

# NIU LLI NEWSLETTER

Summer 2006

By Tom Dietrich

**Northern Illinois  
University's  
Lifelong Learning  
Institute**

**Opening  
doors...**

**Building  
friendships...**

**Learning  
for the  
fun of it!**

**Invite a friend to  
join the NIU LLI!**

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**Website:  
www.niu.edu/LLI**

## MUSINGS...

Greetings and congratulations to all past, present, and prospective members of Northern Illinois University's Lifelong Learning Institute on its fifth anniversary.

Our NIU LLI is well into its sixth year and, from all appearances, is in vibrant health. I presume to speak for all NIU LLIers in expressing our heartfelt gratitude to our founders and to all of the past and present committee members and conveners who have donated selflessly of their time and efforts to provide us all with high quality programs. Of course, none of this would have been possible without the collaboration of our patrons and partners, the staff in the Office of External Programming at NIU's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences.



This is my first letter as chair of the NIU LLI Steering Committee. I decided to accept this position since my pre-retirement work history as a certified public accountant, in both the private and public sectors, was loaded with innumerable "uncharted waters" experiences. I had only been familiar with the NIU LLI as a student/participant. Now, I have learned a lot about the inner workings and administrative tasks involved in running the NIU LLI. I still don't profess to know much about how to carry out this job. But, with the sage guidance, counsel, and assistance of all of you who have participated in LLI since its 2001 inception, I'm groping my way along.

Here's a bit of my LLI background. My first exposure to the NIU LLI was in the winter of 2004 when the spring brochure caught my eye at Kishwaukee Hospital's cardiac rehabilitation facility. ( It had been placed there by past steering committee co-chair Alan Wantroba.) A study group on the Lewis and Clark expedition was being offered, something in which I was most interested. I called NIU and enrolled for the spring term and signed up my wife and myself for the Lewis and Clark field trip to St. Louis that spring. I thoroughly enjoyed the study group, and we thoroughly enjoyed the St Louis trip and have been enthusiastic NIU LLI regulars ever since. I'm one who likes the NIU LLI because it is true that learning for me is now FUN!

Now, some observations on the NIU LLI's immediate and long-range plans that have grown out of discussions at recent Steering Committee meetings and the early May membership meeting.

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**FABULOUS IN SPANISH IS FABULOSA**

Students in Jan Modloff’s NIU LLI study group may have learned a lot about Don Quixote or how to order dinner in Mexico, but Jan, who taught high school for over 30 years, learned that she loved teaching adults.

In the basic Spanish for travelers class she taught she liked that each NIU LLIer took on the individual responsibility to learn what he or she wanted and at what level. “We were there for fun and to learn something new,” she notes, with a real camaraderie among group members. Her overall assessment: “Really fabulous.”

Her students thought Jan was a fabulous convener too. On the day they were to learn the Spanish words for colors and clothing items, Jan brought a suitcase full of clothes into class and set up a shop. After teaching the vocabulary, always with humor, she played the role of a store clerk and study group members were customers who had to do business with her. When food was the topic, she set up a restaurant, complete with menus and place settings.

Jan will offer another Spanish language, customs, and culture study group this fall on Wednesday mornings. “A couple people asked me to teach another class, and

it’s something I can do that I enjoy so much,” she says. NIU LLIers with no knowledge of Spanish, those who took last year’s study group, and those who have other Spanish classes in their background are welcome, Jan says. As well as practical vocabulary, lessons will cover Spanish culture and places, including many Jan has visited.

When she is not teaching (Jan also convened a class on Don Quixote), Jan is taking NIU LLI study groups. Asked to name some favorites, she laughs, saying there are so many. Pressed to name a few, she mentions Islam, taught by Larry Bray and Alan Wantroba; film classes with Sol Feldman; poetry with Alan Chesler; opera with Clark Neher; current events with Elizabeth Bass; wine and chocolate with Ellen Dran; and the “conversations with interesting people” that Lolly Voss convened.

What keeps Jan coming back as a student? The stimulation of learning new things and new perspectives in good company.

–Elizabeth Bass



**Musings...**(Continued from page 1)

First, it’s time to adopt a better committee system, preferably one with staggered terms that will allow new members to apprentice under experienced members. I suggest that we start engaging new committee members for all committees now so that they can begin understudying immediately.

The NIU LLI CURRICULUM COMMITTEE has been doing an outstanding job in arranging for and assembling a set of diverse study groups for both the just concluded summer session and the fall session that begins in September. We’re considering establishing either a sub-committee to the Curriculum Committee or a separate committee to work more closely with the LA&S External Programming staff on selecting the weekly NIU Notables Brown Bag Lecturers as well as destinations for NIU LLI field trips.

Among other activities, our MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE is very busy updating membership rolls, surveying and re-establishing contact with inactive members, and updating our membership brochure. They also have put together a system where new members may be assigned a present member as a buddy, someone from whom the new member can get guidance and advice, whether how long it takes to drive to campus from the south side of Batavia or where the restrooms are.

Our DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE is working with LA&S External Programming to create a strategic plan for future operations and activities.

Finally, I hope you all continue to have as much fun with your NIU LLI experiences as I have had – from a trip to see the White Sox win at Comiskey Park (I still can’t get used to U.S. Cellular!) to the relief I

# NEWS YOU CAN USE AT LLI

## NAMETAGS

Remember to wear your nametag, especially during the first weeks of the term. It's an easy thing we can do to make new members welcome – and to help returning members. You're welcome to leave them in the box on the hall table between study groups.

## NIU LLI BROCHURE

The membership committee has revised our brochure about the NIU LLI and is looking for places to distribute them. If you have any ideas for places in your community to leave a stack or to hand them out, contact committee chair Georgette Rocheleau at 756-2169 or [grocheleau@gmail.com](mailto:grocheleau@gmail.com).

## E-MAIL

If you have not gotten occasional NIU LLI e-mails, we don't have an e-mail address for you or it's bad. E-mail is particularly important as a way to let you know if a program is cancelled or if a convener needs to get in touch with you. So, if you use e-mail but do not get NIU LLI messages, please send your e-mail address to [apetty@niu.edu](mailto:apetty@niu.edu), putting "NIU LLI e-mail address" in the subject line. The information will be used for NIU LLI purposes only.

## BRING A FRIEND

Research has shown that high school students who visit a college campus are much more likely to attend that college than students who don't visit...and we think the same is true for the NIU LLI. So, bring a friend to any study group or Brown Bag. And please pass along the names and addresses of prospective members to Anne Petty at [apetty@niu.edu](mailto:apetty@niu.edu) or give the information to the graduate assistant for our mailing list.

## CORN FEST BOOTH

Our LLI will be sharing a booth with the External Programming Office during DeKalb's Corn Fest on August 25-27. If you could help staff the booth for a few hours, please contact NIU LLI volunteer coordinator Pat Mehagan at 895-8588. The booth will be in front of the Monat building at 148 N. 3rd Street.

## VIDEO

If you have not seen the video about the NIU LLI, you can borrow a copy from the NIU LLI office. And if you know of any group – social, church, civic, or other – that would like a program on the NIU LLI, let the office know and we'll provide a speaker and/or the video.

## DINING NEWS

A Subway has replaced the McDonalds at the Holmes Student Center and the Blackhawk Cafeteria was renovated during the summer.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

August 21	Fall NIU LLI Luncheon
August 25-27	Corn Fest
Sept. 29 – Oct. 2	Shiloh & Corinth Field Trip
October 8-13	"Illinois: Voices from Past in Land of Lincoln;" NIU Elderhostel
November 3	John Deere Field Trip
January 17	Winter term starts
February 8	Winter term ends

## GUEST PRIVILEGES

Remember, as an NIU LLI member, you have guest privileges at almost 300 LLIs across the country.

**HOLLYWOOD IS COMING TO THE NIU LLI**

Bet you did not spend your summer with Anthony Hopkins, Christian Slater, John Turturro, Camryn Manheim, Jeffrey Tambor, or S. Epatha Merkerson (from Law and Order)! But NIU communications professor Laura Vasquez, our first fall Notables lecturer, did as she and six NIU students spent five weeks working on location for *Slipstream*, a film that Hopkins wrote, directs, and stars in.



The clout that opened doors for the NIU contingent was communication alumnus Robert Katz, the producer of *Slipstream*. His other producing credits include *Seabiscuit*, *One-Hour Photo*, and *Crash*, this year's best picture Oscar winner.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!**

Our NIU LLI marked its fifth birthday with the start of the Spring 2006 term. Some of our achievements:

- Offering almost 200 study groups
- Presenting 128 Notables lectures
- Receiving \$8,600 in outside grants
- Creating new friendships
- Providing learning for the fun of it!

**FALL 2006 STUDY GROUPS**

(all classes 8 sessions, unless noted)

- \**The Human Immune System*  
–Lazlo Hanzely (5 sessions)
- \* *Orphans of Light: Lost Christianities of the Near East*  
–Joe Gastiger
- \* *Let's All Go To The Opera*  
–Clark Neher (5 sessions)
- \* *Surfing the World Wide Web*  
–Norma Wiley (2 sessions)
- \**Diva Elizabetha: England's Queen Elizabeth I*  
–Lisa Schlosser
- \**Traveling in Spanish-Speaking Countries: Más Language, Más Customs, Más Cultures*  
–Jan Modloff
- \**The Constitution of 1787, the Election of 1800, and the Supreme Court*  
–Lyle Sykora
- \**That Was The Week That Was*  
–Elizabeth Bass
- \**Judaism: Beliefs, History, Practice*  
–Avi Bass
- \**Theater of the Absurd*  
–Heinz Osterle
- \**What Does It Take To Raise A Pig?*  
–Pat & Gilby Mehagan
- \**U.S. Grant (The Other President from Illinois)*  
–Ross Legg

**MAKE NEW FRIENDS ...REFRESH OLD FRIENDSHIPS**

**NIU LLI FALL KICK-OFF LUNCHEON**

Monday, August 21, 2006, 11:30 a.m.— 1 p.m.  
Holmes Student Center, Pheasant Room Buffet  
\$10 per person : Members & Guests Welcome



Reserve a space when you register for fall classes. Or, sign-up online at [http://www.niu.edu/clasep/NIU\\_LLI/](http://www.niu.edu/clasep/NIU_LLI/) or call 1-800-345-9472 or 815-753-0277.