

ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOOR WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

LATE FALL 2011

Conference 2012: Destination Taos, New Mexico

Calendars should be marked for June 10-14: Destination Taos, New Mexico.

Why? Read on...

Your conference committee has been working to put together another stimulating and fun-filled 4-day conference, with pre-conference options of a challenging writing workshop, a whitewater raft trip through the famed Taos Box, or perhaps some fly fishing, to kick it off.

Conference headquarters is the historic **Sagebrush Inn & Conference Center** located on the south end



Rio Grande Gorge Bridge
© Linda Martin

of town. We've reserved 25 units total for June 10-13, which will be held until May 10. Rates are \$69 single or double for a standard room or fireplace room (10 of each are being held), and \$99 single or double for a deluxe suite (5 are being held). These rates, which include a full cooked-to-order breakfast, will also apply for the two days before and two days after the conference, depending on availability. **Call 800-428-3626 and be sure to mention you are with the Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers** when you make your reservations. Other accommodations at Sagebrush are a small suite (\$79), executive suite (\$129) and, also on-site, the Comfort Suites (\$79, 888-751-1555), depending upon availability.

Mary Taylor Young will be on hand on Sunday the 10th for an all-day writing workshop, which she calls "Paint Your Prose With Pizzazz!" Ms. Taylor Young, an RMOWP member and award-winning nature writer who is also one of RMOWP's writing judges, will

strolling around Taos Plaza
© Linda Martin

discuss how the techniques used in nature writing truly capture a sense of place, and can be used for fiction, narrative non-fiction, essay, and even opinion articles and other writing. Participants will discover how to use all their senses to closely examine the world around them, finding universal themes, and how to utilize metaphor and other techniques to engage even the most home-bound armchair explorer.

A raft trip on the Rio Grande is always fun, especially if the day is hot, since you're bound to get thoroughly soaked as the rafts spear their way through the Taos Box - a rough and tumble ride over boulders and white water. We survived it several times (in our younger days).

Fisher persons can opt to connect with local fly fishing guru Taylor Streit and experience the joys of catching some trout.

More conference highlights

- Two workshops by Mary Taylor Young on Monday: nature writing and changes in publishing that affect both writing and photography
- Capturing that winning image (workshop)
- Photo captions worthy of the subject (workshop)
- Presentation of photo submissions to the contest
- Writing Critique
- Photo Critique
- Exploration of a BLM site along the Rio Grande followed by a picnic supper
- Jack Olson's famous Sunrise Photo Shoot
- Auction to benefit the RMOWP Scholarship Fund
- Banquet and awards ceremony

Registration form will be out in early January, with registration expected to be around \$50.



More Taos photos on page 2.
Getting to Taos, see page 7.
Tentative Schedule on page 8.



Rocky Mountain Outdoors

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www.rmowp.org



San Francisco de Asis Church
in Ranchos de Taos
© Linda Martin



rafters approaching rapids on the Rio Grande
© Linda Martin



Taos artist along the Rio Grande
© Linda Martin

CONFERENCE 2012 HEADQUARTERS
Sagebrush Inn & Conference Center
800-428-3626; www.tashotels.com
1508 Paseo del Pueblo Sur, Taos, NM 87571
Taos, New Mexico June 10-14

SOONER or later

Article & photos by Jack Olson

Take a look at your latest RMOWP membership directory. Finished? OK. Now which of our Rocky Mountain states boasts more members than Utah, Montana, Wyoming, Arizona, or South Dakota? Oklahoma, where the wind comes right behind the rain. Ten, count 'em, ten, are listed. And as any of us who pay the slightest attention, Wayne and Kathy Turner recently relocated to Fairplay, Colorado, from where they can still SEE Oklahoma.

Whoa. It only seems right to pay tribute to the



an RMOWP hiker considers his chances of entering a bison range in Tallgrass Prairie Preserve

home place of so many of our most active members. Now, Jaunts has not nearly covered this entire extraordinary state, but some locations in the western half are closest to our core membership and would make a rewarding trip outside of "100 degree season".

Once, the tallgrass prairie stretched almost unbroken from Texas to Manitoba, Canada. Hundreds of thousands of buffalo (bison, to be scientifically accurate) roamed wild and free. Native tribes lived on the land and set periodic fires to renew the grasslands and prevent the growth of brush.

But as pioneers, and then farmers, moved into the central plains, the tallgrass prairie was plowed, cut up, for farms, ranches, and towns. Less and less of the virgin prairie remained. Only at the last moment were small parcels purchased and preserved. Most notably there are a national park preserve in Kansas and the Tallgrass Prairie Preserve in north central Oklahoma. Purchased in 1989, the Preserve is owned and managed by the Nature Conservancy. The 39,000 acres owned and 6,000 leased are home to 2,500 head of buffalo. A small jewel, this waving grassland is a delight for those with a hankering to head east.

Normally the Nature Conservancy will purchase land to protect the resource and then turn it over to a government agency to administer. But they were so proud of this acquisition that they chose to run it themselves. The Preserve is open every day from

dawn to dusk at no charge. So set out on a hiking trail, especially enjoyable when the grass peaks very tall late in the season, taller even than a lone RMOWP hiker.

Perhaps the most complete recreational area in western Oklahoma is Quartz Mountain State Park. There's expansive Lake Altus-Lugert, with fishing and a variety of water sports. A major resort boasts a lodge and cabins, the Oklahoma Arts Institute, and a conference center. There's camping and hiking, family reunions. This place teems with outdoor activity. And the bumpy landscape is a precursor to what will be found farther to the west.

One of the better ideas for inclusion in our national forest system was the addition of national grasslands. So many of these quiet, gentle wonders lie within our Rocky Mountain states, and the states that border them. One such treasure is the Black Kettle National Grassland in far western Oklahoma. The grassland is named for the leader of the Cheyenne tribe killed at the Battle of the Washita, in an encounter led by Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer. A monument commemorates the Washita Battlefield. Lakes, canyons, and rivers add a distinctive character to the prairie and its creatures.

An overwhelmingly sad reminder of the worst in humanity and in our nation's history is the Oklahoma City National Memorial. So that our citizens will never forget the terror attack of April 19, 1995, the site was dedicated on the anniversary in 2000.

The Memorial is a gathering place for sober contemplation of what occurred and those who were victims. At either end of the site rise the Gates of Time, one with the time 9:01 and the other 9:03, separating the time of the blast. At the Reflecting Pool, a thin layer of water flows over a bed of black granite between the Gates. In the location of the former Murrah Building spreads probably the most touching, and powerful, depiction of what we all lost. The Field of Empty Chairs dominates the site with 168 chairs, lit from within at night, with the name of each person taken from their loved ones etched in glass on the chair. Nineteen of the smaller chairs indicate the children who were lost.



Oklahoma City National Memorial, Gate of Time and reflecting pool 9:01 -- one minute before the blast

Arguably, but to Jaunts the most interesting attraction in western Oklahoma, has to be the Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge. First and fore-



bison & longhorns graze in Wichita Mountains National Wildlife Refuge

most, abundant wildlife abounds---buffalo, elk, and deer. But the true surprise in this special place is the profusion of Texas longhorn cattle, a cultural and historical legacy species. The herd ranges between 250 and 300 head. A great opportunity for wildlife photographers, sometimes even a long lens is unnecessary. Be sure to travel to the top of Mt. Scott to survey the 59,000 acres of the Refuge. Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge is a must-see in a visit to western Oklahoma.

But ask our members from the Sooner State, so named for settlers who jumped the gun in occupying land to stake a claim. Those members will have many more recommendations, and maybe a social get-together, too.

You're doin' fine Oklahoma!
Oklahoma O.K.

Mentoring for you, me, us and future generations

While at Capitol Reef Conference, the board decided mentoring our new members has the possibility of convincing the fresh person that they never want to drop their membership. We are too valuable to their well being.

We did not arrive at a firm plan as to how to implement this program. Kenita Gibbins agreed to be a matchmaker. She will refer to our membership directory, then call you if a request as been made for help in a certain area of your expertise. Kenita says she has never met a member that wasn't willing to share their skills.

As the board began to make momentum with this idea, someone said, "Hey, I need help too." Therefore, we will make up the rules as we go and if you have a problem Kenita will call on an expert for you. She does not plan to call on the photographers she knows know everything. This means you may be the next receiver of a call for help. Perhaps someone

needs an edit job on a manuscript. Entire books would become a paid job, of course.

Mentors could be hooked up with their newbie soon. The two of you might exchange information all year and finally meet at our next conference. Or your new photographer/writer friend might actually live near you.

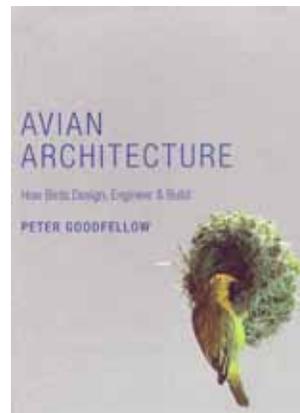
Please email Kenita at kenital@comcast.net with your requests as well as your level of expertise in areas you can share.

Avian Architecture

~ a book review by John Catsis

Most bird books are valuable reference guides used for confirming sightings in the field. *Avian Architecture*, by Peter Goodfellow, is a book one actually reads, from cover to cover. And that's just what I did recently, much to my delight.

This 160-page hard bound work is replete with information about the variety of various birds nests from around the world. Hundreds of photos and drawings help illustrate the incredible variety.



For example, the Western Rock Nuthatch, a native of an area ranging from Serbia to Iran, builds a cup-shaped nest of mud that can weigh up to 70 pounds, yet the bird weighs but 1 ¼ ounces.

The Baltimore Oriole builds a nest suspended from several tree branches.

The job can take five days. But what is amazing is that the nest is made up of about 200 slender fibers stitched together more than 10,000 times.

Other birds use twigs to paint the interior of nests with colors obtained from fruits and seeds.

The Black Wheatear of Spain uses pebbles and rocks as a major construction element. The bird weighs about an ounce, but has been seen carrying rocks up to ten ounces. That's what I call strong!

Perhaps the most fascinating is the Western Bowerbird of Australia. The male builds a nest that includes twin towers approaching 17 inches in height. Outside, it decorates the entry with colorful materials it finds in nature.

Avian Architecture is a must read for anyone who enjoys birding, or wants to learn more about the natural world. Published by Princeton University Press and selling for \$27.95, a copy will be offered at the next RMOWP auction, if you can wait that long.

2012 CALENDAR

TBA ~ RMOWP contest submittal deadline (see www.rmowp.org)

May 30 ~ Scott-McKenna Scholarship application deadline (see www.rmowp.org)

June 10 - 14 ~ RMOWP conference in Taos, New Mexico

June 26 - 30 ~ RMOWP Photography Workshop in Rocky Mountain National Park

September 4 - 6 ~ OWAA conference in Fairbanks, Alaska

one more thing; too many birds." She went on: "I want to see snow in the winter months. Each month should show a picture reflecting the season."

It took me a couple weeks to come up with 12 images and my wife analyzed and dismissed 9 photos in less than 90 seconds. So now I have acceptable photos for February, March and April. The other 9 months are blank white spaces on the 2012 Nature Photography Desktop Calendar.

I need to change my calling card to: "Al Perry, Nature Photography---Not."

Perseverance

Article & photos by Richard Holmes

I first saw it one morning while on a short hike in the foothills near my home in Boulder, Colorado. A single, light blue wildflower on a hairy stem. Then I saw two more. It was early April, and I was excited. I had just stumbled upon my first pasqueflowers of the season. They bloom early, starting in late March, before most other wildflowers.

I had marked the location of these flowers with a long branch leaned against a boulder, especially noting a group of four. Within hours I returned with camera, tripod, and high expectations for an afternoon shoot. After locating the marker I put down my pack and began to assemble my equipment.

I concentrate first on the group of four, moving a fallen log closer to them to provide a backdrop. I try this at various angles, then replace the log with a large rock. Next I go to a single flower under a tree and move in close. These flowers are usually only three to eight inches high, with no leaves on the hairy stem.

The afternoon progresses this way, moving from one flower to another. I kneel down and shoot from different positions, some from above, some from the side, often lying on the ground. It's slow going, scrunching down low to the ground, trying to avoid distracting backgrounds, or a cactus needle sticking me in the butt.

Distracting elements in a photo are always a problem, so I'm constantly gardening. This means removing dead grass stems or a shiny pebble or a pine needle reflecting sunlight. Often, these things are not noticeable until looking through the viewfinder. I avoid pulling up living vegetation, just bend it out



pasque flowers © Richard Holmes (honorable mention, Flora category RMOWP 2010 contest)

President's Column

End-of-Summer Blues

Al Perry

Have you ever wondered if you are the only one not going on exotic trips? I feel that way. I called Tom and Lynda Cummings and they were between Alaska and Africa excursions. I talked to Tom Ulrich and Linda Martin. After a short summer in Glacier National Park, they are headed to South America and later on, New Zealand. I dare not call Kenita Gibbins to learn of her adventures.

Not that I am complaining, but my summer has been filled with family reunions, weddings and my wife's sorority reunion. At each of these events, I usually get asked to "take a few snapshots" which means photos of everyone along with free prints.



Sandhill Crane Landing
© Al Perry
(honorable mention
Altered/Composite category
RMOWP 2011 contest)

In between these short jaunts, I have been working to come up with images for my annual Nature Photography Desktop Calendar. I finally settled on a photo for each of the twelve months. With some pride, I showed them to my wife to see what she thought and it didn't take her long to give me feedback. "Get rid of the insects, lizards and snakes.

No one wants to spend a whole month looking at an insect, lizard or rattlesnake. Don't you remember how your Mom reacted to the rattlesnake on last year's calendar?" She didn't stop there: "Oh, and

of the way and hold it down with a stick or rock if necessary. When the wind picks up, and threatening clouds move in, I pack up to leave.

That evening I phone a photographer friend to join me the next day. We set off early and work with morning light. But we find the flowers have yet to open. In fact, we discover they take their own sweet time to fully open. However, the pasqueflower is perfectly beautiful even when closed. It is oval-shaped, like a large pecan, and just as hairy as the stem. The color ranges from pale blue to deep lavender. As it opens, a white interior with yellow center is exposed. The cup-shaped flower is about 1-1/2 inches across.

By noon we feel satisfied with our morning's work and head back to our cars. I was sure I achieved some good results, and verify this when I return home and download to the computer. But I want more.

So we decide to try another location a few miles away, to a burn area we had used in a previous year with mixed success. What we find this year on the hillside is a plethora of pasqueflowers. I have never seen so many in one place. It is hard to know where to start. I see singles, doubles, or small groups everywhere. Then we find a clump of thirteen! Unbelievable. My friend, Doug, starts there.

After the shock of seeing so many pasqueflowers I settle down to work. As expected, many are not suitable for critical photography--problems with location, background, or the flower's condition. (We flower photographers get picky after a bit and demand perfect specimens.)

Sometimes shade works well. Sometimes sunlight. I often use a white umbrella to defuse harsh sunlight, but a thin cloud layer is best. Recall that not much else is blooming this early in the year. Even weeds and grasses are barely up. This makes it easier to get a clear shot while lying on the ground.

Later, we discover another large patch down the road on a steep hillside. This is fortunate, because a steep slope makes it easier to get down on a level with the entire plant. Excitement fills me. One trip leads to another. Different light, different angles, different techniques. The flower stem isn't long enough to get a lens under it, but what about a mirror? So I place a small mirror on the ground under the flower. By shooting down at the reflection I'm getting an unusual view of the flower from underneath, with sky for a background. The possibilities seem endless.

One morning I come up and find the blossoms missing at one of my favorite clumps. A cluster of nine had nothing left but the stems. I thought for a moment then knew the answer. Wild turkeys! Those dirty little snippers had come through and lopped off the flower heads. I immediately resolve to support any legislation declaring open season on wild turkeys. Maybe even a second Thanksgiving holiday, just



pasque flowers © Richard Holmes
(honorable mention, Flora category
RMOWP 2011 contest)

before pasqueflowers bloom.

Another morning I wake up to three or four inches of snow, so I write off that day for the camera. But I barely finish breakfast when the phone rings, Doug calling from his cell phone to say, "Come on up. The flowers are sticking up through the snow, and it's beautiful up here". So he was already up there photographing. I hastily grab my equipment and drive to meet him. He had found another large patch a couple hundred yards away from our previous place. And he is right. Many of the flowers stand up through the snow, some are bent over from the weight, and some just trying to poke through. I spend the entire morning and part of the afternoon in the snow. It would be gone by the next day.

As I look back on those three weeks I felt that each day was a treat. The thrill of the intense pursuit of a single flower species is a memorable experience. I had injected myself into that effort with a passion, and those eight trips had produced over a thousand images, many very good, many mediocre, a few truly excellent.

Some may call the results lucky because of so many flowers. I call it perseverance.



Backcountry Journal now offers payment for articles and photos

The *Backcountry Journal*, quarterly membership publication of the Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, now offers payment to professional writers and photographers for published articles and photos. Articles pay up to \$100, and photos are: cover \$50; inside color \$20-\$40. Contact editor Matt Miller at miller_outdoors@hotmail.com. To view a recent issue, visit www.backcountryhunters.org.

Scholarship Awarded

This year's Scott-McKenna Memorial Scholarship was awarded to 18-year old Pennsylvania student Hannah Misner. A freshman at Penn State Mont Alto, Ms. Misner is majoring in animal sciences. She recently graduated from Shalom Christian Academy, where she studied photography and won a number of awards for her wildlife photography.



Hannah Misner

"I love to spend my free time walking in the woods and photographing God's beautiful creation," she says. "Whether it be sitting in a tree stand, or fishing on a secluded lake, this is where most of my memories are made. My favorite time of year to take pictures is in the winter. I like to get up bright and early to take pictures of freshly fallen snow or frozen icicles."



Bat ©Hannah Misner

Ms. Misner submitted some great wildlife and scenic landscape photos with her scholarship application, according to scholarship chairman Mike

Hammond, and also has a very impressive GPA. Hammond says Hannah also does a lot of volunteer work in and around Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, where she lives with her parents, and likes to go with her father on his hunting trips, with camera in hand to photograph whatever she comes across.

This year there were 114 applicants for the scholarship, Hammond says, which is 18 more than 2010. He says that applications were received from 34 states, and there were even two international applicants.

The Scott-McKenna Scholarship is awarded annually to a student with a career interest in communicating about the outdoors, and applicants need not have a declared major in a communications field. RMOWP gives a scholarship so that we don't forget two special members, according to Hammond.



woodcock ©Hannah Misner

organization, Hammond says, and in honoring these two men for all the work they and others went through in the organization's fledgling years, we reap the rewards and enjoy the diverse and extremely talented group of folks that make up our group.



Flower
©Hannah Misner

Hammond adds, "RMOWP gives a scholarship to a student that is pursuing a career that promotes Joe and J.B.'s love of the great outdoors." Additional information about the scholarship program is at www.rmowp.org.



Landscape ©Hannah Misner

Photographers Showcase Needs YOU

The Showcase of Selected Members Photography has become very popular in the last three years. Anyone interested in making a presentation, either at the 2012 conference, or a future one, please contact Jack Olson, (303) 777-8998; jackolson1@aol.com.

Getting to Taos

Taos sits at almost 7,000 feet elevation in the northern reaches of New Mexico, about 300 miles south of Denver and 135 miles north of Albuquerque, both of whose airports are full service.

There are no commercial flights into Taos Airport at this time and only limited service to Santa Fe, about 70 miles south of Taos.

RMOWP Conference 2012 June 10-14 ~ Taos New Mexico

Tentative Schedule

Meals and workshops at Sagebrush Inn/Comfort Suites complex unless noted otherwise.

Sunday, June 10

10 am-4 pm Pre-Conference Writing Workshop, "Paint Your Prose with Pizaaaz," with Mary Taylor Young (limited to 12 participants; \$85, includes box lunch)

OR

7:45am-4:00pm Pre-Conference Taos Box Whitewater Raft Trip (\$110, includes lunch)

OR

Fly Fishing on Your Own (guide contacts provided)

5:00-7:00pm Registration & Opening Reception, Happy Hour and Light Buffet (included in registration fee)

7:30-9:30pm Presentation of All Photo Contest Submissions

Monday, June 11

8:30am Welcome, Handouts & Announcements - President Al Perry

9:00am What in the World am I doing in Taos, New Mexico? - An Introduction from Local Experts

9:30am Workshop - The Art & Craft of Nature Writing with Mary Taylor Young

10:45am Break

11:00am Workshop - In Pursuit of the Winning Image

12:00pm Lunch (choice of classic Rubeen sandwich, roast chicken breast sandwich, or Cobb salad with diced turkey and ham; included in registration fee; guests \$16 including tax & tip)

1:00pm Workshop - The Brave New World of Publishing with Mary Taylor Young

2:15pm Break

2:30pm The Art & Architecture of Taos - If it's Good Enough for Ansel Adams and Georgia O'Keeffe it's Good Enough for Me - guided tour with Local Experts

6:00pm Dinner on your Own

7:30pm Photo Critique with Tom Ulrich & Jack Olson

Tuesday, June 12

9:00am Writing Critique with Wayne Turner (spectators encouraged to attend & comment)

10:45am Break

11:00am Workshop - Create Photo Captions Worthy of Your Best Shots

12:00pm Lunch Buffet (choice of Caesar salad with grilled chicken breast; avocado stuffed with tuna; classic club sandwich; or croissant with turkey, avocado, and Swiss cheese, \$16 including tax & tip)

1:00pm Showcase of Selected Members' Photography

2:30pm Break

3:00pm Carpool to Orilla Verde Recreation Area (BLM site along the Rio Grande, about 16 miles SW), for guided walk, photography, fishing, etc.

6:00pm Picnic Supper Along the Rio Grande (included in registration fee)

Wednesday, June 13

5:00am Sunrise Photo Shoot with Jack Olson

8:30am General Membership Meeting

9:00am Break

9:15am Board of Directors Meeting (open to all members)

OR

Explore Taos Pueblo, Taos Plaza, museums, galleries, etc. on your own

12:00pm Lunch on your Own

1:30pm Workshop - TBA

2:30pm Break

3:00-5:00pm Auction to Benefit Scholarship Fund with Jim Baker & John Catsis

6:30-7:00pm Happy Hour (full cash bar)

7:00-10:00pm Banquet (Choice of prime rib, grilled salmon filet, chicken Florentine, or stuffed Portobello mushroom, \$25-\$35 including tax & tip; full cash bar) and Awards Ceremony

Thursday, June 14

8:00am Board of Directors Meeting, if needed (open to all members)

11:00am Lodging Check-Out

RMOWP Members Pick Top Conference Locations

Members of RMOWP - at least those who attend conferences - have voted, and Taos, New Mexico is number one, followed closely by the west side of Rocky Mountain National Park, with Grand Junction, Colorado coming in a fairly close third. Although not asked specifically about it, some said they would like to go to Glacier National Park in Montana, and the survey results were pretty clear about cities, or at least one city - almost no one wants to have a conference in Albuquerque.

Surveys were passed out and collected at the 2011 conference and were also sent via email to those not at the 2011 conference but who had attended at least one conference in the past four years. A total of 42 surveys were submitted - 29 at the 2011 conference and 13 later from those sent the survey. The survey asked participants to rate 11 potential conference sites by saying Yes (definitely interested), Maybe (willing to be convinced), or No (no way). To analyze results, Yes votes were given ten points, Maybe votes got five points, and each No vote deducted one point.

The results, starting with the top choice, are:

- 1: Taos, NM (333 points)
- 2: West Side of Rocky Mountain National Park; headquarters at Grand Lake, CO (331 points)
- 3: Grand Junction, CO/Colorado National Monument (318 points)
- 4: Ghost Ranch/Abiquiu, NM (312 points)
- 5: Steamboat Springs, CO (303 points)
- 6: Mesa Verde National Park, CO (285 points)
- 7: Carlsbad, NM/Carlsbad Caverns National Park (283 points)
- 8: Bryce Canyon National Park, UT (281 points)
- 9: Lake Powell/Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, AZ/UT (256 points)
- 10: Alamosa, CO/Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve (225 points)
- 11: Albuquerque, NM/Petroglyph National Monument (203 points)



RMOWP members also had some excellent suggestions for conference locations. There were six recommendations that we go to Glacier National Park, MT; plus one each for Ridgeway, CO; Buena Vista, CO; Leadville, CO; Salt Lake City, UT (Timpanogos Cave National Monument & Golden Spike); Cody, WY (rodeo & Frontier Days); Tucson, AZ; Sedona, AZ; Blanding, UT; Santa Clara Ranch, TX (Beto & Clare Gutierrez's wildlife viewing ranch); Dinosaur National Monument, UT; Black Hills, SD; Moab, UT; Grand Canyon National Park North Rim; Silver City, NM; Wichita Mountains, OK; Canada; Big Bend National Park, TX; and "outside the West."

RMOWP member Jimmy Smith got the photo of a lifetime, when he was invited for a VIP spot at the launch of the space shuttle Atlantic for its final mission July 8th at Kennedy Space Center in Florida.
© Jimmy Smith



4th of July Fireworks over Lake Avon
© Jon Sheppard