

# Lifelong Learning Institute

Fall 2016 NIU LLI NEWSLETTER

ROADSCHOLAR



Northern Illinois  
University

**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...

*Jerry Smith, Steering Committee Chair*



I recently asked newsletter editor **Elizabeth Bass** about “Musings,” the name of this column. I had been thinking about naming it something different, but after Elizabeth told me that the name had been used from this publication’s inception, I decided not to mess with it.

Having said that, however, my comments this time around could definitely be considered “musings,” since I’d like to share a potpourri of miscellany...something akin to long-time LLI member **Dan Dillman**, whose Huntley radio show is titled *A Little Bit of This & A Little Bit of That*. I suspect Dan may be looking over future Lifelong Learning schedules for potential LLI –related topics for his radio gig.

First of all, kudos to our summer term conveners and tour coordinator **Sue Stelling** for their efforts in July. DeKalb Police Chief **Gene Lowery** and his staff deserve special thanks for opening up their facility for summer’s first two weeks.

Our fall term schedule will once again serve up a myriad of diverse offerings, including two new conveners – **Donna Benson** and **Judie Wright** – who will be teaming up on Thursday morning’s study group they’ve titled *Drugs, Society, and Human Behavior*. Neither Donna or Judie are new to LLI, having been study group participants for several years, but their decision to step up and convene a study group on which they both have interest and experience is to be commended. Thank you!

We’re pretty firm in scheduling Holmes Student Center space once again and our NIU staff continue in their attempts to secure larger rooms for LLI. That effort, coupled with the purchase this year of new audio-visual equipment facilitated by our Community Foundation grant, should provide a better classroom experience for us all. Speaking of HSC, a big shout-out to its director **Norm Jenkins**, who retired this past summer. Norm, along with his Center staff, was extremely cooperative in making HSC as comfortable as possible, and we will continue to work with the new director, Ian Crone.

As mentioned in the spring, we hope to utilize Ellington’s restaurant this fall, probably as a term-ending luncheon that will hopefully feature presentations by NIU hospitality/nutrition students. If the cuisine is as interesting and colorful as last year’s affair, we’ll be in for a tasty treat. Stay tuned for more information.

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## Deep DeKalb Roots



Pat McKinley is a hometown girl in the truest sense. She was born in DeKalb's old Glidden Hospital, graduated from DeKalb High School, and grew up helping out in her family's downtown business, Wright's Gift Store. Following graduation, she attended Stevens Career College in Chicago, which led to her first "real" job with Hanover Insurance. She married and lived briefly in Indiana where her oldest son was born. But things came full circle when her husband accepted a job offer with DeKalb Ag and Pat returned to her hometown. Her second son was born here, and Pat has been home ever since.

Always a career woman, Pat began working, while a young mom, for the local phone company and followed it through all its permutations—from Continental Telephone to Contel to GTE and eventually to Verizon, from which she retired after 25 years. Still too young to collect a pension, Pat rounded out her professional life by working in the NIU Parking Division for another 13 years. Her first awareness of LLI was simply a matter of curiosity: She wondered what kind of special students got to park in the pay lot for only two bucks.

When she retired—for the second time—in 2012, Pat decided to explore LLI. At first she assumed its members would mostly be retired professors and wondered if she'd feel welcome. But the topics were intriguing, so she gave it a try. One of her earliest study groups was on patriotism, taught by Dick Downen. She found the people friendly and the discussions stimulating; after her first term, she was hooked. Not only has she been a regular enrollee ever since, but she's also been an enthusiastic cheerleader for the program. (Among her recruits is her sister, Judie Wright, who will be co-convening a study group on addiction this fall.)

With both of her sons and all three grandchildren living within easy driving distance, and her sister recently retired, Pat doesn't lack for family activities. Additionally, she sings in her church choir and in the biannual Celebration Chorale concerts. She also served as a DeKalb township trustee for eight years and is still involved in local Republican politics.

But LLI is one of the cornerstones of her social life. Pat has convened a study group on actor John Wayne, and this fall will lead a four-week discussion series on the life and work of Frank Sinatra. The continued growth and success of LLI has certainly been enhanced by members like Pat McKinley, who is not only a faithful participant, but also has encouraged a number of friends and former classmates to "give it a try—you'll love it!"

--Brad Pietens

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## Eating at Ellingtons

Watch your email for info on another fall LLI luncheon in the Ellington Room at the Holmes Student Center. Once the fall term starts, if you want to eat there at other times, you can check the menus at [www.niu.edu/ellingtons/](http://www.niu.edu/ellingtons/).

## Did You Know...

LLI members Barry Schrader, Jerry Smith, and Kathy Gosnell Seiler all were enrolled in the winter 2016 *News & Views* study group. The first day, over break, they quickly realized that, while undergraduates, they had all worked on the *Northern Star*, the NIU student newspaper, at the same time. Soon after, they found that classmate Sue Lehto was another *Star* alum.

Lise Schlosser, LLI convener and the office manager for our NIU parent, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences External Programming, received an NIU Outstanding Service Award this spring. She was one of four recipients from over 1,530 civil service staff. Lise has convened several LLI study groups and will offer *John Adams: The Often-Overlooked Founding Father* this fall. She does all this while also being a doctoral student in the NIU English department!

If you pay the special LLI rate of \$2 to park in the NIU Visitor's Lot, be sure and get a receipt. That receipt entitles you to in-and-out privileges for the rest of the day.

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### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

LLI Fall 2016 Term	September 13 - November 3, 2016
LLI Winter 2017 Term	January 17 - February 9, 2017
LLI Spring 2017 Term	March 14 - May 4, 2017
LLI Summer 2017 Term	July 11 - August 3, 2017

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Also on this fall's agenda will be Cultural Events Committee chair **Pat Vary's** array of special outings, along with another outstanding schedule of Tuesday Notables luncheons, coordinated by chair **George Spencer**. I continue to marvel at the variety of Notables topics that George and his committee members **Elizabeth Bass**, **Linda Schwarz**, **Joanne Dillman** and **Arlene Neher** come up with each year. And, I'd be remiss not to mention that, once again, Lifelong Learning will be sending a team to Altrusa's DeKalb County Community Spelling Bee. That entry is spearheaded by our own **Sue Lehto**, and will be held in late October.

So, as you can see, there are many people who devote considerable time in helping to make LLI the great organization it is. Our future sustainability will depend on many things, including the infusion of new blood into our group. Whether it's suggesting a study group topic...volunteering to serve on one of our LLI committees...asking a friend to come along with you some day...or, yes, considering convening a study group on something that you are passionate about, we welcome your participation.

As I prepare for my second year as your Steering Committee chair, I'm as excited as ever at the momentum that is ours. Let's hold on to it...grow it...and work together to keep our collective minds sharper as we "go to study group" at Lifelong Learning.

## **COMING THIS FALL TO LLI**

September 13 - November 3 (All study groups eight weeks, unless noted.)

**Election-Year Politics** – Elizabeth Bass & Carol Zar

Issues & candidates, presidential, congressional & gubernatorial

**Something Wicked This Way Comes: Decoding the Demonic in Everyday Life**

Joe Gastiger - The concept of the demonic over time; who & what is the devil

**John Adams: The Often-Overlooked Founding Father** – Lise Schlosser

Adams, his family, his turbulent times; based on the HBO series

**All or Nothing At All** (4 weeks) – Pat McKinley

Frank Sinatra's life & his music

**America: The Land - The People** - Linda Fulton

Places & people that define America

**The *Up Series* Continued** (4 weeks) - Marilyn Loy

Documentary subjects in middle age in films made every seven years

**The 1960s: Part Two** - Elaine Spencer & George Spencer

Social & political changes including identity politics & the counterculture

**Drugs, Society, and Human Behavior** - Donna Benson & Judie

Wright - Whys, effects, types of addiction & abuse

**The Reconstruction Era** (7 weeks) - Dick Downen

Ad hoc solutions, freedom & freed slaves, South vs. North

### WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

#### Winter 2016

Maureen McAllister, Rockford  
Maja Shoemaker, Oregon

#### Spring 2016

Margaret Carlton, DeKalb  
Greg Lindsay, DeKalb  
Rosemarie Slavenas, Sycamore  
Fayeann Stone, DeKalb  
Gail Taylor, DeKalb

## **Back To Our Beginnings**

History is always a popular topic with LLI members, so here is some LLI history.

The NIU LLI's first term was in spring 2001 when it was called the Institute for Learning in Retirement, so this spring marked the beginning of our sixteenth year. Seventy-seven people enrolled in study groups and workshops that first term. A year later, in our fourth term of offerings, there were 86 enrollees, 74 renewing and 12 new.

The eight study groups that first term included *Future Presidential Elections* (remember the hanging chads of 2000?), *Topics in Contemporary Science*, and *The U.S.—1800s through Reconstruction*. *Surfing the World Wide Web* was among four workshops offered. Notable topics included "A Night Out with Neanderthals" and "Images of Lincoln in Hollywood Film."

Since 2012, every spring term has had over 100 members enrolled; this year it was 104. Fall term usually has the largest enrollment, with spring coming in second, then winter, then summer. Eighty-six members enrolled in our winter 2016 term, a 41 percent increase from the 61 enrolled five years ago in 2011.

### IN MEMORIAM

Sharon Downen  
Cliff Eaton  
Sol Feldman  
Ellen Piper