

A Note From the President

Our annual day of thanks is now behind us and we find ourselves moving gently but unmistakably into the season of bright lights and soft candles, nostalgia and wistfulness. This time of year carries its own quiet magic—a mixture of memory, tradition, and the subtle awareness of time passing. Yet the city around us has changed, and with it some of the touchstones that once helped shape our holiday wonder.

The windows along Fifth Avenue, once a glittering corridor of imagination, don't have quite the same allure as in years past. Where Lord & Taylor and B. Altman's once stood—grand department stores that felt like destinations in themselves — we now see office buildings with darkened windows, their facades silent where festive

tableaux once sparkled. For many of us, these stores were not merely places to shop; they were part of the ritual of the season, anchors of shared experience. Their absence leaves a faint ache, a reminder of how even beloved traditions shift beneath our feet.

And still, the child in me, the one who pressed her nose to cold glass and waited for enchantment to begin, longs for the double-decker carousel that used to turn so elegantly in the window of the Lever Building on Park Avenue. Moving it to Greeley Square Park may have given it new life, but it also broke the spell. Some magic, it seems, belongs only to a certain place and time—and to a younger version of ourselves who believed without effort.

But fear not; this season invites us not only to remember but also to rejoice. 'Tis the season to be joyful and triumphant for all we have achieved this year, and to be deeply grateful for what remains bright in our lives. It is also a season that stirs excitement for what is still ahead, for possibilities that have not yet taken shape but glow on the horizon with quiet promise.

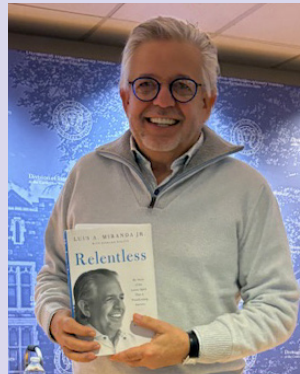
So as the days continue their slow slide into early darkness and the winter solstice approaches, we can take comfort in what it brings: the turning point, the promise that from that moment forward, the light will grow again — little by little — guiding us toward longer days, renewed hope, and the gentle unfolding of a new year.

Donna Ramer

Guest Speaker Luis A. Miranda, Jr.

by Bob Reiss

On November 5th, Quest welcomed guest speaker Luis Miranda, father of Broadway star, Lin-Manuel Miranda, and author of a recent autobiography, *Relentless*. Interviewed by Bob Reiss, Luis recounted his “only in America” life trajectory from a six-street town in Puerto Rico to the upper echelons of New York City politics. Beginning as an advocate for new schools in his Washington Heights neighborhood, he rose to become a key advisor to Mayors Koch, Dinkins and Giuliani. Interleaved between his “inside baseball” stories of NYC political personalities, Luis related heartwarming and humorous vignettes about his remarkable family including, of course, Lin-Manuel. In one hour, Luis established himself as a veritable Quest star.



**May 2026
Be a Year of Peace,
Good Health, Compassion,
Respect, Enough, Joy,
and Love.**

Kykuit by Michael Wellner

On Friday October 31st (yes Halloween), some twenty-five Questers traveled by car and railroad to Kykuit, for a two-hour tour of the Rockefeller family estate on the banks of the Hudson River, in Sleepy Hollow, New York, just about 30 miles north of the city.

The weather was a bit overcast and chilly (but no rain!), as we toured the house itself, the spectacular gardens, and the adjacent barn housing an amazing collection of old horse-drawn wagons and sleds, and more than a few automobiles dating from the 1920s through the 50s (including

Governor Nelson Rockefeller's official Chrysler Imperial, complete with the original license plate. Although the setting is really spectacular, the house itself is a bit understated, considering that the family patriarch was the richest man in America.

Following the tour of the home and property, we made our way to the fabulous Half Moon Restaurant, located right on the eastern shore of the Hudson River in nearby Dobbs Ferry. Lunch was absolutely superb (thank you, Andy Bata!), and a short walk back to the Metro North train back to the city. All in all, a superb day! — caffeinated, and connected.



December Dates

- 1 World AIDS Day
- 1 Eat a Red Apple day
- 2 International Day for the Abolition of Slavery
- 4 National Cookie Day
- 4 World Wildlife Conservation Day
- 7 National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day
- 10 Dewey Decimal Day
- 10 International Human Rights Day
- 12 National Ding-a-Ling Day
- 14 First Candle of Chanukah
- 15 National Bill of Rights Day
- 17 Wright Brothers Day
- 20 National Sangria Day
- 21 First Day of Winter
- 21 Kiwifruit Day
- 22 National Mathematics Day
- 23 Pfeffernuesse Day
- 25 Christmas Day
- 26 Kwanzaa Begins
- 28 Eat Vegetarian Day
- 29 Get on the Scale Day
- 30 National Bicarbonate of Soda Day
- 31 New Year's Eve

CultureQuest Tour Of Ancient American Art

by Linda Downs

For many of the twenty-four Questers, this first visit to the Michael C. Rockefeller Wing at the Met Museum was an awesome experience. The new galleries shimmer and shine with the light from the gallery-long window that let's in the natural light and plays both shade and shine on the stone, ceramic, gold and wood sculptures. The tour of the Arts of the Americas was presented by the extraordinary Lauren Debin, Met Educator. In her introduction, Lauren described the development of the collections by Nelson Rockefeller in the 1950's and the organization of the Ancient Americas collection and the vast cultures and sculptures represented in stone, ceramic, gold and wood.

The present collections reach back six thousand years to a mysterious white ceramic baby figure from the Olmec people. A royal Mayan stone relief commemorating both earthly and spiritual achievements contained Mayan princes as well as wild menacing spirits which originally decorated a palace. A small solid gold Mexica lip jewelry demonstrated that lip and ear piercings go back thousands of years. This jewelry was used in royal ascension ceremonies. Large Andean gold storage vessels with real and imagined faces were made of gold sheets, a technique devised before the lost wax method was invented. A very modern Inca tabard. And last, the famous blue and yellow Peruvian feather panel which took generations to create and which was remembered from the past installations and felt like old friends.



Great Plays

by Ruth Ward

On December 17th the Great Plays course was proud to present three one-act comedies from the *Mere Mortals* collection by David Ives. Profoundly moving roles were interpreted by John Davis, Peter Dichter, Vince Grosso, Yona Rogosin, and Ruth Ward.



CultureQuest: The Frick Collection

by Dena Kerren

At last! The Frick Collection opened to the public after five years of renovations in its historic home on Fifth Avenue. On our group's recent Culture Quest museum tour, we were treated to engaging and insightful presentations of some of the most important paintings in art history, led by a knowledgeable and informative educator.

In building his collection, Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919) had often been persistent in obtaining the works of art he desired. He negotiated for months in 1906 before buying a star of his collection, a Rembrandt "Self-Portrait" from 1658. He had competition from the Metropolitan Museum of Art and J.P. Morgan.

Our docent led a discussion of this most beloved and captivating large self portrait of Rembrandt in an extraordinary costume. This painting is one of more than 50 self portraits he painted over the years. We then moved on to view Rembrandt's "The Polish Rider," known as a mysterious and poetic masterpiece.

Our closeup views of extraordinary paintings moved on to Joseph Mallord William Turner's great masterpieces. We focused on the brilliant "Harbor of Dieppe," a fishing village, a vibrant reflection of golden tones, filled with sunlight and hundreds of figures engaged in lively activities. Turner loved to travel every year, taking trips throughout Europe, sketching ports and then returning to London to paint.

We continued our tour viewing Johannes Vermeer's awesome painting "Officer and Laughing Girl," one of only 33 paintings by the artist.

The Frick Collection offers a unique opportunity to engage with art in an intimate and grand setting.



If You Missed Our Tour Don't Despair! For further insight, you may want to tune in to "Cocktails with a Curator" on YouTube. Hosted by Frick Collection curators, the series features them discussing a single work of art from the museum's collection, and then sharing the recipe for a themed drink (and a non-alcoholic version). The video series was developed during the pandemic. We just couldn't get enough of it and spent hours viewing. Great for a rainy day.

New Members

Quest welcomes two 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.



Rafael Ovalle

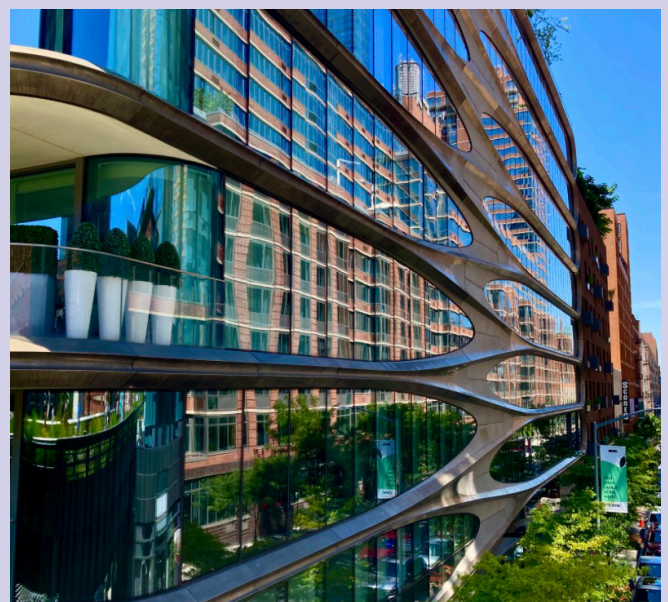


Sylvia Schaindlin

City Ramblings

by Frank Montaturo

Zaha Hadid eschewed the right angle, "embracing curves and diagonal lines to create buildings that appeared to be in motion." And this... her only building in New York... is a good example of her credo. It sits smack up against The High Line... a destination that I normally eschew but on one late summer day decided to revisit. In spite of the crowds... I was not disappointed... though one could easily carp about feeling hemmed in by so much multi-story Bling. That would have been ungracious... especially on this e. e. cummings day when all that was needed was a whispered "i thank You God for most this amazing day: / for the leaping greenly spirits of trees / and a blue true dream of sky."



Who's Doing What



On their terrace in Buenos Aires, **Sandy Gordon** and Argentinian cousins, inherited from her late husband Al, relaxed in the sun and toured. She then joined an exciting

Road Scholar tour: more new and exciting experiences. Tango anyone?

• • •

Dena Kerren and **Roy Clary** were in the Berkshires during early November and one evening enjoyed dinner with **Mark Cardillo** at a favorite restaurant in Lennox, but they forgot to take a photo.

• • •

Terri and George Hicks report their grandson Ethan Klapinski became an Eagle Scout. He's pictured here with his dad Frank and their daughter Krisha. Ethan built furniture for a local animal shelter as his Eagle project. He plans to study environmental science next year in college.



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An unanticipated trip to L.A. meant **Ellen Rittberg** got to stand in for her daughter-in-law for neighborhood trick-or-treating, later donning the Jurassic Park costume.

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Creative Corner

COINCIDENCE® by Betty Farber

How can my mind make any sense
Of what is called "coincidence"?
Is it bizarre, a mystery?
Or just the way life seems to be?

Every day I read the news.
At times, the story that I choose
Is of calamity or strife,
With no real bearing on my life.
But here is the great mystery—
That clue comes up on "Jeopardy!"

I'm home, at ease, a memory brings
To mind a friend — my cell phone rings.
You surely guess what I'll relate,
It is that friend! It is that mate!

But best is when you have a dream
To eat a pie with mounds of cream.
And someone that you dearly love,
Says, "That's what I was thinking of!"

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And a Happy New Year!

