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THE EMERITUS VOICE

From the Dean's Desk

by Dr. Scott Silverman,
Interim Dean



Greetings Emeritus Students,

First and foremost, I hope you are all staying safe. This is a difficult time for all of us. Words will never be able to convey all of the emotions and stress running through us all.

Word is out, Emeritus and all of Santa Monica College will be doing remote delivery of instruction for Winter and Spring terms. It's the best decision for all of us to stick to distance education for now. I know we all miss seeing each other in person greatly — but that time will come again soon.

We're using this time where we're away from the Emeritus building, to do a number of updates. You're going to be very happy to see many long-awaited upgrades, and a few surprises, including the HVAC system,

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The Covid Road to Learning

By Merry Rose

Protecting others and ourselves from Covid has drawn the curtain on many in-person activities we used to take for granted. Zoom classes have taken over for now and we Emeritus students have all learned to adapt to a new format and platform to continue our education. I had the pleasure of speaking with a few long-time students taking their classes online to see what they thought. What I found interesting is that, by and large, they have all adapted very well to the new format and have found that, basically, the pros outweigh the cons. Although each of them said they missed the social aspect of in-person classes, I found a few surprises.

All of them found their exercise classes to be quite beneficial. Each of them now finds it easier to focus on their own progress and ability to go at their own pace more easily than in-person classes. They have found the temptation to compare themselves to others who may be more advanced, more flexible or in better shape is eliminated, since they only see the instructor on screen. The biggest drawbacks to Zoom exercise classes tend to be the lack of group energy and the ability to see posture demos in three dimension, making it more difficult to discern what the instructor is

doing with body placement. Overall, though, they all agree that the instructors are doing a wonderful job.

The art classes present different challenges. During the class, each participant shows up in a window on Zoom, and depending on class size, it can be difficult to see everyone's work. The instructor also faces the difficulty of giving input by not being able to see the art piece in person. The advantage is that, when class is over, students can continue to work on their projects. They can then post their work on Facebook.

Lecture and writing classes seem to be heavy on the Zoom advantage side, as there are no distractions from other people talking to each other, or trying to find a good seat in a crowded classroom. It seems that there always are those students who do more of the talking than others. The advantage of the Zoom platform is the ability of the instructor to silence everyone. If you want to ask a question or make a comment, you can hit the "raise hand" button so the instructor can call on individuals, allowing each student their opportunity to speak, one at a time.

The biggest drawback, across the board, seems to be the social

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Armchair Educators

By Perri Chasin

A global pandemic has deemed Emeritus students, without exception, to be armchair travelers, and Zoom, a company who has seen its profits rise 300% in just a few short months, has positioned itself to be our passport to learning. That meant faculty had to morph into armchair educators. And, with a click on a link, students were beamed into their kitchen, backyard or studio.

The faculty's initial challenge was to familiarize themselves with the software; next they had to reconceive and transition their classes to an online distance learning platform. For some disciplines the transition was straightforward and easy. For others less so, yet, without exception, the process of adapting one's classes online was time consuming and exhausting.

Monona Wali, a published author who teaches writing courses (full disclosure, she is the editor of the *Emeritus Voice*) was fortunate that her initial transition was smooth. Having been trained on Zoom early on, when the college moved to online teaching in March, she was able to redesign her classes for the Zoom platform.

While a few students experienced challenges with the technology, overall Monona was impressed by the speed at which they adapted. One of her classes, whose roster had been limited by the number of chairs in a classroom, was able to increase its students, thanks to Zoom. She finds features such as Breakout Rooms and Screen Share helpful additions to the Zoom experience. "The Breakout Rooms allow students to have social time in smaller groups, which is so valuable. Otherwise the online experience can feel impersonal." Monona found Zoom, '... easy to use, easy to do and can be accessed anywhere,' allowing her to continue teaching while visiting her elderly parents on the east coast. "I'm so grateful Zoom has been able to keep classes going and keep the community connected," Monona said.

Not every instructor's transition was quite as facile as hers. For Chris Hero, a working artist and Emeritus art instructor, the move to distance teaching was a greater challenge. Chris and his wife, who both now work from home, initially had to make significant investments in computer equipment and Wi-Fi upgrades to insure he could successfully teach online. Once he mastered Zoom, he faced technical difficulties translating his drawing classes online. For example, determining appropriate camera placement when producing a drawing demo posed a problem and that led to successfully reconceiving his drawing classes by using a multistep combination of Zoom and private Facebook group pages. Now Chris demonstrates a drawing process on Zoom after which the students work on their own, then upload their drawings to the class' private Facebook page. When the class meets again as a group on Zoom, each student's shared work is discussed.

"When it all comes together it's fine, but it's a lot more work, physical, mental and time." Technical issues notwithstanding, Chris finds value in the platform. For one thing, his Art Survey classes, which visited museums, are no longer anchored to works being exhibited in Los Angeles; instead of focusing on art presented locally, he can now present work by any artist anywhere in the world. As for his assessment of online teaching, "it's where we are, not what we want to be but it's better than nothing and amazing...and I'm happy to have it!"

Catherine Tirr, a working artist who teaches five art sections at Emeritus, concurs. When the pandemic hit, Catherine reports she was initially frantic, never having heard of Zoom. Like Chris, she had to invest in new equipment and Wi-Fi upgrades in order to teach online.

She too found innovative ways to reconceive her classes. While 'tricky' to orchestrate initially, she devised a system in which she uses a webcam to demonstrate each step-by-step art process. The response has been so favorable that some students report they actually prefer online teaching as it allows them to closely monitor the progression of her art work during each demo, something they were unable to see in the classroom. And, she believes that when so many students are isolated, distance learning has proven to be a lifeline.

Like Monona and Chris, Catherine acknowledges, "While Zoom doesn't replace meeting in person, we're making the most of it and doing a pretty good job."

And for that, we Emeritus armchair students are grateful!

SMC Foundation's Meal Project 1

By Sharon Valente



Covid-19 presents many challenges for seniors such as the anxiety of getting sick, finances, housing, job loss, and family safety. For some seniors, access to food has been an ongoing challenge. Fortunately, when Covid hit, the SMC Foundation quickly devised a solution for those who struggle with food insecurity. According to Lizzy Moore, president of the foundation, Santa Monica College (SMC) Foundation launched the Meal Project in March 2020 for all Emeritus and for-credit students and they continue to deliver meals to those requiring support to this day. **Students need to opt in each week and subscribe.** For safety, participants don't pick up food, it is delivered to all participants.

Another program, started April 2, 2020, is a weekly Wednesday drive-through food pantry which provides groceries on the main campus in Lot #1 from 12:30 – 2:30 p.m. Students need to wear a mask and show proof of current enrollment on their smart phone to receive groceries. When I was faculty at a local university, I worried about students whom I suspected were sleeping in their cars, and I wished we had a supportive program like this.

According to Scott Silverman, Dean, Noncredit and External Programs (Interim), any Emeritus student who wants to participate needs to contact the office (emeritus@smc.edu or 310-434-4306). Participants place orders each Wednesday for the following Wednesday delivery.

Meal options include: Standard (which has meat in every dish), Vegetarian (not vegan) or Meal Project (a mixed option where some dishes have meat).

One critical aspect — **Students cannot customize their free meal for dietary preference, allergies or taste.**

When the program started, Robocalls went to all students asking if they were going to have trouble physically grocery shopping or might need financial assistance. All who replied 'Yes' were invited to join. Since then, information has spread by word of mouth. Students continually join the program or stop, depending on need. Participants need to be an active student at Emeritus or SMC — it's a requirement. Everytable is SMC's community partner and they provide the food. They also offer paid subscriptions to the public and are committed to healthy and affordable food: everytable.com. They began by providing nutritious food in disadvantaged areas at prices that rivaled typical fast-food costs.

The funding for the Meal Project comes from The SMC Foundation that has a longstanding partnership with SMC and from donors to Emeritus and the Foundation at large. This project survives on donations. If you wish to donate, you can contact the office at 310-434-4215. For donation by check, please make checks payable to The Santa Monica College Foundation, 1900 Pico Blvd, Santa Monica or [donate online](#).

Donate to the [SMC Foundation Meal Project](#) directly (which supports the program for the full campus need, not just Emeritus).



A selection of meals to be delivered.

Faculty Profile: Adam Harrison

By Heather M. Walsh

Adam Harrison is a contemporary California artist who specializes in representational cityscapes and landscapes. Adam Harrison teaches E15 drawing, E16 Life drawing, E30 watercolor, and E19 oils/acrylic painting on-line and live via the facebook group page, Emeritus Summer. He says everyone is welcome to watch all of his class video posts. I am in two of his classes live, and can watch the video of his other classes. I have taken almost all his classes!

Adam really knows his subject well and enjoys teaching. He has a vast knowledge to share. He shares techniques, artist details, how to care for your brushes, and even shares book references, and may read a passage to give context to a masters painting. He gives a little art history along with his lessons. He is very relaxed and

natural in front of the camera, answers questions promptly, and goes into detail teaching important techniques. He greets students as they log on in the morning while he sips his coffee. Students can watch and paint along, or just watch him and paint later, as he posts the video on the group page for those who need review or missed the class. Students post their work on the page for feedback, and it provides a nice class gallery. Some students are clearly not beginners. It is great because the focus is on the techniques he is teaching, and our painting, so its nice that we can get closer to see what the teacher is doing, than if we were in a classroom.

Adam has won awards for Best of Show of Representational Works, Best MFA Painting Award UAM, CSULB, and more. He was selected

to do an artist residency at Borgo Finocchieto in Tuscany, Italy.

His work has been shown at the Long Beach Museum of Art, George Billis Gallery, Werby Gallery, The Brand Library and Arts Center, and more. He has given lectures on contemporary art at CSULB and the Long Beach Museum of Art.

We are so fortunate to have Adam teaching us art here! He has helped make Covid-19 times more tolerable with his art classes. I have painted all my life and I can't believe how much I am learning from him. However, I didn't get to go to art school like he did, and he is sharing everything he knows with us! Check out the Emeritus Summer facebook page and sign up for his classes while you can!



Adam Harrison, *Patterned Quilt*, 29 6/8" x 39 3/4", oil on linen mounted to panel

Face Mask Summer

By Perri Chasin

On Thursday, June 18, 2020 it became official. That was the day Governor Gavin Newsom mandated Californians wear face coverings 'while in public or high-risk settings, including when shopping, taking public transit or seeking medical care'.

Not everyone welcomed the news. Masks can be uncomfortable, impact breathing, muffle speech and they certainly hide smiles. But as seniors, we understood masks slow the infection rate and reduce infection rates. And the law was clear –to enter a business establishment, a government building, hop on a train or bus, or just stroll in public, one could not be maskless.

Now as state's inhabitants, we faced a new dilemma; where to purchase masks.

Due to the shortage of personal protective equipment at that time, free paper masks typically distributed by doctor's offices were scarce as physicians were loathe to let go of any in their possession.

Necessity is the mother of invention; hence a cottage industry was born, one devoted to all manner of fabric masks. In those early days, purchasing face masks relied on word of mouth. Someone knew someone whose friend's sister made fabric masks and they would kindly pass that information along to you, until they ran out. These homemade masks consisted of extra fabric and elastic the mask-maker had lying around. They sold out quickly so the hunt was soon on for another source.

As the pandemic raged, folks required multiple masks in order to sport a clean one for every outing.

The obvious go-to resource was the internet where sites like Amazon jumped on the mask distribution bandwagon with gusto and a new fashion accessory was born.

Suddenly one could purchase masks with or without filters, solid color masks, patterned fabrics, bejeweled masks and before too long, established clothiers entered the fray.

Today, there is no end to the styles, types and prices of masks one can purchase. In Santa Monica, Old Navy sells packages of cotton masks for adults and children, Bloomingdales in Santa Monica Place offers face masks for the entire family and even Costco has boxes of paper masks, fabric masks and clear shields. If you're partial to silk just head to Citron on Montana Avenue.

Masks can promote a message, a cause or a movement. Hillary Clinton has been photographed wearing a VOTE mask and across America protestors have been sporting I Can't Breathe and Black Lives Matter masks.

There's a mask for everyone. Art lovers can don an image of their favorite painting, statue or artist. For movie buffs, there are masks featuring actors. One can find animal masks, flower masks, food masks, embellished masks and more. One online site boasts 7,757 different mask designs to choose from.

Couture designers like Chanel, Dolce and Gabbana, Hermes and just about every famous fashion house offer their signature masks. And, an Israeli jewelry company has created a gold and 3,600 white and black diamond encrusted face mask that retails for a mere \$1.5 million.



Whether you opt for a paper mask, favor fabric, or seek an embellished mask to match each outfit, just remember, the CDC affirms face coverings are a critical tool in the fight against Covid-19. Wear a mask when you're out. You will protect yourself and protect others — besides, it's the law.

Are You Zoomed In or Zoomed Out?

By Laura Wilson

What the heck is Zoom? This was what I wondered back when Covid hit. I soon found out the answer. In late March 2020, I received an invitation to my first Zoom birthday party.

My friend and longtime SMC Emeritus student Sara Bragin was turning 80, and with Covid-19 stay at home restrictions, an in-person party was out of the question. Thus, Sara, being the creative individual she is, decided to celebrate her 80th birthday via Zoom.

It was a lovely celebration attended by people all over the world. Some wore birthday hats, some decorated the room around them, we sang Happy Birthday and everyone had something wonderful to say about Sara. That was the moment I knew Zooming was our future.

Zoom has introduced a whole new way to stay connected. So many of

us, regardless of our age, are now Zoomed in! Zoom is keeping us connected in a time of disconnect. We can Zoom with family and friends for any special occasion like birthday's, graduations and holidays. There are Zooms to attend religious service, writing groups, personal interest groups, SMC Emeritus classes, yoga, dance, 12 step meetings, meditation, playing games, cooking classes, dinner meet-ups — the list is endless.

For many seniors, Zoom has made this time of isolation bearable. It's been a lifeline to the outside world when most of us are staying safe at home. It has provided a meeting place to maintain and even grow relationships with people in our various Zoom groups.

Five months after her 80th, I spoke with Sara about life and Zoom.

"I'm too busy on Zoom," she said. Adding, "It's like having a job, where there are lots of different parts and the subject of the job is me."

"How many hours a day are you on Zoom?" I asked.

"Too many, probably 4 to 5 hours a day, and I like it all!" Zoom makes her more productive because of less travel to and from places she went before Covid-19. In addition to her many Zoom commitments, Sara said she walks in the afternoon and has her meals in between. She describes this time of life as "very satisfying."

So what happens when Covid-19 restrictions have ended? Will we be Zoomed out and ready to get back to normal or will we want to stay Zoomed in to our new normal? Only time will tell.

WHAT'S HAPPENING: *Fall Emeritus Events*

"Watercolors, Spring 2020" Launch Event

Opens 5 p.m., October 22

Emeritus Art Gallery will present "Watercolors, Spring 2020" a new body of work created during the pandemic by renowned artist Catherine Tirr. The exhibition — offering a healing response with deep and peaceful watercolors — will be shown online.

A free, live Zoom Virtual Launch Event will be held online from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Thursday, October 22. A link at smc.edu/emergituseum takes guests directly to the exhibition's opening reception.

The opening reception will be hosted by Interim Dean of Noncredit and External Programs Dr. Scott Silverman and Emeritus Art Gallery Curator Jesse Benson. The event includes a live scroll through the exhibition, a discussion between Benson and Tirr about selected paintings, and a Q&A offering guests the chance to ask the artist questions about her work.

To see the artwork online at any time after 5 p.m. on October 22, viewers may go to smc.edu/emergituseum and click the **Catherine Tirr: Watercolors, Spring 2020** link, available 24 hours a day. The link takes viewers directly to the exhibition album on Facebook.

The Ongoing Moment 2020 Opens 5 p.m. November 19

The Ongoing Moment series continues with a new iteration. A live Zoom Virtual Launch Event with participating artists and writers — hosted by Emeritus faculty members Catherine Tirr and Monona Wali as well as Interim Dean of Noncredit and External Programs Dr. Scott Silverman and Emeritus Gallery Curator Jesse Benson — will be held Thursday, November 19, from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. More info about the exhibition, published journal, and Zoom reception event with live readings posted soon.

Senior Beach Parking in Paradise

By Laura Wilson

Sunrise to sunset, The City of Santa Monica Senior Beach Parking Permit offers easy and affordable access to the healing energy of the ocean.

Imagine this.

You are barefoot, standing on wet sand at the edge of the Pacific Ocean. Breathe in deeply counting to three and exhale slowly. Smell the ocean air. Listen to the birds and rumble of the sea. Feel the warm sun and a cool breeze brush your cheeks. A small bubbling wave flows softly towards you and tickling your toes, covering your feet and embracing your ankles. The sensation of cold water sends a shiver up your spine and chill through your body. In your mind's eye, see and feel yourself connecting with the nature around you.

You are imagining yourself Earthing at the Ocean!

Earthing, also known as Grounding, is the practice of connecting your body, mind and spirit to the planet. Some benefits of Earthing include improved sleep, reduced pain, increased energy, speeds recovery time from injuries and reduces stress. The beautiful beaches of Santa Monica are an excellent place to practice grounding and connecting with nature.

Avoid the crowds with an early morning visit and consider using the Annenberg beach parking lot. The area has lovely shaded seating, clean bathrooms a walking path that brings you to close to the water's edge, and a restaurant where you can enjoy breakfast outdoors with your feet in the sand.

So what are you waiting for? Purchase your permit and go to the beach. Let the magical energy of the

ocean begin to heal your mind, body and spirit. You are worth it!

Your passport to easy beach access is a City of Santa Monica Senior Beach Parking Permit. The annual permit fee is \$25 and is valid from April 1 to March 31 of each year. The permit is available to California residents 62 and over. For complete information and information on how to purchase your permit, visit the link below.

- [Senior Beach Parking Permit](#)
- Want to know more about Earthing? Watch the Documentary: [“The Earthing Movie: The Remarkable Science of Grounding.”](#)
- [Santa Monica Public Parking Locations](#)

Voting for Seniors

By Merry Rose

Voting for seniors this year will be the easiest it has ever been. Every registered voter will receive a ballot in the mail. Counties will begin mailing vote-by-mail ballots: October 5, 2020. All you need to do is to fill it out and mail it back in a postage-paid return envelope, postmarked by Election Day, November 3 or drop it in a ballot box near you.

As always, you can still go to your polling place. Although polling and ballot box locations have not yet been released, the LA VOTER website is the best reference to use for everything about voting, including registering to vote if you have never registered. The last day to register is: October 19, 2020. You can also request an absentee ballot if you need to.

Websites:

- Voter Information: sos.ca.gov/elections
- Rock the Vote California: rockthevote.org/how-to-vote/california

PLEASE VOTE!

The Covid Road to Learning

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aspect of not being able to connect in person. Overall, the advantages outweigh the drawbacks. Getting to class is easy – just go to your computer. No driving and having to find parking. Everyone gets a front row seat. It's easier to hear, as you can control your own volume.

During my discussions with those interviewed, the idea of combining these two methods of instruction after the Covid lockdown is over emerged as a possibility to explore. Food for thought!

Wearing a Mask Is Personal to Me

By Rozelle Teplitsky

Wearing a mask is not only necessary in these days of the Covid pandemic, but it is personal to me. It is not a fashion statement. It is not political. It is for my own health reasons and personal safety. This past December and January, I had an insidious Covid-like viral infection which lasted over five weeks. I am not willing to become a statistic by putting myself at risk by not wearing a mask when I leave home. Thus, wearing a mask is very personal to me. It is how I hope to protect myself from others with whom I come into contact.

Many business establishments like grocery stores require shoppers to wear masks before shopping. Some of my experiences while grocery shopping have been bizarre, to say the least. The day after Labor Day I went to the Santa Monica Trader Joe's where I had two unusual experiences.

While sanitizing and bagging my groceries outside the store, an unmasked lady who was standing close by told me that she believes the Covid virus is not real and does not have a television to listen to "fake news." I immediately knew her political convictions from her rhetoric. I quickly bagged my groceries, put them in a shopping cart and headed for the parking garage elevator.

As I approached the elevator, an elderly couple entered before me.

They went to the rear of the elevator, removed their masks and started to argue. The paunchy blonde-haired woman was unhappy with her older gray-haired and wrinkled male companion. When she fussed at him, he responded in a gruff, hoarse voice. They continued to argue when they exited the elevator. It was uncomfortable for me to be in such close proximity to the unmasked couple. I was concerned about this situation because Covid is an airborne disease and there is a possibility of transmitting germs into the air when someone who is not wearing a mask is talking in such an enclosed space.

I could hardly wait to get away from them. Unfortunately, their car was parked next to mine. For my own protection I was wearing a large pink straw hat, oversized round tortoise glasses and an N-95 mask. The woman removed her mask again when she placed her groceries in the backseat of her car. As she did so, she swung it back in such a way that it hit the rear left fender of my small car. When I heard the thump, it made me angry; but I just shook my head again without saying a word.

The woman asked me, "What is your problem? You were shaking your head!"

I answered, "Nothing."

She asked again, "Is it because I removed my mask?"

Again I said, "Nothing!"

I was appalled at their nonchalant behavior, disregarding masks and letting the grocery bag hit my car fender. However, I refused to engage because I did not want our encounter to escalate. Instead, I said to the woman, "Have a nice day!"

Her response was, "Asshole."

During this time of Covid and the pandemic all over the world, people are anxious and concerned about a multitude of issues — the daily barrage of negative press, increasing deaths from Covid, our election, and having to wear protective gear like a mask so they do not catch or spread infection. For many people, wearing a mask symbolizes the loss of control over their own lives and the perception that their constitutional rights and independence have been violated. But wearing a mask is a public safety measure to decrease the spread of Covid and more deaths — nothing more, nothing less. It is the responsible thing to do.

Pioneer Pandemic Scout

By Camille Gaon

Five months and counting into the hunkering down in my aboveground bunker, so to speak, and I've actually enjoyed my "involuntary staycation," even though it's in Salvador Dali land.

I haven't succumbed to the pandemic panic that abounds because that's not my knee-jerk reaction to unwelcome change and upheaval.

As a senior citizen, I've had decades to learn how to adapt to change and uncertainty. My particularly traumatic childhood and adult life's roller coaster ups-and-downs prepared me well to embrace the opportunity to roll with these unprecedented punches when our planet pushed the pause button in an attempt to cause a massive shift of the Cosmic Imbalance.

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Surviving Coronavirus

By *Eliyahu Abramson*

As the early news broke out about the first pandemic shutdown in the city of Wuhan, China, where it originated, I learned that a special needs adult in that town, who was cut off from his brother, father and his caretakers, perished. And what a death, what a brutal way for him to go before his time.

I am a special needs person with mental and physical health disabilities. Hearing the story of the man in China horrified me. But I decided to take a life-affirming position. I would survive no matter what; I would not follow in the tragic fate of my fellow disabled person in China, even if my health and psychological maintenance became especially challenging during the pandemic.

At first I thought I would not make it. I was under enormous stress

My life-long experiences have given me a rather impressive set of coping tools to utilize during these enigmatic times.

Resiliency, self-sufficiency, creativity, gratitude, superior attitude, sense of humor, thinking on my feet and adapt-on-a-dime mentality have kept me buoyant and thriving throughout.

Inspired early on by the character Dominique in Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, I always strove to be independent and not need to rely on anyone else for anything.

My abuse-laden childhood taught me that I needed an extra special set of stellar survival skills if I wanted to live and thrive.

I was a Brownie, but I wasn't a Girl Scout. The silver lining during this

because of the isolation, fear related to the disease, and shocking consequences associated with public health measures such as physical distancing. I am a social person. I am an extrovert. And I was also finding that my symptoms were hard to manage.

My appointments with health professionals became completely remote. Speaking to a psychologist and the psychiatrist over the phone instead of meeting with them and being observed by them in person, having weekly physical therapy Zoom sessions instead of having the physical therapist working on me directly—all this was challenging for me. For the past six months, even my case worker, who was visiting me on a weekly basis before the shutdown to help me with practical tasks, hasn't seen me in person even once. Now I am completely on my own.

Surviving coronavirus is a triple whammy, as I fall in the category of at-risk, having pre-existing conditions, and having limited care by family members. Even my birthday on the weekend of September

time is that I realized I am a Pioneer Pandemic Scout.

In the vein of not depending on anyone, I studied in the school of life to learn how to be a Jill of all trades. I can cut and color my own hair, cook delicious and healthy gourmet meals, practice yoga at home, unclog a drain, clean the house, do laundry, change a light bulb, and most importantly, invent new holistic therapies to conquer a cancer recurrence during Covid.

I've combined dancing with my yoga/meditation practice and coined my new nickname as an "Anti-Cancer Dancer" to dance the cancer away. So far, in absence of traditional treatment, it has not progressed one bit.

26th, which used to be a traditional opportunity for my extended Russian-Jewish family to get together for a meal in a restaurant and shower me with financial gifts, didn't occur because of the pandemic this year. Yet I feel lucky I survived my 51st birthday, even if I did not celebrate it in the traditional way. I had my friends and family in my heart.

As a philosopher and a stoic, I am able to look the coronavirus challenge directly in its face. I take a life-affirming position that I will survive. I emphasize my meditation. I exercise. My gym is closed, so I walk in the park three times a day. I cook everything from scratch, weigh and measure my food, abstain from flour and sugar. As previously I was able to reverse my diabetes by losing 100 pounds, now diet and exercise and all my healthy habits counteract the toxic effects of coronavirus. I have survived and endured despite this crippling pandemic; and I will survive and will endure in the future, so help me God.

This gift of "me time" has been a chance for me to flourish and embrace this challenge without resistance. The adaptations I've made have all been for the better.

For one, I can practice bra-less yoga at home, on my own timetable. I've planned weekly menus, which frees up a lot of time.

Speaking of time, I'm just as busy as I was B.C. (Before-Covid), but it's time I get to spend indulging in luxuries that were always on the back burner, like writing.

Given this newfound appreciation of shifting my focus and being more present and mindful, I'm happy to say I'm a "Satisfied Sequesterer," and grateful that my daughter is a member of the Pioneer Pandemic Scouts with me.

Passings: Ellen Reich

By Monona Wali

SMC Emeritus lost a beloved teacher and Malibu lost its Poet Laureate with the passing of Ellen Reich in May 1, 2020.

Ellen taught poetry and writing at the SMC Emeritus for twenty years at the Malibu Senior Center. She had many devoted students. One of them, Hank Pollard, shared a letter he wrote to her on finding out she was ill:

In your class I began to do creative writing. You allowed my imagination to wander freely, mostly in prose but even poetry. Your laser-like comments upon reading a piece for the first time continually amazed me. They were perceptive and incisive, but invariably gentle and considerate. You developed an environment that produced better writing by all of us. You made the class a safe place where we could comfortably write about personal and sometimes even intimate matters. Many thanks for being my teacher and my friend and my inspiration.

Dr. Scott Silverman, Interim Dean of Noncredit and External Programs, wrote that “Ellen had a very genuine heart, and an amazing outlook on life. Even after her diagnosis, and her decision to step away and retire, she commented that she had enjoyed the most amazing experiences and successes in life, and she would not have traded the last 20 years she spent teaching for anything.”

Ellen was widely published and she received numerous awards for work

from DA Center for the Arts, Blue Unicorn, Cape Cod Times and other organizations. She was nominated for Pushcart Prizes in 2008 and 2009. She published four collections of her works of poetry, including *Reverse Kiss*, *The Gynecic Papers*, *Sleeping Guardian*, and *Sacrifices Have To Be Human*. She became Malibu’s second poet laureate in March 2019 and was to have served until March, 2021. According to the Santa Monica Daily Press “Ellen’s spirit and ideative poetry, along with her relentless devotion to the development of poetry in Malibu since 1974, made her the ideal artist to hold the position of Malibu Poet Laureate.”

Ellen was also an active fine artist whose work was exhibited in the Weisman Art Museum and the Ojai Valley Gallery. She was the recipient of two first-place awards from the Malibu Art Association.

Ellen was born April 4, 1934 and grew up in New Jersey before moving to Southern California in the early 1970s. She passed away peacefully at her home in Malibu surrounded by loved ones, and is survived by four children, nine grandchildren and eight great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her husband Herbert and her son Barry Gaynor.

INTERRUPTION OF BIRD

Ellen Reich

take one feather
floating toward the surface of the earth
the bird unaware of her loss
sings
her timing precise like rests in music
for without phrasing there is no passion
the bird-song a gentle entry
to ancient conversation

Brain Teasers and Trivia

- 1) What belongs to you, but other people use it more than you?
- 2) What is the driest continent?
- 3) What goes up but never goes down?
- 4) What is the only X-rated movie to win Best Picture at the Oscars?
- 5) If there are six apples and you take away four, how many do you have?

Answers: (1) YOUR NAME (2) ANTARCTICA (3) YOUR AGE (4) MIDNIGHT COWBOY (5) FOUR

Remembering Bill Elliott

By Peter Bergquist

William Hugh Elliott, longtime and much-loved Emeritus music teacher, died peacefully in his sleep on Sunday night, August 16, 2020. I would like to offer a few personal reminiscences of the man his students all knew as Bill. Shortly after I retired some ten years ago and a friend told me about Emeritus, I got hold of its catalogue to see what might interest me. I ended up trying a class listed as Voice Training. I had been in my college glee club, loved to sing and thought improving my voice certainly couldn't hurt. I was amused to find that there was precious little training involved in Bill's class. I was a latecomer and didn't know if he had always run things the same way. His class was packed, so I imagined that at some point he had decided he really didn't have enough time to teach technique individually in any depth and at the same time give everyone enough time to sing. I was soon to learn the Bill Elliott technique.

Despite his short and slight frame, Bill had a core of strength. He did not often comment or compliment a performance; he seemed to want to keep things moving. And he ran a tight ship in his soft-spoken, almost deadpan way. I remember early on singing a song with many verses. To my chagrin Bill just stopped me in the middle, said it was too long and told me to sit down.

But the more I performed, the less frightened and more confident I became. Eventually I was able to sing in a small showcase at a local library. For someone who had frozen onstage at the opening night of a high school play, it gave me a real sense of accomplishment.

I loved the class. I enjoyed learning about the composers and lyricists of great songs by researching my selections and by hearing about the choices of others from the students or Bill, who was very knowledgeable. The songsters ran the full gamut of musical abilities, but we were all very supportive of each other's efforts. We wanted very much to please Bill as well as ourselves and so were driven to rehearse at home and improve. One day I attempted Irving Berlin's "Cheek to Cheek." Afterwards Bill said to me in his low-key way, "That was very professional." I have rarely in my life been so proud of myself.

Bill was born in Canada to George Reginald and Elizabeth Jane (Musgrove) Elliott. He is survived by his wife Martha (Dean), whom he met serving in the US army in Korea where she moonlighted as a DJ for the troops, his brother David, and many nieces and nephews. Bill and his wife came to California in

the late 1970's. Gifted with perfect pitch, he sang with Fred Waring, Perry Como and Jimmy Dean during his career. I was told by another student that he had written a score for a version of *The Wind and the Willows*, which unfortunately was never produced. Bill taught singing and guitar at Emeritus until he was 88, driving in all the way from Camarillo to do so. In 1986 he took over as director of the Emeritus all-female Lyric Chorus, which he built up to three times its original size. The group performed in many Santa Monica venues over the years.

The family would like to thank his longtime caregiver, Melody Mendoza, as well as Lillian Alcaron and Jocelyn Cacal for providing a home and refuge for the Elliott family and also the Free Spirit Hospice (5924 E. Los Angeles Ave., Simi Valley, CA 93063) and Life Care Hospice (80 Northwood Rd Suite 304A, Camarillo, CA 93010). Memorial donations may be made to either of these facilities or to the Christian Science Church of Camarillo, 380 Mission Drive, Camarillo CA 93010. The Neptune Society has provided cremation and a private burial at sea.



Lori Pollack, *Getting Out of the Woods*, 11"x14", watercolor. From *The Ongoing Moment*.

From the Dean's Desk

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lighting upgrades, a sliding automatic door on the first floor foyer leading into 107. We're also putting in automatic door openers on the 1st floor restroom, replacing a window in Art Room 205 so we can open it up for ventilation, adding mirrors into Health Room 308, and will see the elevator retrofit be completed this Academic Year.

By now you should have received the Emeritus fundraising letter for Fall. We did not send one in Spring due to the start of the pandemic. I hesitated for Fall too, as I know many people don't have the same giving capacity right now as they might normally have. We appreciate any donations you send in. **They go a long way to making improvements on our facilities and programs.**

We have had several events this last year, and will be doing more this year. The best site to bookmark is that of our Emeritus Art Gallery smc.edu/emeritusgallery where we will host the live show and post a link to the photo album. Archived shows are there too and we're working on adding some of the older shows. It's not the same as being there in person...and we aren't providing food, but in many ways, it's even better. Invite your friends and family to check it out as well.

Our student workers, Marcia and Minh-Chau, as well as our dedicated staff, Vivian Rankin-Scales and Jessica Riojas, are hard at work answering your emails and calls. Lauri Arneson, who has been our Administrative Assistant for 13 years, has retired, effective September 30, 2020. If you're so inclined, you can send congratulatory notes to the Emeritus office and I will route them to her. So far, she's enjoying retirement, and even though I've invited her to enroll, she says she's going to take a much-deserved break first.

We have some other programs we're working on as well and we will find ways to get information to you when we know it. In the meantime, if you are not already checking your SMC email regularly, please start doing so. It's very hard to communicate to students regularly without the use of your SMC email. If you need help accessing it for the first time, email us at emeritus@smc.edu.

Wishing you a great fall!

Dr. Scott Silverman
Dean, Noncredit and External Programs (Interim)

This edition of the *Emeritus Voice* was written and produced by students in the "Writing For Publication" (E34) class taught by Monona Wali.



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SMC Emeritus is committed to life-long learning for older adults. From art and literature to health and safety, personal finance, and digital technologies, Emeritus College students connect, discover, renew, and reinvent. Classes are held at the SMC Emeritus headquarters at 1227 Second Street, Santa Monica, as well as at community sites located throughout the cities of Santa Monica and Malibu.

Got Suggestions?

You can give Emeritus your feedback in several ways: by emailing emeritus@smc.edu; calling 310-434-4306; through the suggestion boxes located on the 1st, 2nd, and 4th floors of Emeritus; and in-person on the 1st floor Enrollment Services or 4th floor Administrative office.

SMC Emeritus Campus is temporarily closed.



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