

QUEST GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Friday, November 20, 2020

Council Members present: David Bernard, Stephanie Butler, Wayne Cotter, Pam Gemelli, Bob Gottfried, Arlynn Greenbaum, Karen Levin, Frieda Lipp, Penelope Pi-Sunyer, Ruth Ward and Michael Wellner.

Quest Members: Approximately 132 members attended.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic shutdown, this meeting was held via Zoom call. The meeting was called to order by Quest Vice President Ruth Ward at 1:00 p.m.

Ruth welcomed all Quest members and explained that this meeting would include a preview of the spring 2021 courses; provide updates by Council members; review new course summaries; and deliver information from the editors of both QNews and Q Review.

Ruth introduced Quest President Bob Gottfried who informed everyone that “the state of Quest is excellent.” Bob extended his thanks to the following members who help make Quest an excellent organization:

- Quest Council Officers: Ruth Ward, Vice President; Stephanie Butler, Treasurer; Karen Levin, Secretary; and Quest Council At-Large members: David Bernard, Wayne

Cotter, Pam Gemelli, Arlynn Greenbaum, Frieda Lipp, Penelope Pi-Sunyer and Michael Wellner.

- Sharon Krutzel and Bob Reiss who launched the Online Learning Committee in the spring of 2020;
- Current Chairs of the Online Learning Committee: Wayne Cotter, Bob Reiss and Ruth Ward as well as Committee members: Victor Brenner, Jeanne Gold, Ellen Shapiro, Pete Weis, Michael Wellner and Ilene Winkler. Special recognition to Michael Russo, a new Zoom member, who has been working with Victor Brenner to put together a new “Online Presentation Library.”
- Publication Editors: QNews editor Carolyn McGuire and Q Review editor Ruth Ward.
- Committee Chairs:
 - Joyce West - Curriculum Committee
 - Linda Downs – Scheduling Committee
 - Nan McNamara – Membership Committee
 - Frieda Lipp - Diversity Committee
 - Renee Woloshin – Culture Quest Committee
 - Arlynn Greenbaum – Distinguished Guest Lecturer Committee
 - Eleanor Maurillo – Caring Committee
 - Wayne Cotter – Co-Chair, Online Learning Committee

Special thanks to the following members:

- Donna Ramer on the Membership Committee who maintains the Quest Membership List. Council authorized the placement of the Membership List on the private Quest website. If a member would like to opt out of having their information on the list, please contact Donna at donnaramer1@gmail.com. If you already opted out, you do not have to do anything further.
- Deborah Yaffe who compiled a list of cultural and educational “things to do” and distributed it via QuestCommunity.
- Sheryl Harawitz who organized and facilitated the Lunchtime Social Programs.
- Wayne Cotter who maintains QuestBusiness.
- Joyce Hinote who maintains QuestCommunity.
- Steve Allen who chairs our Quest Bylaws Revisions Committee and assisted Quest Treasurer Stephanie Butler with her new role as Treasurer.
- Nina Dioletis and Laura Lopez who compile and email NWAQ each week.

Bob described the following ways in which members can help Quest:

- Develop new course ideas and share with the Curriculum Committee or become a lead coordinator or co-coordinator.
- Volunteer to make a presentation in an existing class or a new class or serve as a course coordinator.
- Join a committee.

- Talk to family and friends about Quest and encourage them to become new Zoom members. The spring Zoom tuition for all members will be \$150.

Bob clarified the leave of absence policy. If anyone would like to take a leave of absence for the spring 2021 term, they will still remain a Quest member and will not have to pay tuition until the fall 2021 semester.

Quest classes will end on Thursday, December 10 and resume on Monday, February 1, 2021.

Ruth Ward described her role as Quest Council Vice President. This includes discussing issues with Bob Gottfried, supporting him on issues agreed upon by Council and learning leadership skills thru observation.

Ruth praised our Quest Council Secretary, Karen Levin, for doing a very meticulous job of taking and sending out our monthly meeting minutes.

Ruth introduced Quest Treasurer Stephanie Butler to present Quest's finances.

Stephanie reported that Quest's finances continue in a healthy state. Quest revenues for the year are projected to be \$41,580 and expenses will be \$43,273 resulting in a deficit for the year of -\$1,693.

Stephanie provided details on our annual revenues and expenses and then gave details on our reserves.

Quest Revenues

As you know, in the current fall semester, the COVID virus, has prevented us from occupying 25 Broadway, and we do not anticipate returning in the spring. Council determined that fall semester tuition for virtual classes for all members will be \$150. Existing members who paid full tuition for the 2019-2020 year (last school year) have been given a credit of \$150 for the period of time last year in which we were unable to attend in- person classes. The credit was applied to this fall's tuition so that no additional fall tuition was due.

We have created a new class of membership, Zoom members, while classes remain exclusively on line. Zoom members have not been accepted for full membership at this time but may participate in virtual classes and activities. Quest received \$5,100 from 34 new Zoom members, each paying tuition of \$150 for the fall semester. Tuition for the upcoming spring semester for all members has been set at \$150. If we assume that 80% of existing full and zoom members will pay spring semester tuition, we can expect to receive an additional \$36,480, producing full year tuition revenue of \$41,580.

Quest Expenses

Although in typical years, about 70% of our expenses namely rent, expenses associated with an office manager, contributions to CWE, and insurance are directly related to CWE, a division of

CCNY and our landlord. This year, except for CWE contributions, we will only be responsible for the remaining 30% of budgeted expenses which includes professional printing services to prepare our catalog, Q Review, and QNews, our leased copy machine, honoraria for Wednesday afternoon guest speakers, funding for some museum trips, and computer and Zoom expenses resulting from virtual classes. These expenses total \$43,273 of annual expense.

Quest Reserves

Quest has reserves of about \$800,000 which are invested in CDs and Treasury bills in various banking institutions. These reserves derive from the following sources: a bequest from the estate of Ken Leedom in the amount of \$487,000, about \$240,000 in other membership bequests and contributions received over the 25 years of Quest's history, and about \$73,000 built up over these 25 years in small annual surpluses of membership fees and other revenues over expenses.

Our reserves are available for emergency expenditures such as a pandemic virus which keeps us from occupying 25 Broadway or in the unlikely loss of our CWE rental space. While our relations with CWE remain excellent and while CWE does have a long-term lease on its 25 Broadway space, we must be aware of the remote possibility that changes in politics or priorities of CCNY could lead to a termination of CWE's lease.

In the meantime, the Council, in response to the large increase in reserves resulting from Ken Leedom's generous bequest, has

begun funding some new initiatives from our reserves, such as the special Ken Leedom-Peter Cott Memorial Guest Lecture each term, a scholarship for a CWE student in Leedom's and Cott's honor and a future fully Quest-funded celebration of the 25th Anniversary of Quest's founding.

Finally, on the operational side, Stephanie acknowledged the valuable contributions of Peter Fleischman who helped redesign our system of record keeping, David Judlowitz, Chair of the Audit Committee along with its members and, in particular, Steve Allen, former Treasurer and member of the Audit Committee for his suggestions, tutelage, and guidance.

Work of the Curriculum Committee and New Courses for Spring 2021

Ruth introduced Joyce West, Chair of the Curriculum Committee. Since the Quest summer session is referred to as "Summer Encores," Joyce asked members to recommend presentations from the spring and fall 2020 semesters that they would like repeated in the summer 2021 semester.

Recommendations should be sent to Leslie Goldman or Art Spar.

A list of the Curriculum Committee members and the spring 2021 brochure was shown on screen. Joyce introduced the lead coordinators who spoke briefly about the new courses.

- Diane Crothers – Reading Black Lives

This is a discussion course and will include readings from Ida B. Wells, the “1619 Project,” Bryan Stevens and other writers.

- Ann Goerdt – African Continent

This course will address individual countries (Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, Nigeria and Morocco) and will focus on the government, the economy, quality of life, arts, music and literature.

- Harriet Finklestein – Anti-Semitism

This course explores anti-Semitism from the ancient times through the present. Some topics will include the history of anti-Semitism in Germany, the protocols of the Elders of Zion and Jews and the death of Christ.

- Stephen Baker – Borders/Boundaries

This course will look at geography and its impact on borders and boundaries. Topics include borders within New York City, the Thirteen Colonies, and our borders with Florida, Mexico and Canada.

- Paul Golomb – Christian Scriptures Between Faith and Reason

This course will discuss the New Testament. It begins with the Hebrew roots and continues through Christian Scripture. All participants are encouraged to bring a copy of a New Testament bible to class. Any translation of the New Testament is acceptable.

- Caroline Thompson – Russian History

This course studies Russian history from the 9th century to World War II. Topics include the Golden Horn, Ivan the Terrible, Boris Godunov and Peter the Great.

Questions from Quest Members

Q. How can I get involved in Quest?

A. Bob Gottfried responded that a member can volunteer to do a presentation by contacting the lead coordinator or by talking to the Curriculum Committee. You can also join a committee. If you have a new course suggestion, please contact Joyce West.

Marian Friedmann mentioned that all Committee Chairs are listed on the Quest website. Wayne Cotter noted that NWAQ lists all the lead coordinators.

Q. Will Quest members receive a bill for the spring tuition?

A. Stephanie Butler responded that a bill will be sent.

Q. How can I receive a Quest password in order to access the private website?

A. Steve Allen responded that everyone has an individual password. If anyone needs help with this, please email StevenAllen2@gmail.com.

Q. Can a member do a one-time presentation?

A. Yes, through “Noontime Knowledge” or “Presenter’s Showcase.” Any member (including Zoom members) can do a presentation.

Joyce West will email the spring 2021 Course Catalog to all members via QuestBusiness. The catalog is also available on the “Courses Page” on the Quest website. The “Creative Lunch and Learn” program listed on the Quest schedule will be a special class on creative work and projects done by Quest members.

Joyce confirmed the Lunchtime sessions will continue during the winter break months of December and January.

Committee Chairs and Publication Editors

Ruth Ward introduced the Committee Chairs and Publication Editors.

- Nan McNamara – Chair, Membership Committee
Nan mentioned Quest’s cap of 270 members. Since we have been participating in Quest online, due to the COVID pandemic, Council created a program for non-members (“Zoom” members). Zoom members paid a \$150 fee.

Quest currently has 265 members and an additional 34 Zoom members. When we return to 25 Broadway, Zoom members will be invited to learn more about Quest and attend in-person classes. They will be the “first in line” to become new members of Quest. Council decided that everyone currently enrolled must re-enroll and will pay

\$150 for the spring and summer terms of 2021. In December 2020, everyone currently enrolled will receive an email with instructions on how to re-enroll and where to send their \$150 check.

- Wayne Cotter – Co-Chair, Online Learning Committee
Wayne gave a history of our virtual classes. On March 31, we premiered the first webinar on Zoom. Over the next few months, Quest presented live Zoom classes twice a week.

Over the summer, there was a tremendous effort to plan online courses. In the fall, Quest presented 30 online classes. In December and January, the Online Presentation Library will be available “On Demand” and you will be able to view over 100 videos online. An email will be sent to everyone when this is available. Please be sure to contact Steve Allen if you don’t have a password to access the private website.

Wayne acknowledged his thanks and appreciation to all the Online Learning Committee members as well as all the Zoom hosts. Special thanks to Sharon Krutzel and Bob Reiss for their vision, hard work and inspiration.

- Arlynn Greenbaum – Lead Coordinator, Distinguished Guest Lecturer Committee
Arlynn mentioned that we were able to have two of our COVID-cancelled spring speakers speak via Zoom over the

summer: Deborah Goldberg and Elizabeth Cohn. And we had a bonus speaker, Leigh Hallingby, who took us on a feminist tour of Harlem. Arlynn provided a recap of our fall guest lecturers, starting with Memorial Guest Lecturer Meg Wolitzer. She then summarized the guest lecturers she and her committee have booked for spring 2021 including Memorial Guest Lecturer Roz Chast (legendary New Yorker cartoonist). The guest speaker presentations will be taped so they can be included in the Quest archives. Members were reminded that their suggestions for guest speakers are always welcome.

- Renee Woloshin – Chair, Quest Culture Committee
Several museum tours were arranged on a virtual basis and about 182 Quest members attended. The museums included The Jewish Museum, The Met, The Tenement Museum, The Guggenheim and the Museum of Asian Art. In the spring, the museums will include The Guggenheim, The Whitney, The Winterthur Museum in Delaware, the Audubon Bird Mural Project and MOMA.

- Frieda Lipp – Chair, Diversity Committee
Frieda addressed the current issues with respect to the racial divide and how it impacts Quest members. Quest has a policy that says anyone can attend Quest on an unlimited trial basis for 2 weeks at no cost. If a member knows anyone who is interested in auditing/participating, please contact Nan McNamara. Additionally, the Quest Travel

Committee is rescheduling the Civil Rights Journey trip for spring 2022.

- Eleanor Maurillo - Chair, Caring Committee

The Caring Committee offers comfort and assistance to members in need of support. The Committee has sent greetings, flowers and made hospital visits. Please let the Committee know of anyone who would like help.

- Ruth Ward – Editor-in-Chief of Q Review

Q Review is the Quest literary publication. It includes art, poetry and prose as well as short stories. Last year, we published the 25th anniversary edition. The publication was mailed to all members in 2020 and will be mailed in 2021.

- Carolyn McGuire – Editor of QNews

QNews is the Quest newsletter and is published three times per year. During the pandemic, it has been published monthly. Highlights of what Quest members are doing, cartoons and jokes, food recipes and profiles of new members are in QNews. It also includes information on the guest speakers and the museum tours.

Questions from Quest Members

Q. Who should we contact regarding training for a Zoom presentation?

A. Bob Reiss responded that someone from the Zoom team is assigned to each class but anyone should feel free to contact him directly.

Bob Gottfried mentioned that this year is his last year as Quest President. There will be four Council member seats open. In February, communications will be sent from the Nominations and Elections Committee asking for candidates.

The meeting was adjourned by Bob Gottfried and Ruth Ward at 2:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Levin

Secretary