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Newsletter of the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico, published on www.nfbnm.org, on New Mexico Newsline, and on NFB Newsline.

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# PREAMBLE

The National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico (NFBNM) is a 501(c)(3) consumer organization comprised of blind and sighted people committed to changing what it means to be blind. Though blindness is still all too often a tragedy to those who face it, we know from our own personal experience that with training and opportunity, it can be reduced to the level of a physical nuisance. We work to see that blind people receive services and training to which they are entitled and that parents of blind children receive the advice and support they need to help their youngsters grow up to be happy, productive adults. We believe that first-class citizenship means that people have both rights and responsibilities, and we are determined to see that blind people become first-class citizens of these United States, enjoying their rights and fulfilling their responsibilities. The most serious problems we face have less to do with our lack of vision than with discrimination based on the public’s ignorance and misinformation about blindness. Join us in educating New Mexicans about the abilities and aspirations of New Mexico’s blind citizens.

(Adapted from NFB of Ohio newsletter.)

# TRIBUTES TO GARY MONTAGUE

By Elaine Montague

There will be a Celebration of Life for Gary Montague at St. John’s United Methodist Church, 2626 Arizona Street NE, at 10:30 on July 17, followed by a light lunch. I will welcome those who would like to participate. It’s been a long time since Gary passed on November 6, but at last the church is open for a service. St. John’s is to the east of Staples at Menaul and San Pedro. I can be reached at authormontague505@gmail.com.

The College of Education at the University of New Mexico is paying a tribute to Gary via Zoom on June 10. Part of the tribute is included below. It will be read by Dr. Ruth Luckasson, Chair, Department of Special Education. There will be information about our scholarship, The Elaine and Gary Montague Victory from the Shadows Endowed Scholarship in Special Education, which we set up to broaden the understanding that those with poor or no sight can live successful, meaningful lives. The scholarship will be awarded to undergraduate or graduate students in a special and general education teacher-training program. The scholarship will be awarded in perpetuity, and the first one will be announced or awarded this December.

Register to receive a Zoom link for June 10 at 3:00 PM at https://goto.unm.edu/tribute.

UNM College of Education Tribute – Gary Ted Montague

June 10, 2021

A friend noted that Gary was always by his wife’s side, inspiring her to do her best, while quietly going about his work, even during declining health. His engaging smile invited others to persevere, and they enjoyed his sonorous voice.

Gary Ted Montague loved his God, his wife, his country, music, and tools of all kinds. He overcame blindness, cancer, deafness, poor mobility, and other challenges to win six awards for his book “Victory from the Shadows, Growing Up in a New Mexico School for the Blind and Beyond.” He wrote Victory to show why there is no giving up and to promote the understanding that individuals with extremely poor or no vision can participate fully in life. Anne Hillerman called Gary’s story one of strength, resilience, and optimism. It documents domestic life on a mid-20th century New Mexico homestead and a farm on the eastern plains. He describes in a straightforward manner how his family reared a boy with special needs and the conundrum of living with low vision. He shows his perspective of the educational and employment challenges of those with little or no vision from 1936-1994 and includes current observations and resources.

Gary became a residential student at the specialized school at the age of eight. Thereafter, he spent Christmases and summers on the family farm. He graduated from the University of New Mexico College of Education with assistance from 300 volunteer readers and married his college sweetheart and co-author, Elaine Carson Montague. Gary believed one should persevere with integrity whatever the challenge.

Born with low vision, he was a determined trailblazer. Gary’s career spanned more than thirty years at Sandia National Laboratories in the areas of Education and Training and Safety Engineering. He worked in the sighted world with few accommodations. The Americans with Disabilities Act was passed four years before he retired.

Gary is published in the 2018 Southwest Writers Anthology and a 2019 newsletter of the National Federation of the Blind of New Mexico. He gave talks, was featured in a magazine article and a podcast, and his YouTube video was presented at a conference of a historical society. The video is online at www.elainemontague.com. Victory was chosen the 2020 Best Biography in the Communications Contest of the National Federation of Press Women and won first place in the Parenting and Family category of the 2020 New Mexico/Arizona Book Awards. Victory is available through BARD for those with a print disability and online for Kindle and Nook. Print copies are sold in bookstores and by Elaine at authormontague505@gmail.com.

Gary wanted Victory to be used in general and special education teacher-training programs. The parent of one child with Down syndrome and a second with Tourette’s told the Montagues, “Victory is not a book about vision loss. It is a book about hope.” And hope is what Gary was about.

# SOCIAL DISTANCING AND FAMILY LIFE

By Larry Lorenzo

For the past year, we all have been experiencing COVID-19 and its impact on "normal" life. Change that: "normal" does not exist. As a grandparent, I recently became much more keenly aware of the role that grandchildren play in our lives. After getting fully vaccinated, we invited the grandkids to stay for a week. Following very limited contact for a year, this proved extremely interesting from a blindness perspective. This was especially true for my six-year-old grandson named Tomas.

For context, let me state that I have been blind since childhood, and my grandchildren have always known me as being blind. However, interaction with Tomas has been less frequent. With Coronavirus restrictions, contact during the past year has been extremely limited. As with most young children, both his physical and intellectual growth has been extraordinary. Interestingly, my being blind became a point of increased attention and curiosity for Tomas. Many questions about doing things without sight persisted.

The challenge was to entertain a six-year-old for a week. For this purpose, I'd like to focus on three activities we shared, which proved both interesting and insightful. To burn off energy, which he had and which I was in need of, I found a basketball that we could dribble on the patio. Since we don't have a basketball goal, we improvised and used a plastic trash barrel to shoot baskets. As a point of reference, I hung a small transistor radio on the fence near the "goal.” This proved less than adequate, and Tomas was not impressed with my shooting during a game of "horse.” In "horse,” a letter is awarded for each basket made. The first to complete "horse" wins the game. In order to be more competitive, I placed the “goal” on a seam of the concrete patio. At first, I felt a bit guilty. Then it was pointed out that sighted players use lines on a court for reference all the time. Okay! With this new reference, I became much more competitive.

We also played Black Jack or 21. To make the game more interesting, we played for pennies. I quickly learned that Tomas is very good at math. He was briefly curious about the Braille cards. Then his focus was on beating his grandpa. We also walked to a nearby park and played on swings, slides, etc. Did I mention that I'm not as young as I used to be!

To put it mildly, the week was an exhausting and interesting experience. Although I won some basketball games, I must admit that Tomas is highly coordinated and won more often than I did. I also lost considerably more pennies. I definitely lost any immediate need for jumping around in a playground. And yet, I can't help but think that something more important was gained during the week. We both laughed a lot, and now we will enjoy memories of our time together. Most important, I think Tomas walked away with a different perspective of life with a blind grandpa.

# MEMBER SPOTLIGHTS

By Gabriella Smith

It is once again time for member spotlights! This round we have Tara Chavez of the Albuquerque Chapter and Jedi Moerke of the White Sands Chapter.

Tara is the president of the Albuquerque Chapter. She was born in California but has lived here since she was five. Tara was born with a retinal detachment, and as a result, she lost her sight when she was three years old.

Tara works for the United States Forest Service. She is the quality assurance specialist for the Chief Information Office’s Validation and Testing team. When she can, she also tests for Section 508 compliance using her refreshable braille display and JAWS.

Tara also uses a guide dog at work. She and her first guide dog, a black lab named Rika, graduated in 2010. She says walking with a guide dog is different than using a cane, because there is a loss of tactile feedback, but mobility is more fluid. For instance, with a guide dog you don’t have to worry about finding poles, because the dog will go around obstacles on its own. One of her favorite things about using a guide dog is that the dog can help you find certain objects, such as trash cans or doors. She says one important thing to know about using a guide dog is that you can’t stop using your cane, because you’re going to need to use the cane sometimes instead of the dog. Tara is currently working with her second guide dog Patterson, with whom she graduated in 2017.

Jedi is the president of the White Sands Chapter. They were born blind, and they believe that it is not important to go into the how or why when talking about blindness, because while this can be somewhat helpful to get new members on their feet, it can also take away from the point that the amount you can see doesn’t matter. Jedi was born in New Mexico, grew up in Washington, and moved back here about five years ago.

Jedi works for the Commission for the Blind in Alamogordo and specializes in cane travel skills. They say that in addition to using a screen reader and braille at work, their most important adaptation is their mental skills, like being able to interpret the environment by listening to it. They say they are very good at listening to cane noises, not just from their own cane, but from their students’ canes as well.

Jedi became president of the White Sands Chapter in November, 2019. They have been chapter president before, but they say this time has been extra challenging thanks to the pandemic. Jedi says the chapter was struggling, and it got a slow start last year, but the chapter has been coming around and has been making a more positive start in 2021. They say that they have a good, strong board behind them, which is vital in order to have a healthy, thriving chapter. They say that the trouble with being a Federationist is that it can be difficult to balance that with other things sometimes, and NFB responsibilities can be inadvertently pushed to the back burner, so having a good team is very important.

Jedi is a vegan, and they enjoy spending time learning new vegan recipes. They say a lot of people think vegan food is boring, but they believe it can be really fun.

# ATTEND THE 2021 NFB BELL ACADEMY IN-HOME EDITION

National Federation of the Blind BELL Academy: Braille Enrichment for Literacy & Learning

Enhance your Braille and nonvisual skills with us!

The National Federation of the Blind is offering virtual programs of the NFB BELL Academy this summer to prepare blind and low-vision children to

grow into confident and independent blind people by enhancing their education. Options are available for beginner, intermediate, and advanced students.

\*Receive Braille and other fun materials for lessons

\*Connect with experienced teachers

\*Build relationships with other blind students and mentors

Take advantage of this opportunity for your child to connect with blind role models and more by applying for one of the following sessions:

•Session 2 - July 19-30, 2021 (deadline to apply is June 19)

•Session 3 - August 9-20, 2021 (deadline to apply is July 9)

Link to the NFB BELL website:

<https://nfb.org/programs-services/nfb-bell-academy>

# TO EDUCATE OR ALIENATE

By Nancy Burns

As blind or visually impaired people, we are frequently confronted with demeaning and sometimes insulting questions or comments from the general public. The difficulty is how to respond to these situations without alienating anyone. The sighted public generally has little, if any, connection with someone who happens to be blind; therefore, long-held false assumptions seem to kick into place.

From my years of dealing with such encounters, it has come to my attention that the common belief is that it would be impossible for the sighted person in question to perform typical daily tasks without vision. The truth of the matter is that such opinions are accurate. We, as blind people, know that it takes training and a positive attitude to become a confident and competent individual. The National Federation of the Blind has for decades provided support and training in these areas. The challenge then becomes how to respond to such a person. These encounters occur all too quickly, so we must be able to think quickly on our feet and respond without hesitation. This is challenging and much easier said than done.

A lively discussion centering around these issues took place during a recent meeting of the Creating Options support group. Several examples of rather thoughtless questions were reported: Who picks out your clothes for you, do you know where you are going, will your dog take you to the right location, or may I move your stick? These are just a few of the commonly asked questions that we hear. There are a number of ways that we could react to such questions, such as using sarcasm or giving an angry retort, making a humorous comment, explaining politely that we are capable and do not need assistance, or simply ignoring the question altogether.

The solution seems relatively simple to those of us who happen to be blind and have many years of experience on which to draw. Sometimes there can be a bright side to these encounters. Dialog between blind people and the general public does not always occur. The more we are out there and seen walking independently, catching buses for work, being involved in daily activities or involved in civic organizations, the more we are viewed as “normal.” Each of us is an ambassador of the truth and must respond politely to those never-ending comments from uneducated or unthinking people. It is the responsibility of each and every one of us to wear a badge of independence and to share the responsibility of educating and not alienating the sighted public.

# IS THERE SOMETHING WE DO NOT UNDERSTAND?

By Pat Munson

Jack and I have lived in New Mexico for over ten years, but we still have trouble with people’s directions to restaurants and other places. For example, we were to meet some folks at a restaurant. I called the place to get directions. I was told I could not miss the restaurant because it is right on the corner of two streets I knew well. Jack and I drove to said corner; we found no restaurant. We asked a number of folks, but no one knew where it was. So we decided to drive down one of the streets; two blocks later, we finally found it.

This kind of problem has arisen a number of times, but the following wins a prize. If you have ever had an appointment at Kaseman, you might know something we did not: it is a series of buildings set in a strange arrangement. The first time we went there, we were looking for a sign stating what was housed in the building we were near. What were we thinking? There was no such sign. Jack said he saw a number of folks going toward one unnamed building, so we followed them in. The lobby was vast; it might serve as a football field. We headed toward what we took to be a check-in line. After that, we eventually found our way to the doctor's office.

One time I needed lab work on the weekend. We had Mary Rose in the car and told her we would be back shortly. We walked over to the door where we usually enter. It was locked. Then we made a big mistake: we started walking in what we learned the hard way was the wrong direction. After going at a fast pace, we found nothing but closed, unnamed buildings. Finally we found the emergency room. Then we actually found a human who gave us correct directions. He pointed and said the lab was on the west side of the complex. Too bad I did not have my Braille compass. When we got to the correct check-in, the gal said the other lab is not open on weekends. By the time we got back to the car and poor Mary Rose, an hour had elapsed.

Now we have another story which wins a prize. Jack's doctor wanted him to go to the sleep clinic. Fifteen minutes before his appointment, he entered the building in which his doctor has his office. How could he be so foolish! After not finding the clinic, he asked several employees. No one knew its location. So, back outside he went. He stopped at other buildings, but no one could assist. Since he had had good luck at the emergency room before, he went there and asked.

Sure enough, he struck gold! A worker told him the clinic was behind the emergency room, right down that mile-long hall. He made it to the end and saw a sign stating that indeed he was at the correct door. There was no one around, but there was a phone. A worker answered and told him to press the button, and the door did open. When he gave his name, he was told he was very late and would have a long wait. Now here comes the best part: the worker handed him a laptop and told him to fill in the information. Since Jack has very few skills on how to use a laptop, he handed it back to the lady and came home …

Perhaps someone reading this can clear the fog from our brains concerning these secrets! Please help!

# THE BEAST IS ON THE MOVE

By Larry Lorenzo

NFB of New Mexico is supporting Blind Entertainers, Artists And Support Team, "BEAST.” Blind New Mexican performers, writers, and other creators are encouraged to develop skills and raise expectations. While contributions by blind performers and creators are nothing new, the entertainment industry is expanding opportunities for all minorities, including people with disabilities. New Mexico is quickly becoming a major player in film and television production. This means that all aspects of the entertainment industry are needing technicians, writers, workers, etc. Blind and visually impaired characters are being portrayed more often by real blind actors.

NM BEAST is actively supporting all levels of talent and ambition by aspiring blind and visually impaired individuals. Last December, a holiday program was coordinated by the group and presented on Zoom. The one-hour show was also made available on YouTube.

Blind performers and friends are again invited to share their talents in a showcase during the NFB of New Mexico State Convention via Zoom in August. If you are a singer, musician, comic, poet, or other type of performer, and if you share our vision of higher expectations and opportunities for blind New Mexicans, come join in the fun. Interested persons can contact NM BEAST or NFBNM affiliate members.

For more information, contact Joaquin Luna or Larry Lorenzo:

Joaquin Luna

E-mail: mr.joaquinluna@gmail.com

Larry Lorenzo

E-mail: 4lorenzo.l@gmail.com

# GOOD EATING

## SUBSTITUTE FOR SUBWAY

By Dona Orgeron

Hello all! I thought of this when I heard a commercial on TV advertising a sale on a brand name company’s delicious sandwiches. I thought (as I do these days holed-up in the house), why can’t we just make our own very fresh sandwiches at home? So, here it is: really simple, fresh and made to my own specifications.

1 loaf French bread (Albertson’s or Walmart)

Lettuce, pile it up

Tomato of your choice

Bacon, 2 strips per sandwich

Cheese of your choice (about 1-1/2 slices per sandwich)

Peppers, any kind, sliced to fit

Mayo, mustard, ketchup, Nutella, whatever you fancy

Instructions:

Cut the ends off of the French bread about 2 inches from each end. Place the ends of the French bread into a plastic bag and save them for breakfast.

The remaining piece of bread is too long for just one sandwich, so cut the bread in half to create the beginnings of two smaller subs. For each half, turn the bread on its side and slice to make the top and bottom of the sandwich. To avoid smushing the inside of the bread, instead of holding the knife parallel to the bread and slicing it that way, hold your knife perpendicular to (at a right angle to) the bread and carefully slice it from one end to the other, length-wise. Now you have the start of two sandwiches.

Spread your condiments, such as mayo or mustard, on the inside of your bread. Now pile on your favorite ingredients from the above list. Put the top on and press very gently down on the sandwich to keep it together.

Ready to eat: your very own customized (and not expensive) sandwich!

## INSTANT POT FRIED RICE

Submitted by Palma Lewis

Fried rice is a delicious meal, and it's actually quite easy to make in the pressure cooker! It's also an excellent way to use up your leftovers at the end of a week. This recipe takes about 35 minutes to make and is packed with flavor!

2 cups Jasmine rice, rinsed and drained

2 cups water

2 tablespoons sesame oil

2 tablespoons soy sauce

1 tablespoon rice vinegar

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

4 eggs

1 onion, finely chopped

1 cup frozen peas and carrots mix

1 cup sweet kernel corn

Sesame seeds, for garnish

Diced green onions, for garnish

Use a rice strainer to rinse the rice until it’s no longer cloudy. Once the water is clear, let the rice drain for 10-15 minutes. Add the rice to the pressure cooker with 2 cups of water. Stir, close the lid, and point the valve to SEALED. Select Manual mode and cook on high for 3 minutes.

Upon completion, allow for a 10-minute natural release. Then, do a quick release for the remaining pressure.

Open the lid, fluff the rice with a fork, and transfer to a bowl. Without cleaning the insert, turn on Sauté mode, adjust to the medium setting, and add in sesame oil. Once the oil begins to sizzle, scrape the bottom of the insert with a wooden spoon and add in the onion. Sauté the onion in the oil and stir for 1-2 minutes. Then add the peas, carrots, and corn. Stir to combine it all together.

Add the butter and cook everything together for another 2 minutes. Push the veggies to one side of the pot and add the eggs to the other side. Stir the eggs constantly (like you’re making scrambled eggs). Once the eggs begin to cook, mix them in with the veggies until fully cooked.

Cancel Sauté mode and set the heat setting to Keep Warm. Add the rice back to the insert with veggies.

Add the soy sauce, rice vinegar, some sesame seeds (if desired), and combine with the veggie-egg mixture.

Finally, turn off the pressure cooker and serve the fried rice topped with sesame seeds and chopped green onions.

# ACCESSIBILITY BOUTIQUES AND SEMINARS

These are workshops presented by National Federation of the Blind access technology experts that provide introductions to accessibility best practices and the latest trends in access tech.

To register for a workshop, use this link:

<https://nfb.org/programs-services/center-excellence-nonvisual-access/trainings/accessibility-boutiques/accessibility-boutique-registration>

There are two workshops in June, listed below:

Wednesday, June 16, 1:00–5:00 p.m. Eastern Time

Getting the Most Out of Microsoft Office with a Screen Reader, Zoom Teleconference

Mastering the basics of Office may be easy, but using its advanced features with a screen reader can become tricky. Even if you begin as a novice, during this seminar you will progress toward becoming an advanced user in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook.

Tuesday, June 29, 2:00-3:30 p.m. Eastern Time

Gaming for Everyone, Zoom Teleconference

With all the stress of work, school, and daily life, it is important to take time out to relax and unwind. One excellent way to do this is through gaming, and the number of accessible options is increasing all the time. Come to our Gaming for Everyone boutique on Tuesday, June 29 from 2:00-3:30 p.m. and learn about accessible gaming options on computers, phones, and consoles. We will demonstrate games from various genres, both those designed for the blind and mainstream options that are playable. We will also discuss ways that blind friends and family members can be included in games that are not otherwise accessible.

# MEETINGS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

May 31, 2021: Deadline to register for 2021 NFB National Convention, anywhere and everywhere

June 1, 2021: Presidential Release Live 8:00 p.m. ET (Spanish translation and CC available)

July 6-10, 2021: NFB National Convention, anywhere and everywhere