

A Program of Santa Monica College

THE EMERITUS VOICE

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From the Dean's Desk

by *Guadalupe Salgado,*
Associate Dean



Dear Emeritus Students,

As we approach the milestone of Emeritus's 50th anniversary, I am thrilled to share some exciting developments. First and foremost, I am delighted to announce the Living Histories project, made possible by the generosity of Mitzi Bland, a steadfast supporter of SMC. The purpose of Living Histories is to preserve and showcase the diverse experiences and invaluable contributions of the Emeritus community through a series of documentary stories. This project will be a beautiful collaboration between both Emeritus and credit SMC film/media students.

Another exciting update coming soon to Emeritus comes in the form of the course catalog. This Fall semester students will see

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Everybody's Story Matters

Darlene Gaston

Sharing the belief that, "Everybody's story matters and every story deserves to be in the world," Monona Wali is both passionate about writing and teaching. As a result of these passions, she is an award-winning writer, filmmaker, and a respected instructor.

Monona received her Bachelor's degree from Syracuse University in English and Film studies. She earned her MFA from UCLA's Film School, where she received accolades for her final project, a film entitled *Grey Area*.

She began her teaching career with older adults, incarcerated youth, and veterans after she received a certificate to teach writing to underserved populations. Monona witnessed firsthand the transformative power of writing in changing the lives of her students as they captured their stories.



For the past sixteen years, she has taught at SMC Emeritus, teaching Autobiography and Short Story classes. Whether teaching older adults, troubled youth, or veterans, she has always recognized the power of writing to validate the stories and experiences in each of their lives. About her writing class, Tracy K. says, "Monona Wali is a treasured gem of Emeritus, gently yet firmly guiding all levels of writing with deep care and sensitivity." Monona also is forever inspired by her students and the stories they tell.

Monona's Writing for Publication classes have edited and published both the school's newsletter and its two literary journals: *Emeritus Chronicles* and *The Ongoing Moment*. Collaborating with Catherine Tarr to produce *The Ongoing Moment* journal, Monona has constructed an artistic creation of memoir stories from her classes with art pieces from Catherine's classes, resulting in a creative masterpiece. Catherine had this to say, "Working with Monona is delightful. This will be the seventh year of our collaboration *The Ongoing Moment*. I always enjoy our discussions; we are usually in agreement about the theme for our project right away. Monona is thoughtful, sensitive, and intuitive.

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Zest for Love, Learning, and Life

Linda Rosman

What if you had to wait forever for marriage and feared that this right might be revoked?

On October 18, 2008, at the Beverly Hills Courthouse, Karen Sandler and Linda Broughton were in the first group of gay couples to marry in California. It was a long journey to finally get there starting with a commitment ceremony in August 2004, the closest gay couples could come to marriage. Right after they married, Proposition 8 passed, banning marriage of same-sex couples, but thankfully it was overturned in court. In spite of being legally married, they both feel the need to carry identification for proof of their marital status in case it is questioned.

Linda and Karen first met at a friend's party in 1990. Although they felt a ripple of interest, Linda had just ended a relationship and Karen was in the middle of her medical school training. They met again a few years later at the Virginia Slims Tennis tournament and rekindled that interest. Karen then invited Linda to a Tina Turner concert at the Greek Theater — not a bad first date! In late 1994 as their love had grown, Karen asked Linda to move into her new Westside home.

Karen and Linda share a passion for travel. Before retirement, the couple loved to take one international trip a year; fond memories include rolling suitcases through the streets of Venice. They celebrated retirement by sailing on a small ship, the Paul Gauguin, around the lush-green islands of Tahiti. For seven days they relaxed in Tahiti's warm turquoise-blue water of the South Pacific. "It was a perfect way to begin the next chapter of our lives." Their

most recent trips came to mind — Israel & Jordan, Kenya & Tanzania. "Walking 7.5 miles in the ancient Rose City of Petra and tent camping in the Serengeti with lions roaring nearby were memories to last a lifetime." At age 75, they know there will come a time when traveling internationally will become too hard. Next up is Morocco this spring and Japan next year...

To stay in shape for their next journeys, and to pursue her passion for pickleball, Linda had a knee replacement last year. Having qualified for the Pickleball Nationals three years ago, Linda is back playing on the advanced courts at Santa Monica's Memorial Park.

Karen and Linda have been taking classes at SMC Emeritus since their retirement in 2016. Karen has long had a passion for photography, so no surprise that her first classes were Photography and Photoshop. Her photos are in the yearly Emeritus Photo Show in the Emeritus Gallery. She was also honored to be part of a select group of artists in a special small group show. Although she loved being a doctor, she relishes the time now to pursue a different side to her creativity. "It's wonderful

to try something for the first time and feel no need to prove yourself, to have the freedom to explore new interests."

Linda's favorite class is the gospel choir with William Bryant. She especially enjoys singing at nursing homes and community events. Professor Ghabaei Bahram's writing class has also been among Linda's favorites. They both feel SMC Emeritus is a blessing for all seniors, as it provides a warm welcoming community for everyone.

This loving and active couple feels a strong bond and connection to the SMC Emeritus community. "The beauty of SMC Emeritus is the personal connections and friendships we've made."

I feel lucky to count myself amongst them.



Meet Kathleen MacKay, New Emeritus Instructor

Linda J. Hernández, M.S. Ed.

Our new Emeritus Instructor, Kathleen MacKay has been teaching classes in Autobiography and Writing for Publication since the Fall of 2023. Hailing from Vallejo in the San Francisco Bay Area, she originally studied film at the San Francisco Academy of Art College. Then, she traveled south to Los Angeles and worked in postproduction, first at boutique studios, then at NBC Universal. On her lunch breaks, she would enjoy walking through the old studio lots.

During that time, on a whim, Kathleen signed up for a short story writing class at SMC. She had always loved reading for pleasure and escape and felt fortunate to be introduced to writing by the beloved and famous Jim Krusoe. She also was motivated by other SMC writing instructors: Monona Wali, Dawna Kemper, and Ana Reyes.

Deciding she wanted to devote her life to writing, Kathleen, applied and was accepted to the Writing Workshop at UC Irvine run by Michelle Latiolais. There, she found a community of fellow writers and thinkers, and received her MFA from UCI in 2018.

She's since returned to Los Angeles and has been writing and publishing short stories in places like *The Santa Monica Review*, *The Orange Coast Review*, and *Zyzyva*. As well as fiction, she writes reviews, essays, and interviews with visual artists for *Artillery Mag* and *Autre*.

Kathleen also teaches at Art Center College of Design, where she instructs courses in creative writing, and literature & media studies. Her classes are themed around subjects that interest her; fairy tales, witches, and “girl power” aka representations in myth and media of teenage girls with power.

On another whim last year, Kathleen started taking ballet classes at Los Angeles City College, and loves spending her mornings pli-ing to the live pianist. You'll also find her hiking the trails of Los Angeles with her enormous black German shepherd named Loba, who you might hear howling on Zoom. Kathleen considers herself a “bon vivant,” and enjoys beach days, gallery hopping, cooking, and entertaining friends for long evenings of delicious food and conversation.

When asked about her experiences teaching at SMC Emeritus, Kathleen responded, “I have been so inspired and moved by the incredible storytelling, the dedication and practice of the students.” We students in her writing classes have been inspired by Kathleen as well. Gordon Blitz commented, “Kathleen has a youthful exuberance that gives a fresh perspective on our writing.” Fellow student Caroline Feinstein observed, “Kathleen lets each student know that their writing is special and important. Her ability to encourage each student's best qualities makes us want to continue writing.”

During the spring 2024 semester, Kathleen teaches by Zoom Writing for Publication on Mondays from 1 – 3:50 p.m. and Autobiography on Saturdays from 12 – 2:15 p.m. In the summer, she'll be teaching Autobiography in person at the Emeritus Campus on Thursday mornings at 10:00 a.m., as well as by Zoom Autobiography class on Saturday. Welcome to Emeritus, Kathleen, and looking forward to your classes in the future!



Everybody's Story Matters

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She has the compassion to draw beautiful work from her students."

A writer for over thirty years, Monona is a prizewinning and acclaimed novelist and short story writer. Having lived in many areas of the world, and as an immigrant, has shaped her perspective of various communities and has expanded and enhanced her writing. Born in Varanasi, India, she has lived on the East Coast, Midwest, and now Los Angeles.

Monona has written three novels. It was while writing her first novel, *Taking Lessons from the Dog*, that

she felt that she really honed her skill as a novelist. Her second, *My Blue Skin Lover*, was self-published in 2014 winning the Independent Publishers Gold Award for best multicultural fiction. *Sutra Americana*, her most recent, was a finalist out of seven hundred submissions in a New American Press manuscript contest. About *Sutra Americana*, finalist judge, Weike Wang, said, "A close second for me was *Sutra Americana*, for the sweeping tale that was so incredibly immersive and readable."

What is her writing process? "I am an obsessive re-writer." Monona allows her stories to develop through

a discovery process; to create themselves through the characters.

Monona loves and is inspired by nature. The desert is her destination of choice, inspiring her to purchase a home in Joshua Tree as a writing retreat and to engage in her hobbies, hiking, backpacking, swimming, and camping. She seeks a deep experience of life, through writing, friends, family, work, and nature. Proud of her daughters, Monona has passed along her passion for environmental and social justice issues. Her next project: to expand her stories to the desert experience because every story deserves to be in the world.

The Eighteen Lives of Luba

Gordon Blitz

Cats — may boast about having nine lives but that is only half of Luba's eighteen careers. I met Luba in the Emeritus Comedy Improv class and as we became friends, she revealed her remarkable careers.

Luba told me, "Each of these careers was totally different from and unrelated to each other. I found myself changing jobs every three years and was worried that there was something wrong with me, but it turns out I just got bored easily and simply had to learn new things."

Her occupational highlights include: a proofreader for a San Miguel, Mexico newspaper, image and color consultant in Boston, creator of a cosmetic line called Show Your True Colors, and owner of a coffee house which later became a barbecue restaurant in Abiquiu NM. But really that's the tip of the iceberg. She explained, "I had a consignment store in Santa Fe called Worth Repeating and got involved with the Native Americans in Abiquiu, was

initiated into the tribe, and renamed Dancing River." Luba was president of a theater company called Newton Country Players and for years she was part of a duo called Radiance that performed at piano bars. Stuck in between these jobs, she was a DJ extraordinaire for KIOT radio in Santa Fe and a mind-body therapist!

She told me, "The reason I moved twenty-three times was because I loved designing and creating living spaces. Much like an artist completing a painting and then starting a new one, my living space was also a canvas and upon completion, I needed to create a new one."

I still wanted to know what made her tick. She explained, "I started my life at 35 because I had lived most of my life rarely venturing out because of agoraphobia." When she overcame that cloistered phase, she exploded into life. Luba said, "I guess I was making up for lost time when I didn't leave home."

Luba has an insatiable lust for all things educational, including creating the Lifelong Learning Center in San Miguel de Allende. As a student she is grateful to SMC Emeritus for satisfying her urge to learn by participating in many classes, including the Emeritus gospel choir. "Music seems to be a recurring theme, an important part of my life. I sang with On Wings of Song, a successful group that toured the country and created 23 albums."

One of Luba's favorite classes is Improv. She even teaches it, along with memory games, and sing-alongs, to fellow residents in her senior complex.

In addition to these accomplishments, Luba raised three children and endured two marriages. You might call her restless because she's lived in so many places—Boston, Santa Fe, San Miguel, Santa Monica, and...Or is she a relentless soul, searching for the meaning of life?

When I asked Luba what keeps her going, she told me, "You never stop exploring and learning. That's what makes life so much fun."



Photo by Jonathan Ng

A Hidden Gem – SMC’s Malibu Campus

Bec Edelson

In Summer 2022, in-person classes returned to SMC’s Emeritus Program. However, most students — even those who are able to return to the classroom — are resisting giving up Zoom classes. Emeritus students who are looking for an incentive to return to live classes should consider SMC’s Malibu Campus in-person Emeritus offerings. For the 2024 summer session, they will include: Life Drawing Studio; Drawing and Painting; Watercolor; Poetry and Fiction; Creative Writing; Autobiography; and Current Events. Enrollment for summer 2024 Emeritus courses will open on April 22, 2024.

The three-acre campus opened in April 2023 and was 20 years in the making. The campus includes a light and airy modern two-story building with science and computer labs, a 100-seat lecture hall with sloped seating for music and film, an art studio, open floor spaces for dance and yoga, general classrooms, a conference room, outdoor study spaces, and an interpretive center to tie into the nearby coastal landscape.

The campus is located at 23555 Civic Center Way, Malibu, CA 90265 and parking is incredibly easy. There are almost 200 free parking spaces outdoors directly in front of the building.

If Emeritus students require still more to try out the Malibu Campus, they can consider the delights that surround it. The Malibu Campus is across the street from Legacy Park, which is free, imminently walkable, and beautiful. Coastal prairies and bluffs, woodlands,

and wetlands come together in this amazing setting. Legacy Park’s innovative urban runoff and storm water projects have won multiple awards. Those who are so inclined can explore Legacy Park before or after their classes at the Malibu Campus.

The Malibu Campus is also around the corner from the Malibu Country Mart, for those who happen to be in the mood for some upscale laid-back dining, imbibing, and/or shopping before or after class. Although parking comes with the ease of a stereotypical shopping center, it does not do it justice to call the Malibu Country Mart a shopping center. It is next to stunning mountains at the same time the Malibu beach is just a minute’s walk away.

In addition, those who like to hang out at libraries and discover books in that setting will be in their element at the Malibu Campus since the Malibu Library is right next door.

Finally, no matter where you are coming from, your drive to the Malibu Campus will not be the usual annoying commute. The Pacific Coast Highway (aka PCH) is incredible driving as the ocean is on one side and the mountains and/or cliffs are on the other side. Surfers and sea life are sporadically visible from the road. So, even if there is the occasional traffic, the drive to or from the Malibu Campus will be a pleasurable one.

For those who did not know about the SMC Malibu Campus Emeritus in-person class offerings, it is time to discover them!

Arts Scene, Santa Monica

Spotlight On: The Eli and Edythe Broad Stage at SMC Performing Arts Center

Bonnie S. Priefer

The Broad Stage is located at the Santa Monica College Performing Arts Center. It was established in 2008 and is proud to be one of Los Angeles' leading venues for innovative and daring performances. April 2024 promises to be an exciting month of entertainment at The Broad Stage.

On April 10 – 13, at 8 p.m. and April 14 at 2 p.m., The Broad Stage proudly presents *Book of Mountains and Seas*, composed by Huang Rio. A fantastical world of sunbirds, demons and hairy giants is evoked in *Book of Mountains and Seas*, a fascinating work of vocal theater for 12 singers, two percussionists, and six puppet masters.

Composer/librettist Huang Ruo took his inspiration from a classic compilation of Chinese mythology, first transcribed in the fourth century B.C. Over the years, these stories have become part of Chinese written and oral history, shifted and reshaped to match contemporary times. Tickets start at \$39.

On April 18, at 7:30 p.m., The Broad Stage audiences will get the pleasure of seeing *National Geographic: Untold Story of Sharks*. Sharks have roamed the planet's waters since before the dinosaurs and have evolved into more than a thousand species. But only recently have we begun to understand their lives in the ocean — and how our actions can threaten their survival. Dr. Jess Cramp will take audiences on a journey through the National Geographic archives to discover the work of pioneering women in shark science and storytelling before she dives into her work on the frontier of shark research and conservation. In this show, the audience members will journey through the vibrant waters of the South Pacific in search of elusive breeding grounds and find out what it truly means to save sharks while working with communities struggling to maintain their traditional ways of life. Tickets start at \$55.

On April 20 at 7:30 p.m., The Broad Stage presents Antonio Sanchez in *Birdman Live*, where Sanchez injects a vitality that maps out the emotions of the film "Birdman" with precision. He is one of the standout jazz drummers on the contemporary music scene, a polyrhythmic ace artist attuned to dynamic fluctuations in beat. Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's successful *Birdman*, won four Academy Awards. Antonio Sanchez has performed his dramatic Grammy award-winning score live around the world. Each performance is original and largely improvised, making each presentation unique. Celebrating the film's 10th anniversary, Sanchez, one of the world's most sought-after drummers, brings *Birdman Live* to The Broad Stage. Tickets start at \$45.

To inquire about student tickets, contact the box office at (310) 434-3200. There is ample parking at The Broad Stage lot. The Broad Stage is wonderful at bringing live theatre to the west side.



Photo by Charles Mark-Walker

Guardian Angel: Elena Popp

Margaret Lenzey, MA

May I please tell you about a wonderful human being in our community? Her name is Elena Popp, and she is doing a huge service for people who are dealing with difficult living situations. We all know of the hard times people are experiencing in our communities in Los Angeles, as well as across the country. Unlawful Detainer Eviction is one challenging situation where a landlord attempts to force their tenant to move out. You can imagine this is an unnerving experience for anyone, especially for people who may not speak English or Spanish, who are out of work or impoverished, or who simply don't understand the process.

After the moratorium which froze evictions during the COVID pandemic was lifted, many landlords immediately filed Unlawful Detainer Evictions at the courthouses in L.A. These landlords tried to quickly collect back rents, and/or evict tenants. If a tenant did not respond to the court order in the specified five days, the courts can order the tenant out by the sheriff, who may

show up within 24-48 hours, locking the person out. In some cases, a whole family could be displaced for something as innocent as not receiving their mail.

My closeness to this experience is due to my friend Dana, who was being evicted by her landlord. After Dana filed with the Los Angeles Housing Department, LAHD informed Dana that where she was living was "uninhabitable," and even an illegal unit. Through LAHD, Dana discovered the Eviction Defense Network where she met the lawyer Elena Popp, a 40-year veteran in the court system, and the founder of EDN.

Eviction Defense Network provides workshops, trainings, videos, and amazing lawyering. Elena has compassion for the individuals fighting to stay in their homes of all financial situations, and most often works pro bono. If Elena cannot be your lawyer, she will be with you on your phone to text in the courtroom, reminding you what you've learned in the workshops and training videos,

and to be strong — you have rights. She gives pointers like, do not ramble on about your situation, no "poor me!", and definitely no arguing or getting angry. You come in the courtroom kind, calm, and confident, with your EDN orange notebook filled with supporting evidence.

Elena is smart, sharp, light-hearted, and witty, but also firm and straightforward with the tenants, not putting up with nonsense, laziness, or disrespect. She reminds the tenants that they can carry themselves with honor and dignity. She uses a slogan of encouragement: "When We Fight, We Win!"

We are in gratitude to Elena and EDN for Dana's win! Elena is a warrior for thousands with her creation of EDN! If you know somebody who needs assistance with an eviction, please lead them to the Eviction Defense Network!

One more beautiful note is Elena Popp is in support of a law that would require every tenant in eviction court automatically be appointed a pro-bono lawyer. She shoots straight from the heart and is a wonderful example of a strong woman seeking change, who makes good things happen for people.

From the Dean's Desk

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the addition of several new classes that are sure to pique your interest. I am pleased to announce that the following courses have been approved and will be offered beginning Fall 2024:

- Walking for Wellness
- Perils of Social Media
- Optimizing Your Smartphone & Tablet
- And many more!

The classes above represent a diverse array of topics of interest to the Emeritus community. Whether you're keen to explore the benefits of physical activity, navigate the complexities of social

media, or harness the full potential of modern technology, there's something for everyone to enjoy and learn from.

As we look ahead to the future with optimism and enthusiasm, I invite you to join us in embracing these exciting opportunities for growth, connection, and discovery. Together, let us celebrate the legacy of Emeritus while embracing the endless possibilities that lie ahead.

Warm regards,
Guadalupe Salgado
Associate Dean, SMC Emeritus (Interim)

Frugal Adventures

Jeanne Shamji

SMC Emeritus students may be tired of being tied to their computers in Zoom classes. Once the beautiful spring weather is upon us, we can visit nearby museums for free on certain days. It is easy to purchase a Senior Tap Card for 35 cents a ride at the Metro station or online at taptogo.net/TAPContact. Increased security has made the Metro safe and accessible. Parking at museums is available but can be pricey.

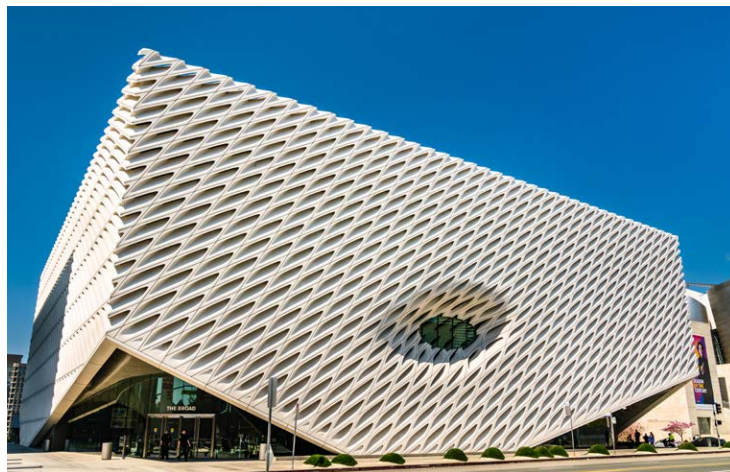
The J. Paul Getty Museum, located at 1200 Getty Center Dr, Los Angeles, CA 90049, is always free — the parking costs \$20. You can enter any gallery displaying artwork from antiquity to modern times, and gardens with spectacular views abound. Special exhibits are also free but require timed reservations. Open from Tuesday to Friday, Sunday from 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. – 8 p.m. Closed on Monday.

The Getty Museum takes an hour and a half by Metro and bus from Santa Monica. You can travel by Metro E line from Santa Monica to Sepulveda, where you can take the 761 bus to The Getty, whose tram will transport you to the top of the hill to visit the galleries, views, gardens, and cafeteria. The museum is okay with bringing drinks or food. So, bring a bottle of water and some sandwiches, and you can sit under umbrellas outside if you don't wish to pay \$8 for a bowl of soup.



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The Broad Museum's general admission is free if you wish to see modern art. However, some exhibitions and events carry a separate charge. Kusama's The Infinity Mirror Rooms and The Souls of Millions of Light Years Away are free if you email or call for timed tickets. Take the Metro E line towards downtown and exit at the Atlantic Station. The Metro takes 45 minutes, followed



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by a short walk to The Broad Museum at 221 S. Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Open Tuesday & Wednesday & Friday from 11 a.m. – 5 p.m., Thursday from 11 a.m. – 8 p.m., Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. – 6 p.m. To make reservations, contact the Broad Museum at ticketing.thebroad.org/events If you want to drive, parking is \$17.

No food or drinks are allowed in The Broad, but the **Grand Central Market** is within walking distance, where you can inexpensively purchase various ethnic foods and beverages.

Enjoy **La Plaza de Cultura y Artes** to celebrate Latinx culture through exhibits, music, dance, and culinary arts. Open Wednesday through Sunday from 12 – 5 p.m., closed Monday and Tuesday. Ride 90 minutes on the Metro from the Santa Monica E line, exit Broadway, followed by a 13-minute walk.

La Plaza is conveniently located within walking distance of Olvera Street, the oldest street in L.A. This area is rich in Mexican heritage and boasts a variety of cultural shops, cozy cafés, and weekly festivals. Visitors can also take advantage of the free tours offered at the tour office near the **Plaza Firehouse**. Tours are available on Thursdays at 10 a.m., 11 a.m., and at noon.

All locations are handicapped, service animal-approved, and wheelchair accessible. Confirm times, dates, and transportation details before your adventure. Check locations for free exhibits. It is advised that masks be worn on public transportation and in enclosed areas. Check your computer weekly and look for **FREE EVENTS** in Los Angeles!

When the Pain Doesn't Stop – Living Well with Chronic Pain & Illness

Wendy Walsdorf, LMFT (Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist)

Chronic pain (pain that lasts three months or more) affects a large part of the population globally. It has been estimated that one in three people struggle with the multifaceted and overlapping symptoms associated with chronic pain, which can be difficult to diagnose. Acute health issues, on the other hand, are well understood, time-limited and, unless left untreated, rarely result in the social and emotional problems we see with chronic pain patients.

While pain is not a given as we age, new conditions may begin to emerge such as musculoskeletal disorders, arthritis, osteoporosis, and other diseases, which contribute to the problem of pain and mobility in an aging population.

Despite the pain population being the most common users of primary care visits, they often report difficulty in being treated. Reasons for this include no objective findings on blood and x-rays, controversial and misunderstood syndromes, and lack of reimbursement. Studies show that women and racial minorities are subject to bias when it comes to the treatment of chronic pain. This results in underreporting and inadequate care. Much work still needs to be done to change the culture of inequity in health care, especially when it comes to patients struggling with chronic pain and the myriad of issues associated with it.

Sufferers report that not being taken seriously by the medical profession contributed to feelings of shame and isolation. I recall leading pain groups where coworkers discovered that they were both affected by chronic pain for years, but never knew about each other's struggles. This speaks to the stigma attached, and the fear of being perceived as a complainer or incapable.

Chronic pain affects home life as well. Loved ones have to adjust to new roles and expectations. It is not unusual for the family to get on the same emotional and physical cycle as the person in pain.

We all filter pain differently. Our cultural upbringing, support system, coping skills, and emotional history contribute to our personal pain experience. Our attitudes, capacity for resilience, and ability to communicate effectively will affect how we manage the stress that chronic pain can bring to our lives.

Due to the fact that chronic pain affects multiple areas of our lives, effective treatment will require a multi-disciplinary and collaborative team approach to work. The positive news is that our mind and body can work together to mitigate the challenges of chronic pain management. We have the capacity to close the gates of pain through mind-body exercises as well as psychological restructuring. Researchers are discovering more and more evidence of this connection through brain studies and pain clinics with trained professionals. Complimentary care is another tool in the chronic pain toolkit.

The following are useful tips to manage chronic pain.

1. Remember to “take your meds”:
 - M – Mindful meditation
 - E – Exercise
 - D – Diet
 - S – Sleep
2. State clear, reasonable, and measurable goals and intentions. Start small.
3. Learn skills to identify and manage stressors. Include obstacles to overcome.
4. Utilize tools such as:
 - Group therapy
 - Family/Individual counseling
 - Hypnosis
 - Yoga
 - Acupuncture
 - Biofeedback
 - Meditation
 - Breathing techniques
5. Be aware of cognitive distortions — assuming the worst, disqualifying the positive, or personalization — which may hinder our ability to enjoy life.

Chronic pain affects our lives in numerous domains, but by taking an active role in our own care and reaching out for help, chronic pain sufferers can begin to find joy and lead full and productive lives.



Shutterbugs

Darlene Gaston

Did you know that SMC Emeritus has its own cadre of accomplished photographers? It does!

On March 7, we were treated to the launch event for Emeritus’ annual Student Photography Exhibition, curated by Jesse Benson, art instructor and gallery curator. A call for entry submissions was emailed to students in November, with a deadline set for late January. Any 2023 or 2024 SMC Emeritus student was eligible to enter up to three digital images for the exhibit. Twice as many submissions were received for the 2024 show as last year, a testament to the popularity of this exhibit. Works were selected by Jesse.

On display, per Jesse, was an “impressive quantity and quality” of photos. The online event featured over 150 photographs and displayed a wide range of themes from architecture, geometric shapes, nature, portraits, vacation to underwater glamor, and playful shots. Viewers were treated to shots of a lone tree in a field, dramatically

shrouded in fog, a sports scene revealing the gripping stop action at the goal line suggesting the potential tense action to come, and a vibrant flower in colors of lavender and purples. Personally, I received a “happy surprise” when I viewed the crisscrossed light halo dome in dark stormy skies, hovering over a crowded harbor of small boats. I submitted this photo because of the drama revealed in the shot. One of the rewards of photography: you are greeted with happy surprises. Other times, you can create moods and feelings with light, shadows, color, and angles.

We traveled the world in our armchairs, as the photographs depicted a myriad of locations. The photos were shot not only in California, but around the world: Tanzania, Botswana, London, Paris, Norway, and Slovenia and throughout the country. The majority of the photographs were in color, but some were finished in black and white, and some even digitally enhanced to boost the color or produce special

effects. Some photographers used Apple and Android Smartphone cameras, while others used Digital SLR, Mirrorless and Film cameras.

Jesse honored student photographer, Chenkung Lee, whose work was presented at the show. Chenkung sadly passed away before the exhibition but had also participated previously in other Emeritus photography exhibits.

To see the 2024 Emeritus Student Photography Exhibition or see what you missed at the Virtual Launch Event, visit: smc.edu/emergitusgallery. Shows from prior years are archived in the gallery as well.

Upcoming Gallery Art Exhibitions:
Art Exhibition Part 1
April 18, 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
In-gallery/online
Art Exhibition Part 2
May 23, 5 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.
Online

Photography credits: Trude Haas, *Glasses In Hand*. Angela Castellanos, *Stairway to Heaven*. Mike Muttera, *Norway Lake*. Jebbie Lavoie, *Takeout Window*. Wendy Miller, *Butterfly Mindo Ecuador*.

Making Critical Choices Before It's Too Late

Sharon Valente, PhD., APRN, FAAN

Talking about final medical wishes or dignified death is challenging especially with cultural taboos. Many of us hesitate to broach this subject with our patients and also family members like my mom whose stroke during the Northridge quake led her to a nursing home in her 80s. Asking Mom to specify her wishes for life-sustaining treatment challenged me as a nurse practitioner and psychologist. When I asked Mom to complete an advance directive POLST (Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment), she barked, “What, you want me to die already?” That night in the nursing home she growled at the nurse, “Just ask my daughter, she knows what I want.” As the daughter, I had no clue. She never talked about dying.

Discussing your death choices with family and your physician is important if you want death on your terms, Documenting whether you want all interventions (e.g., full code — CPR, IV, feeding tube) or no interventions (e.g., no code) or something in between is essential. This is often called Advanced Planning or Advanced Directives and includes identifying a surrogate decision maker if you can't speak for yourself (e.g., due to stroke, dementia, or heart attack). You complete a POLST (polst.org) with your physician's signature and post it on your refrigerator and in your phone—for paramedics. The POLST may have other names in other states.

The POLST is a 1-page double-sided checklist. You indicate if you do or don't want resuscitation, artificial nutrition, or feeding tube. The standard practice in emergencies is to resuscitate you unless paramedics or healthcare providers have your signed legal order refusing this. If you have written your wishes in a trust, will or other forms, these are typically not legal in medical settings and not available to healthcare providers. Related papers such as the Five wishes are not legally binding. California law articulates steps to legally enact how you wish to die (compassionandchoices.org). The POLST was intended for community use. For hospitals, a POLST may require translation into physician orders (e.g., Life Sustaining Treatment Orders).

Important topics like end-of-life decisions (e.g., resuscitation, feeding tube, and other interventions) are tough to consider but without timely choices, you may lose options much like my friend, Vern a well-known humanist and historian did. He always supported choice in dying but never took the time to document his wishes.

As a result, he died with more pain and suffering than necessary. An SMC Emeritus colleague asked me about a POLST, but she mistakenly thought it required her to change her healthcare provider. It does not.

When we are healthy, death seems distant, and many would opt for a full code or everything possible to restart our hearts. In our 70s, 80s, and 90s, other considerations arise. With age may come infirmity, chronic diseases with disability, and poorly managed pain, and we may rethink our choices. People facing life-threatening illnesses such as cancer or AIDS who have experienced resuscitation and a ventilator may not want to prolong their suffering. Often my HIV clinic patients said, “I never again want to be resuscitated or ventilated.” You can discuss your wishes and revise your POLST (compassionandchoices.org; POLST.org) as often as you wish and file revised copies with your healthcare providers.

Some people facing a painful or difficult death may choose assisted dying. In California and other jurisdictions, medical aid in dying involves physicians administering lethal medications to induce sleep and death (End of Life Option Act, compassionandchoices.org). Medical aid in dying is not considered suicide. One must meet eligibility criteria (e.g., terminal diagnosis, etc.). A person with end-stage Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS) or Parkinson's Disease who cannot eat, talk, or provide self-care may contemplate assisted dying (End-of-Life Choices California). Whatever you choose from full code to no code is up to you, but make sure you have posted your POLST, shared it with your physician and family, and reviewed the law so your choices can be honored, and you die on your terms.

The image shows a sample POLST form. At the top, it states "HIPAA PERMITS DISCLOSURE OF POLST TO OTHER HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS AS NECESSARY". The main title is "Physician Orders for Life-Sustaining Treatment (POLST)". Below the title, there is a section for "First follow these orders, then contact Physician/NP/PA". The form is divided into two main sections: A. CARDIOPULMONARY RESUSCITATION (CPR) and B. MEDICAL INTERVENTIONS. Section A has checkboxes for "Attempt Resuscitation/CPR" and "Do Not Attempt Resuscitation/DNR". Section B has checkboxes for "Full Treatment", "Selective Treatment", and "Comfort-Focused Treatment". There is also a section for "Additional Orders" at the bottom.

Example of a POLST form.

WHAT'S HAPPENING:

Spring/Summer Emeritus Events

EMERITUS ART GALLERY

The Emeritus Art Gallery is located on the first floor of the Emeritus Campus, 1227 Second St., Santa Monica. For gallery hours and more information, call 310-434-4306, or visit the Emeritus website (smc.edu/emmeritus). Exhibits and opening receptions are FREE.

Annual SMC Emeritus Student Art Exhibition 2024 – Part 1

In-Gallery Exhibition: April 18 – June 7

Online (smc.edu/emmeritusgallery) starting April 18

Zoom Virtual Reception at smc.edu/emmeritusgallery:

Thu, April 18, 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Join us for Part 1 of our popular annual group exhibition of creative works by students in SMC's Emeritus program. The show will be presented in the Emeritus Art Gallery and available for viewing online. Exhibition opens Thursday, April 18, with a Zoom reception event from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. featuring student artists speaking about their work, and hosted by Emeritus Associate Dean (interim) Guadalupe Salgado and Emeritus Gallery Curator Jesse Benson.

Annual SMC Emeritus Student Art Exhibition 2024 – Part 2

Online (smc.edu/emmeritusgallery) starting May 23

Zoom Virtual Reception at smc.edu/emmeritusgallery:

Thu, May 23, 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Don't miss Part 2 of our popular annual group exhibition of creative works by students in SMC's Emeritus program. Part 2 opens online Thursday, May 23, with a Zoom reception event from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. featuring selected artists speaking about their work, and hosted by Emeritus Associate Dean (interim) Guadalupe Salgado and Emeritus Gallery Curator Jesse Benson.

Emeritus Players Acting Showcase

Conversations: Scenes from Film and Theatre

Mark your calendar for our summer performance showcase featuring silly, serious, and quirky scenes that inspire, entertain, and — hopefully! — give you something to think about. For more information, please call 310-434-4306.

Sat, July 13 | 1 p.m. | Free | Online; see smc.edu/events for details



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/emmeritus

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.



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