

# RAQ *news*

## Queen's Spirit Then and Now

ALL THE FOOFARAW about Homecoming and Aberdeen Street raises the question why Queen's persists in perpetuating this irritant. I am not privy to the reasoning but assume that it is partly because folk celebrations are very hard to stop by administrative edict and also because some believe they foster the once-famous Queen's spirit. The latter is important to fund-raising – a concern understandably never far from the University's mind.

Institutional loyalty is declining, an impression strengthened by a recent personal experience: Arts/PHE'56 this year invited their surviving profs to a celebratory Homecoming dinner. We greybeards and greylocks noted the extraordinary cohesiveness of this group compared to bonds among more recent graduating classes. The consensus was that few of the recent crop of Queen's grads fashioned so strong an *esprit de corps*.

Why should this be? Several causes leap to the mind:

**Ballooning size** is one. About 3,000 students graced the campus when I arrived in 1949. Look at the place now! Greater numbers foster anonymity and inhibit intimacy. They also engender **specialization**. Whereas earlier students dealt with only a few university-wide persons (the registrar, padre, dean, professor – all of whom had their home phone numbers listed in the campus phone book), they now confront an army of agencies and officials charged with catering to minute academic, health, social and personal concerns. Most of these are service- rather than university-centred.

Student **homogeneity has declined**. Our constituency was ethnically, religiously, and geographically much less diversified. It was consequently easier to identify with everyone else and to create a sense of family.

**Week-ends were different**. Hardly any students left the campus except during holidays or long week-ends. In my first few years I had Saturday 8 am classes that were well attended. (OK, *reasonably* well attended. Such shortfall as there was, was related more to the hour than to the day.) Nowadays the campus begins to empty on Thursday evening and does not recover until about Tuesday. An enormous proportion of people flee to Toronto and other centres, loyal to their own sub-communities.

In the 21st century, virtually every student must work at one or more **part-time jobs**, further watering down their "Queen's experience." This was anything but a universal pattern in the old days.

Furthermore, it was formerly easier to find **full-time employment** upon graduation. Today, a more problematic future often deflects undergraduates' attention from campus concerns. A related phenomenon – the growing practice of undertaking graduate studies – also undermines the centrality of Queen's. Loyalty to one's first college becomes diluted by attachment to other schools.

These are only some of the causes for the attrition or diminution of a healthy and binding attachment to, and identification with, Queen's. If school spirit – becoming a well integrated member of the university community – is deemed to be a useful byproduct of student life (I consider it invaluable), then one ought to seek redress.

The number and complexity of the causes for the decline in Queen's spirit preclude any simple or single solution. Does it make sense for RAQ, many of whose professorial, administrative and other members have a warm attachment to Queen's, to study this problem and seek solutions? It would, in fact, make a fine area for exploration by the Student/Retiree Committee we are developing with the Rector and the AMS.

JOHN MEISEL, *Past-President*

## Presidential News and Views

Mark your calendar!

RAQ Annual General Meeting and Lunch

Monday, April 30, 2007

University Club

Bar 11:30 Lunch 12:30 Meeting 2:00

## Pension and Benefits Committee Report

IN RECENT newsletters, we have reported on the Queen's Medical Plan, with particular reference to the 20% not covered when traveling outside the country. We have also told you that Trent Insurance, who previously provided such insurance at a 20% premium, no longer makes this available. Neither Queen's administration nor RAQ has been able to find any other Canadian insurance company willing to offer such a plan.

Recently, representatives of the Kingston Financial Centre kindly offered to look into this problem on our behalf. Their initial findings were provided at the information session for retirees held at the Donald Gordon Centre on Friday, November 10. They were assisted by Mr. Robin Ingle of Toronto, whose firm has provided travel and emergency medical insurance for many, many years.

These are some highlights of this presentation:

First, when traveling, you should have at hand your "GLOBAL MEDICAL ASSISTANCE" blue card issued by Great-West Life/MEDEX. In the event of a medical event requiring treatment that occurs outside Canada, you must call MEDEX within 48 hours. Your card shows your own ID number, the Queen's policy number (139046) and the various worldwide telephone numbers (in Canada and the U.S. it is 1-800-527-0218). Be prepared to use it in the province of Quebec.

The recently distributed Queen's "Group Insurance Plans" booklet has a refined definition of what constitutes a medical "emergency" occurring outside the country – see pages 14-16. If you want to be covered for a previously identified medical condition, it must be **stable and controlled for a period of three months immediately prior to departure from Canada**. If you have questions about your specific eligibility, call Great West Life at 1-800-957-9777. One of the experts' main messages is to

be certain about your existing medical condition and your eligibility for a potential claim reimbursement *before departure*. To be denied by Great West Life, after incurring huge medical costs, could have catastrophic consequences.

All the outside experts were clear in their praise of retirees' coverage under the Queen's Medical Plan. First of all, we have medical insurance, which is not necessarily the norm, and the plan itself is seen as very good, with excellent provisions

If you are leaving Canada and wish to be covered for the 20% not available under the Queen's plan, you will NOT be able to purchase 20% coverage at 20% of the full premium. However, if you wish to protect this uninsured portion, there are plans available. Depending on your needs, age, health condition, willingness to accept a higher deductible, etc., you may be surprised at the relatively low cost and increased flexibility available with one of these individually owned plans.

*\* Please understand that RAQ is not endorsing Kingston Financial Centre or Robert Ingle. We are simply making you aware that their services are available.*

*Also realize that you are covered under the Queen's plan, and any questions about coverage, eligibility, etc. should be discussed with Human Resources and/or Great West Life.*

Please note, however, Kingston Financial Centre has arranged with Ingle to provide a website tailored for Queen's retirees to assist in the research and purchase of travel medical insurance. Access it through <http://www.kingstonfinancial.com/> Halfway down the page on the right hand side, see "INGLE Need Travel Insurance? Click here". Then see products and use "click here" for a number of options. Personally I found the ETFS Medi-Select Advantage site to be the most beneficial.

If necessary, Mary Thompson and Kathryn Wright at Kingston Financial Centre are willing to work with you through the process.

BILL WRIGHT, Chair

*Pensions and Benefits Committee*

## Participation in research studies: A guide to decision-making

BECAUSE OF THE breadth and depth of Queen's research enterprises, there are regular media appeals for volunteers, especially for health care studies. Although the volunteers needed vary in age, these appeals are often aimed at seniors – that is, at *us*. Arlene Aish, a veteran of health care research in nursing, looked into this subject on RAQ's behalf and prepared a set of guidelines, based on these questions:

\* Have you ever wondered if you should participate as a subject in a health care research study?

\* Should you encourage a loved one to participate?

\* Exactly what would you be expected to sign if you volunteered?

From there she proceeds to outline

both the positive aspects and possible downsides of being a human research subject. She then presents the questions we should ask before making our decisions.

This helpful article is now published in its entirety on the RAQ website [www.queensu.ca/retirees](http://www.queensu.ca/retirees) under **Guidelines & Policies**.

\* \* \* \*

"Studies on seniors may result in important advances in care and treatment," says Arlene, "and researchers may really need you as a subject. Much remains to be learned about specific needs of seniors and best treatment practices, so the study that wants to recruit you could have important personal implications."

On the other hand, she says, some

other projects that need us may not result in benefits in our lifetimes. Her guidelines will also help people determine if there are risks before they commit the necessary time and effort. Potential volunteers should read her list of points to look for on any project's mandatory **consent form**.

Please note that RAQ does not sponsor, endorse or recruit participants for research studies. Membership records are not made available. However, as part of the Queen's community, RAQ may, on a discretionary case-by-case basis, inform its members about studies recruiting human subjects.

Not on-line? Ask the RAQ office (613-533-6986) for a printed copy.

CATHY PERKINS

# Reports of Past Events Summer 2006

## Applause applause for Picton concert

On September 22, a beautiful fall day, 16 RAQ classical music lovers and friends met for dinner at the Lake of the Mountain Inn before proceeding to the evening concert in Picton's beautiful Church of St. Mary Magdalene. The eight headliners at this year's Prince Edward County Music Festival were distinguished musicians from across Canada, all of whom have performed internationally. The event was unusual in featuring two compositions by the contemporary Canadian composer Malcolm Forsyth and having him present to explain his inspiration. The floating quality of soprano Donna Brown's voice was a joy, not only in Forsyth's *Incantation*, but also in a selection of songs by Schubert and Mahler. Robert Schumann's quartet for piano and strings was a good choice to allow the audience to appreciate David Stewart, (violin), Paul Marleyn (cello) and David Harding (viola), accompanied by Stephane Lemelin, pianist and musical director. The delight of the serious music lovers present and their surprise at the high quality of the performance in a small PE County town was clearly evident in the applause and after-concert chatter. The festival took place over three evenings and will return in September next year.

MARJORIE PINKERTON



Good friends, food and conversation at RAQ's monthly luncheons

## Three sites on Neuroscience tour

On October 30, nine RAQ members spent a fascinating afternoon touring facilities in the Centre for Neuroscience Studies, which is actually located in three separate buildings: Botterell, Abramsky, and Humphrey Halls. The group was welcomed by the Director, Dr. Doug Munoz, and taken to view the state-of-the-art MRI unit with Dr. Patrick Stroman. This facility was launched in 2005 to support research that spans physical, biological and medical sciences. Volunteers can try

out a mock-up machine to find out what it feels like to lie on the narrow mattress and be rolled into a closed cylinder for a magnetic imaging scan.

The Centre recruits people of all age groups for its various studies. The actual MRI machine is located in a protected room with large warnings that the magnet is always on. From outside this room, we watched a test in progress, none of us able to guess that what we were watching on computer screens was an image of a squash!

To view parts of the facility in small quarters, the group divided into two. One group went to Abramsky Hall (Eye Tracking Laboratory). Graduate students demonstrated how control of eye movements is tracked on the computer. On this site they conduct both basic research and studies of attention deficit hyperactivity disorders, Parkinson's disease, and the aging brain.

The second group went with Dr. James Reynolds to the Eye Tracking Laboratory in Botterell Hall to learn about a diagnostic approach to developmental and degenerative disorders of the nervous system.

Next, the first group walked to Humphrey Hall to the LIMB Laboratory with Dr. Stephen Scott. The KINARM robot there allows testing of subjects' awareness of the exact location and movement of each arm and hand when gently supported by slings attached to the robot. The study is useful to assess stroke patients.

The second group visited the Cognition and Action Laboratory in Abramsky Hall with Dr. Randy Flanagan to explore the size-weight illusion. Even though it was explained in advance that two objects had the same weight, the brain insisted that the smaller was heavier. The muscular system quickly adjusts, but the brain clings to its original mistake. The group also tried a virtual reality experience on eye-hand coordination.

ARLENE AISH

## RAQ part of full house for matinee

This year 38 RAQ members attended a matinee performance of Bertold Brecht's drama *The Good Woman of Setzuan* on November 18 in the Queen's Theatre. Drama students under the able direction of Professor Greg Wanless played to a sold-out house. Afterwards, the director discussed the play with us, pointing out the meaning and symbolism of some details that might have escaped us. RAQ members commented on being impressed by the quality and maturity of the acting, the costumes, and the music. We are delighted with the success of our theatre outings, which continue to bring out such good numbers of RAQ members, and look forward to another theatre outing on March 3 (see coming events).

MARION MEYER

**RAQ  
Events  
Winter  
2007**

**Monthly  
Lunches:**

Attendance continues to be high at these informal meetings for lunch at various restaurants, usually on the last Monday of each month.

Everyone is welcome. E-mail Jessica Roddy, [jroddy@kingston.net](mailto:jroddy@kingston.net) or phone 613-353-6959 to be notified of the lunch locations and/or to reserve your place.

**Tour of  
'new' Gordon Hall  
Friday, January 26  
3:15 to 4:15 pm**

The Registrar's Office will welcome RAQeteers to this newly refurbished building, with its exterior restored to the original design.

Completed in 1911 and named after Principal D.M. Gordon, Gordon Hall was built with a gift from the Ontario Government and provided a home for the Department of Chemistry for some 90 years until Chemistry moved to Chernoff Hall.

The building was added onto several times. In 1964, an extra floor was added. The Gordon Annex was constructed 1947-1949. The Frost Wing, added in 1961 and named in honour of Grenville Barker Frost, was torn down in 2003. Gordon Hall has been completely redone since then, including removal of the anomalous extra floor. It now houses the Office of the University

Registrar, Career Services, the Dean of Student Affairs, and the School of Graduate Studies and Research.

The building faces Union Street opposite the Phys Ed Centre, between Nichol Hall and the Douglas Library. We will meet in the front lobby. If you plan to come, please e-mail [morgana@post.queensu.ca](mailto:morgana@post.queensu.ca) or call Alison Morgan 613-544-9854

**Queen's  
Theatre Matinee:  
Meet the Director of  
Faustus  
Saturday March 3  
2:00 pm**

The Drama Department presents *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* by Christopher Marlowe (Elizabethan). Briefly stated, the main character "seeks the ultimate wisdom and with it the ultimate power, but becomes obsessed with power to the neglect of his spirit." Professor Jillian Kelly will be the guest director.

Price for seniors is \$8.00.

**Please return the enclosed reservation form by February 21.**

**"The Viennese Waltz" –  
a talk by John Burge,  
Director,  
Queen's School of Music  
Thursday, March 22.  
3:30 pm**

Join us for another music talk in the Graham George Seminar Room in

the W.D. Jordan Special Collections and Music Library, in the Douglas Library.

Professor Burge's presentation, which will include musical excerpts, will provide a glimpse into the flurry of activity that led to the waltz craze in Vienna and will trace the influence of the waltz on composers over the last 200 years. Even today, Vienna is called "The Waltz Capital of the World," and the works of the great waltz composers such as Johann Strauss Sr. and Jr. continue to be very popular and frequently performed.

To give us an idea of numbers, please contact Juliet Milsome either by phone 613-544-9893 or e-mail [milsomej@post.queensu.ca](mailto:milsomej@post.queensu.ca) if you plan to come.

As a prelude to this talk, you might consider attending "A Night in Vienna," the School of Music's gala fundraiser on February 9 and 10 in Grant Hall.

This event will feature Austrian music, song and dance, performed by the Queen's Symphony Orchestra, vocal students, alumni, faculty members and professional ballroom dancers. A dance floor will allow guests to dance to the music of Strauss and other Viennese masters.

Specialty Austrian treats will be offered, plus a cash bar with Austrian beer and wine. For tickets for this event, contact the Performing Arts Office.

***Also, watch for details of upcoming "Monday Morning Forums"***

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

Contributors to this issue:

Arlene Aish, John Meisel, Marion Meyer, Marjorie Pinkerton, Juliet Milsome and Bill Wright.

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RAQ's postal address is: Mackintosh Corry Hall, **Room B410**, 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).