

# RAQnews



## President's Report

Happy New Year! I hope your holiday season has been pleasant and peaceful. The seasonal respite has been a time for me to reflect on the many productive activities of the RAQ Council members since my last report and to give thanks for the privilege of working with such effective colleagues.

There's been much activity from the Membership Committee in the past months. The chairperson, Greg Lessard, will speak at the February Human Resources information meeting of Queen's upcoming retirees in an effort to increase interest in joining RAQ. For that meeting he is developing a brochure outlining the benefits of being a RAQ member, a document we hope to be able to use in other membership efforts. The membership benefits continue to increase as we negotiate with Queen's and with merchants offering such things as discounts. See page 3 for more details on some of our efforts on discounts for Queen's retirees.

Much Council time has recently been spent on advocacy, especially follow-up on long-standing issues. After lengthy email correspondence and several meetings, it's frustrating to have to report that the issue of ID cards for Queen's retirees remains unresolved; Human Resources and the VP Finance, however, are investigating possibilities and will "be in touch with a definitive solution as soon as possible". In another negotiation, no final resolution to the continuance of staff email has yet been found, but RAQ continues to push for a satisfactory plan. If you have thoughts about either of these issues, please email me directly ([eleanorrogers@sympatico.ca](mailto:eleanorrogers@sympatico.ca)) or the RAQ office ([raq@queensu.ca](mailto:raq@queensu.ca)).

Queen's depends on volunteers for many of its projects, and many RAQ members give actively. As a RAQ member you will have received an email message asking for your participation in a survey prepared by a Graduate School group participating in The PhD Community Initiative. Five of the six student groups in this program are currently being mentored by RAQ members. If you are interested in being more involved in the program or just want to know more about it, you can find information about its goals and operation at <http://www.queensu.ca/exph/phd-community-initiative>.

*...continued on page 4*

# Pension & Benefits Report; UPP Update

In late November all pensioners should have received the annual letter from Pension Services announcing the final investment gains to the Queen's Pension Plan (QPP) for the pension year September 1, 2016, through August 31, 2017. For those of us who started receiving our pensions before the great market crash of 2008, there will be NO increase in our monthly pension income in the current pension year.

At the QPP Annual General Meeting on December 15<sup>th</sup>, Bob Weisnagel showed a projection that IF the QPP has a return on investments of 9% in the current pension year, we "old timers" WILL receive a modest (\$ 1.10 per month per \$1000 of pre-tax monthly pension) increase for the 2018-19 pension year and thereafter (barring another great crash).

At the QPP AGM, Manuel Monteiro of Mercer (the QPP's actuaries) gave an overview of the QPP's financial state. Because the status as of August 31, 2017 has to be reported to the provincial government, Mercer is still working on the final figures, but the preliminary results indicate that the QPP will show a "going-concern" deficit of some \$30 million (down from \$ 175.6 million in 2014) and a "solvency" deficit of some \$300 million (near the \$ 308.8 million reported in 2014). Under the normal rules of provincial law, Queen's would have to pay down the larger of these two deficits over a period of years to restore the QPP to good health. However, to encourage universities to set up (or join) a multi-institution jointly-sponsored pension plan (JSPP) with a Board of Directors comprised of management and employee representatives, the government has allowed universities to apply for (and in our case, receive) temporary postponement of these payments. Those who join a multi-institution JSPP will receive permanent exemption from having to fund it on a "solvency" basis. A University Pensions Project (UPP) has been underway for some time to explore the possibility of creating such a jointly-sponsored plan.

Al Orth, Special Advisor to the Vice-Principal (Finance and Administration), reported on the current state of the UPP negotiations. Recently, the negotiations to set up a multi-university jointly-sponsored pension plan have been led by Queen's, the University of Toronto, and the University of Guelph. A mediator has assisted in resolving disputes about the structure of a proposed plan between representatives of the three administrations on one side of the table, and union representatives of OCUFA and the USW on the other. Other unions (CUPE, OSSTF, UNIFOR and OPSEU) have temporarily withdrawn from the negotiations. In August, the negotiators reached tentative agreement. Throughout the negotiations, the government has provided funding for both sides to hire expert advisors and mediators.

Since reaching tentative agreement, the negotiators have been creating documents to explain what has been agreed. They expect to have a plenary meeting in January 2018 of all interested universities, prior to returning with the explanatory documentation to their local institutions. Before any institutions can move forward toward actually setting up a new plan, they must receive approval to proceed by a vote of members of their existing pension plans (including existing pensioners). Before any such vote can be held, plan members must have the information necessary to understand what is being proposed. We anticipate that distribution of material and Q&A sessions could come early in 2018. As things progress (or not), RAQ will continue to work to keep our members informed.

The slides discussed at the AGM are online at:

**<http://www.queensu.ca/humanresources/total-compensation/pensions/annual-general-meeting>**

The last two slides show comparisons of the investment performance of the QPP with those of other Canadian Pension Plans. As always, the Committee welcomes questions, comments, and information about problems from members of RAQ, which we will bring to our meetings with senior administrators of Queen's.

*George Brandie (Chair), Chris Chapler, Bruce Hutchinson, Sue Miklas and Joyce Zakos*

# RAQ Membership News

## RAQ Secures New Retiree Discounts

After discussions with Queen's Strategic Procurement and some good work by that office, RAQ is pleased to announce that a number of discounts on a range of products and services are now also available to Queen's retirees (see side-bar).

A complete list of specific vendors which offer discounts to Queen's employees is available at:



**<http://www.queensu.ca/procurement/employee-discounts>**

As noted on the Procurement website (above), retirees may obtain discounts at the companies that show a plus sign (+) after the company name (select a category to get the list of vendors).

Please take advantage of these discounts, and mention them to any other retirees you may be speaking with.

RAQ will continue to seek additional benefits for Queen's retirees and will keep you informed of any progress we make.

*Greg Lessard, RAQ Membership Chair*

### Categories with discounts available to Queen's retirees include:

Fitness Memberships  
Furniture, Appliances & Electronics  
Household Items, Home Maintenance & Renovation  
Hotels  
Personal Assistance  
Photography & Framing  
Transportation  
Vehicle Purchases & Maintenance

Keep checking back, as the categories and vendors are updated regularly!

## RAQ Welcomes New Members

Carol Beatty (Industrial Relations Centre); Diane Buchanan (School of Nursing); Lorne Carmichael (Economics);  
Charlie Cooney (Mechanical and Materials Engineering) and Fran Cooney; Margaret Harrison (School of Nursing);  
Jane Johnston (School of Nursing); Terry Krupa (School of Rehabilitation Therapy); Cherie Mastronardi (Pathology);  
Ann O'Riordan (School of Rehabilitation Therapy) and Gary Mullen; Jane Philipps (University Libraries);  
Phyllis Reid (Faculty of Law); Walter Rosser (Family Medicine) and Janet Rosser;  
Kenneth Roth (Campus Planning and Development)

*President's Report (continued from page 1)*

The RAQ Bursary is now in its second period of fundraising with a new goal of \$2,500 in this fiscal year (May 1 2017 – April 30, 2018). So far, we've raised 28% of that goal, so only \$1,800 remains. Visit our bursary page on the Queen's website: <https://www.givetoqueens.ca/project/view/767> to follow our progress and to contribute if you can. It's satisfying to know that RAQ not only contributes to the welfare of its members but also helps ease a current student's way. By the time you read this, Advancement will have established an "Honour Roll" naming the non-anonymous contributors on this webpage. Queen's will also update the status of this new campaign as contributions come in. We should be receiving the name of our first recipient in February, and we'll be able to announce it at the AGM.

The AGM is scheduled for April 23, 2018. Our guest speaker will be Stephanie Simpson, the newly named Executive Director (Human Rights and Equity Office) and University Advisor on Equity and Human Rights. Stephanie "has been a leader on equity, diversity, and inclusivity at Queen's for many years, and her appointment reflects the important role she plays in the Queen's community." (*Queen's Gazette*). We look forward to hearing about her plans for this office, and hope many of you will be able to join us for the lunch and the meeting.

RAQ's two popular speaker series will continue in the 2018 winter term with varied and thoughtful discussions. Dr. Agnes Herzberg has arranged for three Monday Morning Forum speakers this winter. All lectures, held at The University Club, will be preceded by coffee and muffins at 8:15 a.m. Please see page 7 for details.

Sandra Olney's Lunchtime Speakers series also continues this winter (see page 6). Neil Hobbs, speaking on his medical experiences in the North, was our January 24 visitor, and on February 15 George Brandie will give us an account of his experience in Iceland.

If George's talk inspires you to visit Iceland yourself, you'll have an opportunity to sign up with RAQ's travel associate, Collette Travel (see page 5) for your own visit. In a few weeks, RAQ members will receive mailed brochures outlining the fall 2018 tour we've selected as our premier trip with Collette. The brochures outline travel expenses with a Canadian departure from Toronto; an Ottawa departure is also available. I look forward to seeing other RAQ members on this tour.

Lastly, I'm sorry to announce that Barbara Tait, our Office Administrator, will retire from this position after the AGM. We're all very grateful to her for her hard work and support, especially for the many extra volunteer hours she has given her job. The organization is indebted to her for her interest in our welfare and for her dedication to her work. I know you join me in wishing her well.

Although we'll miss Barbara, we're lucky to have an excellent replacement. Cheryl Descent will be taking over the administrator's position in the last week of April. Cheryl has been an active member of RAQ Council since the last AGM and will be adept at keeping the office running smoothly.

I hope the next months are productive ones for you and I look forward to seeing you at the AGM. Thanks, as always, for your support of RAQ.

*Eleanor Rogers, President*

# RAQ Presents: a Guided Tour of Iceland

## Iceland: Land of Fire & Ice

September 28 – October 6, 2018. Tour conducted by Collette Tours.

The 9-day guided tour includes 13 meals (7 breakfasts, 6 dinners) and return air travel between Toronto and Reykjavik for \$5,599 Cdn pp (double occupancy)\* or \$6,809 Cdn pp (single occupancy)\*.

**Join fellow RAQ Members this fall on a Collette Tour of fascinating Iceland.** Iceland is a place where lava fields (ancient and recent) reflect the island's volcanic origin and evolution. Massive glaciers continue to sculpt mountains, creating thundering waterfalls and deep fjords. This tour will showcase many examples of these features, as well as Thingvellir National Park (the rift valley marking the boundary between the North American and Eurasian geological plates), the Visitor Centre for Eyjafjallajökull, the volcano whose 2010 eruption disrupted flights throughout northern Europe, a glacial lagoon, a geothermal field whose geyser erupts about every 9 minutes, and museums of Icelandic life.

Highlights of the trip will include visits to Reykjavik, Golden Circle, Thingvellir National Park, Gullfoss Waterfall, Geysir, Snæfellsnes Peninsula, Cave Tour or Lava Field Walk, Breidafjörður Bay, Waterfall Seljalandsfoss, Vik, Eyjafjallajökull Volcano Visitor Centre, Skógar Museum, Skógafoss, Jökulsárlón Glacial Lagoon, Vatnajökull National Park and Glacier, Blue Lagoon or Whale Watching.

RAQ will mail information brochures with registration forms to sign up for this tour as soon as we get them from Collette. The prices

are in Canadian dol-

lars and include flights

between Toronto and Iceland. Optional excursions (a whale-watching cruise or a visit to the famous Blue Lagoon, for example) are included in the price. **\*Prices quoted above are for reservations, with deposit, made by March 29, 2018.**

If you don't receive a brochure in the mail, contact Elaine Fowler at [efowler@tpi.ca](mailto:efowler@tpi.ca)



RAQ Insider Tour Tip: See George Brandie's review of another recent trip with Collette Tours (to Colorado) on page 9.



# RAQ Lunchtime Speakers Series

The Lunchtime Guest Series is offered by RAQ in partnership with the University Club.

Our October Guest was Dr. John S. Andrew (right), Director, Queen's Real Estate Roundtable & Continuing Adjunct Assistant Professor, Schools of Urban & Regional Planning, Business & Environmental Studies. The general topic was *Real Estate Markets in Ontario: Trends, Transitions and the Implications of Government Policies* but also included discussions on changes to mortgage lending practices, mortgage insurance, consumer debt and irresponsible lending, and the expected shift from owning to renting a home. Attendees commented, "Whoever thought real estate issues could be so interesting!"



The November Guest Lunch was held on November 29. Led by Dr. Laura Kinderman (left), Associate Director, Bachelor of Health Sciences (Program: <https://bhsc.queensu.ca/>), the topic was *Logging into an online education: Incomplete substitute or flexible alternative to learning on campus?* Queen's has rapidly assumed a leadership role in online education, and Laura presented fascinating insight into student motivation for on-line learning, advancements in the technology involved, and the scope and future of online education.



The January Guest Lunch was led by Dr. Neil Hobbs (right), a Family Physician with an intriguing history of practice, teaching and mentoring in far-flung regions of the world including Labrador, Newfoundland, New Zealand, and the Northwest Territories. The topic was *Medical work north of 60: more than just snow and mosquitoes?* His talk reflected his love for remote and rural regions of the world and impressed us with a sense of the beauty of the Northwest Territories. During the Question and Answer period he reflected on the difficulties of practicing in remote and sparsely populated regions and the challenge of meeting the medical needs of indigenous populations.



**Join us for our next Lunchtime Guest Talk on February 15 at the University Club (at noon).**

On Thursday, February 15, Dr. George Brandie will speak on *Travels in Iceland*. George came to Queen's in 1972 and never left. Since his retirement from Chemical Engineering, he has been active in RAQ and in the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada. George enjoys travelling to visit new places, as a tourist and especially as part of groups travelling to Total Solar Eclipses around the world and on all his trips he takes lots of pictures. He visited western and southern Iceland in 2015 and will use pictures from that tour to illustrate highlights of travel in Iceland.

**Please join us for a sandwich lunch. It costs \$12 per guest; please pay on the day. Reservations are required in advance as space is limited, and please inform us of any allergies or sensitivities. Please call Valerie Winn Paul at 613-533-2846 or e-mail to her attention at [admuclub@queensu.ca](mailto:admuclub@queensu.ca). You need not be a member of the Club (or RAQ) to register – so bring a friend! All talks are at noon at the University Club.**

The RAQ Lunchtime Series aims to take advantage of the extensive knowledge and expertise found among us. Please contact me directly ([sandra.olney@queensu.ca](mailto:sandra.olney@queensu.ca)) with your ideas and suggestions for future topics or speakers.

# Monday Morning Forum Winter Series

## Agnes Herzberg's Monday Morning Forum

Winter, 2018 Series

The University Club, 168 Stuart Street

### **February 12, 2018 – Doctor M. H. Lachmann – *Where and How We Age in Ontario in 2018***

Doctor Lachmann is Assistant Professor of Psychiatry at Toronto University with a specialty in Geriatric Psychiatry.

### **February 26, 2018 – L.A. Delvoie – *Is Politics Rewriting History?***

Ambassador (Ret.) Delvoie is associated with the Centre for International and Defence Policy, Queen's University

### **March 12, 2018 – Doctor J.R. Allan – *The Crisis of Inequality***

Doctor Allan has been a Fellow of the Queen's Institute of Intergovernmental Affairs since 2010.

All Monday Morning Forums begin with coffee and muffins at 8:15 a.m. at the University Club. The talks begin at 9:00 a.m.

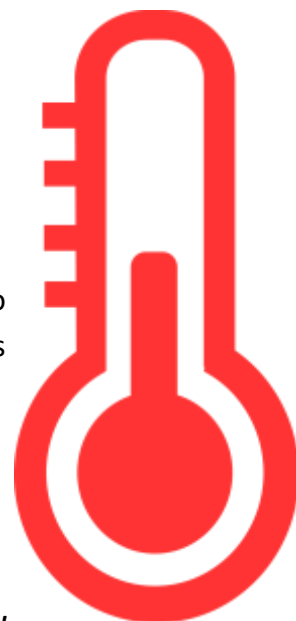
## **Please Consider Making a Donation to the RAQ Bursary**

Thanks to your generosity, RAQ's first bursary is soon to be awarded! We will announce the award in February as soon as we are informed. The 2018 beneficiary is the first of five students in need who will receive our help.

You can help RAQ extend this aid beyond the initial five-year period. Generous supporters have already given more than \$700 towards our next goal of \$2,500. You can easily help to meet this goal by going to the RAQ bursary web site and following the link to the Queen's page and pressing the "**Give Now**" button.

The RAQ bursary is awarded on the basis of demonstrated financial need to students in any year of any Faculty or School. Preference is given to students who have experienced an interruption in their education.

*Thank you for your support of this worthwhile project!*



# Travels with Collette

## A Guided Tour of Colorado with Collette Tours

In August I travelled to the United States to watch the total solar eclipse crossing the U.S. The staff of *Sky and Telescope* magazine had arranged to add two days for the eclipse to Collette Travel's "The Colorado Rockies" tour, and that was the tour I elected to join. It started in Denver on Friday, Aug. 18th. About 200 people (assigned to one of five buses) had chosen this expedition, but only one busload would be making the full tour, on the "Apollo" bus with expert bus wrangler, Lane, and tireless, capable Collette Tour Manager, Heather.

On Saturday we went to Rocky Mountain National Park northwest of Denver. Inside the park, US-34 is also "Trail Ridge Road," the highest national highway in the continental U.S. (peak elevation: 12,183 feet). Stops at scenic outlooks gave us panoramic views of these mountaintops in summer.

On Sunday we drove north to Cheyenne, Wyoming, our home for the next two nights. Monday, Aug. 21<sup>st</sup>, was Eclipse Day, and we had perfect conditions in Glendo, WY, for observing it (a topic for another article). On Tuesday, four of the buses took their passengers back to Denver airport, while the "Apollo" bus travelled to Grand Junction in west central Colorado, our home for three nights.

On Wednesday, we toured the Colorado National Monument, where the Colorado River, moving southwest from its origin in Rocky Mountain National Park, has been carving its first canyons. For dinner, we visited a winery near Grand Junction.

On Thursday, we travelled into eastern Utah to visit two National Parks. Our first stop was in Canyonlands National Park. Here the lookouts were some 1500 feet above the valley floors below. After a picnic lunch, we entered Arches National Park, the site of more than 2,000 natural sandstone arches, which is bordered by the Colorado River in the southeast. Then it was back to Grand Junction, Colorado.

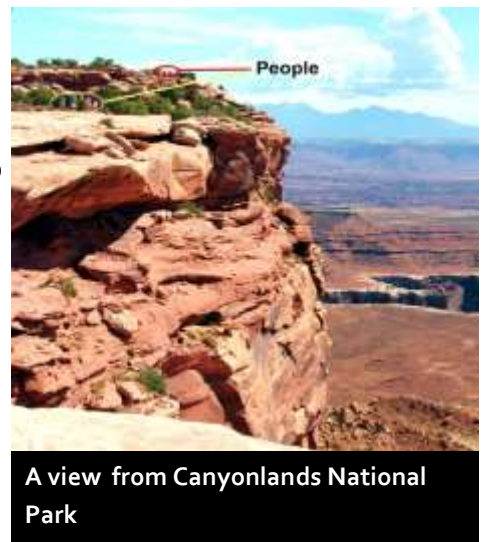
On Friday we left Grand Junction to head into the southwest mountains, passing some well-known winter ski resorts. We crossed over Red Mountain Pass to reach Silverton, a mountain mining town. As its name suggests, Silverton had a mine that was a major producer of silver, but there were also copper, lead and zinc mines nearby. To get ore down to the smelters and railroads of Durango took a minimum of three days by oxcart. In the late 1880s, General W.J. Palmer, founder of Colorado Springs and owner of the Denver & Rio Grande Narrow Gauge Railroad, built the Durango & Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad, which cut the travel time to three hours. After lunching in Silverton, we took the D & S train to Durango, while Lane drove our bus (and our luggage) down the



Lane and Heather



Rocky Mountain National Park



A view from Canyonlands National Park

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**"North & South Window Arches" at Arches National Park**



**"Delicate Arch", also at Arches National Park**

highway. The restored period cars on the D&S are pulled by coal-burning steam locomotives built in the mid-1920s. The railroad follows the valley of the Animas River down to Durango. For one section, the valley was so narrow the tracks had to be laid on a narrow shelf about 400 feet above the river, blasted out of the granite mountainside. That section is known as the "High Line" and you can just see the end of our train (top left) in the picture below. We had a car reserved for us, with a local guide dressed as the wife of a Durango banker from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

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### **My impressions of Collette Travel**

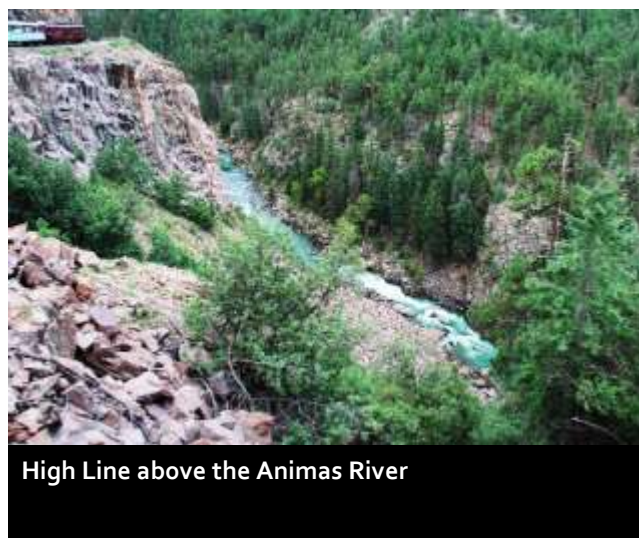
This was my first Collette trip, and I was favourably impressed throughout. On the very first day, the plane for my flight from Toronto to Denver was over an hour late in arriving at Pearson. When that was announced, I called Collette's toll-free Emergency Center to inform them of my delay. The agent said she would inform the people in Denver. When I did arrive in Denver, I couldn't find anyone waiting for me, so I called again. This time the agent gave me the phone number of the limo company in Denver hired by Collette for this purpose, and 15 minutes later I was in my own limousine being driven to our hotel in central Denver.

Throughout the trip, our Tour Manager, Heather Larsen, was well informed, cheerful, and always ready to help. In the National Parks, the local guides were people who had worked for or with the National Park Service for decades, so their local knowledge was impressive. Heather had booked our special car on the Durango & Silverton train with our special local historian in the car. She had run this tour many times before, and so knew staff in the hotels, parks and other locations. At the last minute, she postponed a scheduled "Chuck Wagon Dinner" at the Bar D ranch near Durango for a day, so that we'd be less tired for it (we agreed it was a wise choice). Our hotels were all excellent. It was a happy bus, and got more so as we stopped being complete strangers. I was both pleased and impressed by the service we received.

**GB**



**All aboard the train to Durango**



**High Line above the Animas River**

# A Selection of Past RAQ Activities

## Henry Dinsdale Reports....on the RAQ Fall Reception and the Monday Morning Forum Talks

Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) Benoit-Antoine Bacon made time in his busy schedule to accept an invitation to speak to RAQ members on October 11 as part of the **RAQ Fall Reception**. Dr. Bacon is the university's chief academic, budget and operating officer. This position brings with it the wide-ranging responsibilities of developing the university's budget, ensuring integration of operational planning and overseeing academic program development, all of which comprise Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes.

Dr. Bacon's scientific career began with studies in cognitive neuroscience focusing on perception in visual and auditory systems. He began taking on additional administrative responsibilities initially at Bishop's University and later Concordia. He joined Queen's University in August 2016. Dr. Bacon emphasized that a major focus for him was the student experience at Queen's. Students accepted by Queen's were highly qualified with a secondary school matriculation average of 89.1%.

Faculty renewal is a priority. Taking into account retirements, the appointment of 40 new tenured faculty members each year would be ideal. Although the budget grew 6.7% to \$552.2 million this year, it provided for only 22 new appointments.

Queen's has a strong academic base, emphasized by the recent Nobel award to Prof. MacDonald. However, research and innovation move rapidly and need to remain a priority.

Dr. Bacon's enthusiasm and good sense provided reassurance that in spite of inevitable fiscal challenges, the university is in good hands.

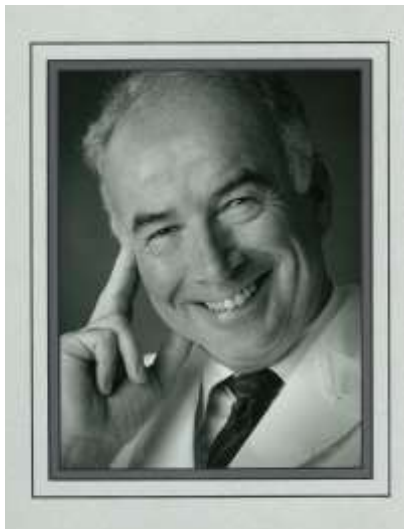
The **Monday Morning Forum (MMF)** has featured prominently in the list of RAQ events for a number of years. It is due in large measure to a singular initiative by Agnes Herzberg and is sponsored by RAQ with the support of Queen's University, Cunningham Swan Carty Little and Bonham LLP, and the Frontenac Club Inn.

The first MMF was a presentation on September 25 by Merlin Donald, Professor Emeritus, Queen's University. Professor Donald was a member of faculty at Queen's for many years before becoming chair of the Cognitive Science Department at Case Western Reserve University. His presentation was titled "How does information technology affect human cognition?"

Professor Donald has a longstanding interest in the effects of the evolutionary changes in primates that have led to the cognitive abilities now possessed by humans. He has been attracted by the possibility that growth in the size of our social groups has driven brain development more than the cognitive demands of activities such as tool-making or orienting oneself in the environment. Immersion in a network of communication is essential for the human

brain to achieve its potential. This begins in childhood where the developing brain is embedded in a cultural network. Early skills become automatic or unconscious and provide a base for the conscious mind to be a mediator of novelty and new learning. Although unconscious or "intuitive" decisions are often the best, conscious supervision is usually the ultimate tribunal.

Professor Donald's lecture provided an insightful approach to the "human" elements underlying behaviour and brain function. The impact of living in our technology-supported culture with its capacity for external storage and retrieval of information is still to be determined. His presentation was a reminder of the remarkably broad range of research into the function of the human brain that extends from examining social groups down to the single cell. It brought to mind the rhetorical question: "Will the human brain ever understand itself?"



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# A Selection of Past RAQ Activities

## RAQ Tour of Providence Care Hospital

Our tour on October 4th began somewhat inauspiciously because of unexpected difficulties with parking, due to on-site construction, but all 25 people who had signed up for the tour were able to participate. We had been told ahead of time that we would not be able to see any of the inpatient units, but I don't think any of us realized that in spite of that there would be so much to see.

Our tour started in the lobby and public areas aptly called the "downtown" area; we saw the reception desk, the registration desk, the gift shop, the cafeteria and waiting rooms for outpatient clinics.

On the other floors the places we were shown included the meditation room, the worship centre (which includes a labyrinth), the forensic unit, the walking track, the therapy pool and the healing garden. As we were touring we were given a great deal of information about the facilities available at the hospital, perhaps the most impressive being that each "pod" of approximately thirty rooms (all private) has a lounge/kitchenette and an easy-to-access outdoor area. We were all impressed with the views and the light that came streaming in.

It is hard to do justice to all that we saw. I would encourage you to look at the Providence Care Handbook. It is available on-line at:

[http://www.providencecare.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Patient\\_Handbook.pdf](http://www.providencecare.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Patient_Handbook.pdf)

And finally, a big thank you to our informative and helpful guides: Tania Christie and Janet Hunter.

*Cherrilyn Yalin*

*(photos by George Brandie)*



PCH Worship Centre with Labyrinth



The Outdoor Area for One Pod at PCH

Please join us at the RAQ  
Annual General Meeting  
April 23, 2018  
University Club

Our Guest Speaker will be  
Stephanie Simpson (Executive  
**Director of Queen's Human  
Rights and Equity Office**).

Watch for your formal  
invitation with all the details.



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On Saturday, it was a relatively short drive from Durango to Mesa Verde National Park near Colorado's border with New Mexico. A group as large as ours cannot enter any of the cliff-dwelling ruins, so we observed them from across ravines. The people who lived here built their homes under rock overhangs, grew crops and grazed livestock on the plateau above them, and drew water from the streams in the ravine floors. Why they abandoned their settlements remains a mystery.

From Durango, on Sunday we headed northeast, crossing the Continental Divide in Wolf Creek Pass and reaching Colorado Springs at about 5 pm. On Monday we drove to Manitou Springs (now a suburb of Colorado Springs) to take the cog railway to the desolate summit of Pike's Peak (el. 14,115 feet). Pike's Peak is the 20<sup>th</sup>-highest mountain in Colorado, but it was often the first mountain wagon trains heading west would see, and in the (brief) Colorado Gold Rush the cry was, "Pike's Peak or bust!"

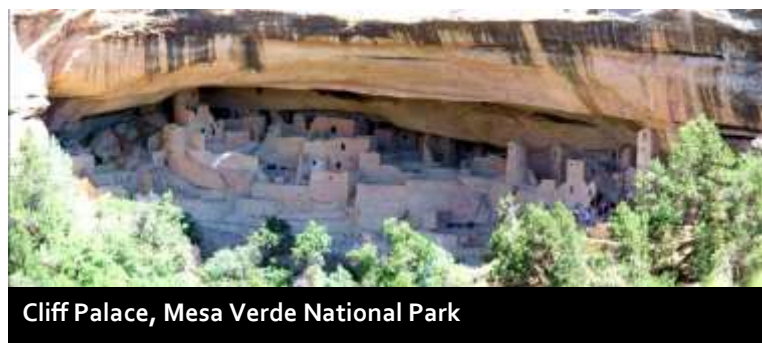
That afternoon, our final sightseeing stop was in "Garden of the Gods," a municipal park in Colorado Springs. Here, the mountain-building process of the Front Range tilted once-horizontal sandstone layers to a vertical orientation, and erosion created strange balanced rocks, as at Arches National Monument.

That evening we had our farewell dinner in a Colorado Springs chop house, and the next morning it was back to Denver airport for our journeys home.

*George Brandie (text and photos)*



Square Tower House, Mesa Verde National Park



Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde National Park



View from Pike's Peak Summit



Garden of the Gods Park



Balanced Rock, GOTG Park

RAQnews is published three times a year by the RAQ Communications Committee. Editor: Elaine McDougall. Proofreaders: George Brandie and Jane Emrich. Photographs (used by permission): George Brandie, Henry Dinsdale, Mardy Hewitt, Sandra Olney and Creative Commons. Contributors: as noted. Website: <http://www.queensu.ca/retirees/>. Webmaster: Don Robinson; Assistant Webmaster: Marianne Lamb. Mailing address: RAQ, Mackintosh-Corry Hall, Room A412, Queen's University, Kingston, ON K7L 3N6. Phone: (613) 533-6986, email: [RAQ@queensu.ca](mailto:RAQ@queensu.ca)