This morning I decided to look for, and then amazing myself, quickly found the January 2007 report of the LLI Strategic Planning and Goal Identification Workshop. The external programming office had sponsored a day’s retreat, under the direction of the NIU Center for Governmental Studies, for LLI committee members to set aside time to determine the future of LLI as an organization. NIU Professor Greg Kuhn, from the center, was a masterful resource for that event. He praised our group dynamics as open and positive to individual opinions and perspectives, yet embracing collective goals for LLI as a whole. Afterward, he presented a summary report with the counsel to take the list developed and to work the vision into actions.

We tried to identify the internal strengths and weakness of LLI, as well as the external opportunities, the conditions and resources with which we were blessed, and the challenges that might hinder our programs. In the end, four major themes emerged: membership growth and retention, program enhancement, finances, and, finally, image and relationship building. Most of these issues come up at every Steering Committee meeting. We continue to make progress in all of these areas, yet the issues are far from checked off as “mission accomplished.”

Over my four years as chair of the LLI Steering Committee, I have been rewarded by everyone’s commitment and passion for LLI. You support our study groups with your attendance and participation. You suggest ideas for study groups. You patiently bear with technology problems. You tout LLI to your friends and in the community to bring us new members. You warmly welcome new members into our diverse mix. You attend luncheons and soirees to promote camaraderie, fellowship, and openness. You, the members, are our greatest strength.

LLI is now into its second decade. So, the Steering Committee met last summer under the guidance of Carol Zar to once again review our Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Challenges (SWOC). Carol had a career at the Center for Governmental Studies, where she developed the skills to lead groups to reflect, focus, plan, and take action. At that SWOC meeting, the committee decided to pursue several tasks. These included developing a mission statement, a marketing/membership committee, a speakers’ bureau for promoting LLI in the community, and a membership survey. (continued on Page 2)
AN ORGANIZED WOMAN

Have you noticed that those who welcome you to LLI classes each term are called conveners rather than teachers or instructors? That’s because content knowledge, while important, is not the only ingredient necessary to create a successful learning experience. Equally important, and sometimes more important, are organizational skills, an eye for talent, and a “big picture” view which can shape individual components into a cohesive program. That’s the kind of individual you’ll find in Sue Stelling, one of our newest and most effective conveners.

Sue and her husband, Dennis, grew up in the DeKalb area. They were high school sweethearts who married a year after graduation. Except for a brief time in California, while Dennis was in the military, they have lived here all their lives. While Sue earned a bachelor’s degree in journalism and public relations from NIU, her programming and organizational skills were demonstrated and honed in the jobs she has held.

In the early years, while she was mostly at home raising two young sons, Sue worked as an independent contractor, typing and editing theses and dissertations for NIU graduate students. Later she began a career at NIU where she worked as an administrative assistant in such varied offices as continuing education (a predecessor to external programming), technology commercialization, and the Graduate School.

Since retiring from NIU in 2007, Sue has jumped into LLI, both as a participant and as a convener, in her usual fashion—with both feet. She has already convened two very popular study groups, organizing one series of speakers on historical sites around DeKalb County and another series on faith-based groups in the area. In early winter, after a fun pre-holiday visit to her new grandchild in Pittsburgh, she was back in town to put the finishing touches on a new course for the winter LLI term. Moneywise was its intriguing title.

Moneywise included presentations by experts in public administration, real estate, insurance, and health care, providing practical information on many topics of interest to LLI participants. And given Sue’s meticulous planning, you know that it was well organized. After all, Sue is another example of why LLI means it when we say “No teaching experience required.” We know it can work for us!

—Brad Pietens

MUSINGS (continued from page 1)

With these goals in mind, who but Carol is perfect to become the new chair of the Steering Committee? Please support Carol, the Steering Committee, the external programming office, and the conveners with your input and participation, as we work to offer great educational opportunities for very active and inquisitive seniors.

The 2007 report ended with a wonderful observation about long range planning and vision that I would like to report here in closing:

“The art of progress is to preserve order amid change, and change amid order...” A.F. Whitehead
**WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

Since LLI is expanding the scope of its Notables lunch-time lectures, we are looking for a new name for the series that will more accurately reflect the inclusion of some speakers from off-campus, particularly on topics related to LLI study groups.

This spring, for example, Linc Smelser, an accomplished cellist and the conductor of DeKalb’s Kishwaukee Symphony Orchestra, will tell us about his experiences playing and touring with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

The Notables Committee welcomes suggestions for a new name, which need not include the word “Notable.” Send your ideas to any of the committee members listed below by April 15. The committee also welcomes suggestions for speakers at any time. Do let one of us know, by email or in person, of anyone whom you have heard, or heard of, in our region who might be a good speaker for LLI.

Elizabeth Bass, ebass@niu.edu
Arlene Neher, aneher@niu.edu
George Spencer, gspencer39@yahoo.com

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**LLI HISTORICAL TRIVIA**

1962: The first learning in retirement program, the Institute for Retired Professionals, began in New York City.

1988: The Elderhostel Institute Network (EIN), of which our LLI is a part, is set up to help individual programs.

2001: An Institute for Learning in Retirement, now named the Lifelong Learning Institute, is established at Northern Illinois University.

2012: More than 400 LLI throughout the United States, Canada, and Jamaica belong to EIN. —from *Working Together: Lifelong Learning Institutes & The Elderhostel Network*

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**WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

**Fall 2011**
Linda Corwin-Graber, Creston
Nancy Godfrey, Sycamore
William Godfrey, Sycamore
Daniel Graber, Creston
Mary Anne Kiser, Naperville
Susan Liebhaber, Sycamore
Mitchell Mabel, Ashton
Beverly Pigott, DeKalb
Frederick Quade, DeKalb
Rochelle Quade, DeKalb
Guy Todnem, Batavia
Nicholas Weber, Rochelle
Tony Xidis, DeKalb

**Winter 2012**
Anne Becker, St. Charles
Mary Joanne Burrows, Genoa
Bobbie Cesarek, DeKalb
Robert Conrad, DeKalb
Brian Fulton, DeKalb
Stephen Mansfield, Elburn
Dale Osterle, DeKalb
Forrest Troyer, DeKalb
Sharon Zollman, DeKalb

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**Mark Your Calendar!**

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<td>LLI Spring Term</td>
<td>March 20—May 10, 2012</td>
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<td>LLI Soiree</td>
<td>June 23, 2012</td>
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<td>LLI Summer Term</td>
<td>July 10—August 2, 2012</td>
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<td>LLI Fall Term</td>
<td>September 18—November 8, 2012</td>
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BLOOMING THIS SPRING AT LLI

March 20—May 10

World War II at Sea: Submarines, Codes, Convoys, and Tin Cans—Richard Dowen
Submarine warfare in the Atlantic and Pacific

Frontiers of Science—Jerrold Zar and Carol Zar
NIU faculty on recent developments in their disciplines

Peril on the Sea—George Spencer
Movies from Sink the Bismarck to Caine Mutiny to Mister Roberts

The Greater Journey—Paul Pawlowski & Sharon Tourville
American in Paris from David McCullough’s book The Greater Journey

Reconsidering Disability—Greg Long
Perceptions, history, issues on disability as a social construct

Comparative Religions—Joe Gastiger
Nature of religion and universal and unique elements of major religions

The Joy of Music from Vivaldi and Bach to Copland and Bernstein—Al Resis
Four Seasons, Water Music, Rite of Spring and other joyful works

Literature and Film: Responses to Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway—Lise Schlosser
Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway and Michael Cunningham’s The Hours

Castles, Palaces, and Vineyards in Europe: Location, Location, Location! - Dan Dillman
Geography and landscape’s influence on grand buildings and vineyards

Blue, White, and Red—Jan Graefen, Sue Lehto, Marilyn Loy & Jan Modloff
View and discuss film trio directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski

Digital Photography—James Womack
Conquer your fears; become familiar with your camera

IN MEMORIAM
Florence Alexander
Christine Hamilton

During a break, Dave Juday (seated, left), board chair of Ideal Industries, and Paul Borek, executive director of the DeKalb County Economic Development Corporation, chatted with LLI members Arnie Lehto (center), Arlene Neher, and Jerry Zar. Juday and Borek spoke on “DeKalb County and the Global Economy” for the winter study group on DeKalb County’s Business Climate, convened by Carol Zar.