

A Note From the President

In Greek mythology, Persephone's ascent from the underworld marks the transition from the dark days of winter to the promises of spring, arriving not as a sudden miracle but as a well-negotiated return. Having spent months in shadows, she again rises to the surface and with her the earth softens, greens, and begins anew.

Her story is not simply about rebirth, but about cyclical knowing, a powerful metaphor for lifelong learning. Like Persephone, we do not shed our metaphorical winters, when our thirst for knowledge retreats underground to gestate out of sight, only to be reborn during our springs of quiet strategies, our times of visible flourishing when ideas bloom easily and times, when the seeds of our ideas are acts of foresight

and preparation. In this way, spring mirrors the forward-looking dimension of learning. To study, to practice, to begin again when we're ready are acts of curiosity and investments in a self not yet realized, of courses and presentations yearning to come to life.

Just as fields eventually open into bloom, learning ripens into expression and exchange. Reaching outside ourselves to teach, to share, to shape new courses or conversations around what we find meaningful becomes part of our learning cycle. To articulate what is important or interesting to us is to test it, refine it, and offer it as seed for others.

In this way, we as lifelong learners become both recipients of seasons — our semesters — as well as participants in them, helping to create conditions for growth beyond the

self. Persephone's spring teaches that renewal is not passive. It is an active, deliberate turning toward possibility, one that culminates in the generous act of passing on, sharing. Beneath the surface, connections are forming, questions deepening, and understanding taking root in ways not yet ready for display. To trust this hidden work is itself a discipline. It asks patience, humility, and faith that what is being cultivated in darkness will, in time, find its way toward light.

So my questions to each of you: What is it that you would like to share with us? Have you planted the seeds, and when do you plan to share that harvest with the rest of us?

– Donna Ramer

Distinguished Guest Lecturer Ellen Jovan

On March 11, a full auditorium of grammar nerds were treated to a lively presentation by Ellen Jovan, author of *Rebel With a Clause*. Ellen is also the subject of a documentary of the same name made by her husband, Brandt Johnson, about taking her "Grammar Table" to all 50 states.



Distinguished Guest Lecturer Jonathan Mahler

On March 25, Jonathan Mahler, author of *The Gods of New York: Egoists, Idealists, Opportunists, and the Birth of the Modern City: 1986-1990*, was interviewed on stage by Arlynn Greenbaum. We had a full house and a lively Q&A after the discussion.



CultureQuest Tours Temple Emanu-El

by Lois Klein



On February 27, a sunny day following one snowstorm after another, 21 Questers met at Temple Emanu-El for a group tour. Mark Heutillinger, a congregant, was our knowledgeable and enthusiastic guide.

Located on Fifth Avenue across the street from Central Park, Temple Emanu-El was built on land purchased from the Astor family in 1927. It took only two years to complete its amazing construction. The date was mid-October of 1929 — two weeks before the stock market crash.

Walking into the Sanctuary, the view is a breathtaking Art Deco masterpiece blending Moorish, Byzantine, and Romanesque styles with stunning mosaics, stained glass (including a massive Rose Window), and vast space, making it one of the world's most beautiful and largest synagogues.

The 2500-seat Sanctuary of this Reform congregation has a 103-foot-high ceiling constructed with a steel frame without any supporting pillars. We smiled when informed that, although the synagogue houses one of the largest organs in the world, the music often heard is that of Rabbi Davidson playing his guitar.



The space, while majestic, is also welcoming and serene. We all agreed that this Culture Quest visit was a memorable experience.



**We Wish You a Sweet and Happy Passover and/or
A Blessed Easter. May We All Celebrate in Peace.**

— The QNews Staff

**Carolyn McGuire sends regards to all her friends at Quest,
and would be happy to hear from you.**

Curriculum Corner

by Ellie Schaffer

Welcome to the inaugural column of The Curriculum Corner where we answer your questions about our educational offerings.

Let's begin with some definitions.

What is a class? A class is one individual session within a course. Six or seven classes comprise a course, depending on the semester holiday schedule.

What is a course? A course is a theme-based series of sessions that spans an entire semester. There are three kinds of courses — lectures, discussion groups, and workshops. We will discuss the differences in a future column.

Please reach out to any of our members listed below, or email me at elschaffer@gmail.com, for any curriculum-related question or concerns.

Curriculum Committee members include **Debbi Honorof**, Chairperson, **Arlynn Greenbaum**, **Anne Marie Gussman**, **Joyce Hinote**, **Susannah Falk Lewis**, and **Mary Beth Yakoubian**.

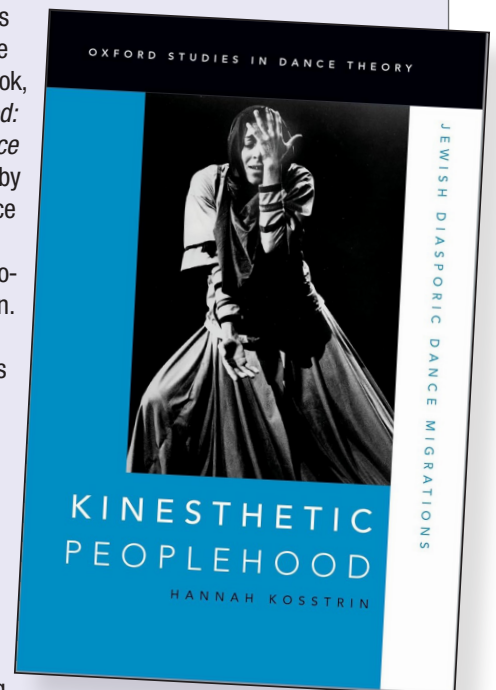
Ze'eva Cohen

Ze'eva Cohen is featured on the cover of the book, *Kinesthetic Peoplehood: Jewish Diasporic Dance Migrations*, published by Oxford Studies In Dance Theory, and written by Ohio State University Professor, Hannah Kosstrin.

The book includes a chapter on Ze'eva's performative and choreographic work, and explores how people experience diaspora not only through geography or shared histories of exile and displacement, but also through the body itself. Drawing

upon extensive archival materials, interviews, and ethno-graphic research, this book demonstrates how dance embodies the cultural migrations at the heart of Jewish experience.

The book is available for purchase on Amazon, or Oxford University Press, oup.com/us, ahead of its official publication on May 19, 2026.



Quest Council Elections

The Quest Council consists of four officers (President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer), and seven members-at-large. Each year, in compliance with the Quest Bylaws, we hold an election to fill vacancies. By the end of this fiscal year, **we need to elect a vice president, a treasurer, a secretary, and three members-at-large.** Each Council position is a two-year term that begins June 1.

Candidate biographies and videos of the candidate forums have been posted on our website. To access them, go to the Members' Section <https://www.org/private-quest-members-page/>, and look at the top of the page under "Important Events."

Electronic voting begins at noon Friday, April 3, and ends at noon Sunday, April 5.

The Nominations and Elections Committee (NEC)

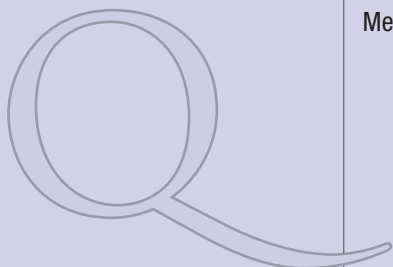
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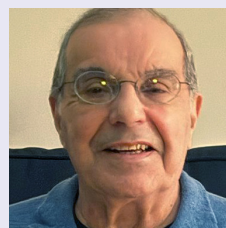
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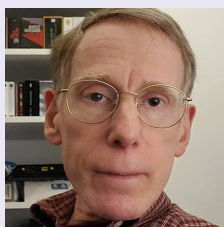
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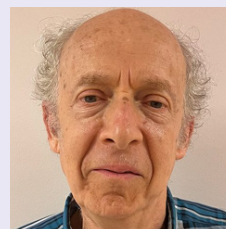
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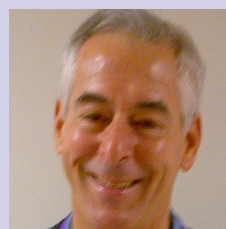
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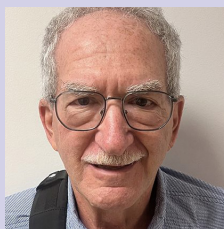
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Art Spar,
Member-at-Large



Martin Green,
Member-at-Large



Lynn Vairo,
Member-at-Large



CultureQuest: Another Deep Dive at The American Museum of Natural History

by Madeleine Brecher

On March 13th, 20 Questers stood alongside **Marion Schultheis**... our friend and excellent docent...and received a reeducation. The dioramas, animals shown in lifelike poses within geographically accurate settings, became AMNH's signature contribution to museum education. These were not generic "African savannas" or "American forests," but reconstructions of specific locations at specific moments in time. We were shocked to learn that many museums today were tearing down these wonders of science and art education. AMNH chose instead to preserve and restore them.

Together, we thoughtfully studied many of the settings which represent the most ambitious and complete habitat diorama exhibits ever created. Marion explained how a diorama was physically built, and how these replicas have preserved detailed records of ecosystems from the early 20th century. Over the decades, many of the animals no longer exist in the habitat captured at that moment

in time. We were in awe of these treasures we have right here in our amazing city.

Following our diorama tour, we headed to the Planetarium for the current show entitled *Encounters in the Milky Way*, a visually dynamic look at our home galaxy. The satellite responsible for most of the latest major discoveries about the Milky Way is the European Space Agency's Gaia. Gaia measured stars repeatedly to track how they move through space. Marion had given us an advance lesson in the Milky Way at her presentation in the Across the Universe course at Quest a week before our tour, so we were not "lost in space" at the Planetarium.

After this extraordinary morning, 17 of us headed to lunch at Gazala's delicious Druze restaurant a few short blocks away. We mixed and matched at small tables where we ate up a storm and enjoyed a few hours of wonderful conversation with old and new friends. It was another 'soldout' CultureQuest Friday!



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

Tennessee Walt *by Wayne Cotter*



On March 16, Tennessee Walt performed for Questers in the "It Ain't Just Rock 'n' Roll" course. Walt performed his tribute to Kris Kristofferson — "Big-Time Lonesome Town: The Songs of Kris Kristofferson." The show was jam-packed with incredible music and stories, however Walt did confess that he's not from Tennessee and his name's not Walt.

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.



Deborah Bonelli



Sandra Elam



Linda Halliday



Lisa Levine



Eva Mihovich



Jessica Raimi

Book Club

Don't miss the last two Spring sessions of the Quest Book Club. The dates and selections are:

April 22

How to Read a Book, by Monica Wood; presented by **Joan Vreeland**
[Note the new meeting date]

May 6

A Little Luck, by Claudia Pineiro; presented by **Shirley Ranz**

Is there a book you love that you'd like to introduce to others? The Book Club is looking ahead to the Fall semester and developing our reading list. Each month a different person leads the discussion of that meeting's book, and we're looking for people to present books that meant something to them. It's a great way to try your hand at presenting for a single session. Let us know either in person at the April or May meetings, or by emailing any one of the group's co-coordinators, **Jan Goldstein**, **Madeleine Brecher**, or **Joan Vreeland**.

**Goodbyes Are Only For Those Who Love With Their Eyes.
Because For Those Who Love With Heart And Soul
There Is No Such Thing As Separation.**

— Rumi

Creative Corner

GRANDMA'S RING® by Betty Farber

It was my habit to lose things:
Keys, pencils and schoolbooks,
But when I lost grandma's ring
I cried all through dinner.

The ring was mine to keep.
It was made of onyx
With a tiny diamond chip
Exactly in the center.

At bedtime, my father whispered,
"I hocked the ring. Needed money.
Please don't tell your mother.
She would divorce me if she knew."

Overjoyed that I had not lost it,
I promised I would never tell.
He kissed me and thanked me.
And I never saw the ring again.

My father played the horses
With money he didn't have.
He knew I loved him
And gambled that I wouldn't tell.

Was it out of loyalty to my dad,
Or out of fear that I kept the secret?
I never talked about my innocence
And my parents stayed married
to the end.

Have I forgiven him? Yes.
My jewel box holds a myriad of rings,
Of every shape and color.
But not one is made of onyx
With a tiny diamond chip
Exactly in the center.



Urban Wanderings by Frank Montaturo

Botanica Centro Espiritual Santiago... East 106 St Spanish Harlem



A botanica is a unique phenomenon an emporium specializing in products and services of a spiritual nature. It is the "merchandising" arm of Yoruba/Santeria/Candomblé... some of the names by which this Afro Caribbean Afro Brazilian faith is known. It is an amalgam of African practices with a Christian veneer. It still has many adherents here and in the Caribbean and in Latin America. There are still a few botanicas left in Spanish Harlem. More in the other boroughs. They sell potions and lotions candles and beads incense tinctures and teas...to help the supplicant find

a job secure a lover put a spell on a wandering spouse or rid yourself of lice. The options and the solutions are bewildering. St Roch...aka Babalu-Aye in Santería... is a popular figure. This is his lacerated image. He is an Orisha of infectious diseases and leprosy.

I thought the proprietor of this shop, no longer young... kind and patient with my questions each time I visited... would probably retire. A recent google search happily finds it is not a nail salon. It is now Botanica El Congo #2.

Canterbury Tales at The Morgan by Margaret Gill



On March 23, the Canterbury Tales class, coordinated by **Sheryl Harawitz** and **Andrea Irvine**, had a private session with the resident Chaucer scholar. They opened the Morgan Library for us, took out *The Tales* from their vault for us, and explained the ink, the pens, and the paper which was brought from Paris for the books.

The Morgan is just magnificent. They brought us on a short tour of the rooms, including the office of J.P. Morgan's secretary, Belle da Costa Greene, the subject of the recently-published *The Private Secretary*. It was a fabulous journey for all of us.

~~NO~~ KINGS

