

QNEWS Q DIGITAL

A Quest Publication

Issue 58

January 2025

A Note From the President

As 2024 all too quickly morphed into 2025, we can look back on another successful year and look forward to one of celebrations as we complete our 30th year. And in a sea of lifelong learning programs, Quest has become a rare and lustrous pearl, crafted by time and polished by the currents.

On another note, it's that time of year: Resolutions. Last January, I wrote about how I use the beginning of each year to reflect on what NYT columnist David Brooks calls eulogy virtues (Brooks Eulogy Virtues

April 11, 2015). Brooks differentiates between résumé virtues (the skills we bring to the market-place) and eulogy virtues, the character strengths we would truly like to be remembered for: kindness, empathy, compassion, bravery, honesty, faithfulness, generosity of spirit with depth of character and capable of deep love.

Every year has its ups and downs, great experiences and painful times, making new friends and losing others. This year we lost Loretta, John and Lois. And what is it that we remember? Not what they did as much

as who they were and their impact on our lives: their eulogy virtues.

So as some of us are using the winter break for hibernation, drafting a presentation, taking a vacation or a combination, let's take a few moments to reflect on what others just might say about us. And, as we welcome 2025, we are living our future and, without being maudlin, know we have no more time to squander.

After all:

Happy New Year!

Donna Ramer

Guest Speaker Margalit Fox

by Arlynn Greenbaum



Margalit Fox, our final distinguished guest speaker of 2024, captivated over 100 Questers in person and on Zoom on December 11 with the amazing story of *The Talented Mrs. Mandelbaum: The Rise and Fall of an American Organized-Crime Boss*. The talk was recorded and will be in our archives for those who may have missed it.

Spring Book Club Schedule

by Jan Goldstein

The Book Club is looking forward to continuing in the Spring. The dates and selections are noted below. Winter break is a great time to get the jump on the reading list! Hope to see you in the Spring.

February 5: *Orbital* by Samantha Harvey; presented by **Linda Downs**

March 5: *Remarkably Bright Creatures* by Sharon Van Pelt; presented by **Joan Vreeland**

April 2: *The Uncommon Reader* by Alan Bennett; presented by **Debbi Honorof**

May 7: *Long Island* by Colm Toibin; presented by **Anita Hunter**

Quest Theater Outing

by Michael Wellner

With thanks to Quest theater aficionada **Sandy Gordon**, on Sunday, December 8th, some forty Quest members gathered at the 59 East 59th Street theaters, for an absolutely wonderful production of Kate Hamill's show *The Light and The Dark*, the riveting true story of the female 17th Century Renaissance artist Artemisia Gentileschi. The show is a tour-de-force, starring Kate and an absolutely perfect cast, that provides a somewhat chilling look at the life of women at that time.

Judging from the recent turnouts (seventy people at *The Devil's Disciple* and forty here at *The Light and The Dark*, not to mention thirty or so who ventured to New Jersey last summer to see one of August Wilson's plays), I think it's safe to say that more theater outings are almost certainly in our future! Thanks again to Sandy Gordon!



The Light and The Dark, written and acted by Kate Hamill and company!



End of Semester Luncheon

by Michael Wellner

On Friday the 13th of December, over a hundred Quest members proved that there is absolutely nothing to the rumors about triskaidekaphobia, as they gathered (for the second time) at the wonderful Sicily Osteria restaurant, in the theater district on West 46th Street, to celebrate the end of the fall semester and the approaching end of 2024. A choice of red or white wine awaited everyone as they arrived, providing a welcome chance to "mix and mingle" before sitting down to a delicious three-course lunch.

Unlike many of our prior year-end gatherings, our good friends, CCNY's President Boudreau and CWE's Dean Mercado were unable to join us (CWE had their own party the same day), but we were fortunate to have both Robert Hernandez and Felix Pina with us (without whom all the tech issues at 25 Broadway would never be resolved!).

And we were also treated to brief remarks from our president **Donna Ramer**, and some poetry readings from **Wayne Cotter**, **Helen Saffran**, **Ruth Ward**, and **Judy Winn**. Even the weather cooperated (it was cold, but sunny — no rain!), and everyone had a wonderful time.

Many thanks go our Social Committee (**Marian Friedmann**, **Leslie Goldman**, **Bob Gottfried**, **Marilyn Ostrow**, **Marilyn Weiss**, and **Michael Wellner**), who ask everyone to watch their emails for news about an extra-special event next May to celebrate Quest's 30th Anniversary!



IN MEMORIAM:
John Spiegel



We are sad to report that **John Spiegel**, a Quest member for nearly ten years, passed away in mid-December after losing

an almost two-year battle with leukemia. Many of us will remember John as a lively and talented member of the acting class, who participated in many of our stage plays. He was an alum of Stuyvesant High School, Harpur College, SUNY Albany, and earned his Ph.D. from St. John's University. John came to Quest after a nearly fifty-year career as a guidance counselor and administrator at Nassau Community College. He loved history (he had a fascinating family connection to World War II intelligence operations), and loved to present in history-related Quest classes. It's no exaggeration to say that he was more than well-liked by everyone he knew, and will be sorely missed. There will be a Memorial Service for John on Sunday, January 5th, at 1:30 PM, at Anshe Chesed Synagogue, 5th floor, 251 West 100th Street, (corner of West End Avenue). All Quest members are welcome.

New Member

Quest welcomes a new member this month. Look for their red lanyards, indicating a new member, at 25 Broadway, greet our new members, make them welcome, and include them in our wonderful Quest.



Elaine Lederer

Meeting of Minds



On December 9th, the Great Plays course presented Meeting of Minds by Steve Allen (not ours, the other one). The cast played the following historical figures: **June Jacobson**, Emily Dickenson; **Wayne Cotter**, Attila the Hun; **Vince Grosso**, Moderator Steve Allen; **Jennifer Jolly**, Galileo; and **Art Spar**, Charles Darwin.

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A Quest Publication

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Articles submitted to QNews may be edited by the Staff. The Editor-in-Chief is the final arbiter of the publication's contents.

CultureQuest
Revised Spring 2025

February 16: Museum of the Moving Image and Greek lunch, Astoria, Queens
In-person

February 28: Museum of Modern Art: Lillie Bliss Collection
In-person

March 14: Metropolitan Opera House: Backstage tour
In-person

March 28: Jewish Museum: Esther in the Age of Rembrandt
In-person

April 25: Metropolitan Opera: Salome Final rehearsal
In-person

May 2: Exploring Little Italy: A Walking Tour and Visit to the New Italian-American Museum
In-person

Creative Corner

PAPER AIRPLANES®

by Betty Farber

The floor under the tree is covered
with toys:
Robots, Legos, puzzles and games,
Coloring books, sticker books, story books,
Crayons, paints and brushes.

So why are the children
Ignoring them all?
Watching their Grandpa
Take a large sheet of paper
And turn it and fold it
And hold it in a way
That when he thrusts it in air
It flies across the room
To the star on top of the tree.

Or over the ceiling fan,
Getting stuck on the blades.
The children, the pilots
Have to turn on the switch
So the fan will dislodge
Its resident airplane.
It is so much fun
The grownups fly too
Restoring their memories
Of a long-ago life.

Grandchildren's memories
Are now newly born
On the day that they gladly
Neglected their toys
To explore outer space
With Grandpa's creative,
Mystical, remarkable, life-affirming
Paper airplanes!

CultureQuest At the Morgan: A Personal Librarian

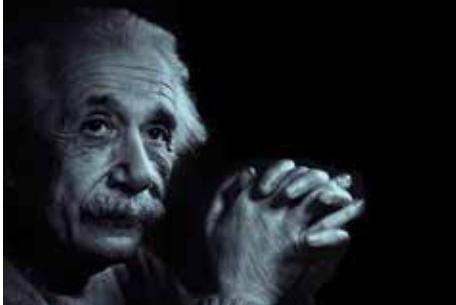
by Estelle Selzer

On a bitter cold Friday in early December a group of CultureQuesters gathered in the lobby of the Morgan Library in anticipation of the docent-led tour of the exhibit, *A Personal Librarian, Belle Da Costa Greene*. Our excellent guide, Nadja, wanted us to get a feel for what it was like for Belle to come to work each day at the Morgan. She started our tour in the main entrance to the library and explained the artwork decorating the walls. Then we went into Mr. Morgan's sitting room and library, and finally into Belle's office. Nadja was happy to point out the secret passageways that both Belle and Mr. Morgan used to climb the stairways to each of the levels where there were voluminous books in bookcases. The Morgan rotates the articles it places in the display cases every three months, so it's always a treat to come back to discover new things.

We finally went into the exhibit which is full of letters that were either written to or by Belle over the years when she was employed by Mr. Morgan. There is a wonderful tracing and documentation of Belle's upbringing and impressive education, as well as what it was like to "pass" by herself and others of her generation. Both rooms of the exhibit are filled with treasures she purchased on behalf of Mr. Morgan and incredible history.



A **CLEVER** PERSON
SOLVES A PROBLEM.
A **WISE** PERSON
AVOIDS IT.



30th Anniversary Kickoff

by Gale Spitalnik

In January 2025 Quest celebrates the 30th anniversary of its formation. On Tuesday, February 4th, all Questers are invited to the lunch room for a welcome back lunch and a kickoff celebration of our 30th anniversary for dessert. Looking forward to a wonderful 2025 of good health, good cheer, good learning, and good friends.

"The trouble with quotes
on the internet is that it's
difficult to determine
whether or not they are
genuine."
— Abraham Lincoln



Who's Doing What



On December 18th spirited elves **Helen Saffran** and **Ruth Ward** helped Santa's dynamic helper Joyce Hinote decorate her Christmas tree. Hot mulled wine and a cheese and cracker, fruit and cookie platter helped to make light work of this time-honored task.

• • •



Ellen Rittberg visited her youngest grand child in early December, enabling her son and daughter-in-law to take a "babymoon" (vacation) prior to the birth of their second child. She

taught her grandson that it's never too early to pitch in.

• • •

Sybil Cohen reports The Parrish Museum techies managed to insert her likeness into a masterpiece:



• • •



George and **Madeleine Brecher** resurrected a past holiday tradition at Sammy's Romanian Restaurant. After many decades, they took their expanded

gang of 12 for a celebration none will soon forget.. eating, dancing, singing, laughing, hilarious entertainer, and restaurant-wide hora. "Best night ever" was the word from their six grandkids.

Holiday CultureQuest Special Event Final Dress Rehearsal of Aida

by Estelle Selzer

During Quest's Winter Break 50 CultureQuesters gathered on a Friday morning in December for the Final Dress Rehearsal of *Aida* at the Metropolitan Opera House.

Aida is the grandest of grand operas and features an epic backdrop for what is in essence an intimate love story. This production didn't disappoint in many ways. The staging of the opera was incredible with opulent set designs. Its three protagonists all

had fabulous voices, especially the renowned soprano Angel Blue in the title role. Costumes were magnificent.

Questers gathered during intermission for a photo op. Here are several happy Questers in the lobby of the Opera House. Many who have attended previous dress rehearsals with Quest commented on how these were our best seats yet. We were in the orchestra.

Thank you to the Metropolitan Opera for making this special opportunity available to us.



New Music Terms

ALLEREGRETTO: When you're 16 measures into the piece and suddenly realize you set too fast a tempo.

ANGUS DEI: To play with a divinely beefy tone.

A PATELLA: Accompanied by knee-slapping.

APOLOGGIATURA: A composition that you regret playing.

APPROXIMATURA: A series of notes not intended by the composer, yet played with an "I meant to do that" attitude.

DILL PICCOLINI: An exceedingly small wind instrument that plays only sour notes.

FERMANTRA: A note held over and over and over and over...

FIDDLER CRABS: Grumpy string players.

FLUTE FLIES: Those tiny insects that bother musicians on outdoor gigs.

FRUGALHORN: A sensible and inexpensive brass instrument.

GAUL BLATTER: A French horn player.

PLACEBO DOMINGO: A faux tenor.

TEMPO TANTRUM: What an elementary school orchestra is having when it's not following the conductor.

Luncheon Poetry

Winter Break by Ruth Ward

It is said that during winter break, what people often miss most is the consistent routine and social interaction of school or work. This includes seeing friends and associates daily, having structured activities, and the sense of purpose that comes with a regular schedule.

As we all know, Quest will be on hiatus for the next six weeks: half of December and all of January. So, what am I to do?

What to do with the next six weeks?
Storm the department stores and boutiques?

Pitch my tent at a concert hall?
Binge watch movies, do a pub crawl?

I might start thinking, Who needs Quest?
I'm independent; I need no nest.

I could easily stay home this winter
Taking deep dives into Stoppard and Pinter.

Or, if zealous, each day before dark
I could cyclone my way through Central Park.

A whirlwind winter could be glorious,
But weeks without Quest friends?...very laborious.

I don't want rest; I want to gain traction...
But not at the expense of social interaction.

So anticipating what I'll miss
I'll take this moment to reminisce.

What could be more of a true godsend
Than a random sighting of an old Quest friend?

And what has the taste of a good coffee clatch?
The 7th floor morning brew has no match.

Where else can you join a profound conversation
And share nuanced views with a sense of elation?

Where else can you eat lunch with friends every day,
Savoring, relishing each word they say?

Do you love catching up with your pals between classes?
Applauding their sports teams, air pods, or new glasses?

What can beat bus rides home with these folks when it rains?
Dazzled by their IQ and the blaze of their brains?

And long distance travel — are you seeking a buddy
Who'll share in your love of adventure and study?

It's true your companions don't share your genes
But they can share exercise, theories, cuisines,

So look with good cheer toward the next six weeks
Assured current valleys will have future peaks

And if you don't do all the things you had planned
You'll know a warm welcome awaits in Questland,

For there is one place you are never a guest
And that's at your well-grounded home here at Quest.

see next page

Special January Dates

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1: Headache Day | 20: Cheese Lovers' Day |
| 3: Festival of Sleep | 21: Hugging Day |
| 8: Bubble Bath Day | 25: Opposite Day |
| 9: Word Nerd Day | 27: Chocolate Cake Day |
| 12: Hot Tea Day | 29: Puzzle Day |
| 15: Bagel Day | 30: Croissant Day |
| 16: Hot and Spicy Food Day | 31: Hot Chocolate Day |

City Ramblings by Frank Montaturo



There is a magic to a late winter afternoon in midtown if the light and clouds are right. It is not an area I am often found in but when on one winter's day I did, this is what awaited me... and it would be hard not to be bewitched.

Luncheon Poetry *continued*

Santa is Coming *by Helen Saffran*

He walked into the subway car
Saying
"I'm Kanye West"
And chuckled
He had a resonant
Baritone voice
That carried down
The car

Santa Claus is coming
He shouted
Then his rollicking laughter
Santa Claus is coming
He boomed
Santa is coming
We all need help
All
I need help too

Over and over
He repeated these lines
Sometimes with great sincerity
Sometimes followed by laughter

He didn't seem crazy to me
He had a message to deliver
Santa is coming
We all need help
All
I need help too

Here We Are Again *by Judy Winn*

Here we are again
Together for another holiday luncheon
Twelve months gone since last December
Certainly a year for us to remember.

We saw red lanyards in profusion
Newbies walking the halls in confusion
Lost in the maze of the seventh floor
Trying to find a restroom door.

Some of us have shrunk in height
Others have spread out in girth
More gray hairs show here and there
Then there are heads that have less hair.

One important thing we have in common
We stretch our brains through learning
Who would have thought that this
group here
Could create new programs twice
each year.

Let's take a look at the courses
You may have taken in the Fall
An amazing variety was offered
You would have wanted to take them all.

Lynnel and Sandy dissected a book
You could have learned science from
Jim Brook
With Wayne and Steve K. you could rock
for sure
Then read the Old Testament –
it does endure.

There were poems to read and poems
to write
You could enter the zone of the Twilight
Bob Reiss took us to see art in the
subways

You may have walked with a mate on
alternate Thursdays.

We had a World of Religions, a World
of Theatre
A Brave New World of AI
You could have tried some acting if
you chose
To shake off feelings of being shy.

There were films that were short
And films that were long
If you gave your regards to Broadway
You may have heard Peter singing a song.

A course on neighborhoods of the city
The middle years of Beethoven's history
Tech team members to come to the
rescue
If the podium to a presenter was a
mystery.

Finding out Thomas Jefferson was flawed
Or American Values upheaved
You might have gone to Science
Clubhouse
Seen what Steve Allen had up his sleeve.

Those Montagues and Capulets
Couldn't give it up
Verona was divided
Until Juliet drank potion from a cup.

There was more, it's unbelievable
What we can do is inconceivable.

We will look forward to February third
When we will be back at Quest
And to make the membership committee
happy
Please remember to bring a guest.

Fun Fact:

**Records Indicate That
Julius Caesar
Never Once Said
"Thank You" In His Life.
This Is Most Likely
Due To The Fact That He
Couldn't Speak English.**

**May 2025
Be a Year of Peace
and Good Health,
Sanity and Compassion,
Love and Hope...
and Chocolate.**

READING GLASSES



KAREN.