

RAQnews



FOR THE PAST two years I have enjoyed serving as President of the Retirees' Association of Queen's. During this time, the President's page of *RAQnews* has been titled "News and Views" – a different

Presidential News and Views

approach from that taken by founding President John Meisel, a master of the written word. In this issue, I'm focusing on two recent events – the first, a dinner meeting with Principal Karen Hitchcock; the second, the 2007 AGM. They conclude the series of Council, Committee and related meetings for the year following the previous AGM.

Principal Hitchcock has made it a practice to invite Executive members to a dinner meeting with Vice Principals and relevant senior staff. This spring it was on April 10 at Summerhill, and RAQ invitees included Dr. Henry Dinsdale, who chairs our committee exploring the possibility of a Retiree/Emeritus Centre, and Ms Alison Morgan, who has been instrumental in reviving an oral history project under the title *A Human History of Queen's*.

Not surprisingly, the atmosphere was totally supportive of RAQ's overall objectives and our most recent initiatives. V-P (Academic) Patrick Deane, our chief liaison in Richardson Hall, was absent due to illness, but the Principal assured us that he will initiate meetings shortly to advance the Retiree/Emeritus Centre concept. We also discussed new ways retirees could be helpful to the University, ranging from our being consulted about major policy changes to engaging in informal learning environments for enriching life on campus and in Kingston. (*Please see "Queen's Mini-U" inside.*) On RAQ's side, we sincerely thanked the Principal for financially supporting our communication costs and the Monday Morning Forums.

On to the AGM – On April 30 I was delighted to welcome some 80 members to the University Club for an enjoyable lunch and a review of the past year's activities. It's hard to believe this was RAQ's 5th Annual General Meeting. Every report made there showed clearly that we're an organization with lots of intellectual and social bustle. To cover news and topics raised there, this newsletter has been expanded, but I would like to cite a few highlights for those who weren't present:

The on-going projects under Alison Morgan and Henry Dinsdale (mentioned above) drew considerable interest. The first oral history interviews for the period 1960-74 will be taped early next year. Please don't be shy if you're asked for your memories and views.

Membership Secretary Joy Hoselton reported a total of 535 members – an increase that Treasurer Barbara Aitken noted means almost \$900 more in revenues (total \$7,438). I'm sure you'll agree this is very healthy. Still, the Council would welcome ideas for attracting even more staff retirees.

According to John Gordon, we're communicating effectively via e-mail, *RAQnews*, mailings and our website, but his committee, too, invites readers' suggestions for improvements. Pension and Benefits Committee chair Bill Wright brought welcome news on several fronts, as you'll see in his column inside. Arlene Aish's report on events past and future certainly testified to members' diversity of interests and expertise.

It was John Meisel who wrapped up the agenda as Nominating Committee chair. I'm happy to be passing the gavel to Arlene Aish, who has given strength and inspiration to this association from its very beginning. At the same time, we salute some other RAQ pioneers whose terms are up. (*More on this inside.*) The sustained applause they and the committee chairs received was certainly well deserved.

It was an honour to serve this term and a pleasure to look around the AGM and sense the purpose, dedication, and enjoyment that I believe will ensure a long and lively future for this association.

JOYCE ZAKOS, *President*

Pension and Benefits Committee Report

Our 20% Solution Much of the work of our committee during the past year has aimed at finding protection for the 20% not covered under the Queen's Medical Plan, chiefly for those traveling outside the country. Here's a quick recap of those efforts:

- * Trent Insurance stopped selling this coverage.

- * Neither Queen's administration nor RAQ could find any company in Canada willing to provide a plan whereby the "missing" 20% coverage could be bought for a 20% premium.

- * Representatives from Kingston Financial Centre very kindly (and without remuneration) came up with a much-appreciated alternative.

- * Through Kingston Financial Centre, and with its assistance, we can now access individual travel and emergency medical insurance through Robin Ingle in Toronto. For information, please go to <http://www.kingstonfinancial.com/>

The link to ETFS Medi-Select site seems the most beneficial. If you have any questions, call either Mary Thompson or Kathryn Wright at Kingston Financial Centre. You should understand that there is no financial compensation for this firm, nor its representatives, for any work done on behalf of RAQ members. Please also note that RAQ is not endorsing Kingston Financial Centre or Robin Ingle, but the staff do seem to provide the solution we have been seeking for several years

- * A number of RAQ members who have used this service in recent months have expressed to us their considerable satisfaction. If you have had any experiences with these firms, either good or bad, we would like to hear from you

'Very Nice' Pension Prospects As of February 28, the return on the Queen's Pension Plan, as reported by the Pensions, Benefits and Insurance Office, was 9.436%. This was mid-way through the plan's fiscal year that ends August 31. Should such a positive level of return be maintained for the second six months, it would definitely result in a very nice increase in pensions for all retirees next September 1.

We have nothing new to report on the Pension Plan proposed changes that have been under discussion between the University and the various unions and employee groups for several years. The significant problem of the actuarial deficit in the plan remains unsolved. Whatever eventually transpires should have no significant effect on currently retired staff.

Pre-retirement Course Returns Many of our retired staff may recall that for many years the University conducted pre-retirement planning courses. For whatever reasons, these were discontinued about 15 years ago. RAQ learned from some recent retirees – at Queen's and other Canadian universities – that there is strong interest in having access to such programs. Queen's administration, reacting very favourably to our input, tells us that such a program will soon be reinstated for active staff nearing retirement and wanting advice on such matters as life style adjustments, financial matters, health needs and concerns, etc.

Feedback Welcome Dave Bonham, Alan Green and I are the members of your Pension and Benefits Committee. As noted above, we would be pleased to have your input on the medical plan issues or any other matter in which you are interested.

M.W (BILL) WRIGHT, *Chair*

Here's something new: Queen's Mini-U

QUEEN'S is preparing to take a new step in enriching its relationship with its graduates and the broader Kingston and area communities by launching a "mini-university" weekend in May 2008. Planners hope to make it an annual spring event.

"Mini-U" will engage participants in a variety of educational, cultural, social and recreation programs. It will put alumni and members of the community-at-large in touch with the heart of Queen's – its intellectual life.

As described to the RAQ Councillors' March meeting, the Mini-U weekend will showcase fac-

ulty and alumni experts, give participants unique access to this expertise, and build on Queen's reputation for academic excellence. Participants will also experience some of the best of what Queen's offers in lifelong learning opportunities, at the same time, we hope, deepening their engagement in the life and work of the University.

To steer the development of this pilot event, the office of Alumni Relations is partnering with various key stakeholders – faculty members, the Alumni Association, the Performing Arts Office, and the Retirees Association, among others.

The date will be May 23-25, 2008.

We extend a warm welcome to RAQ members to get involved – as volunteers, participants, and, most significantly, resources. We're sure retirees have good ideas to share about possible themes, topics, speakers, and target audiences.

If you find this initiative exciting, please contact me for more information, to find out how you can help, or to give us your ideas.

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Notes from RAQ's AGM

Membership increasing

The Retirees Association wrapped up its 6th year with a membership of 535 – 275 single members and 130 couples. Membership Secretary Joy Hoselton, when asked from the floor about the ratio of faculty to staff, noted that faculty retirees outnumber staff members about two to one, and she invited members' ideas about increasing staff applications. She also reassured questioners that non-Queen's spouses were welcome to join. At present, everyone retiring from Queen's is mailed RAQ information and a welcome. The Executive decided not to increase fees this coming year (\$15 single, \$25 a couple).

President Zakos observed that RAQ's current Executive and Council are almost perfectly balanced between faculty and staff volunteers.



The Executive table: from left, B. Hutchinson, J. Meisel and A. Aish

Numbers up, revenue up, budget up

Treasurer Barbara Aitken reported that this year's increased membership has meant a welcome increase of \$890 in revenue. Income for 2006-07 was \$7438, and expenses totaled \$6371. As a corollary, additional costs for communicating with more members will make this year's budget higher (\$7350).

In addition to membership revenues and cost-recovery for events, RAQ receives a grant of \$1500 through the Vice-Principal (Academic) towards communication costs (printing, postage, phone and website). That office also funds the Monday Morning Forums, which are considered a first step towards the anticipated Emeritus College – a possibility being explored by a committee chaired by Dr. Henry Dinsdale. Guest speakers have addressed six of these forums to date, and forum organizer Dr. Agnes Herzberg has five more scheduled for this year.



The 80 members who enjoyed lunch before the AGM (above and below, left) were surveyed about the menu, location and agenda papers.

RAQ Spin-off in BC

RAQueteer Mavis Goodman, now a resident of Victoria, BC, has discovered enough other Queen's retirees living in the same city that she now reports there's a RAQ "branch" up and running. "That may be a misnomer," she writes, "since we've thrown membership wide open to anyone with a Queen's connection of just about any kind." They've had two meetings and plan to meet over lunch on the last Thursday of each month from now on. It's likely this will be the first "spin-off" group among CURAC members.

If you have friends in Victoria who might be interested, please contact Mavis or give your friends her address: goodmanm@post.queensu.ca



The pre-lunch reception was a chance to meet and greet.

New voice on CURAC

Two years ago, Queen's joined the College and University Retiree Association of Canada (CURAC), anchored by Prof. Ken Rhea at the University of Toronto. Last spring, Joyce Zakos and Arlene Aish attended the CURAC conference in Guelph, heard the proposal for a national newsletter (now launched) and suggested to Council that RAQ maintain its ties with this umbrella body at a maximum cost of \$400 for 2007-08. As announced at the AGM, RAQ V-P George Brandie has agreed to serve as Queen's official representative to CURAC. George has also succeeded Alison Morgan as RAQ's liaison with web master Bob Cavanagh (School of Business).



Meet your 2007-08 RAQ Team. SEATED, from left: Councillor Patricia Bogstad, retiring Past-President and Nominating Committee Chair John Meisel, new President Arlene Aish, Past-President Joyce Zakos and Vice-President George Brandie. STANDING, from left: Councillors David Bonham and Chuck Campling, Pension & Benefits Chair Bill Wright, Treasurer Barbara Aitken, Membership Chair Joy Hoselton, Councillors Juliet Milsome and Henry Dinsdale, Communications Chair John Gordon, and Secretary Bruce Hutchinson. The first meeting of new and continuing members took place following the AGM at the University Club, April 30. Absent from the photo: Councillors Mary Balanchuk, Alan Green, Jim Kelly, Jessica Roddy and an Events Committee Chair to be named.

New President and Officers

THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE chaired by Past-President John Meisel presented a popular slate of officers to the AGM and introduced RAQ's new President, Arlene Aish. As a former Associate Professor of Nursing and Assistant Dean of the School, she brings a valued administrative experience to her new post, just as she brought it to her previous duties as Events Committee Chair and Executive member-at-large.

John Meisel is one of three long-serving officers whose terms are now complete, the others being Councillors Dan Soberman (an inaugural member and the drafter of RAQ's Constitution), and Eileen Fleming.

The new President's **Executive Committee** of eight now consists of Joyce Zakos (Past-President), George Brandie (Vice-President), Bruce Hutchinson (Secretary), Barbara Aitken (Treasurer), Joy Hoselton (Membership), and three members-at-large: John Gordon (Communications Chair), Bill Wright (Pension & Benefits Chair) and an Events Chair to be named.

Councillors – both continuing and new – are Mary Balanchuk, Patricia Bogstad, David Bonham, Chuck Campling, Henry Dinsdale, Alan Green, Jim Kelly, Juliet Milsome and Jessica Roddy.

Reports of Past Events – Winter 2007

Tour of Gordon Hall was an architectural and social delight

On January 26, nine RAQeteers braved a cold and blustery day to tour Gordon Hall – new home of Registrarial and Career Services. We enjoyed a warm welcome from Joanne Brady, University Registrar, and a wonderfully relaxed yet informed tour conducted by her assistant, Rebecca Mezciems, and by Debbie Mundell of Career Services.

We were shown both the public and behind-the-scenes spaces. The architectural details were wonderful: the restored gable roofline, the slate floors, the lighting, the high ceilings, and the distinctive interior space created by the gables. The layout has been carefully designed for maximum service to students and efficiency and comfort for staff (e.g., the windows can be opened). The wide range of Registrarial Services is, for the first time, under one roof. Career Services offers a lot of help for both students and employers in a people-friendly space. [An aside: RAQ members can email DM26@post.queensu.ca if they have a job they would like posted.] When offered tea and cookies, we enjoyed ourselves so much that we were still there chatting after quitting time!

Our hearty thanks to the University Registrar for organizing such a delightful tour. ALISON MORGAN



RAQeteers stroll from cellars to sampling at last August's tour of Carmela Estates Winery in Prince Edward County.

Dr. Faustus matinee was a challenging piece of theatre

Although not all the 26 RAQeteers who registered for *Dr. Faustus* turned out, the performance on Saturday, March 3, played to a full house. In the words of Jillian Keiley, who directed this modern, musical adaptation of the Christopher Marlowe play, it was "based on ... the idea of music found in everyday language ... a new experi-

ment of what can be." Particular emphasis was placed on rhythm of voice and music and on a different style of staging. Actors emerged and disappeared from triangular boxes that could be moved into ever-new "constellations" by the actors themselves, from the inside.

The production was fascinating, but presented challenges for the audience. The background music had to be loud enough to be heard by the actors in their boxes – which made it, alas, much too loud for the audience. Most of us had a hard time understanding what was being said. Yet, I left quite stimulated by the atmosphere created by the coming and going of boxes, the actors' performances, and the rhythm they were following. And so, along with the students, I learnt something about new staging.

MARION MEYER

Viennese Waltz endures as 'middle class' legacy

Encouraged by last season's musical experience with composer Istvan Anhalt, 14 RAQ members gathered in the Graham George Seminar Room of the Douglas Library on Thursday, 22 March. The occasion was a delightful presentation, in words and music, by Dr. John Burge, Director of the School of Music, on the topic "The Viennese Waltz." John's talk concentrated on three 19th century composers: Johann Strauss Sr., his son, Johann Jr. (the "Waltz King"), and Frederic Chopin, who composed the *Grande Valse Brillante* during the brief time he was in Vienna. Due to the huge wave of immigrants who came to Vienna early in the 19th Century, primarily from eastern Europe, there was increasing demand for popular entertainment by this middle class audience. Balls, attended by thousands, whetted an appetite for the waltz, which became an increasingly fashionable dance. Johann Strauss Jr. and his orchestra, along with a huge retinue of 200, including drivers, cooks and personal servants, traveled extensively throughout Europe. Strauss was greeted with adulation wherever he went and helped to popularize his own waltzes.

Dr. Burge illustrated his talk by playing Chopin's *Grande Valse* on the piano, analyzing it as he went along, and also played a video excerpt from *Die Fledermaus*, Strauss Jr.'s most popular operetta. Pointing out that the waltz continues to be popular to this day in the stage musicals that are the successors to the operetta, John played us an excerpt from Stephen Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, where the waltz has taken on a menacing tone.

JULIET MILSOME

RAQ Events Spring/ Summer 2007

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

come – including members' spouses and friends. On May 28, we're at The Greek Islands, 331 Bath Road. Contact Jessica (Jerry) Roddy, jroddy@kingston.net or 613-353-6959 for details and reservations

PLEASE ENJOY THE
FOLLOWING EVENTS PLANNED
FOR THIS SUMMER:

Opinicon Pot Luck Picnic

Wednesday, July 25

11 am (Rain or Shine)

This will be the third RAQ picnic at Opinicon. Last year the day was bright and sunny and we enjoyed eating outside in the park-like setting. If it rains, we will eat 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 renowned research facility and grad students' current projects. The enclosed Registration Form has details and directions. Cost is \$6.00 – and a picnic dish to share. **Please register by July 16.**

1st RAQ Golf Tournament **Monday, August 27**

Location: Colonnade Golf and Country Club, 2789 Woodbine Rd., Joyceville. From Kingston, take Hwy. 401 East to exit 632, go north on Joyceville Rd. one mile to Woodburn Rd., then east one-half mile. Course description, map in kms, etc. are on the Club's web site: www.colonnadegolf.ca

Format: Four-person scramble (best ball). Groups of four must be made up ahead of time. If you'd like to come on your own or with fewer than four, call Joy Hoselton at 613-533-6986 ASAP before the deadline and we'll try to fit you into a foursome.

Cost: \$60 per person for 18 holes and dinner. Not a golfer? \$20 for dinner only. Cash bar.

Power Carts: \$30 for two people. Reserve through the Pro Shop (613-541-4779) by August 13.

Registration deadline: Monday, August 13. Include full payment for your foursome (\$240).

Tee off times: 10 am till noon. Dinner between 5 and 7 pm.

Concert Excursion to Picton

Friday, September 21

Classical music lovers, mark your calendars! We've planned a leisurely bus tour to Picton for a delicious

pre-concert meal and another evening of exceptional classical music at the Prince Edward County Music Festival.

This annual Festival provides a unique experience by featuring the compositions of a living Canadian composer among works from other composers and eras. The concerts (\$20) take place in the acoustically superb Church of St. Mary Magdalene, Main St., Picton, beginning at 7.30 pm. The 2007 composer-in-residence is Queen's own John Burge, Director of the School of Music. Two of his compositions will be played that night, along with works by Schumann and Brahms.

More details about the program and seven featured performers are at www.pecmusicfestival.com.

Dinner is booked for 5 pm at the chic Portabello restaurant, an easy walk from the church. A four-course meal is offered for \$30, including taxes and tip, payable individually at the restaurant. Please make your choice of entree in advance from the selections on the enclosed Registration Form or on RAQ's website – www.queensu.ca/retirees.

Participants should meet at the West Campus parking lot, NORTH end (Johnson St) at 3.30 pm to allow for a scenic drive to the ferry and on to the Portabello for dinner. **Registration deadline is Wednesday, September 12.** Enclose a cheque for \$50 (\$30 for bus + \$20 for concert).

Stroke Study welcomes RAQ volunteer 'controls'

Members without e-mail may have missed this appeal for volunteers to serve as controls in a stroke study being conducted at St. Mary's of the Lake Hospital. It was during last October's RAQ tour of Stephen Scott's lab in the Centre for Neurosciences Studies that some members expressed interest in participating in such studies.

Although RAQ does not sponsor, recruit or endorse any research studies, it is happy to refer those interested in more information to Kim Moore, Research Assistant, at 613-533-6000, ext. 74590, or to the Laboratory of Integrative Motor Behaviour (LIMB) at <http://limb.biomed.queensu.ca>

RAQnews is published three times a year by The Communications Committee, *Chair*, John Gordon.

Contributors to this issue: Arlene Aish, Joy Hoselton, Bruce Hutchinson, Melanie McEwen, Marion Meyer, Juliet Milsome, Alison Morgan and Bill Wright. *Photos:* John Gordon and George Zakos

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Printing and mailing: Special thanks to Queen's Printing Services, Queen's Post Office and RAQ volunteer staffers.

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