

BOOK IT: **59** GREAT READS TAKE YOU THERE

FEBRUARY 2010

# New Mexico

MAGAZINE

FOLLOW US TO  
**HILLERMAN  
COUNTRY**

PASSIONATE PAIRS:  
**LEGENDARY  
LOVE STORIES**

RECIPES FOR YOUR  
**BOOK CIRCLE  
TEA TIME**

DESERT ESCAPE:  
**SADDLE UP  
DOWN SOUTH**





# New Mexico

88TH YEAR: THE ORIGINAL STATE MAGAZINE

● = GREAT READS    ♥ = VALENTINE'S DAY SPECIAL

## February 2010

VOLUME 88 ISSUE 2

### FEATURES

#### ● BOOK EXCERPT

### 24 Tony Hillerman's New Mexico

Author Tony Hillerman inspired thousands of readers to discover (and rediscover) the Four Corners region that was the setting for so many of his mysteries. Now, his daughter and son-in-law, writer *Anne Hillerman* and photographer *Don Strel*, take you to Zuni Pueblo in this excerpt from their recent book, *Tony Hillerman's Landscape: On the Road with Chee and Leaphorn*.

#### ● NEW MEXICO NOW

### 30 The Best from the Best

Six top authors reveal the New Mexico books they love, ranging from a Magdalena love story, to a Pueblo tale of sin and redemption, to a Pecos Valley classic about a *curandera*. *As told to Wolf Schneider*

#### ● NEW MEXI-CULTURE

### 34 From Book to Film

Hollywood may not be listening, but here are nine New Mexico stories we'd love to see on the screen.

#### WILD PLACES

### 36 Sweet Symphony

*Ashley M. Biggers* heads for the border, where she saddles up her horse for a ride across desert mesas under the warm sun. Pack your T-shirts and head out to the proposed Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks Wilderness, outside Las Cruces.

#### ♥ HERITAGE

### 42 Classic New Mexico Couples

"TRUE LOVE? SPLITSVILLE! ON THE ROCKS? REUNITED!" Saucy headlines from today's tabloids could have described the relationships of some of New Mexico's most legendary couples. This Valentine's Day, *Diana Del Mauro* takes a fun-loving look at history.

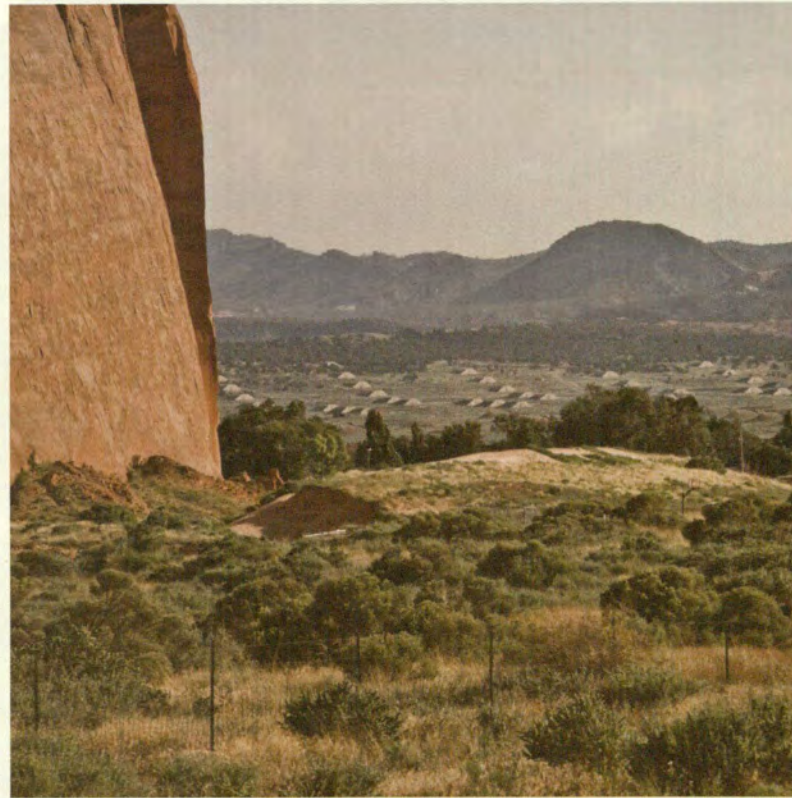
#### THROUGH THE LENS

### 46 Many the Miles

Stepping up to the challenge to photograph only what's within 60 miles of his Clovis home, photographer *Nathan McCreery* zeroes in on the oft-overlooked austerity of eastern New Mexico.

#### ON THE COVER:

Chaco Culture National Historical Park is a setting in three of Tony Hillerman's mysteries. This photo, *Chaco Canyon Hike*, is by Gallup's Brian Leddy.



24 Bunkers at Fort Wingate with Zuni Mountains. PHOTO BY DON STREL



42 Maria and Julian Martinez, c. 1925. UNKNOWN PHOTOGRAPHER, COURTESY PALACE OF GOVERNORS PHOTO ARCHIVES (NMHM/DCA), #2000043



## DEPARTMENTS

### INSIGHTS

**4** Editor's Letter

**6** Storytellers

**7** Mailbag

**78** Greener Acres

by *Doug Fine*, the carbon-neutral cowboy:  
Books without Borders—reading in the great outdoors

**79** One of Our 50 Is Missing

**80** My Secret Place:

Albuquerque poet and novelist  
*Jimmy Santiago Baca* heads for his mountain retreat.  
By *Devon Jackson*

### 9 GOING PLACES

**What to discover in February**

Cling to your sweetie on a Santa Fe helicopter ride, kick back in a Pueblo palace, knock back a cucumber jalapeño margarita, and more.

**17** Calendar

Take in a budget-friendly table for two during Restaurant Week, Chocolate Fantasia in Silver City, and the Mount Taylor Winter Quadrathlon in Grants.

**18** King of the Road

*Lesley S. King* takes the pulse of today's Atomic City.

**20** Artscapes

Contemporary cowboy artists reinterpret the West.  
By *Johnny D. Boggs*

### 51 BRINGING IT HOME

Host a salon and high tea New Mexico style, dive into these choice coffee-table books, and groove to Latin hip-hop.

### 52 Southwest Flavor:

Whip up New Mexico tea muffins (with green chile and cheese!) for your book-circle friends, then serve them with tea and conversation courtesy of these tips from Albuquerque's New Mexico Tea Company.

By *Wendy Sue Gist*

### 57 Books

Off-beat travel guides, poems from a New Mexico icon, and a mythical children's tale

### 59 Music

Santa Fe hip-hop artist Mark J. Ortiz calls his music "New Mexi-flow."  
By *Emily Drabanski*

### 60 Unique Boutique

Large and In Charge—New Mexico coffee-table books  
By *Jennifer Olson*



**11** Mabel Dodge Luhan House.  
PHOTO BY TERRY THOMPSON



**20** Good Horses Make Good Cowboys (Detail).  
BY TIM COX

### IN THIS ISSUE:



**52** New Mexico Tea Bar Muffin.  
PHOTO BY DOUGLAS MERRIAM

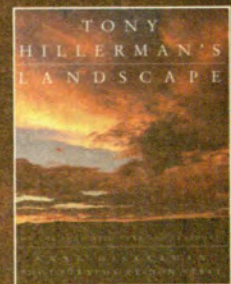


# TONY HILLERMAN'S NEW MEXICO

A year after the passing of mystery-writing master Tony Hillerman, his daughter, writer ANNE HILLERMAN, and son-in-law, photographer DON STREL, published *Tony Hillerman's Landscape: On the Road with Chee and Leaphorn*, a collection of travelogues based on their explorations of the Native American lands that were the settings for his novels. Go with them as they honor the memory of this icon of Southwestern literature.

*Behind him, above the red sandstone wall of the mesa, a skyscape of feathery cirrus clouds stretched southward toward Mexico. To the west over the Painted Desert, they were flushed with the afterglow of sunset. To the north this reflected light colored the cliffs of the Zuni Buttes, a delicate rose. Far below him in the shadow of the mesa, a light went on in the camper near the site of the anthropologist's dig.*

[FROM DANCE HALL OF THE DEAD: CHAPTER 1]



From the book TONY HILLERMAN'S LANDSCAPE. Copyright © 2009 by Anne Hillerman. Photographs copyright © 2009 by Don Strel. Reprinted by arrangement with Harper, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers.

## A DAUGHTER'S RECOLLECTIONS

[FROM TONY HILLERMAN'S LANDSCAPE: CHAPTER 1]

This book grew from my desire to immerse myself in my father's world, part real, part imagined. I wanted to stand where he stood and see what he saw. . . . This project provided a wonderful opportunity to see these places as my husband, photographer Don Strel, took countless photos. The book connected me to the two most important men in my life.

When we set out, I expected to be impressed by the landscape, but I didn't expect to find so many people whom Dad's words had touched. After his death, the overwhelming kindness of people who felt connected to me because of their love of Dad's stories often moved me to tears. . . .

The first trip Don and I make after Dad's death, returning to our project, takes us to Zuni Pueblo, the site of *Dance Hall of the Dead*. Tribal officials treat Don and me like honored guests. Councilor Arden Kucatec escorts us to the Middle Village so we can photograph the dance plaza featured in the book. Beyond it, Corral Mountain rises against a clear blue sky. I feel a deep sense of calm joy as I stand in that quiet, ancient, and blessed space on that January afternoon.

Later, I'm looking for Dad's description of that scenery. I open *Dance Hall* to find the section where Leaphorn is comforting a young woman distraught over the deaths of two young boys.

*Leaphorn said, "Maybe death should only be for the very old. People who are tired and want some rest." ... Leaphorn talked about it quietly. He told her how the Navajo mythology dealt with it, how Monster Slayer and Child Born of Water took the weapons they had stolen from the Sun and how they killed the monsters that brought death to the Diné but how they decided to spare one kind of death. "We call it Sa," Leaphorn said. "The way my Grandfather told me the story, the Hero Twins found Sa sleeping in a hole in the ground. Born of Water was going to kill him with his club but Sa woke up. He told the twins they should spare him so those who are worn out and tired with age can die to make room for others being born."*

[FROM DANCE HALL OF THE DEAD: CHAPTER 11]

I had the honor of being with Dad in an Albuquerque hospital during the last two weeks of his life, bringing him sips of coffee, turning his pillow so the cool side sat against his skin, sitting with him and Mom and other family members who shared the vigil. Like any child whose parent dies, I wish Dad and I had more time together. But I saw that, supported by his deep Catholic faith, he faced death as friend, with no hesitation. When Sa came that Sunday afternoon, my father welcomed him. He was ready for what he often called "the next great adventure."



## DANCE HALL OF THE DEAD

[FROM TONY HILLERMAN'S  
LANDSCAPE: CHAPTER 3]

**THE STORY:** A Zuni Pueblo boy studying to dance as the Little Fire God disappears, leaving a pool of blood next to his bicycle. His best friend George Bowlegs, a Navajo, is also missing. Does young George know something about the crime? As Navajo Tribal Police Officer Joe Leaphorn investigates, the case grows to include a drug-dealing commune, suspicious activity at an archaeological dig, and the age-old conflict between love and ambition. The action-filled climax takes place at Shalako, the sacred Zuni ceremony in which messengers of the Gods come to bless the world.

.....

**OF INTEREST:** The book, the first in which detective Joe Leaphorn is the principal character, won the 1974 Edgar Award for Best Mystery Novel. Hillerman initially described the Folsom Man dig site he uses in *Dance Hall of the Dead* in an article he wrote as a freelance assignment for a national magazine. Hillerman also used Zuni Pueblo as the setting for a children's book, *The Boy Who Made Dragonfly*, which he based on a traditional Zuni story. His daughter Jan Grado did the illustrations.

### TONY HILLERMAN'S

**COMMENTS:** "The problem here was how to have Leaphorn understand what was motivating the behavior of George Bowlegs, a fugitive Navajo boy. To do this I had Joe gradually understand Zuni theology as a Navajo (or a white mystery writer) would, and realize the boy was trying to make contact with the Zuni Council of the Gods. Thus the boy (and Leaphorn) would come to the Shalako ceremony, at which these spirits make their annual return to the pueblo, and thus I would have my excuse to describe this incredibly beautiful ceremony."

[FROM *SELDOM DISAPPOINTED*]

Corn Mountain is a sacred place for the Zuni people; the village of Halona lies in the mesa's shadow.

*Leaphorn's gaze rested on Zuni Village. Halona, they called it. Halona Itawana, the Middle Ant Hill of the World. A hillock beside a bend on the now dry bed of the Zuni River, a hillock of red stone houses jammed together to form the old village and surrounded now by a sprawling cluster of newer houses. Maybe six thousand Zunis, Leaphorn thought, with something like 65,000 square miles of reservation, all but a few hundred of them lived like bees in this single busy hive.*

[FROM *DANCE HALL OF THE DEAD*:  
CHAPTER 7]

## ABOUT ZUNI PUEBLO AND ITS PEOPLE

[FROM TONY HILLERMAN'S *LANDSCAPE*:  
CHAPTER 3]

Zuni Pueblo, the largest of New Mexico's Pueblo communities, sits in a scenic valley surrounded by mesas some 150 miles west of Albuquerque. I first visited here when I was taking an anthropology class at the University of New Mexico (I rode to school each morning with Dad) and a friend invited me to the Shalako dances, the most important of the Zuni ceremonies. I'll never forget the clear, bitterly cold November night, the crowd of mostly Indians, and the unearthly music of the Shalako's long snapping beak as it swooped and danced and hooted to the drumbeat.

Dad made many trips to Zuni and was a guest at Shalako, which he re-creates as a setting for the climax of *Dance Hall of the Dead*. He often said that his interest in the Zuni took a serious turn when his middle daughter, my sister Jan, began to date a Zuni boy friend. The romance faltered, but Dad's connection to the pueblo stayed strong.

Archaeological evidence demonstrates that the Zuni people have lived on this land since at least 1300 A.D., and ancestors of the modern Zuni may have settled in the area as early as 650. Today, some 8,000 Zuni tribal members occupy the pueblo proper and



Sunlight struck the east faces of the Zuni Buttes ten miles to the northwest. It reflected from the yellow water tower that marked the site where the government had built Black Rock to house its Bureau of Indian Affairs people... It illuminated the early-morning haze of smoke emerging from the chimneys of Zuni Village.

[FROM DANCE HALL OF THE DEAD: CHAPTER 7]

its Black Rock suburb. Zuni is unique in its language and its ceremonial life. It was the place of first contact between Spanish explorers, who mistook it for the legendary golden Cities of Cibola, and the indigenous people of the Southwest.

Don and I met with the Zuni tribal council for permission to photograph in January 2009. Governor Norman J. Cooney told us that *Dance Hall of the Dead* helped him stave off homesickness as a student in faraway Salt Lake City, Utah. He had never read a Hillerman book before, he said, but the Warrior God on the cover instantly attracted him. "I regret that I never had the opportunity to personally thank Mr. Hillerman for the pleasure the book gave me." Cooney touched his hand to his heart. "I would have told him how much of a difference it made in my life." Dad died a few months before our trip to Zuni.

Council members offered good suggestions for photo locations in a discussion that reflected both their hospitality and their pride in their homeland. Councilor Arden Kucate personally escorted us to the Middle Village. Don and I followed

along a narrow ice-covered path between old sandstone buildings to steps rising to a rooftop that overlooked the dance plaza. Ladders led to the kivas beneath us. The scene could have come from *Dance Hall*, except for the wonderful bright sunlight.

Back at the tribal offices, we met up with Dan Simplicio, Jr., an affable guide and former member of the Zuni tribal council. Simplicio teaches the Zuni language and culture at the pueblo, and is a jeweler like his well-known father, deceased World War II veteran Dan Simplicio, Sr. Dan helped us find the best vistas of Corn Mountain, *Dowa Yalanne* in Zuni. He also took us to an abandoned commune, a model for the hippie village Dad depicts in *Dance Hall of the Dead*.

Zuni's old mission church, many times rebuilt, includes human-sized murals on the interior walls depicting traditional katsina spirits. [In the years since Dad wrote, *katsina*, the traditional Hopi word for both the dolls and the spirits they represent, has come into broader preferred use. Many scholars use the words *kachina* and *katsina* interchangeably.] For nearly three decades Zuni artist Alex


Seowtewa and his sons created these paintings, painstakingly including details of costume and pose. During one of his visits to Zuni, Dad watched the artists working on these Dancing Gods. He was especially impressed with the figure by the railing of the choir loft, the Shalako, a nine-foot-high pyramid topped by a tiny head and supported by human legs. In the novel, Leaphorn admires the murals as he interviews the parish priest. Don and I would have loved a picture of the art, but the pueblo no longer allows photographs.

We stayed at Zuni's only hotel, the Inn at Halona, a cozy bed-and-breakfast. Our host, Roger Thomas, is a longtime Hillerman fan and we found a well-read copy of *Dance Hall of the Dead* on the bookshelf. The hotel and adjoining grocery store rose from the site where the Vander Wagen family established a trading post in 1903. Roger and his wife, Elaine, a granddaughter of the Vander Wagens, have operated the inn and the store since 1974.

The spring before that, graduating students of Zuni High School class of 1973 invited Tony Hillerman to give

their commencement address. A talk by an Anglo author was a rare event in Zuni: *Dance Hall of the Dead* had just been published.

Dad told the students: "I urge you, if you leave the Zuni reservation, not to leave the ways of Zuni behind you. You will take with you what you have learned at this school from your teachers here. I hope you will also take with you and use what your families have taught you about what is really valuable in this life. ...I would be very proud to be a Zuni. I know that you must be too. And I hope that never changes."

After his talk, stern-faced tribal elders asked Dad to meet with them privately. They wanted to know who had told him certain details of Zuni spiritual practices. He reassured them that everything in *Dance Hall* came from published anthropological reports and the workings of his own imagination. 

Anne Hillerman and Don Strel are featured in "Storytellers" on page 6.

Read more about Zuni Pueblo's Inn at Halona in "Wake Up to Pueblo Ways," (page 15).

The orgy of baking which caught up the women of Zuni each Shalako season had reached its climax during the morning. Now most of the outdoor ovens were cooling, but a thick layer of blue smoke still hung in the air over the pueblo. It made a faint smear as far northwest as the Zuni Buttes and eastward to the gaudy water tower at Black Rock. Even here, high over the valley and a half mile away, Leaphorn's nose caught the vague scent of baking bread and the perfume of burned piñon resin.

[FROM DANCE HALL OF THE DEAD: CHAPTER 18]

The Zuni Buttes, rising to 7,225 feet above sea level to the northwest of Zuni Pueblo, dominate the landscape south of Gallup.

