

# Live Inspired!

## News and Updates from the Fresno State OLLI

### OLLI Connections Remain Strong

By Lanny Larson, OLLI Member, OLLI Advisory Council Member

OLLI members sign up for the knowledge, but they're likely to get some connections, too. Here's a modest example from Fall's first meeting of the OLLI Book Club on Friday, Sept. 4, to discuss "Pandemic 1918" by Catherine Arnold.

**Connection 1:** Led by Book Club coordinator Kay Davies, OLLI members participated in a wide-ranging discussion of the great influenza pandemic a century ago and the current Covid contagion that has affected the world and each of us in many ways.

**Connection 2:** I shared during discussion that the book referred to my mother's birthplace (Dorchester, Mass.) and reminiscences by someone who might have been her cousin. Mom's mother succumbed to the influenza. References to Dorchester evoked long-forgotten memories of being there.

**Connection 3:** Gary Duran participated in Book Club not by Zoom, but by phone from a Sierra fire lookout where he and his wife were volunteering for the Labor Day weekend. Gary's ongoing support was on full display at 8:43 a.m. Saturday morning Sept. 5 when he emailed the following: "Non book club item. If any of you are going to Shaver/Huntington, don't.

168 is closed at top of 4 lane. Fire, 500 acres, at Big Creek."

**Connection 4:** My granddaughter, her boyfriend and family members were visiting my wife's family cabin at Huntington for Labor Day weekend. Alerted by Gary, I called her and she was already packing up to evacuate, although the actual evacuation order wasn't issued until 10 a.m. Gary's thoughtfulness gave my granddaughter a jump on the downhill traffic as others dashed outta Dodge (OK, down the four-lane). [Editors note: sadly, the family cabin was destroyed in the fire].

**Connection 5:** Fast-forward to the Tuesday after Book Club and participant Frank Dougherty alerted us that his grandmother and grandfather died of the influenza in the coal-mining city of Hazelton, in northeastern Pennsylvania. The obituary Frank posted says the deaths occurred two weeks apart, orphaning Frank's father. Sadly, it was a much-repeated scenario documented in our book.

All that from just one OLLI session!

**Takeaways:** Learned a lot from the book, more from the discussion even more about how OLLI touches members in and out of class.

## Online Events



Our friends at the Arizona State OLLI invite members of other OLLIs to enjoy some of their **lectures for free**. They aren't trying to recruit members from other OLLIs (a no-no among OLLIs); instead they are trying to gain bigger audiences to see their notable speakers. Use the special link for OLLI members [HERE](#).

You're invited to a free lecture by journalist **Robert Costa, a Washington Post reporter and moderator of "Washington Week" on PBS**, on Oct. 8 from 6-7:30 p.m. The talk is part of the Fresno State President's Lecture Series. No pre-registration is required; just click [HERE](#) on the lecture date/time.

OCTOBER



## Why Participate Online? Here's Why!

Some folks are resistant to online learning. It's sad because they are missing out on great learning. Please feel free to share this newsletter and testimonial with reluctant friends. We take registrations all semester and there are still plenty of courses to attend! Click [HERE](#)

### Larry Parmeter, OLLI Member & Instructor

"The Japanese have a saying, 'Shikata Ga Nai', which, loosely translated, means: to make the best of a bad situation. It's akin to our American phrase: 'when life hands you lemons, make lemonade'.

This is where most of us are right now, in a bad situation. Between the virus and the fires, we need to stay positive and keep going. This is why I'm staying active with the OLLI program.

I'm with colleagues and friends, and we all have the common goal of furthering our

knowledge and stimulating our minds, as well as the chance to catch up on each others' activities.

So, even though we're not meeting face-to-face, virtual OLLI is still well worth the time, and Zoom is quite easy to set up and use. As Dr. Biggane explained, the situation right now can be either a threat or a challenge. Make it a challenge and join the OLLI community. This will be over eventually, but until it is, don't miss anything OLLI has to offer."