

# Founders'

A Newsletter of the Friends  
of Northern Illinois University Libraries



# Type

Issue No. 33  
Fall 2003

## *President's Column*

Welcome to a new and exciting season of programming organized by the Friends of the libraries. Our first program this year, a talk by Dr. John Dirk Wassner, who recently commanded in Iraq what we used to call a MASH unit, was timely, interesting, and well-attended. I envision a season packed with more excitement and attendance. We have additional programming on the prairie, electronic library resources (a particularly favorite subject of mine), therapeutic cloning and public policy (another timely topic), and the exploration of space. There is something for everyone, and I hope you will attend these events.



### *Programs at Founders*

*Founders Online: An Introduction  
to Electronic Resources*

Mary Munroe, Presenter

Wed., Nov. 19th, 7:30 pm

Founders Library, Room 297

Space Limited, RSVP

*Therapeutic Cloning and Public Policy*

Prof. Andrea Bonnicksen

Thurs., Feb. 19th, 2004, 7:30 pm

Founders Library Staff Lounge,

Lower Level

*From DeKalb to the Moon and Beyond*

Emil Schiesser, Presenter

Wed., Mar. 3rd, 2004, 7:30 pm

Engineering Bldg. Auditorium, EB 101

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e-mail: libraryfriend@niu.edu

In addition to exciting programming activities, the board has undertaken this year to revise and update our by-laws, and a committee has been formed to lead that effort. The goal is to have a proposed set of updated by-laws to present to the next annual meeting. Anyone with an interest in that effort is welcome to contact me.

As a group, we as Friends of the Libraries now have an opportunity to make the world a slightly better place. As the State of Illinois struggles with a budget deficit, higher education, and libraries there, will no doubt experience reduced state support. The reduced support can lead to gaps in the collections of our libraries if not offset by other resources, gaps that could make our world a little bit less than it could be. We can help reduce the permanent effect such a reduction will have on the collections, by our membership in the Friends, and by further supporting the libraries.

Like many of you, I joined the Friends because of its support of the libraries. As a lawyer, I like to think I understand the value of books and education, in our society. The Friends to me seem to be a great way to support both.

--Lawrence A. Stein

President, Friends of NIU Libraries

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## *Valuing Libraries: A Donor's Perspective* --James Pick, Friends Member

Libraries are a treasured resource to develop a lifelong education. In the digital age, this is even more true, rather than less so. A library is a way of expanding one's depth and breadth of knowledge, to critically examine many questions and issues, whether in life, hobbies, or one's works.

My own experience got off to a good start growing up in a Chicago suburban home among many family books. In my master's degree at NIU in the late 60s, I consulted a fine college library, that today is much larger and appropriate for a Research I University. I remember, however, a library that was welcoming in every respect – like NIU, it was friendly and encouraging, a place where I spent many productive hours.

Since leaving NIU, I have benefited as a professor from libraries, including at the University of California and University of Redlands. Like many faculty, my own office and home libraries have gotten too big, but parting with a familiar book is difficult! I feel that the library is one of the cornerstones of any university, and that the resource must be carefully cultivated, cared for, and supported. It is important for the university, its alumni, and community to provide it with the necessary encouragement, feedback, funds, and resources. The digital age has pushed the library out of its brick and mortar to the office or home desktop, yet it's not helpful there without the same age-old ingredients – staff who know about the quality sources of knowledge, an organized way to sort through the exploding volume of information, human sources to go to when the electronic doesn't quite do it, and diversity and breadth of materials. With today's electronics, I go and sit physically less today in a comfortable corner of a library, but I'm there in spirit, and have added an appreciation when I visit it.

Finally, I regard a public university library as a resource not only for the talented professors and students privileged to be near it, but also as a community resource for anyone to walk in, seek information and knowledge, ask questions, and learn about whatever is important to them, their work, and interests. The NIU Library has always struck me as that kind of resource, for its scholars and learners and for the DeKalb and the broad regional community.

### *Friends Lecture:* *Dr. John Dirk Wassner on Afghanistan* --Glen Gildemeister, Treasurer

Local surgeon John Wassner provided the first evening program of the year for the Friends of NIU Libraries. Speaking in Terwilliger Auditorium, Dr. Wassner mused "I transfused more blood in my nine months in Afghanistan than I have in my entire career, I think. Over one hundred units."

Wassner provided his audience with a first-hand, on-the-ground account of Operation Enduring Freedom rarely seen through the eyes of the American mass media. "We lived in tents all the time," he related. They worked, too, with people in a nearby hospital in Khost. "We did some teaching. We shared supplies with the local hospital." *Continued on the next page...*



Through a series of color photographs Dr. Wassner, Commander of the U.S. Army 909<sup>th</sup> Forward Surgical Team, showed local conditions and the efforts of his team to ameliorate the suffering of people caught in the firepower of a combat zone. The goal of his team, he said, was “to provide battlefield resuscitative care.” That care included locals as well as American military personnel and the range of injuries from gunshots and land mines presented challenges well beyond the experience of those in the audience. “We move with the battle,” he said.

“Damage control is a naval term; it’s a way to buy time. Sometimes simple control of bleeding can save a life. We learned that in Vietnam. We may not fix the problem but we can get the patient to the next level of care.”

Stationed near the Pakistan border just outside the Afghan city of Khost, Dr. Wassner and his team spent nine months working from a base camp at 4,000 feet in the Hindu Kush Mountains. He spoke of the strength of the Afghan people who have endured now decades of war and whose land has been mined over and over again by various armies. Many of the wounds he saw among the locals came from the unexploded mines and ordinance dotting the barren landscape. Some of the victims were children whose lives either ended or were forever changed in a moment by an encounter with a landmine.

The 909<sup>th</sup> team of twenty personnel working under Commander Wassner included two general surgeons, one orthopedic surgeon, and an assortment of nurses and medics. His photographs showed an extraordinarily sophisticated level of care and medical equipment operating in a tent under the most difficult of conditions including the severe Afghan winter.

Dr. Wassner’s sharing of his personal journey into the tragedy of war was both sober and heartening. In the midst of violence and carnage the 909<sup>th</sup> Forward Surgical Team not only brought medical care to American military victims, they brought compassion and humanitarian care to the Afghans caught between the American military and the Taliban. It was a stunning presentation and the Friends are in Dr. Wassner’s debt for beginning our program year with a real education in how the United States war on terror is playing out in the field.

### *Meet Ging Smith*

Ging Smith is the new Senior Gift and Estate Planning Officer for the University Libraries. Her role is to raise funds for the libraries. Her extensive education includes two bachelor’s degrees in English and education from the University of San Jose Recoletos in the Philippines, a master’s degree in English from the University of San Carlos, and a master’s in journalism from NIU. She came to NIU as a Fulbright Scholar in 1972. It was the “hand of fate” which brought Smith to NIU because her choices included Syracuse and Ohio State, although the chance to study at NIU with the same professor who taught Walter Cronkite when he was a student at Texas was too big to

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miss. While here at NIU, the government in the Philippines declared martial law and she could not return home. Fortunately, Smith managed to find both employment through practical training and her future husband, Jerry Smith.

Smith taught courses in journalism and English at Kishwaukee College from 1974 to 1994 as well as serving as advisor to the student newspaper. In 1994, she became the Dean of Development and College Relations until her retirement in 2002. Accomplishments at Kishwaukee College include marketing two referendums in which the voters responded positively. The latest successful referendum resulted in a \$20 million dollar building expansion without raising taxes at that time. She also completed a Management Development Program (MDP) at Harvard University in 1998, worked with the Alumni Association, and served as Executive Director of the College Foundation.

Over the years she became involved with the Society of Professional Journalists, the DeKalb Chamber of Commerce, and the DeKalb County Housing Authority which helps provide low-income housing for residents. Her involvement at Kishwaukee College and the community earned her an ATHENA Award in 1995. The ATHENA Award is a national program in which chambers of commerce participate. The award recognizes accomplishments of women in leadership roles in their community and professional achievements.

Smith does not golf nor does she have any hobbies. In her words, “Retirement was driving me crazy” and she decided to return to the workforce. She selected the job opening at NIU for several reasons. First, she graduated from NIU and she wanted to help her alma mater. Second, she appreciates the role of President John Peters in trying to provide a quality education. Lastly, she cited NIU’s increased emphasis on research.

If you have not yet met Ging Smith, perhaps you will have that opportunity at one of the next Friends programs.

### *Dean’s Column*

#### **--Dr. Arthur Young, University Libraries**



The University Libraries continue to make progress on a number of fronts. Our compact shelving installation in the library basement became operational this past year, and several hundred thousand volumes of older serials and little-used monographs are being transported to this area. This migration from the upper levels to the compact storage site will continue over the next 12 to 18 months.

We have nearly completed the text and layout for a new promotional brochure for the University Libraries. It will be a handsome production, which will tell our important story over the past century. A copy will be mailed to all Friends later this fall. We would appreciate your feedback and comments, as always. Other important components of our enhanced development activities include a revision of the bylaws which will address such issues as the size of the board to ensure greater participation, and a series of small dinners with potential donors. And, we are delighted to welcome the Libraries’ new development officer, Mrs. Ging Smith.

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Operationally, we have acquired and will soon implement a serials access system which will enable users of our web site to more directly access our 6,000 electronic journals. This product will enable us, for the first time, to generate statistics on the actual use of our electronic journal collection.

The Horatio Alger Society last convened at NIU in 1999. This national society will again hold its annual convention in May, 2004. NIU is pleased to serve as the host. The library annually sponsors a Horatio Alger Fellowship competition, and one of our recent winners will be speaking during the Society's convention.

I am especially pleased to announce that the University Libraries' digital unit has secured another grant, one for \$211,000 from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, to launch a website project on "Mark Twain's Mississippi." This project underscores the library's commitment to the dissemination of knowledge and the provision of value-added educational experiences for the global learning community.

## Thank You!



Thanks to the help of generous donations from the Friends, the University Libraries purchased eight medieval manuscript leaves (two pages, front and back) for NIU students to view in person. In the past, students needed to make special field trips to Chicago. Some of the manuscripts served as part of homework assignments for art and English students already this semester. Without donors like the Friends, the Library would not be able to own such magnificent works of book art.

*Detail of a leaf from a French Bible in Latin from the 13th century. King Solomon forms the decoration for the letter "O."*

### *New Look for the Newsletter!!*

*Art Graduate Student Jess Witte redesigned the artwork on the newsletter. It features images found throughout the library. Do any of them look familiar? Also, postage charges to mail out the newsletter turned out to be higher with advertising than without, compared to how little money the advertising brought into the Friends. Therefore, no more ads will appear in the newsletter.*

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## *Life Members*

*Adra Baker-Gallagher  
Glen and Dawn Ericksen  
Deanne Holzberlein  
Barbara and David Johnson-Wint  
Ron and Karen Klein  
William and Josephine Monat  
James Block Pick  
Gordon Rasmussen  
Peggy Sullivan  
Russell and Betty Wood  
Jerrold and Carol Zar*

*Paul and Jean Burtness  
Glen and Jamie Gildemeister  
E. Nelson and Marilyn S. James  
Martin and Harriet Kallich  
John Jefferson and Judith M. Looney  
Todd and Joanne Nebel  
Mark Richard and Alice Priebe  
Lawrence Rast  
Rebekah Wilson  
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