

Minutes of the Quest General Membership Meeting...April 6, 2016

The semi-annual Quest General Membership Meeting was called to order by Michael Wellner at 1:02 P.M. He began by welcoming all members attending, especially those new members (identified by their red lanyards). All told, the auditorium was filled; there were about 100 members present.

Next, Michael thanked the officers (Carolyn McGuire, Ruth Kovner and John Sicree) and the Council members who have helped to run Quest so efficiently this past year.

He noted that our current membership count is 245; Al Gordon recently requested that he be placed on a Leave of Absence. In addition to the 245, we also have six people who have enrolled for the summer session.

Our Treasurer, John Sicree, reported that our finances are in great shape. We remain with over \$200,000 in savings, and a small operating surplus each year.

Next - and possibly most important --- Michael made note of our Emergency Response Team, headed by Lila Heilbrunn and Doreen De Martini. He described the importance to all Quest members of our fire drills and overall Emergency Training, and urged all members to familiarize themselves with the emergency exits on this floor, and to comply with all directions during fire drills. This can be LIFESAVING.

Michael then introduced four committee chairmen:

1. Carolyn McGuire, Chair of the new Mentoring Program, who described her mentoring program, in which any interested member will be taught how to structure a presentation, how to use PowerPoint (if desired), and how to get the audience involved.

2. Sandra Southwell, Chair of the Tech Committee, emphasized that her committee members are on hand to help with the A-V equipment at Quest, the podiums, and specifically with software such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. Any Quest members who are reasonably technically skilled are invited to join Sandra's group.
3. Liesje ten Houten, Chair of the Caring Committee. This group is concerned with those members who have been absent from Quest for one reason or another, possibly accident or illness. This group will try and reach out to them to express Quest's concern. Please contact any member of this committee if you know of someone who is ill.
4. Last was Wayne Cotter, the new Editor-in-Chief of Q Review for 2016-17. He will be heading up this committee. Before describing the publication and its mission, he thanked Carolyn McGuire and Doreen De Martini for their efforts on behalf of Q Review this past year. This truly excellent publication has recently been distributed to all members. Soon Wayne will be soliciting contributions for next year's issue. Watch for announcements.

Then – the highlight of the meeting --- Caroline Thompson, our enthusiastic Chair of the Curriculum Committee, introduced key members of her group (Lynnel Garabedian, Phil Gisser, Joan Briller, Art Spar and Leslie Goldman), and the new courses that will be introduced in the fall of 2016. There will be a total of 9 new courses this coming fall. These include:

- A. New York City Department Stores: Michael Wellner, lead coordinator: The history of retailing in general and of specific (and many now gone) department stores in New York City will be the subject of this course. Included, among others, will be S. Klein, Gimbel's, B Altman & Co., Saks 34th, Abraham & Strauss and more. We'll also delve into the influence that online shopping has had on retailing in general.
- B. Love Stories: Trudy Owett described the course as one that will focus on the great love stories of all time. These are stories of passion that sometimes lead to chaos. They will be about real life people such as

well known stars of film and theatre as well as literary figures and mythological ones.

- C. Science & Scientists: This course will focus on great scientists throughout history, and some of their amazing discoveries and inventions. Steve Allen, lead coordinator, told us he is looking for new members who have a background in the sciences.
- D. Turning Points in American History: Harriet Finkelstein asks “How did we get to where we are?” We’ve been the most powerful nation in the world for over half of our 240 years (Donald Trump notwithstanding). This course will look at specific turning points in our history in an attempt to provide some clues and answers.
- E. Law & Order: Bob Moore discussed this new course, an expansion of his “What’s Wrong with America” course that just concluded. It will attempt to examine in some depth, and with some intelligence (not just sound bytes) issues that affect us all: policing, the courts, cybercrime, white-collar crime, punishment and the prison system, guns in America and gun control, racially-tinged justice, and much, much more.
- F. The Woman’s Movement: Joyce Hinote described this course as taking a look at the 2nd wave of feminism, which began in the late 1960s. Topics will include the Equal Rights Amendment, Sexism, Reproductive Rights, and more. And it will ask the question: “What still needs to be done?”
- G. The Other Americas: Jane Pittson-Chianese will be the lead coordinator of this course that will examine Canada and other countries of Central and south America. Topics covered will include the history, geography, politics and culture of each country as well as it’s interaction with the U.S. and the rest of the world.
- H. The Tumultuous Sixties: Wayne Cotter will coordinate this course that will focus on this fascinating and consequential period in our country’s history, a variety of items such as music, history, politics and more

- I. Here There Be Monsters: Art Spar regaled us with thoughts of all sorts of monsters that are found in literature, from Sea Monsters to the Cookie Monster. What can we learn about monsters and why are we so fascinated by monsters? Insights as to how monsters affect our lives will be discussed.

Next, Michael introduced Hedy Shulman, who will be taking over as Co-Chair (with Bob Reiss) of the Wednesday Afternoon Guest Speaker Program from the formidable Sandy Gordon, who has been heading up this very successful, long running program. With the assistance of Barbara Oliver this group will likely surprise us with interesting guest speakers. She asks the members to be on the lookout for possible guest speakers and to inform her if you have any suggestions.

Finally, Michael introduced the Long Range Planning Committee members, and spoke at some length about the issues involved in planning on where Quest should be in three, five or even ten years from now. So many factors are involved in planning that the committee has proposed to the Council, and the Council has accepted and proposed to the members a resolution that we cap next year's membership at 250, in order to give us a chance to "catch our breath" and see what procedures we might have to put in place as we really develop a (meaningful) waiting list.

Michael then asked for comments from the members about the proposal. A lengthy and sometimes energetic (and sometimes heated) discussion followed, among those who prefer a somewhat smaller membership level, those who are "happy" at the present level, and those who would like to see our membership increased, by twenty-five or more.

Ballots to vote on the Council's proposal were distributed, and votes had also been solicited by e-mail from members who might be unable to attend the meeting in person. (As a postscript, ballots were counted after the meeting concluded, and the vote was 98 - 14 in favor of the Council's resolution. Membership will not exceed 250 for the 2016-17 year, unless a greater (or lesser) number is approved first by the members.

With that discussion concluded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:35 P.M.

Respectfully submitted by:

Ruth Kovner

Ruth Kovner
Secretary.