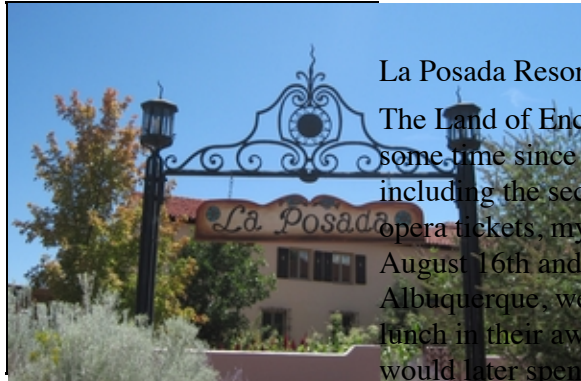


New Mexico - The Land of Enchantment

By Paula G. Cullison Summer 2013



La Posada Resort - Winslow, AZ

The Land of Enchantment beckoned us, since it had been quite some time since our last trip there. After many days of organizing, including the securing of good hotel deals and the purchase of opera tickets, my husband Tim and I drove from Phoenix on August 16th and returned eleven days later. On the way to Albuquerque, we stopped at La Posada Resort in Winslow, AZ for lunch in their award-winning Turquoise Room restaurant. We would later spend the night there before returning home to

Phoenix. This historic resort on Route 66 is one of the original Fred Harvey hotels built by the Santa Fe Railroad in 1929. It was designed by architect Mary Jane Colter, who also designed the El Tovar Hotel at the Grand Canyon. La Posada guests have included famous movie stars like Shirley Temple, John Wayne, Dorothy Lamour, and Clark Gable, as well as Charles and Anne (Morrow) Lindbergh. With visions of cooler temperatures, we headed for the Swiss-made aerial tramway for the ride up to the top of Sandia Peak in Albuquerque. The 11,000 square mile view of the Cibola National Forest, Rio Grande Valley and the rock formations below were breathtaking. We ascended 4,000 feet in 15 minutes. At the top, we spent a few hours walking along the trails and marveling at those who arrived and departed via mountain bikes. It was a great way to appreciate the natural beauty of our neighboring state.



Native American Girl at Indian Market - Santa Fe, NM

In Santa Fe, we enjoyed the Indian Market, film festival, the opera, museums, art galleries, scenery. As luck would have it, we found a great parking spot in Santa Fe. Our first stop was to the San Miguel Mission near the main square. Two Christian Brothers, Kevin and Vincent, were there to greet us. After asking for permission to photograph them, to which they agreed, Brother Kevin took a lovely polished rock from his pocket and handed it to me. I took this as a sign that we would have a good trip. The

main square, known as Santa Fe Plaza, was filled with many Native American artists, as well as several offering arts and crafts from the indigenous people of South and Central America. Entertainment was ongoing. We were treated to the Pueblo tribe's Buffalo Dance and to Navajo chanting. We also met Cody Jansen, a young Navajo woman and student at the University of New Mexico, Gallup, who was named 92nd Inter-Tribal Ceremonial Queen. We admired the multi-talented artistry of Jody Webster, an artist-in-residence for the fair. Webster, a Ho-Chunk - Potawatomi is from Wisconsin. At Webster's display, we met Rose Stiffarm whose film, A Red Girl's Reasoning, was being presented at the 13th annual Native Cinema Showcase. We saw her powerful film dealing with violence against women and three other independent films. The showcase was funded in part by the Smithsonian Institute. The next night we attended a fantastic production of Rossini's La Donna del Lago (Woman of the Lake) at the Santa Fe Opera House (partially open-air - but we did not need our heavy jackets). The superb cast received several standing ovations. An announcement was made informing us that the production will be part of the 2015 season at the Metropolitan Opera in NYC. Bravo! The next day, we walked the lovely streets of Santa Fe, as we visited the Georgia O'Keefe Museum, a number of art galleries, as well as the Garcia Street Book store and the adjacent Subscription coffee shop. One night, we sat in the square and enjoyed the music and the friendly conversations with the locals, especially Ramon, who seemed to know just about everyone who passed by. Another gregarious local tried to recruit us to join her demonstration to Save the Bees, an acknowledged critical environmental

Ramon, who seemed to know just about everyone who passed by. Another gregarious local tried to recruit us to join her demonstration to Save the Bees, an acknowledged critical environmental issue. We also spent time at the International Folk Art Museum founded by Florence Dibell Bartlett and home to over 135,000 art objects from 100 countries. During our visit, there were two special exhibits: one on Japanese kite-makers and the other on the AIDS quilt.



Eat More Chile - Chimayo, NM

We then headed for Chimayo and the Santuario in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, one of the settings in *The Gift* by Louis Michalski. This shrine is a national historic landmark that hosts over 300,000 pilgrims a year, many of who believe in the curative powers of the 'holy dirt' found there. An adjacent church is dedicated to children, especially those who are dealing with a major illness. Our stay at the Rancho di Chimayo Hacienda, estate of the Jaramillo family, was restful. No extraneous noise (TV) to disturb the peaceful tranquility of this special place. We enjoyed a delicious evening meal at the restaurant across the road and morning breakfast on our balcony. Thanks to advice from a fellow traveler, we took the 'High Road' to Taos, aka the Scenic Byway, a winding Route 76. The Carson National Forest covers 1.5 million acres of in this section of New Mexico. The rolling hills and mountainous terrain is home to the Nambe Pueblo - People of the Round Earth - known for their stylized pottery.



Welcome to Taos, NM




Taos Pueblo - Taos, NM

Shortly after arriving in Taos, our first stop was the Pueblo, home to the Tewa people. It had been quite a while since our last visit to this UNESCO World Heritage site which is also a National Historic Landmark. The Pueblo village is made of [adobe](#) which is earth mixed with water and straw, then poured into forms or made into sun-dried bricks. It is estimated to be over 1,000 years old and has been continuously occupied since then. We especially enjoyed the talk given by Flower, one of the tribal members and former inhabitant. Flower explained the history of the area; namely, when Spanish settlers, attracted to the area, began to impose their religious beliefs on these Native peoples, they rebelled in what is known as the Pueblo Revolt of 1680. While at the Pueblo, we enjoyed fry bread made by Paul David Romero (claimed to have been the best!) and bought a small storyteller clay sculpture from Juanita Martinez.

In the Footsteps of Georgia O'Keeffe


We continued our travels in the footsteps of Georgia O'Keeffe with

In the Footsteps of Georgia O'Keefe



We continued our travels in the footsteps of Georgia O'Keefe with a tour of her home - a short drive from the lovely Abiquiu Inn where we stayed. The home with its lean lines and huge windows was sparsely decorated. 'Give me the simple life' must have been O'Keefe's mantra. She spent most of her time there alone, as husband photographer Alfred Stieglitz preferred the tempo of New York City to the solitude of Abiquiu. O'Keefe planted a basic vegetable garden at this and at her Ghost Ranch home from where she did most of her painting. At the Ghost Ranch we purchased tickets for a tour of the sites made famous by O'Keefe who was enchanted by the natural beauty of the Southwest. It was thrilling to stand at those very spots and gaze for albeit relatively short periods of time. The Ghost Ranch, now used for retreats and camp programs, hosts a labyrinth and small Japanese rock garden for meditation purposes. The old pueblo church (now in ruins) of Santa Rosa de Lima was hosting a high mass to celebrate its anniversary the day we were leaving. I got out of the car to take a photo of the procession. When my husband started up the car we knew we were in trouble. An ominous rumble in a wheel startled us. Fortunately, two Rio Arriba County Deputy Sheriffs were there to escort those walking along the road. I flagged them down. They helped us secure towing and car repair in Espanola. My polished stone was working its magic. When we returned to Phoenix, I wrote a letter to the Sheriff in acknowledgement of his deputies' help. To my surprise, he wrote back, noting that he was grateful for my letter, which he would place in the personnel files of the two deputies. He also noted that almost all of the letters he receives are complaints and how happy he was to have received mine.

Rio Grande River



The drive back to Taos on the picturesque Route 68 took us alongside the Rio Grande River. In Taos, we enjoyed an antique car show, the art galleries, especially the one of R.C. Gorman, and a delicious dinner of grilled quail at La Fonda on the Square. One surprise find was the home and museum of Ernest and Mary Blumenschein who were instrumental in establishing the famous Taos Society of Artists in 1915. They were from New York City, no less! They must have heeded Horace Greeley's advice to 'Go West'. We walked across the Rio Grande Gorge Bridge. At 564 feet, it is the second highest bridge in the US. Opened in 1965, the bridge is considered an engineering marvel. The somewhat dizzying views from the bridge were awesome. We were enchanted every step of the way throughout the entire trip. We met many interesting people along the way, including a father and son from Belgium who were enthralled with the vastness of the USA. The son is director of a travel agency in southern Belgium. It was fun to meet visitors from the land of delicate lace, tasty beer and delicious chocolates, as well as those from other countries. For that is the best part of traveling. As Dr. Seuss noted ... Oh, the places you'll go ... Oh, the people you will meet.

I found the following websites to of great help in planning this trip:

www.newmexico.org www.santafe.org www.santafeopera.org www.swaia.org www.taos.org
www.taospueblo.com www.elsantuariodechimayo.us www.blm.gov/nm www.hotels.com

Paula Cullison, a long time Moon Valley neighbor, is a member of the Sonoran Arts League and National League of American Pen Women.