

# RAQnews

## Students keen on contact with retirees

By Cathy Perkins

Now and then an idea comes along that seems so right you can't believe it took so long. That's what happened when Rector Grant Bishop made a presentation to RAQ's December meeting. His idea? To link Queen's retirees with Queen's students in a lively mix of discussion groups, high tables, student government issues, and perhaps a formal mentorship program.

There was some good buzz created by the suggestion right from the start. The next step – this being Queen's, after all – was to set up a meeting to explore the possibilities from student and retiree perspectives. "It was a kind of 'Have your people call my people' step," laughs President Joyce Zakos. Along with John Meisel and David Bonham, she met with the Rector a few days later. Impressed, they invited Grant to address the RAQ Council on December 13.

He explained how a first step would be to develop a database of willing members' interests, career backgrounds, and contact information. "Once that information is collected," he said, "development of links could proceed organically."

He pictured residence dons inviting retirees to high tables or arranging floor discussions tied to their professional experience. He imagined overworked student government members looking for personal mentorship or assistance with events such as lectures.

So far, so good. First, the meetings. Next, a committee.

The RAQ Council agreed to canvass for at least three people who might have the ideal combination of energy, time, interest and career background. Grant, who will be graduating this spring, put his mind to identifying three students from diverse disciplines who share his vision for the partnership. He soon reported he had "commandeered three willing and thoroughly capable individuals":

**Alex Harris**, 2nd-year V-P of the Nursing Science

Society and President of the Queen's Health Sciences Student Association;

**Dan Jacob**, 4th-year Politics, an AMS veteran with experience on the Campus Activities Commission, former AMS Advancement Officer and currently its Media Director; and

**Connor Langford**, 3rd-year Applied Science (Geological Engineering), President-elect of the Engineering Society and its former V-P Student Development.

Grant expects that his successor as Rector, Johsa Manzanilla, will take his

place next fall.

By mid-April, Joyce was pleased to confirm RAQ's reps on this "steering" committee:

**Arlene Aish**, former Associate Dean of Nursing, chair of RAQ's Events Committee, and someone who shares the interests of student Alex Harris;

**Mary Balanchuk**, Queen's alumna, retired Professor of Education, a member of the Board of Trustees (where Grant Bishop is a colleague), and, she says, "generally keen on working with students;"

**Albert Fell**, a voice for the largest faculty, Arts and Science, former Philosophy Professor and veteran of student-faculty colloquia in his own department;

**Carl Hamacher**, former Dean of Applied Science and Professor of Electrical and Computing Engineering, always a willing supporter of student initiatives;

**Jim Kelly**, long-time Director of Career Services and a seasoned counselor in an area of vital interest to students.

"That gives RAQ five members to the students' four," notes Joyce, "but we retirees are notorious for travel and other absences, so that's likely a wise move. After a first meeting by the end of April we hope for a wide and enthusiastic response from RAQ members.

*Because she still can't resist writing about student affairs in campus publications, long-distance RAQ member Cathy Perkins (Editor Emerita of the Queen's Review) was invited to report on this new project linking retirees and students.*

## Presidential News and Views

## Pension and Benefits Committee Report

IN JANUARY a joint meeting was held with the administration and employee groups to discuss the changes proposed for the Queen's Pension Plan. RAQ was represented and will also be at a follow up session scheduled for April 27. Clearly the plan has a significant unfunded liability. There are many reasons behind this situation, although a major "problem" is that actuarially we are all living too long! Apparently, the mortality experience for retired Queen's staff is substantially lower than that of similar age groups of retired people across Canada. Changes are essential for the ongoing health of the plan, but changes proposed and provided to all of us over a year ago, have run into heavy resistance from faculty and staff groups. The only proposed change affecting current retirees was a shift from an arithmetic to a geometric method of calculating the four year rolling average for determining pension increases. RAQ is in agreement with the university administration that retirees could opt for this change, but it would not be mandatory. Although the end result of negotiations should have no impact on retired staff, we will continue to keep you informed.

The University's web site states plan performance was a positive 5.2% as of the end of February. This has very likely increased since then to probably in the area of 6%.

At such a level, the pensioner increase next September 1 would be over 5%.

GREAT WEST LIFE and Queen's are reviewing the definition of a medical "emergency" occurring outside the Province under the Queen's medical plan. The problem is that obviously each incident has its own particular circumstances. The current provision, states "an emergency means any sudden critical unforeseen or unexpected occurrence requiring immediate medical attention". This definition has remained unchanged for roughly forty years, and applies to active, as well as retired staff. There is no reference in the contract to prior conditions, but obviously these will have a bearing, particularly if previous medical events have been recent, medications have been changed, etc. We are under a GROUP contract, not an individual one, and hence assessments can only realistically be made after the fact when a claim is being considered. If you are worrying about a medical condition before leaving the province, your best guide is probably advice from your family physician. We are in regular contact with the administration on this, and if, and when, a new definition is developed, we will keep you up to date.

M. W. WRIGHT, *Chairman*  
Pensions and benefits Committee

## New high in membership, revenues and AGM attendance

A RECORD 90 RAQeteers gathered for the Annual General Meeting and luncheon at the University Club on April 24<sup>th</sup>. It was RAQ's fifth AGM and attendees learned the good news that membership rose to 474 this year after a dip to 418 in 2004/05, bringing revenues up by \$1200. President Joyce Zakos reported council and committee members were very active. Meeting reports detailed notable accomplishments by the communications, events and pension and benefits committees.

Links with the University continue through the Principal and Vice Principals, through the Monday morning forums, organized by Agnes Herzberg (past president, John Meisel will present the next forum in May on *Greed: Revisited.*), through a new student retiree com-

mittee reported on page one and through the distribution of RAQ's *Report on Questionnaire Survey of Departments' involvement with their retired members* to all departments.

The president thanked the following, retiring from RAQ positions: Newsletter editor Bernard Trotter, treasurer Pat Bogstad, Joan Sherwood and Stuart Vandewater from council, and secretary Alison Morgan.

On the recommendation of the of the nominating committee, RAQ members elected George Brandie, Bruce Hutchinson, and Henry Dinsdale to council, and re-elected Mary Balanchuk, Chuck Campling, John Gordon, Alan Green, Juliet Milsome and Jessica Roddy, all for a two year term.

Dave Bonham reported for pen-

sion and benefits. John Carmichael, suggested that our medical contract should be revised so that a person be advised in writing by Great West Life before leaving the province, exactly what would not be covered in the event of an "emergency" (i.e. at the time of each trip Great West Life would be required to review his medical condition). It was explained that this would occur under an individual contract, but never under a group plan. In answer to questions, Dave Bonham explained that gains on the TSX would not remove the actuarial deficit since most gains accrued to individual accounts and that an actuarial deficit would trigger a response from the University under Ontario law.

The president warmly thanked members for attending.

# Reports of Past Events Fall 2005

## Retirees learn about Orthopaedic Research

Fifteen curious retirees toured the Human Mobility Research Centre (HMRC) in February at the Syl and Molly Apps Annex of KGH. Dr. Tim Bryant, Chair of the Scientific Committee, explained that the Centre is a partnership between the hospital and Queen's. It is a multidisciplinary research centre involving professors and their students and support staff from engineering disciplines, computing sciences, rehabilitation, and surgeons whose research is aimed at improving mobility and quality of life for those with orthopaedic health problems.

Dr. Steve Waldman described how he grows cartilage in the laboratory which is then implanted into model animals to determine the conditions under which cartilage repair can be achieved. Ph.D. student Joel Lanovaz showed the group how mechanical inserts like knee replacements are designed and tested to minimize wear in the patient. The group also saw the Niagara Foot, a foot designed at HMRC and manufactured by an Ontario company for use by land mine victims in developing countries. Information technology specialist Shawn Leclaire showed the group how computer models taken from CT scans can be used by surgeons in planning and carrying out surgery.



The retirees were impressed with the advances made and thank Marg Alden, managing director of HMRC for organizing the tour for RAQ.

## How to stay healthy when traveling

In March, 13 RAQ members visited the KFL&A Public Health building to hear Public Health Nurse Alice Welsh describe health hazards in various parts of the world and how one can be protected from them. India seems to present the most health challenges but other tropical areas such as the Caribbean and Africa can also be hazardous. Fortunately, immunization is safe and effective. Alice discussed the common myths about vaccinations and then covered factors affecting level of risk for those traveling. These include destination, length of stay, reason for travel, and current health status. Some infectious diseases that may be encountered include hepatitis, typhoid, tetanus, malaria, cholera and yellow fever. Travelers' diarrhea is the most common, but steps can be taken to reduce risk and to treat it when it occurs. Protection against tetanus is important because of the risk of injury anywhere one travels. Retirees asked many questions about their specific health and travel situations following the lively presentation by Alice. The Public Health Department is an excellent source of current information about international health hazards because of their knowledgeable staff and their information networks. They suggest people call (549-1232) a few weeks ahead to schedule an appointment for counseling about immunization before a trip. Generally there are no ill effects from the immunizations and people are ready to travel after the initial dose.

## Dinner with the Principal

On April 10th seven members of the RAQ Executive had dinner at Summerhill with Principal Hitchcock, VPs Simpson and Deane and Patrick McNeill (Executive Assistant to the Principal). This provided an informal opportunity to discuss a number of topics of direct interest to the retirees of Queen's. Among the topics discussed were student-retiree interaction, the concept of an emeritus college, staff involvement in RAQ, the Tett Centre initiative, town-gown relations, the pension plan and medical benefits. The tenor of the interchange was open and frank giving rise to agreement that the dinner will become an annual event and a direct channel between RAQ and the administration. The Principal is very sensitive to input from retirees and would welcome involvement from them in furthering the purposes of the university.



## RAQ Events Spring/ Summer 2006

RAQ MEMBERS continue to meet informally for lunch at various restaurants, usually on the last Monday of each month. Everyone is

welcome. Contact Jessica Roddy, [jroddy@kingston.net](mailto:jroddy@kingston.net) or phone 353-6959 to reserve your place and/or to be notified of the location of the lunches.

Please enjoy the following events planned for spring/summer:

### John Meisel speaks on *Greed: Revisited*

**Monday May 29**  
**Monday Morning Forum**  
University Club,  
8:30 am Coffee etc.  
9:00 am Forum  
9:30 am Discussion.  
All Welcome.

### *River Revue 2006*

**Luncheon Cruise and Theatre performance *Wingfield's Inferno*.**

**Wednesday July 5, 12:00 noon**  
departure from cruise dock,  
bottom of Brock Street, Kingston,  
2:30 performance at 1,000 Islands  
Playhouse (Springer Theatre),

Gananoque, then post-performance bus transportation back to Kingston.  
\$72 per ticket  
(\$48 for 1000 Islands' subscribers.

*Wingfield's Inferno* – A devastating fire at the Orange Hall in Larkspur leaves it a smouldering ruin. Former financial guy/country farmer Walt leads the charge to get it rebuilt, but lighting a fire under his fellow committee members proves a daunting task. Is it courage they lack or is the devil in the details?

Why not plan a table of 6 for this delightful cruise down the St. Lawrence and to see Canada's favourite stage character in the newest saga of life in the country. **Register by Friday May 12** – see enclosed form.

### *Opinicon Pot Luck Picnic*

**Wednesday, July 26, 11:00 am**  
**(RAIN OR SHINE)**

Last year it rained and we still had a fine time eating in the comfortable pavilion. Please join us again for a visit to this delightful spot on the shores of Lake Opinicon to see the Biology Department's great facility. Learn about various graduate student projects while enjoy-

ing the surroundings. See enclosed registration form for details and directions. Cost is \$6.00.

**You must register by July 18.**

### *Prince Edward County Winery Tour and Lunch,* **Thursday August 10, 2006**

Enjoy a tour and tasting at the **Carmela Estates Winery** near Wellington. After the tour - lunch (vegetarian choice available) on the patio (weather permitting) at the Vines Restaurant on the Carmela Estate; menu items range in price from \$8 to \$16 each plus taxes and gratuities, payable at the restaurant. Our mini bus will then take us to Wellington to explore the town on foot and/or shop. If time permits (and the weather cooperates), we will drive to Lake on the Mountain to enjoy the view and then take the ferry home, arriving around 5 pm. Bus pick up will be 11 am sharp in the West Campus parking lot behind McArthur Hall. Cost for bus and the winery tour: \$36.00. See enclosed registration form.

**Space is limited.**  
**Reserve your place by registering by July 20.**



### **Membership is Important**

If you haven't yet renewed your membership in RAQ for 2005-06, please do so **NOW**. And please encourage other retirees and prospective retirees to join. Forms are available on our web-site [www.queensu.ca/retirees](http://www.queensu.ca/retirees) or phone 533-6986.

RAQnews is published three times a year by The Communications Committee, Chair, John Gordon. Contributors to this issue: Cathy Perkins, Arlene Aish, Bill Wright, Joyce Zakos, Bruce Hutchinson and Alison Morgan. Design and Production: Peter Dorn; Contributing Editors: Dick Bowman, John Gordon and Alison Morgan. Printing and mailing: With special thanks to Queen's Printing Services and the Queen's Post Office. RAQ's postal address is: Mackintosh Corry Hall, Room A410, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, K7L 3N6. Telephone 613-533-6986. E-mail [raq@post.queensu.ca](mailto:raq@post.queensu.ca) website [www.queensu.ca/retirees](http://www.queensu.ca/retirees).