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From the Dean's Desk

by Guadalupe
Salgado-Shower,
Associate Dean



Dear Emeritus Students,

For this edition of *The Voice*, I would like to begin by acknowledging the devastating loss so many members of our community are facing. Both faculty and students alike have been displaced due to the Los Angeles fires. During this challenging time, please remember that support services are available. The SMC Foundation has raised over a million dollars to assist students and employees affected by the fires. If you need help applying for assistance, please stop by the office — we are here to support you.

As a result of these events, our 50th Anniversary Gala is postponed to Fall 2025. While this is unfortunate, there is still

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Emeritus Turns 50

By Hannah Heineman

The Emeritus Program opened its doors 50 years ago to older adults who were interested in lifelong learning and that mission still continues today.

Like many other state-funded institutions Emeritus has had its financial struggles over the years. After opening in 1975 with 20 classes Emeritus grew its offerings to 190 by 2001. Then came the 2008 financial crisis which caused the state to threaten to close the entire program. Santa Monica Board of Trustees Chair Dr. Nancy Greenstein explained, “We were able to stave off cuts through the commitment of the administration, faculty, staff, assistance from our legislators, and committed students who supported Emeritus through lobbying and other efforts.”

In 2013 Emeritus once again had to become creative to remain open because some in Sacramento questioned how its class offerings were different than programs offered at the Y. The program responded by modifying its class descriptions and curriculum. During the Covid Pandemic in 2020 the program quickly pivoted to offering its classes online via Zoom.

In recent years the Emeritus Program has been expanding its

class offerings but the offerings are still below Emeritus’ 2008 levels. The program’s Interim Associate Dean, Guadalupe Salgado-Shower emphasized, “We can’t add a lot of classes at once due to funding and cuts were made to Spring classes due to budget and (low) attendance in some sections.”

SMC’s Dean of Noncredit and External Programs, Scott Silverman, pointed out, “The goal of Emeritus is to provide high-quality and enriching educational experiences that help Emeritus students keep their minds and bodies sharp.” To that end, we “support our faculty in updating our curriculum as needed.” However, “we cannot add new sections unless there is capacity within the budget to do so — and that might very well slow down for a bit.”



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Emeritus Turns 50

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Silverman also explained that “the State of California funds the California Community College Office, which in turn, funds SMC, based on attendance. There is no federal funding tied to Emeritus.” Therefore, any cuts to the Federal Department of Education will not affect SMC. However, the state budget deficit could affect the college Salgado-Shower stressed, “there’s a lot of fear in the community” about the state deficit.

Emeritus opened its Malibu Campus in 2023. The 2nd Street campus opened in 2003 and this location has been upgraded to offer hybrid classes so students can attend a class in person or on Zoom. Emeritus also offers classes at numerous locations around Santa Monica.

Emeritus Program Coordinator, Vivian Rankin-Scales, pointed out that the



Photo by Keats Elliott

program “expanded its geographic footprint because of the Covid stay-at-home order. A lot of students moved but stayed connected” to the program through Zoom if they stayed residents of California. Therefore, enrollment has grown and was 3,402 in the 2023-2024 academic year. It is expected to grow even more this year according to Silverman.

Lastly, Silverman mentioned, “There is growing attention being paid

to Noncredit programs statewide, including Emeritus, this combined with the creativity and ingenuity of the faculty, staff, and administrators of our own Emeritus program will enable us to continue to serve the educational needs of our students.”

The 50 years of Emeritus celebration has been postponed from May to sometime in the Fall due to the impact of the wildfires.

WHAT'S HAPPENING: *Spring/Summer Emeritus Events*

EMERITUS ART GALLERY

The Gallery is located on the first floor of the Emeritus Campus. For 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 2025 Part 1 In-Gallery Exhibition April 24 – June 6 In-Gallery Reception:

April 24, 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 24, with in-gallery Opening Reception 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-Shower and Emeritus Gallery Curator Jesse Benson.

Annual SMC Emeritus Student Art Exhibition 2025 – Part 2 Online (smc.edu/emmeritusgallery) starting May 22

Zoom Virtual Reception at smc.edu/emmeritusgallery: May 22, 5 p.m.

Part 2 opens online Thursday, May 23, with a Zoom reception event from 5 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

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 19 | 1 p.m. | Free | Online; see smc.edu/events for details

Are You Curious about SMC Main Campus Opportunities? Join a Campus Tour

By Sharon Valente

The SMC main campus classes and the smorgasbord of Thanksgiving food giveaways were mesmerizing and I rediscovered photography could be fun. On November 26, 2024, a cold and overcast Saturday morning, I joined Emeritus classmates at the Second Street Emeritus building at 9 a.m. and our bus sped to Santa Monica College for the scheduled Main Campus tour. The Campus offers over 100 academic and other programs. We would see the holiday three-day Thanksgiving Event offering free fresh produce, grains, and proteins to some 3,000 students facing food insecurity. Enthusiastic campus guides led us around as we met inspiring faculty and staff who described their intriguing programs. I was curious about SMC's diverse curriculum and the sustainable garden.

Scott Silverman, Dean of Non-credit & External Programs welcomed us to the auditorium and brought greetings from Guadalupe Salgado-Shower, Associate Dean (Interim) Emeritus. Representatives presented SMC programs illustrated with student work and distributed handouts (e.g., campus maps, student beauty salon low prices). We met student guides and divided into smaller groups.

A dapper and charming professor called the "Mayor of SMC," greeted

us on the photo lab steps and highlighted student work – the photographers' perspectives, shadows, and vision drew me into their pictures. The witty Professor assured us that we could create similar works. As a plus, photography students can receive a free loan of cameras, equipment, and lab access. We traipsed into the dimly lit and curtained lab where a friendly student posed a lithe Venus of a golden-haired woman in a shimmering white sheath with diaphanous wings and took stills for a photo merge with shots of an oblong 4-inch dark rock. The finished photo would show the angel hovering and reaching down to the rock that grew to Mount McKinley stature. Although my high school photographer years are a faint memory and I haven't touched a camera since, I would have enrolled on the spot. Next stop on the tour is Cosmetology.

In Cosmetology, students provide services in the salon lab (e.g., hair dye, cuts, wigs, nails, and facials at low prices ranging from \$10). I wanted an appointment — what a deal compared to sky high community prices. Most ladies grabbed the schedules. Anyone can call (310) 434-4000 for student salon appointments, hours, and address. SMC also secured funds for pricey beauty kits to give students. I was impressed; my undergrad equipment was costly on my strained budget. The free kits must be a magnanimous gift.

Scott Silverman joined us briefly. We had not seen the garden, so he detoured to the small plot where students tended various plants and herbs. Walking in the sun through



Photo by Keats Elliott

the Quad, we saw the bodega and an outside bazaar of Thanksgiving food. What a feast with enticing aromas — the array of tables teeming with onions, potatoes, squash, colorful fresh vegetables, and other tables heaped with grains and canned goods. Students received and loaded a large colorful tote with Thanksgiving essentials and fixings. They left balancing their heavy tote, complimentary large pie, maybe pumpkin or pecan, and a coupon for their preferred. My mouth watered and my stomach gurgled; I was ready for lunch and maybe a pecan pie.

In the cafeteria, a collection of brown-boxed lunches greeted us — a beautifully packaged, an iced carrot cake, a decorated cookie, and a beverage. My tarragon-turkey sandwich and cake were delicious. Despite limited time before departing, colleagues at my table chatted. Delighted, I found several Francophones next to me including a student from Africa. We conversed in French. Since Emeritus doesn't offer advanced French language classes, I ponder taking one on the main campus.

The tour was great fun; we felt like VIPs. The SMC programs were intriguing, and we met faculty dedicated to putting students first.



Photo by Keats Elliott

Ladies, Looking for Society? Try a Red Hat!

By Linda J. Hernández, M.S. Ed

Often seen out to tea at monthly gatherings, our local Red Hat Society is a group of retired women from many different walks of life. We also take day trips to areas of interest in greater Los Angeles and Orange Counties. Here we are at the South Coast Botanical Gardens. I enjoy meeting like-minded friends, inspired by the beloved British writer Jenny Joseph's poem "Warning". Little did she know when in 1961 she wrote: "When I am old I shall wear purple, and a red hat which doesn't go, and doesn't suit me..." she would later inspire a worldwide, social movement of retired ladies who like

to meet for tea or lunch and take interesting local tours. In her poem, she goes on to explain how she must now live a sedate, conservative life with many responsibilities.

However, she continues, when she is in her dotage she will go "rogue" and have all the fun adventures and actions denied her in her youth.

For example, my group's next tour is of our local ice skating rink. A few brave souls may even go out on the ice! We have also visited Watts Towers Arts Center, Muckenthaler Cultural Center, and Independence Hall Museum at Knott's Berry Farm,

to name a few of our past monthly outings.

Ms. Joseph's poem has become the inspiration for women everywhere. What was started in 1998 by artist Sue Ellen Cooper having a few friends in for tea in Fullerton, California has grown to a worldwide, social movement. Today

there are over 20,000 chapters of the Red Hat Society, encouraging women to age playfully, throughout the United States and in 30 countries worldwide.

We retired ladies realize that we are not ready to hang up our walking shoes and spend our days in grandma's rocking chair, clutching our television remote controls.

While the Red Hat Society was started as a social group for women over 50, there is a companion group of "Pink Hatters" for women under 50. They have been part of The Red Hat Society since 2000 and wear pink hats with lavender or lilac clothing.

For more information on The Red Hat Society and to find local chapters, see: redhatsociety.com

For Jenny Joseph's delightful poem which inspired a worldwide women's movement: scottishpoetrylibrary.org.uk/poem/warning



When Clutter Takes On a Life of Its Own

By Harriet L. Lipson

Where did your safe haven go... that oasis where you could unwind and relax without tripping over something? The answer is straightforward: you buried it beneath your inertia.

When did decluttering become a lucrative trend...profitable for some, but mostly avoided at all costs? The KonMari Method™, a global sensation referred to as the "science of tidying up," would have inventors like Thomas Edison, Alexander Graham Bell, and Henry Ford turning over in their untidy graves when compared to Marie

Kondo, an organizing consultant and author of the best-selling book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*.

Science my foot! As a bona fide organizer who founded No Problem / Pas de Probleme in Montreal in the 90's, simplifying was on most clients' lists. I know firsthand that there's no magic, x-factor, or secret sauce when it comes to decluttering.

We all remember being asked to tidy our rooms, put away our toys, and place a limit on collecting Beanie Babies, hockey cards, and snow globes. We've all encountered that

"aha" moment when we grasped it would take longer to restore order than it took to destroy it...when what should be an easy task has morphed into an unmanageable project.

Only you know when enough is enough. When your apathy becomes annoying, when your stuff takes the upper hand and literally trips you up? When you worry about being cited for unsanitary living conditions or asked to audition for *Hoarders*?

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The Challenge: \$20 a Day in Santa Monica

By Gordon Blitz

Is it possible to spend less than \$20.00 for a day in Santa Monica, including food? Yes! We'll begin at the Venice Boardwalk where you can watch skateboarders scaling treacherous slopes without injury. Follow this up with a visit to Muscle Beach. Muscle Beach dates back to the 1930s where gymnastic and acrobatic exhibitions were held on this outdoor weightlifting platform. The rippling muscles of these body builders might convince you to join a gym! Of course, Venice offers the ultimate in people watching along with street entertainers.

Now you can move onto the Santa Monica Pier. You'll find that the views from the tip of the pier offer stunning oceanic vistas. Who knows, you might see a dolphin or a whale or see a local or tourist fisherman catching a perch or bass. Free events on the pier are Locals' Night, Heroes Day, and the Wellness & Waves Festival. Watching children ride the carousel is also a delight.

I know you're exhausted and hungry. Don't fear. You'll find the street tacos at Tu Madre (606 Broadway and Sixth Street) not only gourmet, but filling. At the price of \$2.50, this is a rapturous bargain. I promise you, two of these tacos will fill your belly. While you're in the heart of downtown continue on the Third Street Promenade. If it's a Wednesday or Saturday, you can sample food from the local farmer's market, too. Check out dancers or singers serenading the crowds. Before we leave downtown, stop at the library where you'll be amazed at the free events ranging from food preparation to musical happenings.

If it's Sunday then Open Houses are a prime choice. Check the Redfin App Maps for neighborhoods where there might be a selection of open houses. If you're lucky, realtors offer free water, sodas, or snacks to lure prospective buyers into their listings.

Next stop is Ocean Ave. where you can stroll, and there is an abundance of benches where you can sit and read a book or newspaper. Gob-smacking views of the ocean and waves are mesmerizing. Additionally, you can see surfers and swimmers that brave the cold water. I like to end my day walking from Montana and Ocean Ave. up to 17th Street. Montana is loaded with independent restaurants and stores perfect for lookie-loos.

All that is left is dinner. The best place is California Pizza Kitchen back in downtown Santa Monica. Currently there is a happy hour when you can get a pizza and beer (or other soft drink) for less than \$10.00. If that doesn't interest you, try the chicken breast and a side of broccoli or potatoes, again for under \$10.00. And as a filler, don't forget they serve bread with either butter or a delicious oil/vinegar concoction. Always call the restaurant first to make sure of availability: CPK (310) 353-2060 and Tu Madre (424) 353-2060.

You can make this day a personal challenge as to how much bang you can get out of \$20 for a full day of activities in Santa Monica.

When Clutter Takes On a Life of Its Own

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When we as kids were overwhelmed by homework or chores, our dad always gave the same advice: to chop down a tree, strike it with your axe... one log at a time. It's the same with decluttering. Start small, and little by little, chaos becomes order.

Begin with the powder room so you can create a modest template without feeling besieged. Once you experience a small-scale success, you will be motivated to continue

chipping away at your own pace. Start with three containers: keep, toss, donate. Empty each drawer and remove all items from every shelf, placing the lot on the floor where nothing can escape your scrutiny.

Tossing is easiest so best to start there. Remember, this is a decluttering exercise, not a Kamikaze mission. Your treasures are yours, so disregard well-intentioned input from others. If Rubber Ducky carries special memories of a time, place or person, it stays. If deciding what to keep or donate has you stymied, remember there is someone who will cherish

that item right now. Your keepers will soon stand tall, no longer jammed behind a shampoo bottle.

Before you call it a day, deal with the toss and donate baskets. At this stage, it's easy to relapse, cling and renegotiate. When you return from the dumpster or Good Will, put your feet up, have a cup of tea, and bask in your accomplishment.

That's it! You now know what to do so you can tackle the next room... whenever. There are no shortcuts to get the job done properly, and importantly, you will be laying the foundation for a lifetime habit.

Kudos — Emeritus Student and Writer Gordon Blitz

By Camille Gaon

As the curtain rises, so does Gordon Blitz's star. I'm gladdened to be writing this piece about one of my fellow writers and playwrights. I've been treated to his distinctive, always engaging writing style through several different classes that I've taken with him over the last several years.

His latest play, *Homeless Thanksgiving*, was recently performed by a cadre of seasoned actors in New York and was very well received. As it was when he had a reading of it in my Friday Readers Theatre class, taught by another fellow playwright, the highly esteemed Tony Abatemarco.

This work, one in a long line of many genres of writing, such as memoirs, and novels that Gordon excels at shows the payoff of his focus on playwrighting that he's immersed himself in for the last three years.

His character development is so finely honed that I found myself thinking that these were people he knew. He did not, but said that he is often "stealing through people's lives." And don't we all. An inspiration here, an inspiration there, a little pinch of this added to the mix that gives us a rich stew in the process.

Classmates who commented on Gordon's work were all genuinely impressed with how he was able to take the sad, tragic, magic, and humor dappled words and make the homeless human. His play is also very "au courant."

We got more than a peek into their world through his fine-tuned dialogue that his longtime editor, Michael Main says is the strong point in his writing. This is coming from someone who really understands Gordon and with whom Gordon has always encouraged to be brutal.

Now if the gossip in you wishes they'd heard some juicy brutal comments from our contemporaries about his play, you'd be bitterly disappointed because they were all kudos. Gordon has quite an impressive array of fans in our Monday "Writing for Publication" class taught by our well-pedigreed, published instructor, Kathleen MacKay.

Some of Gordon's life experiences that influence and contribute to his insightful, realistic portrayals stem from the fact that he lost his father right after his Bar Mitzvah, and then to echo the loss, when his first love and long-time partner died of AIDS in 1989. It took almost a decade to find the love of his life whom he married.

His resiliency prepared him well for dealing with throat cancer recently and his writing served as a good coping mechanism, as he always found time to write each day during the grueling chemo and radiation.

The success of his work relies on being well organized and disciplined and he now writes two hours a day. Not only plays, he's written in a variety of genres — everything from murder mystery novels to historical fiction and more. In all his writings, he says he is driven by writing about relationships between people and what drives them. The more dysfunctional, the better. And can't we all relate to that?

Every week in our Zoom classes, Gordon can be seen looking thoughtfully and intently into the camera with a black-and-white caricature picture hanging on the wall behind him. I don't think their resemblance is a mere coincidence. Gordon's Charlie Chaplin's light shows up by his social commentary on the homeless plight in his *Homeless Thanksgiving* just as Chaplin's work reflected what was going on in his times.

You can listen to *Homeless Thanksgiving* on Spotify and other platforms by scanning this QR code.

Gordon's work can be found on his website at gordonblitz.wixsite.com/website, and his novels are for sale on Amazon.



Seeking Calm and Balance in an Uncertain Environment

By Sharon Valente, PhD. APRN, FAAN

Have the recent devastating fires, breaking news, and government layoffs disrupted your sense of peace and serenity? Turbulent times are characterized by periods of uncertainty, struggle, or speedy change. In a frantic world, a peaceful mind might seem out of reach. Without peace of mind, you may experience insomnia, aches, fatigue, stomach upset, irritability, poor concentration, and conflict. One Emeritus student, Terry said, “I’m afraid of Social Security data breaches and Medicare cuts.” Another Emeritus attendee, Johanna, said “I avoid the news and cuddle with my dogs to disconnect from this disturbing world when my compassion burns out.” Another said, “I can’t stop crying after watching the fires.” Often such anxiety interrupts sleep and increases heart rates. It is easy to feel overwhelmed by difficult emotions, painful experiences, or challenging times. So how do we restore our peace, serenity and balance when so much is out of our control? Several steps can help you to remain calm and balanced and navigate the complexities of life with ease. Consider what disrupts calm which is the opposite of chaos and encompasses inner peace.

First, recognize where your attention goes. Be mindful of what captures your attention on your phone, TV, or internet, and limit things that exhaust you. For instance, you may reduce your time watching distressing news or stories. Pay attention to what relaxes you such as nature. Spend time in natural settings e.g., a walk in the park or along the beach. Spending time in nature soothes anger and fear, eases stress, and lowers the risk of depression. Learn to allow your mind and body to rest. Avoid surrounding yourself with negative people or circumstances.

Second, practice self-care. Set aside time for yourself; it benefits your well-being. You can reflect on your values or explore your identity or feelings. Explore your creativity. Take time to reevaluate your boundaries and set limits on things that upset you. Elaine says, “I practice yoga with a group, and it calms me down, centers, and relaxes me. After Yoga, I feel like a gummy bear as my body releases tensions and my mind calms.” Let go of grudges or slights and practice forgiveness. Do things you enjoy that ease your stress. Diane says, “When I’m frustrated, I express my emotions in my journal, and it frees my mind.” Remember to play — enjoy your favorite games or listen to music. My friend,

Laurie, says, “I love dancing and singing. They make me happy.”

Third, exercise offers a way to put worries aside, breathe, and stay grounded. Exercise helps you build self-confidence, calm, and relaxation. It reduces stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol and increases endorphins. It helps you reduce tension, improve mood, and lower anxiety and depression. It improves sleep and rest.

Fourth, focus on here and now. Amidst uncertainty, the mind wants to dwell on the future and guess what could go awry but this is not helpful. Pay attention to the truth and what is happening right now avoid dwelling on “what ifs” and potential catastrophes. We can all be tempted to think of the worst. Avoid focusing on rumors or opinions that are not verified. Resilience is grounded in the present not in what you imagine might happen in the days ahead. Laughter can also help lighten your mood.

Five, harness the power of breath. Breathing is a handy tool that eases tension, lowers blood pressure, and slows your mind. Simple breathing exercises help focus the mind, lower stress, and improve mental clarity.

Six, ask for help. If you notice that you can’t get a good night sleep, your anxiety is excessive or you feel depressed or experience PTSD symptoms (e.g. intrusive thoughts, flashbacks, avoidance of triggers) or you just cannot function, seek assistance. You might consider talking with a competent and qualified pastor or mental health counselor, a support group, or a psychotherapist whom you trust. Talking with a friend can be helpful if the friend listens, focuses on you, and offers support but avoid any negative Nellies or Freds or Debbie Downers.



Regina Pally, *Birds on a Fence*, from Emeritus Student Photography Exhibition 2025.

Remembering Nancy McKeever

by Monona Wali

Sometimes it's a mystery what draws me to a person. Is it their looks, their demeanor, or just an instant sense of connection?

I suspect in Nancy's case it was her writing that drew me to her. In her first year in Autobiography class in 2014, she wrote her story "Crowning Glory" and we published it in the *Ongoing Moment*, the journal of literature and art. Rereading it now, I realize that all the hallmarks of her writing and her self are contained in that story. First, she sets the stage:

A woman's hair used to be referred to as her "crowning glory."

For a Black woman, this was far from true. Hair maintenance was a major undertaking.

In Pittsburgh in the 1940s, there was no Black Power and Black certainly was not considered beautiful. The goal, as far as hair was concerned, was to be as white as possible, made by a torturous process known as "straightening."

What a powerful opening — we know exactly where we are and we are brought into the social, political, and cultural history of the time with a sure hand. Then the story describes the whole process, giving unforgettable details:

The day started early, with my mother first washing and then braiding everyone's hair. We had no shower, so the shampoos took place in the kitchen sink. The sink counter in this cold-water tenement building was made of wood slats that, due to the washing of dishes and daily use, would stay wet for days at a time. Occasionally in the summertime, the old wooden sink would become infested with maggots. My mother drenched them in boiling water to get rid of them. On shampoo day, my

mother heated up several large pots of water. We would lie face up on the damp sink while she washed our hair and rinsed it by maneuvering our heads to the correct angle under the faucet.

I was the second oldest girl, but the middle child. Quiet, shy, and studious, I was known as "the bookworm." My father used to say that I even enjoyed reading cereal boxes.

It's hard to forget those details (the maggots!), and impossible not to fall in love with the little girl who loved to read cereal boxes.

I admit to being a sucker for good writing and with writing like this it is easy to see why I would have been drawn to Nancy. But not all good writers become friends. There was an openness to Nancy that was welcoming and curious. She was also humble, always surprised to receive praise for her stories, and immensely pleased, as if an unexpected gift had arrived at her doorstep. I knew from the beginning that I wanted to support her in the discovery of her talent.

She wrote honestly about her disappointments with her largely absent and unsupportive father, but she did not let him define her life. Her stories did not stop with her childhood either. She was equally keen to tell stories of how she made a life on her own, writing honestly about her failed marriage, and her two beloved daughters, how she fashioned an extended family with a fellow single mother, and built a successful career as a psychiatric nurse. Her later chapters detail meeting her partner Patty and making the bold move to allow herself a full and loving relationship.

As you read through her memoir, you see that she did not let herself be

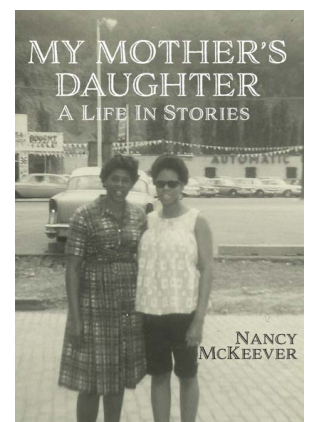
swayed by the negative in others, and she experienced plenty of it, including bigotry and sexual molestation, and she wrote honestly and openly about it, but seemed to hold herself resolutely in the strong light of optimism. She was defined by a deep and abiding love for the goodness in others. It is in her stories and in who she was as a human being.

When Nancy reached out to me last fall not knowing how to put her stories together into a book, I offered to help without even thinking twice. I felt strongly that her life story should be in the world. As I've reflected more on what bonded us, I think it was that we both knew instinctively the power of choosing love. We were sisters in that. It is not just a question of being a kind and loving person, although she was that for sure, it was that she recognized that you could choose love as an act of empowerment, that it was not a simple choice, but rooted in allowing for the full complexity of each and every one of us, the dark and the light.

Nancy was diagnosed with terminal cancer while we were editing the book. It was a rush against the clock to get the book finished, and I am happy she did get to see it and hold it just three days before she passed. She has left us an incredible gift. The full essence of who she is lives on very powerfully in all her stories. It is a way to have her with us again and always.

Nancy's memoir *My Mother's Daughter* —

A Life in Stories is available for purchase through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and bookshop.org



Catherine Tirr's Art Classes

By Jeanne Shamji

I have taken many art classes with Catherine Tirr over the past eight years, exploring techniques in watercolor, acrylic paint, and colored pencil. Her expert guidance has significantly improved my skills and helped me develop my artistic voice. It is inspiring to see many of her students return each semester. I currently attend two classes on Wednesdays with her, where I experiment with painting with watercolor and acrylic in her engaging morning and afternoon sessions. What draws me to Catherine's classes is her unique approach to conducting each session. She carefully designs a variety of assignments across different artistic mediums, encouraging her students to explore materials in innovative and unexpected approaches that many of us had not considered before.



Catherine critiques her students' artwork with constructive and thoughtful feedback that significantly enhances their skills and techniques. Her suggestions are not just theoretical; she provides practical demonstrations and examples that clearly illustrate her points. Her critiques are characterized by kindness and specificity; however, she encourages individuality by suggesting that her opinions are optional. The students who choose to take her advice often experience marked improvement in their work, which they proudly share with the class. This back-and-forth fosters a collaborative and supportive artistic community. Catherine offers practical information regarding less expensive sources for materials and ways to extend the life of brushes and paints.

Her colored pencil class last semester had assignments that required us to draw various items found around the house — a stack of hats, a pile of shoes, or a few rocks or seashells. She had her students draw the items precisely in perspective and learn techniques that render realistic results.

I am taking her acrylics class this semester. In this class, students study the various methods of well-known and lesser-known artists. We utilize these artists' abstract and landscape painting styles and use unusual mediums. The techniques and mediums we explore in Catherine's class keep us excited and curious.

Catherine's watercolor class this semester involves creating collages during the first two weeks of class. Each student will choose one of their collages to become the still life subject of their watercolor paintings, which will be rendered using various techniques each week.

Paintings from Catherine's classes are featured in the annual *Ongoing Moment* book published for Santa Monica students. The book showcases artwork created in Catherine Tirr's watercolor classes and stories from Monona Wali's and Kathleen MacKay's writing classes. The Santa Monica Emeritus Gallery features students' artwork from Catherine's classes. I am proud to have had my artwork from previous semesters chosen to be presented in the Gallery and the *Ongoing Moment*.

Catherine has been a professor at SMC since 2000. Her classes are available on Zoom and in person. She teaches five art classes for beginning and more experienced artists. Catherine is an artist in her own right, with a large body of work displayed in museums worldwide and exhibitions at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and The Hammer Museum. Her work is on her website: catherinetirr.com

Impressions of 2025 Women's March in Los Angeles

By Linda J. Hernández

Saturday, March 8 was a perfect Spring Day in Downtown Los Angeles. My friends and I were pleased to join approximately 17,000 others at the Women's March, which celebrated the International Day of the Woman. This event was one of many worldwide, and we began our local March at Pershing Square at 10 a.m. From there we journeyed as a group to the steps of City Hall for an enthusiastic Rally. There were many inspiring speakers, such as labor activist Dolores Huerta who urged the group not to patronize corporations that don't respect women or marginalized groups. Many of the marchers, which included women, men, and children of all ages, were protesting recent changes to women's reproductive rights as well as diversity, equity, and inclusion provisions.

The Women's March began in 2017, following the first inauguration of President Trump. My group and I



were pleased to be present at that first March where an estimated crowd of 750,000 were present. It was described at the time as “the largest such event in Los Angeles since the Immigration March of 2006.”

Emiliana Guereca, founder of Women's Rights Foundation in Los Angeles stated that:

“For us, the main focus is making sure that women understand that we are not equal yet. We have lost rights instead of gaining rights.” Guereca also emphasized that marchers protested Trump administration's actions and proposals to cut healthcare spending, restrict voting access, and roll back diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts.

As we marched through the streets of Los Angeles, accompanied by a troupe of very energetic Aztec Dancers, we were truly thrilled to be

back after 8 years with like-minded supporters of diverse backgrounds. Our only disappointment was that the crowd, while large, was so much smaller than the history-making one of 2017. My group arrived by Lyft and Uber but many others took buses, private cars and the Light Rail System. Perhaps the lack of attendance was in part caused by Amtrak and MetroLink who had to close their trains to Downtown L.A. on March 8th for “routine track maintenance.”

The Los Angeles March was part of the Women's March Network which organized hundreds of such demonstrations for the weekend across the USA and the world. I'm hoping to meet some of my fellow Santa Monica Emeritus Students and Staff Members next year as we celebrate Project 2026 leading up to the Midterm National Elections!

To Be or Not to Be...A Nun: Theresa Bonpane

By Caroline Feinstein

I met Theresa in an autobiography class at Emeritus College a few years before the pandemic began. On Friday, March 14, 2025, she turned 90.

A small gathering, maybe about 60-70 people, including a dear friend and fellow activist, Jane Fonda, were there to help her celebrate. Her life

has been, in my opinion, not one that you would think of upon first meeting her.

She was a Nun for 12 years. But something stronger inside of her developed and she was finally able and strong enough to leave, and to continue her life's work outside of the nunnery. As fate would have it,

about 2 years after leaving, she met Blasé Bonpane, who had been a priest, and left the priesthood.

She grew up in an Irish Catholic family, with very loving parents. It was never Theresa's dream to become a Nun, it couldn't have been further from what she wanted.

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Meet Teri Roseman, C-IAYT: Your Guide to Reduced Tension, Inner Serenity, Wellness, a Supportive Community and More!

By Sharon Valente, PhD., APRN, FAAN

From 2000, a yoga mat beckoned from my closet but yoga never interested me until I had difficulty climbing stairs at Emeritus and I joined a Yoga class pioneered by Jasmin Lieb and then taught by Teri since winter 2021.

Teri's yoga journey is fascinating. In her 20s Teri was forced to leave college to build a successful graphic arts career in mainstream American printing corporations. Her interest in wellness didn't fit with her demanding career. After attending a yoga retreat, Teri dreamed of integrating yoga into her life, but it wasn't realistic given her financial obligations. Printing changed its business model, but Teri continued to work in digital printing despite a diagnosis of cancer. Then in 2008 the organization furloughed her digital division, including 50-year-old Teri with no termination package. What a shock after 25 years; but an unexpected benefit emerged. Despite the angst and disruption of job loss and being out of work, Teri was free to pursue her dreams.

She finished her bachelor's degree in Interdisciplinary Studies, the LMU Yoga Therapy program with a Certification as Yoga Therapist, and Jasmin Lieb's yoga teacher training. She started her yoga wellness studio and also joined Jasmin Lieb in Live-in Wellness and teaching at emeritus. The COVID pandemic forced teaching to go online. Teri was teaching with Jasmin at Emeritus online when Jasmin suddenly became ill and died, leaving the Emeritus yoga class pending. A yoga colleague, Sarabanda notes, "I recall it was a blessing for seniors who had taken Jasmine's class for years that Teri, who studied with Jasmin took over the class." Teri honors her mentor, Jasmin's legacy at the end of every class.

Teri's class offered wellness and healing. On the mat, I followed the directions to "oil" the hip joint, extend the knee, or stretch, I relearned body mechanics, tuned in to my body, and discovered renewed function. No more pain climbing stairs. Teri starts class with an intake or assessment where she inquires, "What is going on with your body?" and individuals describe their shoulder pain, tense neck, or poor digestion and what preceded their aches (e.g., after hours at the computer, I had shoulder pain) and envision more healthful practices.

Teri structures the practice to reduce these distresses, to help navigate health issues, and practice yoga from the

inside out. She demonstrates a superb exercise (standing next to a wall in an A-frame posture) that relieves shoulder and neck tension. She observes, coaches, and improves students' postures. She encourages us to slow down, breathe, and turn off racing, type-A brains. Teri also adjusts positions to prevent stress on a painful or tender area. She has an amazing knowledge of anatomy and physiology.

Yoga practice combines meditation, inner awareness, and mental focus in a supportive and caring community. During the Palisades fire, these classmates offered support when I had to evacuate and skip class. Teri records class and provides these tapes for students. She has a devoted community of SMC Emeritus students who depend on the yoga class an essential part of their self-care and wellness. Thank you, Teri, for a great class.

From the Dean's Desk

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much to celebrate. This semester, we continue honoring the Emeritus Program through the Living Histories Project, which produces short documentaries highlighting key figures in our community. These inspiring stories will be shared in the coming months.

Additionally, our Let's See SMC! field trip series will continue, allowing us to explore SMC's campuses and programs. Upcoming trips include the Performing Arts Center, the Center for Media and Design, and the Early Childhood Lab. Invitations and RSVP details are sent via email so please be sure to check!

Though we face difficult times, we remain strong as a community. Please take care of yourselves and know that we are here for you every step of the way.

Best,
Guadalupe Salgado-Shower

To Be or Not to Be...A Nun: Theresa Bonpane

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Early on in high school, she loved going to parties and hanging out with her friends.

It was some time in her senior year, when a strange happenstance occurred. She heard an ominous voice while she was washing her hands in the bathroom of a local coffee shop. At first, she thought someone might be in there playing a trick on her, but it continued even after she checked. The voice was strong and loud enough for her to understand in no uncertain terms, you need to become a Nun.

At first, she just shook it off, but it continued to haunt her. And haunt it did. To give up boys, smoking or an occasional cocktail, no way. She even ditched school every first Friday of the month with a few of her insurgent cohorts.

Well, as her story goes, the voice won. It had instilled in her almost a feeling of guilt. She decided that if she gave in to this voice, maybe it would stop. She would give this calling a few years and then move on and be done with it.

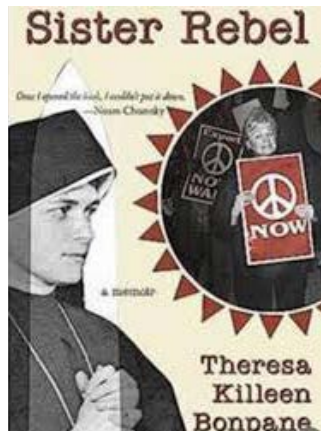
After a couple of interviews, because she was refused at first, she was finally accepted into The Order of Mary Knoll Sisters of St. Dominick and remained with them for 12 years. Most of this time with the Order was spent in Chile, teaching English to underprivileged women and children. When she married Blasé, they became an unstoppable force. Their partnership was like a match made in heaven, and they began working with communities in East L.A.; The Black Panthers; Farm workers and Cesar Chavez directly in La Paz, California.

Now all of this and more can be found in her autobiography book, *Sister Rebel*, a book she will tell you that every word in it is hers, but someone else input it into a computer for her.

But what I want to add about this incredible woman is, she is like a modern-day Gladiator, maybe without the sword, but nonetheless, she is and always has been an activist. Her voice could be heard, fighting for people's rights and the justices she deeply believes in, and to this day, she is still fighting for them. She wants to continue to get the word out there about finding peace here on earth. She is one of the 'OG's' of authenticity. It's possible she does them a little slower or not as frequently, but nonetheless, there is no stopping her.

I believe that Theresa was put on this earth, to be that voice and an ear that so many causes need.

Copies of *Sister Rebel* can be found on Amazon, Bookshop.org, and local bookstores



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



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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, 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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