

QNEWS Q DIGITAL

A Quest Publication

Issue 68

November 2025

A Note From the President

October is Lifelong Learning Month so it's no surprise that CCNY president, Dr. Vince Boudreau, a very active supporter of Quest, dedicated his radio show this month to the topic.

On Wednesday, October 29, Dr. Michael Flanigan and I were the two members of City's lifelong learning community to be interviewed by Dr. Boudreau. Dr. Flanigan currently serves as Director of Corporate Engagement and Development at the Borough of Manhattan Community College.

As part of my introduction, Dr. Boudreau said that "At CCNY, we are proud to promote and inspire lifelong learning through various programs and collaboration with community partners. One avenue that directly talks to lifelong learning is our Quest Lifelong Learning program." He then went on to capture the essence of both lifelong learning in general and Quest more specifically, explaining that we have "about 270 active members who lead classes, self-administer more than 35 peer-taught courses each

semester, and actively participate in committee and social activities."

Questions for my 30-minute segment ranged from the personal to the very practical to promotional for Quest, such as:

- What drew me to Quest and what does this program represent for me personally?
- How did Quest evolve from a small group of retirees into this thriving learning community of 270 active members?
- What makes Quest different from other adult or continuing education programs?
- What does lifelong learning truly mean in practice?
- How does a peer-to-peer structure



change the classroom dynamic compared to traditional learning?

- What are some of the most popular or unexpected courses offered at Quest?
- What are some of the biggest challenges you face leading an all-volunteer program and how do you overcome them?
- What's next for Quest? Are there new initiatives, partnerships or ideas on the horizon that excite you, and how can listeners learn more or get involved with Quest?

Dr. Boudreau's show, *From City to the World*, airs live from 3:00–4:00 pm the last Thursday of the month on WHCR 90.3 FM and is rebroadcast the following Monday at the same time, before being posted on the station's website as a podcast. The show reaches beyond the walls of the college well into the Harlem community and beyond. If you have any interest in hearing the full interview, click on [Quest on CCNY Radio](#) [From City to the World](#)

Donna Ramer

Guest Speaker Frank DiLella

Frank DiLella was our Distinguished Guest Lecturer on October 22. The host of "On Stage" on Spectrum News NY1, Frank gave us an entertaining in-depth look at the current and upcoming Broadway and Off-Broadway shows.



Spring 2026 Distinguished Guest Lecturers Announced

Arlynn Greenbaum, Estelle Selzer, Karen Levin, and Bob Reiss are pleased to announce the following roster of guest speakers for Spring semester. Please feel free to give us your suggestions for next Fall.

Feb 11: Dr. Nir Barzilai on *How to Die Young at a Very Old Age*. Jan and Stuart Eisler Memorial Speaker.

Feb 25: John Avlon, author, journalist, and political commentator.

Mar 11: Ellen Jovin, author of *Rebel with a Clause*.

Mar 25: Jonathan Mahler, author of *The Gods of New York*.

Apr 8: Steven Ujifusa, author of *The Last Ships From Hamburg*.

Distinguished Guest Lecturer Series

by Estelle Selzer

On Wednesday, October 8th, Neal Shapiro, President and CEO of *Thirteen* spoke to a full auditorium and many Zoomers. His wonderful PowerPoint presentation with clips from many of the past programs showed the history of the WNET Group. He also gave us a sneak preview of upcoming programming. Mr. Shapiro answered questions from the audience and was upfront about the challenges facing the organization.

Here Are Some Comments From Our Members

Thank you to the committee and especially to Estelle, who had the insight to invite Neal Shapiro! What a coup! He was forthright and reassuring.

And Questers were appreciative of the opportunity to enjoy an intimate interchange. Questions were great and further elucidated the discussion, with additional guidance on getting the Channel 13 programming.

Bob Reiss's final suggestion regarding support was a perfect end to a fascinating afternoon!

— Sandy Gordon

A big thank you to the Distinguished Guest Lecture Series committee for bringing Neal Shapiro to Quest. I realized how much Thirteen has been a fixture in our lives over the decades. Just as impressive as Neal's presentation were the questions and comments from the Quest audience.

Many thanks to the committee for their excellent work time and time again!

— Rica Fujihira

I have heard Neal speak several times and knew he wouldn't disappoint. Hopefully his talk encouraged people to go home and make a contribution to this important organization.

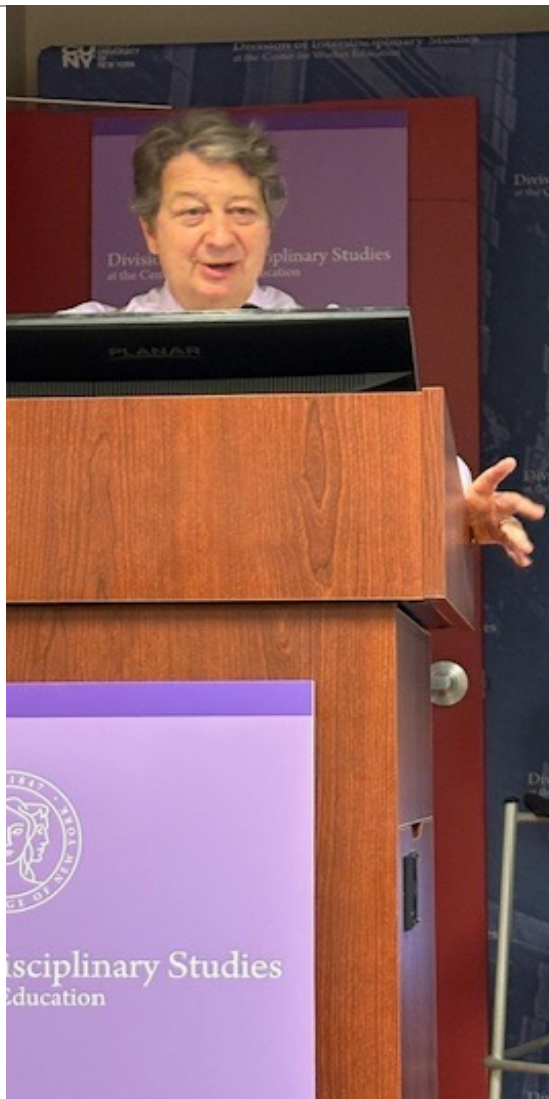
For those who didn't see the talk it was recorded and is now on our website.

— Estelle Selzer

It was wonderful to hear/see Neal. I kept thinking it was Saturday night and a movie would play!

One way to help financially is to leave a bequest in our wills! They'll get it eventually! To Quest as well!

— Sandra Abramson



I write about the important session with Neal Shapiro on the past and future of PBS under the severe cuts in its budget.

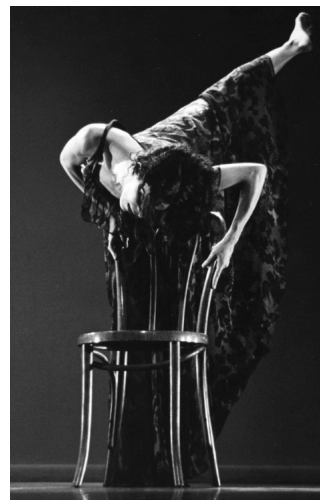
In context of the presentation and during the Q&A it became clear that both **Frieda Lipp** and I were directly or indirectly involved with this channel during the very beginnings in the mid 60s. Frieda actually worked there starting in 1966.

I had an important role in Anna Sokolow's *Rooms* in 1967, a modern dance masterpiece that was filmed by Jack Venza, who was the producer of Great Performances of Theater Music and Dance from its onset. *Rooms* was the very first filming of dance at a series that was called Dance in America.

Jack Venza filmed Sokolow's *Rooms* himself, in a most innovative way. He filmed it from many angles, and different degrees of close-ups, with incredible lighting that strengthened the dance as seen on the screen. This was a new way to film dance, rather than the then-conventional filming from front row center.

Here are photos of me on the set of this filming from 1967, on the left with my mentor and the choreographer of *Rooms*, Anna Sokolow, a major dance theater artist and creator.

— Ze'eva Cohen



CultureQuest: Cathedral of St John the Divine

by Lois Klein

On Friday, September 26, twenty-two Questers met inside the Cathedral. We sat in a quiet area as our Docent described the origins of this immense and gorgeous feat of architecture. Its construction began in 1893. However, today, it is still unfinished, mainly due to the lack of funds. Its style was initially Romanesque and years later changed to the elegant Gothic form. There is a dome in the main chapel made of Guastavino tiles that remain perfect to this day. We walked through seven chapels representing various nationalities. These chapels were conceived as a bid to welcome people of

all denominations to the Church. This invitation was especially addressed to immigrants who were entering the country in large numbers. There was much Art on the walls, which ranged in styles from medieval to contemporary. In the British chapel, there is a Keith Haring altarpiece displayed. Facing the West entrance, there is a magnificent Rose window that rivals only the Paris Notre Dame Rose window in size and detail. It was made with 10,000 pieces of glass. I believe everyone would agree that this Cathedral is amazing and warrants future visits, if only to sit in a pew and marvel at its grandeur and beauty.



Q News Staff

A Quest Publication

Editor-in-Chief
Barbara Gelber

Consulting Editors
Michael Wellner
Gale Spitalnik

Editor Emerita
Carolyn McGuire

Graphic Design
Robbii

25 Broadway
New York, NY 10004
212.925.6625 x229
questlifelong.org

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Spanish Harlem Walk

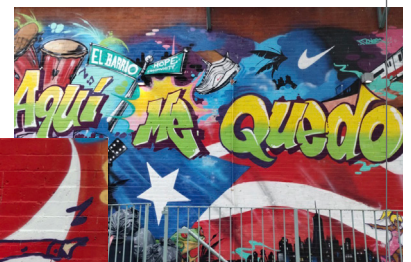
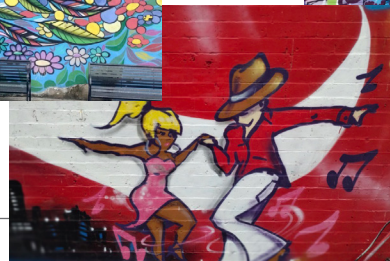
by Sheryl Harawitz

On a misty October morning, Quest members followed Leigh Hallingby through the vibrant streets of Spanish Harlem — and what a treat it was! Leigh led us with her signature blend of insight and enthusiasm, guiding us past political, poetic, and cultural murals that tell the story of El Barrio's past and present.

From images of community heroes to lyrical tributes painted on tenement walls, every corner offered a burst of color and meaning. The drizzle only heightened the mood — reflections shimmered on the pavement, turning the murals into living art.

We ended the morning with laughter and conversation over a festive meal at a Mexican restaurant, the perfect way to celebrate the spirit of the neighborhood and our shared experience.

Kudos and many thanks to Leigh for leading us so aptly through Harlem's art-filled streets!



New Members

Quest welcomes six new members 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.



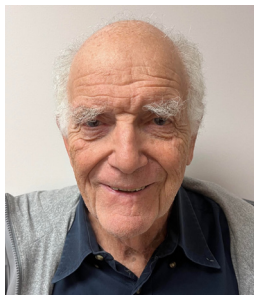
Susannah Blum



Ilana Gruebel



Joanna O'Connell



Philip Meyers



Joel Schnell



Greer St. John

New Members' Luncheon

by Leslie Goldman

The New Members Committee — **Tracey Lee**, co-chair, **Vince Grosso**, **Ken Sasnor**, **Gale Spitalnik** (special guest, Social Committee Chair), **Leslie Goldman**, co-chair, and **John Davis** — hosted a meeting on October 22, for 25 new members who enjoyed lunch and conversation with Quest President **Donna Ramer** and Quest Co-Chair Tech Committee **Wayne Cotter**.



Dr. Nir Barzilai to Speak at Quest in Spring 2026

by Karen Levin

Dr. Nir Barzilai will be our Jan and Stuart Eisler Memorial Speaker for the 2026 spring semester. He is the Director of the Institute for Aging Research at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and the President of The Academy for Health and Lifespan Aging Research (AHLs).

Dr. Barzilai is a preeminent leader in geroscience, demonstrating in his studies that aging has its own biology that drives age-related diseases. At Albert Einstein College of Medicine, he is a professor in the departments of Medicine and Genetics, the director of the Institute for Aging Research, and the director of several Centers on the Basic Biology of Aging, as well as the author of over 350 papers.

Please join us on February 11, 2026 when Dr. Barzilai will speak on *How to Die Young at a Very Old Age*.



**Wednesday, November 26th:
Remember To Turn Your Scale Back
10 Lbs...
For Thanksgiving.**



**When The Moon
Hits Your Eyes,
And Its 4:45,
It's November...**

Who's Doing What



Nina Sanders captured the view at Prospect Park one Saturday in October.

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Bob & Ellen Gottfried

spent two weeks in October visiting Dublin in the Republic of Ireland, and Derry and Belfast in Northern Ireland. They had a fabulous trip and learned a lot about Irish history.



• • •



Sandy Gordon spent an exciting October weekend in Austin, Texas, visiting her grandson. He worked during the days while she explored the museums and the LBJ Presidential Library, then

dinner together and Jazz in the evening. He loves Austin and she now understands why!

• • •

Debbi Honorof and her husband Alan spent a few days in Newport, RI at the end of September. They visited the Touro Synagogue and walked the Cliff Walk to see the extraordinary Gilded Age Mansions. At the International Tennis Hall of Fame, Alan fulfilled a lifelong dream by playing tennis on the historic grass courts. They also ate a lot of amazing seafood!



Kathy Cook and Margaret Woodward (a former Quester) went to see *Murder on the Links*, a play Sandy Gordon recommended. We thoroughly enjoyed the play, the town of Red Bank and the JBJ Soul Kitchen, a restaurant near the theater where we had dinner. JBJ Soul Kitchen is run by Jon Bon Jovi's wife, Dorothea. Guests who eat there either make a donation or work to pay for their meals. The goal of the restaurant is to address food insecurity by providing a community dining experience with a rotating menu of healthy American cuisine. The food and service were excellent.



• • •



attending a Thursday evening performance of "Weer" in early October, the one-woman comedy at the Cherry Lane Theater in Greenwich Village that's been extended into December. The show is wild, raunchy and memorable. **Roy Clary, Wayne Cotter, Helen Saffran, Phyllis Grossman, David Grossman, and Steve Allen.** Steve, Phyllis, and David had seen the show at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in 2024, but couldn't wait to see it again in New York.

• • •

Lisa Bu was interviewed by the *Harmony Talk* podcast to share her love for books and her immigrant experience. A nonprofit, *Harmony Talk* is produced by the Foundation for Harmony Presents and airs on WVIA, a PBS and NPR affiliate in Pennsylvania.



Yona Rogosin was interviewed by the with grandson Zach, a senior at UCLA and an accomplished jazz guitarist, were out on the town, first having dinner at Joe's Shanghai at 46 Bowery (highly



recommended) and then at a wonderful concert at Django's, a jazz club in the Roxy Hotel in Tribeca, featuring the acclaimed Dave Stryker Trio.

Creative Corner

ECHOES®

by Betty Farber

I'm drifting slowly from a nap
In his chair, book upon my lap,
I feel his presence as I wake.
I gaze at how our furniture was
placed—

He measured twice to fit into the space
Without an inch to spare—

I can't erase

One moment of our story from my mind,
Nor leave any memories behind.

The echoes that I hear are not the kind
That frighten.

They only make me know
That time without him simply goes
too slow.

He's with me going anywhere I go.
Whispering confidently in my ear
"This is the route to take, the way
is clear;

Down this street, and then a right
turn here."

We laughed at the crazy world and
at ourselves.

We told each other all there was to tell.
At the end he couldn't speak to say,
"Farewell."

Every moment that we spent together
Echoes, and will stay with me forever.

Noontime Medley Honors Pam and the Coffee Crew

by Sheryl Harawitz

Noontime Medley celebrated one of Quest's most essential groups — the Coffee Crew — led by our indefatigable **Pam Gemelli**.

Every morning, while most of us are still making our way to Quest on the subway, Pam and her Team are already at work. They arrive early, set up the coffee, buy the milk, bring cookies, cover for one another, and stay behind to clean up — all so the rest of us can start our day in the best possible way: together.

Our honorees were **Maureen Berman, Lisa Bu, Lucille Granfort, Sal Granfort, Vincent Grosso, Shoshana Kagan, Susan Keohane, Laura Lopez, Eleanor Maurillo, Maria Mendonca, Michael Navas, Ellen Rittberg, Jamie Rower, Helen Saffran, Marion Schultheis, Jamie Skyes, Ruth Ward, and Michael Wellner**.

Quest runs on volunteers — we teach, we coordinate, we serve on committees — and the Coffee Team is among the most important of all. Before a single class begins, they create the space where everything starts: the morning coffee time. It's when we gather, talk, and connect — and that's not just a pleasant extra. It's right there in our mission statement: *"meaningful social interaction among members."*

This group of dedicated Questers represents that mission perfectly. They bring people together before the first lecture, before the first announcement — they jump-start our day and our community.

Pam and her Team are truly the quiet heartbeat of Quest. Thank you for keeping us warm, caffeinated, and connected.

Espresso Martinis: Because Coffee Time Shouldn't End at Noon

by Sheryl Harawitz

At our coffee team celebration, I decided it was time to take our daily ritual to the next level—from percolator to party glass. Thus was born my recipe for Espresso Martinis, equal parts gratitude and good cheer.

The secret formula (don't tell the barista):
Brew one strong cup of coffee — I used Bustelo espresso, because instant coffee is an insult to caffeine.

In a jar, mix together:

- 1 cup vodka (it's medicinal)
- 1 cup fresh coffee
- 1 cup Kahlúa

Shake it like you mean it. Pour a little into your glass, and stash the rest in the freezer for emergencies—by which I mean any day that ends in "y."

When you get home, grab that frosty jar, pour, and raise a toast to the coffee team who keep us upright every morning—and to the version of coffee that keeps us smiling every night.



Pam's Cafe

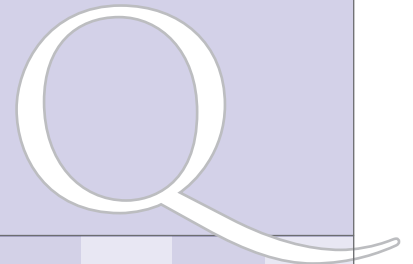
by Ruth Ward

What draws us to Quest on a brisk
Monday morn,
Its call more pronounced than a
drumbeat or horn?
Its fragrance so lovely it wafts
through the air,
With a promise of fellowship we can
all share?

Track the scent to the lunch room
and there you will find
A group of your pals with just one
thing in mind:
A wish to rev up at the start of
the day
With a boost from the coffee at
Pam's café.

We thank you, Pam, for all
your work
Our pre-class refreshment is quite a
fine perk
Of belonging to Quest and appearing
in person
Despite a long trip and all kinds
of exertion.

You never complain, you're as true
as the clock
And your team, just like you, is
steadfast as a rock.
So accept our huzzahs, our
"Good work!" "Bottoms up!"
We drink in your kindness with
every cup.



VOTE! It's Your Right, It's Your Privilege, It's Your Obligation

Special September Dates

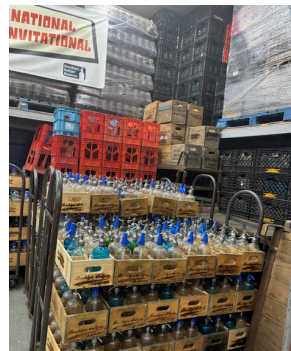
- 1** World Vegan Day /
National Adoption Month
- 4** Election Day
- 5** World Tsunami Awareness Day
- 11** Veterans' Day
- 13** World Kindness Day
- 14** World Diabetes Day
- 16** International Day for Tolerance
- 20** Universal Children's Day
- 27** Thanksgiving Day
- 27** Native American Heritage Day
- 27** National Adoption Month

CultureQuest Tours the Brooklyn Boys Seltzer Museum *by Sharon Katz*

Twenty-two Questers toured the Brooklyn Boys Seltzer Museum in October. What an absolutely fun day we had filled, with humour, tastings of very bubbly seltzer and discovering the history of seltzer. We experimented with how far a can of highly carbonated spray(spritz) could go. Our guide, most enthusiastic and entertaining, took us through the 1700-year history of seltzer, the mechanics and, most importantly, the bottling of seltzer.

We tasted, we spritzed, and then we were given the original recipe and treated to New York egg creams made with tradition Fox's u-bet. A special surprise was those long salty pretzels we devoured with the egg creams as kids at our local candy store. All still as delicious as we remembered.

The day ended for nine of us with an optional lunch at the empty Daruchini Restaurant, providing yet another amazing cultural experience. Friday prayer services ended at the local mosque, and droves of men rushed in heading straight for the very spicy prepared food steaming at the counter. We Questers opted for the made-to-order menu options, mostly Chinese noodles. Yummy!



Halloween at Quest *by Andrea Irvine*

A fun event — members loved it — all complaining about how much candy/cakes they ate.

