

RAQ *news*



IF I WERE TO TITLE THIS article, I'd consider "How I survived the heat wave of 2006" (remembering those Ice Storm stories and t-shirts) or "What I did on my summer vacation" (which I recall, vaguely, as one of the first back-to-school assignments). Jumping into the nearest body of cool water, even a backyard kiddie pool, helps the heat wave survival, as does doing nothing remotely physical unless absolutely necessary. There goes the fitness routine. And golf? Forget it. So there goes the vacation, too.

Many people who are still employed think being retired is one long holiday, but not so for RAQ and RAQueteers. The association has been busy on a number of fronts since the AGM in April

At the June meeting of the RAQ Council, Arlene Aish presented a report on the annual conference of CURAC (College and University Retiree Association of Canada), which she and I attended in May. We noted that a CURAC member survey on **non-medical retiree benefits** put Queen's roughly in the middle of the range. However, if that report were to be updated, I think Queen's would be well ahead of most because of recent support from the administration. In addition to space and other in-kind provisions, Patrick Deane, Vice-Principal (Academic), has approved funding to cover such communication costs as telephone and mailing. And Principal Hitchcock covered some of the expenses of our CURAC attendance.

Pre-retirement planning is one area where Queen's and other universities fall short of the "ideal" as described in the CURAC survey report. There was general consensus in discussions at both the conference and the RAQ meeting that retirees have a lot to offer and should be consulted in developing any pre-retirement program. Indeed, our own Bill Wright designed and conducted such a program, long since discontinued, during his tenure as Director of Human Resources.

Presidential News and Views

The **Monday Morning Forum** series managed by Agnes Herzberg has had such success that Vice-Principal Deane again came through, granting further funding for 2006-7. The last in this past series was given by RAQ Past President, John Meisel, under the title "*Greed Revisited*." In her report on the event, Joan Sherwood says that leading to the discussion period, John posed this question: "How can the University live up to its mandate to serve the better good?" To further quote Joan, "The response ... among his audience of retirees was varied, exciting and innovative. ...The issue enthusiastically engaged the hearers." A small group (dare I say "committee?") will consider any follow-up to the thoughts expressed that morning.

The Student/Retiree Committee (see May's *Newsletter*) has met on three occasions and identified a number of projects that may be of interest to pursue. Those projects are outlined elsewhere in this issue, along with an appeal to retirees to express their interest in interacting with students in a number of areas. I have joined the meetings of this committee and can vouch for the enthusiasm of the students. It has been fun, too, so I encourage you to get involved.

And we have another committee! John Meisel has been successful in persuading Henry Dinsdale to chair a committee to explore the potential for establishing a campus **Emeriti/Retiree Centre** to serve Queen's retired faculty and staff. Patrick Deane endorsed the idea at a recent meeting and will identify three or four people from the senior administration to join the retiree group, which currently includes Henry Dinsdale, John Meisel and Alison Morgan.

The reports of the **Standing Committees** speak eloquently for themselves. RAQ is *not* on vacation! I hope to see many of you at upcoming events.

JOYCE ZAKOS, *President*

Pension and Benefits Committee Report

THIS IS ONE of those 'good news, bad news' reports.

As you know, under our medical plan with Queen's and Great-West Life, we are covered for 80% of eligible medical expenses. This lack of full coverage is of particular concern to those who travel outside Ontario and who wish to be protected from a potentially huge claim resulting from

a catastrophic medical event.

Various plans are available to travelers on an individual basis. Medical questionnaires must be completed, and, based on these and age, premiums are assessed. The main problem has been that virtually all insurance companies, including Great-West Life, are not interested in offering **travelers top-up insurance**, and insist on the resulting very expensive and overlapping full 100% coverage. This includes popular plans such as those offered by CAA, Snowbirds, Ingle, etc. As a result, Queen's staff and retirees pay twice for the same 80% of coverage, with no opportunity for double reimbursement.

Until recently, the only exception to the above has been Trent Insurance, and many RAQ members have used this company for 20% top-up insurance. Unfortunately, Trent recently advised us this is no longer available.

Although we are not optimistic, both RAQ and the University are pursuing other possible solutions. Meanwhile, those of you planning out-of-province travels should be aware that the Trent option has dis-

appeared. One alternative might be to use a plan with the option of a very large deductible. For example, the Snowbirds (Medipac) do have a \$10,000 U.S. deductible plan. Depending on age, length of trip and the individual's medical condition, the premium cost with a \$10,000 U.S. deductible would be roughly 55% of that charged for a minor \$250 deductible.

As reported previously, we have also been in discussions with the University regarding the definition of a medical "**emergency**" occurring outside Ontario under Queen's medical plan. The current, somewhat ambiguous, provision – unchanged for roughly 40 years – states "an emergency means any sudden, critical, unforeseen or unexpected occurrence requiring immediate medical attention" A new definition, of which we have seen a draft, is currently being finalized between Great-West Life and Queen's. This will be incorporated into a retiree's benefit booklet to be sent to all retirees. In our opinion, the newly worded provision, which would go into effect this fall, appears fair and reasonable, not overly restrictive, and should provide clarification for us.

And now the good news. In spite of recent downturns in investment markets, as of June 30 the performance of the **Queen's pension plan** was a positive 4.8%. This should have held at least during July. It remains to be seen what happens, but such a return as of August 31, the year-end for our plan, would result in pensioner increases of very close to 5%, based on the rolling four-year average.

M. W. (BILL) WRIGHT, *Chair*
Pension and Benefits Committee

Picture yourself interacting with students. *Fun, isn't it?*

CONSIDER THIS CHARMING scenario: You've been retired from the classroom for years, but here are six or seven students hanging on your every word. They're having lunch with you, wanting to hear how you chose your field of research, or what's new since you wrote your last book, and they hardly remember to eat.

Here's another scenario: You spent years in Drama, or Film, or Music, you're a living history, and a campus club is keen on picking your brains. This could be very gratifying. More than that, says RAQ President Joyce Zakos, who has enjoyed the students' enthusiasm at a few meetings of the new Student-Retirees steering committee, it could be a lot of fun.

It was last December when Rector Grant Bishop suggested to RAQ a number of possibilities for linking Queen's retirees and students. (The *May Newsletter* had background and names of student and RAQ committee members.) Now some initiatives and areas for interaction have been identified and RAQ volunteers are being sought for:

- Informal lunch discussions driven by specific topics
- High Tables in residence
- Guided tours for Homecoming alumni
- Faculty-specific projects – e.g. Engineering design teams
- Projects with clubs on campus.

Are you ready for this kind of adventure? Willing to be matched with appropriate students and groups? Then please add your name to the volunteer list by giving your name, contact information, and a note on your interests (academic and other) by e-mail to raq@post.queensu.ca or mail to RAQ's postal address (page 4) or phone Arlene Aish at 613.546.2979.

You will then be informed about upcoming student-retiree opportunities. This list is meant merely to facilitate projects and interaction and *is not binding*. You may participate as little or as much as you like.

Any questions? Comments? Please e-mail Arlene Aish at aisha@post.queensu.ca or call her at 613.546.2979.

Reports of Past Events Summer 2006

Istvan Anhalt explains 'what's behind the music'

More than 20 music-loving RAQueteers gathered in the Jordan Music Library on May 11 to hear renowned composer Istvan Anhalt describe what's behind his music. He does not begin with the music itself, he said, but rather starts with an idea. This idea develops into further ideas, often when he is outdoors walking. Only then does he begin work on the musical expression of those ideas.

Foregoing more recent works, he outlined the thoughts behind his composition *Sonance-Resonance* (*Welche Töne?*), commissioned and premiered by the Toronto Symphony Orchestra in 1989. He used stories, snatches of song and fragments on the piano and then played the CD version, indicating where the different concepts came into play.

A burst of questions followed. Discussion was continued enthusiastically all the way down to Douglas Library's main entrance. RAQ is grateful to Dr. Anhalt, to Music Librarian Lucinda Walls, and to the School of Music for making this event possible.

ALISON MORGAN

River Revue: Lunch and laughter



On July 5, 24 RAQ members and friends enjoyed an outing on the *Island Belle* from Kingston to Gananoque for a matinee at the Thousand Islands Playhouse. The weather remained bright and sunny all afternoon, perfect for a cruise down

the St. Lawrence River while enjoying lunch. As usual, an admiring audience watched from the theatre's upper and lower decks as our group disembarked.

The play was *Wingfield's Inferno*, latest in the popular series written by Dan Needles and starring Rod Beattie as the whole cast of hilarious characters. The "inferno" refers to a fire destroying the Orange Hall in Larkspur – and perhaps to the ultimate destination of the locals who invent a scam to get the hall rebuilt. The play pokes fun at the insurance industry, municipal politicians, committees in general, harness racing and horse training, but at the same time celebrates family life in the country. Frequent bursts of audience laughter showed keen appreciation for the humour and wit that always mark the Wingfield plays. The only downside was the long wait for transportation back to Kingston. We apologize. The cruise company forgot to order the school bus and so had to send six taxis instead – a more comfortable ride than the bus, admittedly – and the Playhouse helped by opening the Firehall Theatre lobby and making cold drinks available.

ALISON MORGAN

Picnic at Opinicon a pot luck pleasure

Twenty-six members turned up for the Lake Opinicon Pot Luck Picnic on Wednesday, July 26. It was a warm, sunny day, so we set up on the picnic tables outside the lodge and, thanks to some great RAQ cooks, enjoyed lunch on the lawn. So did a mother doe and her fawn. Many took advantage of this event to catch up on the activities of friends not seen since the prior year's picnic.

After lunch, the new director of Queen's Biological



Research Station, Bruce Tufts, gave us a talk on the projects with insects, reptiles, fish and other animals at the Station and how they relate to research at similar stations on the coasts and inland waters.

Most of our group then took advantage of the fine day to stroll around the grounds. As usual, Frank Phelan, Manager of the Station, made everything easy for us.

BOB CRANDALL, with JOY HOSELTON

Carmela Winery highlight of Prince Edward County tour

On Thursday, August 10, 32 RAQ members embarked on a McCoy luxury coach for Prince Edward County's Carmela Estates Winery via the beautiful Loyalist Parkway and the Glenora Ferry. After a brief tour of the wine-making cellars, where



most of the processes are done by machine, including de-stemming the grapes and filling, corking and labeling the bottles, we tasted three vintages – two white and one red. The vineyards feature an intriguing anti-frost device consisting of windmill-like structures that blow warm air onto the vines when an early frost is forecast.

For lunch in the Banquet Hall we had a choice of quiche or chicken sandwich with salad, followed by apple crisp and ice cream, plus a glass of one of the wines we had tasted. After our visit to the Winery we made a short stop in Wellington and then at mysterious Lake-on-the-Mountain before returning to Kingston. A first-class tour all the way!

JULIET MILSOME

RAQ Events Fall/ Winter 2006

Join the Lunch Bunch. RAQ members continue to meet informally and enthusiastically for lunch at various restaurants, usually on the last Monday of each month. Everyone is

welcome. E-mail Jessica Roddy, jroddy@kingston.net, or phone 613-353-6959 to be notified of the lunch locations and/or to reserve your place.

PLEASE ENJOY THE FOLLOWING
EVENTS PLANNED FOR THIS FALL.

Art and Music Tour to Picton Friday, September 22

Join fellow retirees for a trip to Picton to take in sights and sounds at the **Prince Edward County Music Festival and Studio Tour.** We will car pool. You can choose to attend the Studio Tour (many artists showing art in seven mediums), the evening concert (part of the **PEC Music Festival**, featuring works by a living Canadian composer as well as works from other eras), or meet at 5:30 for **dinner at Lake on the Mountain Inn** (choice of three delicious entrees). Your choice of one, any two, or all three events will depend on finding a match between what you want and a willing car driver. The enclosed information sheet has details of the three events.

Let us know as soon as possible if you are interested in this Picton trip. Please return the enclosed Registration Form. It would be very helpful if you could e-mail raq@post.queensu.ca or contact Marjorie Pinkerton at 613-546 2510 or rmhp@kos.net as soon as you decide so that concert tickets can be obtained and dinner reservations made.

The Monday Morning Forums Monday, September 25 Pandemic Influenza: Are we prepared?

This popular program returns with a presentation by **Dr. Ian Gemmill,**

Medical Officer of Health, KFLA. RAQ members and friends are invited to gather at the University Club, 168 Stuart St., at 8:15 for coffee and muffins before Dr. Gemmill's lecture at 9:00, to be followed by a discussion and exchange of ideas. These Forums are co-sponsored by RAQ and the University and convened by Agnes Herzberg.

Monday, October 16 The Threat of Climate Change – It's real; What needs to be done?

Start off University Day at the University Club, challenged by a lecture and exchange of ideas with **Dr. J.M.R. Stone,** formerly with **Environment Canada.** The format for these morning forums is coffee and muffins at 8:15; lecture at 9:00, and discussion at 9:30. All are welcome. No reservations necessary.

Tour of Centre for Neuroscience Studies – Eye-Hand Coordination & MRI Facility Monday, October 30 3:00 – 4:45 pm

Neurological and psychiatric disorders are the leading cause of disability in our society. The Centre for Neuroscience Studies aims to increase understanding and classification of sensory, motor and cognitive dysfunctions of various disorders. We will tour two strategic research areas within the Centre. The first consists of laboratories that study the control of eye movements, hand and arm movements, and movements requiring eye-hand coordination. These labs support basic research in addition to studying a variety of clinical populations showing symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, Parkinson's disease, Tourette syndrome, Huntington's disease, autism, fetal

alcohol spectrum disorders, and stroke. The tour's latter part includes the state-of-the-art MRI Facility, launched in September 2005. One focus of this facility is the use of functional magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) in research on the brain and spinal cord.

Please contact Bruce Hutchinson by phoning 613-542-7645 or e-mailing hutchinb@post.queensu.ca **on or before October 26** to register. The maximum tour size is 15 people. Please meet at the entrance of **Abramsky Hall.**

Queen's Theatre Matinee; Meet the Director Saturday, November 11 2:00 pm

The Drama Department presents ***The Good Woman of Setzuan*** by Bertold Brecht, directed by Greg Wanless, who will discuss the play with us following the performance. Professor Wanless, who is also founder of the 1000 Islands Playhouse, defines the play as "a masterpiece because of its inherent theatricality as well as its essential moral question: When must you choose to help yourself instead of helping others?" Price for seniors is \$8.00. **Please return the enclosed reservation form by November 1.**

Silver Bells Dinner & Carol Service Tentative date: Last Sunday in November or first in December

The AMS is again sponsoring this popular campus dinner (around \$10) for Kingston seniors and RAQ members, followed by the Engineering Society's traditional Carol Service in Grant Hall. **Contact Mary Balanchuk, 613- 389-3794, for information and to register.**

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

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