how rich ye get t’ be,
How much yer chairs an’ tables cost, how great yer luxury;
It ain’t home t’ ye, though it be the palace of a king,
Until somehow yer soul is sort o’ wrapped round everything.

Home ain’t a place that gold can buy or get up in a minute;
Afore it’s home there’s got t’ be a heap o’ living in it;
Within the walls there’s got t’ be some babies born, and then
Right there ye’ve got t’ bring ‘em up t’ women good, an’ men;
And gradjerly, as time goes on, ye find ye wouldn’t part
With anything they ever used – they’ve grown into yer heart:
The old high chairs, the playthings, too, the little shoes they wore
Ye hoard; an’ if ye could ye’d keep the thumb marks on the door.

Ye’ve got t’ weep t’ make it home, ye’ve got to sit an’ sigh
An’ watch beside a loved one’s bed, an’ know that Death is nigh;
An’ in the stillness o’ the night t’ see Death’s angel come,
An’ close the eyes o’ her that smiled,
an’ leave her sweet voice dumb.
Fer these are scenes that grip the heart,
An’ when yer tears are dried,
Ye find the home is dearer than it was, an’ sanctified;
An’ tuggin’ at ye always are the pleasant memories
O’ her that was an’ is no more – ye can’t escape from these.

Ye’ve got t’ sing an’ dance fer years, ye’ve got t’ romp an’ play,
An’ learn t’ love the things ye have by usin’ ‘em each day;
Even the roses ‘round the porch must blossom year by year
Afore they ‘come a part o’ ye, suggestin’ someone dear
Who used t’ love ‘em long ago, an’ trained ‘em jes’ t’ run
The way they do, so’s they would get the mornin’ sun;
Ye’ve got to love each brick an’ stone from cellar up t’ dome:
It take a heap o’ livin in a house t’ make it home.

It Couldn't Be Done

Edgar Guest

Somebody said that it couldn't be done,
But he with a chuckle replied
That "maybe it couldn't," but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

Somebody scoffed: "Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it";
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat,
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.

There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure;
There are thousands to point out to you, one by one,
The dangers that await to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start to sing as you tackle the thing
That "cannot be done," and you'll do it.

UMRA HIKING GROUP

Sandy Sipkin is the UMRA organizer of a hiking group. Those interested and not yet on her email list can contact her at <ssipkin@comcast.net> or by phone at 734-747-8785 for further information.