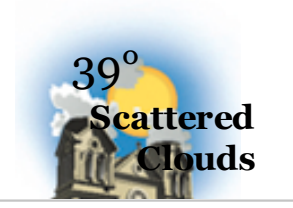


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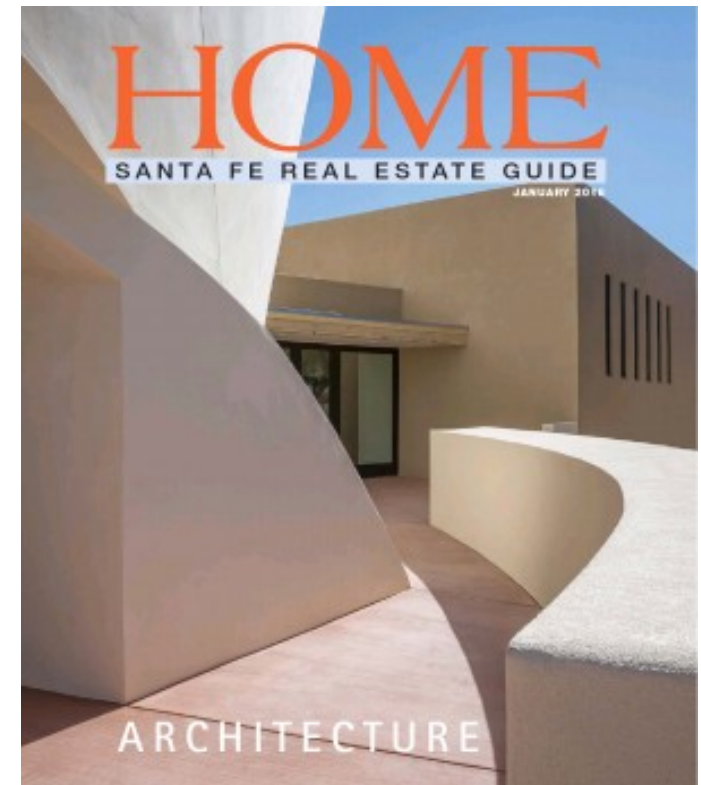
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Posted: Saturday, July 6, 2013 10:12 pm

By Nate Downey
For The New Mexican

We live in a wonderful place. The food is great. There's almost no traffic. For a small town, we've got culture up the wazoo. Our climate is perfect (cough, cough). One of Santa Fe's nicest traits is its pace of life, especially when compared to the

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hubbub along our nation's coasts. Did I mention year-round sunset views, Music on the Hill, and the aroma of roasting chile in the fall?

Trumping all of this is a wise, creative, and friendly Santa Fe vibe that emanates from her people, la gente. Last month we lost an extremely awesome person, Diego Mulligan. As the host of the afternoon drive-time radio program The Journey Home on KSFR (101.1 FM and www.ksfr.org), his life was a gift to our community. He was also a gift to the world.

Diego was the human equivalent of a 30-foot-tall hops plant. Even while silent and at rest, he seemed to be in constant motion, always spiraling in search of more and more light. It was as if he were reaching high not just for the thrill of reaching (which he clearly cherished) but also for its effects: a stronger, fuller, higher level of consciousness with an exceptional view of the local environment, an original flavor, and a celebratory zest for life, its branches of learning, and its fruits of justice, peace, and wit.

If it were not for Diego, I might not be here today. Soon after graduating from St. John's College in 1991, I gave myself one year to find something to do in town. I knew Santa Fe was a small, middle-of-nowhere place, but I also had a sense that I might regret ditching the best breakfast food on Earth.

I met Diego a month later. He talked of building a better world, one that used intelligent architecture, solar power, rainwater catchment, on-site wastewater treatment, local food, alternative technology, bike trails, public transportation, and a slew of post-New Age community-building techniques. At the Community Economic and Ecological Development (CEED) center that he founded, our plan became focused on building ecologically conscious subdivisions — communities that applied these alternative strategies, that would become models for others to look back on during challenging times like these.

It sure would be nice now if CEED had succeeded in building a model, or two, or

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10, but in a way Diego did much more. As the hardest working and longest running radio-show host in town, he helped build the Santa Fe community by promoting thousands of creative solutions and by informing our community of some cutting-edge thinking from folks like Frances Moore Lappe, Bill McKibben, Medea Benjamin, and so many other extremely effective and influential public figures.

Santa Fe is a better place because of Diego Mulligan and so is the world. He was a connector of people and ideas and on this interconnected globe our mainstream culture needs to stumble across the crazy places like Santa Fe. In its journey, America needs a new generation of Diegos to pop up in every community.

Nate Downey is the author of [Harvest the Rain](#) (Sunstone Press, 2010) and the president of Santa Fe Permaculture, Inc. You can contact him through his new company website, www.permadesign.com.

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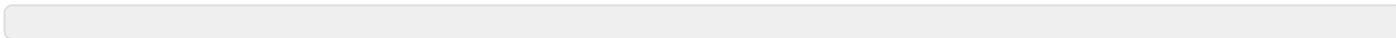
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