

## FROM THE OFFICE OF DAVID L. SCHUTZER

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- Don't bring alcohol to the pueblo. It's against the law in most places.
- Dances are religious in nature. Don't talk to individuals doing a dance. Don't ask questions of the Indians sitting next to you. Just watch and appreciate the opportunity to observe a different culture. Oh, don't clap when the dance is over.
- Native American religions are generally nonproselytizing. In other words they don't go out and try to convert people to their religion. They really don't want you to "see the light." They also do not like to answer questions about their religion. Many people will go out of their way to be polite if you are overly nosy but others will answer your questions with stony silence, or worse. Don't be pushy, be a good observer.
- Many of the Hopi villages have recently closed to all non-Indian visitors during their spring and summer dances. This happened recently and is a bit of a change. The Hopi are traditionally the most private of the pueblos and they have been plagued with non-Indians stealing prayer bundles and various other religious objects and generally being obnoxious during dances. If you are planning a trip to Hopi this summer remember the changes in their policy.
- One village will remain open to visitors. That village is *Moenkopi*. If you are planning a trip to Hopi, it's a good idea to find out what the current policies are before you get there. Call 1.520.734.2441, extension 106. Please be on your best behavior if you visit. Even without the dances being open the Hopi villages are still great places to visit!
- Keep your children with you and keep them under control.

—from Coyote Creek Southwestern Products: Newsletter April 11, 1998

## **Visiting The Pueblos: Etiquette**

As the vacation season approaches many of us will plan a vacation to the pueblos of Arizona and New Mexico. If you are considering such a trip there a few things you need to be aware of before you go.

Have you ever been in a public place and encountered a group of tourists from another country? Usually those groups of tourists are very polite and quiet, but on occasion you see a group that is loud and insensitive to the way we do things here.

Naturally, most of the people in these groups are well intentioned, just unaware of our customs. Different cultures have different behavioral expectations. Unless you know what these expectations are, it's easy to come off looking like an insensitive lout.

Here are some guidelines to keep in mind when visiting the pueblos, whether during a religious ceremony, a feast day, an arts and crafts show or just a visit to see some friends.

- Before entering a pueblo, you will usually find a sign stating a few rules for visitors. Read the sign. You won't see that many signs on pueblo visits. It will pay to read the ones you do see.
- Don't take pictures or make drawings of anything. Sometimes you can purchase a photography permit, sometimes you can't. Find out before you take or draw any pictures. Even if you have a permit be sure to ask before photographing any people that will be identifiable in the picture.
- Many people are baffled by this policy about picture taking. Just think about it. How would you like people taking your picture, pictures of your house, church, kids, *etc.*, on a daily basis? You'd probably get tired of it pretty quickly! What's worse, many of us don't recognize a Native American religious ceremony when we see one. Would you like somebody standing up in the middle of an important religious ceremony in your church, synagogue or mosque and popping off a few high powered flash shots?
- At a pueblo the rooms are usually either peoples houses or a kiva. A kiva is a place of importance in the religious life of the pueblo and strangers are not welcome. Don't go in buildings unless you are invited. Even on a building that might have a "pottery for sale" sign in the window you should knock first. Remember, it's probably someone's house. Some pueblos have stores in them, most notably the **Taos** pueblo. If it's obvious the building is a place of business then of course you may go in unannounced.