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From the Dean's Desk
by Dr. Scott Silverman, Dean



Dear Emeritus students,
I hope you are all doing well.

Special thanks to all of the faculty teaching an in-person class, and special thanks to those of you who are attending an in-person class.

I know many of our in-person classes are also choosing to live-stream their class on Zoom... and we should see that trend continue in future terms. Even so, I believe that nothing can replace the joy and enthusiasm of being with your friends and classmates (and faculty!) in-person. I hope you will venture back on campus soon, even if it is just to say hello, or to view the artwork of student Michael Baroff currently in the gallery. Our staff occasionally work remotely, or someone may take a sick day...but otherwise, we are in the building.

continued on page 2

**Speaking of Art:
Profile of Catherine Tirr**

By Darlene Gaston

"I guess you can say that art is in my DNA," said Catherine Tirr, SMC professor since 2000. "I've always done creatively driven work." Her creative journey started in the UK, where she was born and acquired a master's degree, then to Michigan when she was awarded a scholarship to Cranbrook Art Academy. She was lured to New York City as the next stop on her journey. There she devoted herself to freelance printmaking and produced prints for such artists as Robert Rauschenberg, Robert Mapplethorpe, Phillip Pearlstein and Saul Steinberg. Also, while in NY,

Catherine worked in the film industry as a scenic and set designer. After a short course at the Polakov Studio of Stage Design, she pivoted to production design. On a whim, Catherine delved into the world of fashion where she constructed sculptural hats for runway shows. That experience led to a move back to London to create hats for a 007 Bond Girl, which she did for two seasons. Now many years later, Catherine doesn't remember the name of the Bond Girl actor for whom she worked.

continued on page 2



From the Dean's Desk

continued from page 1

I wanted to also let you know about an amazing new campus that Santa Monica College is opening in Malibu. The SMC Malibu Campus, located at 23555 Civic Center Way, Malibu, CA 90265, is funded through a previous Bond measure. SMC will offer a combination of Credit classes, Noncredit classes (including the tuition-free Early Childhood Education certificate), Emeritus classes, and Community Education classes at this Malibu campus. The first term of instruction is slated for Spring 2023. The campus is stunning, and I am pleased to tell you that you will certainly enjoy having Emeritus classes there.

There will be a series of fun events to look forward to! Please stay posted.

I hope all of you are doing well, and that we can see you in-person soon!

Scott



Speaking of Art: Profile of Catherine Tirr

continued from page 1

At Emeritus, Catherine started teaching one class — a watercolor in plein air, taking her students outdoors to paint in natural settings. Today she teaches five art classes. She also teaches the same number of classes at Pierce College.

Catherine enjoys interacting with Emeritus students because of their diverse backgrounds and lived experiences. “Here it’s not about grades. People want to learn, to grow, to develop.”

She supports students’ development with inventive projects. In the drawing class that I took in the spring, Catherine challenged students to select an object that would become our drawing subject for the semester. The weekly prompt charged us with developing various scenes: we drew our object enclosed in a plastic baggie, sitting atop a bottle of sanitizer, gazing into a mirror. These were just a few of our projects, all of which are devised to teach a new drawing skill or technique. By the end of the semester, we knew our subjects intimately. Catherine chooses projects not only to stretch her students, but projects that excite her as well.

This year marks the seventh year that Catherine has collaborated with Writing and Literature professor, Monona Wali on *The Ongoing Moment*, a publication produced by Wali’s Writing for Publication Class. The journal combines artwork from Catherine’s students with creative non-fiction from Wali’s students. “It’s a natural fit really,” Catherine said. This year’s issue will

have a launch date of December 1 and Tirr’s students’ paintings will be shown in the Emeritus Gallery.

Catherine is not only an art instructor, but she is also an artist in her own right, with a large body of work. You can check out her work at catherinetirr.com. Her work is currently handled by Coast Gallery in Big Sur. She doesn’t have a favorite medium, working in watercolor, acrylic and oil depending on what the subject dictates. Catherine divides her art into two categories: plein air painting and studio art. Her plein air work consists of landscapes and nature scenes. She finds plein air “meditative and absorbing” requiring the attention that allows her to “respond to a feeling and emotional response to the environment” rather than creating a realistic rendering. She describes her studio work as “more personal” art. In a current project, Catherine arranges playing cards to set up changeable still life scenes, a project influenced by Giorgio Morandi, that allows her to capture the “ephemeral nature of the political landscape”. Catherine says, “I feel that an artist’s job is to speak to the time they are living in and comment on it.”

Speaking of art, Catherine has shown her work at LACMA, Armand Hammer Museum and had a one woman watercolor exhibition here at [Emeritus in Spring 2020](#). She is a featured Emeritus art faculty member of the SMC Malibu Campus coming in 2023. Yes, you can say art is indeed in her DNA.

The Nonagenarian

By Darlene Gaston

Len Magnus became my hero from the minute I heard his first story. His crisp, concise writing and tongue-in-cheek humor engaged me from the first sentence. His imagination is so complete that I am often left wondering, *is that a true story?*

“Maybe,” is his frequent answer.

His stories run the gamut of life. “I draw inspiration from all over the place. I can walk down the street and find inspiration.” His specialty: the art of the short story. I was even more impressed when I found out that he was a nonagenarian writer. Len celebrated his ninety-first birthday this year.

At SMC Emeritus, Len started taking Joe Kronsberg’s creative writing class in July 1999 when he was a young man of sixty-eight and realized that “I was tired of writing what I did last summer and I wanted to write fiction.” He sprinkles humor, heart, and a twist — always a twist — into his stories. They take you on an unexpected but pleasant ride that I don’t want to end. His writing elicits smiles and chuckles from the class. That suits Len just fine. “I like to entertain,” he says about his storytelling. Len is a prolific writer with a body of work that consists of hundreds of stories, yet he has no plans to publish. Instead, he loves to just share them with the class.

Len graduated from New York University with a degree in Communication Arts with the aspiration of being a DJ and a sportscaster. As often happens with the vagaries of life, Len has held a plethora of positions. He worked in radio and TV, engaged in fundraising for organizations such as Sierra Club and Red Cross, taught business classes, and was a writer. He produced a syndicated radio show for Dick Clark. Len remembers fondly holding up cue cards with the words “Well, Dick” to remind interviewed guests on the show to simulate speaking to Dick Clark, who was not present at the time of the interviews.

He was an eyewitness to the start of rock-and-roll. How so, you ask? He was a producer at WINS, a TV station in NY where Alan Freed renamed his show *Rock and Roll* to describe that fresh style of music and dance that we grew up with and came to love. The music had a good beat; you could dance to it. The rest is history.

Another eyewitness account: Len was also in line along with Ted Koppel and Charles Osgood, fellow ABC employees, to view the body of JFK in repose prior to the funeral. He also reported during a phone call with the ABC staff about the capture of Lee Harvey Oswald.

Today, Len not only writes plays, but he also acts in them. He even has a listing on IMDb for his role in *Sometimes Santa’s Gotta Get Whacked*. Len has been acting since he was seven years old but only started acting classes in 1992 to hone his craft. He has also taken theater commentary and singing classes throughout his years at Emeritus. Fellow student Freddie recalled when she started at Emeritus, “Len was everywhere.” Len has even reversed roles and has on occasion been Joe’s substitute instructor.

Since retiring, Len hasn’t allowed any moss to grow under his feet: writer, actor, father, partner, grandfather, nonagenarian, and my hero.



Coping with Grief

By Sharon Valente, Ph.D., APRN

My husband had his final wish and died peacefully at home. Although expected, his death was still a shock. One of his nurses wanted to keep hugging me; I wanted to be alone. I couldn't cry for weeks. Despite being a psychologist and a psychiatric nurse with expertise in grief and bereavement, that knowledge didn't temper my grief. I was numb, frozen, and on automatic pilot. My brain needed time to adjust to reality while it raced to enumerate tasks such as calling the mortuary, notifying family, and canceling credit cards. Grief is a normal human response to loss that traumatizes us as our feelings ping pong out of our control. It can impact the physical, emotional, mental, social, and spiritual dimensions of our lives. As seniors, we suffer more losses than most and face the daunting reality that the bell will toll for us soon enough.

Managing the process: Grief is confusing — you may feel better one day and mired in acute grief the next. You may have glimpsed or heard the deceased and think you are losing your mind, but this is normal. In grief, we make sense of death and readjust our relationships and lives. A death leaves us fatigued, powerless, and wishing that something like calling 911 sooner might have prevented death. Over time, try to reduce the painful guilt-ridden “shoulds” (I should have done this or that...) and substitute “could” to lessen self-blame. Who knows if any change would have been effective? You loved the deceased, sometimes over a lifetime, so grief will not resolve overnight. Elisabeth Kubler Ross identified the different stages of grief as denial, bargaining,

depression, and acceptance; diverse feelings including anger and sadness are normal. These stages do not necessarily proceed in order. You can be in denial one day, bargaining (asking God to bring the loved one back) the next and bounce back and forth to sadness or relief and acceptance. Suicide or homicide may pose additional difficulties. Suicide leaves a skeleton in the family's closet with haunting guilt and regrets. The grief process is a roller coaster; not predictable or linear.

Grief takes time and one size doesn't fit all: Processing grief and feelings takes time as we manage tasks from planning funerals, to overseeing an estate. Death often evokes old family feuds, greed, and gripes. Your decisions won't please everyone. If you are an unwed life partner and without a durable power of attorney or other legal documents, you may have no say about burial, possessions, or estate. In the worst case, you may lose your housing and find your possessions tossed in the street. Grief changes our relationships — you may move from a couple relationship to single, or junior to elder, and you may absorb the deceased's tasks. If you are widowed and your partner managed finances, or house upkeep, you may need to assume or delegate these roles. If an elder sibling dies, you may become major caretaker for ailing relatives. If you were the caretaker, you need to grieve the loss of that and may need to reorganize your life. If your treasured pet, Fluffy died, only you can decide if or when to get another pet.

Seniors face more losses with dwindling support to help us cope. It's important to ask for help. When you lack knowledge of a daunting task like managing the estate, resources are available including a good estate attorney. If like me, your late partner was a handyman, but you're not, you might enroll in the

excellent SMC Emeritus Fix it Class to learn basics (e.g. how to shut off water and utilities, stop a leak, and more). Your religion or culture also offers comforting supportive rites and ceremonies. Be prepared for irritating phone calls for the deceased even after you said, “he died.” Friends or family with good intentions often don't know how to respond to a death, so be prepared for awkward or hurtful comments. After my husband's death, my housekeeper announced, “You look so much better now.” Her comments stunned me and I gasped. When well-meaning friends or family advise you when to stop wearing your wedding ring; unload belongings and move on, use only the advice that helps you. Proceed at your own pace. If wearing the wedding ring feels right, do so.

When to seek help: Seek pastoral or professional counseling (a licensed mental health professional including a psychologist, psychiatrist, psychiatric nurse, or psychiatric social worker) or support if you:

- Cannot sleep, eat, work, or function
- Continue to isolate yourself,
- Anger, denial, or suicidal thoughts consume you
- You behave self-destructively with excessive alcohol or drugs or
- If you ignore usual safety precautions (e.g., seat belts, locks)

The following guidelines help process grief:

- Be patient with yourself, your tears, and reactions, and be flexible to new needs.
- When possible, put off major decisions (e.g., moving, selling the house, buying a boat) until you can think more clearly after the grief resolves.
- Prepare and plan for recurring events that trigger grief (e.g., holidays, birthdays, etc.) If you always had an anniversary party,

continued on page 5

Ellen's Club

By Shifra Meyerow Wylder

Ellen Reich,
Malibu's Poet
Laureate from
March 2018-2020,
passed away on
May 1, 2020. She
taught Creative



Writing and Autobiography
for Emeritus for many years. She
was a long-time Malibu resident
and widely published poet, with
hundreds of her poems and stories
appearing in *The Los Angeles Times*,
Slant, *Mudfish*, *Slipstream*, *ACM*,
Coe Review, and other publications
over the years. Ellen was also an
active fine artist and had her work
exhibited in the Weisman Museum
of Art and the Ojai Valley Gallery.

"I started writing poetry in 1964
when my first husband died an
untimely death at the age of 37
from leukemia," Ellen shared once in
class. "I had three young sons and
writing poetry was a way to deal with
my grief."

Ellen inspired me and many others
to write and appreciate the art of
writing and poetry. She exuded loving
kindness and a contagious sense of
humor. She was the bright, shining

light everywhere she went, especially
in the darkness of the student's
writings. She acknowledged and
validated our shadow sides yet
brought beautiful light out of them.
She gave everyone the grace and
encouragement they needed to
get through and overcome their
challenges because she had faced
her own.

Ellen's Club is an offshoot of Ellen's
Emeritus Autobiography writing class
held at the Malibu Senior Center.
Lisa Zarowin, one of Ellen's students,
started Ellen's Club to keep her
legacy alive. After class, a group of
us (Ellen's students and friends) went
to Marmalade restaurant for happy
hour and continued conversations,
while learning about each other's
lives and building deeper connections
and community.

Ellen's Club currently meets about
once a month. Initially, we met
on Zoom, would choose a writing
prompt, then share our writing with
the group for feedback. Lately, since
we can now meet in person, around
seven to ten of us meet at a chosen
restaurant. We'll usually celebrate
those who have birthdays during that
month and discuss current matters in
each other's lives. Sometimes there
are a list of printed puns handed out
and read, special announcements, or
health issues that need our positive
thoughts and prayers.

One day after lunch, a group of us
went to nearby Legacy Park on Ellen's
birthday to view and read her poem
Interruption of Bird, engraved on a
beautiful black Belgian stone, which
is an appropriate fit for a park where
four natural coastal habitats meet.

Ellen's daughter wrote in an email
to Lisa Zarowin, "I remember the
day when she drove up to Ventura
with Ann Buxie (Malibu's current
Poet Laureate) to pick out the stone
for her poem. She was so honored
to have the opportunity to have her
poem engraved and put in Legacy
Park. At that time, she hadn't even
been diagnosed with cancer yet.

Ellen departed surprisingly and
suddenly, leaving a strong imprint
in the lives of all whose path she
crossed. She continues to shine
brightly in the hearts of everyone
who knew her.

Interruption of Bird

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.

Coping with Grief continued from page 4

- plan something different — dinner
and a movie with a friend.
- Honor the deceased — cherish
your memories and feel free to talk
about the loved one.
- Seek resources — consider
attending supportive grief groups at
a church, temple, or mental health
center. Our House Grief Support
Center, a nonprofit in Santa Monica
supports the bereaved. Another
resource is Compassionate Friends

- compassionatefriends.org local
chapters.
- Recognize that survival mode may
dominate as you move toward
healing and growth.
- Take time to enjoy the trivial things,
laugh at the funny memories, and
treasure the deceased.
- If you are angry and want to
scream but not in public, go for a
drive, pull over and scream and
holler in the car.

Grief teaches us about our
unrecognized strengths as we learn
new skills and manage feelings. We
may treasure life anew and adopt the
loved one's valued characteristics
such as a generous spirit, gratitude, or
a positive attitude. Learning to put our
love into words every day is often an
outcome of grief. The deceased's spirit
may remain with us as a supportive
and guiding presence. Be patient with
yourself, your tears, and reactions, and
be flexible to new needs.



Kudos: Ana Reyes:

A Writer's Journey to Novelist

By Tracy Katz

Exciting News: SMC Emeritus Professor Ana Reyes' debut novel, *The House in the Pines*, is forthcoming January 2023 from Dutton Books. It is a thriller in which a young woman must find her way back to a New England cabin, armed with only hazy haunting memories and a half-written book by the father in Guatemala she never knew. She must finally uncover the truth that could save her. The book keeps you guessing about whether she can fully confront the past and return home.

Ana Reyes is no stranger to books. She was raised by a mother who received her Ph.D. in literature and wrote her thesis on T.S. Eliot, so she was surrounded by interesting books and authors all her life. In her youth, her family moved around a lot, and libraries became a familiar and centering place where she could always dive into a book. She developed an early love of mysteries, thrillers, and escapist stories. She also enjoyed entering the library's

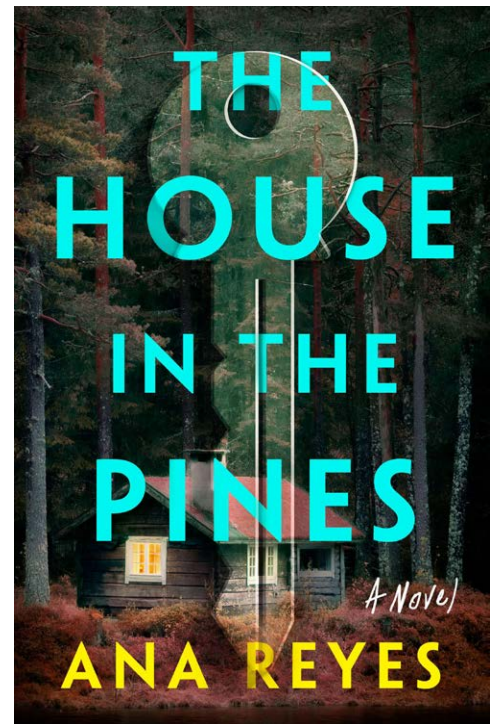
writing contests in hopes to win a gift certificate to buy more books.

Laura Esquivel's *Like Water for Chocolate* introduced the teenage Ana to her new love, the genre of magical realism. After working in the film business as a script reader for eight years, she went on to receive her MFA at Louisiana State University in Creative Writing in 2015.

After graduate school, she found herself teaching prerequisite English and Composition at various colleges in California. Seeking a more creative experience, she joined Jim Krusoe's creative writing class at Santa Monica College. It was here that she was introduced to a community of like-minded writers. Once Ana got her MFA, Monona Wali, her former teacher, suggested she apply to teach at SMC in the Emeritus program. She now teaches the Saturday autobiography class, where I have been privileged to have the opportunity to learn from her.

The House in the Pines began as her thesis in grad school. It took her seven years to write. After she queried several agents, she was finally accepted by one. She worked closely with her agent for the next two years to prepare the novel for submission. It was submitted on a Thursday and by the following Monday there were multiple offers! Ana selected Dutton as her publisher and worked another seven months with their editor to fine-tune it.

When asked what advice she would give to aspiring writers, Ana suggests: read different authors and genres, take classes, read and listen to others' work, offer comments and find a supportive writing community. Ana is currently working on a new novel that she is very excited about. She hopes to complete it in a year's time. Her current novel is already available for pre-order and will be available on Amazon, in bookstores, and of course at your local library once released in January of next year. Ana has a big fan club at Emeritus and we are all looking forward to reading *The House in the Pines*!



The Bargain Hunter: What Are You Doing Here?

By Gordon Blitz

The first time I entered the 99 Cents Only Store at Stewart and Pico in Santa Monica, I was nervous and embarrassed. Despite two friends who swore by the establishment, I was skeptical. Also, I was known as a cheapskate and was afraid this was going to cement my reputation. When I saw BMWs and Mercedes in the parking lot, I forged ahead. And when I found organic strawberries, blueberries, English cucumber, and sweet potatoes for 99 cents a pound, at pre-pandemic prices, I thought maybe this isn't so awful. I worried when I told my husband, who grew up in Beverly Hills, that he would ask for a divorce, but when I showed him the quality he approved with a smile.

Even with the impact of inflation, with prices now fluctuating between \$1.29 and \$1.49, you can't beat their bargains for humongous honeydew melons, jasmine rice, and ground flaxseed. I've even found gluten-free items like creamy oat milk, pasta, and bread. And what could be better than seeing an abundance of items labeled as non-GMO?

Once you start visiting this treasure trove consistently, you'll learn tricks about which days and times you'll get the best selection (avoid afternoons and Sundays), how to bypass food that has no shelf life like wilting broccoli or resist avocados that never ripen. You need to remember that certain items like paper goods and toiletries may be more expensive than in supermarkets or Costco because they can't be bought in bulk. And speaking about shelf life, don't be surprised if one of

your special finds like frozen plantains has passed its expiration date. Plus, don't get too fond of any specific groceries. You'll find those organic raspberries were a once-in-a-lifetime acquisition by the store's wholesale buyer.

One benefit has been that my culinary repertoire has been expanded by cooking comfort food like grits and baking gluten-free blueberry muffins from scratch.

Seniors on fixed incomes need to stretch their dollars and there is no place better than the 99 Cents Only Store. And there is no shame in bargain hunting. The store has a diverse clientele — ages nine through 99 which includes all classes, races, and genders. The cashiers have masters' degrees in patience — helping the physically challenged and working with customers who use coins to pay for their groceries. And you would be amazed at the number of balloons purchased for birthday celebrations and *quinceañeras*. Overall, going to the 99 Cents Only Store can be a mood lifter. Rather than getting depressed by runaway inflation at other markets, you'll become a bargain-basement detective, rewarded with rock-bottom opportunities. The kind of scavenger hunt where we all are winners.

The day I met someone else from Emeritus at the store, we both giggled and simultaneously said, "What are you doing here?" This was a good way to break down the barrier of being found out. What could be better medicine than laughter and stretching your dollar?

Brain Teasers and Trivia

- 1) What do the following words have in common: revive, banana, grammar, voodoo, assess, potato, dresser, uneven?
- 2) What is another name for a footrest?
- 3) In how many films did Sean Connery play James Bond?
- 4) In what country were French fries invented?
- 5) What do the following two-letter combinations have in common: SA, TP, IC, DK?

Answers: 1) IF YOU MAKE THE FIRST LETTER OF EACH THE LAST, EACH WORD READS THE SAME WAY BACKWARDS 2) AN OTTOMAN 3) SEVEN 4) BELGIUM 5) SPEAKING THE LETTERS CREATES A WORD (ESSAY, TEEPEE, ICY, DECAY)

Exercising the Brain

by Jeanne Shamji

Lois Frand teaches three sessions of HUMDEV E27: Exercising the Brain at SMC Emeritus. Her classes assist older adults to minimize anxiety when memory behavior patterns change. The ultimate goal is to stimulate thinking and exercise the brain. I was lucky to be able to attend one of her classes on Zoom.

Prior to her classes each week, Lois emails students two brain exercises designed to enhance memory retention and retrieval and to keep them mentally sharp. For the class I was attending, one of the brain exercises included twenty-five definitions and asked for a word that answered each definition that contained only the vowel “E.” In class, Lois went over each definition with clues of what the answer could be.

This lesson was not easy to solve, and I needed to “cheat” to answer four of the questions. One of the definitions was, “of little importance.” Others were “a place where dogs are boarded” and “a ridge or coral or rock in a body of water.” (The answers are below.) In addition to the in-class exercises, Lois suggests that students try jigsaw puzzles, learn a skill, eat a healthy diet, and utilize other ways to help to increase focus, concentration, and memory. Her students have told her that the class has helped them learn to stay focused on what they are doing and not get easily distracted, to talk to themselves before going into the kitchen, living room, bedroom to remind them what they are going for, and they are better at thinking through situations and solving problems.

Lois has twenty-five students in each of her three classes. Even so, she makes time to work with each individually. She characterizes her students as being exceptionally jovial and who help each other to answer the definitions. Many students repeat the class as it is so much fun. I found the class enjoyable with much comradery and socializing. Her classes are for speakers of all languages and for people with memory difficulties. They are immensely helpful for pronunciation, spelling, and socialization. Lois stresses that the classes are not for those suffering from dementia or Alzheimer’s.

The subject of her class interested me personally because I suffered a stroke when my son was born that caused me to develop epilepsy. The stroke damaged the neurons in my brain. The neurologist informed me that each time I had a seizure, some brain cells would die and this process would affect my memory. I learned that Lois was paid by the Los Angeles Adult School one summer to develop a memory loss class and to put together games and puzzles for students suffering from memory loss.

She is a retired registered nurse who specialized in surgery and parenting classes and is a certified Red Cross nurse. Lois has a master’s degree in education and previously taught Special Ed for the speech, language, and hearing impaired and also taught lip reading. She has a teaching credential in adult

education from UCLA and works with people who have suffered from strokes and memory loss.

She is married to a math expert and has two children. One of her children is a physician and the other is an IT specialist. Some of her grandchildren live around the corner from her. Others live in Israel. Lois enjoys swimming and working out on her treadmill and walks three miles a day.

Speaking with Lois after class, I found her to be a friendly, helpful, and knowledgeable person who is familiar with my problems with memory. Now that I am older, I understand that many people my age suffer from loss of memory. It is embarrassing to be in the middle of a sentence and unable to come up with the correct word or forget a friend’s name — “a senior moment.” I appreciated Lois’ suggestion to give myself permission to age gracefully, a lesson we can all benefit from.

Answers to brain exercise: 1. petty
2. kennel 3. reef



From Ukraine to America: Profile of Anna S.

By Linda Rosman

Ganna S. (Anna) is a Ukrainian student here at SMC Emeritus. I first met Anna in our photography class on Zoom. She was always cheerful and I found her to be a wonderful photographer with a great eye and sensibility. However, in February 2022 when Putin started the war in Ukraine, Anna's demeanor changed, and we could see she was very visibly upset.

For Anna, the fear and terror of this war is very personal. Her 75-year-old sister and brother-in-law lived in Kyiv. They spent two weeks hiding in the basement of a neighboring apartment building without access to health care, basic medical supplies, or groceries. By a pure miracle, they were able to find a long and exhausting way out. For Anna, starting and ending each day reading the horrific news from Ukraine has been her reality for the last 8+ months.

Anna was born in Siberia, but when she was five, her family moved back to Ukraine, to Kyiv. During WWII, her mother was a military doctor in the Russian army and her father was an

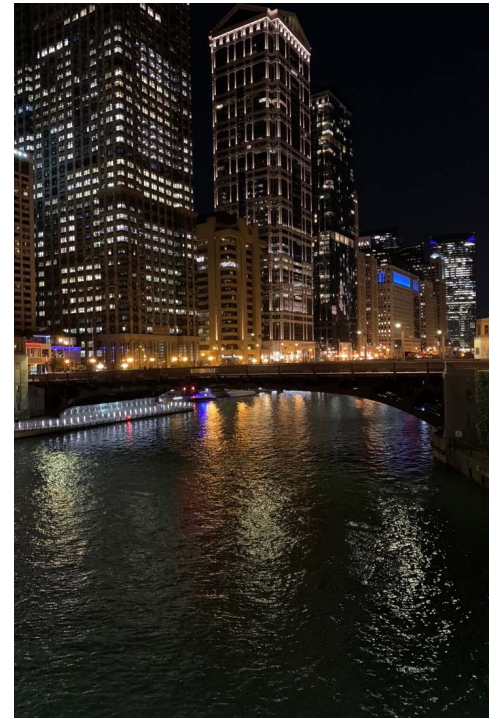


officer. Anna and her family are no strangers to loss. Both her parents were Ukrainian Jews and lost their entire families in the Holocaust. "I was the only one in my elementary school class who had never known any grandparents." Anna grew up in Kyiv. She got married, raised her daughter and spent most of her career in financial planning and reporting. She lived in Ukraine for 58 years. Her husband and her parents are all buried there. In 2015, after the annexation of Crimea by Russia (in 2014) and the outbreak of the war in the east of the country, Anna left and came to the US to live with her daughter here in Los Angeles. While it's very difficult at this age to adjust to life in another country speaking the language you never learned before, Anna has been truly enjoying her life in the United States.

"I grew up listening to my mother's stories telling me that peace is by far the most important thing. I listened to much softened (yet still horrible) stories about the atrocities and horrors of war. I always thought that would be my only connection to war; and yet war came to my home country from the insane next-door neighbor."

Unfortunately, as it was in case with the WWI, there doesn't seem to be much of a diplomatic path to ending this war.

When asked about Emeritus, Anna said "I relatively recently started taking pictures (never did that before) with my iPhone. Right before COVID, I was lucky enough to find



our photography class — it's such a wonderful opportunity provided by the SMC Emeritus Program. Jerry's class became such a great learning opportunity for me, and I'm so grateful that it remains available now with yet another phenomenal teacher, Martin. Learning from my much talented, creative and very friendly classmates is yet another treat. I truly enjoy urban photography and street photography — those are my favorites."

If you are interested in donating to aid Ukraine:

Anna's suggests supporting the Ukrainian army [using the bank account created by the Ukrainian government.](#)

Additionally, the following are good reputable charities

Doctors Without Borders, Ukrainian Red Cross, American Jewish Joint Distribution Committees jdc.org

Is Learning Sign Language Your Next Challenge?

By Linda J. Hernandez

Learning sign language has brought a special richness to my life. It allows me to connect with the profoundly deaf and the hearing-impaired, who are sometimes very isolated from the hearing world. When I see deaf people conversing, I will approach them, even if they are complete strangers, and sign: "Hi, my name is Linda. What's your name?" They are usually thrilled to be acknowledged as fellow human beings and start signing back very quickly. I will then respond, "I know a little sign language. Please sign slowly."

While there are many authoritative books on the subject, my favorite is *The Joy of Signing* by Dr. Lottie L. Riekehof. In it she explains that there are two basic systems of signing employed in the United States. One uses English grammatical word order and simply follows the order of the written language. The one more commonly used by deaf people is American Sign Language. Linguistic studies have shown that this is a unique and recognizable language with its own grammatical pattern. For example, articles are omitted and just one sign is often used to cover several spoken English words. The book reminds us that sign language isn't just about hands. It includes the movement of fingers, body, and facial expressions that express emotion.

I initially learned sign language as a teacher of non-verbal, pre-school Special Education students. This was forty years ago. While they had normal hearing, their spoken language was delayed for various

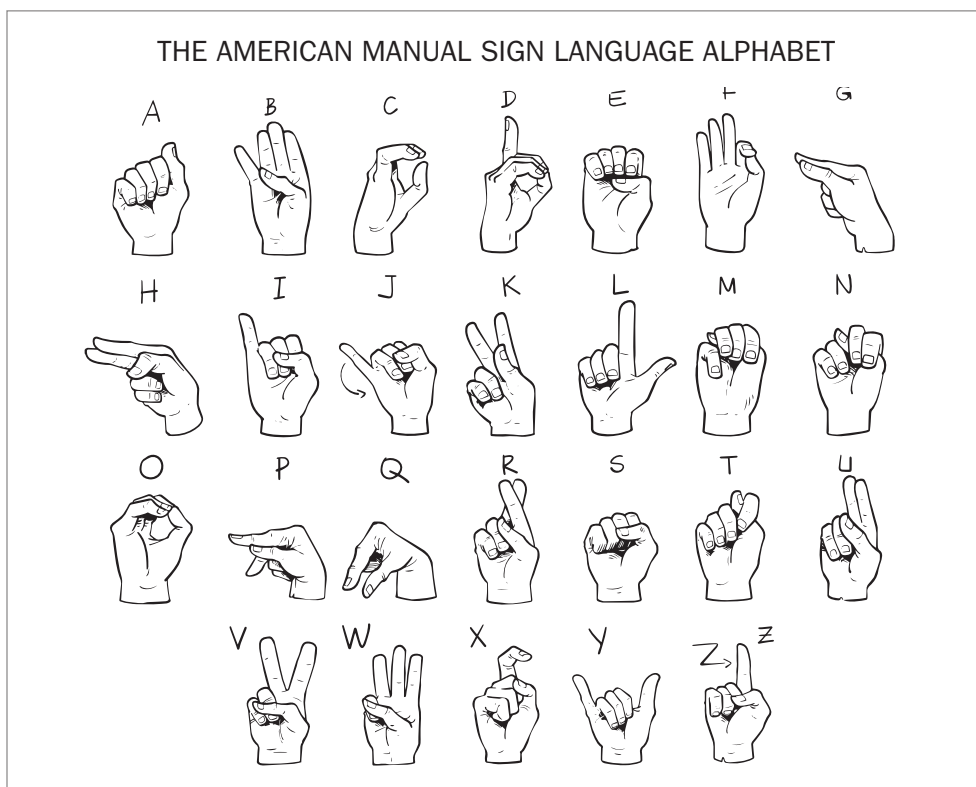
processing difficulties. I found that they responded to and learned sign language easily and were finally able to communicate with their teachers, peers, and family. As my teaching career continued, I found that all age groups and levels of students responded to it as fun and easy. It helped the challenged students to retain information and the advanced students were able to communicate amongst themselves across the room (and behind the teacher's back).

I have become somewhat of a sign language evangelist, although my level is by no means advanced, and would just like to encourage everyone to at least learn the alphabet. Once you can sign it, you can say anything. Now that I have become hearing impaired myself and use hearing aids, I further

appreciate how visual cues, and even lip reading, can be helpful to older adults. There is nothing more frustrating than not being able to understand and participate in conversations, both friendly and necessary. Other benefits include being able to communicate when the spoken word is impossible. You can also use sign language when you don't want to interrupt others with noise. Just think, you'll be able to tell friends how much you love or hate a movie or play without disturbing the other patrons!

There are a wealth of instructional videos online, plus patient and fun Adult School teachers at the ready to help you with this new and rewarding experience. Those who really want to dig in can even earn college foreign language credit by learning sign language. My hope is that SMC Emeritus will someday offer a Beginning American Sign Language Class. It is so enriching and enjoyable!

[Here are a series of instructional videos on YouTube that I find very helpful.](#)



SMC Emeritus: What Does It Mean to You?

By Rozelle Teplitsky



SMC Emeritus was founded in 1974 to create an educational program for retired citizens 55 and older. It is a unique program, offering a broad range of noncredit classes that serve the interests of older adults, from literature to art and music, computer training, health and conditioning classes like yoga and tai chi, and much more.

Prior to the pandemic, classes were offered at the SMC Emeritus campus, located at 1227 2nd Street in Santa Monica, as well as at community sites located throughout Santa Monica and Malibu. With the onset of the pandemic, the college made a swift transition to Zoom in March, 2020. Emeritus students were so grateful that the classes and communities they had come to rely on were still available.

These classes carried me through the difficult pandemic period and provided a place for me to thrive in a safe environment. And they gave me a place to belong although I am alone at home. I reached out to other students to ask them what Emeritus has meant to them.

Linda Rosman, a photographer and classmate in the Writing for Publication class, said of taking a photography class for about six years, "I found a wonderful supportive community of photographers here at Emeritus." She added that although Santa Monica Emeritus classes are wonderful in person, the current events class was better on Zoom because remarkable speakers, like United States Representative Jim Clyburn and former White House counsel to Richard Nixon, John Dean, could speak to the class from wherever they were in the country. She also mentioned they were lucky to have a retired judge in the class shed light on the courts, and a retired physician gave us useful information about COVID and other health concerns.

Rosemary MacHardy, a classmate in Ana Reyes' Saturday afternoon Autobiography class, said that Emeritus "provided a beacon of joy" for her life after being in great shock from the death of her husband of more than 50 years. Her therapist recommended that she take a writing class to help her recover from her grief. And so began her journey with Emeritus over two years ago. The autobiography class led her to realize that she was writing the memoir of her life. Like Linda, and me, she found "community" and formed close meaningful friendships with classmates.

My close friend Evelyn Harb has been taking classes at Emeritus for some fifteen years since retiring as a legal secretary. She says it is meaningful to her because she is not alone and has made friends there, and that learning new things with others is important to her. "Taking a voice class was an unfulfilled dream because I was always very shy as a young woman." Performing in class gave her the confidence to sing in front of an audience and a sense of fulfillment and joy.

Over the years, I have taken many different classes such as computer training, jewelry making, yoga, voice training and writing classes. Although I have a BS degree in Radio-Television-Film from the University of Texas in Austin, TX, I wanted to improve my feature writing skills so I could publish my written projects. Two years ago, I signed up for the Writing for Publication class with Monona Wali and have published at least five articles. This has given me a sense of accomplishment and pride to see my articles in The Emeritus Voice Newsletter and Emeritus Chronicles, a productiveness that I have not known for many years.

During the pandemic, I took four classes on Zoom and formed close relationships with classmates that I had not known in the past. In addition to Writing for Publication, I took the Voice Training Class with Linda Jackson who helped me regain my vocal range after not singing publicly for several years.

Always keeping up with the times, SMC Emeritus is now beginning to offer classes in person again. Zoom classes are still going strong, and some professors are trying out hybrid models, with students both in person and on Zoom. The one constant is that the college is going strong. Thank you to Santa Monica College for creating this program for us seniors to thrive and live productive meaningful lives!

WHAT'S HAPPENING:

Fall Emeritus Events



**1227 2nd Street
Santa Monica, CA 90401**

Business Hours:

Mon. – Fri., 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Telephone: 310-434-4306

Email: emeritus@smc.edu

Website: smc.edu/emeritus

SMC Emeritus is committed to life-long learning for older adults. From art and literature to health and safety, personal finance, and digital technologies, SMC Emeritus 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.



© Amy Williams Photography

Emeritus Concert Band

Yosuke Miyoshi, Conductor. November concert — “Giving Thanks” — celebrates the ensemble’s return to the stage after two years. See smc.edu/calendar or call 310-434-4306 for details.

Sun, November 13 | 3 p.m. | Free

Sun, February 26 | 3 p.m. | Free

The Broad Stage at SMC Performing Arts Center

Emeritus Players Acting Showcase

Conversations: Scenes from Film and Theatre

Mark your calendar for our performance showcase featuring silly, serious, and quirky scenes that inspire, entertain, and — hopefully! — give you something to think about. See smc.edu/calendar or call 310-434-4306 for details.

Sat, January 28 | 1 p.m. | Free | Online

EMERITUS ART GALLERY

The Emeritus Art Gallery is located on the first floor of the Emeritus Campus, 1227 2nd St., Santa Monica. Gallery hours are 9 a.m. – 12 p.m. and 2 p.m. – 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. For further information, visit the Emeritus Gallery website (smc.edu/emeritusgallery). Exhibits and opening receptions are FREE.

Freddie Manseau

Opens 5 p.m., November 3, 2022

Don't miss this online-only show of new works too large to install in the gallery by contemporary artist and beloved Emeritus instructor Freddie Manseau. Zoom virtual reception event on Thursday, November 3, from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Links to view the online exhibition and join the Zoom reception event will be posted starting at 5 p.m. on November 3 on the Emeritus Gallery website.

The Ongoing Moment: Literature and Art from Emeritus

December 1, 2022 - January 12, 2023

Enjoy a hybrid show of art and writing by students in Monona Wali's memoir class and Catherine Turr's watercolors studio class. Works will be shown in the gallery, with additional programming online. Zoom virtual reception and author readings on Thursday, December 1, from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Links to view the online exhibition and join the Zoom reception event will be posted starting at 5 p.m. on December 1 on the Emeritus Gallery website.

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