

GRAY MATTERS

News of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute | Sonoma State University

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Summer is the time to enjoy Sonoma County scenery and barbeques and get together with friends and family. I hope with our movement into the yellow stage, the opening up of California, and the increased numbers of vaccinations, that we will once again be able to enjoy the activities and outings that we love. The past year has opened our hearts to all we hold dear: our friends, families, neighbors, co-workers, and the ability to be together. I wish you all the best as we move into the light – into healthier times ahead.

OLLI will provide you with travel experience that you can enjoy from home this summer. Experience eight weeks of virtual travel with OLLI on Tuesdays from 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m., June 22 through August 17, 2021. Each week you will go on a new adventure, in the United States, around the world, or beyond our solar system. Take a look at the summer adventure classes listed in this newsletter.

Happy Summer!

Leslie Brutocao, Director

OLLI INSTRUCTOR HIGHLIGHT: *Barbara Spear - Celebrating 20 Years of Teaching with OLLI at SSU*

By Grace Burroughs

"I know that I have become a better teacher because of the people at OLLI. That's a fact." – Barbara Spear

Did you know Barbara and her husband spent a year living in New Zealand as newlyweds? While her husband was working towards his PhD, they lived in Lake Tepako. Barbara spoke of that year as such a wonderful experience and commented that she had never met so many kind people in her life. She remembered that the closest movie theater was about 60 miles away! Barbara attended Sonoma State for her undergraduate degree and continued her educational journey at San Francisco State University where she completed an M.A. in Cinema Studies. She enjoyed how at that time SSU students were of such varied ages and backgrounds and had such diverse perspectives.

When first discovering her love for film she explained, "It hit me like a wall, it is not the words on the page, it's the images on the screen. Movies mean something to people. That is what the people in OLLI have shown to me. These movies mean something real in their lives." Barbara remembers the comment from an OLLI Student: "You make me realize, these movies are like friends."

When asked what has kept Barbara teaching for OLLI over the past 20 years, she said it's the students. Barbara noted that OLLI students are truly kind, warm, generous, and so forgiving. She expressed feeling close to the OLLI community and further explained students' eagerness to learn has been life-giving. Barbara has genuinely appreciated consistently receiving such acceptance.

Barbara loves dogs and spoke very fondly of a terrier she had named Susie and a chocolate lab named Tootsie.

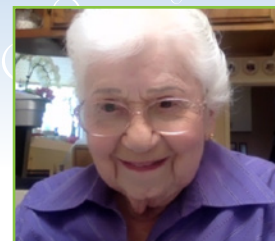
Keep up to date with film recommendations from Barbara at FilmFrog.org.



OLLI STUDENT HIGHLIGHT: *Gerry Lipton – 20 Years of Learning at OLLI*

by Grace Burroughs

As we embark on OLLI's 20th year, we are so thankful for our members who have participated in OLLI. Join us as we celebrate Gerry Lipton and her 20 years of dedication to OLLI.



Gerry took her first OLLI class in 2001. She quickly went home and raved about the classes to her husband, Sid, and he soon joined her in attending classes. Some of her favorite instructors include Mick Chantler, James Sokol, and Barbara Spear. Gerry has been a faithful student and has even taken every class that Barbara Spear has offered! Currently, she is enjoying "Genre Films," "Economics of Contemporary Policy Issues," and "Before the Storm" and will soon take "The Real and Non-Ionizing Radiation." Gerry speaks very highly of the OLLI program at Sonoma State, the community that it has provided, the diversified mix of classes, and the top quality of the instructors.

Gerry and Sid began their journey together working on a chicken ranch in Petaluma. They owned and operated the ranch for 35 years. Gerry also worked at the Emporium in Santa Rosa. Through 20 years of hard work there, she came to manage ten different departments simultaneously. She was also a sales representative for a stocks and bond company during her working years.

Gerry has made many friends over the years at OLLI. She became good friends with Berni Altman and also shared fond memories of eating lunch between classes out front of the Cooperage with other good friends.

Gerry and Sid are very well traveled. Their adventures together have included trips to Canada, South America, China, Europe, Israel, Australia, and New Zealand. One of her favorites was going to France and adventuring from Paris to Marsai on a riverboat cruise.

Gerry is an avid reader and is currently reading *A Long Petal of the Sea* by Isabel Allende with her book club. Thank you to Gerry and the many OLLI members that continue to enjoy lifelong learning and the friendships made through OLLI.

AROUND THE WORLD IN EIGHT WEEKS *Your virtual summer getaway with OLLI!*

Tuesdays, June 22 through August 17, 2021 | 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | \$25 per class

- June 22** | **Hidden Treasures of Florence** with Heidi Chretien
- June 29** | **Exploring Opera: Sensational Seville** with James Sokol
- July 13** | **A Paris Getaway to the Musee d'Orsay and the Louvre**
with Charlie Goldberg
- July 20** | **The Barnes Collection: The Battle for Art** with Linda Loveland-Reid
- July 27** | **Sicilian Travelogue** with Douglas Kenning
- August 3** | **A Stroll through Venice: City of Masquerade
and Intrigue** with Bruce Elliott
- August 10** | **Geology of Alaskan National Parks & the Beringia
Land Bridge** with Nicole Myers
- August 17** | **A Brief Tour of Planets and Moons Inside and
Outside our Solar System** with Warren Wiscombe



Summer registration opens Wednesday, June 2. Class descriptions and online registration available at oli.sonoma.edu or call 707-664-2691.



EXPERIENCE 15 SENSATIONAL OLLI CLASSES AND INSTRUCTORS IN FALL 2021

OLLI Fall Course Preview Monday, August 23, 2021 | 10:00 a.m.

OLLI Fall Classes Monday, September 13 – Friday, October 22, 2021

OLLI Off-Season October 29 – November 19, 2021

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SAVE THE DATE!

OLLI 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Ed Stolman Memorial Lecture

Friday, September 10 from 3:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Keynote Address: Chris Smith – Our favorite columnist and story teller from the Press Democrat!

LIFELONG FRIENDS OF FILM: OPEN TO ALL WHO LOVE MOVIES

Lifelong Friends of Film has recently been holding meetings on Zoom on the last Friday of each month after members independently stream a film of our choosing. Our next meeting will be on Friday, May 28, when we'll discuss the film *COLETTE* (2018), which stars Keira Knightley as the famed French author who must fight for creative ownership of her successful works and overcome the societal constraints of the early twentieth century. Peter Debruge in *Variety* raves "*Colette* ranks as one of the great roles for which Keira Knightley will be remembered." At the meeting, we'll also make decisions about the future of the club. For more information about our meetings, contact Barbara Spear (spearb@sonoma.edu).



Are you a fan of baseball? This class is for you! *Play Ball! Is Our National Pastime Past It's Time?* Sportswriter, author, and instructor, Pete Elman, will lead you on a fun journey on the state of baseball.

Fridays | May 21, May 28, and June 4, 10 am – 12 pm.

Register at olli.sonoma.edu or call 707-664-2691 by Thursday, May 20 at 5:00 p.m.

DO YOU HAVE AN IDEA FOR AN OLLI CLUB?

OLLI has a Cinema Club and Art Club, with plans to restart the Science Club. If you have an interest in having a Book Club, Music Club, Food or Wine Club, Genealogy Club, Writing Club, Outdoors Club, Guitar Players Club, Bowling Club, Bridge Group, Photography Club, or anything else, submit your idea to olli@sonoma.edu. OLLI clubs are run by members. Staff are happy to provide support through the OLLI website and newsletter. An OLLI club is a great way to make friends and share like interests.

IN MEMORIAM

Gerald William Haslam, PhD

1937 - 2021

"He saw stories in every moment and wanted to tell every one of them" – Gerald's daughter, Alexandra Russell.

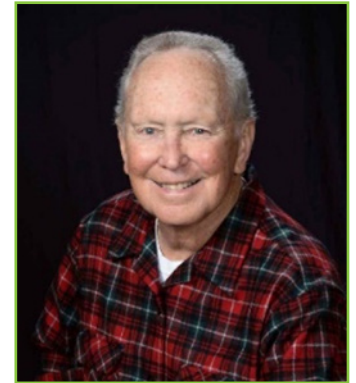
The longtime and much-loved Sonoma State University professor, Penngrove resident, and prolific author died April 13 after battling prostate cancer for more than two decades.

Gerald William Haslam was born in Bakersfield and raised in Oildale. Haslam left the area in 1961 with his wife, Janice Pettichord, to begin his writing career, and continued on at San Francisco State for undergraduate and graduate degrees. He stayed in the North Bay area for over 50 years.

Haslam joined the English department at Sonoma State University in 1967 where he taught for 30 years. He saw himself as a "writer who taught, not a teacher who wrote." He wrote fiction and nonfiction books as well as had editing roles in literary anthologies and wrote hundreds of magazine stories.

His honors and accomplishments include the Commonwealth Club Medal, a Western States Arts Federation's Fiction Award for his book *Straight White Male*, a Benjamin Franklin Book Award and a Bay Area Book Reviewers Award. He received the Ralph J. Gleason Award for *Workin' Man Blues: Country Music in California*, an ode to the music heroes from the towns where he grew up in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Haslam and his daughter Russell, a local journalist, collaborated on the book. His book, *Coming of Age in California*, was selected as one of the top 100 nonfiction books about the West by the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1999.

Haslam credited his parents, his wife, and five children in helping him to accomplish his writing dreams. In a 2006 interview, Haslam credited his home state, saying "The fact that we can, and do, draw from the value systems of so many different people makes life here very fascinating, indeed. California has given me a gift for which I have always been thankful." Haslam was a gift to all who knew him and to all who enjoyed his writing. He is survived by his wife, Janice, sons Fred, Carlos, and Garth, and his daughters Simone and Alexandra, and fifteen grandchildren who he said were "the great gifts of his later life."



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