



# University of Michigan Retirees Association

Volume 11, No. 1

August 2008

## Social Hour Programs

**September 11:** Percy Bates, Professor of Education and Director, Program for Education Opportunity, School of Education, will discuss “Are college athletes getting the best education possible?”

**October 16:** Annual UMRA Membership Meeting, including elections. There will be two presentations: Faye Wiseley, local rep. for "Pride and Honor," will discuss flights to Washington DC to see the World War II Memorial and other monuments for Veterans. Finally, Marty Eichstadt, of the Benefits Office, will conduct a question/answer session on U-M's health plans for 2009.

**November 13:** To be announced.

**December 11:** Brian Coppola, Professor of Chemistry, will speak on “Everything I thought China was, was wrong and still is.”

## IN THIS ISSUE

- A report of the 2007 UMRA-sponsored Health Day
- Noting the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Housing Bureau for Seniors and announcing their Aging in Place conference.
- Items dealing with the economic problems facing an aging population – e.g., gas prices, alternative energy sources, making and losing money.
- Running for charity and running/walking for health.
- America's healthiest places to live – we're the best!
- Advice from a former President.
- Establishing associate membership in UMRA.

Thursday, September 18, 2008 is the date for the annual UM Retirees Health Fair. UM Benefits Office experts will discuss changes in the retirees' benefits program for 2009. Plans are still being finalized and more information will appear in the University Record as well as in a mailing to be sent to all UM retirees.

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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 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.hr.umich.edu/umra/](http://www.hr.umich.edu/umra/)>, the UMRA web site.

## Meeting Location

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, Ann Arbor MI 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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## **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE UMRA CONSTITUTION**

The proposed change to the UMRA CONSTITUTION that follows affects ARTICLE III: Section 3, where qualifications for membership in UMRA are listed. It will allow the addition of the category ASSOCIATE MEMBER. Requests have been received from individuals who were formerly employed by the University, usually now of retirement age, that they be deemed eligible to join the Association and to pay dues but not be eligible to vote.

### **PRESENT WORDING:**

**ARTICLE III. SECTION 3 MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION:** The following persons shall be eligible for membership in the Association: all retirees of the University of Michigan, as well as the spouses of retirees, the spouses of deceased retirees and the spouses of persons who died while employed by the University of Michigan. Members of the Association are those persons eligible for membership who have paid dues as required by the Board, as well as those persons whose membership in the University of Michigan Annuitants' Association, an incorporated organization of which this Association is an outgrowth, remains valid according the rules of that organization.

### **PROPOSED DELETION AND ADDITION**

**DELETE:** as well those persons whose membership in the University of Michigan Annuitants' Association, an incorporated organization of which this Association is an outgrowth, remains valid according to the rules of that organization.

**ADD:** Faculty and staff, who were formerly employed by the University but not retired from it, who are now retired, will be eligible to become Associate Members, and will be charged a yearly fee equal to the UMRA dues. The Associate members will be eligible to participate in UMRA programs but will not be accorded the vote.

## **ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS**

The term of office for the following Board members will end at the business meeting on October 16,

Donald Brown  
Patricia Butler  
Larry Katz  
Lawrence Jones.

Any members,, interested in serving on the Board may contact any of the present Board members to let us know. The Board members listed above may continue to serve if reelected.



# AMERICA'S HEALTHIEST HOMETOWN

Recently, grim news has been no stranger to Michigan's psyche, with the state experiencing the highest unemployment rate in the U.S., one of the worst U.S. home foreclosure rates, the deepening slump in the auto industry, and surging prices for energy and food. Rising above this gloom is a very bright glow of sunshine – courtesy of the September-October 2008 issue of the AARP Magazine. Their lead story lists their selections for the ten healthiest American communities and, leading the pack, ranked at Number One, is our own Ann Arbor.

The remaining cities, listed in order are (2) Honolulu, Hawaii; (3) Madison, Wisconsin; (4) Santa Fe, New Mexico; (5) Fargo, North Dakota; (6) Boulder, Colorado; (7) Charlottesville, Virginia; (8) Minneapolis-St.Paul-Bloomington, Minnesota; (9) San Francisco Bay Area, California; and (10) Naples-Marco Island, Florida.

There are two interesting observations that come to mind from an examination of this list: (i) the large number of college-university towns; and (ii) the relatively few snowbird refugee cities. Academic centers perforce include a significant number of younger inhabitants who often inject their youth and enthusiasms into the area and thereby avoid the feeling of stagnation sometimes present in a retirement community. The relaxed pace of life in southern cities is mirrored by the highest rates of obesity and chronic disease in the nation.

In order to minimize the subjectivity of such a list, AARP researchers looked at 26 criteria in addition to the physical characteristics of each metropolitan area studied. These included:

Life expectancy	Percentage getting regular exercise
Physicians per capita	Adequate emotional support
General practitioners per capita	Percentage walking, biking to work
Cardiologists per capita	Percentage satisfied with life
Oncologists per capita	Teaching hospitals per capita
Percentage getting regular checkups	Hospital beds per capita
Percentage with health plans	Overall mortality
Stress index (rates of divorce, suicide)	Mortality rates of heart disease
Percentage that smokes	Mortality rates of cancer
Rates of diabetes	Percentage with trouble affording healthcare
Healthy eating habits	Rates of hypertension
Existence of smoke free legislation	Cholesterol rates
Alcohol consumption	Obesity rates

Finally, the presence of the UM Medical Center [one of the largest university medical centers in the world] as well as St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, provide seniors with confidence in the availability of quality medical care. Ann Arbor has 580 physicians per 100,000 people, compared with the U.S. average of 228

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## Healthy Snacking

The urge to munch on something is natural and can even become nutritious if we avoid high-fat, high-cholesterol junk food. Some items that are actually good for us include: Energy bars. Choose brands high in fiber (at least 4 grams), low in fat and sugar, with 5-10 grams of protein. Nuts. Dry-roasted walnuts, cashews peanuts and almonds are loaded with protein and healthy fats. Dried fruit. These are rich in sweetness, fiber and antioxidants. Cheese. Small, individually packaged servings of low-fat string cheeses don't need immediate refrigeration and contain calcium and protein. Apples/oranges etc. Not only do these take the edge off hunger, fresh fruits are a valuable source of antioxidants.

# AN ECONOMIC SMORGASBORD

## The Price of Gas

Although motorists have recently benefited from a slight drop in energy prices, rapid economic growth in Asia portends an inevitable increasing demand for petroleum. The price of gasoline has not only outraged Americans, but it has often wrought economic havoc on many sufferers and resulted in some curious political responses in this election year. There are still many in denial about the ongoing availability of oil reserves. A recent (7/25/08) Ann Arbor News story quoted the U.S. Geological Survey as saying the Arctic may contain as much as a fifth of the world's yet-to-be-discovered oil, with a possible yield of 90 billion barrels of oil. However, with current world oil consumption of 86 million barrels of oil per day, the "bonanza" of 90 billion barrels shrinks to a 3-year supply! And if that truly represents one fifth of all the oil yet-to-be-discovered, only about a 15 year supply lies ahead.

## An Alternative Energy Source?

Interestingly, in view of the previous item, is a story which appeared just three days later (7/28/08) in the same paper. This story, however, is almost too serendipitous and tells of scientist Carl Hodges efforts to grow plants for food and biofuel, using seawater. The plant is salicornia, a halophyte, or salt-loving plant that thrives in heat and poor soil. It is a succulent annual herb which produces oil-rich seeds which can be pressed into liquid biofuel and whose tubular stems can be dried and used as a solid fuel. Studies indicate that salicornia can produce 143 gallons of

biofuel per acre, compared with 48 gallons from soybeans. NASA has estimated that halophytes planted over an area the size of the Sahara Desert could supply more than 90% of the world's energy needs. A 1,000 acre pilot project is currently under development in rural Sonora in Mexico. One final advantage is that halophyte production would have no adverse effects on world food markets as the corn-based ethanol conversion has apparently had.

## Making or Losing Money

With the second quarter fiscal reports of many companies now being reported, the contrast between the fortunes in the auto industry and the oil industry could hardly be more dramatic. At the same time that General Motors was reporting a 2nd quarter loss of \$15 billion, Exxon Mobil's 2nd quarter profits reached \$11.68 billion – the largest profit by any U.S. corporation.

## Bagging It

UMRA members may recall grocery shopping trips of yesteryear which included the ubiquitous "shopping bag". These were generally made of a durable fabric which folded easily and unfolded to a size sufficient for significant grocery purchases. Paper bags were indeed available, but retailers were sparing in their use. And, of course, plastic bags were only a distant gleam. Waste not, want not kept the landfills free of plastic debris, and plastic had not yet begun its disastrous toll on creatures of the sea. A silver lining in the skyrocketing price of oil may be a significant decline in the availability and use of plastic bags. Oil will be needed for fuel, not disposable conveniences.

### **Housing Bureau for Seniors:**

Since 1983, the Housing Bureau of Seniors has helped more than 13,000 older adults and their families throughout Washtenaw County. Programs deal with home sharing, eviction and foreclosure prevention, and housing counseling. A part of the University of Michigan Health System, it is not-for-profit and charges no fee. The 4th annual *Ageing in Place* program will take place in November. Call 734-998-9339 or see [www.med.umich.edu/seniors/](http://www.med.umich.edu/seniors/) for details.

# Deep Vein Thrombosis

Slowing down and reduced physical activity often accompany advancing years, so seniors need to be aware of potential problems aggravated by prolonged inactivity. Deep vein thrombosis (DVT) happens when a clot (or thrombus) impedes the flow of blood through a vein deep within our muscles, usually in calf or thigh muscles. Blood clotting is a natural and protective mechanism the body employs to prevent bleeding, but it can also become dangerous under certain circumstances.

After a long period of immobility, such as sitting in a plane, bus, or train, be on the lookout for swelling or cramps in one leg or bruising behind the knee. One DVT complications that can result is pulmonary embolism which can happen if a piece of the blood clot breaks off, makes its way to the lungs, and restricts blood flow there. Symptoms of DVT may not occur for several days; these can include shortness of breath, rapid breathing, fever, coughing up

blood, and fainting. If these occur, seek medical help immediately.

There are some things that can help prevent a DVT: (1) avoid dehydration by drinking plenty of fluids. Dehydration causes blood to thicken and blood vessels to narrow. Some symptoms include dizziness or disorientation and muscle weakness. (2) modest exercise: get up and stretch your legs. When flying, walk the aisles if possible. If you must remain seated, take a few minutes every hour and flex your calves and toes and try to stretch. (3) avoid sitting with legs crossed for more than a few minutes. (4) avoid wearing anything (knee braces, tight socks or stockings) that might hamper circulation.

People with the highest risk for a DVT include: people over 60, cigarette smokers, overweight individuals, people on hormone therapy, those undergoing cancer treatment, those with other medical conditions, such as varicose veins.

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## SOME ADVICE FROM IKE

With less than 100 days before the 2008 Presidential election, amidst the barrage of competing television attack ads, it may be salutary to hearken back to the parting advice of a President, indeed a Republican President, as he prepared to leave office in January 1961. The nation was in the midst of a frightening Cold War, but partisanship did not prevent bipartisan cooperation to achieve national goals. Dwight Eisenhower was a true military hero of World War II. His cautionary advice was prophetic and his emphasis on cooperation remains a lesson for us

"Crises there will continue to be. In meeting them, whether foreign or domestic, great or small, there is a recurring temptation to feel that some spectacular and costly action could become the miraculous solution to all current difficulties. A huge increase in the newer elements of our defenses; development of unrealistic programs to cure every ill in agriculture; a dramatic expansion in basic and applied research – these and many other possibilities, each possibly promising in itself, may be suggested as the only way to the road we wish to travel.

"But each proposal must be weighed in light of a broader consideration; the need to maintain balance in and among national programs – balance between the private and public economy, balance between the cost and hoped for advantages – balance between the clearly necessary and the comfortably desirable; balance between our essential requirements as a nation and the duties imposed by the nation upon the individual; balance between the actions of the moment and the national welfare of the future. Good judgment seeks balance and progress; lack of it eventually finds imbalance and frustration. "

## Have you changed your address or e-mail?

1. Print new information below.
2. Cut out this form and your address label.
3. Mail both to the UMRA address shown by your mail address.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

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