

# RAQnews

## *Recent activities of RAQ Council, Executive, and Committees*

The Principal's Reception on October 27 was a great success. RAQ members always seem keen to get updates on the state of the University and were interested in Principal Tom Williams' plans for the future. He spoke candidly of the many challenges facing Queen's at this time. The question period after his talk was lively and lengthy. I believe Principal Williams is open to ideas and suggestions from everyone, and so I would encourage you to e-mail or write to him with your opinions about the University

Last summer, several Council members had dinner in Kingston with some representatives from Lakehead University who are working towards establishing a retiree organization. They were not receiving the support we were lucky enough to get at Queen's when RAQ started. However, they have made progress since then and recently asked for information about how we manage to put out such a successful newsletter. John Gordon, Chair of the Communications Committee, responded by giving an overview of how it all works. We are fortunate to be in a position to mentor another retiree group.

Until recently, CURAC (College and University Retiree Associations of Canada) has not had a formal office. When George Brandie (VP of RAQ and Secretary of CURAC) suggested that the office be established at Queen's, VP Patrick Deane was most supportive. CURAC will share facilities with RAQ in Macintosh-Corry Hall.

A working group to investigate the possibility of Queen's getting involved in retiree housing has

been established. John Gordon will be RAQ's representative. Many universities in the United States and a few in Canada have established retirement homes on or near campus. If Queen's does decide to pursue this idea, it will be part of long-term development planning.

## **Presidential News and Views**

Retired faculty were again invited to participate as application readers in the Major Entrance Award selection process. The Admissions Office was pleased once more to have RAQ members participate.

## *Opportunities for volunteers to interact with students*

A section listing Volunteer opportunities has been added to the RAQ home page. Please check it out. One of the items gives more details about a notice we printed in the Fall newsletter about the Queen's University International Centre (QUIC). At September's RAQ Council meeting, Susan Anderson spoke to us about the Centre's role in providing a variety of services to incoming international students, staff and faculty, as well as to North American students seeking opportunities abroad. Volunteers are needed for English language support (ELS), income tax preparation assistance, and for short-term housing upon students' arrival.

Last September, the Office of Student Affairs organized an Orientation event called Capstone. Students were invited to sit down and engage with community members (including retirees) and professors. Reaction by the student participants to the 2008 Capstone event was overwhelmingly positive. Learn more by following the Volunteer link at [www.queensu.ca/retirees](http://www.queensu.ca/retirees).

ARLENE AISH, President

**Mark your  
calendar!**

**RAQ Annual General Meeting and Lunch**  
Monday, April 27, at the University Club  
Reception and Cash Bar 11:30 am  
Lunch 12:30 pm \* Meeting to Follow

## Pension and Benefits Committee Report

On November 12, 2008, Human Resources mailed its annual statement to Queen's pensioners, outlining the pension fund's rate of return for the last four years and explaining why the latest increase in our payments is about 2%. I would like to use my first report as chair of RAQ's Pension and Benefits Committee to give you an overview of pension governance and to differentiate

between the Board of Trustees' Pension Committee and your RAQ Pension and Benefits Committee, which is made up of David Bonham, Chris Chapler (new member) and me.

On that same November day, we three, along with RAQ President Arlene Aish, met with Rod Morrison (VP Human Resources) and Bob Weisnagel (Pensions & Benefits) to discuss the following areas of mutual concern.

**Governance** During the past year, the composition of the Board of Trustees' Pension Committee has been modified slightly to add two more Board appointees, replacing the two sitting Vice-Principals but leaving them on the committee as non-voting, ex officio members. Currently the Board's Pension Committee has 11 voting members, six from among members of the plan (two active staffers, two faculty members and two retirees) and five Board appointees, not necessarily Trustees. The final accountability of Queen's Pension Plan (QPP) matters remains with that committee, including establishing and maintaining investment policies, as was confirmed by the update on pension governance released by the University last March. At this stage, it seems advisable for RAQ's Pension and Benefits Committee to keep a careful watch on developments that follow from these changes. We're trying to do that.

**Financial Viability of the Plan** For all pension plans operating in Ontario, there is a statutory requirement to conduct a formal actuarial review every three years. This was last done at Queen's in February 2007

and showed an actuarial deficit of \$40.5 million. As we understand the rules, this deficit must be dealt with over a prescribed period of several years. Since 2007, the deficit quite clearly is increasing, and no doubt its course will be closely monitored by Queen's and both pension committees. The next formal actuarial review is scheduled for 2010 and will doubtlessly be the subject of great interest. In spite of the current deficit, RAQ was assured at the November meeting that the QPP continues to occupy a good relative position *vis à vis* other universities and other employers. Nonetheless, the current state of the economy heightens these worries.

It's not easy to say specifically what causes a deficit. Although it's wonderful news for us that Queen's retirees as a whole are living longer than the national average, our longevity is a significant contributing factor. So might be the current stock market volatility. You may recall that other possible factors were mentioned in our committee's letter last January to William Young, Chair of the Board of Trustees. In any event, this deficit situation exists. Although the primary financial responsibility rests with the University, it is a matter that concerns RAQ very directly.

**Future Meetings** It was agreed that we should meet regularly with the administration through VP Morrison's office for assistance with any questions we might have concerning the operation of the QPP. We wish to thank Rod and Bob for making this a most friendly and useful meeting.

**Notes** In these financially turbulent times, it is reassuring to recall that the QPP has a non-reduction clause with respect to pension levels already in effect. For recent clarification about benefit claims, especially for travellers who have a medical emergency more than 500 km from home, outside Canada or Ontario, please see Queen's November mailing about the Pension Plan's AGM on December 5. Clearly, it's wise to carry your Global Medical Assistance card.

ALAN GREEN, *Chair*



Who better to share ribbon-cutting honours on Professors' Walk with Principal Tom Williams, right, than the 'dean' of the emeriti, John Meisel, RAQ's first president? This Homecoming event took place on the newly named and landscaped path in front of Kingston Hall. (Queen's Gazette photo by Stephen Wild)



# Reports of Past Events – Fall 2008

## *Music in Picton a “magical evening”*

On a beautiful fall afternoon, 28 classical music lovers set off for the annual RAQ outing to the Prince Edward County Music Festival in Picton, stopping en route for dinner at the delightful Portabello Bistro just around the corner from the church where the concerts are held.

Here’s how Grace Orzech describes ‘the magic:’

*“On the evening of September 18, I joined the group attending the opening night of the three-day Music Festival at the Church of Saint Mary Magdalene in Picton. It was a perfect farewell to summer and welcome to autumn. The music-making was superb in a programme that was a beautiful mixture of old and new. The Penderecki String Quartet and musical colleagues played two chamber music masterpieces. Clarinetist Simon Aldrich joined the quartet for Mozart’s Clarinet Quintet and cellist Tanya Prochazka was the fifth member for Schubert’s sublime Quintet for Strings in C Major. The Festival’s composer-in-residence, Alexina Louie, charmed the audience with an account of how a composer works. Tanya Prochazka and pianist Stephane Lemelin, who is the Festival’s artistic director, played several of Louie’s works. On the bus trip back to Kingston, the magic of the evening continued, as the moon beamed down on the Bay of Quinte.”*

Do mark your calendars for next year’s festival:

September 17-19.

[www.pecmusicfestival.com](http://www.pecmusicfestival.com).

MARJORIE PINKERTON



Tom Williams seems to be leading RAQ in prayer about complex Queen’s issues (Principal’s Reception, October 27), but in fact he was mentally juggling his challenges.

## *“Drums in the Night” best drama outing yet*

The general opinion of those who attended Bertold Brecht’s “Drums in the Night” (November 1) was that it was the best Queen’s Drama Department play we had seen so far. Director and department head Craig Walker successfully surrounded the audience with the atmosphere of 1920s Berlin. The students managed their not-so-easy parts remarkably well and, all in all, we were left with much food for thought.

Although the director was not present to discuss the play afterward (a popular feature of other RAQ matinee outings), the student actors willingly and ably answered our questions. I was surprised that no-one – neither audience nor actors – questioned the very self-centred, final choice of the main protagonist, as if we were to believe “they lived happily ever after.” We are told that Brecht was embarrassed about this play in later life, but we enjoyed it very much.

MARION MEYER

## *Innovation Park shows another side of Queen’s*

On November 5, about 20 retirees learned how part of the Novelis Global Technology Centre (formerly the Alcan Research Laboratory on upper Princess St.) and new space to be built there will enhance the economic prosperity of the Kingston area.

Director Janice Mady described how Innovation Park came to its current state of development and outlined plans for its growth. Queen’s has been a key partner from the beginning. The “Park” – made possible by a \$21-million grant from the Ontario government – brings academic and industry engineers and scientists together under one roof as a means of tapping their creative energy and fostering an environment of discovery that accelerates and supports the growth of new businesses. At present, the facility is 60% occupied by 18 organizations involving about 125 staff, faculty and students, in addition to about 85 Novelis staff.

BRUCE HUTCHINSON



The Principal had an attentive University Club audience, including RAQueteer and past Principal Ron Watts (right). Question period was long and lively.

# Coming RAQ Events Winter 2009

## *March matinee: Chekhov's "Seagull" with a twist*

**Saturday, March 7**  
**Details TBA**

RAQ's first theatre outing in 2009 will feature "The Seagull" by Anton Chekhov (1860-1904), presented by Queen's Drama Department and directed by Prof. Kim Renders. This was Chekhov's first play after a long silence. Initially, it was received with such hostility by the audience that one of the actors lost her voice. However, in the end, the play

became known as the "greatest event of Russian theatre" and marked "the acceptance of new developments in play writing." (*Summary and Study Guide*)

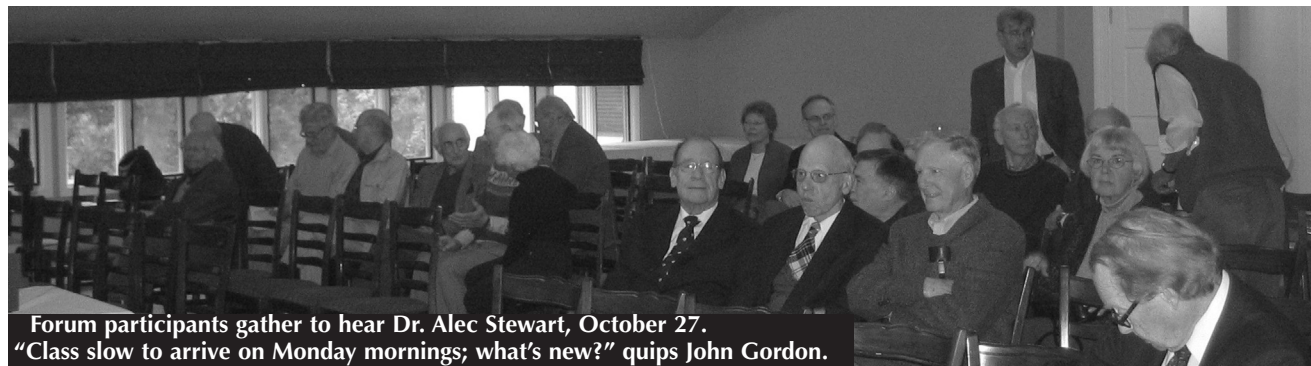
Chekhov commented that the play contains five tons of love. He shows that, typical of human tendencies, love, when freely given, is often rejected and, conversely, is sought when it is withheld. Director Renders intends to give "The Seagull" her own twist, challenging both her young cast and us seasoned theatre-goers by treating it as a comedy. Details about

location, time, and tickets will appear on RAQ's web site and will be announced to members with e-mail.

MARION MEYER

## *Luncheon Reminder*

January 25 will see the return of this popular noonhour series on the last Monday of most months. Restaurant TBA. All are welcome at these lunches, including members' spouses, other Queen's retirees, and friends. In due time, contact co-ordinator Jerry Roddy, [jroddy@kingston.net](mailto:jroddy@kingston.net) or 613-353-6959, for details and reservations.



Forum participants gather to hear Dr. Alec Stewart, October 27.  
"Class slow to arrive on Monday mornings; what's new?" quips John Gordon.

## **Monday Morning Forums**

The Winter-Spring series of five Monday Morning Forums will continue to feature diverse specialists sparking lively discussions by posing challenging questions. All five Forums will be held at the University Club, 168 Stuart St. Come at 8:15 am to visit over coffee and muffins. The guest lecture is at 9:00, followed by an exchange of ideas. Everyone is welcome. This series is co-ordinated by Agnes Herzberg under the joint sponsorship of the University and Four Points by Sheraton Hotel & Suites, Kingston.

RAQ members will receive mail and e-mail reminders.

**January 12**

### *How does one get the scientific results one wants?*

Guest Speaker **DR. J.C. BAILAR**  
National Academies of the USA

**February 23**

### *Is there a future for classical music?*

Presentation by  
**MR. ERIC FRIESEN**  
CBC Radio 2 host of "Studio Sparks"

**March 2**

### *Will there be enough water?*

Presentation by  
**DR. J. H. CAREY**  
Water and Science Technology  
Directorate, Environment Canada

**March 9**

### *Psychoanalysis and Literature: From annexation to fragmentation*

Guest Speaker:  
**DR. JEAN-JACQUES HAMM**  
Emeritus Professor of  
French Studies,  
Queen's University

**May 4**

### *What caused the banking crisis?*

A presentation by  
**PROF. EDWIN H. NEAVE**  
Queen's School of Business

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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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