

Minutes – Quest General Meeting 11-Nov-2015

The semi-annual Quest General Meeting for the fall of 2015 was held on Wednesday, November 11th, in the 7th floor auditorium. President Michael Wellner called the meeting to order at exactly 1:00 P.M. There were approximately 100 members who attended.

Michael opened the meeting by recalling the terribly sad news that June Dwyer had passed away over the previous week-end. He asked for a moment of silence to remember June. She was such a major figure at Quest, and will be deeply missed by all. Quest will hold a memorial service on Thursday December 3rd, at 2:30 PM.

Next, Michael welcomed Quest's new members, and then introduced the officers and members of the Quest Council.

Michael next noted that the state of our organization has never been stronger, and that our relationship with CCNY has never been better. A copy of the "Quest Page" in the latest CCNY Annual Report was distributed to all members; it contains a wonderful article about Quest. Our continued good publicity and enhanced visibility only serves to enhance our reputation.

And, speaking of Quest's reputation, Michael noted that a delegation from Thailand, led by the wife of the Prime Minister, and the Thai Ambassador to the United States, visited Quest in late September in conjunction with UN week. Apparently the King of Thailand is very interested in establishing a program similar to ours in Thailand. You never know how far our good story travels.

Michael next reported that we now have 236 paid members, and noted that so many of our new members are taking an active role in our classes. A special thank you was extended to Pam Gemelli, and the Membership Committee for their excellent work, and to Art Spar for his excellent efforts with the freshman class.

Next, Michael encouraged those new members who have not yet led a class, to be brave and "take the plunge" and offer to make a presentation. It is a fact that Quest works best with everyone's active participation.

Next came a report on membership. Michael reminded everyone that the Council recently voted to temporarily increase the membership limit to 250. That decision was made with the realization that Winter is coming, and several of our members depart for warmer climes, and many who do remain here in the city often don't venture out in the inclement winter weather. It is likely that attendance in the winter will not be a problem. Beyond that, however, is clearly another issue.

To address the issue of what membership level is right for us, and several other corollary issues, Quest has formed a Long Range Planning Committee, which currently has eight members (Michael, Bob Hartmann, Leslie Goldman, Art Spar, Nan McNamara, Steve Allen, Carolyn McGuire and Bob Reiss) of diverse backgrounds and opinions. The plan is to have that committee make a report to all Quest members early next year, outlining several options, with lots of time to discuss it before --- and during -- the April General Meeting. In the interim a questionnaire will be prepared and submitted to all Quest members seeking their input. Michael assured everyone that the Council will make no permanent decisions on membership levels without input from all of us.

Next Pam Gemelli, Membership Committee Chairman, thanked all of her committee members.

Then our Treasurer, John Sicree, reported that Quest remains in excellent financial condition.

Next came a report from Lila and Doreen, co-chairs of Quest's Emergency Response Team. It is a fact that our location here at 25 Broadway is literally a short walk from the World Trade Center, the New York Stock Exchange, the New York Federal Reserve Bank, and a host of other sites that could, again, become terrorist targets. It is essential that we all know what to do in case - God forbid - of another emergency, perhaps like we saw on 9/11, or even just a mechanical malfunction in the building. We were all urged to familiarize ourselves with the four emergency exits on this floor, and to participate in --- and pay attention to --- the fire drills that we have. They may be disruptive, but they could quite literally save your life!

Next Caroline Thompson, head of the Curriculum Committee, reported that 3 courses are dropping or going on hiatus for the spring term and will be replaced by 1 new course, Blacks in America, and 2 returning or revised courses: Election 2016 for What's Wrong With America, and a return of Environmental Studies. Caroline passed out a survey form with course suggestions compiled by CC members to serve as ideas for new courses for the fall, although additional Quest member ideas are encouraged as well. She urged members to carry on discussion about course possibilities and suggested that, in the spirit of June Dwyer, who believed her mission was always to try and make better an organization to which she belonged, that all Quest members should try to up their level of involvement by one step. If you just attend class, contribute to the discussion. If you already do that, then volunteer to lead a discussion. Next step: make a presentation. If you do that now and then, do it more. Next step: be a coordinator. Caroline compared Quest to a cake with frosting. The extracurricular activities and sense of community that we all love is the frosting. The cake is the intellectual engagement and creative outlet we find from classes and Q-Review. With the loss of June, we have lost a big slice of the cake.

Then Sandra Southwell has a few brief remarks about the Tech Support Committee, reminding everyone that Tech Committee Members are available to help anyone, any time, with any computer issues. And she asked for any members who wish to join her committee to please speak to her.

Next Steve Allen shared some information about communications at Quest, including e-mails, the website, WiFi access and more.

Next Carolyn McGuire gave a brief Travel Committee report. Trips in place now include Colombia in January and London in May. We are still looking into possible August trips (maybe the Canadian Rockies). As always, any and all suggestions are welcome.

Michael next made gave special recognition to our stalwart coffee volunteers, Lowell and Elaine Berman & Palma Mahl and their staff of volunteers who so ably make coffee for us every day, and get the supplies, and keep everything clean. And, of course, a special note of appreciation was offered to the one person without whom Quest would literally stop functioning, Eneida Cruz!

Finally, Michael concluded his remarks with two points:

1. A bit of housekeeping, reminding everyone that food and drinks are not permitted in any classroom (other than the lunch room). And remember that there is NO FOOD or COFFEE allowed in the auditorium --- only water!
2. And a quick reminder that our year-end Holiday Party will be held Thursday December 10th, at Noon. At Quest. Stay tuned for details; we are going to do something a bit different this year.

Respectfully submitted in Ruth Kovner's absence,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael".

Michael H. Wellner
President