

California State University, Fresno  
Emeriti and Retirees Association

# CONNECTIONS

Newsletter #13

Spring 2018

Spring Luncheon May 24, 2018      Smittcamp Alumni House  
11:00 Social, 11:30 Lunch and Speaker

## **Lunch Topic:**

The *Spring* luncheon is scheduled for **Thursday, May 24**. It will be at the Smittcamp Alumni House on Matoian Drive of the Fresno State campus – west of the SaveMart Center complex. The “meet and greet” period starts at 11:00 a.m.; and we sit down for lunch at 11:30 a.m. The meal is free to ERA members; prospective joiners are welcome as non-paying guests. If you are planning to attend, please R.S.V.P. to David Quadro <[davidq@mail.fresnostate.edu](mailto:davidq@mail.fresnostate.edu)> in order to give University Catering an accurate count in a timely manner.

ERA President David Quadro will welcome attendees with brief remarks regarding organizational matters. Then, after the luncheon main course is finished, the guest speaker will be introduced. Following the subsequent Q&A session with the presenter, the President and/or officers of the Executive Committee will update members on vital issues being tracked by the statewide ERFA and our local affiliate ERA. The luncheon ends by 2:00 p.m.

The **guest speaker** is Jim Boren, recently retired after 48 years at the Fresno Bee. He was Executive Editor and Senior Vice President for the last five years at the Bee. His career began while still a student at Fresno State, first as a vacation relief reporter, then sports reporter, general assignment reporter, political reporter, editorial page editor and executive editor. He won journalism awards for his investigative reporting and column writing. He led the newspaper into the digital transition.

“His passion to deliver quality journalism to our readers and his commitment to the Bee, the Fresno community and this organization have been extraordinary.”

Tom Cullinan, The Bee’s former publisher and president

He will speak on the fate of newspapers in general and the Bee in particular.

Mark your calendar for our **Fall Lunch on Wednesday, November 7, 2018**.

## FALL 2017 Speaker Recap

Dr. Joy Goto, Chemistry, spoke on Alzheimer's, ALS and Parkinson's diseases at our Fall 2017 luncheon. Currently, there are 5.2 million individuals afflicted with Alzheimer's in the USA (one in ten individuals over 65), costing an estimated \$203 billion. ALS affects 20-30,000 in the USA (about 5000 new cases per year), usually between the ages of 40 and 60 years. Parkinson's has one million cases with the onset in the mid-50's. Factors in all these related diseases are age, gender, DNA to RNA conversion and lifestyle. Few of these factors are under our control.

Dr. Goto's research group seeks chemical clues to these diseases by investigating fruit flies. She is focussing on the action of BMAA, produced by a cyanobacteria, using fruit flies as a model for the human disease. BMAA can cause mis-folding of proteins and replaces serine, which is vital in the synapse functioning in the nervous system. The complete genome of the fruit fly is known which is helpful in her research.

The research plan is to:

- 1) Develop a model of synapse action and investigate fruit fly movement in flies affected by BMAA.
- 2) Determine the mode of action of BMAA. In the fruit fly, one neuron is connected to one flight muscle, so the effect is readily observable (with the right equipment!).
- 3) Determine potential therapies for the change in synapse action.

There were many interesting questions, one that was of major interest to the audience was the status of clinical trials for L-serine.

Phase I is complete which tests for general safety of L-serine in a healthy population. Phase 2a: This phase will begin soon and is a short duration (9 months) to test safety and clinical efficacy in an affected AD population. The affected will be those in the early stages of Alzheimer's Disease. This is a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study of the effects of L-serine. No fruit flies are harmed in her research.

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"Of course I believe in luck. How else does one explain the success of one's enemies?"  
Jean Cocteau

"I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work."      Thomas Edison

"Remember to look up at the stars and not down at your feet."      Stephen Hawking

"You know, a long time ago, being crazy meant something. Nowadays everybody's crazy."      Charles Manson

"Against the assault of laughter, nothing can stand."      Mark Twain

## Profile: Tom Ebert

Associate Vice President for Academic Personnel Emeritus; Librarian [Reference / Documents] Emeritus; California Faculty Association (CFA, Fresno Chapter) President Emeritus

Tom was among the most recognizable individuals on campus during his career (1970-2005) at the university - as noted by his numerous positions in service to the campus community. He broke the mold for librarians by actively serving on committees of Shared Governance, including being elected Chair of the Academic Personnel Committee. He also served on numerous University Task Forces. He still volunteers at the Library. He was awarded the F. Ben Mansell Award, CFA, for Outstanding Advocacy of Faculty Rights, 1989.

Tom believes that when you retire, you have to have a plan. Otherwise, the danger is that one loses a sense of purpose. So, what was Tom's plan? 1) Write a family history. 2) volunteering, (3) coauthoring a forthcoming book with Dr. Allen Carden. Tom still takes his summer cross-country driving trips including giving a talk at Fort Ontario State Park in his hometown of Oswego, NY.

As Associate VP and Union Leader, he "saw to it that people were treated fairly," a legacy from his father who emphasized to "be fair to others." Tom brought a "more open, transparent and fair" personnel process to the university and made all documents available on the web to ensure 100% access. Fresno State was the first university in the country to develop a probationary plan process that provides mentoring support to new faculty.

Tom is a community supporter and donor through his Kiwanis club - Valley Children's Hospital, Evangel House, Clovis Dinner for Seniors and many other activities.

Tom recently donated his 3000th volume toward the Thomas J. Ebert American Frontier Collection held by the Henry Madden Library.

[Contributor: John Shields, former Editor of CONNECTIONS]

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### **Upcoming events on campus**

Summer Arts      <https://www2.calstate.edu/summerarts/Pages/default.aspx>

Osher Institute      <http://www.fresnostate.edu/cge/olli/>

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"We have grasped the mystery of the atom and rejected the Sermon on the Mount.  
Ours is a world of nuclear giants and ethical infants."      Omar Bradley

"Technology is the knack of so arranging the world that we do not have to experience it."  
David Wolpe

## **A great loss of two of our friends.**

Our sadness at the loss of Liz Nelson and John Shields, two members of our ERFA Executive Committee. John served from the new beginning of the newly reinvigorated campus group until 2017 and Liz had just started her Executive Committee service in 2017.

## **Preventing Injuries from Trips and Falls**

- Exercise.
- Keep your home well lit.
- Make sure all stairways have secure, easy grip handrails.
- Wear comfortable, well-fitting shoes with low heels and good tread.
- Take care of your vision - good, clean, current glasses.
- Install grab bars near tub, toilet and stairways.
- Remove throw rugs, clutter and extension cords.
- Turn on a light when you get out of bed (you know you have to).
- Avoid ladders and step stools (my personal favorite).

## **Planning a flight after October 1, 2020?**

Starting then, a REAL ID driver license or ID card, or other compliant identification will be required to board a domestic flight. Passports will still suffice, but for convenience, you might want to get a California REAL ID. Check details at [REALID.dmv.ca.gov](http://REALID.dmv.ca.gov)

## **Paying too much for Medicare?**

If you are paying more than \$134 per month, you might be eligible for a reimbursement from PERS. Check the first page of your November letter from Social Security to see if the monthly cost exceeds your PERS reimbursement (found in the Itemized Gross section of your pay stub). If it is, request a reimbursement from PERS. Details in the statewide CSU-ERFA Reporter, March 2018, for details. [csuerfa.org](http://csuerfa.org)

## **News Items**

“State needs college grads, falls short on preparation” Dan Walters  
<https://calmatters.org/articles/commentary/commentary-california-needs-college-grads-falls-short-preparation/>

Other Dan Walters articles:

<https://calmatters.org/articles/author/dan-walters/>

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**A Celebration of John Shields**  
**by David Quadro and the ERA Executive Committee**

We all knew John when we worked on campus. He was intimately involved in the campus academic governance process and he served as one of our representatives on the statewide Academic Senate. We got to know him very well in retirement.

In March of 2011, after a series of events that left David Quadro in charge of our local chapter of the statewide Emeritus and Retired Faculty Association, he sent a letter to the 133 Fresno members of that organization inquiring about interest in reviving our chapter, which had been largely dormant for seventeen years and asked for response to a range of interest levels which included participation in a leadership role. John was one of four members who expressed a willingness to work with Dave on this. It took multiple meetings and a lot of hard work over a year to get the mechanisms in place. John worked tirelessly on specific aspects of the revival and provided a wide range of ideas to help bring this effort to fruition.

After the initial organizational steps were in place, John agreed to serve in the combined role of editor of our newsletter and our historian, positions he held from the Spring of 2012 thru the Spring of 2017. He edited eleven newsletter issues. He named the newsletter "Connections" because he felt that reflected the linkage of the content he intended to include with the nature of our membership (university retirees). His articles were insightful and covered a range of topics that provided the kind of linkages he intended. A good example that was not an article was he included in a couple of the issues (insisting it be at his own expense) inserts containing pictures he took of the campus showing recent physical changes. He did this because a third of our members do not live near the Fresno area and some who do probably have not been to the campus in years. He felt this was a way to "connect" them with the campus.

John's participation in the organization went far beyond his work on the newsletter. He always had suggestions for luncheon speakers, ways to recruit new members, and whatever other topics were on the table. He was one of the most proactive people we have ever met.

John also remained active on the campus. A few years ago he served pro bono as a consultant on the campus WASC accreditation team. He received a commendation from the local Academic Senate for that work.

Special notes from David Quadro:

“John came to my home eleven times so we could prepare the mailing envelopes containing the newsletter and the luncheon announcement. It should have been about a 20-minute job. It always took at least an hour and sometimes more. We continually stopped (to avoid screwing up the process) to talk about anything and everything. This ranged from the current issues of the day to old campus war stories. I thoroughly enjoyed those interactions as I know he did.

The last time I saw John was last Fall when he came to my house to bring some materials he had related to the newsletter and his historian responsibilities. We stood at my front door and chatted for a few minutes. He wouldn't come in because Liz was waiting for him in the car. At the end of our brief conversation, he said to me: “This is probably the last time you will see me.” He left, I stepped back inside. It took me several minutes to gain control of my emotions. We did talk on the phone a few times after that.

There are a number of ways I can think of to describe John. He had intense feelings about a number of issues. He was outspoken. He was engaged in whatever the endeavor was. But the best way I know to succinctly describe him is that he was a gentleman in the truest sense of that word – a gentle man.”

We will all miss John and we know the loss to his family is great. We hope his family will call on us if they need anything.

We wish them peace.