

# QNEWS DIGITAL

A Quest Publication

Issue 16

May 2021

## A Note From the New President

**A**s the newly-elected president of Quest, I'd like to express my deep appreciation to Bob Gottfried, whose four years of outstanding leadership have led us to this new period in Quest's development as a Lifelong Learning Community. As you know, in March 2020 our 25 Broadway home was closed by the pandemic, and since then Bob, the Council, and our Zoom Team have enabled us to deliver a full schedule of online courses.

We look forward to our online summer Encore program of Zoom presentations on a wide variety of topics. These live webinars will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10:30 am to noon from

June 1 through July 29. Questers will be able to watch, ask questions, and comment on presentations, many of which will be updated, that they missed or want to see again. And let's not forget our library of recorded webinars at [questlifelong.org](http://questlifelong.org).

After an August hiatus, Quest's fall classes will start on Monday, September 13. The Quest Technology Team (comprised of our original Quest Tech Team and our Zoom Team) is actively working to ensure we will have a 2021-2022 program that meets the needs of all our members — both those who plan to come in person and those who plan to access our programs remotely on Zoom.

Although a few of our planned fall courses

will be accessible only at 25 Broadway and a few others will be accessible only on Zoom, the majority will be taught in a "hybrid" format. The CUNY technical staff is assisting us in the purchase of equipment that will facilitate our presentation of programs in this hybrid environment that will accommodate in-person learning while simultaneously allowing members to fully participate in classes from their homes.

As we go forward with these plans, I will do my best to represent your interests and to ensure that Quest continues to provide quality lifelong learning opportunities for all our members in a positive, inclusive social atmosphere.

— Ruth Ward

## President's Farewell

**A**s I write this, I am in the last weeks of my term as President of Quest. Being your President has been a great honor. My being at Quest or even knowing about it, was entirely due to my meeting Caroline Thompson and Steve Allen at Chautauqua years ago. Caroline encouraged my wife, Ellen, and me to join Quest as soon as we retired, which we did in the Fall of 2014, while I was still working. Caroline also predicated that one day I would become Quest's President. My term of office began in June of 2017.

I was recruited to run for President by Michael Wellner, who allowed me to shadow him for his last year as President, while I was serving as Vice-President.

Michael has been extremely helpful to me during my time as President.

I am thankful for the support I have received from the Quest membership, my fellow Quest officers and at-large Council members, and from all those who volunteer to help make Quest the thriving organization it is today. The two most important decisions I have made as President were the selections of my Vice-Presidents, Marian Friedmann and Ruth Ward. Marian was always available to me to bounce off ideas and to contribute to the solving of Quest problems. When Marian agreed to run for Vice-President, she informed me that she had no desire to be President. After being elected to complete the remaining year of

my term as Vice President, Marian was reelected for another two-year term, and was eligible to serve for two more years. Marian declined to do so, to allow Ruth Ward to run for Vice-President. I am so happy that Ruth accepted my entreaty to succeed me as President.

Quest is extremely fortunate to have Ruth and Wayne Cotter as its newly elected President and Vice-President, Stephanie Butler and Karin Levin as Treasurer and Secretary, and to have dedicated, intelligent, and hard-working members on the Quest Council. I anticipate Quest will continue to thrive in the coming years.

— Bob Gottfried

## We Remember Marty Helpern

A number of years ago in the early days of Quest, Maty Helpern became an active member of an ad hoc committee whose purpose it was to increase membership and avoid danger of closing. Marty was joined by good friends such as Bob Hartmann, Joe Nathan, Howard Salik and David Robinson. Through Marty's efforts, Quest membership grew and is now flourishing.



During this time Howard Salik was president and Marty was treasurer. Channel 7 heard about Quest and came to observe what we were all about. They were so impressed that a story about our organization appeared in the business section of The NYTimes along with a photograph of Marty. After 14 years as companion to Beverly Francus, Marty was around 25 Broadway until recently. He was always a very pleasant man and was friendly to all members... we had some lovely conversations. He quickly got to know people and according to Bob Reiss he taught Bob the ropes of how Quest works. Over the years he worked with Helen McMahon, John Hood among others.

Marty had a keen intellect and was an asset to Quest. He was a lawyer, accountant and a professor at Columbia and Pace Universities. He passed at age 93 after a long illness and is survived by one son and our own Beverly Francus.

## Quest Book Club

**The Book Club** meets on the second Wednesday of the month at 12:15. The following are the books planned for the book club for the fall semester:

**September:** *Deacon King Kong*  
by James McBride

**October:** TBD

**November:** *Hamnet* by Maggie O'Farrell

## Behind the Scenes at the Met *by Estelle Selzer*



On April 14th I had the privilege of interviewing Peter Gelb, General Manager of the Metropolitan Opera, as part of Quest's Distinguished Guest Lecturer series. Since Mr. Gelb is very busy these days making plans to allow the Metropolitan Opera to perform in the fall of this year (fingers crossed), he had only an hour to devote to us. I started by asking Mr. Gelb to fill us in on his background and how he came to this prestigious position. Then the conversation turned to our concerns as seniors and lovers of the arts, and how he plans to address them. Finally, Mr. Gelb showed a short video of the season's Gala which was recorded all over the world by opera singers from their homes and compiled into a Zoom broadcast.

The recorded interview is on the Quest members' website at [questlifelong.org](http://questlifelong.org). If you weren't able to attend the session, you can still see it there.

## Election Results *by Bob Gottfried*

I am writing to inform you of the results of the recently concluded election.

**Ruth Ward**, President

**Wayne Cotter**, Vice President

**Mary Ann Donnelly, Nan McNamara, Donna Ramer** and

**Michael Wellner** elected to Council-at-large positions.

Quest bylaws amendments were overwhelmingly approved. A record 80% of eligible voters cast ballots.

I would like to thank the Quest members who agreed to run for Council positions, all of whom were well qualified to serve on the Quest Council. I also want to thank Caroline Thompson, Sharon Krutzel, David Judlowitz, and Roy Clary for the superb job they did as members of the Nominations and Elections Committee, and special thanks to Roy for agreeing to serve as the chair of the NEC.

The May 10 Quest Council meeting will have both the current and new Council members participating; the new Council members will be formally installed at the June meeting.

Congratulations to all newly-elected Council officers and at-large members.



## A Day in the Bronx

*by Karen Levin*

**I**t was another exciting excursion for Quest's Fearless Five (Madeleine Brecher, Arlynn Greenbaum, Karen Levin, Michele Mackey and Gale Spitalnik), off to the NY Botanical Garden in the Bronx to see the Yayoi Kusama exhibit.

Susan Diehl did such a great Quest presentation on Yayoi Kusama, we decided we had to see this 92-year-old Japanese artist's works in person. Her work is the product of infinite curiosity with a creative streak. She is known for her use of polka dots, as well as the color red, in her canvas work and sculptures. The exhibit was fascinating and, as you can see from some of the photos, quite unusual. We recommend going to see it for yourself!

After the exhibit, we went to Arthur Avenue for lunch because exotic food is always included in any of our trips!



## A Thank You

**A**s incoming president of Quest, I wanted to express Quest's gratitude to our outgoing president, Bob Gottfried, for his stellar leadership during his four-year term.

I was able to tell Bob "Thank you," but how to show him the appreciation felt by the Quest Council and our Quest membership? Wayne Cotter suggested sending him a Plaque. Yes, of course. A flame-shaped crystal desk plaque on a solid black base seemed to express the energy Bob devoted to his job during his entire tenure. The inscription reads, "To Bob Gottfried, with deepest appreciation Quest thanks you for your years of exemplary service as president, 2017-2021." Bob received his gift on the Friday before the last council meeting at which he was to preside.

When you see Bob on Zoom or one bright day face-to-face, you can thank him personally. Although it is true that a picture is worth a thousand words, sometimes a heartfelt comment can go a long way in expressing thanks.



**An invisible man married  
an invisible woman.**

**Their kids were nothing  
to look at either.**



## Culture Quest: Magical Copenhagen

### A Virtual Walking Tour of Magical Copenhagen — Health, Wealth, Church, Politics

by Madeleine Brecher

On Friday, May 7, one hundred Questers joined Danish tour guide Charlotte Thalmayon for a 90-minute walking tour of Copenhagen's City Center. The sun was shining as we were led through the lovely cobblestone streets of the old town to learn about this wonderful city which seemed to be coming back to life after a year and a half of Covid. After living through our own year and a half of quarantine here on the other side of the Atlantic, it did indeed seem to be just what we craved... to be back on the road again.

The comments that were received from so many attendees were exhilarating, and a hearty thank you was sent to Charlotte and Ronan, her photographer/husband. We awarded them the Copenhagen Tour Academy Award!



*The old city center of Copenhagen*

## Culture Quest: Audubon Bird Murals

### Virtual Tour of the Audubon Bird Murals

by Renee Woloshin

On Friday, April 9, fifty Quest members went on a virtual tour of the beautiful bird murals in Washington Heights and Hamilton Heights. These works of art appear on the sides of buildings, on doors, on windows, and even on security gates. They comprise the public art initiative called the Audubon Bird Mural Project, sponsored by the National Audubon Society and the Gitler art gallery. Artists were commissioned to fulfill the project's goal to paint all of the 314 bird species identified by John James Audubon, currently threatened by climate change.

In our tour, we learned that Audubon spent the last ten years of his life in Hamilton Heights and is buried there. How fitting that he is surrounded by these larger than life depictions of birds he had painted. In this slide presentation which was accompanied by lively and informative commentary by our guide, Leigh Hallingby, we saw about 40 of the stunning murals.



*Black-throated Green Warbler, Palm Warbler, Painted Redstart, Cape May Warbler, and Golden-cheeked Warbler by George Boorujy.*

## Culture Quest: MoMA

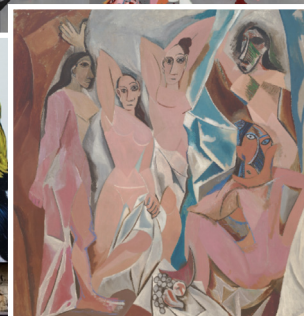
### The Recent Expansion of MoMA

by Bob Reiss

A virtual tour of the re-installation of MoMA's galleries stimulated spirited discussion by Quest attendees on April 23. The tour, led by art historian Deborah Goldberg, PhD, rewarded us with insight into the museum's innovative rehanging with a focus on the fifth floor.

One of the most significant changes is showing more work by female artists, African-Americans, and artists from outside Europe and the United States. Working more collaboratively, the curatorial staff has interconnected all of the museum's departments in their former Painting and Sculpture galleries, with a dialogue between the mediums and different perspectives.

An example was the gallery showing both Faith Ringgold's *American People Series #20: Die* and Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)*.



*Top: Faith Ringgold, American People Series #20: Die*

*Bottom: Picasso's Les Femmes d'Alger.*

## Quest Provides Scholarships for CWE Students

by Michael Wellner

On May 26th seven deserving CWE students were honored with scholarships provided by Quest, and three of its members. To see Quest making a difference in the lives of young people, whose futures lie ahead of them, should make all of us extremely proud. We have all known for more than twenty-five years that Quest has made a significant impact in the lives of its members, both in classes at 25 Broadway, and outside as well. Now, to be able to share our good fortune and enrich the lives of deserving CCNY / CWE “kids” as well, just makes Quest that much more meaningful.

This year, two student scholarships have been funded from the Quest general funds; two more come from the Peter Cott / Ken Leedom bequest received from their estate; and three individual members of Quest have each provided funds to endow a single scholarship. They are Bob Hartmann, Sandra Abramson, and Michael Wellner. At the recent Scholarship Awards Ceremony, usually held in the 7th floor Auditorium at 25 Broadway, but this year held via Zoom, each student was able to “meet” his/her sponsor, and directly express their appreciation.

You should be aware that many of the CWE students are older than most college “kids,” and many of them are raising children of their own while attending CWE in the evening. If you get the opportunity to meet them while in the halls or classrooms, you will see firsthand how appreciative they are for the opportunity to further their education. Perhaps one of the students summed it up best when she wrote on her graduation cap: *“I didn’t come this far to just come this far!”*

We should all be proud of the help that Quest and its members provide to these very deserving students.

## Bragging Rights

by Ruth Kovner

Two family members are making me real proud. They work very hard using their skills to help others. They both work with young deaf children and run a summer camp devoted to the very young deaf.

Last winter many Questers were having difficulty making appointments for our first vaccine injection. My sister, their grandmother, was also unsuccessful booking a shot. Brit and her sister Brandi volunteered to help. They were able to make the arrangements, although they are in New Jersey and my sister was in Florida.

My sister told a neighbor and the neighbor contacted Brit, who got to work. They were able to help her as well. Word spread. Soon they had 43,000 names for whom they were seeking appointments. At this point they have over 100,000 people on their lists, and they have recruited others to help them.

They have been interviewed by a local newspaper as well as USA Today. A recent phone call came from Governor Phil Murphy of New Jersey. He wanted to hear about what they were doing and what their lives were like. Brit has two children, a four year old and one who was 8 months old. She also has a fulltime job and is running a camp for very young deaf children.

He wanted to know about Brandi as well. She is about to be married. He asked where the wedding will be held. When told it is to be in Long Branch, NJ he exclaimed that he knew it well. Where was the wedding actually to take place, he asked. When told, he mentioned he was very familiar with that hotel. So it is possible he may drop by. Wouldn’t that be a hoot?

## Creative Corner

### BUTTERFLY IN THE CITY

by Betty Farber

A teenager crosses East 61st Street  
With a white butterfly  
Circling around his head.

He opens his hand  
Palm up, not to catch it  
But to give the creature  
A large landing field.

A white-haired lady  
Crossing alongside him  
Notices the butterfly  
And smiles at a memory,  
“Yesterday, one landed on my shoulder  
and stayed there for an hour.”

They both smile in shared wonder  
At the city’s surprises.

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**Michael Hamburg** is working on the last part of his alternative history novel, *Shanghai Tales*, which he began writing as the pandemic lockdown began.

What if a brilliant scholar in Imperial Shanghai 1000 years ago, invented a flying machine, but didn’t receive the reward he was expecting?

What if the Chinese discovered the Americas by accident 500 years before Columbus? Follow the tale of a survivor of an ill-fated junk as it loses its way in the Pacific and makes landfall among the peoples in several Western Hemisphere locales.

What if, on the eve of Mao’s 1949 invasion of Shanghai, ancient artifacts are discovered? Stay tuned...

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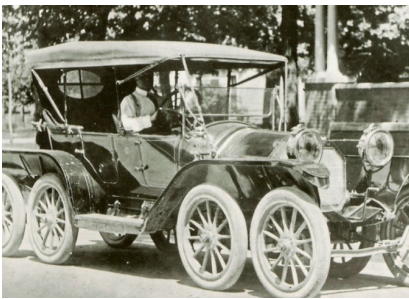
**Steve Koenig’s** poem “Salad Days” has just been published in *Sensations Magazine* Supplement 11—2021: “Decade of Dichotomy” (print copies only).

His poem “Tree Of Life” will be published shortly in *Brownstone Poets: 2021 Annual* (print only).



## Who's Doing What

**Toni Dickenson** writes: I've been thinking about buying a new car and when doing my research I discovered these classy models were actually developed by a (very) distant relative of mine. Unfortunately I know nothing about this ancestor—I found these photos while doing some genealogical research. I think the auto manufacturer was something like a second cousin, once removed, of my great grandfather. The photos were so amusing though—and I am in the market for a new car So we'll see !



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Two Questers **Andrea Irvine** and **Lynnel Garabedian** check out the art at Sotheby's. Porsche only \$450,000 — bargain compared to art on the walls!



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**Eileen Kelly** and her step-daughter recently spent a week at Mohonk Mountain House in New Paltz, New York where they hiked all around the lake and ate delicious food. The carriage mules took them up the hill and around the surrounding countryside. Shrubs and trees were in beautiful bloom and tulips in full color.

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Mixing Meet-Up with **Lillian Scheinblum**. On a Tuesday in May, I made a plan with

**Marilyn Rosen** to see a movie at the 2:00pm show. I waited for her at the AMC theater on Second Avenue but she didn't arrive. I waited and waited for quite a while.

Fortunately, for mobile phones we were able to get in touch. While I waited at the AMC, she was waiting for me at the Angelica Theater on Houston Street. So she grabbed a taxi and came uptown.

However, after the coming attractions still no Marilyn. So I left her ticket at the box office and went in to see the movie, *Nomadland* and loved it. Still no Marilyn.

As I left the theatre after the credits, there was Marilyn walking towards me. She had just made the movie after a speedy taxi ride.

We laughed about the mix-up and had a leisurely dinner at my house and at 9:00pm a taxi arrived to take her back to Brooklyn.

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**Arlene Curinga** I am planning a trip to see my daughter who lives in Port St. Lucie and I will be staying at a Club Med. Looking forward to a massage and relaxing fun activities. I also just bought tickets to the Van Gogh show coming to New York City which I am excited about. Finally a little normalcy getting out. Yeah.

• • •

**Karen Levin, Michele Mackey, Gale Spitalnik, Arlynn Greenbaum and Madeline Brecher** (L to R) took a fascinating walking tour of Harlem with tour guide Derrick Edwards (center) followed by a delicious lunch at the famous Red Rooster restaurant on May 14.

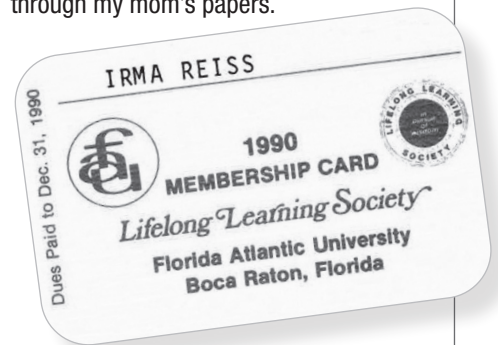


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**Marva & Michael Wellner** although not quite ready to fly, have three week-long driving trips planned for the fall. First comes the Southampton (LI, not Bermuda!) Inn, where they'll stay while visiting friends; next is a week in July in Maine (Bar Harbor and Rockland); and finally a week at the world-famous Greenbrier Resort, in West Virginia. That should be an adventure — with a planned stop in Gettysburg along the way.

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**Bob Reiss** I came across this going through my mom's papers.



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*A Quest Publication*

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## Questers Visit UPenn Museum by Donna Ramer



**M**asked with tickets in hand, six Questors boarded Amtrak on Wednesday, May 19th for the eighty-minute trip to Philadelphia to visit Penn Museum, which is part of the University of Pennsylvania.

The six wandered through the African, Egyptian, Israeli, Babylonian, Etruscan and Mediterranean galleries, viewing hundreds of the museums one million objects, many obtained directly through its own field excavations or anthropological research.

*(l to r): LinZ Redding, Nancy Richardson, Sheryl Harawith, Judy Hampson, Anita Hunter and Donna Ramer stop to admire "Brick House," Simone Leigh's monumental sculpture installed at the gateway to UPenn's College Green.*

*The piece depicts Black beauty with artistic references to the African diaspora. It is the first large-scale piece in Leigh's Anatomy of Architecture series that merges human form with diverse architectural elements. Another edition is on display at NYC High Line through Spring 2021. Bottom: Picasso, Les Demoiselles.*

### We Remember Rita Post

**R**ita Post died last month at age 94.

Rita graduated from Hunter College High School and University of Wisconsin, and earned a Masters degree in teaching. Years later She then obtained her MSW from Adelphi University and began her career at 50 as a family therapist at Family Service League, where she worked for 33 years.

After retiring at age 83, Rita became a fixture in the community, meeting friends for dinner and the theatre, attending classes at Quest, studying tai chi and Shakespeare at the Greenwich House Senior Center, and taking daily walks in Washington Sq. Park. She enjoyed time spent with her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.



### Wine Tasting With the Travel Committee by Donna Ramer

**W**ith Covid-19 cases slightly on the wane in NY, twenty-two Questors have signed up to be the first post-pandemic travelers. The one-day mini trip on June 11th will be to Warwick, New York to taste the nectar of the grapes grown at two wineries, Applewood Winery and the Warwick Valley Winery, as well as indulge in a lunch. The troupe will travel in a brand-new bus with a guide and driver. Questors must be masked and vaccinated. Photos and highlights will be featured in our back-to-25 Broadway issue in August.

**IDENTITY CRISIS:** A 65 year old woman had a heart attack and while she was in the hospital on the operating table she had a near death experience.

Seeing God she asked: "Is my time up?"

God said, "no, you have another 33 years, 2 months and 8 days more to live." Upon recovery, the woman decided to stay in the hospital and have a face-lift, liposuction, breast implants and a tummy tuck. She also changed her hair color. Since she had so much more time she figured she'd make the most of it. Upon leaving the hospital crossing the street she was hit and killed by an ambulance.

Arriving in front of God she demanded, "I thought you said I had another 33 years. Why didn't you pull me from the path of that ambulance?"

(You'll love this) God replied: "I didn't recognize you"