

Magazine, feature writing category (11 entries; one first place, one second, three third, three honorable mentions)

Entry 352178 FIRST PLACE Tim Keller New Mexico Magazine February 2014 “A Range of Possibilities”

This is a lovely, informative piece of writing. The author’s sharp eye and facility for description and ear for the telling quotes make it a very readable piece. The history of the cattle industry in Lea County and how it was overtaken by the oil industry was fascinating, but what holds it all together and highlights it are the people you encounter in the story. His treatment of the 90-year-old rancher, Giles Lee, is a delight. He paced the article well, so that it never bogged down. I am partial to remote, out-of-the-way places, and I felt while reading this that if I am anywhere close to Lea County in the future, I will make a side trip to see the museums. If I had any disappointment, it was because I was intrigued by his mention of the champion rodeo riders from the county. From my reading, it wasn’t clear if these men were national champions at one time or another, and he included Mr. Lee as the 13th of those national rodeo legends, but I was left wondering if Mr. Giles actually was honored at some point with the national calf-roping award. I know nothing about rodeos, but I did attend Cheyenne Frontier Days when I was 12 years old in 1956, where I got Casey Tibbs’ autograph. Perhaps Mr. Giles competed in Cheyenne that year. Sorry about the personal note, but it might explain my delight with this story, a very well crafted, solid piece of writing by a very skillful practitioner. I doff my Stetson.

Entry 352184 HONORABLE MENTION Tim Keller New Mexico Magazine August 2014
“Nine Nights a Week”.

This entry by Mr. Keller is another example of his obvious talent. While it is basically a travel story, he succeeds in turning it into a nicely readable, compact history of the town’s evolution into a tourist destination by telling the backstory of the musicians who were instrumental, to coin a phrase, in making it so. Because it does not have the broader, longer approach than his other entry, “A Range of Possibilities”, however, it is not really comparable to that earlier piece of work.