



OUR STORIES

JULIAN SPALDING: The Natural

I suppose there could very well be a gene related to human generosity, or perhaps a chromosome that drives our species' sense of decency. If these qualities are embedded in one's DNA, Julian Spalding is a likely case in point. By all indications, this soft-spoken man is indeed an instinctive nurturer.

Given my serendipitous personal history with Julian, it really didn't come as much of a surprise to learn that he had been named TENT Volunteer of the Month. Though I'm not an official recipient of TENT services, I had nevertheless regularly been on the receiving end of Julian's gentle generosity and concerned compassion.

For many months, Julian and I were participants in a twice-weekly Gyrokinesis class at Taos' High Altitude Fitness Center. Since I have a rather obvious movement disorder, I was frequently slow and clumsy, as I shuffled and plodded late into class. Julian persistently, yet virtually wordlessly, would come to my aid.

Unbidden and matter of factly, Julian quietly and empathically created space for me among the group members who were arrayed (pre-social distancing) in close proximity to our trainer. He then efficiently retrieved and

organized the large mats and folding wooden stool required for the exercise program at hand. Julian's routine acts of kindness immeasurably supported my presence and participation.



Now retired, following an arts publishing career in Albuquerque (ABQ ARTS), a poet and writer himself, it was Julian Spalding's writing that brought him and husband Terry Brown together some decades ago. The couple moved to Taos a scant two years ago, and it can easily be said that Julian hit the ground running. Not only does he dedicate time transporting and problem solving with TENT Members, he is also a committed hospice volunteer.

Julian cites his Osage tribe membership as having instilled the strong sense of place that he and Terry found resonating in Taos.

This enhanced the allure of Taos, but it was the special draw of our people that cinched their move here. Despite social distancing requirements imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, Julian expresses an undiminished desire and hope for future deep connections with the magic to be discovered in the extraordinary people of Taos. It is something that he yearns for.

Julian Spalding explains his significant local volunteer commitment as driven by a need “to give back.” But my guess is that he just cannot help himself---he’s hard-wired to care for those struggling in our midst. He is simply a natural. And aren’t we, in Taos, fortunate that he is?

-- Robert J. Silver

FROM THE BOARD:



Dear TENT community,

Thank you for spending the time to read our newsletter. Your contributions—be they photos, poems, jokes, or

whatever have grabbed your passion—are welcome. Just write to [Linda Thompson](#), the editor.

The 2nd TENT annual report is now complete; if you have not seen it, you can click [here](#) to

find it. Our community has performed 35,550 hours of Volunteer service. This effort included fulfilling 1,465 service requests during the last fiscal year and answering the phone or doing numerous other office jobs. Frankly, that is impressive—well done, Volunteers. Despite the news which suggests discord and disunity in this time of COVID-19, I find compassion and connectedness in TENT and in Taos. Please continue to pitch in, wear your mask and help wherever you can—and ask for help whenever you need it.

-- Jim Schultz, Board President

HELP WANTED

We could use a somewhat technical person to monitor our Google Voice phones. This means switching the phones to a different Call Manager (receptionist) four mornings every week. The support person must also monitor our TENT email account several times every day and forward Google Voice messages to the Call Manager on duty.

-- Jim Ludden

LIFE MILESTONES

We at TENT send condolences to Stacy Quinn and family on the death of her husband, Wes Patterson, who died on July 11, 2020. Wes and Stacy were both founding donors of TENT and we appreciate their generosity.

-- Bette Myerson



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MORE STRESSED THAN USUAL? REBUILD YOUR PERSONAL RESILIENCE

“I feel more relaxed right now” and “I’ve learned that we are much more connected than I have thought” are two of the several comments expressed by TENT Members at the end of an hour-long discussion on ZOOM about strengthening our resilience. Tips on bolstering our internal strength during this COVID-19 pandemic were shared and discussed in a webinar on July 15. Seventeen TENT Volunteers and Members came together on the ZOOM platform to be reminded of, and even practice, some tips for breathing and calming ourselves as the physical distancing required to protect ourselves and others continues.

Called “Resilience in the time of COVID-19: Activate your own resources,” the presentation was adapted from a slightly longer version by TENT Volunteer Paula Claycomb. She had participated in a similar webinar by Swiss resilience trainer Elsbeth Horbaty, who developed the content mainly for people who work in international development.

Resilience is the ability to recognize and/or prevent personal, social, and other adversity; absorb difficulties or challenges; and recover from damage caused by such challenges. While we may not be living in a crisis zone like Yemen or Venezuela, the coronavirus pandemic is its

own emergency, creating feelings of helplessness and loss. Many of us know that breathing more slowly or having reminders nearby (such as a photo or a nice little “scent” box with cinnamon or another favorite scent) are useful in calming us during a moment of panic.

One action you can take throughout the day is called “self-holding.” In this illustration, you can see several ways to give yourself a physical boost with gentle pressure from your hands.



While most of us feel privileged to be “stuck” in Taos during the pandemic and to have adequate food, shelter, and health care, Paula emphasized that it is important to take care of our emotional and physical selves. At the end of the seminar, a participant said, “I am reminded of an article I read by the Dalai Lama yesterday. What he said is ‘Goodness and kindness is what we are; that is our nature, and that is what we are.’”

If other Members or Volunteers express interest, this short seminar could be presented again. Let Kate Harris know if you are interested. *Submitted by Paula Claycomb*

Volunteer Coordinator Update

Greetings to all! I hope everyone is remaining healthy and happy.

Welcome to new Volunteer, Julie Sabia, who has already started fulfilling service requests. We thank you! Thanks also to Volunteers, Wendy Shuey and Katherine Forrest, for going above and beyond.

Wendy is calling all Members to make sure that they have filled out their Five Wishes, providing them with the required paperwork and helping to fill out the forms, if needed. Katherine Forrest has taken over the Member survey, consisting of a few questions that will help us discern how best to serve you. Members, please take the time to talk with her.

We had a very nice event on ZOOM, facilitated by Paula Claycomb, about Resiliency in the Time of COVID-19. Paula graciously has recorded it to be aired again at a later date. So, start checking the Events list as we also will link to the Villages of Santa Fe and AARP's presentations, including a fall prevention class, "Balance and Beyond," and Gentle Yoga. We still have open leadership positions: Member Care, Outreach, Publicity, Phone Manager, and Tech Help. Please let me know if you are interested!

Membership has been reopened. The Board will review this decision monthly. We are not encouraging extended in-home contact at this time, except for home maintenance and tech help, which are fairly essential.

Volunteers fulfilled 94 services last month! Congratulations! To help keep everything

running smoothly, Members please try to enter your requests as soon as you can; seven days lead time is helpful.

We are all experiencing stress and doing the best we can in this new reality. I am so impressed with everyone's kindness and understanding. TENT is a wonderful Village to belong to and we will keep furthering relationships far into the future. To this end, if anyone, Member or Volunteer, is discontent for any reason and has suggestions as to how we can improve, please do not hesitate to contact me directly with your concerns. I shall do my best to alleviate them. Call me at 575-741-6230. I thank each and every one for your dedication. We will get through this together.

– Kate Harris

12 COMMANDMENTS FOR SENIORS

1. Talk to yourself. There are times you need expert advice.
2. "In Style" are the clothes that still fit.
3. You don't need anger management. You need people to stop pissing you off.
4. Your people skills are just fine. It's your tolerance for idiots that needs work.
5. The biggest lie you tell yourself is, "I don't need to write that down. I'll remember it."
6. "On time" is when you get there.
7. Even duct tape can't fix stupid, but it sure does muffle the sound.
8. It would be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the dryer for 10 minutes, then come out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller!
9. Lately, you've noticed that people your age are so much older than you.
10. Growing old should have taken longer.
11. Aging has slowed you down, but it hasn't shut you up.
12. You still haven't learned to act your age, and you hope you never will.

And the 13th commandment: One for the road" means peeing before you leave the house.

These have been posted on a number of sites on the Internet.

TECHNOLOGY TO REDUCE ISOLATION

During this COVID-19 epidemic, we are asked to keep six feet away from others and wear face masks, not to gather indoors, and to avoid crowds. For gregarious types and extroverts, this results in social isolation--a huge health risk for seniors and their caregivers.

How can we use technology to reduce this isolation? By “technology,” I include telephones, as well as computers and the internet. One hundred years ago, the telephone was new technology for most people. At the simplest level, TENT can schedule a phone call with someone. Simply hearing the voice of friend or family will help reduce your isolation; if you have no friends or family, even a robotic or virtual pet helps!

Getting more advanced, if you have a smartphone (which can use applications, or “apps”), you can make video calls to people similarly equipped. iPhone users can call other users of Apple products (computers, iPads, or iPhones) using FaceTime, which comes with these devices. Or you can use a computing device (laptop, smartphone, tablet, or desktop) with software such as Skype or WhatsApp to place video calls to any similar device.

Of course, these are all one-on-one conversations, either with voice alone, or voice plus video. Participating in events with multiple people changes the dynamics considerably. As you can imagine, when several people in a meeting try to talk at once, pandemonium ensues. So larger events are limited to either one presenter with a larger audience (similar to television or radio) or to a somewhat controlled environment where only one participant contributes at a time.

Long ago, we wrote letters on paper to one another. Now we write electronic mail (email) messages, which can be sent to multiple people at once. Email can also include photos, which helps to keep up with growing grandchildren.

Strings of emails allow participants to discuss topics of common interest. The audience is strictly limited to the contacts of the participants. Such a discussion can be extended to others by participating in an electronic forum, where messages are posted (as on a bulletin board) for a wider audience to see or respond to. These messages (called “posts”) may be divided into topical areas. Users may subscribe to a topic and receive notice when a new post appears on that forum.

Our software provider has created an electronic forum (“Village Talk”) which is currently only available to Members (not to Volunteers) on TaosElders.org. A user must register for an “Interest Group.” There are many forums on the internet devoted to every topic you can imagine, from travel in Ethiopia to how to repair Indian motorcycles.

Alternatives to forums are various forms of “social media.” These allow you to make virtual connections with other people through a computer platform that is usually supported by paid advertising. Among these are Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, and Instagram.

If you want a live discussion with several people, you will need someone to place a conference call or host a meeting, using one of several tools. The best-known tool is called “ZOOM,” though there are several others. Simply participating in a video meeting is fairly simple, but not as easy as a phone call. Hosting a meeting is more complex. During this pandemic the number of meetings has exploded, and many are recorded for later viewing.

I have excluded technology that does not allow some personal contact, such as radio, TV, and YouTube videos. (Even newspapers were a new technology at one point.) Although these can keep us entertained, they lack the interaction that many of us require.

– Jim Ludden

MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR UPDATE

Hi All,
Here is our current policy for membership services: we have resumed transport for nonessential requests, subject to Volunteer availability. This policy could be changed if the situation gets bad again.

Members are encouraged to stay home and let TENT do the shopping. If you do go out, we encourage you to avoid confined and crowded

places. Wear a face cloth covering. If you feel sick, stay home and call the N.M. Dept. of Health's coronavirus hotline: 855-600-3453.

Respect your TENT driver's supplies, distance, and precautions. Disinfect and sanitize your hands. Sit in the back seat and keep the car windows open. To all, stay safe and be well.

– Gary & Charlene Shapiro

DEMENTIA – HOW DO WE KNOW WE HAVE IT?

Here we dive a little deeper into risk factors for dementia, signs of it, assessment, and how to reduce our risk or delay the onset.

The primary risk factors are age and gender. Also, African Americans have twice the frequency of dementia as others, and Hispanics/Latinos have 1.5 times higher risk. Down syndrome* is correlated with Alzheimer's, especially as Down patients are living longer than in the past. Family history is also a factor.

How do you look for the signs in yourself or others? Early dementia is indicated by one or more of the following:

1. Memory changes – forgetting something recently learned, asking the same questions over and over, relying on memory aids for things you used to remember
2. Challenges in planning or problem solving
3. Difficulty completing familiar tasks
4. Confusion with time or place
5. Visual and spatial difficulties
6. Problems with words

7. Misplacing things
8. Decreased or poor judgment
9. Withdrawal from work/social activities
10. Changes in mood and personality

Later-stage dementia behaviors include:

1. Repetitive questioning
2. Agitation
3. Anxiety
4. Shadowing/clinging to others
5. Sundowning (lack of mental clarity later in the day)
6. Tearfulness
7. Sleeplessness
8. Being suspicious
9. Pacing
10. Wandering (a safety issue!)

Only 50 percent of those who show signs get a diagnosis or are told that they have it.

We should want to know if we have it, for a number of reasons! Some dementia can be life-threatening if it's not detected or treated promptly. And some problems can be treated or reversed with medications that are available right now.

If we know about our condition now, we have more time to consider and plan for the future,

addressing care options, legal/financial matters, and safety and transportation; empowering others to make decisions; building the right care team and social network; exploring drug therapies for symptom relief; realizing longer independence; and perhaps choosing to participate in clinical trials.

Experienced doctors can diagnose dementia with 90 to 95 percent accuracy; the best ones to work with are geriatricians and neurologists. If you are experiencing symptoms when you go to a doctor's appointment, do take a "knowledgeable informant" with you: someone who will ask questions and take notes. Keep a log with a list of your symptoms (when, how often, where), with input from family members or close friends, and take it to the doctor with you. Include a list of your current and previous health problems, medications, vitamins, supplements, and over-the-counter medications.

An assessment includes medical history, evaluation of mental status and cognitive ability, visual-motor coordination, language skills, a physical exam, and a psychiatric evaluation. It may include interviews with family or others close to you and involve more extensive diagnostic tools.

None of us wants to get dementia, although at this point, we have no way to prevent it. However, here are 12 ways to reduce the risk of dementia or delay its onset:

1. Get regular cardiovascular exercise
2. Eat a balanced diet high in fruits and vegetables, especially blueberries
3. Get enough sleep
4. Take care of your heart, aided by doctor visits and tests
5. Ask your doctor to administer cognitive health exams as part of your annual check-up
6. Stop smoking

7. Seek treatment for depression or anxiety and manage any stress
8. Treat hearing loss so that you can stay connected and engaged
9. Stay socially engaged (find ways to be part of your community, even during COVID-19)
10. Keep your mind active by taking a variety of classes
11. Challenge your mind with new activities and creative endeavors
12. Wear a seatbelt and a helmet, when appropriate, to prevent brain injury

This the second of three articles on dementia, taken from a webinar offered by AARP/Colorado. The next article addresses how to pay for costs associated with diagnosis and treatment and how to care for your loved ones with dementia. -- Nancy Ewing

* A person with Down syndrome is born with an extra chromosome. Cognitive impairment ranges from mild to moderate.



RESOURCES

NM Senator Martin Heinrich offers support for seniors during this difficult period. He asks that we contact his office with any needs for assistance:

<https://www.heinrich.senate.gov/contact>.

Also, he suggests contacting [NM Coverage Connector](#) to see if you are eligible for free or low-cost insurance options; and calling 1-833-862-3935 or visiting beWellnm.com for information about converting health insurance programs if you lose job-based coverage.

AARP has updated information about life during this period, including tips for safety during caregiver visits. [Click here](#).

Also from this AARP [link](#) "Will the Coronavirus affect the 50-Plus Vote?"

AARP is also reaching out to members and all older adults to communicate any new rules and procedures that will be put in place to accommodate the safeguards needed during the pandemic.

Absentee ballots are highly recommended and in New Mexico can be obtained by submitting a request now. (The ballot will be sent to you in October.) Click [here](#) to request an absentee ballot.

And last but not least is a reminder that [this link](#) will connect you to the national Village to Village network which TENT is a member of so people who know TENT and have friends in other places can use VtV to find out if there is a village near them.
-- 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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