

Minutes of Quest Council Meeting – Dec. 4, 2017

The meeting was called to order by Bob Gottfried, president, at 2:43 pm. In attendance were Steve Allen, Marian Friedmann, Pam Gemelli, Phil Gisser, Bob Hartman, Eileen Kelly, Ruth Kovner, Frieda Lipp, Bob Reiss and Michael Wellner (ex officio.) Jane Lubin was unable to attend this meeting.

Guest: Vivian Oliver, Chair of the newly-formed ad-hoc committee on issues dealing with those Quest members who have hearing impairments, gave an impassioned presentation on the benefits of installing a hearing loop in Room 15-17 to benefit those who are hearing impaired. She has identified at least 14 members with hearing problems who have expressed an interest in this technology, and believes that there are others who have not yet come forward. Vivian notes that those with hearing aids that have an integrated T-coil as part of their hearing aids find a greatly improved classroom experience. With the T-coil users find that the sound goes directly into their ears, clearly and without distortion.

At lunchtime on Monday, December 4th, a special meeting and demonstration was held for those with hearing impairments. More than 25 members attended. Howard Salik gave those attending a demonstration of a portable loudspeaker called the **Cube**, (which is owned by Quest), to determine if that device is sufficient for those with impaired hearing. Bottom line: it worked quite well but does seem not achieve the same results as the hearing loop.

After hearing Vivian's presentation the Council discussed the question of installing the loop in 15-17 (it is already installed in all our other classrooms and the auditorium), a project that will cost approximately \$6,500. Bob Reiss spoke strongly in favor of the project, noting that we are, after all, an aging population and many of us are likely to benefit from this as time goes on. Bob Gottfried then made a motion to move forward with the contract negotiation; that motion passed unanimously. Bob Gottfried and Steve Allen will work with Davi Saroop of CWE on the contract with the company selected by CCNY to do the installation. More details will follow. Assuming that we can come to terms, the Council will then formalize a second vote to actually proceed.

Update: We have come to terms with the vendor. The price has been reduced by \$800, and the loop will be installed prior to the beginning of the next term. All Council members approved the purchase in an e-mail vote.

Budget: Steve Allen, Treasurer, reported that once again Quest is in good financial shape. There are no surprise expenses to date, and we anticipate that our revenues this year will be sufficient to cover our normal expenses. (Note that the cost of the hearing loop, if approved as noted above, would have to come from our reserve funds.)

Tech volunteers: Steve reported that the two volunteers (Nina Dioletis & Sharon Krutzel) who are assisting Wayne Cotter with the NWAQ compilations and e-mails have agreed to continue next semester. We owe them both a HUGE thank you for a job very well done (☺). Quest class schedules are put up on the CWE screens at the front of the 7th floor.

Live Streaming of Some Quest Class Presentations : At our last meeting there was discussion of streaming some of our classes for the benefit of those members who may, for one reason or another, be unable to attend classes. After an early trial, it is clear that this project is still in its infant stage, and will be revisited later by the Marketing and Communications Committee. (the committee dealing with live streaming)

Quest Grievance Committee: One Quest member has broached the subject of Quest establishing a formal Grievance Committee. Bob Hartmann, a member of long standing, stated that in the past there was a Grievance Committee, but in the end it resolved only a small number of grievances and was ultimately disbanded. After some discussion it was agreed that any member with a grievance should approach any member of the Council who will, if appropriate, bring the issue to the full Council.

Bob Gottfried noted that he will be sending a President's memo to all members at the beginning of the spring term which will include a note regarding the availability of Council members to present any member's issue to the Council. It was the sense of the Council this was a good idea. Steve Allen noted that the Quest Communications Policy encourages free expression of ideas, including critical comments about Quest policies. We only ask that members refrain from personal criticism of other members.

Scheduling Committee: We all agree that scheduling Quest's many classes is one of the most difficult tasks for Quest volunteers. Generally speaking here are the criteria taken into consideration.

- 1) Two courses requiring reading are generally never scheduled opposite one another.
- 2) Classes are scheduled only when the lead coordinator is available.
- 3) No two courses on similar subjects are scheduled opposite one another.
- 4) Classes should not be locked into place forever, but rather, should be moved around the schedule from year to year so more members can have the opportunity to attend these classes.
- 5) New courses should not be scheduled against each other.

Classroom Seating: Bob Reiss brought up the question of whether we might ask the CWE custodians to arrange the seats in each classroom so that they are staggered, and not one directly behind each other. It was the sense of the council that we can easily do this ourselves (as long as we put them back!) and should not raise this issue with CWE.

Caring Committee: Michael distributed a Directory of those Quest members who have volunteered to assist other members should they become temporarily housebound. The lists are now available in the lunchroom and the office. Names on the list are arranged by zip codes to facilitate contacting people in their neighborhood.

Using Internet Ads to Attract New Members: One member, concerned that we lost more members this year (around 15%) than usual (10%), approached the council with a suggestion that we allocate funds to be spent on internet advertising in an attempt to attract new members. Steve noted that we have already been expanding our efforts on Search Engine Optimization (SEO), which has produced excellent results. (Google

lifelong learning in New York City and Quest appears first!) And he and others, suggested we wait until this full year's cycle has passed and then see where we stand with membership. Michael indicated that we'd likely finish the spring semester with between 235 and 240 members. One thought: Bob Reiss suggested that each of us could report in our various college alumni magazines (in Class Notes [or similar]) a mention of Quest. The Marketing and Communications Committee will organize an effort, following up on Bob Reiss' suggestion, and will review our entire website to find ways to emphasize that Quest welcomes new members.

CultureQuest: A new committee has been formed with Linda Downs (who has lengthy relevant experience) as the Chair. Bob Reiss is to support her in her efforts to schedule Friday Museum visits. This new group intends to expand our offerings, and will plan trips to museums, parks and many other cultural attractions.

Nominations & Election Committee (NEC): Bob Gottfried has reappointed last year's members, with the concurrence of Council: Leslie Goldman (Chairman), Paul Adler, John Hood and Nan McNamara. Bob Hartmann will be the Council liaison.

The following council members' terms are up in May:

Vice President: Marian Friedmann (may run again)

Secretary: Ruth Kovner (cannot run again; two terms are up)

Treasurer: Steve Allen (may run again)

Members at large: Phil Gisser (may run again),

Bob Hartmann (cannot run again), and Bob Reiss. (Bob Reiss has since resigned from Council.) Marian Friedmann and Steve Allen have indicated their willingness to run for new terms as Vice President and Treasurer respectively, but requested that the NEC also encourage other candidates to run for these offices.

Coffee Committee: Liesje ten Houten has resigned as Chair and member of the Coffee and Caring Committees. Bob G. has appointed Michael Wellner as the new chair of both Committees and Roberta Schoenfield will serve as co-chair. They will solicit volunteers for the spring term.

New Business: The Annual Christmas/Holiday gratuities were discussed. We currently give gifts to the building staff who man the front door, and the building manager and his assistant(s), the CWE Custodians, and, of course, Eneida. It was also suggested and readily agreed that we should also give a gift to Robert Hernandez (CWE Tech person) for all his outstanding assistance to Quest. And Eneida will be invited to the holiday luncheon at Scaletta on December 8th (at no cost to her).

The next council meeting is scheduled on February 5th, 2018 at 2:30 pm.

All business having been concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 4:13 PM by Bob Gottfried.

Respectfully submitted by Ruth Kovner, Secretary

Ruth