

RAQnews



THE MOST important event at Queen's, since I last invaded RAQnews, is the arrival of our new Principal, Karen Hitchcock. Having crossed paths (decidedly not swords) with her a couple of times, I can report that the vibes are very good.

Trading on my status of old geezer (OG), I have the impudence to say that I was heartened by a lot of things, not least her obvious interest in metaphorically discovering all the nooks and crannies of Queen's and that she mercifully seems to be bereft of any impulse to tell one and all how they do it at Albany. My pals at some Canadian universities now run by Canadian ex-pats from the US tell me that they have not been as lucky!

In warmly welcoming Karen on behalf of RAQeters, I wish her well, assure her of our support and, true to the rights and privileges enjoyed by OGs, dare offer her a little gratuitous advice. Space limitations compel me drastically to curtail the number and substance of the suggestions – consider them teasers which could, if desired, be fleshed out and added to later.

Queen's has been well served by its recent Principals and has grown into a stronger, healthier and more exciting place. The university has responded to the enveloping political, economic and academic climate; to the dynamic of its professorate, students and Board of Trustees; its benefactors, and by no means least, to the leadership of the administration.

Our strides in the sciences and some of the profes-

sional programs have been more impressive than in the humanities and the social sciences. We are no longer (perhaps inevitably) the college that enjoys exceptional ties with governments, and our former status as the quintessential Canadian university is now matched and perhaps even exceeded by several other places.

It will be well to examine these and other changes, decide whether we find them inevitable and/or desirable. If not, whether we should take certain compensating steps. This is one of the little tasks I propose for the agenda of our new chief.

The second one is more self serving, "RAQ-wise". Most Canadian and particularly American universities are responding to demographic changes and the growing number of students and retirees by developing programs mobilizing retirees for the performance of needed tasks: teaching, counselling, doing research, etc., etc., Some places now have emeriti colleges and centres with fairly elaborate programs. This not only helps the institutions but provides creative work for interested staff and faculty.

RAQ has a tentative working party on this front and could easily join the new administration in exploring future possibilities and ways of exploiting potentially "new" talents and energies. I herewith draw this to the Principal's attention and call on her and interested RAQ members, to devote some thought to the possibility of becoming a Canadian leader in harnessing a potential Niagara of energy and resourcefulness provided by those who have slipped off the payroll or, are about to do so.

JOHN MEISEL, *President*

A message from the President

What a Kick-off for RAQ'S Fall Calendar !

DR. KAREN HITCHCOCK, 18th Principal of Queen's University has accepted an invitation to meet with RAQ members at the University Club on Wednesday, 13 October from 3.30 to 5pm.

Please see page 4 and enclosures for details and registration form.

Reports of Past Events

Cataraqui Cemetery Tour

26 May

Forty-five RAQ members went on a guided tour of the Cataraqui cemetery, led by Dr. Jennifer McKendry. Much to our surprise, the focus of the visit was neither the social and/or political history of the “Life and Times” of famous men and women buried there, but the history of cemetery architecture. Thus we learned among other things, that Cataraqui Cemetery was one of the oldest garden cemeteries in Ontario. “Green and flowery sod and waving and weeping foliage” were intended “to give solace to mourners from the city and township during the Victorian era.”



Update on Retiree Medical Benefits

AS REPORTED earlier, the University readily agreed to act on our behalf in looking into the matter of medical benefits for retired staff. In particular, many members had asked us to investigate the issue of the 20% not covered under the Queen’s medical plan’s existing provisions. This was of importance to those seeking out of country protection, where currently one is basically faced with purchasing expensive and duplicate coverage.

Five separate insurers were asked to consider providing 100% coverage. None, including the incumbent carrier, Great West Life, was prepared to provide a quotation.

This is probably not surprising unless it was mandatory for all retired staff, and even then, the premiums would likely be exorbitant. Insurance companies, particularly in the current environment, are not interested in providing optional coverage, for a select few, who in many cases are bad

risks and/or heavy utilizers. As many of you know, when applying for individual personal medical coverage, costs go up significantly based on age and existing medical conditions. Some people are totally unacceptable risks, and coverage is not available.

Dental coverage was also explored, and again it was not deemed to be feasible. The vast majority of Canadian employers do not provide dental benefits to the retired population, even if the retirees are asked to pay the entire cost.

As we previously reported, Trent Insurance does provide coverage for only the 20% portion. The premiums are age related, and a health questionnaire may exclude certain existing conditions. In cooperation with the University administration, we will continue to seek other alternatives in this area, but the chances of success are not particularly encouraging.

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

A reminder | The RAQ website www.queensu.ca/retirees not only offers complete information about our association, but also provides handy links to other websites at Queen’s and to those of local and national retirees’ organizations. You can also find all past issues of RAQnews with some of the pictures in colour!

The RAQ office number is 533-6986. Joy Hoselton will respond to calls there.

Summer 2004

Lunch and Tour of Winery and Cider Company

17 June

Twenty-five RAQ members visited the Picton area to tour the Waupoos Estates Winery and the County Cider Company and to taste their products. Rain started to fall just as lunch was being served at the winery. Fortunately, the group was easily accommodated inside and a delicious lunch

was enjoyed. After lunch the rain stopped and the group proceeded down the road to tour the County Cider Company and taste the cider. The return trip included a ride on the ferry and the drive along scenic highway 33. Special thanks to Pat Bogstad, Edith Costello, and Barry Batchelor for assisting fellow RAQ members.



Corn Boil – Potluck Picnic

25 August

Close to two dozen RAQ members and friends gathered on August 25 at Joy Hoselton's home in Bath on the shores of Lake Ontario. It was a perfect summer day, and the attendees put together a memorable smorgasbord. The highlight of the meal was fresh peaches 'n cream corn on the cob from Kaiser's farm in Hay Bay. The highlight of the day was the idyllic setting and the great company. It was especially nice to welcome several members who had not previously attended a RAQ function.

River Revue Event

7 July

Thirty-five RAQ members and their friends participated in a leisurely, scenic cruise down the river from Kingston to Gananoque. Lunch was enjoyed along the way. The group disembarked at the Thousand Island Playhouse ramp to see the matinee performance of "The Music Man", complete with 76 trombones (recorded). The yellow school bus was waiting at the top of the hill for the bouncy return trip to Kingston.



Wolfe Island Corn Maze

11 August Cancelled because of low registration.



RAQ Events Fall 2004

The RAQ Events Committee is pleased to announce the following events planned for the fall:

Reception with Principal Karen Hitchcock

**Wednesday October 13
3:30 – 5:00 pm**

A chance to meet and welcome the new Principal as she assumes leadership of the university. We hope that retirees who are not yet members of RAQ and former members who have not renewed will share this occasion.

Jordan Special Collections Library Tour

**Friday October 22
3 pm**

This promises to be an unusual opportunity to learn at first hand about one of Queen's outstanding resources hidden away on the third floor of the Douglas Library.

Queen's Theatre

**Saturday afternoon
November 13**

The Drama Department presents:
Ben Johnson's *Volpone* or *The Fox*,
produced and directed by
Professor Greg Wanless
who will discuss the play with us following
the performance.

Silver Bells Dinner and Carols

**Sunday November 28
(tentative date)**

The AMS is again sponsoring this popular event for Kingston seniors and RAQ members. Location: Ban Righ Hall Dining Room.

For more detail about attending these events please refer to the Overview and the Registration Forms enclosed with this Newsletter

Tips for Trips

Many RAQeteers are frequent travelers. Others are finding they have leisure to travel for the first time. We are asking those with ideas to email us with suggestions of websites that provide useful tips such as whether your debit card will work in certain countries, local conditions, finding long stay accommodation, etc. Here are two that have already been suggested :

<http://www.voyage.gc.ca/dest/ctry/new-en.asp>

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>

Send the web address of your favourite travel site to raq@post.queensu.ca

And **NOTE:** Travellers should know that Canadian passports will probably not be accepted for travel abroad if they are dated to expire in less than six months from the date of departure.

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