USC/Rancho Study Explores Links Between Lifestyle and Pressure Sores for People with Spinal Cord Injuries

When actor-director-activist Christopher Reeve died as a result of septicemia related to a pressure sore, it reinforced the seriousness of the threat posed by pressure sores to the health and quality-of-life of people with spinal cord injury (SCI). Why would someone like Mr. Reeve, who had access to high quality medical and personal care, develop a sore that proved fatal, while some people with SCI who have inadequate support systems report that they have never had a pressure sore? Recognizing that the context of daily activity and lifestyle choices might provide a powerful key to unlocking this mystery, researchers from USC OS/OT and Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center joined together to study the issue. The resulting qualitative study, titled “Daily Living Context and Pressure Sores in Consumers with SCI,” was funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s National Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research. Emphasis was directed toward understanding the agentic role of consumers in interactions with their daily living environments, including their individualized attempts to adapt to the circumstances that characterize their everyday existence. What was revealed was the fluid and intricate nature of daily life as it occurs in naturalistic settings.

Under the direction of principal investigator Dr. Florence Clark and co-PI Dr. Jeanne Jackson, a team of six OTs identified and began interviews with 20 participants, men and women representing a wide range of ethnicities, socioeconomic groups, ages, causes of injury and years since acquiring SCI. Over the course of 3 years, these 20 people opened their lives to the OTs, sharing with them intimate details of their health practices, family relationships, medical histories and daily routines. The participants’ beliefs about pressure sores were also explored; some in the group firmly held that diligently practicing pressure sore prevention techniques would keep them healthy no matter what, while others were resigned to the idea that pressure sores were inevitable. Interestingly, neither belief proved to be entirely accurate.

Now possessing this wealth of material about the lived experiences of people with SCI, correlated with their ongoing medical histories, the investigators realized the complexity of the factors that contribute to getting – or avoiding – a pressure sore. There is no formula that says who does and doesn’t form a pressure sore, or that a certain action (or inaction) taken by an individual always has the same outcome. The researchers identified that, in fact, pressure sore formation is influenced by a constellation of factors, dynamically interacting to create buffers and liabilities. When the balance of these opposites leans towards buffering factors, the person tends not to form a pressure sore. If, however, liabilities outweigh buffers, that person’s health is at risk.

One of the most surprising findings of the USC/Rancho investigation was that the desire to engage in productive activity must be weighed against the need for protecting one’s health; for example, a worker committed to a full 40-hour week might find themselves up in their wheelchair for so long that a red area, signaling a Stage 1 pressure ulcer, might be aggravated into advancing into a later-stage, infected sore. This dilemma can lead many people with SCI to take

(Continued on page 4)
Message from the Chair

I have always believed that the work of occupational therapists was critical to insuring quality-of-life for people after a chronic illness or disability. But what was recently made very clear to me is that, for older Americans, the complex and multifaceted educational preparation of occupational therapists, translated into a life redesign, can make the difference between life and death. I experienced this epiphany in my recent effort to save my own mother from the downward trajectory her life was taking.

In spring of 2003, my mother was a sprightly, active, engaged 82-year-old senior, living independently in a Florida retirement community. In fact, she had just purchased a brand new, Trojan gold Hyundai Elantra and had put about 400 miles on it doing her IADLS when she suddenly became ill with a severe infection. First diagnosed with diverticulitis and then appendicitis, she was in and out of emergency rooms and hospital beds from June through August, during which she had at least three surgeries. As both my brother and I lived in different states, we rotated visiting her as much as we could, but when my mother returned to her home, she was primarily in the care of 24-hour aides. By September, she was so frail and deconditioned that she could no longer do any of her ADLs independently, was sleeping approximately 22 hours a day, and was resisting eating. When I arrived to see my mother, the aide said that she had witnessed this scene many times and that basically I should accept the inevitable, with the consolation that my mother had lived a full and rich life.

Obviously, I found myself overwhelmed with tears and emotion following her counsel. But then a voice within me said, “No, Florence – you can use your occupational therapy knowledge base and redesign her life so that your mother will reclaim her spirit and move forward.” The redesign would mean first thinking deeply about what drives my mother. Travel and change were my answer. While for many people, not moving and “aging in place” would seem optimal, I could see my mother was not thriving in her existing situation and reasoned, given her particular character, that “moving” might give her a boost. So I next used my occupational therapy knowledge base to select what I judged to be the optimal supportive living situation, given her level of functioning. I carefully assessed the way in which potential hazards could be avoided by present or needed home modifications. I analyzed the distances and other challenges that would be inherent in floor plans when, and if, my mother began to tackle ADLs. I made a judgment to “rent” a more expensive apartment in the “center” of the social happenings at a new community that offered supported living since I knew that my mother, having been very social her whole life, would become motivated to build her capacities if there was a potential social world that she could see “out there” for her future. In fact, from my work in the Well Elderly Study, I knew that loneliness is very detrimental to the health of elders. In the apartment in which my mother had been living, the challenges inherent to reconnecting with her social world were monumental, but, here in her new apartment, the social world was only 100 steps away.

The new facility had communal dining, and once again I employed my occupational therapy knowledge to select the optimal table assignment. It turned out that at the facility, residents were assigned to tables based on their functional level. When my mother entered the facility, she was much frailer than is typical at the facility and, for this reason, was admitted only with 24-hour aide care. However, I convinced the administrator to allow my mother to sit with the most competent residents, because I knew my mother would muster all her strength to attain their level of wellness if she wanted to remain at the table. I knew I had done the right thing when one of the ladies at the table said to my mother, “Bea, you need to speak up when you’re with us,” and another invited her to go to a movie the next day. My mother, who two days before moving had been spending 21 hours a day in bed, was now pushing herself and walking the equivalent of three blocks a day with her walker so that she could dine with engaging new friends at lunch.

Several months have now passed, and my mother is so much better. Although she has now moved to be near my brother in New York, it turned out that prior to moving, she was still dining at the communal table but had now been getting there with a cane instead of a walker. She became independent in her ADLs, and, when I last visited in Florida, she walked about 10 blocks (in a mall) and had started driving the car again.

I believe “lifestyle redesign” by an occupational therapist brought about this incredible reversal of what seemed like destiny. Our services are desperately needed to help countless Americans who are facing everyday decisions of this kind. And at USC, we are preparing practitioners who can think about the complexity of human existence and who can help consumers customize the way they live to promote health, happiness and longevity.
Dr. Joseph Van Der Meulen, Vice President for Health Affairs of the Keck School of Medicine of USC and Director of the Division of Independent Health Professions (IHP), has announced he will step down from those posts, held since 1977 and 1991, respectively. During Dr. Van Der Meulen’s years leading IHP, the Biokinesiology and Physical Therapy program and our own Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy both achieved #1 national rankings.

“It has been an honor to work for a person who has the integrity of Dr. Van Der Meulen, and a genuine pleasure to work for someone of his caliber,” commented Dr. Florence Clark. “His style of leadership has been key to the success of our department. Without his support, there is no question that we would not be where we are today. As we move forward, I will take with me his spirit as well as all the wisdom he has imparted to me.”

A specialist in neurological movement disorders who graduated Boston College and Boston University School of Medicine, Dr. Van Der Meulen trained at Bellevue Hospital in New York, the Harvard Neurological Unit of Boston City Hospital and the Karolinska Nobel Institute for Neurophysiology in Stockholm. He joined USC after posts in neurology at Harvard University and as an Associate Professor at Case Western Reserve University.

Among Dr. Van Der Meulen’s many honors, he twice served as dean of the USC School of Medicine; was a board member of several USC-affiliated hospitals (including a stint as Chair of the USC University Hospital Board of Governors); chaired the Board of the Association of Academic Health Centers; had an annual symposium in clinical neuroscience, a neurology library and conference room in USC’s new Healthcare Consultation Center II and a funded Chair in Parkinson’s Disease Research all named for him; and received the Barlow Respiratory Hospital Award in 2004. In February, he joined Dr. Clark in making the welcome and introductions at the 2005 Occupational Science Symposium (see related story, page 14).

After a lifetime of so many noteworthy accomplishments, some people might choose to retire. Not so Dr. Van Der Meulen, who plans to make rounds, teach residents at LAC+USC, assist Helena Chui (Chair of Neurology at Keck) develop a program in neural recovery and repair, and return to full-time teaching in neurology in July 2006, after a year’s sabbatical.

Awards and Recognition

Congratulations to the following faculty on their outstanding achievements!

Mike Carlson, Ph.D., will receive the AOTA Certificate of Appreciation at the 2005 Annual Conference and Exposition in Long Beach, CA, in recognition of his contributions to the advancement of occupational science and occupational therapy.

Gelya Frank, Ph.D., received the 2004 OTAC Award of Appreciation from the Occupational Therapy Association of California. Among achievements cited was her work developing and implementing her model of Direct Cultural Intervention.

Jeanne Jackson, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA, was the honorary Ruth Zemke Lecturer at the 2004 research conference of The Society for the Study of Occupation: USA (see related story, page 8).

Diane Kellegrew, Ph.D., OTR/L, was the guest editor of the Zero to Three Bulletin for a special issue on leadership. She also was an invited speaker at Because We Care: An Early Intervention Mental Health Services Conference, hosted by the Los Angeles Child Guidance Clinic.

Diane Parham, Ph.D., OTR/L, FAOTA, was a Visiting Scholar at the University of New Mexico Occupational Therapy Graduate Program in February.

Ruth Zemke, Ph.D., OTR, FAOTA, was the Wilma West lecturer at the 17th Annual Occupational Science Symposium in February (see related story). Her speech was titled “Origins to Outcomes: Occupation in Daily Life.” Additionally, she gave the Tsuyoshi Sato Memorial Lecture at the 2004 Japan Occupational Science Seminar; was voted Chair-elect of the SSO:USA at that organization’s 2004 annual meeting (see related story, page 8); gave invited presentations at the Sensory Integration R2K Conference, on the Well Elderly Study in Hiroshima, Japan, and on Occupation and Mental Health at Kohnan Hospital near Okayama, Japan; was named Mentor for the Class of 2006, the first Master’s entry-level class at the University of Texas Medical Branch-Galveston; and still found time to enjoy line dancing and Tai Chi classes.
Once again, our program has been ranked the #1 graduate program in the nation in *U.S. News and World Report*. But our faculty knows we cannot rest on our laurels. The #1 graduate program must have the best possible curriculum to keep occupational therapy a vital health profession for the 21st century. This year we are proud to announce our faculty will be launching a massive curriculum revision of all our academic programs. The result, we hope, will be a model that will be embraced not only nationally but also internationally.

We believe that the curriculum revision must be aligned with the vision put forth in “USC’s Plan for Increasing Academic Excellence: Building Strategic Capabilities for the University of the 21st Century.” In this document, three key goals are emphasized: (1) meeting societal needs; (2) expanding global presence; and (3) promoting learner-centered education. We are fortunate that these priority areas are ones in which the Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy has always been strong. But, through the curriculum revision process, we hope to do even better.

When we first launched the curriculum revision effort this year, we conducted meetings with selected expert practitioners and our Board of Councilors in order to hear their input on how we could create a flagship curriculum. By synthesizing their ideas with those contained in the document just cited, we have come up with the following road map for the curriculum revision process:

1. For our Department to best meet societal needs, our graduates will need to be fully informed of the key public health concerns of the 21st century and what occupational therapy’s role in each should be. They must also be fully equipped with the skills to be evidence-based practitioners who will search not only the occupational therapy literature, but also other data sources to justify their practice. They must also be prepared with the knowledge and skills to understand, locate, and secure multiple reimbursement opportunities. Finally, they must exude confidence as they enter various practice arenas to meet societal needs.

2. For our Department to continue and expand its global impact, we must continue to infuse the curriculum with a global occupational science perspective. We must also build affiliations and exchange programs with similar programs throughout the world, and create internship opportunities for our students abroad, especially in humanitarian ventures.

3. For our Department to enhance student-centeredness, we must explore new ways of presenting content. It is expected that lecture formats will decrease as students are required to learn in more interactive ways with greater dependence on technology. Such an approach will result in graduates who are able to stay abreast of the changing science that supports practice because they have expertise in knowledge gathering and evaluation.

It goes without saying that our faculty is extremely excited about the challenge. We hope you, our alums, are as well, and we welcome your input.

**Pressure Sore Study (Continued from page 1)**

Due to the complexity of the relationship between pressure sore development and choices about activity and lifestyle, the team recognized that reporting on the findings of the study would require atypical forms. A preliminary paper, “The Role of Daily Activities in Pressure Ulcer Development,” was published in *Advances in Skin and Wound Care* in 2001. The investigators are currently refining a number of other products based on the study, including scholarly papers to be submitted to a variety of peer-reviewed publications including *The American Journal of Occupational Therapy*; a manual intended for medical practitioners outside the field of OT, containing biographies of the 20 participants (with names and identifying details disguised) and interactive and/or analytical tools to aid in using the material in clinical settings; a website intended for health care consumers, with articles about almost 50 subjects found to be important factors in pressure sore prevention, ranging from stress management to involvement with gangs; and a version of the website adapted for people with reading disabilities. To emphasize the “personal” dimension reflected in these products, the team called on the talents of USC OS/OT student Rudy Marticorena to create illustrations based on the characteristics of the participants, but not portraying their actual appearances (in order to maintain their confidentiality).

Also being developed is “Daily Living Context and Pressure Sores in Consumers with Spinal Cord Injury: A Proposed Lifestyle Redesign Approach.” This proposal will test a lifestyle redesign intervention based on the current study’s results, and will be submitted to appropriate funding agencies soon.
Well Elderly Study Brings Lifestyle Redesign to Seniors

The New USC Well Elderly Study, funded by the National Institute on Aging and entitled “Health Mediating Effects of the Well Elderly Program,” is well under way. Drs. Florence Clark and Jeanne Jackson lead a multidisciplinary research team including Dr. Stan Azen, Co-Director of the USC Division of Biostatistics; Dr. Chih-Ping Chou, USC Department of Preventive Medicine; Dr. Maryalice Jordan-Marsh, USC Department of Social Work; Dr. Bob Knight, USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology; Drs. Barbara Cherry and Mike Carlson, both of USC OS/OT; and Dr. Doug Granger, Pennsylvania State University Department of Biobehavioral Health.

Investigators hope to replicate the results of the first Well Elderly Study and pinpoint the underlying mechanisms that contributed to its success. The new study is being conducted in two cohorts. Each cohort of 220 participants is divided into two treatment groups, both of which receive the Lifestyle Redesign intervention. Each subject participates in the treatment group for 6 months, and is followed for testing for 18 months after the intervention is completed. The assessments measure occupational patterns, coping styles, perceived control, social support, and stress-related biomarkers. Baseline testing of approximately 200 participants in Cohort I has been completed.

Seniors participating in the study receive the Lifestyle Redesign intervention at locations that are convenient to their everyday lives. There are nine research sites as far away as Woodland Hills and Hawthorne, including low-income senior apartment complexes, senior centers, and a three-level continuous care facility. The project team performed needs assessments at these treatment sites; although some of the issues that emerged were anticipated from the first Well Elderly Study, a variety of new concerns came out of these tests, which were addressed in customizing the intervention.

Four licensed occupational therapists joined the project in January to conduct the Lifestyle Redesign intervention. The therapists are Gitu Bhavnani, Karen McNulty, Aishah Muhammad, and Joan Vartanian. The treatment groups of 6 to 10 participants started in mid-February, meeting once each week, and going on community outings once every 4 to 6 weeks. On the outings, participants have explored the public transportation in their communities, and have visited such attractions as the Civil Rights Museum, the Hollywood Trolley Tour, and the Aquarium of the Pacific.

Participants seem to appreciate the special perspective of occupational therapy. Group leader Ms. Bhavnani reported that one woman has already made significant shifts in her routines. After filling out a calendar of her weekly activities, she announced, “I don’t do anything!” Following this insight, she began volunteering for various group tasks.

Deborah Mandel, Director of Operations, and Jeannine Blanchard, Project Coordinator, are setting up nine to ten new research sites for Cohort II. They will recruit 220 participants for the second Cohort, and will begin baseline testing in December 2005.

OS/OT Student: Why I “Swim with Mike”

By Anna Nguyen

Wandering the campus one brisk April morning as a USC freshman 4 years ago, I came across “Swim with Mike.” As a competitive swimmer in high school, I was intrigued by this fusion of swimming and fundraising. After I discovered their mission to “provide financial resources for advanced education that paves the way for physically challenged athletes to overcome their tragedies and realize their full potential,” I utilized my aquatic abilities and joined the cause, raising $100 the next year.

Every year since, I have challenged myself to raise more money for this worthy organization and to increase awareness of philanthropic events at USC which ally themselves so closely to OT beliefs. This year I surpassed my donation goal, raising $517 from 40 generous sponsors for the Physically Challenged Athletes Scholarship Fund. I swam 100 lengths of the pool in just over 1½ hours on behalf of Centennial Apartments/OT House.

Each year around mid-April, I am reminded of our society’s potential for humanity and kindness with the tremendous outpour of enthusiasm and support. Keep an eye out for next year’s “Swim with Mike!”
For USC OT Students, Ghana is Fieldwork Destination

This year was a breakout year for international OT fieldwork at USC! Ten first year Master’s students, led by Bonnie Nakasuji, MA, OTR/L, a seasoned pediatric practitioner and current OTD student (see related story), embarked upon the first-ever international fieldwork experience for USC’s OS/OT program. The group traveled to Ghana, West Africa, to provide services at the Mephibosheth Training Center, a boarding school for children with disabilities that just opened. The OT students attended educational meetings for parents of the students, and provided supervised individual and group treatment for children ages 2 to 12 years.

The group brought supplies and toys donated by their OT classmates with them to Ghana. The fieldwork students provided both direct treatment and consultation services by creating home programs for the parents and school staff and teaching them how to carry out their recommendations.

“The language barrier and the cultural differences were all very real, but through play, we found this universal language, and were able to help these kids,” observed Jennifer Stokely, one of the fieldwork students. “By the end of the week, they were singing songs and playing games with us and, most importantly, improving their abilities.”

In her dual role as fieldwork educator and OTD student, Ms. Nakasuji noted that “it was wonderful to see the impact that the interns made through the hands-on work that they were able to do. Children with disabilities and their families are often scorned and socially isolated in Ghana because of the perception that the disability is a curse. Having the students work and play with the children, accept them despite their disability, and sincerely care about how to meet the unique needs of each child and family, demonstrated what occupational therapy is all about – that which promotes a sense of personal value and self worth.”

The fieldwork experience was made possible by collaborative efforts of Mary Jane Ponten, founder of Mephibosheth Training Center, Andrea Linder, PT and Joe Jehu Appiah, Headmaster of the Training Center, in conjunction with the USC OT Fieldwork Team and several USC departments and outside agencies.

OTD Program Update

The OTD Program continues to be as diverse as the 24 students enrolled this academic year. Recent graduate Mary Kay Wolfe, OTD, OTR/L, and current OTD candidate Bonnie Nakasuji, MA, OTR/L, represent that variety as they develop projects that range from our own campus all the way to Africa.

Dr. Wolfe made a career transition from the entertainment industry, earning her Master’s at USC OS/OT in 2002. Her work on the Pressure Sore Study grant (see related story, page 1) led to an invitation from Drs. Florence Clark and Jeanne Jackson to continue on the grant as her OTD residency, and to develop a proposal for a lifestyle redesign intervention based on the findings of the study as her OTD project. “My OTD really turned out to be more than just one project; it was a new way of thinking about the profession,” observed Dr. Wolfe.

While fulfilling her residency working on the Pressure Sore Study, Dr. Wolfe also held a part-time position as an OT in the pain management clinic of USC’s OT Faculty Practice. She continues in that affiliation, and, with support from USC OS/OT clinical instructor Deborah Pitts, has expanded her clinical skills to encompass a specialty in offering occupational therapy to undergraduate and graduate college students who are experiencing psychosocial, cognitive and/or mental illness. “It’s so rewarding to work with this group because they really appreciate the individualized approach of occupational therapy, right in their own environment,” Dr. Wolfe noted.

Ms. Nakasuji began her career as a COTA before earning her B.A. in OT from USC in 1973. After 9 years at California Children’s Services, Ms. Nakasuji began long-time associations as an OT with Santa Monica College and with Therapy West that continue today. After teaching on an American team providing 2-day workshops for future caretakers of people with disabilities in the nation of Ghana, West Africa, she formed an interest in developing an OT practice there (see related story, above). She decided to enter the USC OTD Program “when I realized that occupational science literature could help conceptually

(Continued on page 11)
Fieldwork Corner

The USC OT Fieldwork Coordination team of Jaynee Taguchi-Meyer, Jeremy Seip and Robin Turner busily coordinated over 200 Level I fieldwork and 200 Level II fieldwork placements during the 2004-2005 academic year. The department is especially grateful to the wonderfully supportive and loyal clinical community, including countless hospitals, clinics, and OT practitioners who work in them, for their partnership in providing quality practice experiences for our students!

This year, the fieldwork team is collaborating with Diane Kellegrew and the School-Based Training Grant, expanding Level II school-based fieldwork opportunities. Part-time Level II fieldwork continues to grow, with new sites catching on to the benefits of having second Level II fieldwork students 2 days per week for 8 months during the fall and spring semesters. Students do their second Level II fieldwork during the second academic year of the entry-level master’s program, and enjoy applying knowledge and skills acquired in their advanced clinical pathway courses.

Fieldwork development expanded with international Level I fieldwork (see related story, page 6), wellness and ergonomic fieldwork experiences, and Directed Cultural Intervention at the Tule River Indian Reservation in Central California last summer. If you are interested in collaborating with us to provide high-quality fieldwork experiences for our students, contact Jaynee Taguchi-Meyer (323) 442-2857 or taguchi@usc.edu and get started!

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United Student Commuters

The International Student Club (ISC), also known as the Student Occupational Therapy Committee, OTSC also has a philanthropic objective. This spring, over $400 was raised to help two organizations – the Mephibosheth Training Center construction project, and the Botswana Network of People Living With HIV/AIDS (BONEPWA), a nongovernmental advocacy and service organization. The groups were selected due to direct ties to members of the OT student community (see related stories, page 6), and because their purpose and mission matched our profession’s goals to promote occupational health and justice.

Alumni interested in attending future events or speaking on a panel may contact Beth Crall at crall@usc.edu.

Student Council (GSC) merged to form the OTSC in order to represent all students in the department by one student organization. These groups joined forces under the structure and constitution of the GSC, whose 11 members represent each of the department’s five degree programs.

In addition to event planning and representing OS and OT students in the Graduate and Professional Student Senate and the Student Health Center Committee, OTSC also has a philanthropic objective. This spring, over $400 was raised to help two

Dr. Jeanne Jackson peers through kaleidoscope commemorating her as the 2004 Ruth Zemke Lecturer

From L to R: Stacy Fruwirth, Donald Fogelberg, Jeanne Jackson, Ruth Zemke, Aaron Eakman and Eric Asaba participated in the 3rd Annual SSO:USA Conference. Not pictured, but also presenting, were Christy Billock, Jill Goodman, Esther Huecker and Donald Leary. Congratulations to them all! Dr. Zemke’s ongoing association with SSO:USA was reinforced at the conference, as she was chosen Chair-Elect of the organization for the coming year. Also honored was Dr. Florence Clark, who was named the 2005 Ruth Zemke Lecturer; her presentation, “One Person’s Thoughts on Mapping Out the Future for Occupational Science,” will take place at SSO:USA’s 4th Annual Research Conference at the Bolger Center in Potomac, Maryland, October 27th-29th, 2005. (For more information on the conference, call for papers, or on SSO:USA, visit their new website at www.sso-usa.org.)
The USC Department of Occupational Science and Occupational Therapy gratefully acknowledges alumni and friends for their financial support and the encouragement their support represents. This Honor Roll of Donors includes gifts contributed during the past year.

Every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the Honor Roll. Errors and omissions may be reported to Jackie Mardirossian at jmardiro@usc.edu or (323) 442-2811. Again, we thank you for your support!

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Mary Kay Gallagher
Frances Kelley
In Memory of Marian Lilly
Colette Urashima Nagami
James and Patricia Plumtree

$500 - $999
Lih-Syh Huang

$200 - $499
Dr. Florence Clark
Dr. Linda Florey
Carolyn Quan Gee
Elena Haub
A. Joy Huss
Dr. and Mrs. Robert Jacobs
Dr. Arthur E. Lewis
Zoe Mailloux
Kathleen David Parker
Lyla M. Spelbring
Louise A. Sumpter
Charles F. Vorbach

$100 - $199
Jennifer L. Brown
Hannah M. Cline
Dagney M. Cooke
Mara W. Coyne
Robert Dickenson
Judith Freeman
Carolyn Crouch Gayer
Kathleen Ann Gross
Kathy Hoffmann Grotting

$50 - $99
Judith Dyer Algar
Sandra Luz Avina
Michele Berro
Ellen Crampton Bryant
Burbank Kiwanitats
Marylin Cabay
Kathryn Ceppi

(Continued on page 14)
WHETHER YOU’RE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR USC EXPERIENCE, WANT TO LEAVE A LEGACY, SUPPORT A SCHOOL OR SPECIFIC PROGRAM, OR ALL OF THE ABOVE, MAKING A GIFT TO USC IS ONE OF THE MOST WORTHWHILE AND GENEROUS THINGS YOU CAN DO. IT CAN ALSO BE ONE OF THE SMARTEST. OUR EXPERIENCED STAFF HELP YOU

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OR 323-442-2811.
Alumni News

Elizabeth Johnson Schrack, BS ’44, recently celebrated her 80th birthday and reports that she is one of the “Well Elderly.” She lives near San Diego.

Ethel Romano, MS ’47, reports that her son Frank Romano earned a doctorate of law from the Sorbonne in Paris, and has written two books on the subject of French law.

Patricia Buehler, BS ’49, recently donated her craft sample book, woven material and original box-and-block test, all developed in the late 1940s and the ‘50s, to USC OS/OT’s archives at the Center for Occupation and Lifestyle Redesign.

Caroline Boles, BS ’76, earned Advanced Practice Certifications in dysphagia, modalities and hand therapy from the California Board of OT (CBOT) in 2004.

Farrell Sheffield, BS ’76, helped develop “Good to Go!,” a driver retraining program, and an occupational therapy-based visual rehabilitation program for Tri-City Medical Center in Oceanside, CA.

Janis McAfee, ’80, has been working in mental health for the Solutions program for seniors in Hollister, CA for over 10 years.

Linda J. Rifkin, BS ’81, has worked in acute care, skilled nursing facilities and as a burn therapist in the San Francisco Bay Area, Cambridge, England, and Tucson, AZ; and currently works as a therapist in a skilled nursing facility in Eugene, OR. She and husband Jonathan Seidel have two daughters, Maya, 14, and Elah, 10.

Shawn Phipps, BS ’97, is running for Vice President of the Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC). Support your fellow Trojan!

USC Alum Honored With Lifetime Achievement Award

Meg Mitani Moss, BS ’62, was recently presented the Amistad Award, a lifetime achievement honor bestowed by Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center in recognition of her 30-year career as an occupational therapist and leader. She was cited for “her commitment to excellence in advancing the state of the art in OT, her selfless efforts to create joy throughout the hospital with the Flower Cart [a volunteer program that makes and sells flower arrangements, with proceeds used to furnish supplies and equipment for patients], and her embodiment of the Spirit of Rancho.” Congratulations, Meg!

OTD Program (Continued from page 6)

inform the OT practice I wanted to develop in Ghana,” Ms. Nakasuji explained.

To create a program that adequately addresses the needs of Ghanaian people with disabilities and their caretakers, and that is appropriate to the social, educational, economic and political structures in Ghana, Ms. Nakasuji identified two components of her project: (1) continual education and understanding of the Ghanaian culture, and (2) development and implementation of a culturally sensitive, meaningful educational curriculum and advocacy program for people with disabilities that will provide them with the skills to obtain a healthy quality of life.

“As an OT for more than 30 years, the OTD process has challenged me to think ‘outside the box,’” Ms. Nakasuji commented. “The current expansion of globalization in the OT profession will require occupational science to help pave the way toward personal and professional enlightenment, in order to develop effective OT strategies and practices that support people with disabilities around the world.”
A number of recent documentaries, films and television shows have focused on subjects or characters that have relevance to occupational therapy and occupational science, including the multiple Academy Award-winning but highly controversial Million Dollar Baby. Additionally, many books and articles have recently been published regarding health, occupation and the type of informed, minute-to-minute decision-making that occupational therapists would easily recognize as lifestyle redesign. Whether these examples are “positive” or “negative,” they might all serve as a springboard for in-depth discussion of occupation and how an OT uses meaningful activities and healthy lifestyle choices to promote physical improvements and a greater sense of well-being.

This issue of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy examines some of these media products in greater detail. Included is a list of items to “Watch the Media” for – consumer-oriented films, books and articles that might not only be of interest to occupational therapy practitioners and instructors, but which might also be discussed with clients, their families, students and others who wish to learn more about occupation and health.

Life’s Worth More Than a Million

Warning: Reading this will spoil the “surprise” ending of the film Million Dollar Baby.

As a person with a disability, I cannot ignore the message inherent in the Oscar winner for best picture, Million Dollar Baby. Society needs to hear another voice.

The main theme depicted in the movie for me, and many disabled people like me, is that you are better off dead than living with a disability. How do we come to that conclusion? Let’s take a look.

The film chronicles the rise to fame of a woman boxer Maggie (Hillary Swank), and her coach, Frankie (Clint Eastwood), who reluctantly takes her to a career pinnacle, only to witness his protegé becoming a quadriplegic. Frankie takes her to a rehabilitation facility where she develops pressure sores and eventually requires an amputation. She asks Frankie to euthanize her, which he does by turning off her oxygen and giving her an IV dose of adrenaline.

Steven Drake, research analyst for Not Dead Yet, an organization that opposes assisted suicide and euthanasia, says “This is, in reality, a recipe for an agonizing death, combining suffocation with your heart feeling like it will explode.”

I went to the movie with my husband and was shocked by the depiction of rehabilitation and the resultant choice of euthanasia. Were we to assume that Maggie had already participated in occupational therapy, physical therapy, and psychological counseling? And that, despite this, she made her decision?

I don’t think that was Eastwood’s intention. He cut to the chase of his underlying message: that life is not worth living with a spinal cord injury.

To the contrary, many people with a spinal cord injury participate in society despite widespread discrimination.

Eastwood has a history of fighting the Americans With Disabilities Act after being sued as owner of a hotel resort found not in compliance with accessibility standards. In a recent press release issued by the National Spinal Cord Injury Association, CEO Marcie Roth said she was “…saddened but not surprised that he uses the power of fame and film to perpetuate his view that the lives of people with disabilities are not worth living.” The press release questioned whether this movie was Eastwood’s revenge.

I have a type of spinal cord injury called spina bifida. I am concerned with euthanasia, not just at the end of life, but at the beginning as well in utero. With the advent of better and earlier detection measures, a frightening 90 percent of parents in Western countries opt for abortion or termination of pregnancy when the child has spina bifida, according to the International Federation for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus.

Spina bifida, like spinal cord injuries, is perceived as a tragedy. My life is far from the catastrophe depicted in Million Dollar Baby.

As we left the movie theater, my husband wondered aloud, “What would Christopher Reeve have thought?”

(This editorial, written by Associate Professor Ann Neville-Jan of USC OS/OT, was originally published in the Pasadena Star-News.)
Spain’s *The Sea Inside*, which won an Oscar as Best Foreign Language Film, is the true story of Ramón Sampedro (Javier Bardem), who sought the right to assisted suicide after 28 years living with tetraplegia. A vibrant man who toured the world as a ship’s mechanic, Ramón acquired a spinal cord injury in a diving accident at age 26. Although he resourcefully uses a mouthstick and invents adaptive devices, Ramón regrets that “total dependency comes at the expense of intimacy,” as he relies on his family for all physical needs. His sense of helplessness is emphasized when his lawyer, Julia (Belén Rueda), collapses, and Ramón can’t turn in bed to see what happened. Against his family’s wishes, Ramón resolves to “die with dignity.” The film does not present life with disability as unbearable. Ramón constantly maintains that his decision is purely personal. Several characters offer Ramón compelling suggestions of occupations and adaptations that might enrich his life. When Julia falls in love with Ramón and suggests a physical relationship, he opts for romantic fantasies.

A balanced film that can stimulate discussion, *The Sea Inside* (Spanish with English subtitles) will be released on DVD in May.

**Watch the Media**

**Aging**

*The Long Goodbye* – book by Patti Davis (Knopf, $20): A daughter’s account of coping with the advance of Alzheimer’s disease in her father, the late former President Ronald Reagan.

**Healthy Lifestyle**

*Diabesity: The Obesity-Diabetes Epidemic That Threatens America – And What We Must Do to Stop It* – book by Francine R. Kaufman, M.D. (Bantam, $27): Professor of Pediatrics at the USC Keck School of Medicine examines the growing problem of overweight and type 2 diabetes among adults, adolescents and children, and offers suggestions for change from the personal to the public policy level.

*Eat, Drink, and Be Healthy: The Harvard Medical School Guide to Healthy Eating* — book by Walter C. Willett et al. (Free Press, $14): The Chair of Harvard University’s Department of Nutrition offers a sensible new food pyramid and practical suggestions for healthy lifestyle choices.

*French Women Don’t Get Fat* – book by Mireille Guiliano (Knopf, $22): How incorporating the occupations of shopping, cooking and dining can lead to greater enjoyment of food, portion control and weight maintenance.

*Super Size Me* – documentary on DVD by Morgan Spurlock (Hart Sharp Video, $24.99): Filmmaker explores fast food America at first humorously, but then encounters unexpected health consequences on the way to 30 days of eating “super-sized” meals.

*Survey Criticizes South Los Angeles Restaurants*” (http://uscnews.usc.edu/11142) – online report: Researchers at UCLA and USC found in a study that restaurants in wealthier or predominantly white neighborhoods offer more healthy food choices than those in less affluent and/or minority neighborhoods.

**Occupation/Occupational Justice**

*Independent Lens* – nonfiction series on PBS: Showcase for documentaries, many of which touch upon topics of interest to OTs and occupational scientists, such as *Keeping Time* (the music, photography and storytelling of legendary jazz bassist Milt Hinton), *On a Roll* (story of Greg Smith, a motivational speaker, father of three and former radio talk show host who has had muscular dystrophy since age 3), *Red Hook Justice* (an experimental program in Brooklyn where offenders are sentenced to job training, drug counseling and community service) and *Sunset Story* (the experiences of senior citizens’ home residents).

*Murderball* – documentary (to be released theatrically on July 8th in Los Angeles and New York, nationwide starting July 15th): Lively story of U.S. and Canadian Paralympics rugby teams, whose rivalry drives them to an athletic showdown. The no-holds-barred, rough play of these tattoo-covered men with quadriplegia gives their sport the nickname, “murderball.”

**Rehab/Coping with Challenges**

*FDR: A Presidency Revealed* – documentary on The History Channel: Examination of the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s efforts to cope with – and conceal – the effects of polio contracted at age 39.

*One Soldier’s Story* – autobiography by Bob Dole (HarperCollins, $25.95): Recount of wartime injury and long process of recovery and rehabilitation experienced by the former U.S. Senator. Sen. Dole’s first wife was an occupational therapist working at the rehab facility where he was a patient (but she was not his therapist).

*Warm Springs* – made-for-cable movie on HBO: Story of 4 years politician Franklin Roosevelt spent in a rehab community in Georgia to learn to adapt to paralysis resulting from polio, prior to returning to public life and going on to win the presidency.
OS Symposium Explores the Mind and Occupation

How are feelings produced and how do they affect decision-making, social behavior, and creativity? How does psychological stress impact health and everyday activities? What happens to the brain as we age? Do agents such as cannabis enhance or diminish one’s attitude to engage in activities? These were some of the questions discussed at the 17th Annual Occupational Science Symposium, “The Brain, Emotions and Occupation,” on February 18th.

The symposium was part of USC’s 125th Anniversary celebration, highlighting the need to create new academic linkages when studying the complex issues of stress, health, and quality of life in relation to occupation. With this interdisciplinary spirit in mind, the symposium was co-sponsored by USC OS/OT, the USC College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, and the Leonard Davis School of Gerontology. Over 200 people from various disciplines and clinical settings attended the event, our largest symposium to date.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Antonio Damasio, who will be joining the USC faculty in the College of Letters, Arts and Science in the Fall of 2005. An internationally recognized researcher, author and lecturer in neuroscience, Dr. Damasio provided an intriguing presentation regarding the cause of emotions, the relationship to feelings, and the impact on everyday activity.

Dr. Robert Sapolsky, Professor of Biology and Neurology at Stanford University, drew on findings from psychiatry, animal behavioral science, neurobiology, and evolutionary biology to explore the impact of stress on health and everyday activity. He emphasized how “doing” can be both stress-reducing and stress-producing.

Joining Dr. Damasio and Dr. Sapolsky were USC scholars Dr. Mitchell Earleywine, who discussed his research related to cannabis and quality of life, and Dr. Caleb Finch, who presented on the evolution of human life history, emphasizing changes in the brain with aging.

The symposium included the annual Wilma West Lecture, awarded to an OT who has contributed in significant ways to our understanding of occupation. This year’s honor was given to Dr. Ruth Zemke, a pioneer in occupational science and a beloved mentor at USC. Her presentation, entitled “From Origins to Outcomes: Occupation in our Daily Life,” encouraged occupational scientists and occupational therapists to consider our knowledge and valuing of the effects of occupation on human health and well-being within and beyond occupational therapy practice.

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OTAC Conference — October 28th-30th

The Occupational Therapy Association of California (OTAC) is holding its 29th Annual Conference in Santa Clara, California, from Friday, October 28 through Sunday, October 30, 2005. The conference will be held at The Westin Santa Clara, located in the heart of Silicon Valley, adjacent to the Santa Clara Convention Center and across from Paramount’s Great America Theme Park. Make a point to stop by USC OS/OT’s booth in the exhibitors’ area at the conference!

For more information, contact OTAC via mail at 1401 El Camino Ave., #230, Sacramento, CA 95815; phone at 916-567-7000; fax at 916-567-7000; e-mail at info@otaconline.org; or visit OTAC’s website at www.otaconline.org.

USC Homecoming — October 29th

For this year’s Homecoming, our national champion USC Trojan football team will take on the Cougars of Washington State at the L.A. Coliseum on Saturday, October 29, 2005. If you are interested in attending the game and would like group discount tickets, please contact Jackie Mardirossian at 323-442-2811 or e-mail jmardiro@usc.edu, no later than July 29.

Because of the conflict with the 29th Annual OTAC Conference, it is unlikely that USC OS/OT will have a tent to participate in the pre-game activities on campus. Please check our website at www.usc.edu/ot for any updates regarding pre-game activities.

Let’s Keep in Touch!

We’d like to hear from you and share your news in an upcoming issue of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy. Please mail this completed form to: USC Dept. of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy, Attn: Jackie Mardirossian, 1540 Alcazar St., CHP-133, Los Angeles, CA 90089-9003; fax to 323-442-1540; or e-mail to jmardiro@usc.edu.

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Here’s my news (attach additional sheet if necessary): ______________________

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I’d like to read about the following in an upcoming newsletter: _______________

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“Body World” Study Team Creates Campus Buzz

Ten diverse undergraduate students minoring in occupational science participated with Dr. Gelya Frank, cultural anthropologist and professor in the USC OS/OT department, as an official study team for the controversial yet extremely popular exhibit “Body Worlds,” which has drawn half a million visitors in its American debut at the California Science Center in Exposition Park. “Body Worlds” displays real human bodies that have been “plastinated,” which allows bodies to be displayed in free-standing poses in order to teach viewers about human anatomy. As part of OT 375, “The Narrative Structure of Social Action,” Dr. Frank and her students were interested in researching responses to the exhibit and its meaning as a cultural phenomenon.

Human occupation plays a key role in the success of the exhibit. The plastinated bodies of “Body Worlds” are posed as engaged in everyday occupations, such as horseback riding, skiing, dancing, swimming, playing chess, ice skating, yoga and fencing. Earlier versions of the exhibits that were in conventional positions typical of medical displays failed to attract audiences; however, the dynamic sports poses appear to strike an empathic or mirroring response in visitors, who, according to surveys conducted around the world, respond with an increased awareness and motivation to adopt healthy lifestyles.

USC’s student newspaper, the Daily Trojan, gave front-page coverage to the study team in April. One OT 375 student, sociology major Shannon Santos, said in the article, “It was the most hands-on work I’ve ever done…. It’s been a really remarkable experience; I’ll remember it more vividly than any other class I’ve taken at USC.”