

RAQnews

Presidential News and Views

Our seventh annual general meeting was held Monday, April 27. A year ago, two issues mainly occupied RAQ council, executive and committees. The first was concern about the changes proposed in the operation of Queen's pension committee. This issue appears to be ongoing. RAQ's pension and benefits committee, under the leadership of Alan Green, with members David Bonham and Chris Chapler, continues to be vigilant regarding pension issues and meets regularly with university officials.

The second issue related to the academic partnership between Queen's University and RAQ that establishes a relationship between RAQ members and the university. A variety of activities fall under the umbrella of the partnership. Notably, the initiation of RAQonteur, a series of forums designed to strengthen links between Queen's and Kingston. The first of these was Chancellor David Dodge's lecture on the global economy, held March 24 in City Hall. This was well attended and much positive feedback about the event was received. Another important initiative was the formation of a retirement community working group to assess the feasibility of university-affiliated housing. This concept is popular in the United States and is beginning to become so in Canada. John Gordon is the RAQ representative on this group. For more details about these and other activities, see Henry Dinsdale's annual report on the RAQ web page. RAQ members continue to volunteer for various activities related to the university. Watch our web page under Volunteering for upcoming

opportunities, such as helping with the MiniU, May 22-24, interacting with international students, and participating in orientation of new students next fall.

Special thanks for RAQ members' contributions over the past year

Cathy Perkins was editor of the RAQnews from September 2006 to January 2009 for a total of six issues. Cathy put in a great deal of time and effort and used her considerable expertise to help produce a newsletter that was the envy of other retiree groups.



Stephanie Deutsch and Joyce Zakos keeping Joy Hoselton busy at the registration desk.

Resigning members of council include Joyce Zakos, Pat Bogstad, and Jim Kelly. Joyce served as president for two years and past president for another two years. She recently did an expert job of recruiting new council members as chair of the nominating committee. Pat served on council for

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Membership is Important. If you haven't yet renewed your membership in RAQ for 2009-10, please do so NOW. Also, please encourage other retirees and prospective retirees to join. Forms are available on our website: www.queensu.ca/retirees or phone 613-533-6986.

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two terms and was treasurer for two years. Jim ably chaired the events committee for the past year.

Gerry Roddy, with the help of RoseMarie McUen, has kept the monthly lunches going regularly for many years now. Agnes Herzberg continues to use her many connections to find out-

standing speakers for the Monday morning forums. Brian Osborne played a major role in organizing the first RAQonteur event and chaired the evening. Thanks to the people mentioned above and all of the members of council, being president of RAQ for the past two years has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

ARLENE AISH, *President*



Governance and Transparency - Your new 2009-10 executive.

Back l-r: Jack Henderson, Joy Hoselton, Barbara Aitken, Donna Ede, Cherrilyn Yalin, Merrilees Muir, Bettyanne Gargaro, Bob Smithies, Barrie Frost, Sue Miklas

Front l-r: Arlene Aish, George Brandie, John Meisel, Joyce Zakos, Mary Balanchuk

Pension and Benefits Committee Report

The Queen's Pension Plan continues to be affected by the world wide financial situation with which we are all too familiar. Broadly speaking, since the current fiscal year began on September 1, 2008 the fund has lost approximately 20 percent of its value. However, the month of March 2009 provided a window of hope with a significant upturn. This may be a sign that we may now be moving in a better direction. Nevertheless, it is likely that these difficult circumstances could continue at least throughout the remainder of the current fiscal year and perhaps beyond. As far as we can judge at this time, our relative position vis à vis other comparable funds is fairly good. We hope the longer term will see much of this damage undone. We cannot say more than that at this stage.

As we pointed out in our report of January 2009, the Queen's Pension Plan currently has an actuarial deficit which was a worry to us even before the recent economic downturn. These two factors taken together continue to cause concern to the committee. We believe that we have a very good relationship with the university through the office of Vice-Principal Rod Morrison and those who work with him. We will certainly continue to maintain our contact and to monitor this situation as best we can. In doing so, we will be vigilant and diligent.

You may also recall that we reported earlier on the governance issue, which led to some serious questions over the last two years. We are anxious to see the current role of the pension committee continue so that that body will always establish and maintain investment policies as it has done in the past. Recently there has been some indication that the governance issue may become active again. If that were to occur, it is certainly our intention to be involved to the maximum possible extent to present the position of RAQ on behalf of the retirees.

In view of all of these circumstances, we are pleased that the Queen's Pension Plan contains a non-reduction clause with respect to pensions currently being paid. In view of the present financial climate, the importance of this provision becomes of even greater significance.

We certainly hope that our report to the annual general meeting in 2010 will be somewhat more optimistic. In closing, we would like to recognize the memory and good work of our late colleague, Bill Wright, who was very instrumental in establishing the pension plan we now enjoy. Without his foresight and effort, our situation today could well have been worse.

Respectfully submitted,

ALAN GREEN, *Chair*

CHRIS CHAPLER, DAVE BONHAM

Reports of Past Events – Winter 2009

On March 7, a small group of “Raquetees,” seven in all, attended the matinée performance of Chekhov’s *The Seagull*, directed by Professor Kim Renders of Queen’s drama department.

Those of us who attended the play had looked forward to an interpretation close to Chekhov’s original version. However, we were given something quite different. Many of us found the beginning confusing, and the strident tone of the students’ performance, as directed by Professor Renders, unattractive.

Nevertheless, despite our general disappointment in this particular production, new interpretations of classic plays can invite reflection, and we always enjoy the enthusiasm with which the students embrace their roles.

MARION MEYER

First RAQonteur Forum a Success

On March 24, Queen’s Chancellor David Dodge gave the inaugural address to the RAQonteur Forum before a capacity audience. His subject was “A Difficult Period of Transition for the Global Economy: The View from Kingston.”



Chancellor Dodge emphasized that although the last 25 years have been outstanding in advancing living standards of people around the world, global imbalances grew, especially from 2002 to 2007. The rich countries increasingly consumed more than they produced, going increasingly into debt, while Asian countries and oil

exporters built up excess productive capacity. At the same time, there were failures of financial policies. Banks were encouraged to lend more freely (especially in real estate) and banking activities (often with much smaller capital reserves) grew outside the regulated banking system. The system collapsed in mid-2007.

Chancellor Dodge said that nothing can be done to change the dismal outlook for the remainder of 2009. Automatic stabilizers, such as employment insurance and promised government stimulus programs should stabilize economies around the end of the year, although global unemployment will continue to rise well into 2010. The economy won’t “snap back” quickly after the bottom is reached.

In the medium term, the banking system must be recapitalized and regulated so that the peaks and troughs of economic cycles will not be amplified. Canadian banks have, in Chancellor Dodge’s view, been relatively well regulated and well managed.

In the long term, the global imbalances are not sustainable. The U.S. and Europe must reduce excess consumption (and hence borrowing), while Japan, Asia and the oil-producing countries must increase consumption and provide social safety nets for their people. How this could be done politically is a matter for political scientists, not for economists.

Chancellor Dodge concluded that the economic situation will be very difficult for Canada in coming years because of the depth and complexity of the global problems he outlined. After his 45-minute talk, he took questions from the

audience for another 30 minutes. Comments at the conclusion of this inaugural event were very positive.

GEORGE BRANDIE

Monday Morning Forums

The Winter-Spring series of five Monday Morning Forums featured diverse specialists sparking lively discussions by posing challenging questions.

This series was co-ordinated by Agnes Herzberg under the joint sponsorship of the University and Four Points by Sheraton Hotel & Suites, Kingston.

January 12

How does one get the scientific results one wants?

DR. J.C. BAILAR

National Academies of the USA



February 23

Is there a future for classical music?

MR. ERIC FRIESEN

Former CBC Radio 2 host of “Studio Sparks”

March 2

Will there be enough water?

DR. J. H. CAREY

Water and Science Technology Directorate, Environment Canada

March 9

Psychoanalysis and Literature: From annexation to fragmentation

DR. JEAN-JACQUES HAMM

Emeritus Professor of French Studies, Queen’s University

May 4

What caused the banking crisis?

PROF. EDWIN H. NEAVE

Queen’s School of Business

Coming RAQ Events Spring/Summer 2009

Spring Campus Tour

A tour of the renewed University Avenue and the newly renovated Richardson Hall will be held for RAQ members on Monday morning, May 25, 2009. The exact timing is yet to be decided, so please watch the RAQ website for start time and registration details. RAQ members taking the tour are also invited to join in the monthly luncheon to be held after the tour.

Opinicon Pot Luck Picnic

**Wednesday, July 22, 2009
11 am. (rain or shine)**

This will be the fifth RAQ picnic at Opinicon. If it's bright and sunny, we'll enjoy eating outside in the park-like setting. If it rains, we will retreat to the research station's comfortable pavilion. Please join us again – or for the first time – for a visit to this delightful spot on the shores of Lake Opinicon. We will visit the biology department's renowned research facility and take in a grad student's current project. The enclosed registration form gives details and directions. Cost is \$6.00, plus a picnic dish to share. **Please register by July 13.**

'Who has seen the wind?' Summer Tour

Many RAQ members have been watching the progress of the wind turbine 'farm' (officially, the "Wolfe Island EcoPower Centre") for months now. If you are interested in getting a close-up look at this alternative energy source and learning more about what it will actually do to reduce our reliance on conventional energy sources, be

sure to join us for this tour. The date is Monday August 31, 2009 and for those who wish to join in, the regular Monday luncheon will follow the tour at one of the island's restaurants. Watch the RAQ website for updates re timing and registration details for this event.

Prince Edward County Music Festival

Friday, September 18, 2009
Bus trip, dinner
and concert in Picton

Continuing the theme of bridging the old and the new, festival artistic director and pianist Stéphane Lemelin this year welcomes illustrious Canadian musician, Andrew Macdonald, as composer-in-residence. Macdonald's works have been performed by major orchestras across Canada; he is also a talented classical and electric guitarist. Long-time ballerina Veronica Tennant, with guest clarinetist James Campbell, will narrate a piece Macdonald has specially composed for Tennant's *Green Steps in Sunshine, opus 33*. Guest artists Normand Forget (oboe), David Currie (double-bass), and Joseph Petric (accordion) will perform works by Bach, Telemann, and Soler, as well as one by Andrew Macdonald for oboe and accordion. The highly popular Penderecki Quartet will return to play Beethoven's *Quartet in A Minor, opus 132*. For more details see www.pecmusicfestival.com.

As in previous years, the bus will leave the parking lot of ToysRUs (outer Princess Street) at 4 pm.,

arriving back in Kingston around 10.30 pm.

Portabello Bistro will again offer a delicious pre-concert dinner for \$32.25 (including taxes and gratuities). We have been asked to make a choice of entrée ahead of time. You will pay for your own dinner at the restaurant.

Please mark your calendar now for this fall visit to "the County" for great music, great food, and great company. Return the registration form (also available from www.queensu.ca/retirees) with your cheque for \$55.00 per person to cover the bus and concert.

Monthly Luncheons

RAQ monthly luncheons continue to be a popular choice for members to meet informally and sample the cuisine of various Kingston-area restaurants. The luncheons are usually held on the last Monday of each month. On May 25 we're at the Darbar Restaurant, 479 Princess St. Everyone is welcome – including members' spouses and friends. Contact Jessica (Jerry) Roddy, jroddy@kingston.net or 613-353-6959, for details and reservations.

In **November**, the Queen's drama department will produce Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, directed by Judith Fisher.

The **March** matinées will feature Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, directed by Craig Walker, whom we fondly remember as director of Les Belles Soeurs in 2007. Dates for the matinée performances will be announced at a later date.

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

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Categories: People, Flora & Fauna, Places, Digital Illustration and People's Choice
Extended Deadline for Entries: 11:59 pm (EDT), Friday, May 29, 2009.

Full details and to submit your entry, visit <http://www.alumnireview.queensu.ca>