



OUR STORIES:

Bill Blackmore & Patty Rogers: Our Better Angels

Looking back, the effort involved in finding suitable lighting and camera position needed to generate a usable photographic image may have been our first clue that spotlighting Bill Blackmore and Patty Rogers would be both challenging and simple. At a life stage and chronological age when many may have concluded that they have done enough, given enough, been enough, Patty and Bill keep on giving to the TENT community, as well as receiving from it. Despite significant limitations imposed both by age and chronic health conditions, they continue to do what they have always done—give aid to those in need. And doesn't an enduring commitment to take care of our own reflect not merely the sentiments of this couple, but of Taos in general and TENT in particular?

Prior to a recent virtual meeting, I had not, to my knowledge, ever crossed paths with either Patty or Bill. Yet, as they related specifics of their Taos histories, having heretofore been strangers to each other seemed all the more surprising.

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.

One might easily have assumed that our related backgrounds in helping professions (both Patty and Bill hold Master of Social Work degrees), our parallel friendships among members of the St. James Episcopal Church congregation, our similar Taos discovery chronologies, and more, might easily have brought us into contact. A partial



explanation may be the modesty, kindness, soft-spoken manner, and especially the spotlight-shunning style that these spiritually centered people seem to exude.

With origins in geographically disparate and culturally iconic parts of the country (Patty in Woodstock, New York, and Bill in the San Francisco Bay area), the

silence-shattering clatter of an errant umbrella brokered their initial Taos introduction. Some contend that there are no accidents in life. With Bill's quick, chivalrous retrieval of Patty's elusive, offending possession, the serenity of St. James Episcopal Church's sanctuary was quickly restored, and additional embarrassment abated. The rest, as they say, "is history." Indeed, their history is one of a relationship born and pursued over some 30 years in Taos.

Throughout our conversation, Patty's and Bill's resonance with Taos' legendary spirituality was frequently top of mind. Taos Pueblo as a spiritual-cultural touchstone seemed prominent in their thoughts and feelings, and a

likely source of Taos' appeal to each. Combined with daily Buddhist practice and an abiding Episcopal faith, there is palpable connection to our unique community, sometimes referred to as the "soul of the Southwest."

Ultimately, in Patty Rogers and Bill Blackmore, Taos is blessed with two "old souls" who, despite obstacles and without observable fanfare or notoriety, remain committed to quietly helping their fellow man. Whether the result of personal-professional history or inspired by faith and spirituality, they do indeed seem compelling representatives of the better angels of our natures. We are indeed lifted up by their presence.

-- Robert J. Silver

FROM THE BOARD:



In December, TENT postponed Member fees because we were just not able to deliver all we wanted to do to help our Members. It turns out we did a lot even with

COVID-19 concerns, so January will be a regular full-fee month. The dawn is breaking—and we can see that sometime in 2021 we will be able to have public meetings again.

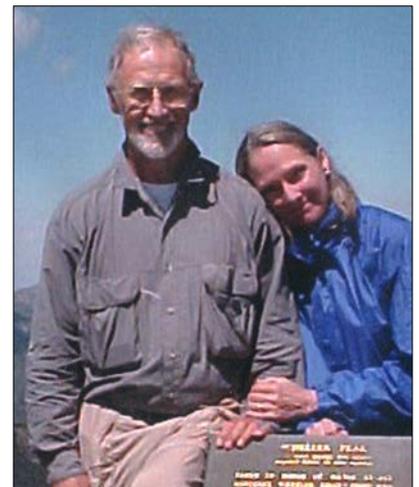
Public meetings have been a big part of our community experience, so how did we stay glued together in the past year? Our Members have been understanding, our Volunteers have continued to help—bless them—our Board and Volunteer Coordinator have worked hard, and our newsletter, *inTENTions*, has been our glue. Many nonprofits could and did fold under this pressure—TENT did not. Thank you!

Please, all of you out there, sign up for your vaccination.
-- Jim Schultz, Board President

LIFE MILESTONES: BILL ZORUMSKI 1940-2020

Dr. William Edward Zorumski, husband of TENT Board Member Caryle Zorumski, died at the Taos Living Center on November 20. Bill and Caryle had lived in Taos 19 years after his retirement from the Langley Research Center, National Aeronautics & Space Administration (NASA) in Virginia. His survivors include four children, nine grandchildren, and three great grandchildren.

Born in Missouri, Bill attended college at the University of Missouri, the University of Virginia, and Virginia Tech. During a 34-year career in acoustical engineering at



NASA, he produced more than 200 publications and was awarded a research fellowship, a NASA Exceptional Service Medal, and a prestigious Decibel Award. He was an avid skier and hiker and had a black belt in martial arts.

Some of Bill's friends came forward with memories. Andy Powell: "The 'WEZ' was one of the most respected acousticians who ever worked for NASA and was sorely missed when he retired . . . I feel very fortunate to have worked with him and to have had him as a friend." G. Louis Smith: "Bill was an excellent Sensei (Karate teacher) . . . The world has lost a wonderful man." Jim Steinbach: "Bill and I

skied together quite often. We climbed the ridge together many times . . . I will always have fond memories of our times together."

Caryle says, "Bill was my husband and best friend for 35 years. He embodied everything a stepfather should be, and he was always a champion of the dreams of young people and women—both at home and at work. We shared many adventures, climbing (or driving to) 43 of the country's state highpoints and skiing in Taos. A man of brilliance and determination who had neither electricity nor running water until age 13, he built a life and career worthy of lasting admiration and respect."

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR UPDATE

Congratulations to our Volunteers who fulfilled all the service requests last month! Thank you to all those continuing to provide services at this time. I am delighted to report that we have two new Volunteers joining your ranks.

The delivery of the Christmas meals provided by the Monastery of San Juan Diego (www.benedictinemonksoftaos.org) went without a hitch. By all accounts, the food was delicious and appreciated by those Members who chose to receive it. We thank the Monastery for their kindness and generosity.

For all you bookworms out there, here is a resource to help while our Public Library is closed: the New Mexico State Library Books by Mail service. Just call 1-800-395-9144 to register and they will send you a catalog. Also, for those with visual impairments, the National Library Service is a free service that delivers books in braille and audio formats by mail or they are downloadable. Call BARD at 1-888-657-7323.

There are a couple of pen-pal programs in the works for Members and Volunteers. One is with Taos High School, the other with other Villages scattered throughout the country. Please contact David Silva at david@enchantedcirclecorps.org.

We are helping Members register for the COVID vaccine. Please contact David or me if you need help. If you have already registered, please let us know so that we don't have to bother you. I feel hope and optimism for the future; we will get through this together! Wishing everyone health and happiness.

-- Kate Harris

MEMBER CARE/OUTREACH COORDINATOR REPORT

A new survey is being sent out in the mail, in which we are asking for your thoughts on programs that we want to start in the new year, such as a time and place for Members to

go on outdoor walks, and interest in online book clubs.

The walking idea came from a TENT Member, Yvonne Hayes. We want to encourage you to share any ideas, because I know we have not thought of everything that can bring us together as a group. Also, we are trying to get everyone registered for a COVID-19 vaccination. Feel free to contact me at david@enchantedcirclecorps.org or at 575-741-0681 if you have ideas or questions.

Thank you for reading. Stay safe and warm
TENT Members. -- *David Silva*

OUR SERVICE PROCESS

Taos Elders uses a computer-supported process to provide services to our Members, which we have found to be very effective. This is a summary of that process, which is also illustrated in a slide show ([click here](#))

1. Member phones TENT at 575-224-6335
2. Call Manager records service request in Helpful Village (HV)
3. HV notifies Volunteers by email
4. Volunteer accepts request in HV
5. Volunteer fulfills request
6. Volunteer and Member evaluate request experience.

If you or someone you know would like to become a Member of TENT, please phone us at 575-224-6335, send an email to TaosElders@Gmail.com, or apply online at www.TaosElders.org.

If you would like to become a Volunteer with TENT, phone and email address are the same.

If you would like to provide financial help for less fortunate members, you may donate (tax-free) at www.TaosElders.org. -- *Jim Ludden*

Book Notes West/Southwest: #2 Beyond the Santa Fe Trail

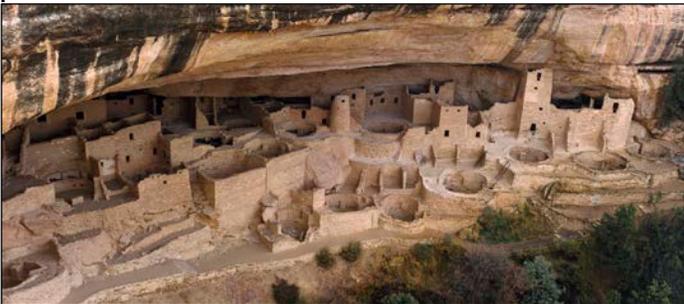
When we last visited, we were on the Santa Fe Trail. Did we run out of time for book talk, or was there a storm approaching? Perhaps we needed to pitch in to help circle the wagons, unhitch the teams, haul some water up from the crick, cut wood, and get the cooking fires started. Now that supper is done, let's talk more about books, starting with one by Lewis Garrard. In 1847 at the age of 17, he traveled over the Santa Fe Trail and made his way to Taos, arriving at a troubled time. An insurrection had just taken place by Mexican and Pueblo allies against the United States occupation of New Mexico in the Mexican American War. Garrard witnessed the trials and executions that took place after Governor Bent and others were murdered, and his account in *Wah-to-yah and the Taos Trail* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1955) is vivid and unique. This engaging book, first published in 1850, remains in print today—quite an accomplishment for any young writer. It should be easy to find in your local library or where books are for sale here in Taos.

For a brief overview of the Trail, look for Mark Gardner's *Santa Fe Trail* (Tucson: Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1993). I'll always remember meeting Mark on a beautiful autumn afternoon at Fort Union when he played the guitar and sang songs that early traders would have listened to along the Trail. Color photos enhance Mark's book and give you a good idea of the remote beauty along the route. Before leaving the Trail, you might want to read David Lavender's excellent book, *Bent's Fort* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1972). You will recall this was where Susan Magoffin stopped with her husband in the late 1840s just when the U.S.-Mexican War was starting. Lavender gives us a good survey of the Fort and related activities in the Southwest and along the Trail. And when we can all once again

take some road trips, drive over Raton Pass and beyond to the gates of Bent's Old Fort, a major historical site, now beautifully restored by the National Park Service. It is a great way to connect with history!

Yes, New Mexico played a major role on the Santa Fe Trail, but since the 19th century our state has also attracted a remarkable array of writers. It is hard to know where to begin, but one can't go wrong with Willa Cather (1873-1947) whose landmark novel, *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, has stayed in print since it was first published in 1928. In this book, Cather captured with deep sensitivity the great beauty and mystery of the Southwest. It was included on the Modern Library 100 Best Novels of the 20th century, as well as *Time's* 100 best English-language novels from 1923 to 2005. I taught this book for 15 years and never tired of rereading it. When you finish it, you may want to read another novel by Willa Cather, so head to the library or your favorite book shop to find *The Professor's House*.

In this beautifully written book, I always delight in its centerpiece, "Tom Outland's Story," with its exquisite description of what we know as Mesa Verde. On a winter morning, Outland rides his horse up to the canyon rim and discovers on the other side one of the great prehistoric ruins of our Southwest.



Whenever I visit Mesa Verde, I carry *The Professor's House* so I can read Tom Outland's Story again, especially this passage: "A fringe of cedars grew along the edge of the cavern, like a garden. They were the only living things. Such silence and stillness and repose--immortal

repose. That village sat looking down into the canyon with the calmness of eternity. The falling snowflakes, sprinkling the piñons, gave it a special kind of solemnity. I can't describe it. It was more like sculpture than anything else. I knew at once that I had come upon the city of some extinct civilization, hidden away in this inaccessible mesa for centuries, preserved in the dry air and almost perpetual sunlight like a fly in amber, guarded by the cliffs and the river and the desert."

Another prize-winning writer on our journey around New Mexico is N. Scott Momaday. He spent the first year of his life at his grandparents' home on the Kiowa Indian reservation in Southwestern Oklahoma. His parents were teachers on reservations, so as a boy Momaday became familiar not only with Kiowa traditions but also Navajo, Apache, and Pueblo Indian cultures. In 1969 Momaday's first novel, *House Made of Dawn* was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. He was the first Native American to win this notable prize. Reviewers and critics had not paid much attention to *House Made of Dawn*, but the Pulitzer shook them awake to a powerful story. The main character, Abel, back home from WW II, finds himself living in two worlds. Time is not linear but flows in and out of places in his mind. Sometimes drunk, sometimes frightened by shape shifters, sometimes motivated by memories of his grandfather, and sometimes remembering his father and sacred ceremonies, Abel confronts his demons to find a path to healing.

While speaking of Native American writers (and I'll have more names for you later), I should mention Leslie Marmon Silko whose novel, *Ceremony*, has been on university reading lists all over the country since first published in 1977. From Laguna Pueblo, she is regarded as an early key figure in what one critic called the Native American Renaissance. Silko is a well-recognized poet and novelist, the winner of a MacArthur Foundation Grant along with

numerous other accolades. *Ceremony* tells the story of Tayo, a WW II vet returning home to Laguna Pueblo after recovering from battle wounds. Haunted by the death of his cousin in the war, he turns to alcohol to quiet his demons. The story takes a dark twist when

some of his friends try to kill him, but he evades them while his old grandmother and a mixed-blood Navajo medicine man help him find a healing path through native ceremonies.

Let's keep reading and keep talking with our friends about books!
-- David Farmer

LAUGHING UNDER THE TENT: Refrigerator Wisdom

I don't know about you, but I rely on the wit and wisdom of others to amuse, educate, inspire, and otherwise enhance my ability to handle the rigor and routine of daily life in these extraordinary times with (hopefully) some manner of grace and humor. I surround myself with quotes and affirmations. Some are on the refrigerator, a few are framed and hanging on the walls, others are kept in easy-to-access files, and two are on the bathroom mirror. I brush my teeth while considering this quote from Marianne Williamson: "We ask ourselves: 'Who am I to be Brilliant, Talented and Fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God; your playing small does not serve the world." Trying to visualize myself as brilliant, talented and fabulous while brushing my teeth and wondering what surprises my hair has in store for me today always gives me a lift.

The refrigerator is Quotation Central in my home and I'm always reminded as I release my

need for pancakes for breakfast: "My Weight Goal: to weigh what my driver's license says." At the same time, I am counseled that "It is not easy to find happiness in ourselves, and it is not possible to find it elsewhere" (Agnes Repplier) and I'm advised that "Life is what happens to you while you're making other plans" (John Lennon). For comic relief, I can always depend on "I never eat sushi. I have trouble eating things that are merely unconscious" (George Carlin).

At my desk, I am inspired by the directive "When you learn—teach. When you receive—give" (Maya Angelou). Finally, at the end of each day as I'm writing in my journal, I reflect on a quote from John Lucas, a former NBA basketball star: "I am the best me I have ever been. I am not all that I would like to be—but I thank God I am not what I used to be."

These are profound and comforting words for someone who aspired to become just a little more "Brilliant, Talented and Fabulous" some 16 hours ago on a questionable hair day.

– Sharon Bradshaw

IRONING PAPER

Okay, where did I store my iron and ironing board? Haven't seen them in months. Oh, the utility room!

Now where's the setting for "paper"? Hmmm . . . Sunbeam never thought we'd need to iron paper? So, would that be closer to "linen" or "silk"? Guess I won't know until I try. "Steam" or "dry"? "Spray"? No, definitely not "spray."



Why am I ironing paper? Well, there's this stack of TENT letterhead I received in my Denver mailbox from Ron Furedi in Taos. I use it for donor-renewal and

fund-raising letters. Unfortunately, Mr. Mailman bent the package to stuff it into my mailbox,

not knowing it was valuable cargo. So now half the sheets are little crinkled, and I refuse to put them into my recycling bin.

I think I'll have to donate one sheet to the experiment of finding the right settings. Future Origami paper! FYI, "wool" and "dry." And there's a technique! Involving a thumbnail! If anybody's interested, I'll put it on YouTube.

-- Nancy Ewing

For Health and Happiness, Look to Nature

In my studies of the nervous system, I learned that we can calm our insides by orienting to something steady and reassuring. What anchors abound to help us through this pandemic?

In Taos, we have powerful nature that holds us with magnificence and wonder. In these times when many of us have lost our social contacts, I believe we can invite nature into the empty seat next to us and make friends on a deeper level. Three practices—sit spot, sunrise and sunset watching, and shifting focus—can enhance our health and happiness and anchor us more deeply into the depths of the natural world. These practices can be combined into one or two sessions a day.

You might be practicing sit spot without knowing it. Find a comfortable place to sit, inside or outside, and notice what is happening in nature. Simply sit for 20 minutes and do an open-eyed meditation, observing light, fauna and flora, water moving or falling from the sky, sounds, air, temperature. Let yourself be filled with nourishment as you deepen your appreciation of this sit spot each day.

The second practice—watching the sunrise and sunset—is not only to appreciate the magnificence of our Taos horizon, but it helps

anchor your circadian rhythm to the natural cycles of light and dark that regulate sleep, especially if you take time to watch both. Do not look directly at the sun but notice how the changing light illuminates your surroundings. Intimacy with the sun's rhythm connects us to our place in time and space.

The third practice, shifting focus, is especially useful if you find yourself on computer or TV screens much of your day. To do this, go outside and focus on something three feet away with a sharp focus. Notice the details, then let your eyes go into soft focus taking in a wide scope. Do the same for a medium distance, say 500 yards, and then look at the farthest distance you can see (such as the faraway mountain tops) and do sharp and soft focus. This practice, which only takes a moment, can help stave off the degeneration of our vision caused by too much screen time. It also invokes feelings of freedom, possibility, and inspiration.

It is common to feel anonymous and separate in nature, but surprisingly, if you open your heart and mind in contemplation and observance, a direct friendship is possible. I have noticed that trees sometimes wave, flowers emit an inner sound, and animals can tell a joke! So, pull up a chair, give these practices a try, and welcome your new companion.

-- Lea Wildflower

RESOURCES

Recently forwarded from members of the Unitarian Congregation of Taos: “33 Tips to Avoid Getting Hacked” at <https://www.savethestudent.org/extra-guides/32-ways-avoid-cyber-hacked.html>
Remember that Social Security and Medicare never contact you by phone, only by mail. You can register scam calls at the “National Do Not Call Registry”: <https://www.donotcall.gov/>

As for getting a vaccination against COVID-19, if you haven’t registered already, go to <https://cvvaccine.nmhealth.org/> To register by telephone, call 1-800/600-3453, Option 4. Only New Mexico residents can register.

Additional information about the national vaccination program is at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention site:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html?utm_campaign=20201223_cvd_frd_gal&utm_content=english&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery And Medicare covers the cost of getting vaccinated, so if you are asked to share your Medicare number or to pay for the vaccine, it is a scam. Report fraud to the Federal Trade Commission (<https://reportfraud.ftc.gov/#/>) or call Medicare at 1-800-MEDICARE.

See the TENT website, <https://taoselders.helpfulvillage.com/>, for more information about staying safe during this pandemic. And see Taos physician Dr. Lucas Schreiber on this YouTube video for excellent reasons to get the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it becomes available:

<https://youtu.be/WBtxa8pd0xY>

-- 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

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

Household

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

3 Month Trial

\$150 or \$50/mo.

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