



Lifelong Learning Institute  
at  
Northern Illinois University

Opening doors...

Building friendships...

Learning...  
for the fun of it!

Invite a friend  
to join the LLI!

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## Musings... *Carol Zar, Steering Committee Chair (out-going)*



I write this on one of the few hot summer days we've had so far. I've had time to think about what a great spring term, with record enrollment, we enjoyed and how interesting the current crop of summer offerings are. And, I'm pleased to say, the fall offerings also look great. I've already got some conflicts and will have to make tough choices as to what I can participate in.

But then choices are a part of life. We make easy ones, and then some that are tougher. The wide array of topics covered in LLI study groups allows us to engage in some things that are just fun and also avail ourselves of information that we may need to make decisions as we move into the next stage of our lives.

We also get to choose to participate in study groups that stimulate our minds and introduce us to new ideas and provide opportunities to rethink some older views. And, most important, we get to meet new people some of whom we would have had no other opportunity to get to know. I've had all those experiences during my time with LLI.

And now it's time to say goodbye, but only figuratively. As our fall term begins, I will be leaving my position as chair of the LLI Steering Committee and handing the reins over to Jerry Smith.

I've enjoyed my time "steering" the LLI ship, but I must let you in on a secret. With excellent committee chairs to oversee curriculum, notable lectures, cultural events, outreach activities, the annual soiree, the newsletter, special mailings and our finances, it's really been an easy job!

The staff in the CLA&S External Programming office is efficient and helpful in organizing registration and logistics, and the addition of our dedicated AV guru has made life at LLI most pleasant.

Making the choice to step down was the hard part; turning it over to Jerry Smith was the easy part. Jerry is full of enthusiasm and new ideas and will be a great leader for our institute. And I'll be there to keep watch, as I'll continue on the steering committee as past chair.

So, thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve...and see you in class!

## Musings... *Jerry Smith, Steering Committee Chair (in-coming)*



As those rock disc jockeys used to yell: "The hits just keep on coming!"

Following very successful terms this spring and summer, we prepare for another round of hits this fall. I'm privileged to take on the leadership of LLI's Steering Committee and the opportunity to learn amidst the company of very interesting people. And, our conveners this fall are as interesting as the study groups themselves. Allow me to elaborate...

Our first study group begins on a Tuesday morning, when longtime LLI convener **Dick Downen** reveals little-known facts about the "brass" in World War II. Those who have taken one of Dick's sessions before will tell you to hitch your saddle tight, since any Downen ride can be an adventure! Opposite Dick, **Sharon Tourville** will display the gentler side of convening as she steps up and repeats a study group, which she first convened 12 years ago, looking at Lewis and Clark's expedition into western America.

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## Steering LLI Forward *by Brad Pietens*



Sometimes we take LLI for granted. We look forward to new offerings each term without thinking much about the efforts required to make it all happen. Next spring, our LLI celebrates its 15th anniversary.

In anticipation of that event, now is a fitting time to reflect on how it all began. Charter members Pat and Gilby Mehagan played a pivotal role in those early days, through their regular enrollment in study groups, and especially by their service as co-chairs of the Steering Committee.

It would be logical to assume Pat and Gilby were native DeKalb County residents. After all, their farm, on land settled by Pat's great-grandfather in 1898, has long boasted a successful hog-farming operation. But it wasn't Pat's childhood home. She grew up in Oak Park in a home where learning was highly valued. A little known fact: Pat's mother held an advanced degree in anatomy from Northwestern University and met her husband, later to become a pathologist, when she was his professor in medical school. That's quite an amazing accomplishment for a woman of her era.

Gilby was from suburban LaGrange. They met in St. Louis when both were students at Washington University. They married after graduation and spent much of their married life on the east (New Jersey) and west (Los Angeles) coasts, where Gilby had a successful business career. Pat taught in the L.A. public schools during the tumultuous time when they were being integrated. Yet they frequently returned to Illinois for vacations and family reunions, always feeling renewed by the peacefulness of rural life.

When reflecting on their early LLI involvement, Pat says, "Well, we always loved to travel - internationally, and in the U.S. too. We especially enjoyed our Elderhostel trips, and that's where NIU got our names. When we heard they were thinking of starting an educational program for seniors, we wanted to be part of it." A smile crosses her face as she continues, "I just can't get over how many people enroll in the study groups nowadays! Back then, if we had seven or eight in a study group we thought we were doing well."

Pat continues to live in the rambling, old farmhouse overlooking Route 23 near Genoa, the home she and Gilby shared until his death in 2009. She's made changes to accommodate her limited mobility, and she no longer drives. "I like to say my body has finally caught up with my age," she jokes. Obviously, her quick wit and intellectual curiosity still are intact. Her daughter Ginny has settled in Sycamore, and the recent arrival of her first great-grandchild has been a special joy.

While Pat no longer finds it possible to take study groups, she has long served on the Soiree Committee and was able to attend this year's event in June. She remains an enthusiastic LLI supporter and is proud of her history with LLI. It is no exaggeration to say that such solid leadership at the outset has paved the way for the quality program we enjoy today.

### Speaking of LLI...

"I wasn't kidding about you all being WAY more engaging than most of my students."

– *Steven Howell, Spring Notable, NIU Department of Kinesiology & Physical Education*

"I'm interested in finding out things I didn't know I was interested in."

– *LLI member, overheard in the elevator*

"I didn't know what I was going to do in retirement.

LLI is the greatest suggestion anyone ever gave me!"

– *LLI member, overheard at break*

"The greatest benefit has been meeting a diverse group of people, from all walks of life."

– *Brian Fulton, in a column about LLI for the NIU Annuitants newsletter*

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Who would have thought that a pair with vastly different career paths – **Pat Vary** (biological science) and **Jerry Smith** (printing and philanthropy) – could end up convening a study group on Broadway musicals? Well, we're going to do it...on Tuesday afternoons. It should prove to be toe-tapping fun!

Retired management professor **Lynn Neeley** absolutely loves technology and the innovations it brings to our everyday lives. She'll keep her LLI Wednesday morning study group fascinated, I guarantee it. The same goes with political scientist **Clark Neher**, a veteran convener of LLI study groups ranging from opera to Southeast Asia. His Wednesday afternoon study group looks at why some nations are rich, others poor. And, to close out that day, ever-popular historians **George and Elaine Spencer** take another look at the 1950s. I'd expect their study group, once again, to be an enrollment-buster.

It's very difficult, at times, to choose between study groups, and Thursdays promise that dilemma. The morning serves up LLI guru and political junkie **Carol Zar** teaming with retired accounting professor and railroad enthusiast **Bill Cummings** as they delve into World War I. And, one of my favorite muckraking journalists, **Barry Schrader**, will interview a number of local personalities, as he convenes *Conversations with VIPs (Very Interesting People)*.

Thursday afternoon will feature geographer and former Detroit Tigers batboy **Dan Dillman** as he again displays his varied interests, convening a session on maps and flags. Dan is an interesting chap, to say the least. During that same time frame, **Gary Glenn** will provide a thought-provoking examination of college education. An expert in our Constitution and political philosophy, Gary is a retired Distinguished Professor at NIU and a previous LLI convener.

So, come join us...this fall will provide a great way to introduce yourself as a newcomer...or a wonderful opportunity to again spend time with **LLI** friends. Who knows, you may want to consider being a convener yourself come next term!



# LLI Fall Pizza Party

Friday, September 11, 2015  
11:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Pizza Pros  
1205 W. Lincoln Highway, DeKalb

- \$10 per person, payable at the door (advance reservations are requested)
- Pizza & Salad Buffet (includes non-alcoholic beverages)
- Cash bar for wine & beer

RSVP to Jan Modloff by **Friday, September 4**  
modsspanish@yahoo.com  
(815) 895-9824 [please leave message]

## COMING THIS FALL TO LLI

September 15 - November 5 (All study groups eight weeks, unless noted.)

**Star Wars in Europe** – Dick Downen

Impact of conflicts among generals during World War II

**The Journey of Discovery** (6 weeks) – Sharon Tourville

Adventures & discoveries of the Lewis & Clark expedition

**Music...Music...Musicals!** – Pat Vary & Jerry Smith

Listen to & Learn about landmark shows and songs

**History & Invention: James Burke's Connections** – Lynn Neeley

Interactions & relation of science, history, & technology

**Why are Some Nations Rich & Some Poor?** (5 weeks)

– Clark Neher

Factors in failure or success of economic development

**The 1950s: Part 2** – Elaine Spencer & George Spencer

China, Joe McCarthy, the Iron Curtain, Sid Caesar, & more

**Conversation with VIPs (Very Interesting Persons)** (4 weeks)

– Barry Schrader

Guest speakers discuss their careers, answer questions

**The World at War: 1914-1918** – Bill Cummings & Carol Zar

Alliances, politics, battles, consequences of World War I

**Flags & Maps** – Dan Dillman

Flags histories & meanings, maps properties & projections

**Contemporary Criticisms of College Education** – Gary Glenn

Costs, political correctness, value of education, preparedness, etc.

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

#### Winter 2015

Deb Booth, DeKalb  
 Peggy Carlson, Sugar Grove  
 Richard Carlson, Sugar Grove  
 Ronald Jerak, Oak Brook  
 James Reynolds, Aurora  
 Randy Vest, Sycamore

#### Spring 2015

Vicki Lantz, St. Charles  
 Mary Snow, Genoa  
 Paul Stromborg, Sycamore

#### Summer 2015

Nancy Detig, Rochelle  
 Judy Emerson, Genoa  
 Victoria Naughton, Geneva  
 Nathan Thomas, Sycamore  
 Judith Wright, DeKalb

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Fall Pizza Party	Friday, September 11, 2015
LLI Fall Term	September 15—November 5, 2015
LLI Winter Term	January 19—February 11, 2016
LLI Spring Term	March 15—May 5, 2016

### IN MEMORIAM

Tom Diedrich  
 Heinz Osterle  
 Jerry Piper  
 Forrest Troyer  
 E. Blythe Stason  
 Mary Wiegele



## Celebrating Friendship

“Marvelous food and great conversation,” is how one LLier summed up this year’s June Soiree. It was our eighth annual evening to just enjoy each other’s company outside of the classroom, and over 70 members and guests were there. Special thanks to all the great cooks who provided hors d’oeuvres and desserts; to the talented Marlene Pawlowski, who made all the flower arrangements; and to the Soiree Committee, chaired by the most capable Gail Venteau.