I made use of the college library by borrowing books other than scientific books, such as all of the plays by George Bernard Shaw, the writing of Edgar Allan Poe. The college library helped me to develop a broader aspect on life.
- Linus Pauling, scientist

Up-coming Program:

History of Illinois Valleys
Presented by: Steve Stout
Wednesday, February 21, 2001, 7:00pm
See page 8 for additional information and the backcover for a reservation form.

The Friends web-site:
http://libws66.lib.niu.edu/friends/

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From the President ...

When I was in third or fourth grade, the contents of the country school building belonging to Bell School District 101 were sold at public auction. The Bell School was a country school located across the road from the family farm where I grew up. It was closed shortly before I started school. It was the school where my grandfather and his brothers and sisters received some of their education and my father, for a very short time, was on the Board of Education of the school. In any event, at the auction they sold all of the contents of the school as well as the building itself. My father purchased the entire library of the school, as well as the bell which hung in the bell tower, for $1.25. I recall that we loaded all of the books in the car and they filled the entire trunk and all of the back seat and part of the front seat and then we hauled them home. I still have many of those books, all of which are stamped Bell School District 101 in the front cover. Besides many children’s books, the collection included many of the old classics by such authors as Cooper, Dickens, and Alcott. I think that this is when I became a book collector or at least an accumulator of books.

I have often thought that the backbone of the Bell School District 101 school was its library. The teachers, students and board members tended to come and go but the library remained constant. I was looking in one of the books the other day and the date 1895 appeared in it. That particular book was in the library at the Bell School for over 50 years. I believe that the library at that little one room country school was extremely important to the welfare of the school and to the education of the students that attended that school, just as the library at Northern Illinois University is extremely important to the welfare of the University and for the education of the students attending the University. It is just as much the backbone of Northern Illinois University as the small library was for the Bell School District 101. If the library suddenly disappeared, how long would the University be able to function? That is why, when I was approached in 1982 about assisting in starting an NIU Friends of the Library, I was immediately interested. NIU Friends of the Library started in the Fall of 1982 and has grown steadily since then. We have been able to raise funds for the library through membership dues in the organization, earnings from our...
Correction

The final Friends’ program, The First American Civil War: Violence in the Countryside, 1775-1783, to be presented by Dr. Allan Kulikoff, has been rescheduled. It will now take place on Wednesday, April 11, 2001, at 7:30 p.m. in the Staff Lounge of Founders Memorial Library. Please mark these changes on your calendar. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

Library Exhibits

Founders Memorial Library Lobby:
Title: Library of Congress - America’s Treasure
Now through January 31, 2001

Southeast Asia Collection:
Title: Art of Burma - Recent Acquisitions; and New Hope for the Common Man
Now through February 28, 2001

Rare Books & Special Collections:
Title: Books Throughout History; and An Historical Look at Chicago
Now through January 31, 2001

Note: A campus wide exhibit will be mounted in February in honor of Black History Month
From the Dean’s Office

I am pleased, once again, to comment on library developments over the past year. Progress on the facilities front has been nothing short of spectacular. We received final approval for an additional $4.5 million for the construction of our remote compact storage facility in the basement of Founders Library. Compact shelving will enable us to store between 600,000 and 750,000 volumes, and will accommodate future space needs for the next 15-20 years. Construction should begin some time in late spring, 2001. We recently opened another branch library, this one at NIU-Naperville. The 1500 square foot facility will house about a dozen computers, 300 or 400 ready reference volumes, and comfortable seating for many students. The Faraday compact shelving project was completed in late spring, and is now operational. The front door of the library was replaced, a long overdue safety and aesthetic need. Also, next spring, the university will begin a landscape and recontouring project in front of the library to complete the landscaping which was part of the original Martin Luther King Commons plan.

We recently appointed two Horatio Alger Fellowships for the Study of American Popular Culture, reinforcing our commitment to these collections and to scholarship in this area. The two students, Kyoko Amano and Felicia Carr, are doctoral students from the State University of New York at Binghamton and George Mason University, respectively. Within the next several weeks, our Horatio Alger collection will be augmented by another 600 volumes, bringing our holdings to more than 3,000 Alger volumes.

Last September, President Peters toured the library, and generously accorded the library faculty and staff ample time for questions and answers. A thoroughly enjoyable and informative time was had by all.

We received a $130,000 grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to further our efforts on the Abraham Lincoln Digitization Project. This nationally prominent website, which focuses on Lincoln the young man and campaigner, is being promoted this fall as a fully operational site, with particular value to the K-12 community. I encourage all of our friends to visit our various digital projects, which can be found on our home page. The library was proud to receive a planning grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for a regional humanities center. This challenge grant provides an opportunity to raise up to $15 million over a seven-year period. We are currently in the process of identifying project ideas and coordinating with other key institutions in preparation for submitting a full grant proposal next summer. If this grant should materialize, there will be many funding opportunities for digitization projects, visiting professorships, student support, and many outreach activities.

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Once again, through the generosity of the Friends, three expensive purchases were made this year for the University Libraries in the areas of architecture, biotechnology, and toxicology.

I am pleased once again to salute the NIU community of library advocates and higher education supporters. Your commitment does make a difference, and enables us to achieve that extra measure of academic excellence in the Library.

- Arthur P. Young
Dean of the NIU Libraries
Giles Presents Nelson Algren

The new school year started out with the first program of the Friends of NIU Libraries program series, “Nelson Algren: Chicago, the Radical Vision,” presented by Dr. James Giles. Dr. Giles, professor of English at NIU since 1970, has published extensively on modern American novelists, focusing on Chicago novelists such as Willard Motley and Nelson Algren. Notable for this topic is Dr. Giles’ Confronting the Horror: the novels of Nelson Algren (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1989).

Algren, referred to as “the most Chicago of writers,” humanized the oppressed and reminded us of the persons they were. Algren’s realism was part of a long line of twentieth century writing where life and literature intersected. Other examples would include Upton Sinclair’s The Jungle, Theodore Dreiser’s The Titan, James Farrell’s Studs Lonigan, and the writings of Richard Wright.

Algren’s most noted book, The Man With the Golden Arm, won the first ever National Book Award for fiction in 1950. At the same award ceremony, Ralph Rusk won for nonfiction and William Carlos Williams for poetry. Algren’s book was the first extended treatment of drug addiction in a novel, and was later made into a movie starring Frank Sanatra and Kim Novak. Algren hated the movie. Algren’s narrative brought home the essential humanness of grotesque lumpen proletariat characters. There were no other similar characters in American literature. The novel built on literature established in the writings of Maksim Gorky, who developed socialist realism, and Fyodor Dostoyevsky, who combined religious mysticism with profound psychological insight.

The National Book Award greatly heightened Algren’s reputation, though he personally failed in garnering publicity and self-promotion. He became an outcast and was nearly forgotten during the McCarthy era of the fifties. Though not considered a major American writer, starting in the sixties, Algren became, and still is, a cult figure. The primary audience for his writings is writers, not academics.

Algren’s writings are being kept alive by a few academics including Dr. Giles and other interested parties such as the Nelson Algren Committee in Chicago. Other activities include Algren reprints through the efforts of small publishing houses, notably, Four Walls Eight Windows and Thunder’s Mouth. Larger presses have found Algren too much of a black sheep, but small presses represent a kind of literary anti-establishment that are quite willing to renew Algren’s voice.

For further reading, Dr. Giles recommended Sidney H. Bremer’s Urban Intersections: Meetings of Life and Literature in the United States (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992). Noteworthy in this book is Chapter 4, “Chicago’s Residential Novels and Their Social Roots.”

--Byron Anderson
Eggleston Demonstrates His Art

The best thing to do with a book that is falling apart is to leave it alone. Home repairs almost always fail, and the damage done makes the professional repair more expensive. In time, Matt Eggleston learned that there was a lot of demand for bookbinding. Much of the business comes from used book dealers. Additional business comes from the rebinding of books from personal collections, such as family bibles, county atlases, and works of modern fiction. The binding of books proceeds one book at a time. The expense can be considerable, with costs varying widely and commonly ranging from $50 to $200.

With the aid of slides, Mr. Eggleston walked the audience through the various stages and types of bookbinding. He introduced a lot of bindery equipment and jargon with clear explanations. While the presentation was not a how-to, audience members likely learned a great deal about the trade. Mr. Eggleston denied that there were any “overarching concepts” in bookbinding, though in the end he provided two. First, it is time consuming, and waits of two months up to one year are not uncommon. Second, when a book is in bad shape, bindery work is traditionally acceptable. This distinguishes it from antique collecting. Whereas antique collecting focuses on retaining or restoring the original, binding will always change the original work.

This advice was provided by Matt Eggleston, the second speaker in this year’s Friends of NIU Libraries program series. The October 18th presentation was entitled, “The Art of Bookbinding and Preserving.”

Mr. Eggleston is a professional bookbinder and owner of The Village Booksmith in Creston, Illinois, a business of hand binding, book repair, and restoration. His interest in bookbinding started when he received a shabby copy of James Joyce’s *Ulysses* as a gift. He wondered if it could be made to look better, but learned quickly that bookbinding was complex and required a lot of tools. The trade could not be learned from book study; it required hands-on experience.

While visiting Madison, Wisconsin, one day, Mr. Eggleston stopped in the Mendota Bindery. Following discussion with the owner, Chris Brown, Matt Eggleston learned that Mr. Brown wanted to move overseas, but was unable to take the heavy bookbinding equipment with him. Upon further inquiry, Mr. Brown agreed to sell the business to Mr. Eggleston and train him in the bookbindery trade. The training took one year and was completed in 1997. At that time, Matt Eggleston moved the business to Creston.

Following the presentation, members were able to talk one-on-one with Mr. Eggleston to ask him their questions about book repair.
A Whitman Mystery Unveiled

In the Walt Whitman Collection at Founders Memorial Library, Northern Illinois University, there is a copy of the seventh edition, thirteenth printing (1888) of Complete Poems & Prose of Walt Whitman 1855...1888 by Walt Whitman [Ferguson Bros. & Co., Printers, Philadelphia, 1888]. On the verso of the “Note at Beginning,” is the hand-written inscription that this is “Edition: Six Hundred, Number Nine.” This edition has a binding that varies from the descriptions given in Joel Myerson’s Walt Whitman: A Descriptive Bibliography (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1993). The first thought might be that FML is in possession of a rare publisher’s binding variant of a limited edition! Nevertheless, the editor and associates of the Papers of the Bibliographical Society of America, who replied to a query about the above item, said that this was not the case. The books in this edition were too large for the original binding, and as a result, many were rebound by someone other than the publisher, such as the current owner of the book.

The book is not without interest, however, to Whitman scholars and enthusiasts. There are several insertions of paraphernalia from the time period, as well as photographs of Whitman, which have been pasted onto the pages. All in all, it is an attractive binding of half-black leather with a slightly rough grain and has sides of very dark green cloth. The edges of the green cloth sides are delineated with gold paint and the spine is goldstamped with rules, borders and filigree patterns, which set off the gilded letters of the title. In addition, there are green, pink, mauve and yellow endpapers with a swirled pattern followed by flyleaves. There follows a single endpaper with green, pink and grey marbling.

The flyleaves are interspersed with insertions into the binding. The first is a yellow envelope addressed to G. Brown Goode, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC with a postmark from Camden, N.J., June 10, 3 pm, 1891. The second is a folded flyer entitled, “Walt Whitman’s Buggy and Horse” with a date of September 15, 1885. The flyer contains a “Statement of Receipts and Disbursements of Fund for Buggy and Horse, for Walt Whitman” by Thomas Donaldson. It has a list of people who donated money for a buggy and horse that permitted Walt Whitman to see his friends in Camden on Sundays. The third insertion is the autobiographic note from an old remembrance copy. Then, a photograph of Whitman by Phillips & Taylor is pasted onto the protective tissue preceding the title page. In addition, an engraving of a photograph of Whitman holding a cane to his chest is pasted onto the verso along the binding of the leaf containing “Note at the Beginning.” The identity of the creator of this engraving or photograph, which is signed by Whitman, is not clear.

In his description of binding B, Myerson refers to “green, pink and gray stormontlike marbled endpapers.” There is one endpaper with this description, which appears to have been ripped away from the half that is ordinarily glued onto the cover of the book. It is inserted before the leaf onto which the yellow envelope is pasted. In
addition, the cutting of the pages of this copy match the description Myerson gives of the pages of the book in binding B. The top edges of the pages are trimmed and gilded; the front and bottom edges are uncut.3

The first flyleaf of this copy is inscribed, “Marie R. Hubert from Mrs. Goode, Middletown, Conn. 1902.” It appears that this copy of Complete Poems and Prose of Walt Whitman 1855…1888, which is designated in the FML catalog as Copy Two, was originally of binding B. However, it was rebound with personal effects. There is also a Copy One of the above edition in the FML Walt Whitman Collection, and it fully matches the description given in the Myerson bibliography.

- Rebecca Martin
Head, Circulation Services

2Ibid., 124.
3Ibid.

To those of you who are reading this column, I say that if you are a member of the NIU Friends of the Library, won’t you consider donating additional funds to our endowment, and if you are not a member, won’t you join and become an active member of our organization? The NIU Libraries need your help.

- Ronald Klein
President, Friends of NIU Libraries

court cases. Stout claims that the aftermath of the radium problem in Ottawa continues to affect area residents’ lives today.

Future projects for the Illinois Valley historian include a Starved Rock State Park Guidebook, a collection of poetry, two music CDs featuring original songs by the author and friends, and a movie screenplay based on the deadly Leonore, Illinois, bank robbery of 1935.

Stout, who is 48 years old, lives with his wife, Judy, and daughter, Hayley, in Utica, outside of Starved Rock State Park. The author’s appearance at Ellwood House is sponsored by the Friends of NIU Libraries and begins in the auditorium at 7 p.m.

(For more information, call Mark Williams at 753-9838 or Ron Klein at 748-0380.) This program requires a reservation and advance payment for the Country Inn’s dessert and beverage bar. For your convenience, a reservation form is on the back cover of this newsletter.

financial assistance if it is to remain a great library. It is costly for the library simply to remain current and extremely costly for it to continue to grow and expand.

... continued from page 8

... continued from cover

annual book sale, and from generous contributions. As a result, we have created a growing endowment and have been able to donate a number of significant items to the library over the years. No educational institution can grow, much less become great, without a great library. I believe Northern Illinois University is blessed with a great library. However, it will continue to need large amounts of
Historical stories of North Central Illinois, including a 1909 mining disaster, will be the focus of an unique lecture at the Ellwood House Auditorium, 509 North First Street, DeKalb, on February 21, 2001.

Steve Stout of Utica, author of several books on Illinois history, will narrate a slide presentation detailing the tragic events of a coal mine fire which claimed the lives of 259 men and boys.

“The 1909 disaster under Cherry, Illinois, changed the coal mining industry across the United States, advanced the causes of the United Mine Workers and became the basis for the state’s workman compensation law,” Stout said. He noted that the tragedy was one of the most important historical events in Illinois during the last century.

Stout will also discuss details of the infamous Starved Rock murder case of 1960, the subject of another one of his books. His research detailed the shocking murders of three prominent Chicago-area women in a picturesque state park canyon. “This crime generated unprecedented media attention and, ultimately, changed the procedures of Illinois state law enforcement agencies,” said Stout. The author insists that the case continues to be controversial today, as the convicted man vigorously maintains his innocence from a Stateville prison cell in Joliet.

Other topics during the lecture will include a Charles Lindbergh plane crash near Ottawa, the Seneca LST shipyard, the adventures of French explorers Joliet and Father Marquette, and a bungled 1935 bank robbery where seven people were killed for seven cents in Leonore, Illinois.

Originally from Galesburg, Stout has been a student of famed poet Carl Sandburg and Illinois history for several decades. “Sandburg’s varied works of literature and poetry continue to be major influences on my writing and research,” Stout said. Following more than a decade of newspaper photo work, Mr. Stout created the Starved Rock Camera Co. in 1985, a full-service camera shop and photography studio in downtown La Salle. He opened another photo studio in Ottawa in 1995 and is one of the most successful photographers in the Illinois Valley. In addition to his successful photography operations, Mr. Stout has authored several books and publications, including Black Damp: The Story of the Cherry Mine Disaster, The Starved Rock Murders, Starved Rock Stories, Legend of Starved Rock, and an illustrated “comic book” about the Cherry Mine disaster, which is now used to teach elementary children throughout the community.

The historian’s most recent publication is the children’s book, Legend of Starved Rock, which explains the origins of the popular state park. “This book was written for beginning readers so they can study the heritage of their own backyard,” Stout said, adding that he hopes it will inspire youngsters to learn more about their local communities.

Stout’s next book project will be an examination of the Radium Dial Company story, which will chronicle one of the saddest chapters in the Illinois Valley’s industrial history. Poisoned by toxic luminous paint in the plant, several dozens of young women workers died in the 1930s, resulting in highly publicized occupational work hazard...
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Jon Poblador
Barry Porch
Abhalash Puljal
Raja Rajendran
Brunnehilde Rapoo
Paula Rebert
Jason Reuter
anonymous
Terry Robinson
George Samuelian
Abel Sanchez
Anindya Sen
Marilyn Sjoholm
Graham Sleight
Melanie Starnes
Kristine Stefani
Patrick Stephen
Guodi Sun
Manqing Sun
Terri Swinbank
Michael Trueau
Reynaldo Ty
Cheng Wang
Lawrence Webster
Will Womack
Shoua Yang

Life: Rebekah Wilson

Individual: M. R. Duvall, Tamara Neuberger, Angela Schmidt, and Don Zochert

Student: Jason Long, Michael Palm, and Terri Swinbank

If we have missed your name or have listed it incorrectly, we apologize. Please give us a call at 815-753-9838 or email us at libraryfriend@niu.edu and we will correct it immediately.

The Friends of the Northern Illinois University Libraries provide support to the libraries in many ways. Membership dues are placed in an endowment fund, the interest income from which is used for the purchase of books and materials the libraries could not otherwise afford. The Friends hold a program series every academic year with a variety of speakers on interesting topics. These programs are free to members and their guests. Every April, the Friends hold their Annual Book Sale. Books that are donated to the library for the book sale are sold to the public. Proceeds from this event are placed in the endowment fund. We are very proud of our Friends group because their activities benefit and strengthen our libraries and the University. If you are already a Friend, please share this newsletter with a friend or colleague, or consider giving a membership in the Friends as a gift.

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History of Illinois Valleys

Presented by Steve Stout (Author of The Starved Rock Murders)
Wednesday, February 21, 2001, 7:00 p.m. at the Ellwood House Visitor's Center,
509 N. First St., DeKalb

This program includes the dessert buffet from the Country Inn Restaurant and requires reservations and advance payment.

Please come and join the Friends for an interesting lecture and delicious desserts and beverages. The cost is $9.00 per person. Payment may be made by check or money order, payable to the Friends of NIU Libraries. Please make your reservations by February 14, 2001. If you have any questions, please call (815) 753-9838.

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