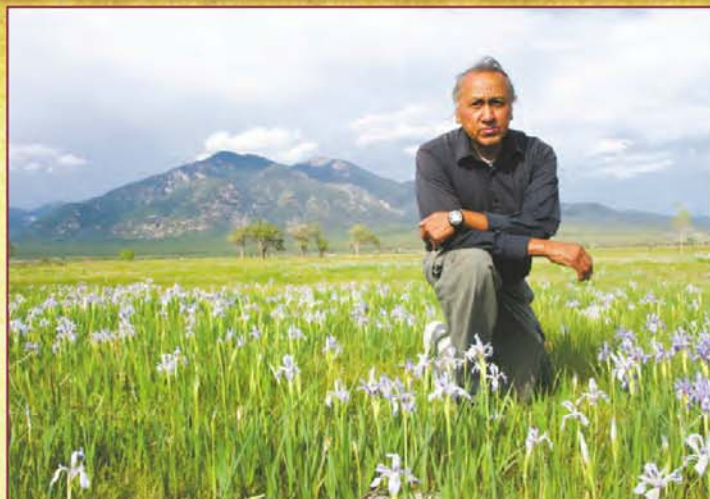


story by **TANIA CASSELLE**
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the Taos Hum

In our new monthly column, Tania Casselle introduces us to the people who make Taos hum.



Karen Todd

One day last summer I spotted Chef Karen Todd sitting at the huge wooden table in her Dragonfly Café and Bakery, peacefully sorting through piled-high baskets of heirloom tomatoes from that morning's Taos Farmers' Market. You could barely see the woman for the fruit, and as a vision of pastoral bounty it was hard to beat. Todd laughs when I remind her. "One of those local tomatoes grown in the sun ..." she muses. "I don't really have to do anything to it, and it makes me look like a rock star!"

Todd previously worked in restaurants in her home city of Chicago and the rather more exotic Amsterdam. She cooked on boats on the Red Sea, bartended in London and Greece and did a stint on a Greek olive farm. Then, 15 years ago, she came to work a year in Taos Ski Valley. "I just kind of got caught," says Todd. She opened Dragonfly Café in 1999, in a century-old adobe with an inviting patio. "I was six months pregnant when I opened," she recalls, "and I look at my son now—he's almost as tall as I am."

Todd and both her sons take full advantage of outdoor Taos. "I walk out my backdoor and I have the Carson National Forest, and I use it!" They ski and snowboard, ride dirt bikes, and go rafting. Todd also runs the ridgeline between San Cristobal and Lama several times a week. And she loves dancing. "I check out the world music that comes through town, either at KTAOS Solar Center or the Taos Inn," she says. "For a tiny community, musically we do pretty well."

She started the café's popular East Indian Night on Mondays (\$17 per person), because "I love Indian food and I would have to drive to Santa Fe to get it." Everything is made from scratch, from curry powder to chutneys. "Mole and Indian food," says Todd. "Making those two things, I completely destroy my kitchen. So much grinding and so many ingredients!"

Dragonfly Café and Bakery, 402 Paseo del Pueblo Norte, Taos. 575-737-5859. www.dragonflytaos.com.

Bruce Gomez

Bruce Gomez of Taos Pueblo is busy plotting the course for the 27th Taos Marathon on June 10. He's directed the event since 1985, and, after a four-year hiatus, it's back for 2012 with various races from a full marathon to a 5K walk or run. "Right now I'm anticipating probably 75 to 100 participants," says Gomez, adding that the small scale adds to the attraction. "That's been one of the neat things; you can go to huge running events with thousands of people. This is just a nice, quiet event."

Gomez, who is also a photographer, is a four-time Santa Fe Indian Market "Best of Photography" winner, best known for landscapes and images of Taos Pueblo. "I do a lot of quiet images, and I'm trying to shoot things that are more simple," he says. "Last year I did a lot of images when we were at the beach of sand, how the water meets the sand." His photographic interests range far and wide. On a trip to Paris, Gomez was inspired by the St. Germain area's famous church and Les Deux Magots café: "One night I took a walk out there and took images of the nightlife." He also shoots action photos and soon will be heading with his camera to the U.S. Olympic Team Trials in Eugene, Oregon.

Back home, Gomez lives a quiet life. In addition to working as a running coach at Taos High School and teaching health classes and Native American studies, he enjoys hanging out with family—sometimes down by the Rio Grande, a favorite location to shoot. "I love to photograph water," he says. "Anything with water is just beautiful."

He's clearly proud of the younger generation of Pueblo photographers, praising the work by the Taos Pueblo Day School Photo Club on display at the Taos Community Auditorium Encore Gallery until June 10. In fact, he's quick to support all the Pueblo arts and crafts people. "Go to the pueblo," he urges, "and there's a lot of amazing artists that you don't really hear about. You'd be surprised at some of the potters and painters, the bead work and moccasins."

See Taos Marathon details at <http://taosmarathon.weebly.com>.