

# RAQ *news*



The year since our last AGM has been an eventful one for RAQ with several noted successes, all attributable to hard-working and enthusiastic members of council. Our numbers have increased somewhat, and we expect that they will continue to grow with the council's intensified focus on membership. Sadly, though, a number of valued members have died, and we grieve with their families and friends.

RAQ's affiliations, both within and outside the university, have also grown and strengthened during this year. Patrick Oosthuizen has settled into the new role of RAQ Senate observer with enthusiasm and wisdom; Teri Shearer, our official representative in the provost's office, is always supportive in her participation in RAQ events and in her counsel. A number of RAQ members have responded to the university's call for academic and professional volunteers: as readers of scholarship applications and as mentors for graduate students, for example. These and other opportunities occur throughout the year, and I encourage you to participate in these valued roles whenever you can.

As Sandra Olney will report, the new model of event planning is working well. We've had several popular and successful events, each organized by an individual RAQ member. Two event highlights were the fall reception honouring John Meisel and introducing Queen's new provost, Benoit Bacon, and the fall continuation of Agnes Herzberg's very popular Monday Morning Forums. Although Agnes took a rest in the spring, she is busily planning a fall

series that promises to be varied, interesting and informative. These forums give us all an opportunity to continue our pursuit of understanding, and RAQ is very grateful to Dr. Herzberg for the energy and expertise she puts into planning and overseeing these events.

Our national association CURAC has been active this year as well, focusing, among other things, on comparing retiree benefits in all its member institutions, lobbying the federal government to concentrate on improved senior health care and negotiating several options for improved travel and medical benefits for its members. George Brandie, who will be our representative at the CURAC AGM this month, will give us details in his report.

You will have seen Diane Duttle's report on the success of our 175<sup>th</sup> Anniversary bursary campaign that has reached 102% of its original goal. We should know soon who the first recipient of the award is, and we hope that RAQ members, especially new ones, will continue to contribute to the fund so that we can continue our support of needy students for a longer period than 5 years. The fund will remain operative as long as it has enough money to cover at least one award a year.

RAQ members who rely on our newsletter and website to keep up with the organization's activities and affiliations have seen a fresh newsletter design and an improved website. We are fortunate to have Don Robinson as our webmaster and to have had Diane Duttle as the newsletter editor. Both have managed RAQ communications efficiently and effectively. Don is a marvel at keeping the website up to date, responding to corrections and suggestions immediately.

## Presidential News and Views

## Pension and Benefits Report

On the pension front, there is positive news to report: **for the first eight months of this pension year (September 1, 2016, to April 30, 2017) the investment return on the plan's assets was +7.66%**. De-

spite the ups and downs of markets, the investments produced another net gain over last month. We hope (but cannot guarantee) that the remaining four months of the pension year will produce added gains.

Negotiations on a multi-university pension plan are continuing, led by employee unions and administrations from Queen's, University of Guelph, and University of Toronto. The negotiators hope to finalize the plan design and governance structure by summer's end. If those negotiations reach a successful conclusion, Bob Weisnagel believes that the results would then be explained to, and discussed with, plan members, including retirees. Ultimately any university cannot go forward to a new plan without the agreement of its administration and a positive vote by members of its current plan. The government has indicated continuation would require the approval of two-thirds of employee plan members and less than one-third disapproval by its pensioners and deferred vested members. Details of how such votes would be conducted have yet to be released. This process was also discussed in an article in Queen's Gazette in March (see <http://www.queensu.ca/gazette/stories/pension-plan-project-takes-another-step-forward> ).

On the benefits front, we can respond to rumours that new retirees will lose all library privileges and "@queensu.ca" email privileges. These rumours are NOT ACCURATE.

Faculty and staff retirees will continue to have library borrowing privileges and access to library e-resources while on campus (but not from off-campus locations). Longer-term retirees who have retiree cards can get those cards validated as library cards each year at

the main desk of Stauffer Library, at no charge. New retirees (who no longer get retiree cards) can obtain a library card at the main desk of Stauffer Library, again at no charge. Cards are valid for a year, and may be renewed indefinitely. We have asked that the Queen's libraries website add a section explicitly for Queen's retirees, faculty and staff.

The new email policy, effective January 1, 2017, is as follows:

All retired faculty and retired staff who retired before January 1, 2017, may retain their "@queensu.ca" email accounts if they so desire. The accounts will remain active provided they are accessed at least once a year and provided the account owner changes the secure password at least once a year. Faculty members who retired after December 31, 2016, may retain their "@queensu.ca" email accounts for as long as they continue to use them.

However, staff who retired after December 31, 2016, will lose access to "@queensu.ca" email accounts as of their date of retirement. We believe that this discrimination is unjust and the RAQ Executive will be pressing for its removal at meetings with Vice-Principal (Operations and Finance) Donna Janiec before the end of May. Should the policy not change, ITServices will provide advanced notice to staff members whose "@queensu.ca" email accounts are to be "deprovisioned" so that they will have time to make other arrangements.

We hope that readers have had a chance to review the comparison of our retiree benefits with those at other post-secondary institutions across Canada. That comparison is accessible on our website (<http://www.queensu.ca/retirees>) on the Home Page News item for Mar. 9.

While that comparison was being performed, some questions (things not covered in the CURAC survey) came to mind – questions about how relationship changes (new marriage, separation, or death) might affect retiree benefits.

Those questions were sent to Ms. Diane Pointer, Director, Total Compensation at Queen's Human Resources, who was kind enough to send these replies:

**1. If a Queen's retiree marries after retirement, would any spousal/family benefits apply to the "new family"? I believe that there could be no change to the pension arrangements agreed to at retirement.**

A: If a retiree remarries after retirement, they are entitled to add their new spouse/dependents through a life event within 31 days of the marriage\*. The retiree booklet on the Queen's website (<http://queensu.ca/humanresources/wellness-accessibility/employee-benefits/group-insurance-benefits/benefit-coverage/retiree-benefits>), states it as such "Dependent's coverage begins on the same date insurance starts or as of the date a dependent is acquired, unless the dependent (other than a newborn infant) is confined in a hospital on that date; in this case, coverage begins as of the date of discharge from hospital. If dependents are acquired after being insured, the Human Resources Department must be notified within 31 days in order that coverage may be arranged."

(\*See response in Q#3 below as there is a related condition that may have impact above, depending on the circumstances.)

The Pension Services unit has confirmed that once the pension has begun, there can be no changes to it, (i.e. if a retiree remarries, the retiree cannot change the pension option they elected at the time of retirement).

**2. If a primary retiree dies, what happens to the spousal/family benefits that applied before the person's death?**

A: In the event that the retiree dies before the spouse, the spouse will be offered survivor benefits. This would typically include Supplementary Medical and/or Semi-Private Hospital benefits. The benefits offered are the same as those in place before the retiree's passing. That means, if the retiree only had Supplementary Medical, only Supplementary Medical will be offered to the surviving spouse. If there are dependent children; they may be maintained under the surviving spouse coverage.

**3. Same question if there is a post-retirement breakdown of a relationship (separation, divorce).**

A: The benefits offered to a spouse once a divorce has been finalized would all depend on the court order. The university is able to maintain a former spouse on the benefits; provided that they have a court order that requires them to do so (proof must be submitted to Queen's). For separation; under the terms of our GWL contract, the spouse is still considered legal spouse; therefore they can continue to be maintained under the benefits. Before a spouse is removed from the benefits due to marriage breakdown, we always recommend employees/retirees consult legal counsel. If an employee/retiree removes the spouse before a divorce is finalized and a court order requires the spouse to be maintained, they cannot be re-added to the Queen's plan at that later date thereby requiring the employee/retiree to obtain alternate coverage outside of Queen's for their spouse. The Queen's plan only permits one spouse on the plan. If a retiree is required to maintain their former spouse, and retiree re-marries they will not be able to add the new spouse to the plan unless a court order allows the university to remove the former spouse.

January 2017

Thanks to Bob Weisnagel and Diane Pointer for their assistance in providing material for this report.

The RAQ Pension and Benefits Committee will continue to monitor developments and report on them to you. As always, the Committee welcomes questions and comments from members of RAQ.

**GEORGE BRANDIE (Chair), CHRIS CHAPLER, BRUCE HUTCHINSON, SUE MIKLAS, JOYCE ZAKOS**

(President's report continued from page 1)

One of the most successful events of the past year is the half-day Retreat organized for Council members and other interested participants on March 13, organized and facilitated by Donna Lounsbury. The purpose of the morning was to rethink RAQ's priorities and to develop a road map for the future, including specific action plans that will move us towards the achievement of those priorities. Nine council members and eleven others in four separate groups considered the future of RAQ in relation to four issues: growing membership; sustaining and engaging membership; connecting members to the university; and "thinking outside the box" – looking at new ways to energize the association. In some ways, all of the groups "thought outside the box" and all came up with similar suggestions. A basic theme of the findings was *connection*, with each other, with the university, with other groups and organizations, and with the community. Groups encouraged more extensive use of social media (Twitter and Facebook, for example) and more effective use of electronic communication (email and website links).

Specific actions arising from this strategic planning will be forthcoming as the new council begins its year. Some of the plans are to seek ex-officio representation with main union bargaining units at Queen's in order to strengthen our benefit plan; to establish links internally (on the Queen's website and departmental home pages) and externally (with lifelong learning groups); to encourage the development of shared housing for Queen's retirees; and to develop an association with the Frailty Network, an internationally-recognized research network focused on improving health care for an aging population and hosted by Queen's.

The results of the strategy session have given us confidence that our work together will ensure the success and vitality of our organization for many years to come. If you are interested in more detail about the session, please contact the office for a copy of the Summary of Brainstorming Results.

The AGM's Nominating Committee report will introduce our new council members, some of whom participated in the Retreat and all of whom will be important in our moving ahead. Please welcome these new members and give them your support. RAQ is fortunate to have Patrick Oosthuizen, Bruce Hutchison and

Joyce Zakos as the committee and we thank them for their work.

We owe a great deal to the retiring members of Council, Pradeep Kumar, Diane Duttie and Stafford Tavares. All have served RAQ loyally, and we thank them for their service. Very special thanks go to two people who have kept RAQ going in a number of ways: Diane Duttie for her work as chairperson of the Communications Committee and, especially, as editor of our newsletter. She'll be difficult to replace. Barbara Tait does uncountable tasks for the association and keeps our membership and financial files up to date. She is the person who reminds us of RAQ and university events of interest. She is the first RAQ representative to answer questions, to give information, and to soothe irritations. I am personally grateful to her for her reminders of my responsibilities.

I am also grateful to the council members who keep RAQ operating efficiently, especially Cherrilyn Yalin, our secretary; to members who express their loyalty to the association through their suggestions and their participation in RAQ-sponsored events. I look forward to a productive year.

**ELEANOR ROGERS , President**



**RAQ COUNCIL 2017-2018**

**Front:** Membership Secretary Barbara Tait, Co-Ordinator of Events Sandra Olney, Secretary Cherrilyn Yalin, President Eleanor Rogers, Councillors Cheryl Descent and Marianne Lamb.

**Rear:** Membership Chair Greg Lessard, Past President Pat Oosthuizen, Webmaster Don Robinson, Councillors David McLay, and Doug Boyd, Pension & Benefits Chair George Brandie.

**Absent:** Communications Chair Elaine McDougall.

## **RAQ'S SENATE OBSERVER REPORTS**

Senate meetings were held in March and April 2017. The following were among the items discussed:

### **21 March 2017**

#### **2017/2018 Draft Operating Budget**

The Provost gave a presentation of the 2017-2018 Budget. The total budget will be \$554.8M which is up by \$32M from the 2016-2017 budget. Faculty renewal will be a major strategic priority in the budget. On average over the past 6 years 22 Faculty members were hired per year. However 25-30 hires are required per year to maintain and possibly grow the faculty complement. Therefore there is a planned faculty renewal and growth of 41 tenure-stream positions in the 2017-2018 budget.

#### **Queen's Truth and Reconciliation Task Force Final Report**

The Principal and the Provost both expressed their thanks to the members of Queen's Truth and Reconciliation Task Force for their work over the past several months. The recommendations contained in the Task Force's report, developed after extensive consultation with the Queen's and Kingston communities, are comprehensive and will empower the university to focus on lasting change. Their implementation will require time and resources, which the university is committed to providing. The Provost noted that, with the planned expansion of the Four Directions Aboriginal Student Centre and the development of two Indigenous language certificates, progress has already been made in several key areas.

### **18 April 2017**

#### **Doctor of Science (Rehabilitation and Health Leadership) Program**

Senate approved the establishment of a Doctor of Science (Rehabilitation and Health Leadership) program in the School of Rehabilitation Therapy, Faculty of Health Science. This will be a professional doctorate that will graduate 'leader scholars' who are able to apply theory and use rigorous methodologies to inform decision-making in rehabilitation and health settings. The program will involve on-site and on-line course work, technology-supported group-based discussions, coaching and mentoring from assigned advisors, preparation and completion of comprehensive exam and development and implementation of an applied dissertation study.

#### **Principal's Committee on Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion**

The final report of the Principal's Committee on Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion was presented to Senate and quite extensively discussed. The committee, which had student, staff, and faculty representation, was established by the Principal to come up with recommendations to ensure that tangible and lasting change is effected regarding anti-racism, diversity, and inclusion at Queen's. The Committee's report contains a number of such recommendations.

#### **Senate Honorary Degree Committee**

The Principal had established an *ad hoc* committee to review the operation of Queen's Convocations. This *ad hoc* committee recommended that the Policy on the Selection of Honorary Degree Recipients be amended to reduce the number of honorary degrees presented each year to a maximum of ten. Senate approved this proposed amendment.

# Summer/Fall 2017 Coming RAQ Events

## IN MEMORIAM

Douglas T. Arkett  
d. 23 November 2016

Thomas Challis  
d. 9 January 2017

Robert (Bob) Gordon  
d. 20 February 2017

Margaret Lois Hooey  
d. 13 January 2017

Rosemarie McUen  
d. 3 February 2017

Marion Meyer  
d. 26 April 2017

Margaret Page  
d. 29 November 2016

Malcolm Peat  
d. 17 January 2017

Harold (Bus) Still  
d. 7 January 2017

**RAQ Pot-Luck Picnic at QUBS's Elbow Lake Environmental Education Centre:** Dee Padfield is busily planning the annual RAQ picnic to be held at ELEEC on **Wednesday, June 21**. The registration form has gone out by email. It's available from Barbara Tait in the RAQ office or by clicking on the news item at [www.queensu.ca/retirees](http://www.queensu.ca/retirees). Prof. Steve Lougheed, QUBS Director, and several students will be with us and talk to us about the research and other activities that take place at the site. This is a very popular event and attendance is limited. Members are urged to register early.

**The Annual Fall Reception** will be held on Wednesday, October 11 at 3:00 p.m. in the University Club. Dr. Bacon will again be our speaker – about his first year as Provost. Save the date!

**Monday Morning Forums** will return in the fall. This very popular series is arranged by Dr. A.M. Herzberg and supported by Queen's University, Ambassador Hotel, Kingston and Cunningham Swan, Lawyers. The talks take place at the University Club. Coffee and muffins are served from 8:15 a.m. Lectures begin at 9:00 a.m., followed by an exchange of ideas and discussion. Plan to attend these exceptional presentations

**The United Way Tour** will be running during the fall campaign and the Queen's United Way group has informed Bruce Hutchinson that they will be happy to have us again this year. Very positive reports following our first tour suggest it is well worth attending.

**University Club Discussion Lunches:** This fall we are planning to have monthly topic-driven discussion lunches led by members of the Queen's community and offered in collaboration with the University Club. The gatherings will be open to members of the larger university community as well as to RAQ and University Club members, and we hope to take advantage of the extensive knowledge and expertise to be found among us. Please contact Sandra Olney ([sandra.olney@queensu.ca](mailto:sandra.olney@queensu.ca)) with your ideas and suggestions.

# New Directions?



## ***Chronicles from the Aragon Road***

Why are we interested in the history of the Aragon Road, and why am I writing about it on a website called *Our Aragon*?

The Aragon Road is a “forced” road following the shore of Colonel By Lake just north of Kingston Mills. It evolved from a narrow cow-path to a lane-way connecting one farm to another in the late 1800s. Then it became a hard-topped gravel-road in the 1950s. A forced road is different from the rural county roads, laid-out by the British government starting in our area in 1783. The Aragon Road has preserved its history in a remarkable way and is now one of the few heritage roads dating from the mid-1800s.



Five historically significant farm houses on the Aragon Road are on the City of Kingston’s listing of heritage buildings.



The farms grew crops and sustained an extensive dairy industry that fed the citizens of Kingston. A magnificent barn with workers’ houses aligned along Battersea Road opposite Fairmount Home is a silent witness of this rich agricultural community that included the Aragon Road. Most of the land north of the road is designated “prime agricultural” which prevents estate development beyond what is already there. The historic road is part of the Rideau Canal and its littoral that stretches from Ottawa to Kingston,

which has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since June 27, 2007.

The social and geographical history of the Aragon Road and its surroundings is fascinating. The website lists topics such as: *Oral History*; *Aragon Road Geology*; *Deeds and Maps*; *Littoral Zone and Locks*. In addition there are many topics presented in posts that are regularly updated. Among the oral histories is a story by Doug Wagner. Readers might remember Doug as the owner of Wagner Air, a one-man air-plane service between Kingston and Syracuse during the sixties and seventies. Many of the Queen’s faculty and administration used this air-shuttle to fly to Syracuse and from there to destinations in the US or overseas. Doug was a trainer of WWII pilots at what is now Norman Rogers Airport, and his story includes adventures on the bombing range at Colonel By Lake. To read the story, enter the search term “Aragon Road History Bombshells”.





We are interested in history of our environment because it is an important link to the future. As a teenager I was fascinated with Leonardo da Vinci and his renaissance art and engineering inventions. Then when we immigrated to Canada in 1970 to join the faculty at Queen's in Mechanical Engineering, the "do-it-yourself" attitude inspired Ineke and me to build a cottage, and then to restore a small wood-frame house in Barriefield when the village was designated a heritage conservation district in 1980. The little "sandbox" type workers house was less than a thousand square feet and had housed at one time *two* families with children. The house was built in the mid-1800s and is located at the corner of Regent and George Street.

In 1982 we built the house on Colonel By Lake on a thirteen acre plot that is environmentally significant, together with the wetlands, floodplains and the bays that ring the lake. The planning authorities did not allow us to include a basement and we had to build on a filled-in area that had to be six feet above the highest recorded water level of the lake. At that time we felt this requirement as burdensome, but fast forward and just last week the water in Colonel By Lake rose to almost a foot above the highest water level *ever* recorded on the lake and the Rideau Canal



Repairs to Trans-Northern Pipelines 1950s pipeline which follows the Aragon Road on its way from Toronto to Montreal caught the attention of the blogger.

north of Kingston Mills. We were reminded of the Dutch, our ancestors in the lower part of the country who built their houses in the early 1600s on small man-made hillocks in the floodplains of the first pol- ders. With rising water surrounding us we were grate- ful for the city-planners and the Cataraqui Region

Conservation Authority watershed managers who laid down the rules for us.

We have now lived longer in Canada than in our country of birth, we never regretted immigrating to Canada and while the process is not without its difficulties, it enriches the soul. Queen's has been good to us and we have reciprocated as best we could.

Retirement since the late 1990s has been rewarding and enjoyable for both of us. The RAQ has played a role in that. Queen's Biological Station in Chaffey's Locks on Lake Opinicon, site of many RAQ picnics, is also part of the Rideau Canal. We are all intercon- nected.

For more on the Aragon Road and Colonel By Lake please go to: [https:// aragonroadhistory.wordpress.com/](https://aragonroadhistory.wordpress.com/)

**HENK WEVERS**

**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS, Winter/Spring 2017**

David Aldridge & Asta Antoft (Medicine) ... Peter & Sandra Baxter (Film & Media) ... Stephanie & Norman Beaugard (IT Ser- vices) ... Helen Campbell (Nursing) ... Anne Croy (Biomedical & Molecular Science) ... Peter & Christine Harrison (Policy Studies) ... Steve Iscoe & Jan Walter (Biomedical & Molecular Sciences) ... Mary Jones (Timetabling) ... Magda Lewis (Education) ... Elaine McDougall (VP Finance) ... Jon & Stephanie Mayo (OH&S/HR) ... Ronald Neufeld (Chemical Engineering) ... Donna O'Connor (Rehabilitation Therapy) ... Rob Renaud (Geology) ... Patricia Smith (Engineering) ... Cathy Wood ... (Research Services)

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