

## Quest Council Minutes –November 7, 2017

The meeting was called to order by President Bob Gottfried. Every member of council was present: Steve Allen, Marian Friedmann, Pam Gemelli, Phil Gisser, Bob Hartmann, Eileen Kelly, Ruth Kovner, Frieda Lipp, Jane Lubin, Bob Riess, and Michael Wellner (ex officio).

Invited Guest: Maryann Donnelly: Chair of the Curriculum Committee, discussed the courses for the coming term. She informed us that we have lost ten (10) courses between this fall and next spring, while gaining four (4). The discontinued courses (or courses on hiatus) are as follows: Blacks in America, Economics & Society, Fiction Into Film-Somerset Maugham, The Cantatas of Johann Sebastian Bach, Mind and Brain, The Other Americas, Remaking the World after World War II, The Story of You, The Woman's Movement and We Are All Immigrants. The spring course catalogue will be published and distributed around Thanksgiving.

There are five new or returning courses: The Acting Workshop, The Big Picture, Contemporary Non-Fiction Articles, Environmental Issues, and Explorations in Philosophy. There are also quite a few prospective courses in the works for the fall of 2018: The Roaring Twenties headed up by Wayne Cotter, Con Artists coordinated by Mary Beth Yakoubian and Jerry Wiesenberg, The History of Dance with Ruth Ward and Linda Downs, The History of Islam with Steve Allen and Caroline Thompson, A detailed analysis of the Vietnam War and its effects on our country, led by Michael Wellner, Jill Altman and John Spiegel, and more.

Fridays With Quest: Council member Bob Reiss put forth a proposal that we expand and formalize our Friday activities, which occur "off campus," and that the Council authorize a budget of \$2,500 to support these "extra-curricular" activities. It is his specific suggestion that we formalize a committee to coordinate this Quest enrichment program, to take place on Fridays during our Spring and Fall terms, under the title of "Fridays with Quest." Pam Gemelli will initially chair the committee, with Bob Reiss to assist. The motion to authorize this committee and its budget was seconded by Marian Friedmann; it was approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Steve Allen reported that we continue to be in sound financial shape. The monies that he has requested be transferred from the CCNY account to ours is en route.

Because our membership has been somewhat smaller this year (we are now at 229 members), Steve anticipates that our revenue will be about \$130,000, a bit less than originally forecast. We anticipate that we will close the year out with about 235 members. It should be noted that we have several members (more than usual) who have taken a leave of absence this year than in the past, and we expect several will

return. A discussion followed about possible ways to attract new members; we all agreed to revisit this topic in the future.

Marketing & Communications: Steve Allen reiterated that Quest's Communication's Policy clearly states that no Quest communications should be used to disparage any Quest member. We are a volunteer organization and it is inappropriate to criticize or disparage any member's efforts publicly.

Steve also reported that Quest's two websites (questlifelong.org and questmembers.org) are to be merged into one (lifelong.org). This should be accomplished before the end of the year. The private password-protected part of the new website will require that each user have his/her own password.

Controversial Guest Speakers: There was a discussion about the recent controversy surrounding the invitation of Dr. James Watson to speak at Quest. Despite this controversy, the sense of the Council is that the choices of speakers and topics must continue to be decided by individual course coordinators who represent different viewpoints and different attitudes towards addressing controversial topics.

One Day University: Bob Gottfried reported that he has negotiated a reduced fee for One Day University events for Quest members. Any Quest member who has not attended a One Day U event before will get a 40% discount off the normal price. The discount code to use when registering for One Day U events is "Quest40." In addition, Bob informed us that if we can attract 30 new Quest members to attend One Day U events, then we will be able to display Quest materials at the One Day U registration tables --- an ideal venue for us to reach potential new members.

Withdrawal of Membership Fee for New Members: Bob (G) reported that two new members who attended a class or two were not pleased, and are seeking to resign their membership and get their money back. After some discussion at the Council meeting, Bob Reiss made a motion to refund new members who withdraw within thirty days of joining, 80% of their membership fee. The motion was adopted, and each of these people will receive their (80%) refunds.

Electronic Signs: Quest members should note that our class schedules now appear on the electronic monitors located at the CWE entrance (above the front desk). These will inform members of the classes for the day. There is also a sign near the auditorium.

Hearing Loop Problems: No hearing loop was ever installed in Room 15-17, and this presents a hardship for those members with impaired hearing. It has been suggested that we look into the possibility of having a loop installed in 15-17. We first need to get CWE's approval (last time the installation in the other rooms was contracted by, organized and supervised by CCNY/CWE). The Council agreed to form an ad-hoc committee, to be chaired by Vivian Oliver, to explore our options.

Changes in the By-Laws: Proposed minor changes to the bylaws have been distributed to the membership 14 days in advance of tomorrow's (Nov 8<sup>th</sup>) general meeting, where a vote will take place. Today, with a unanimous vote, the Council approved these minor changes.

Other Items:

Fee for membership for Longtime Members: Steve Allen brought up a proposal by one of our former members that due consideration be given to reducing membership fees for long-standing members of Quest. It was agreed that no action be taken, especially in light of Quest's existing policy of granting tuition assistance to any member genuinely in need.

Donations to Quest: Through the years Quest members have generously given cash donations to Quest. A question has come up concerning specific designations as to where the donated monies are to be spent. Other than for specific capital items, it was agreed that donations to Quest in general not be designated for specific expenditures (money, after all, is fungible).

The next Council meeting will be held on the first Monday in December; December 4<sup>th</sup>, at 2:30 P.M.

All business having been completed, the meeting was concluded by Bob Gottfried at precisely 3:43 pm.

Respectfully Submitted by:

*Ruth*

Ruth Kovner  
Secretary

