

## Quest's Annual Meeting...April 15, 2015

The meeting was called to order by President Michael Wellner at 1:00 PM. All four officers were present, in addition to 108 members, for a total attendance of 112. Michael began the meeting by presenting his assessment of the state of the organization: Quest is stronger than it has ever been. This is reflected in the fact that we are now 234 members strong. With a cap of membership at 235, we have but one opening at present. In addition we have already enrolled one new member today for the summer session. It was agreed that these new summer members will have first priority for joining in the fall should vacancies arise.

Michael then thanked Pam Gemelli for her excellent work as head of the Membership Committee and Caroline Thomson for her efforts as head of the Freshman Class effort. Caroline's work has proven instrumental in making the transition into Quest less confusing and easier for our new members.

Michael also thanked V.P Carolyn McGuire, Treasurer John Sicree, and Ruth Kovner, Secretary, for their efforts on behalf of Quest.

Treasurer's Report: John Sicree, was very pleased to announce we are in excellent financial condition. We have moved some of our funds to IDB Bank where our rate of return is 4.5 times what we were getting at Chase. Our expenses are running slightly below budget estimates, and our revenues slightly above.

Emergency Response Team: Lila Heilbrun and Doreen DeMartini of the ERT were happy to report that they now have large orange buttons denoting membership on this team. All ERT members should wear these buttons during any emergency activities, making it easier to be identified. Have any questions? Look for the orange buttons during a fire drill or an emergency. Lila wanted us to be especially aware of the four stairway exits; A, B, C, and D. Realistically we must acknowledge we have some members who may need assistance in evacuating the premises. And, since Quest is located near the World Trade

Center as well as many Wall Street financial institutions, some of which have been previous targets of terrorists, we must know the best way to protect members.

Membership Committee: As stated above, we now have 234 members. Happily new candidates are finding out about the unique nature of Quest and are seeking us out. Existing members are bringing in new members. The new members have proven to be very active, giving presentations, joining committees and getting into the swing of things much more quickly and enthusiastically than in the past. We are all delighted.

Q Review: Carolyn McGuire, new Editor in chief, asked the assembled members to start thinking about submitting creative works for the next edition of the magazine. Q Review welcomes works of poetry, prose, art, and photography. Carolyn mentioned that the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition of Q Review should be ready for distribution within two weeks or so.

Travel Update: The Iceland Trip has 20 members and is all set; the Budapest-Prague Danube River trip is on schedule and will go with 8 members. At present we have nine members booked to Stratford/Toronto, and Carolyn believes that that trip will also go as scheduled.

The Bylaws: There were two small changes to the bylaws that members were asked to vote on. One had to do with term limits for committee members who go on to serve as Chair of that committee; the other had to do with establishing the date on which to count members for the purpose of nominating petitions. The assembled membership was asked to vote by a show of hands, and both amendments were passed by unanimous vote.

Curriculum Committee: June Dwyer, retiring as Chair of the Curriculum Committee, gratefully thanked the excellent Curriculum Committee members for their efforts during her tenure. She singled out Frieda Lipp for her work as Scheduling Chair, a most difficult task. June also mentioned that Marian Friedmann will be taking over the scheduling task from Frieda next year.

**Summer Session:** June reported that classes will be 1 ½ hours in length, from 10:30 to noon, and not two hours as before. Coffee will be served prior to the summer presentations.

In addition, she asked that all members please fill out a slip (available in the lunchroom) to note any class that you particularly enjoyed and would like to see repeated during the summer. These classes will then be considered for inclusion in the summer sessions by the Summer Session Sub-committee with the help of the course coordinators.

- a) **Noontime Knowledge:** This program is thriving and will continue.
- b) **Coffee Volunteers:** We still need a few more volunteers for coffee duty. Please see the Bermans, Lowell and Elaine, or Pam Mahl.
- c) **Course Catalogue:** Lynnel Garabedian is now in charge of the catalogue. This is her first year; many thanks to her.
- d) **Curriculum Committee:** Next year's courses will be a result of nine courses that are ending and 11 new courses beginning in the fall. There will be a couple of courses that will be folded into one since their content is overlapping.
- e) **New Course Ideas:** New ideas are always welcome. You will find an application for Quest New Course Proposal in the office. Please submit one if you have an idea that might be of interest to the membership and can be developed into a course.
- f) **New Courses for the Fall 2015 semester:**
  - 1. Betty Farber, June Zaccone and Jennifer Jolly will be leading a course entitled "A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Look at Jane Austen."

2. **Steve Allen told us about his new “Mind & Brain” course. With Jan Eisler he will be discussing concepts such as how we really make decisions in our lives.**
3. **Hal Cantor described his “Ibsen and Modern American Playwright’s” course. Myra Nissen and Bob Riess will be co-coordinating with him.**
4. **Joan Diamond will be heading up a course with Ellen Shapiro on “Art in History.”**
5. **Phil Gisser will bring us his “Economics and Society” course. It will include discussions on climate change, population growth and the “Walmart Effect.” Marian Schultheis and Bob Reiss will co-coordinate with him.**
6. **Hy Gold told us about his “Three Philosophical Conjectures” course which will ponder among other questions, “Is there a God?” Stan Lieblein will coordinate.**
7. **For a change of pace, Steve Koenig and Joan Briller will present the course “Classic Rock Albums.” This will include Reggae, Soul, Folk and Country. There will be live tracks from albums by artists such as the Beatles, Pink Floyd and Aretha Franklin.**
8. **Bob Moore will present “What’s Wrong with America?” Wayne Cotter and Phil Gisser are the coordinators. They will cover the perceived shortcomings developed in American life in Education, Wall Street, the Political System and more. Perhaps a manifesto will result, to be sent to the President.**
9. **Members will join Joe Nathan and John Hood to read and discuss “The Brothers Karamazov,” one of the most thought provoking novels written.**

10. "Oral Interpretation of Poetry" will be the subject of a course led by Art Spar. He will be ably assisted by Roy Clary and Mary Ann Donnelly. In this course the poems of Edgar Allen Poe, Emily Dickinson and Walt Whitman will be read aloud and studied.

11. Caroline Thompson and Sandra Southwell will present "The Long 19<sup>th</sup> Century History." It's been labeled the longest century, although this course is planned to run for just three semesters.

Membership Limits: A lengthy discussion followed on the question of the maximum number of members that Quest should admit as it grows through the coming years. Some members feel passionately that they want to keep the membership at the current 235 level. Others want it to grow to 250. One obvious consideration is our current facilities. Another is the question of the perceived intimacy of the current group. We know we usually lose 10% of our membership each summer, through normal attrition.

Steve Allen and Bob Hartmann each began the discussion by voicing their points of view on the matter. Each took an opposing position. Broadly speaking, Steve would like to see our membership remain where it is; Bob believes that we can easily grow to 250. Steve had done a detailed analysis on daily attendance, which shows that we usually have no more than 60-65-70 people at Quest on any given day. Only in special cases are classes overcrowded, although discussion groups may often suffer from too many participants, thus limiting each person's opportunity to talk.

Steve presented projections based on recent experiences showing that membership is growing by about 10% per year and will hit a 250 cap within a year. Steve's position is that since we will soon be hitting the cap in any case, it is better to move the cap up slowly so that we can begin to design a mechanism for limiting membership and get experience with it.

Michael then asked for opinions from the members. Art Spar began eloquently by stating his belief that the lifeblood of any organization is its new blood. Otherwise the organization becomes moribund, he asserted.

One of our new members decried the fact that we are not a diverse enough group. There is a general consensus that increased diversity would be extremely positive.

A questionnaire was distributed to all Quest members in attendance asking for their opinions on membership caps. The Council will then consider these responses before making any changes to our current limits.

Year End Luncheon: Jane Lubin is taking over the task of luncheon planning from Sandy Gordon. This year for the first time we will be able to select tablemates in advance. This should make seating less confusing at the start of the luncheon.

Housekeeping: Michael reminded everyone that NEATNESS COUNTS! Please pick up any trash that you create and deposit it in the lunch room trash receptacles. It is important that we leave no food or drink residue of any kind in the classrooms. PLEASE!

There being no further business, the meeting was concluded at 3:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

*Ruth Koyner*

**Ruth Kovner**  
**Secretary**