Family reunions seem to be more frequent in the summer than at any other time of the year. Perhaps it is because these parties can be held outside, allowing each individual just a little more space to cope with the combination of several generations and varying opinions about the behavior of children, adolescents, or an uncle or aunt.

Going home to family can be a traumatic or an agreeable venture. I had a delightful trip to Quebec this summer, during which I reconnected with my late husband’s cousins. We Americans were treated like royalty, a reception that this family has always given the stalwart relatives who left Canada to strike out for a better life in the US. The reunion really left us stimulated to put down on paper the proverbial family tree, along with photographs.

That little bit of nostalgia led me to thinking about all the family ties that there are here in the DeKalb area. The Thursday museum tours study group visited five historic sites this summer, leaving each of us with a profound appreciation for those who believed in the potential for this area and who labored for its betterment. At the Glidden Homestead, for example, there is a graphic display of the Gliddens, prominently including the Glidden women, who did so much for our city. In Sycamore, we found artifacts of the early merchants, who purposely created a wide main street, restaurants, and a hotel to convince visitors to stay for more than a day. The hard work and generosity of so many families gave us the foundation of a vibrant, healthy community and an ever-growing university. Their stories are alive for us today because of a vast array of professionals and volunteers who truly love them and strive to safeguard their immortality.

So many others also have interesting stories of their own. The book club to which I belong always assigns a reviewer to get the conversation started. More often than not these reviews have quickly morphed into family stories as the reviewer tells how her own story has parallels to the book. This often evokes memories and stories from other members. We really create a warm bond as we listen and learn about each other’s life.

So I have been delving into the past and am duly inspired. Are you with me as I set sight on new goals, motivated by the determination of those who have served, (continued on Page 2)
MARCHING TO THE DRUMMER

You probably know Cliff Eaton. With his mile-wide smile and bigger-than-life personality, Cliff goes out of his way to talk with everyone. Hard to believe that this imposing figure, with the smoothly shaved head and booming voice, was once a lanky teenager who fell in love with drum and bugle corps music as a 14-year-old in the 1950s - and has maintained that love affair ever since.

Cliff was an only child whose parents were part of the Great Migration, coming north from Alabama during the 1930s in search of a better life. His early love of music was instilled by his father, an accomplished singer, and his mother, who played piano. But it was percussion that stirred his soul when, as a freshman at Fenger High School, he joined the Giles Yellow Jackets, an all-Black drum and bugle corps, affiliated with the Sons of the American Legion, in an era before any such organization was integrated.

Cliff’s spirit of adventure has taken him around the world. He’s a Marine Corps veteran, who discovered DeKalb during a stint as a chartered bus driver. Later he worked for Turner Brass in Sycamore (famous for manufacturing the Olympic Torch) until a job opening in the NIU Physical Plant provided a career that ended when he retired six years ago. He is the father of four and grandfather of eleven. Cliff and his wife, Jan Graefen (another LLI regular), have been together for nearly 20 years, during part of which time they managed a commuter marriage until Jan retired from teaching at Chicago’s Hyde Park High School.

What started as casual conversation among friends about their mutual love of music has grown into an exciting fall LLI study group. Cliff, along with Jerry Smith and local jazz legend Ron Modell, will convene a class focused on music with a Chicago connection. Familiar names, such as Billie Holliday, Mel Torme, and Nat King Cole, will join lesser known musicians, like pianist and vocalist Judy Roberts or the late Minnie Riperton, a singer/songwriter with an incredible 5 ½ octave vocal range. You won’t want to miss My Kind of Musical Town – Chicago Is. There definitely will be more here than meets the ear.

– Brad Pietens

MUSINGS (continued from page 1)

and the many who continue to serve, our community of life-long learners? Your LLI Steering Committee is always open to renewal. Given my theme, let’s call it “re-generation.”

One of our greatest aspirations, into which we will put a lot of effort, is the recruitment of new members. We cherish our old friends, but want to share this treasure of learning, our “brain candy,” with many more folks. We are looking to enlarge the family. Help us reach out to more area residents. Do your friends know about LLI study groups, and how wonderful you think they are? Have you asked them to attend a class with you? If your friends show no interest, can you tell us why? What do we need to do to encourage them to give LLI a try? The fear of the NIU campus and parking can be overcome! The study groups and the people are so much more interesting than sitting at home. Social interaction is key to a thriving senior life.
LLI WANTS YOU!

LLI is only as strong as its member participation. As we start planning for winter and spring, the Curriculum Committee is asking you to step forward and become involved as a convener. Previous teaching experience is not necessary!

LLI study groups may not come in 31 flavors, but we do offer a variety of formats. A convener may organize a 4-, 6-, or 8-week study group and lead every session. Or a convener might have an idea that lends itself to inviting a number of speakers to lead sessions. Or a study group might be such that a convener leads the discussion for some sessions and invites in speakers for others. All of these formats have been successful.

The Curriculum Committee also has ideas for classes but has not identified a convener. If you’re willing to organize, we can help you with suggested topics. For example, in recent months PBS has aired several interesting programs dealing with the civil rights movement of the ‘60s. Perhaps someone would like to organize a study group around these. As a group, we could watch the videos and then have a class discussion.

Bottom line: Join the fun! Be a convener! If you’re interested, contact either Carol Zar (czar@niu.edu) or Dick Dowen (rdowen@niu.edu). We’d love to hear from you!--Carol Zar, Curriculum Committee Co-Chair

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**Mark Your Calendar!**

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<tr>
<td>LLI Fall Luncheon</td>
<td>September 17, 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>LLI Fall 2011 Term</td>
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<td>LLI Winter 2012 Term</td>
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<td>LLI Spring 2012 Term</td>
<td>March 27-May 10, 2012</td>
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Meet Your LLI Leaders

The LLI Steering Committee is composed of our committee chairs. This year’s members include, (front, left-to-right) Elizabeth Bass (Notables & Newsletter), Ron Fuchs (Finance), Arlene Neher (Notables), and (back) Dick Dowen (Curriculum), Carol Zar (Curriculum), Jerry Smith (Finance), Arnie Lehto (Mailing), and Sharon Tourville, who chairs the Steering Committee itself. Missing: Jan Modloff (Cultural Events) and Pat Mehagan (Special Projects & Soiree).
“Joyful learning.” “Nice, relaxed style.” “Unintimidating conveners.” These are among the reasons that Linda Pool, Cary Massey, and Jane McBride respectively have enjoyed LLI.

Linda says that since she joined LLI last fall, she has always found something offered about which she wanted to learn more and has found LLI “an opportunity to learn new things without pressure.”

“LLI is a really enjoyable activity, right here in our community at a reasonable cost,” Cary notes. “The social part is nice too.” She joined LLI in fall 2010 by just coming to the NIU Notables, which she enjoyed enough to enroll in study groups this past spring and summer.

Linda and Jane are both examples of the value of personal contacts in recruiting members. Linda first heard about LLI from Pat Mehagen. In 2007, Jane was paired with Pat’s late husband, Gilby, as an NIU History Fair judge. “I signed up as soon as Gilby told me about LLI and it’s been terrific,” says Jane, who has enrolled every term since.

She keeps coming back because conveners are “fascinating and exciting” and, she admits, because “I guess I just love going to school.” She also enjoys the breadth of the study groups she has taken, from swashbuckler movies with George Spencer to poetry with Joe Gastiger, from the U.S. Constitution with Gary Glenn to operetta with Paul Pawlowski.

“Say Cheese!” Summer 2011 study group. Looking happy was easy for Dorothy Thorsen, Liz Blau, and Rivka Baker. They were among the LLiers who enjoyed the cheese study group convened by Sharon Dowen during the summer 2011 term. The strawberries you see accompanied Mascarpone cheese while olives and peppers went with Manchego cheese, among others.

IN MEMORIAM
Arra Garab
Rita Powell

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS
Spring 2011
Linda Babcock, DeKalb
William Blair, DeKalb
Philip Bus, Batavia
Marlee Clymer, DeKalb
Phyllis Craig, Hinckley
June Ehrler, Sycamore
Carolyn Massey, DeKalb
Bill Miller, Saint Charles
Al Ottens, Rockford
Mary Short, DeKalb
Donna Schulz Xidis, DeKalb
Brian Watkins, St. Charles
Sue Weber, Somonauk

Summer 2011
Harold Engh, DeKalb
Susan Linden, DeKalb
Juliann Olsen, DeKalb

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.
NIU Lifelong Learning Institute Fall Luncheon

GREET OLD FRIENDS! MAKE NEW FRIENDS!

Saturday, September 17, 2011
11:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

American National Bank, Community Room
Bethany Road and Route 23
Sycamore Rd/DeKalb Ave

The Community Room is on the lower level of the bank and is accessible via the elevator or stairway at the front entrance.
Parking is free.

This is a great time to catch up with old friends and to introduce new friends to LLI.

$10 per person, payable at the door.
Members & Guests Welcome
Advance reservations required by Wednesday, September 14.

RSVP to Sharon Tourville at stourville@comcast.net
(815) 758-0236 (please leave a message)
PREMIERING THIS FALL AT LLI

September 20—November 10

American Political Philosophy from Jefferson to the Tea Party — Dick Dowen & Robert Suchner
Opera — Clark Neher
The 1920s — Elaine & George Spencer
The Battle for Vicksburg — Richard Dowen
My Kind of Musical Town—Chicago Is — Cliff Eaton & Jerry Smith
Environmental Geology — Clarence Cassella
Intimate Strangers: Unseen Life on Earth — Pat Vary (4 weeks)
Women and Children and the Courts — Sharon Tourville (4 weeks)
Statistics in Our Lives — Jerry Zar
China Today: An Introduction—Albert Resis
History of American Railroads and the Railroad Industry—Bill Cummings (4 weeks)
Spanish for Travelers—Jan Modloff
News and Views*—Elizabeth Bass (4 weeks beginning September 22)
Women of Interest*—Sharon Dowen (4 weeks beginning September 29)

*These two study groups will alternate weeks.

- HEAR YE! HEAR YE! LLI will have wireless headset microphones for conveners and Notables to use. We think these mikes will solve the sound problems in Room 505.

- A-V: FROM MIKE TO MATT—Mike Zeman, who so ably instructed us in how to use the video equipment at the Holmes Student Center, has retired. When A-V assistance is needed this fall, the face you will most often be seeing is Matt Kylestewa.

- LOOKING GOOD! NIU has a new logo. Web pages are being redesigned. So don’t be surprised if there is a new look at www.lli.niu.edu.

- BRING A FRIEND—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 LLI. So, bring a friend to any study group session or NIU Notable. And please pass along the names and addresses of prospective members for our mailing list to any steering committee member or e-mail NIULLI@niu.edu.