As I write this, LLI summer study groups are about to end, and the fall catalog has been mailed. I always look forward to the start of each new term. I miss seeing my LLI friends and miss the chance to learn something new or to shed new light on some things that I thought I knew all about.

The latter was brought home to me very clearly this past spring term when I enrolled in Joe Gastiger’s and Jerry Smith’s study group on love in poetry and song. I’ve never been much of a poetry reader, and my musical tastes run more to classical rather than to pop music. Well, much to my surprise, this became one of my favorite study groups. The choices of both poetry and songs provoked much discussion about love and life, and I learned that I could enjoy some things I hadn’t really opened myself up to before.

And that’s really what LLI is all about. You can choose study groups on topics with which you are familiar, or you can try something new. You can just sit and soak it all in, or you can participate in discussions and express your own views. Or, best of all, you can share your expertise or passion by offering to convene a study group. Whatever suits you, LLI can fill the bill.

Speaking of being flexible (I was, wasn’t I?), we tried a new venue for our annual soiree. From the informal feedback we’ve received, it seems that people enjoyed themselves even without the hospitality of a private home. As always, the food contributions were delicious. And a special thanks to Marlene Pawlowski who prepared all the floral centerpieces; they really spruced up the room.

As you begin thinking about what study groups you are going to sign up for this fall (see page 4), also think about which one of your friends or neighbors you might want to invite to join us. We had a number of new members this past year. We hope to see them all back, and we hope that many more will join them.

I look forward to seeing you all soon!
MAKING HISTORY

The husband and wife team of historians Will and Ariel Durant collaborated for forty years to produce *The Story of Civilization*, but they have nothing on George and Elaine Spencer. The Spencers have been together for more than 50 years and, in recent years, have been treating LLI audiences to panoramic views of important historical eras. Each is an emeritus professor and former chair of NIU's Department of History, and they frequently convene study groups as a team. The only way in which Elaine is the lesser half of the team is her petite stature. When it comes to presenting and interpreting history, she stands tall among her peers, and LLI members, for her scholarship and meticulous research.

Elaine was born in Wisconsin, but moved west as a small child, coming of age in White Salmon, Oregon, which she proclaims "the most beautiful place in the world." After completing undergraduate studies at Portland's Lewis and Clark College, she began a graduate program at the University of California-Berkeley, where two unlikely events shaped her life. First, she met her future husband, George, in a historiography class, the only common course in their two widely different specialties of Asian and European history.

The second event was an eleventh-hour enrollment in a German class because she had waited too long and all other language classes were filled. But that chance enrollment opened a portal to the history and culture of Germany and began a fascination with modern Germany, which became her academic specialty to this day.

The Spencers came to DeKalb to teach at NIU. Fortunately for LLI, in retirement, they have chosen to remain here. Proximity to their daughter in Madison no doubt has been a factor in that decision, but perhaps the appreciative audiences at LLI have played some role as well. This fall, Elaine and George will once again collaborate on an LLI study group, this one entitled *Age of Empire: 1870-1900*. Those who have taken previous sessions with Elaine know that her presentations will be packed with intriguing information, based on solid scholarship.

—Brad Pietens

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LLI FALL PIZZA PARTY

Saturday, September 13, 2014
11:30 a.m.—1:30 p.m.
Pizza Pros
1205 W. Lincoln Highway, DeKalb

Pizza & Salad Buffet (includes non-alcoholic beverages)
Cash bar for wine & beer
$10/person, payable at door
Members & Guests Welcome

Advance reservations requested by Monday, September 8.
RSVP to Sharon Tourville at stourville@comcast.net or 815-758-0236 (leave a message).
OF COSTS, FEES, AND SERVICES

Not many things in our lives have increased in quality but not in price over the past seven years. But the LLI fee of $80 for the fall or spring term has been the same since we got rid of the annual fee at the end of 2007. Now, to cover gradually increasing expenses, the LLI Steering Committee has voted to raise that fee by $5, an average annual increase of less than 1 percent, as of this fall.

Our major expenses include the rental of rooms and audio-video equipment at the Holmes Student Center. Our move to larger rooms has meant some increase in costs. Other significant expenses include printing and mailing LLI course catalogs and a fee to NIU to cover registration, administration, and office services. Member support has been enthusiastic for our latest expense, hiring Sylvia Crownhart to assist with technical and computer issues whenever we meet.

The best way for LLI to keep fees down is to increase enrollment, since so many of our costs are fixed. As always, scholarships may be available for those needing financial assistance, and those qualifying for the LIHEAP program may register at a reduced fee by contacting the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences External Programming office at (815) 753-5200.

SOCIALIZING AT LLI’S SOIREE

Over 70 LLI members came to our annual Soiree at our new location at Hopkins Park, enjoying an evening of each other’s company and delicious hors d’oeuvres and desserts made by members. Mary Wiegele (left), Carol Tweedy (center), and Sharon Dowen (right) were among those sharing the evening.

NAME TAGS

Let’s help each other match faces with names! Remember to wear your name tag, especially during the first weeks of the term. Some of our memories are not quite what they used to be... and it’s an easy thing we can do to make new members feel welcome. If you need a new name tag, you can request one during the first week of the term.

BEST RECRUITERS: MEMBERS

“A friend told me about LLI.”

Surveys of new members found that such personal contact was by far the #1 reason people heard about and joined LLI. So, spread the word. And you are always welcome to bring a guest to a study group session or to any Notable. Who knows? You may be recruiting a future convener.

To add someone to our mailing list, send the name, street address, and (if possible) email to the office at NIULLI@niu.edu or call 815-753-5200.
THE FALL 2014 LLI MENU
September 16 – November 6 (All study groups eight weeks, unless noted.)

**Star Wars in the Pacific** (7 weeks) – Dick Dowen
U.S. strategies, politics and generals in WW II’s Pacific theater

**Better Living, Perhaps** – Lynn Neeley
Technology that may enhance our lives, medically and otherwise

**World Cities and a Sense of Place** (6 weeks) – Dan Dillman
Impact of history, culture, environment from Athens to Montreal

**Four Spanish Daughters: Four Spanish Queens** (4 weeks)
– Lise Schlosser
Tragedies & triumphs of Ferdinand & Isabella’s royal daughters

**Election-Year Politics: 2014 Edition**—Carol Zar & Elizabeth Bass
Issues & candidates, congressional & gubernatorial, across the U.S.

**How Do We Know That? Thinking About the Earth Differently, Part II**
(4 weeks) – Wilson Wiedenheft
New understandings of why & how Earth is the way it is

**Age of Empire, 1870-1900** – Elaine Spencer & George Spencer
Migration, technology, & empire building connect the world

**Climate Change: Facts & Strategies** – Patricia Vary
Climate change, alternative energy sources & what we can do

**Pillars of the Normal School, 1899** (4 weeks) – Guy Todnem
Educators and others who influenced Northern & the nation

**Orphans of Light: Lost Christianities of the Near East** (4 weeks)
– Joe Gastiger
Essenes, Nazarenes, and other early Christian sects

**Taking Charge of the Rest of Your Life** (4 weeks) – Joyce Barker &
Mary Wiegele
How to address aging & end-of-life ethical & legal issues

**War Stories: World War II** (4 weeks) – Sharon Dowen
*In the Garden of the Beasts, Mila 18, Citizens of London, Catch 22*

**Digital Photography** – Jim Womack
Lab course on your camera’s features & taking better photos

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**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

**Winter 2014**
Mike Anderer, St. Charles
Mark Biernacki, DeKalb
David Breed, DeKalb
Stanley Crane, Elburn
Joyce Escalante, St. Charles
Richard Escalante, St. Charles
Carol Goodacre, DeKalb
Donna Johnson, Waterman
Barbara North, DeKalb
Dudley Sheehan, Sycamore
Joe Vaughn, DeKalb

**Spring 2014**
Mark Duffy, Naperville
Peggy Hoffman, Genoa
Linda Lanphier, Hampshire
John Rhoads, DeKalb

**Summer 2014**
Gerry Chodkowski, DeKalb
Ginny Omerod, Sycamore

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**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Pizza Party</td>
<td>September 13, 2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLI Fall Term</td>
<td>September 16–November 6, 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>LLI Winter Term</td>
<td>January 20–February 12, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>LLI Spring Term</td>
<td>March 17–May 7, 2015</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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