

# 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 STORIES: ONE WOMAN'S WINDING JOURNEY TO THE UNKNOWN

TENT Volunteer and Member, Yolanda Rommel, born on January 28, 1936, in Lodz, Poland, does not consider herself so much a Buddhist as a traveler on Buddha's path. Buddha's teachings have sustained her through life beginning under Germany's brutal occupation of her country, life as an immigrant in the USA, struggling to support herself and her child; attempting to overcome the biases towards Polish people and towards immigrants, in general.

Yolanda immigrated to the USA in 1960 with her husband and 18-month-old son. Although trained in engineering and architecture in Poland, when she came to the USA she couldn't find employment except as a sweat shop worker, cleaning lady at commercial establishments, and assembly line worker, all at minimum wage. While living in Las Vegas, Nevada, in 1964, and becoming a US citizen, her technical skills led to a draftsman position at the Nevada Nuclear Test Site.

Her marriage ended after 13 years of multiple moves across the country, in pursuit of her husband's career. She returned to college while also working as a volunteer with a newly formed Hospice at the Mountain States Cancer Institute in Boise. Her experience of growing

up in the war, when death was an ever-present, intimate reality, prepared her well to serve those also at the end of their lives.

Yolanda's eight years in academia began in 1982, terminating with a bachelor's degree in communication from Boise State University in 1987 and a master's

degree in counseling from Idaho State University in 1990. That same year she began her career as a counselor, contracting with the State of Oregon Services to Children and Families. She provided family therapy, sexual abuse treatment and parent training in four counties. She also maintained an office (Yolanda Rommel, M.Coun., LPC), providing services to private clients, specializing in trauma treatment, working with military veterans, policemen, firefighters, prison workers, and survivors of domestic violence.



She also continued working with Hospice, initially as a volunteer, then as a social worker and a lay Christian and Buddhist chaplain.

These were years when her dream of living in a cabin in the woods came through. In 1995 Yolanda bought an old log cabin on the side of a mountain above the town of John Day, Oregon. Although the cabin had no electricity and only water from the nearby spring, Yolanda was content. When the contracts with the State ended in 2000, Yolanda sold the cabin and moved to town, to her former office in Canyon City, while maintaining a limited private

practice and continuing her involvement with Hospice.

Yolanda came to Taos in May 2016 to be with her son, Peter. On February 27, 2017, after being released from the hospital, Peter died of an aneurism while awaiting emergency surgery.

Yolanda continued to serve with the Taos Hospice until 2018 and continues as a TENT Member and Volunteer, contributing her services by organizing the TENT library, offering weaving classes, and always provoking engaging, philosophical discussions on life and living.

-- Darrel Baumgardner

## FROM THE BOARD



Things are moving along really well at TENT. Thank you to all who have contributed as Volunteers, Members, and Donors. We couldn't do it without you!

We completed another successful Fiscal Year on June 30. Our Annual Report is on TENT's website, click [here](#).

We had a Board and Leader Retreat on June 3. Lots of new ideas to work on! Then we had a lovely Annual Meeting at Kit Carson Park on June 16.

We were the recipients of a grant from the Taos Community Foundation's Impact Awards for 2023.

We are still in need of an Outreach Coordinator to help us contact and coordinate with other community organizations, and an Events Coordinator to coordinate group programs (as we did every other month for the first few years prior to Covid). Please let us know if you are interested in helping with either of these important tasks.

Enjoy the rest of the summer.

-- Bette Myerson, Co-President

## OPERATIONS COORDINATOR UPDATE

Well it's darned hot. Older adults are more prone to heat-related health concerns; please check out [cdc.gov](https://www.cdc.gov) for good information and tips on how to minimize the effects of the heat.

Our annual meeting in June was very nice; Members and Volunteers who attended had a good time seeing old friends and meeting new ones. Those who attended may recall that I



photo: Jeff Black

passed out a questionnaire about Activities. The results weren't very encouraging as not

too many people filled it out, and the result seems to be that everyone is busy enough on their own. So, the Activities Committee has decided to pull back a bit and focus more on Events; stay tuned to see what fun things the group can come up with (if you would like to be a part of the committee please contact Honore Maloney or myself, we could use some help!).

I would like to thank the teachers of the Activities we have: Yolanda Rommel and Weaving (to restart in August, please sign up!); Paul Duboff and Sketching; and Jan Haller with the Handwork Circle (ending by publication). Those who attended enjoyed them very much. Again, please let Honore or me know if you are interested in reforming these groups, or if you have something that you would like to teach. We are open to suggestions.

More thank yous:

- to Linda for helping Becky with the cards to Members
- to the Volunteers who helped me at the Cancer Walk: Darrel, Catrin, Becky, and Anna
- to the Volunteers who helped at the two Taos Plaza Lives (one more to go!): Darrel, Graciela, Terry, Julian, Mya, Wally, Randie, and Jane.

And please welcome our newest Volunteers: Dan, Linda, Mary, Chloe, and Shane. Speaking of Chloe and Shane, they will be presenting an Event at the Taos Public Library on August 5 from 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM entitled "CPR Basics with UNM Medical Students." Please sign up on our Events page soon (or call TENT at 575-224-6335 and the call manager will help you); this will fill out fast as it is also open to the public. I hope to see you there!

-- Kate Harris

## ACTIVITIES UPDATE

A very big thank you goes out to Yolanda Rommel, Paul Duboff, and Jan Haller for leading TENT activity classes. We appreciate the donation of their time and the sharing of their talents with the TENT community – both Members and Volunteers.

Yolanda's weaving class will resume in August after a short hiatus, and will meet each Thursday.

Paul's sketching class continues; the last class will be on August 16. Jan's handwork circle finished up on July 17. The Mexican train dominoes group will start up again in September and will meet every other Wednesday.

The walks in Fred Baca park continue to be offered every other Friday morning from 11:00 AM to noon. The book club will meet on



August 18 from 1:00 to 2:00 PM at the TENT office, 515 Gusdorf Road, Suite 1, to discuss *The Weight of Ink* by Rachel Hadish.

Signing up for activities is easy. Go to TENT's website, [www.taoselders.org](http://www.taoselders.org), click on "Events," then "Events List," and scroll down. Click on



the activity you wish to attend and register. We continue to look for new activities, and suggestions are always welcome. We would also welcome new members to the Activities Committee. If you are interested, please contact me. -- *Honore Maloney*  
575-776-8087 jmaloney@taosnet.com

## WEAVING WITH YOLANDA

I lived in Mexico for almost 20 years and was fascinated with the intricate weavings I encountered. When weaving classes were offered through TENT, I decided I wanted to learn more by doing it myself. I met Yolanda prior to the classes, when I provided tech help, and saw the amazing weavings in her home, so clearly she knows what she is teaching. I was curious if someone with only one workable arm like me could weave. Yolanda made me a special loom to hold between my knees, and the photo (right) is my first attempt! As a scientist, I frequently get too caught up with



too many balls in the air. Weaving has allowed me to focus and become one with the wool. In addition, our group always has engaging conversations that are never dull.

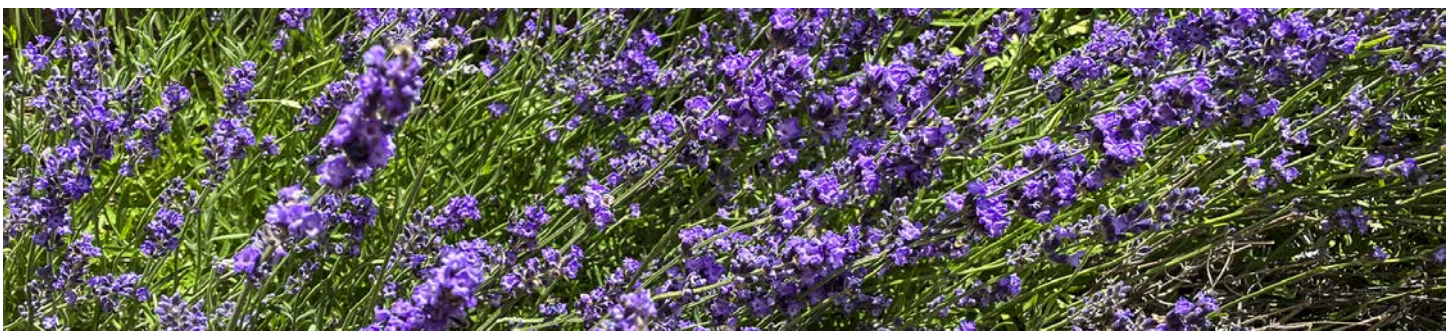
-- Darrel Baumgardner



Curiosity paid off! What's weaving all about? I joined Yolanda's weaving group to see what it was that enticed so many peoples of different cultures to take up the craft and produce such beauty. Yolanda kindly told me a coaster or placemat would be a good beginning—I thought at this stage of my life a masterpiece would be beyond me. I couldn't imagine being creative enough to do anything but a plain coaster... and haven't gotten very far, but it's neat and that's good, Yolanda says.

Kate's project is much more complex and she's gotten a lot further. We are both enjoying the welcoming company of the participants, trying out a new skill, and the wonderful, enriching conversation that this little group has provided. It's been a great way to get over the isolation of these last months.

-- Marianne Furedi



## DR. SID'S RX (AND EXAMPLE) FOR HEALTHY AGING

Some TENT Members may know Sid Bender as that cordial, considerate bearded fellow who drives them to appointments on occasion. Some *Taoseños* know him as a horseman, since he retired to Taos more than a decade ago to have and to ride horses. Others recognize him from his role on the board of the Taos Opera Institute and his support of other arts organizations. What some may not know is that Dr. Sidney Bender came to Taos after more than 40 years as a neurologist in New York City and as Associate Clinical Professor of Neurology at Columbia Presbyterian Medical School.

When asked for his professional observations about Taos, Sid responded that we are obviously an older population overall and, therefore, exhibit a disproportionate level of age-related neurological conditions compared to many other places. (Census statistics confirm that our percentage of residents over 65 is almost twice the national average.) As a small, relatively remote town, we have limited medical resources to diagnose and treat neurodegenerative conditions.

Asked for his recommendations to help us maintain mental and physical well-being as we age, Sid promptly offered the following:

1. Regular exercise and, if possible, aerobic exercise that provides cardiovascular conditioning, e.g., swimming, walking, rowing, elliptical machine.
2. Mediterranean style diet that maximizes fruits, vegetables, nuts, and grains, and

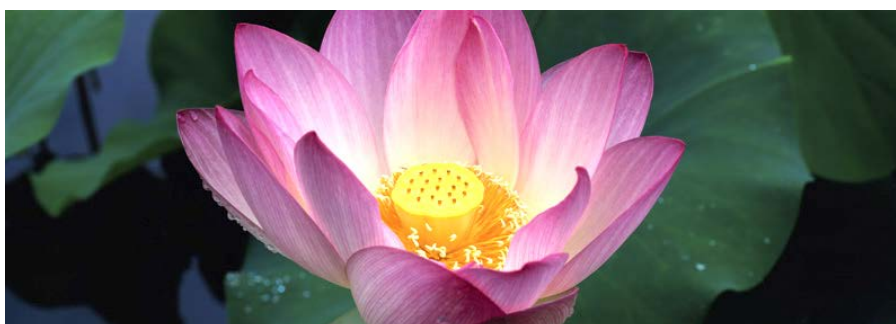
reduces the proportions of dairy, meat, seafood, and alcohol.

3. Mental stimulation like playing games, working on a computer, doing crossword puzzles, or creating art.
4. Socialization, i.e., being with other people. Examples include in-person classes, book groups or other regular group discussions, volunteering.
5. A good night's sleep. If you do not get 7 or 8 hours of restful sleep most nights, consult your doctor or a specialist. Too little sleep can affect not only brain health but also your general health.
6. Diagnosis and treatment for symptoms of emotional and mental disease as well as physical disease, especially high blood pressure. New, effective treatments are being discovered for age-related diseases like Alzheimer's and Parkinson's. Ask your doctor for referral to a specialist if you think it appropriate.



Sidney Bender is married to Dr. Marjorie Luckey, an endocrinologist and internationally recognized specialist in osteoporosis. They have two grown sons and two grandsons in Connecticut.

-- Mya Coursey





## Regional Transit District Blue Bus Paratransit and Demand Services

North Central Regional Transit District service hours are on Monday-Friday, 6am to 6pm.  
Contact: 866-206-0754; 505-629-4725

For Paratransit services please visit their website or give them a call. There is no fare if the application has been completed.

For Demand services: These are provided within a two-mile boundary on either side of the Chile Line Red Route; Talpa, Llano



Quemado, Taos Pueblo, and parts of Ranchos de Taos and El Prado are included. Trips can be scheduled in advance by calling the above numbers by at least the day before the desired trip. The fee is \$1.00 in cash (one way) for curb-to-curb and door-to-door service. There is no holiday service.

<https://www.ncrtd.org/routes-by-area/taos-area/> -- Kate Harris (with thanks to Dan)

### TECH TIPS:

#### LATEST SCAMS

Over the past month I have received at least one text message a week that is probably a new type of scam. In most cases I suspect the sender wants me to reply via text. Each message reads as if you should know who sent

it, but with no identification. Here are some examples:

- Hi Helen, what are your plans for this weekend? If the weather is nice this weekend, would you like to go camping with us?
- Hello, is this John's Garage? I am going to pick up my car tomorrow.
- Hello, Joanna, I seem to have a painting at your home and forgot to take it, when do you have time to bring it to me, thank you!
- Hey, here's my work number, you can keep it and contact me, I'll find you to go shopping sometime? Solinka
- Hello, I saw your number in the address book, there is no note, are we friends or colleagues?
- Hi, do we know each other?

I forward each message via text to 772-6 (SPAM) to report the suspicious message, and follow up by reporting the sender's phone number. I'm not sure this actually helps, but it makes me feel better.

### WRITE YOUR OWN OBITUARY?

The obituaries that I read in the news are not along lines of how I wish to be remembered. So I decided to write my own obituary, emphasizing the areas that I enjoyed and for which I want to be remembered. This exercise offers you the opportunity to take stock of where you are in life, how you got there, and if you are on a path you always envisioned.

When you write your own obituary, you can include those things that matter most to you. You don't need to wait until you are sick or dying, but it may help to update it occasionally. Plus, writing your own obituary relieves your loved ones of this burden when they are grieving. You can find some helpful tips in this article.  
-- Jim Ludden

## TECH TIPS A-Z

*InTENTions* publishes helpful information from time to time about using your telephones, laptops, desktops, or tablets. We will maintain a list of all the topics in each newsletter. Click on the link to pull up a copy of the information.

### Alexa

This technology can be both helpful and annoying. Find out more here.

### Disappearing Windows

Unsteady fingers can cause your laptop window to disappear. This helps avoid that.

### Navigating Your Web Browser

An introductory guide on finding “stuff” on your computer and on the web.

### Password Management

Recommendations for creating, remembering, and storing your passwords.

### Service Requests and Evaluations

A quick overview of how to ask for services from TENT Volunteers and evaluate their response.

### Technology To Reduce Isolation

Living alone has its downside but here are ways to feel less isolated.

### Don't get hacked or conned! (New Aug. 2023)

Getting “Hacked” can be painful but there are ways to avoid it. Here is some advice.

### Voice Mailbox Tips

Frequent “housekeeping” of your telephone mailbox is simple.

– Darrel Baumgardner

## SOMETHING FUNNY?

My sister, Darlene, has the courage—but not always the skills—to tackle any home-repair project. For example, in her garage are pieces of a lawn mower she once tried to fix. So I wasn't surprised the day my other sister, Jesse, and I found Darlene attacking her vacuum cleaner with a screwdriver. “I can't get this thing to cooperate,” she explained. “Why don't you drag it out to the garage and show it the lawn mower?” Jesse suggested.



I couldn't decide whether to go to Salt Lake City or Denver for vacation, so I called the airlines to get prices. “Airfare to Denver is \$300,” the cheery salesperson replied. “And what about Salt Lake City?” “We have a really great rate to Salt Lake—\$99,” she said “But there is a stopover.” “Where?” “In Denver,” she said.

## RESOURCES

We are very sad to report the death on June 16 of our beloved friend and TENT Member, Gene Gray. We profiled Gene and his wife, Sara Jean, in the June issue of *inTENTions*.

It's not too late to boost our brain power, says Consumer Reports. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends 150 weekly minutes of brisk walking, say a half-hour walk (or more) five times a week. Dancing is good! Weightlifting, Yoga, Tai Chi, meditation and socializing with friends and family are highly recommended. Click this [link](#).

A newsletter I subscribe to called “Mind, Mood & Memory” (Massachusetts General Hospital) publishes an article, “How Your Socializing with Friends and Family Boosts Memory and Mental Health.” Although we do it for fun and social responsibility, it says “Interacting with other people in a positive way is a cornerstone of maintaining your cognition throughout life and it’s an essential element to avoiding mood disorders such as anxiety and depression.” So yes! Think about getting more involved with TENT—See the “Activities Update” in this issue.

Also, AARP has guidelines to exercise and physical fitness on its webpage <https://www.aarp.org/stayfit> and if you are a member of AARP, you can access all of its resources. This page includes videos for workouts that focus on upper body strength, cardiography exercises, improving balance, and other areas.

“Artstreams: From the Well of Memory” is a Taos-based innovative program for the in-home family caregiver of those with Alzheimer's or other dementias. That person can be the spouse, partner, adult child or relative. Artstreams offers a monthly support group; a monthly museum program of themed conversations about the art in the exhibits; resource information and educational material. It is unique in its focus on the needs of the family caregiver in the home. For more information, please call Kathleen Burg at 575-770-9874.

I welcome your contributions to this “Resources” column. Feel free to send me ideas at [Editor@taoselders.org](mailto:Editor@taoselders.org) -- Linda Thompson

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**

\$300/year or \$20-25/mo.

##### **Household**

\$400/year or \$30-35/mo.

##### **3 Month Trial**

\$150 or \$50/mo.

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