ESCOM Journal

January/February 2020



Emeritus Students College of Marin Lifelong Learning Lifelong Doing Lifelong Friendships

Moving into a new decade

2020 sounded far away not so long ago. Yet here it is, bringing with it a new decade. What will it hold? Likely it will bring challenges, as we have learned to expect in our own lives and the world around us, but it also promises change, shifting priorities and opportunity. I always feel an exhilaration and anticipation at this time of the year for what lies ahead for me personally and for the community I live in, my friends, my family, and the evolving organizations in which I am committed and connected.

I truly care about ESCOM. After 4 years on the Council and as a member for even longer, the love of who we are and what we represent deepens. I hope you feel the same way.

We all recognize how important it is to have a community, a place to share our skills and talents and to contribute our time, energy and enthusiasm. A place to share our love and curiositv about what we still have to learn and an eagerness to dive right in whether we get to campus on a Whistlestop shuttle or our SUV car pool. Getting here and staying connected is what counts. Seeing so many of you show up in the pouring rain for our holiday party in December convinced me we are a dedicated group. We know what we have here and want to support it.

ESCOM is thriving and has more members than ever. We

Photo: Laura Milholland

look to a full year with our 30 clubs, coffees, speakers, the Author Series and other member gatherings. In addition, we just moved into our new office on the Kentfield campus, just down the hallway in the Deedy lounge. Please stop by for a visit.

It takes effort and a commitment to decide to take the plunge and get involved and to recognize that ultimately our lives will revolve around what we do, what we give, and how we inspire others. Thanks for your membership and showing you care about this gem, called ESCOM. Here's to a Happy and Healthy 2020.

> -- Luanne Mullin, ESCOM President

Don't miss the 6th Annual Author Series

The 6th annual ESCOM sponsored Author Series is slated for one February date and two April dates. A collaboration of ESCOM, Book Passage and College of Marin Community Education and Lifelong Learning, this year will be the last time the series will take place in the William Keith Room in the Kentfield Campus' Library, which will be demolished during the summer.

All programs will be from 1 to 2:30 pm, and parking in Lot Six, close to the Library, will be free for the duration of each event. The event is free and open to the public. A limited number of copies of each book will be available at each reading.

"For the first time our lineup will be all non-fiction," said David Patterson COM Librarian. The event is free and open to everyone, each book this year is especially relevant to all ESCOM members and their peers."

Kudos are due for the hard work put in on the event by Patterson, Community Education and all the ESCOM members over the years who have dedicated themselves to making this event a smash each year.

"This program is a wonderful example of how ESCOM enriches the entire campus," said Patterson.

Friday, February 28th: Michael Shapiro's *The Creative Spark* is a collection of interviews with some of the most creative people of our time—musicians, authors, visual artists, and chefs—speaking about what drives them, what helps them to see the world in fresh ways, and what inspires them to turn their visions into art. During the past decade, Michael Shapiro has interviewed some of our brightest creative luminaries, from David Sedaris to Smokey Robinson, Francis Ford Coppola to Jane Goodall, and gathered those conversations in one book that stands as a testament to human achievement and the creativity that resides within each of us. <u>https://www.bookpassage.com/event/michael-shapiro-creative-spark-college-marin</u>

Coming Up

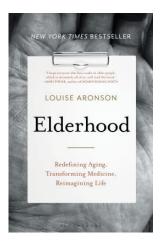
Friday, April 10: Louise Aronson's Elderhood

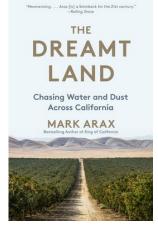
https://www.bookpassage.com/event/louise-aronson-elderhoodcollege-marin

Friday, April 24th Mark Arax's, *The Dreamt Land*

https://www.bookpassage.com/event/mark-arax-dreamt-land-collegemarin







Mini-Medical School is Jan. 25th

College of Marin Mini-Medical School, *Medical Science and Aging* is a free event that focuses on the second half of life and normal human aging. Program partners have included top medical school clinical professors as well as respected researchers from Stanford University, UC Davis, UCSF, and Kaiser Permanente.

College of Marin Kentfield Campus

James Dunn Theatre Saturday, January 25

Morning Session: 9am–Noon

Afternoon Session: 1pm-4pm

Register now to secure your spot! Via email at minimed@marin.edu or call (415) 485-9500.

Please arrive early to check-in and enjoy coffee and tea with fellow attendees.

Co-sponsored by College of Marin Community Education and Health Services

2020 Continuing Education

Winter Registration begins January 7 at 9am

Note NEW locations:

Kentfield Campus Enrollment Services, Student Services Building, Second Floor

Mon 9 am to 4 pm, Tue, Wed, Thurs 9 am to 7 pm Fri 9 am to 1 pm

Indian Valley Campus Enrollment Services, Building 27 East Hall, Room 109

Mon, Tues, Thurs 9 am to 4 pm, Wed 9 am to 6 pm Fri 9 am to 1 pm

Please note: Checks may no longer be used to pay for in-person registration. Checks may still be used for mail-in or on-site drop box registration. Enrollment offices are closed daily for lunch from 1 - 2 pm More info: call 415-485-9305, or email info@marincommunityed.com





Holiday Cheer was enjoyed by all at the annual Solstice Party held at St. John's in Ross on Dec. 7. More than _____ ESCOM members attended the catered event and Kentfield ESCOM office volunteer Loretta Wolf-Dawe was honored for more than 20 years service. Kudos to Rosie Echelmeier and Joan Cassin for their party expertise. Pictured above: Gini Moore, Bonnie Jean Martz and Anne Pearson. Luanne Mullin at the podium. *Photos: Rosie Echlemeier*

MEMOIR

How I Survived the Blackout

Cradling her slim body next to mine, I kissed her over and over. She was experiencing sensations of delight running through her body that she had never felt before. "Slow up Jack." The Baron called to his chauffeur, "I don't want to get to the palace too quickly."

Wow, wow. Can this lady write! I was sitting in bed wrapped in a warm blanket, flannel pajamas and reading my book. The book was reaching a climax and so was I.

Then, a tall man with graying hair appeared in my bedroom doorway. He was wearing dark jeans and a dark jacket. This was not unexpected. It was my oldest son.

"Get out of bed," he said, "get dressed and get in the car with me." He grabbed the book from my hands and tossed it in the flowerpot – its plant long gone.

"I am staying here," I said, "I am toughing this one out."

"What if you need help," he said. "What if Dad needs help?"

"I will go down to the fire station," I said. The nearest fire station is two blocks away.

"Are you going to crawl?" he asked. You cannot walk."

Marcia Summers



I got out of my bed, dressed and got in the back of his car. No toothbrush, no change of clothes, no nothing. That is how I spent the next three days of the blackout in a very elegant home with an elevator and a cook.

The first night I was there for dinner we were served all natural foods. There was not one thing on the table that was not grown locally. After dinner I was given a pair of very warm flannel pajamas and ordered to put them on before my "caregiver" went home. I was then allowed to stay up as long as I wanted.

The next morning, there was a breakfast tray for my husband and myself, coffee, fruit, scrambled eggs and homemade bread. I could get used to life like this but it only lasted three days and we were sent home after the blackout.

I am now trying to prepare my house so that it is in better order in case we have another blackout. I cannot find the book I was reading. That little lady will have to survive the traumas of life on her own. I hope all of you survived as well as we did.

Blessings.

-- Iris Tandler

Hiking with Haiku

Mt. Tam Plants

Twirling in heavy wind Do they hear a Latin beat? Mexican Hat Flowers

Coyote Bush seed Borne by gentle breeze of Spring Snuggles in my sleeve

Along edge of trail Tentacles of Poison Oak Itching to greet you

-- Richard Schneider

MEMOIR

Middle of Nowhere

Last week at work I'm out in West Marin on the road between Petaluma and Point Reyes Station. Nice road, smooth, encourages fast travel. Sixty? Easy. More if the Highway Patrol wasn't always around somewhere. One lane in each direction, they're ten feet wide, plus a breakdown lane on each shoulder. At times you can walk out into the middle of the road and stand there, listening to the quiet.

So I'm out there because someone called and said there's a dead deer on the side of the road. All broken up. Hit by some vehicle. It's my job to get the carcass out of public view. I can load it in the truck which I do most often, but I have options. This is still Marin, where every once-in-a-while someone says:" vultures gotta eat, too." And today they will. Back around the guardrail I've spotted a little flat-topped grassy hill.

If there is a place that's out of the public eye (and nose), accessible to carrion-eaters and will not offend an owner of private property, I have the discretion to relocate the carcass. I loop my comealong around the head and drag the whole decomposing thing around the rail and up the hill where the vultures can see and smell it from the air, but the drivers passing by can't. In a day it will be a pile of bones.

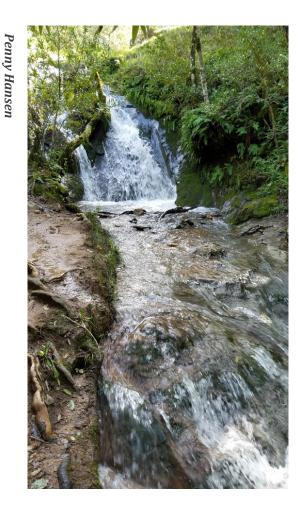
I unhook the body and feel like quite the woodsman about leaving it in such a perfect place for the birds. Walk back down the trail I made, knowing I might pick up fleas that jumped off the body, but too lazy to walk through the stinging nettle and foxtails. I'd rather get a few fleas then spend 10 minutes picking foxtails out of my shoelaces. And those other things that look like Rice Krispies but have little stickery spines all over. Hate 'em.

But I like being out here in Nature. It's warm and still, I'm lost in it, my senses are humming, and I reflect that the longer I live in Marin, the more I notice in the wild places I visit. I have other calls to handle, so I automatically head back to the truck, which is scrunched away from traffic in the breakdown lane. I open the back of the truck's camper shell and stow the come-along. And, WHHUUUMM!! Distracted, I've stepped into the road, just feet away from a car that must be doing seventy, passing another car. Side by side, coming in my direction, obscured by the cab of my truck. It's over in a second, but the sound, the air pressure, the feeling of mass moving by so fast, so close. And I know that if I'd taken two more steps I would have been hit like that deer. While I was blissing out behind the tail end of my truck, they were both hurtling toward me, one racing to pass. I never heard or saw it come. They were just there.

In my work I've seen what happens when a car hits a deer. Sometimes all the bones are broken. Sometimes I have occasion to touch the skull and feel a handful of shards. Sometimes the body is split open with bright red blood, fresh from the lungs, on the ground.

In a world where I have to deal with death all the time, I pretend to be immune. It won't happen. It can't. It just doesn't. But it does. Death just blew in my ear and reminded me.

-- Mike Holland, Elements of Creative Writing



IN MEMORIAM

Art Ravicz, a long time part of the ESCOM leadership as Treasurer, ESCOM Council member and formatter of the ESCOM Newsletter, passed away on December 3rd. A memorial service was held in Novato on December 27th. What follows is a tribute from a former editor of the ESCOM Newsletter who worked with Art.

Art was a gentleman of the old school--polite, gracious, mannerly. But he was also a stickler for detail, which was so necessary to his responsibilities for the layout production of the ESCOM Journal (formerly Newsletter). Art and I worked together for almost four years. I edited and wrote stories, columns, and interviews that Art miraculously transformed into a monthly newspaper.

I gave Art a list of contents for each issue. He had supreme patience, earning the wonderful distinction of never asking me, "Do you have that done yet?"

Art's understated humor at first surprised me. I spoke formally to him in a serious way because I respected his years of dedicated experience with ESCOM. Then I discovered how much he liked to laugh. I caught on to his droll style. It wasn't that he didn't like to talk, but he chose his words carefully—a few pauses said a lot. He sometimes made an archly dry comeback that struck me as surprising...and hilarious. I should have written down his best lines.

Not so funny for him were his momentous tasks of making my final proof reading corrections on the formatted copy. We developed a much better system than doing them over the phone. Instead, I submitted them in writing after numbering the page, paragraph, and line where the correction should appear.

Art drew the line, however, at any "last minute" rearrangement of stories. He did agree to add to the front page a late-breaking story—Jason Lau's departure from COM. However, that meant he had to remake the two pages following it—a considerable amount of work. "Time for a talk I had with Don," he said, referring to the late, revered, long-time editor, Dr. Don Polhemus, who had preceded me and worked with Art for years.

"As I told Don, we're not ordinarily a 'stop the presses' publication," Art said, reminding me of old newspaper movies I had loved. Well, yes, this was now reality...and I agreed with him.

Art was super smart, firmly confident, supportive and humane. He will be missed by all fortunate enough to know him and others who know they missed that opportunity.

Rest in peace, dear Art. I will send no more laborious corrections. All will be perfect now.

-- Sarah Fagan Greenberg



Laura Milholland

Passionflower Navigating the light fantastic on the garden path, I spot a passionflower lullaby musically climbing her arbor like a tower to the sun.

Around the corner the tragedy of the weeping willow unfolds, rhythmically swaying like a metronome of branches.

With evening approaching I hum a requiem for all of the fallen leaf soldiers awaiting the harvest of workers arriving with rakes in hand.

A festival of sunset lanterns envelops my earthly observations illuminating day's myriad lessons in all things great and pedestrian within

the vulnerability of breath.

-- Michelle Sell, Poetic Pilgrimage



Harvey Abernathey

The Life of a Poem

Once upon a time there was a little poem who desperately wanted to be written. It wanted to share its fear of darkness, its love of flowers, its concern for the world it watched over. It waited for a quiet moment, whispered in the ear of its resident poet, but got no response. They say timing is everything, but how is a poem to know what time is right? It waited then tried again, the poet now sitting pen poised above paper.

This must be a good time, but instead of experiencing the joyous transformation to written word, it remained in the ethereal as it watched line after line of mundane verbiage pour onto the page. Maybe morning wasn't the best time. It was a thoughtful poem. It was a patient poem. It trusted she was the right poet, so settled into observation mode—a place it was most comfortable.

As it waited, it grew deeper, wider, wiser. Then one afternoon, almost by accident—really, it was only repeating a line to itself, when suddenly the poet, in the middle of cooking dinner, stopped, turned off the stove, picked up the pen that rested beside a notebook and began writing. At last! As the pen flowed across the page, the little poem let out a long and happy sigh.

- Christine Dietrich Cragg

ESCOM Journa



OPTIMIST

I believe in the starry pole staring back at us So bright and blinking at midnight Cart-wheeling in white hot light I believe in the man in the moon and the lady and the silvery sheen Of her cold water, that might have once been warm I believe in the tin cup and the tent And the hole in the pocket of loose change I believe the planet should fall off its axis So I guess I believe in gravity too I believe in the north winds snarling howl And fox and fowl The bark and bell In heaven & hell

> I believe in the velvet vermillion of grass In early spring and the swing Of messy picnics

> I believe the waiter deserves a bigger tip Than my friends often leave I believe everyone deserves a chance Even when chance leaves

I believe in the darkness of a thousand locked doors And those who can walk through them with ease I believe in the open windows of the sky And the out of tune birdsong which can unlock them

> I believe in the mystery of not knowing And the day without time And the magic of known I believe in fallen angels and hard rocks Silent heroes and the moan I believe in truth no matter how ugly I believe pure beauty will save us I believe grace will once again prevail After all the disgrace is gone

Outlook for 2020

Most of the country will remain divided under cloudy prognostications and boldface lies until June,

when

Laura Milholland

a clear and present front (runner) will emerge to challenge the hot air mass and mindless antagonism that have gripped the U.S. for the past three years with an unyielding reign of willful ignorance.

The resulting mental stagnation is likely to continue in Alaska and throughout the southern U.S., which will remain misinformed, and gleefully so, while the coasts, Hawaii and Puerto Rico will enjoy long, sunny days of enlightenment and unusually balmy evenings of hope until September

when

everyone returns from a carefree summer to endure wild and erratic rain storms, hurricanes and flooding, particularly along the East and Gulf coasts and all of Puerto Rico.

In California, the usual drought will lead to the usual catastrophic wildfires, as well as a return to the Dark Ages in the northern region, largely due to the fear-driven and well funded P.R. campaign of a local, recently bankrupt, power company monopoly on whose neglect and faulty equipment most of the wildfires of the past few years can be blamed.

Meanwhile, the Mid West, and it's goodhearted tolerance of windy fabrications, will experience extreme weather conditions in the form of tornadoes that will obliterate any remaining shred of rational thought until Dorothy finally makes it home around Election Day

when, finally,

things will only get worse depending upon in which region of the U.S. one resides. One side of the angry divide will experience unusually fine weather through the 2020 winter holidays, while the other will endure unmitigated fire and brimstone for the next four years.

-- Denize Springer

Marcia Taylor Smith

Last August

Ravens gargle in the Eucalyptus everything has turned a bit sideways days are melted color and scent angry migrators linger in eaves hopeful of charred fish or some residual cooked flesh of old barbecue my own flesh settles into a new decade, oh how life swirls past and past is our happy conversation how much we recall and what year was that experience? One tries to be grateful for each moment, each bird that sweetly sings about the feeders as

cat

Naughty boy, I grab his silken girth and return us back to the kitchen where the paint smudged circle remains above the hall door, the unreplaced clock still reminds me to forget the time but continue the morning with coffee and contemplation over a poem or two. -- Margie Heckelman, **Poetic Pilgrimage**



Paul Milholland

Night Light

Whispering moon so silent, As you flirt among the clouds, upstaging distant stars.

You pluck the limelight so coquettishly in scope and range, with timeless seniority.

I beckon, hear my call; don't close the curtain yet, there is a mind in play.

-- deidre silverman



NEW YEAR, NEW DIGS





Last December the ESCOM office in Kentfield temporarily moved to Deedy Lounge (adjacent to the student cafeteria) to make room for offices moving from the Student Learning Resources Center, which will be demolished and replaced with a new building. The ESCOM office will move back to its original corner of the Student Services Building once construction of the new building is completed

The move was swiftly accomplished before the holidays by several ESCOM movers and shakers, including Jim and Gini Moore, Miriam Merman, Kevin Colgate and Karen Hemmeter, who worked in concert with COM staff.



Community artist Sarah Gorman-Brown hangs some of her paintings in the relocated ESCOM office. Mentor and COM art professor, Bernard Healy looks on.

SPELL FOR A HAPPY LIFE

Let the husband have his say

no matter how boring or repetitious

Let the dishes sit in the sink

while flies consume the half eaten fried egg there

Let the irate driver, the one you cut off on the freeway

flip the bird and give menacing looks while passing

Let the umbrella invert itself in a rainstorm

and drench your cashmere sweater as you run in high heels to beat the red light

Let your sister say it was nice talking WITH you at the end

of 20 minutes of talking about herself

And then -

Let the moon, the sun and the stars shine only for you

for all your days

Mary Small

MUSIC REVIEW

College of Marin's own Golden Gate Brass Band presented a wide range of music, from *Ancient Hungarian Dances* to *American in Paris*, on Saturday, November 23rd. Under the direction of Trevor Bjorklund the audience was both educated and entertained. The opening piece, *Ancient Hungarian Dances* by Czech composer Vaclav Nelhybel, consisted of cool model scales, none major or minor, of half and whole steps. The percussion section added some spice with the timpani, tiny finger cymbals and a triangle played by Dale Smith. Stronger percussion consisted of a snare, crashing cymbals, and xylophone. French horns followed, then the trombones and trumpets.

The next musical piece, Claude Debussy's *Girl with the Flaxen Hair*, originated from a poem. Notes rich in warm tonality emanated from the flugel horns. The trumpets responded with short, sweet and smooth melodies, while he xylophone filled in for drums.

Johann Sebastian Bach's chorale prelude, *Before Your Throne I Now Appear*, was originally written for organ and is considered one of Bach's final pieces. Tim Meazell, trumpet, played a lovely, soothing rendition.

Trevor Bjorklund arranged the *Prelude in D Minor, Op* 23 No.3 by Sergei Rachmaninoff. This "World Premier" was translated from piano music. The transition of the music to a brass band arrangement produced a dry, detached and tight composition. In Bach's Christmas song, *Beside Thy Manger, Here I Stand*; the Brass ensemble all breathed together, the high tuba with particular grace.

Two flugel horns led the way in the 15th Century War song, *Nelhybel Chorale* from the aforementioned composer Vaclav Nelhybel, and strong percussion prevailed. The music was weaponized with rumbling drums followed by French horns and trumpets.

In the second half of the performance, the audience was enriched by "*Irish Tune from County Derry*. This composition by Percy Grainger included the familiar melody from the song *Oh Danny Boy*.

Engelbert Humperdinck's *Evening Prayer* from his opera *Hansel and Gretel*, based on the Grimm's fairy tale, is a short tune presented well by brass instruments.

Grainger's Spoon River, based on the lyric play about small town American life at the turn of the 20th Century features a folksy melody with a



Elaine Thornton

euphonium solo played by Andrew Osborn. It also featured French horn solos by Nina Levine and Dick Mallory. Sallie Layman added a playful tune on piccolo trumpet.

Tuba, euphonium and trombones carried the sad, low tones of *Dido's Lament*, which was based on an aria. Paul Tanner and Trevor Bjorklund arranged this Henry Purcell piece.

Percussion and the unharmonious sounds of taxi horns beeping portrayed in the cacophony of sounds that characterizes George Gershwin's *American in Paris*. This famous, award winning piece is filled with embellishments that energize the piece.

Nelhybel's *Slavic March* concluded the evening and inspired hand clapping by the audience.

-- Maria Gregoriev

Upcoming College of Marin Concerts in 2020.

Saturday, March 7, 2020 at 3 p.m. in the Lefort Recital Hall/PA 72, Performing Arts Building.

Saturday, May 2, 2020 at 3 p.m. in the James Dunn Theatre, Performing Arts Building

Search brownpapertickets.com for COM Music to purchase tickets.

THE ESCOM JOURNAL WELCOMES YOUR SUBMISSIONS!

Send your best work to denizespringer@gmail.com

GUIDELINES

Submit your <u>final</u>, proofed work. Changes, unless absolutely necessary, will not be accepted after submission.

Include your name in file name and on the page of any documents. You must be an ESCOM member.

WRITTEN WORK must be single spaced, left margin oriented, and ATTACHED as a Word doc. Do not submit PDFs of written work (as these cannot be properly transferred or edited).

ART and PHOTOGRAPHY images must be no larger than 300 kb and <u>attached</u> to the email in the .pdf or .jpeg format (not imbedded in email message). Images larger than 300 kb or saved as a .tif file will not be considered.

POETS: If your poem must be centered, please note. Misspellings, grammatical errors and erroneous line breaks could be mistaken as the author's intent and not corrected. Proof your copy before sending it in.

Information for "In Memoriam" must be verified with an obituary that appears in an official resource such as a newspaper to avoid embarrassing errors.

NEXT DEADLINE: February 15, 2020



Mill Valley's own Rita Abrams led the merriment at the December 2019 ESCOM Solstice Party

ESCOM Journal

The ESCOM Journal (published on www.escomnews.com), a publication of the Emeritus Students, College of Marin, is published on alternate months online. A *limited number of printed copies are available* in the ESCOM Campus offices on the College of Marin Kentfield and Indian Valley campuses. ESCOM members are invited to submit news items, or creative works, such as original art, photography, poetry, memoir and fiction (please consult the guidelines in each issue before submitting). The deadline for each issue is the 15th of the prior month. Submissions or questions and comments should be addressed to the editor: denizespringer@gmail.com

ESCOM Council

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