

# inTENTions



## OUR VISION:

A community of elders and neighbors supporting one another.

## OUR MISSION:

To connect members to resources needed to maintain comfortable, dignified, vibrant lives in their homes and community by providing appropriate services, activities, and programs that will further this purpose.

## OUR VOLUNTEERS:

Having completed our fourth year of publishing *inTENTions*, we have decided it's time to focus on some of TENT's hard-working Volunteers and highlight some of their backgrounds, how they found TENT, and why they like what they

do here. These are certainly not the only Volunteers, and you can expect to learn about others in issues to come. TENT would not be the community treasure it is without our Volunteers!  
— Linda Thompson, Editor

## TECH HELP: DARREL BAUMGARDNER

Joining TENT as a Volunteer was an opportunity to help those who, like me, would like to live out their lives in their own home with just a little help from their friends. As a result, I have met and assisted Members whose life histories are amazing. Here is a snapshot of some of them who have left indelible marks on my life, in no prioritized order.

I cut William Jackson's hair for him and learned about his serving as a Marine Corps medic in the Korean War, then training to fly propeller-driven fighter/bombers during the Vietnam War. A warm and gentle man: rest in peace, William.

Lois West had me help with her laptop, the internet, and some telephone issues, during which time I met Miss Debbie (her sweetheart of an elderly cat) which I found a home for when Lois had to move to a rehabilitation facility. I miss Lois and Debbie so much.



Gisela lives in a house that she designed, and that local artist Ed Sandoval built for her with a spectacular view. Gisela loves playing marimbas and drums built by local artists. She moved from Bavaria to the USA in 1951 and has told me stories of war time Germany that are horrifying and too sad to repeat.

Sally and Robert are local artists with distinctive painting styles. Sally's walls are decorated with her paintings that are an

amazing mixture of themes and styles, all of which I could spend hours studying and admiring. Robert, originally from Kentucky, lives in Arroyo Seco. I have helped him with internet and computer questions while being impressed by his paintings that incorporate a unique use of pen and ink, which require a magnifying glass to thoroughly appreciate. I have prints of two of his incredible winter scenes on one of my walls at home.

All the Members I work with have a common trait—fierce independence, a love of Taos, and a keen appreciation of the nature that surrounds us. The hardest aspect of my working with these lovely human beings is having to accept saying goodbye when the time comes as I have had to do with Lois, Miss Debbie, and William. They, and those whose presence I continue to be blessed with, will always continue to shape my own life.

## FROM THE BOARD



I hope this publication of *inTENTions* finds you well and enjoying the change of seasons. Everything is always changing and what a blessing that is. I know many of us have read the quote that goes something like: “The

trees are about to teach us how beautiful it is to let go.” It is true that knowing when to let go of something—be it because we have outgrown it, it is not right for us, or simply because we must accept that all things change and transform in seasons—can be an incredibly potent experience for us. It is in the changing of everything, that we ourselves change.

With respect to this, I would like to announce my resignation from TENT’s Board of Directors. I have had the great privilege of

being on the Board for almost three years now and have served a year as Vice President and acting President. My decision comes not from weariness nor a need to leave, but rather I wish to direct my energies in other directions. I believe quite diligently in the principle of “rotation.” I have found that it is best for me when I practice this to keep my own interactions challenging, engaging, and informative. I also believe that this is a healthy practice for any organization or group. I have so enjoyed my time with TENT, trying to help our elders and neighbors continue to live and age with dignity. I have no doubt that the Board of Directors will find a suitable replacement and that whoever that may be will bring fresh ideas and energy to the role of leading TENT toward fulfilling its mission and vision in the highest possible way. Thank you all so much for allowing me to serve. — Jacob Martinez

## LOCAL TRANSPORT: RANDIE GONZALES

I got to know TENT through my friend, Kate Harris. We met through the Eagles Club, where both of our husbands liked to play pool, and later we chatted as we met while walking our dogs in a local park. Both Kate and I lost our husbands several years ago. Kate knew that I like to volunteer to help others, and she told me about her work with TENT. I Googled it,

learned about TENT’s services, and said “sure!” We did a training using Zoom. I moved here from Burbank, California, about 46 years ago. We had our daughter and I worked as a teacher, retiring in 2004. I continued working with an after-school program and as a substitute teacher, taking time off to help my husband (who was also a teacher) as his health

declined. He had a shop here called G & G Sports, and I had to help him run it after he became ill. During his last two years he couldn't drive, but we continued to travel because he wanted to. He felt bad that I had to take on more work, but I wanted to do anything I had to do to keep him enjoying life to whatever degree he could.

So, becoming a TENT Volunteer seemed natural to me. I like helping others. Because of Covid, I started out just watering plants for Members, but now I do local transport—mainly picking up groceries, taking Members to appointments in town, helping them get around. And I enjoy their company! One, an Irish gentleman, is fun to talk with. A woman who lives in the Taos Retirement Village has a walker and a cane; she just hangs onto me as we do her errands. They are so grateful for our services, blowing me a kiss or saying “Oh, I'm so glad to see you!” One gentleman from Arroyo Seco has a daughter who raises bees. Thanks to him, I'm well stocked in honey right now!



I'm also on the TENT Activities Committee and we are trying to educate people about what we do. We need to get the word out more. I think there are people here looking for ways to help. I've always been a person who likes to give back to the community—it's good for me. Like many people here, I don't have family close—my daughter lives in Phoenix and my sister in California. As we grow older, we need the kind of assistance that TENT provides. There's a good chance that we Volunteers will someday be Members! TENT is a two-way street.

## HOME VISITS: MARIANNE FUREDI

I got hooked on people when I was a kid. I love listening to stories people tell. And each person has a story, one more interesting than the one before. My childhood summers were at a country house (*dacha*) at the edge of what was to become the New Jersey Pine Barrens.



The people who stayed there were émigrés—rather than immigrants—who had left what was then the Russian Empire at the time of the Revolution. My family, on the other hand, were immigrants—we got out of what had become the Soviet Union at the end of World War II.

Just about everyone who stayed at this New Jersey *dacha* was “elderly,” and that is probably why I got to be so comfortable with elders. And all of them had fascinating stories to tell: The “Revolution,” life before, taking “the last ship” out of Crimea, living in Shanghai, Paris, Berlin, Columbia, and finally coming to America. The stories were sometimes tragic, sometimes salted with laughter, sometimes with tears. Families lost, friends found. There



was so much to hear, to learn—and everything so fascinating.

I was a child who could run errands, pick up items from the floor, bring what was needed. I knew who liked what, what would be pleasing, what would be upsetting. And I was well-loved for being a well-behaved, helpful, quiet little girl. What I got in return was praise and stories. I appreciated the praise, but the stories were the best reward.

When I grew up, I became a nurse, worked in chronic and long-term health facilities,

community health, home care, and hospice. I enjoyed being with older people who needed help. And there were more stories! A new novel every time I met a new client.

Now, as a TENT Volunteer, I get to experience my favorite pastimes—getting to know people and helping those whom I can. For example, Carmen's Membership in TENT was a gift to my world! I may be the TENT Volunteer going to help her, but she is the one who inevitably lifts my spirits. We talk, we walk, we go to have a "bite to eat" — enjoying each other's company.

## HOME MAINTENANCE: WALLY COX

My long journey to becoming a TENT Home Maintenance Volunteer began in a small north Texas farming town, as a boy living in a home above a gas station and grocery store next to a domino hall. Cars, motor scooters, go-carts, and other things mechanical became an unavoidable part of my upbringing, and these hands-on experiences shaped my path more than I understood at the time.

After some years of college and almost a decade in the spray-coating equipment industry, I decided to take a detour into a "temporary" job as freelance mechanic and factotum for a wealthy, eccentric older friend. What began with a handshake and casual agreement became a 31-year full-time working relationship and personal ties to him and his family. When I eventually retired from that perfect job, I moved to Taos with my wife, bringing my tools and all that mechanical and home maintenance experience with me.

When friends here organized Taos Elders and Neighbors Together, my handyman karma led me to volunteer. I've been repairing door locks and leaky faucets, changing lightbulbs and water filters, replacing smoke alarm batteries, and a miscellany of other fixes ever since. Occasionally, I'm called on to advise on a

service request that must in turn be referred to a paid professional, either because the task is beyond the scope of my charge as a volunteer or for legal or insurance liability



reasons. In some cases, the Member has asked me to be present to help explain the problem to the professional.

Many TENT Members live alone; the Covid years have compounded their physical challenges and increased their isolation. For some, the nagging little home maintenance tasks are the most bothersome and difficult to sort out, so when I'm successful in fulfilling a request, I feel a sense of relevance and the Member has one less thing to worry about. For my part, being able to solve even minor issues in someone's daily life helps us both get

through the day. I've also realized that the time I spend talking with Members in their homes and on the phone is often as important as the practical help I provide. The bonus is that this work has introduced me to exceptional new friends among TENT Volunteers and Members, including artists, actors, composers, teachers, and all manner of interesting Taos folks.

## CALL MANAGER - LANA GREEN

### A TENT LOVE STORY

TENT Volunteers often find new friends among the other Volunteers and those we serve, but Lana Green found an even greater reward when she decided to raise her hand. It began with a friend mentioning the relatively new organization, knowing that Lana's education and experience would be a good fit. When Lana attended TENT informational meetings at Valverde Commons House, she learned that TENT's technical guru was a fellow congregant at St. James Episcopal Church. During coffee hour following the next service, Lana approached the tall, quiet man to ask about volunteering. Their conversation on that Epiphany Sunday 2019 led to a coffee date in Arroyo Seco, and the rest is history. Lana Green and Jim Ludden married on July 17, 2021, and now even team up to respond to some TENT service requests together.

Before living here Lana taught environmental science, led wilderness retreats, earned a Master of Divinity degree, and worked at two religious retreat centers. She "retired" to Taos over two decades ago to be near her grandchildren, but then served as Executive Director at Habitat for Humanity here and as a care provider for elders with dementia. Now she has a regular Volunteer schedule as a call manager, answering the TENT phone line in response to calls from Members or their representatives about services needed, from non-Members seeking information on how to

join, and from others with questions about the organization. For eight hours a day, two days a week, she answers the phone, then codes and enters service requests into the computer for relay to Volunteers. Often this requires careful interviewing of the Member to ensure that the request is posted accurately. She relays non-Member inquiries to the appropriate TENT contacts. She says, "Each call is different."



Lana believes that for many Members the social contact with a call manager is as important as processing their request, so she gives each her full attention. That's one of the reasons why service requests can only be made by telephone, rather than on-line. As a call manager, she has become aware of which requests are least likely to be picked up by Volunteers—for instance, long distance transport for medical appointments in Santa Fe or Albuquerque and "socialization" visits and

calls to isolated Members. Volunteering for TENT, she says, requires commitment but is

very rewarding—as Lana and Jim know better than most.  
— *Mya Coursey*

## PHONE CALLS: SUSANN MCCARTHY

When asked if she is Irish, Susann answers “Indeed!” Susann says her father was the wit and storyteller in her family. But it doesn’t take long to catch the Irish twinkle of humor when you have a conversation with her.

TENT has call managers tending to all the calls coming into the office. Susann is a Call Volunteer answering requests for socializing from Members and their families. Since Susann doesn’t drive anymore, she has found a particular niche responding to Members needing a phone appointment.

Perhaps it was the 20 years doing home care with Mountain Home Health Care that made it a natural transition to being a TENT Volunteer. At MHH Susann discovered how much she enjoyed visiting and helping shut-in clients. She met wonderful people.



Susann loves her conversations with TENT Members. She describes them as “brilliant, fun to talk to,” some perhaps in difficult experiences but with “extraordinary disposition, always merry.” It is not without challenges if someone loses their phone or forgets an appointment. But that is part of the

fun. “And I can call Members from anywhere,” she says, “Even from Kit Carson Park!” Susann has been a Volunteer since the early days of TENT. In those beginning days, she enjoyed Volunteer trainings: one with a physical therapist and another with a guest from child and family protective services. TENT helped her for a couple of months after a back injury. Being a Call Volunteer is a way she sees as a thank you to TENT for the support. She points out that she is in the same age group as the Members she socializes with. “This is my own community,” she says. “We have a lot in common! Especially those without local family, like me. TENT is a community builder, and we need that here and in the country.” Susann recognizes the need for connection to others and if something comes along that seems to fit, she is happy to share the good news about TENT. And by the way, Susann has kissed the Blarney Stone.  
-- *Jan Haller*

## OPERATIONS COORDINATOR UPDATE



The big news: TENT has an office space! Located at the Dreamcatcher Building at 515 Gusdorf Road, we are sharing Suite I with Dr. Caryle Zorumski. Two nice rooms with access to the conference room, it will be used for



small group activities, meetings, and storage space. At the moment, I am having office hours a few days a week (subject to change, look out for my emails with the weekly schedule), and all are welcome to stop by and chat—please do! In other news, the Activities Committee has been busy! In the works are a book club to begin November 15, from 1:00 to 2:00 P.M. in the Dreamcatcher conference room; a beginner's weaving class; and a Mexican dominos group (schedule of both to be determined). Gary Shapiro is offering a Tai Chi

class on Fridays at Kit Carson Park (1:00 to 2:00 P.M.); registration is required. (Please go to the Events page on TENT's website to register for any of these events.) If you have suggestions for other activities, please contact Activities Leader Jennifer Ammann. I am always looking for more Volunteers. If you know anyone who might like to explore volunteering for us, please send them my way! And, as always, all you Volunteers who keep on keeping on, the TENT community is more than grateful for your efforts!

*-- Kate Harris*

## NEW MEXICO VILLAGES MEETING

For over a year, New Mexico elder villages like TENT have been meeting quarterly online. Initially, much of the value was to support a couple of villages who are just starting, specifically Parkland (in Albuquerque) and GIFTS (Greater Independence For Trinidad Seniors) in Colorado.

Parkland Village is about a square mile of Albuquerque and has a population of about 6,000. GIFTS has a target population of about 8,000 people. These compare to Taos, with a target population of about 6,500.

Trinidad (GIFTS) is not fully operational yet, and desperately needs a technical support person for the organization.

The most recent meeting was primarily attended by Parkland volunteers, but the conversation has moved from starting a new village to operating an existing village. We swapped information about Volunteer Orientation, giving T-shirts to Volunteers, the value of a membership card for senior discounts, and how best to get service evaluations from Members (and Volunteers).

The next online meeting will be Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, and we hope to get at least two participants in the online meetings from each of the nine elder villages in New Mexico (and adjoining Colorado).

*— Jim Ludden*

## PISCATORIAL UPDATE

In the last newsletter, I described trout fishing opportunities at the Red River Hatchery Pond, restricted to kids under 12, seniors over 65, and people with handicaps. And don't overlook the free license for state residents over 70, available at [www.wildlife.state.nm.us](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us). Kids and their senior companions don't need one. Stocking has been plentiful this summer and will continue through October. As the pond is

fenced for safety, the gate is usually locked on November 1 and opened at "ice out" in March. With fewer tourists, kids in school, and less wind (which makes casting tricky), October is a prime month. Also, less rain that annoys people more than fish. Conditions have changed recently as warming stimulated weed growth, but open areas are still productive. The monsoons did muddy the water, but that is clearing. Some seniors like relaxing in a sunny beach chair, watching a float. A paved path

allows easy movement around the periphery, including for wheelchairs and walkers. Three permanent benches are in good locations. Being an active hunter of willing fish, I tend to take moving shots walking around. Unlike at streams, there are few trees and shrubs to catch your casting.

The fun doesn't end at the pond. Here's my favorite New Mexico recipe for the 10- to 12-inch fish. Soak cleaned whole ones in lemon juice for a couple of minutes. Mix a cup or two of blue corn meal with about two tablespoons of sesame seeds. Add salt per your taste, and maybe some black pepper. Roll the trout in the mix. Sauté them in olive oil, about ten minutes over medium heat, turning over once.

If you are fortunate enough to have an horno, or creative enough to convert your patio fireplace into an oven (with a door and chimney cap), smoking the larger trout can be easy. The dinner entrée, chowder, and schmear

recipes are delicious. I give details and directions in our 2020 book, *Taos Horno Adventures*. It is locally available at SOMOS and Cid's checkout counter. The proceeds of sales benefit the Millicent Rogers Museum's native plant garden maintenance.



Tight Lines, Richard Rubin

Please click [here](#) to make a charitable contribution so that TENT can help our elder community.

**TENT needs your help to help others.**

**TENT (Taos Elders and Neighbors Together)**

### Memberships Receiving Services

#### Individual

\$350/year or \$32/mo.

#### Household

\$450/year or \$40/mo.

#### 3 Month Trial

\$150 or \$50/mo.

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