

Raymond Reunion 2006

*Wendi Maxwell, class of 1971
Co-President, Raymond Phoenix Institute
November 7, 2006*

Raymond College rose Brigadoon-like out of the mist for the weekend of September 29 –October 1. Around 150 of us attended the 2006 Raymond Reunion in Stockton. Every class from 1964 through 1979 was represented. We had perfect weather, visited with old friends and met new ones. We ate and drank and ate some more, talked and talked, took pictures, listened to music, laughed and cried. We raised over \$7000 in cash and pledges toward keeping the Raymond community alive and in touch.

Wendi Maxwell's Friday night party was a hit with about 70 people in attendance. The much-feared crummy potato salad did not make an appearance. Instead, we feasted on middle-eastern vegetarian and lamb casseroles, home-grown tomatoes, home-cooked bread, cookies, cakes and pies. Midway through the evening, David Bennett and Jon Marchant arrived with trays of tacos and hot sauce from Arroyo's. (Tacos were gone in an instant.) Jack Lawson played guitar, and Wendi sang.

The on-campus group swelled the next day as alums from far-away states started drifting into the Common Room. Harrie Allie Walker hosted first-graduating class members in her home prior to their return to campus. Karen Larson visited from list-serve-hosting Gustavus College. Terry Mullins arrived from Florida. Jerry Pier and Greg Finnegan both flew in from Harvard, and met each other for the first time in Stockton. Michael Penkava flew in from Wisconsin, having arrived recently from Budapest. Edwina Aquino hoped to make it, but couldn't get out of Amsterdam in time. (Darn! Don't you hate it when that happens?)

The UOP Alumni Relations Office did a fabulous job of hosting us. They handled reservations, greeted us graciously, sold Mike Wagner's books, and helped keep track of cell phone numbers so we could stay in touch throughout the day. The food was great. Brunch included bacon and eggs, pastries, and much-needed coffee. The dinner menu included enough omnivore, vegetarian, and vegan offerings to please everyone, as well as a variety of succulent desserts.

Saturday was pretty unstructured. People drifted from table to table, recognizing and hugging old friends, sharing stories of children and grandchildren, and taking pictures. We compared our younger selves – documented in those freshmen and senior pictures – with our current selves, and decided we all looked the same, only a little grayer.

We couldn't let the day go by without a little intellectual challenge and a little business. Adam Englund made a presentation sharing his vision for an offshore [ocean-based airport](#) for San Diego. By the end of the discussion, he had made believers of most, or possibly all of us.

We also held our annual business meeting on Saturday. Since the last reunion, we've formed a non-profit corporation, the Raymond Phoenix Institute (RPI). RPI Directors David Wellenbrock, John (Charlie) Dyer, Jan Galt Sherwood, and Sandra Grcich de Alcuaz presented the business plan, goals of the Institute, and a proposed budget for the next two years. We discussed the pro's and con's of continuing our relationship with Pacific Alum Office. (By working with the Alumni Office, we can conserve our volunteer energies for the projects we really enjoy.) A full slate of 12 directors was elected. Full minutes of the meeting will be posted separately.

Saturday night dinner was the highlight of the weekend. John Williams welcomed everyone back. We cheered for beloved and respected faculty members including Neil Lark and all the Johns (Smith, Tucker, and Williams). We gave a spirited ovation for Nicholas Carroll, whose indefatigable efforts resulted in a flawless reunion attended by a record crowd. Bob Cox, representing the University, welcomed us back and spoke of the liberal arts tradition still alive at Pacific.

Next came the Raymond memorabilia auction. Paula Britton Sheil was our expert auctioneer. Precious historic artifacts changed hands and raised money. We improved our sartorial splendor with the acquisition of new t-shirts and badges – all sporting Raymond crests or logos. After intense bidding wars, some alums were tenacious enough to acquire Raymond-crested chairs for their homes – chairs that we hope to see returned for auction in the upcoming years. We raised money on brochures and pamphlets, and even sold off dishes “liberated” from the Great Hall – un-crested but still highly desirable. Finally, we rounded off the evening with live jazz in the Great Hall – courtesy of Bob de Leo, and dancing in the Common Room – courtesy of Bill Burnside.

Sunday morning, tired but undaunted, we accepted Dave Wellenbrock's “mi casa su casa” offer. Dave and his wife Sharon fed us coffee and pastries on Sunday and gave us a chance to wind down before going back to our day-to-day lives.

Plans for the future? Dave's house is open to all Raymond folk the last weekend of September every year. Jinx is interested in vacationing in Oregon sometime next year with all Raymond folk invited to share the fun.

Do you have memories, stories, or photos you want to share? Join the list-serve, or post them on our Blackboard site. Above all, stay in touch.

###