

ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOOR WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2005 VOLUME 4

Write Better, Write Faster

By Ruth Raupe

David Fryxell began his talk with a question for RMOWP writers: What kind of excuses do you make for not writing? Do you have to get the yard mowed first? Or do you just come right out and say, "I'm suffering from Writer's Block!" Fryxell says the problem is not writer's block; the problem is disorganized writers. You have to know where your next sentence is going, and the way to know that is having a plan. His book *Write Better, Write Faster* shows how to make a plan that will lead you through your writing and stop the plague of writer's block.

The plan starts with doing nothing, but doing nothing lets your brain work. To write better and faster, you need to learn to go with your brain, not against. Have a routine that gets you started. For example, Hemingway would always sharpen 20 pencils. While he was sharpening, his unconscious got a head start on his conscious writing. Take a walk, water plants, do anything that frees your mind and lets it organize and solve problems and sort out the pieces of your story.

The subconscious sees patterns in your material and shows you a way to think of your writing in chunks.

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Make a list of these chunks. Every piece or subpoint you've listed can help you gather supporting information. These pieces of your story are like magnets attracting iron filings.

What Fryxell leads up to is the horrible O-word—outlining. If you hate outlining, call it something else. What it is, is a plan that will lead you from start to finish. If you think you just cannot make an outline, remember these words from writer Jon Franklin, "In telling yourself you can't outline, what you're really saying is that you can't think your story through." And if you can't think your story through, you'd better give up writing. The plan or outline doesn't have to be lengthy; it can be skeletal. It just has to keep your attention on where you are going. To fill out the skeleton, go to your research and your notes to get material that goes with your main points and subpoints. Scribble in each idea and quote where it supports your outline. It doesn't have to be neat and may look sloppy to others, but if you have worked it through, it will be a blueprint for you to follow and you'll write better and faster.

Six more tips:

1. If you have tons of material, reduce it before you start writing.
2. Check for transitions, make each item under the main points link to the overall topic; before and after.
3. Don't worry about paragraph beginnings and endings in first writing.
4. Avoid perfectionism and sloppiness in first draft. But avoid being loose and careless. Keep it tight.
5. Avoid fuzzy perfectionism. Don't interrupt by going back all the time. Don't re-read until next day.
6. Don't wait for a good stopping point. Stop in mid-work, even mid-sentence to keep your momentum the next session.



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From the Editor's Desk

Hat in hand, my apologies to the membership for the late, late edition of the Rocky Mountain newsletter. Circumstances – some I may have been able to control, others I chalked up to “that’s life”.

As RMOWP humorist, Jon Sheppard said, “It could have been worse, Ron, you could have been with Custer”!

I feel better already.

Thank you all who managed to retain material that you had previously sent for the newsletter before the “crash”.

To eliminate or at least reduce the risk of late newsletters in the future, particularly through the summer, I have received the “okay” from President Jim Baker to publish the newsletters as follows:

Current issue – September/October. Dates for all future newsletters are printed above. Next issue – November/December – deadline for material is October 20th.

Please mark those dates on your calendar if you are planning to submit material for the newsletter.

This arrangement means that the conference information will be received up to April 20 and the newsletter would be released prior to the conference. Conference results, changes, award winners, etc. would be printed in the July/August issue.

Thanks for your patience and understanding.

Ron Kerr

Newsletter Editor

Member News and Views

RMOWP Heads to Moab in 2006

It's going to be difficult to top the fantastic 2005 RMOWP conference in Silver City, New Mexico, organized by John Catsis and Anne Sullivan, but we're going to try.

So mark your calendars for May 3rd through 7th, 2006, for Moab, Utah.

A highlight of the 2006 conference will be the beautiful red rock scenery of the Moab area, but we'll also have the opportunity to experience the Colorado River and a riparian area that is home to a variety of birds, see prehistoric petroglyphs, and explore some spectacular Hollywood filming locations.

A nationally-known photographer who lives in the area has tentatively agreed to present a workshop, and we have also planned other programs on photography, writing, website design, and how to actually earn some money as a freelancer.

Details on the conference will be announced over the course of the next six months or so, and those who want to learn more about the area can go to the web and head to www.discovermoab.com. Information is also available - and suggestions very welcome - by contacting conference organizers **Don Laine and Jack Olson**.

2004 RMOWP Photography Workshop a Success

The 2004 photography workshop was a great success with 9 participants and a profit of \$1157.94. This was the first year we allowed digital SLR's to be used during the workshop resulting in five of our participants using digital cameras and 4 using film. Without the digital shooters, we would not have had enough participants to do the workshop. Since only half of the group shot film, our film developing costs were down substantially helping us to turn a profit.

Weather was great (if you don't count the 10 minute snow storm) and the participant's evaluations reflected their happiness with the workshop. Jack Olson and Tom Ulrich again did a terrific job of putting the students on subject matter and then helping them capture outstanding photographs. This made judging our annual workshop contest even more difficult.

With the even split of photographers, we divided the contest into digital and film winners in each category and this worked out extremely well allowing for more of our participants to go home with winning photographs.

Tom Cummings, Chairman

Scholarship Awarded

Submitted by Ruth Raupe

The RMOWP Scott-McKenna Scholarship for 2005 has been awarded to Jessica Wolf of Nipomo, California. Jessica has returned to Oklahoma State University for the fall semester and is majoring in communications. Her story about a backpacking trip with her father and friends and an album of photographs from the trip met the criteria of the scholarship, and the Scholarship Committee felt she deserved this year's award.

Colorado High Country Anthology Wins Award

Colorado High Country Anthology, a collection of short works by the Writers of Soiree at the Summit, a Summit County writers' group, was awarded 3rd place in the Miscellaneous Category at the 11th Annual Colorado Independent Publishers Association (CIPA) "EVVY" Book Awards held in Denver on June 11, 2005.

The charter members of Soiree at the Summit (**Maryann Gaug**, Andrew Gmerek, Sherry King, Stew Mosberg, Herb Tabak, Scott Toepfer) have been writing for many years with their work appearing regionally, nationally and internationally in books, newspapers, ezines and conventional magazines.

Colorado High Country Anthology is a collection of short, enjoyable works spanning a wide range of literary genre such as satire, outdoor adventure, the occult, humor, life experiences, the environment, mystery, crime and travel.

The "EVVY" Awards, named for CIPA founder Evelyn Kaye, recognizes the best Colorado books that are independently or self-published. The 2005 competition had 86 entries in 14 categories.

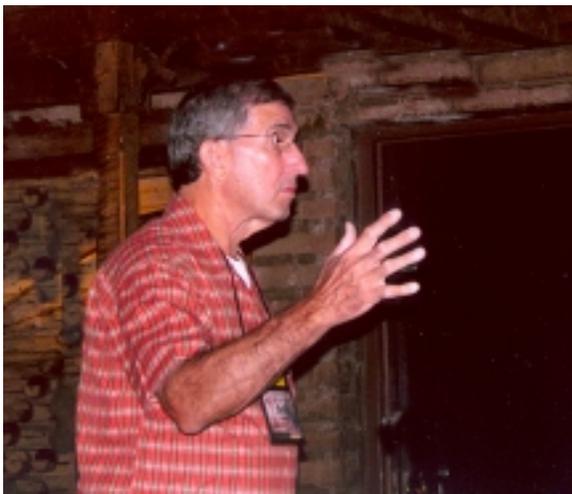
RMOWP Photography and Writing Contest

Submitted by Frank Zurey

Fifteen members entered this year's contest. They sent in a total of 276 individual entries not counting the Member's Choice category for which most of the entries were submitted at the conference. There were 219 slides and thirty prints and published images submitted. In addition, 29 writing and video works were submitted. A digital slide show of all of the slides submitted for the contest was presented at the conference. The published works were on display at the conference.

This year's contest featured the integration of film and digital images recognizing that film and digital capture of an image is equivalent and that the resulting image is dependent on the same photographic skills. A total of 211 slides were entered in the nine categories in which both film and digital images could be entered. Forty percent of these slides were entered as digital images. The resulting distribution of awards was similar with 46% of the awards going to digitally submitted images and the Best of Show going to a film submission.

A few highlights of the contest include: Best of Show went to Ron Kerr for his image "Persistence". Member's Choice went to Sherry Zurey for her print "Auroral Storm". Sherry entered the contest as a novice – she's not a novice anymore. Lee Allen received first place in the three categories Newspaper Articles, Magazine Articles and Web Writing. The newspaper article was "Facing the Future" with the judge's comment "Great portrayal, using multiple sources, of a massive dilemma. Well written. Nice to see an article that tackles a topic like this." The magazine article was "Back from the Brink: the Gila Returns" with the judges comment "Well written. Good balance of perspectives, well researched. Also, a fascinating subject matter."



Beto Gutierrez is not only a great photographer he is also a wonderful storyteller. He demonstrated that talent at a dinner at the Silver City conference.

John Catsis photo

If you did not enter this year's contest, commit to entering next year's contest. It is an opportunity to share your photography and publications with the membership. The slide show and awards presentation are some of the highlights of each RMOWP conference and your participation will make it that much better.

Contest Results

People in the Outdoors

- 3rd Beto Gutierrez, "Fishing South Padre Island"
- 2nd Tom Cummings, "Not Too Close"
- 1st Tom Cummings, "Dancing on the Waves"

Scenics

- 3rd Sherry Zurey, "Aurora Magic"
- 2nd Tom Cummings, "Mountain Reflections"
- 1st Lee Carr, "Fall Colors"

Flora

- 3rd Beto Gutierrez, "Flower, Purple"
- 2nd Tom Cummings, "Columbine 1"
- 1st Ron Kerr, "Persistence"

Fauna

- 3rd Tom Cummings, "Brown Pelican 1"
- 2nd Beto Gutierrez, "Doe with Fawn"
- 1st Beto Gutierrez, "Bobcat"

Best Slide From Last Show

- 3rd Jack Olson, "Sneeze Weed"
- 2nd Maryann Gaug, "Historic Photographer"
- 1st Ron Kerr, "Tools from the Past"

Historical

- 3rd Beto Gutierrez, "Socorro Mission"
- 2nd John Catsis, "Aztec Autumn"
- 1st Tom Cummings, "Times Past"

Cultural

- 3rd Tom Cummings, "Candy Toss"
- 2nd Jack Olson, "Christmas Caroling"
- 1st James Blakeslee, "Beautiful Regalia"

Events

- 3rd Jim Baker, "The Penalty is Death"
- 2nd Tom Cummings, "Cutting a Path"
- 1st Tom Cummings, "Its a Goner"

Best of Show

Ron Kerr, "Persistence"

Continued on next page

Altered/Composite Images

- 3rd Frank Zurey, "Paintbrush"
- 2nd Sherry Zurey, "Ice Art"
- 1st Sherry Zurey, "Egrets"

Novice Slides or Digital Images

- 1st Sherry Zurey, "Aurora Hand", "Auroral Sunshine", "Starry Night"

Color Prints

- 3rd Tom Cummings, "The Great Blue Haron 1"
- 2nd Tom Cummings, "Time Gone By"
- 1st Tom Cummings, "Mountain View"

Black and White prints

- 3rd Frank Zurey, "Sunflowers"
- 2nd John Catsis, "Survivor"
- 1st Tom Cummings, "Upward Reach"

Member's Choice - Prints

- 3rd Beto Gutierrez, "Trophy in the Mist"
- 2nd Tom Cummings, "Sit Awhile"
- 1st Sherry Zurey, "Auroral Storm"

Black and White Published Images

- 1st Maryann Gaug, "Munch", *Colorado High Country Anthology*, 2004

Color Published Images

- 3rd John Catsis, "Birds of a Feather", *Country Discoveries*, March/April 2005
- 2nd Jack Olson, "Sneffels Range", *Colorado 2005 Calendar*
- 1st Ron Kerr, "Canada Jay", *Wildfowl Carving Magazine*, Spring 2004

TV/Movie/Video

- 1st Andy Lightbody, "Super Shoot with Willy T. Ribbs", "Life of a Gunnison Kokanee Salmon", "Word Wranglin' and Wrymin' - Cowboy Poet", Rocky Mountain Television LLC

Newspaper columns/editorials

- 2nd Tom Cummings, "Photographer Debuts New Column, 'Stopping Time'", *Cimarron Valley People*, March 2, 2005
- 1st Tom Cummings, "The Pros & Cons of Digital Photography", *Cimarron Valley People*, March 16, 2005

Newspaper Articles

- 3rd Dan England, "Marshall's Madness", *Greeley Tribune*, July 8, 2004
- 2nd Lee Allen, "Territorial Triage", *Tucson Weekly*, November 18-21, 2004
- 1st Lee Allen, "Facing the Future", *Tucson Weekly*, July 22-28, 2004

Magazine Articles

- 3rd John Catsis, "Picture It", *Highways*, December 2004
- 2nd Ron Kerr, "Lost and Found", *BC Outdoors Sport Fishing*, May 2004
- 1st Lee Allen, "Back from the Brink: the Gila Returns", *Rocky Mountain Game & Fish*, May 2004

Web Writing

- 3rd Lee Allen, "Renewing Lake Havasu's Weary Waters", *ESPNoutdoors.com*
- 2nd John Catsis, "New Mexico's Highway 152", *desertusa.com*
- 1st Lee Allen, "Following Footprints", *ESPNoutdoors.com*

Books and Scripts for TV/Movie/Video

- 3rd Maryann Gaug, *History of the Land: Fiester Preserve*, 2004
- 2nd Andy Lightbody, "Chuckwagon Cookoff" Manuscript for Rocky Mountain Television LLC
- 1st Maryann Gaug, "Conquering Mount Sunflower" and "Traveling Alone in Kenya" in *Colorado High Country Anthology*, 2004

Newsletter Writing of Any Kind

- 3rd Maryann Gaug, Articles in "Friends of the Eagles Nest Wilderness Newsletter", May 2004
- 2nd Ron Kerr, "RMOWP Newsletter", October-November 2004
- 1st Ron Kerr, "NOWA Newsletter", July/August 2004

Selected Works Awards

Photography - Tom Ulrich
Writing - Lee Allan

Spark Plug Award

Maryann Gaug



Award winners on hand at the Silver City Conference. Left to right Lee Carr, Sherry Zurrey, Maryann Gaug, Beto Gutierrez, Lee Allen, Ron Kerr, Tom Cummings.

Welcome New Members

Bryant, Thomas – PO Box 91, San Antonio, NM 87832; phone: 505-423-3303; e-mail: lazytb@juno.com; mentor: yes; status: Individual; sponsor: John Catsis.

Skills: Photographer, Writer, Book Author, Magazine, Lecturer, Radio.

Interests: Being “semi-retired”, my main writing, photography interests are books. I have one at a publisher, one in rewrite and two in progress, plus I’m running a small (15-section) ranch.

Credits: 60 author: “A Taste of Ranching”, Boader Books, 1993; “A Taste of Texas”, University Texas Tech, 1995. Numerous – too many to mention – newspaper and magazine articles.

Harding, David – 239 Anchorage Ct., Annapolis, MD 21409; phone: 410-757-3513; e-mail: dph@arinc.com; mentor: no; spouse: Karla English; status: Individual; sponsor: Tom Cummings.

Skills: Photographer.



RMOWP's new President, Jim Baker, addresses the membership.

John Catsis photo

Heyes, Ronald L. – 8562 S. Dubloon Way, Tucson, AZ 85706; phone: 520-663-5956; e-mail: sunbirds2@att.net; mentor: no; spouse: Virginia M. Heyes; status: Individual.

Skills: Artist/Cartoonist, Freelance, Newsletter, TV/Video.

Interests: Hiking, backpacking, fishing, canoeing, National Parks, Alaska.

Credits: No outdoor credits yet. I have been a technical writer for IBM for 12 years and an avid photographer for 30 years.

Kline, Mary – 2548 Graydon Road, Glen Rock, PA 17327; phone: 717-428-0134; e-mail: marycklinerla@att.net; status: Individual; sponsor: Tom Cummings.

Skills: Photographer.

Murphy, Mary Alice – PO Box 1026, Silver City, NM 88062; phone: 505-534-3058; work phone: 505-388-1576; e-mail: MABM@aol.com or mamurphy@thedailynews.com; status: Individual; sponsor: Anne Sullivan.

Skills: Photographer, Writer, Book Author, Newspaper, Lecturer, Freelance, Staff.

Interests: Photography, creative nonfiction, journalistic photography and writing.

Credits: Photographer and writer for Silver City Daily Press, art photographer in galleries.

Oberle, Scott – 7682 Duquesne Pl., Westminster, CA 92683-6222; phone: 714-894-4970; e-mail: soberle@verizon.net; spouse: Joyce; status: Individual; sponsor: Tom Cummings.

Skills: Photographer, Freelance, Video.

Interests: Nature photography and road bicycling.

Peachin, Mary – 6731 Calle Buena, Tucson, AZ 85715; phone: 520-296-1506; e-mail: mary@peachin.com; web site: www.peachin.com; mentor: yes; spouse: David Peachin; status: Individual; sponsor: John Catsis.

Skills: Photographer, Writer, Editor/Publisher, Book Author, Magazine, Newsletter, Newspaper, Lecturer, Freelance, Web Designer/Developer, Internet/Webmaster.

Interests: Diving, fishing, outdoors.

Credits: ASMP, SATW, ASJA, OWAA.

Perry, Al – 9203 Petersburg Rd., Evansville, IN 47725; phone: 812-867-7841; work phone: 812-867-7727; e-mail: alperry@alperry.com; web site: www.alperry.com; spouse: Joyce; status: Individual; sponsor: Tom Cummings.

Skills: Photographer.

Shrum, Dave – 32991 Buffalo Cr. Rd., Evergreen, CO 80439.

Shrum, Keith – 10691 W. 54th Ave., Arvada, CO 8002.

Sizeler, Stanley – 28 Shetland Lane, Pleasant Hill, CA 94523; phone: 925-372-6422; e-mail: size@earthlink.net; mentor: no; spouse: Cynthia; status: Individual; sponsor: Tom Cummings.

Skills: Photographer, Freelance.

Interests: Photography.

Slee, Ms. Kendell – 1227 McIntosh Ave., Broomfield, CO 80020.

Taylor, Robert – 343 Woodford St., Portland, ME 04103; phone: 207-780-1959; e-mail: 7848@gwi.net; spouse: Georgia; status: Individual; sponsor: Tom Cummings.

Skills: Photographer.

Walker, David – 701 SE Riverside Dr., Evansville, IN 47713; phone: 812-491-9861; e-mail: wraggeowrapper@yahoo.com; spouse: Kim; status: Individual; sponsor: Tom Cummings.

Skills: Photographer.

Directory Updates

Wendleton, Jack – 236 W. 5th Street, Hermann, MO 65041; phone: 573-486-2150; work phone: same, e-mail: jpwend@ktis.net; mentor: yes; spouse: Patricia; status: Individual; sponsor: Jack Olson.

Skills: Photographer, Freelance.

Interests: Photography: outdoor, landscape, nature, history, outdoor recreation, travel, culture, national parks, state parks, living history, domestic and foreign destinations.

Credits: Owner: Jack Wendleton Photography. Member: North American Nature Photography Association, Photographic Society of America, Lake Arts Council Board - Founder Lake Arts Photography Club.

Widup, Kevin – 128 Rockwood Drive, Madison, MS 39110; phone: 601-856-2161; work phone: 601-966-0593; e-mail: kevin_widup@msn.com; spouse: Virginia; status: Individual; sponsor: Tom Cummings.

Skills: Photographer.

Interests: Nature photography.

Youngblood, Richard – 1418 Robin Ave., Katy, TX 77493; phone: 281-391-2845; work phone: 281-396-6700; e-mail: richardyoungblood@katyisd.org; mentor: no; status: Individual; sponsor: Tom Cummings.

Skills: Photographer.

Interests: Photography, camping, hiking, backpacking.

Zinn, Joe – 0587 El Rio Dr., Monte Vista, CO 81144; phone: 719-850-1526, work phone: same; mentor: yes; spouse: Peggie; status: Individual; sponsor: Jon Sheppard.

Interests: Photography and journalism.

Zurey, Sherry – 31901 Warrens Road, Golden, CO 80403; phone: 303-642-7566; e-mail: sherry.z@att.net; spouse: Frank Zurey; status: Individual; sponsor: Frank Zurey.

Skills: photographer.

Interests: nature photography.

Allen, Lee - correct spelling of street to Frannea Dr.

Baker, Jim & Sue - 1024 Oak Ridge Dr.

Bishop, Tom & Buellah – phone: 307-335-9769

Boyd, Guy - work phone: 970-221-6570

Colao, Georgia M. - work phone: 303-793-3375

Cummings, Tom – web site: www.treepotos.com

England, Dan – work phone: 970-392-4418

Evans, Joel – delete work phone and delete fax

Fridmann, Tom – zip code: 89014-5507

Fullinwider, Dusty Lee – fax: 719-873-2008

Gatlin, Kelly – zip code: 87821-0193

Hellbusch, Ron – e-mail: Ron-Hellbusch@comcast.net

Inman Sr., William - phone: 303-989-4918; delete fax

Leeper, Merton – zip code: 80128-5453

Malo, John – delete from directory

Minor, Rebecca Lee – phone: 303-279-6829

Myers, Charlotte & Jay – e-mail: jaychar@comcast.net

Pederson, Jeff – work phone: 505-476-8113; fax: 505-476-8128

Schweitzer, Steve – web sites: www.globalflyfisher.com and www.windbrookranch.com

Silling, Mary - phone: 505-373-9565; e-mail: rdmrtn@earthlink.net; Skills: Photographer, Freelance; Interests: Photography, rock hounding, making silver jewelry; Mentor: yes.

Staley, William – delete from directory

Wilcox, Juli – fax: 402-254-3945

Yajko, M.D., Douglas – Change to Dr. R. Douglas Yajko, MD



Barb Laine talks to the membership during one of the workshop sessions at the Silver City conference.

John Catsis photo

Member News & Views

Bill Staley Passes

Contributed by Jack Olson

Bill Staley, a founding member of RMOWP, died August 26, 2005, after a long illness. Bill was born in Terre Haute, Indiana, and moved with his family to Denver in 1928.

Bill married Margaret Hayward in 1939. They started a photography lab in Estes Park, Colorado, around 1960. It was successful and they moved Staley Studios to Denver. Some of their customers were the Colorado Tourism Board, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Chevron Oil, BLM and the Forest Service. They established an educational filmstrip business, which became a major aspect of their business. Bill and Marge sold Staley Studios in 1984.

Bill and Marge spent winters in Arizona, but Denver was their permanent home; they had a second home near Buena Vista. They loved hiking, exploring, fishing, mountain climbing, and photography. Margaret preceded Bill in death.

I have personal memories of Bill. He had such an engaging manner, and a big smile. I often stopped by his shop on the way home from work. He was helpful with photographic advice. It was always a pleasure to talk with him. Whatever he spoke about was always positive. RMOWP can be proud of Bill Staley, and thankful that he was there at the beginning.

Catsis finds a new way to promote RMOWP

John Catsis found a great opportunity to promote RMOWP on the internet on www.travelwriters.com. The site sends an e-mail newsletter out several times a week, with a section for people to ask questions of other travel writers, and Catsis responded to a question about travel writers' associations as follows:

How helpful do any of you find membership in different travel writers' associations? And which ones do you particularly like?

Carol

If you live in the United States, (and maybe even if you don't) consider joining a regional outdoor writers organization. While these groups were started to promote communication in hunting and fishing, they have evolved into organizations that also embrace writers who specialize in travel and photography, among other interests.

I've been a member of the Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers, Inc., (www.rmowp.org) for 20 years. The organization does three major things for me: 1) it introduces me to individuals with similar interests. Some of these folks have become lifelong friends. 2) It improves my writing and photography skills through seminars at conferences. I also expand my learning by contacting members by email. 3) And it broadens my travel horizons by holding conferences in interesting different places every year....and hardly ever in a big town! This past June we met in Silver City, New Mexico, a fascinating community of 12,000. At most conferences, while engaging in tours, we are admitted to areas normally closed to the general public. This results in better copy and unique photographs.

Other regional organizations are the Northwest Outdoor Writers, Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers, New England Outdoor Writers Association, and Southeast Outdoor Writers and Photographers. There are also a number of state organizations. You generally don't have to live in the region to be a member. RMOWP, for example, has members who live all over the U.S., as well as Canada. I'm sure we'd welcome writers from across the pond, if they chose to join. Dues are usually quite reasonable...less than \$50 a year in most cases.

Submissions needed

Rocky Mountain Outdoors is looking for tips, hints, articles and photos for the newsletter. If you have found a more efficient way to do something, share your ideas. We all make the mistake of thinking that because we know something everyone else has the same information. Not true.

If you went someplace interesting that may generate an article (after you have done yours, or course) pass the information along. If you find sites that will provide photo opportunities pass those places along, as well.

Tips and hints can be any length up to 300 words. If you have information that will help members improve their writing or photography skills, but require more space it can be submitted as a craft improvement article. Please keep articles to 1000 words or less.

Photos are always needed. They can be digital or slides, sent via e-mail, disc or snail mail. Please insure all photos have a caption indicating who, where, what and when along with the photographer's name.

E-mail to ron.kerr@shaw.ca. Mailing address: PO Box 310, Kimberley, BC V1A 2Y9 Canada.

The editor

Jack's Jaunts

By Jack Olson

Ancestral Puebloans—and other changes

Following our wonderful Conference in Silver City, the red Mazda and I hightailed it to the Four Corners area to visit my favorite ancient people. Nowadays, the terminology of choice for the National Park Service and many archeologists is “Ancestral Puebloan”, which describes the culture that flourished here from around 700 A.D. to about 1300 A.D. The former name was “Anasazi”, and that term is still floating around the region. Both terms refer to the same culture.

Unless you possess a crisp new highway map, you may be confused by a change in highway numbering. When I got to Gallup, New Mexico, on I-40, I was looking for an exit to U.S. 666 North. Wrong. That highway is now U.S. 491. That's also true as the road continues in Colorado. It seems I heard that the number 666 is considered by some to be satanic, and they did not want that number to bedevil the highway. This isn't an article on religion, so I'll leave it at that.

Most of our members are very familiar with Mesa Verde, and even the adjoining Ute Mountain Tribal Park in Colorado, which continues the cliff dwellings. So I'll just touch on a few of the lesser visited sites.

Let's use Cortez, Colorado, as our point of departure. Drive about two miles south of town on U.S. 491 (don't forget!). At a stoplight, with a sign pointing right for the airport, take that right and go west on the McElmo Canyon Road. Just under thirteen miles along this road, there's a parking area on rough rock on the right side of the road.

From here, you can hike up to six miles up the Sand Canyon Trail. This is just one of the Ancestral Puebloan locations in the relatively new Canyons of the Ancients national Monument, a conglomeration of scattered prehistoric sites.

Continue west on McElmo Canyon Road and, unless you have brand new Colorado and Utah highway maps, there's another change in store. You can now drive the entire 42 miles from Cortez to Hovenweep National Monument on pavement. The old maps have you bouncing on many miles of gravel road.

The only change at the main Hovenweep site in Utah is a fine new visitor center. The Little Ruin Trail, which leaves from the visitor center, is about a two mile loop and passes numerous Ancestral Puebloan ruins of residences and towers, most of which were built in the 1200s.

There was another ancient site I wanted to revisit, Lowry Pueblo, also part of Canyons of the Ancients. Travel north of Cortez on good old U.S. 491 about twenty miles to the small settlement of Pleasant View. Turn left at a sign for Lowry Pueblo and drive nine miles west to that site. I found, what else, a big change.

At this very attractive ruin they have, for crying out loud, put a big, flat metal and wood roof on top.

There was no information at the site concerning the roof, so I drove back to the Anasazi (see what I mean?) Heritage Center in nearby Dolores hoping to find an answer. But the Center was closed due to roof repairs. I know where they could find one.

After traveling to the mountains for cool air, I popped into Mesa Verde for a bit more of an Ancestral Puebloan fix. Then it was back to Cortez and my motel—the Anasazi Motor Inn.



The Annual RMOWP Photography Workshop is becoming well known in the photograph world. The participants for the 2005 workshop took time out for a group photograph.
Tom Cummings photo

“A great picture separates a poetic moment from the rest of life and preserves it. We can hold it in our hands and in our minds, turn it over and over—and savor it.”
—National Geographic
Illustrations Editor
Todd James

Mexican Wolf Reintroduction

By Maryann Gaug

I stopped and stared at the sign at the trailhead. “You are now in Wolf Country” the brown piece of metal proclaimed. When I planned a day hike in the Gila Wilderness, I hadn’t considered that wolves lived here. Wolves – those dreaded creatures of yore, ingrained in our brains with tales of little Red Riding Hood and the Three Little Pigs.

But are wolves so bad? After the reintroduction of the gray wolf in the Greater Yellowstone ecosystem, the natural world appears to be in better balance. Elk herds seem healthier and the coyote population has decreased.

The Mexican wolf found in the Gila National Forest and Gila Wilderness is a smaller subspecies of the gray wolf. Its original range extended from Mexico to Albuquerque and west to the middle of Arizona. *Canis lupus baileyi* may have roamed as far north as southern Colorado and Utah.

With the big bad wolf in mind as well as protecting valuable sheep and cattle herds, from 1890 to 1930, Americans hunted wolves intent to exterminate them. They almost succeeded. In 1976, the Mexican wolf attained endangered species status, followed in 1978 by the listing of the entire gray wolf species as endangered.

Only five of the Mexican subspecies could be found in Mexico in the late 1970s and were captured between 1977 and 1980. With those wolves and some in zoos across the nation and in Mexico, a captive wolf program started.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (the Service) completed a Mexican wolf recovery plan in 1982. On March 29, 1998, the Service released 11 Mexican wolves from the captive program into the wild from the release area in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest in eastern Arizona. The wolves then disburse into the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area (BRWRA), a 7,200 square mile area covering that forest and the Gila National Forest in southwestern New Mexico. The initial goal included establishing a wild population of at least 100 Mexican wolves.

The program shows signs of success. From no wolves in the area before 1998, the population grew to 65 then decreased to 50 in 2004. The mortality rate has been below the prediction in the recovery plan’s Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Wolves typically die by either being run over by vehicles or shot by humans.

Landowners can legally shoot a wolf in the act of biting livestock on their own property or tribal land as long as they report the shooting within 24 hours. The Service is also educating ranchers to haze the wolves from their property instead of killing them.

Through various research methods, the wolves’ eating habits show they prefer elk (74%), unknown deer or elk (11%), deer (5%), small mammals (5%) and livestock (4%). In three winters, wolves had killed 25 elk, one deer, and eight confirmed cattle. Elk are herd animals more than are deer and wolves excel at working the herd.

The Service has confirmed 37 livestock deaths between 1998 and 2004. Some ranchers argue the total is much higher. John Oakleaf, the Service’s Field Coordinator for the Mexican Wolf Reintroduction Project, spoke at a RMOWP conference dinner and mentioned that more wolf depredation of cattle occurs in the southwest because grazing occurs year-round, not just in summer.

The Service will kill wolves found to prey on cattle. One pack faces that punishment after being blamed for 10 depredations. Before that fateful day, the Service plans to capture the female and her pups and move them to another area.

Because each wolf pack needs approximately 200 square miles, some packs wander outside the BRWRA, not understanding human created boundaries. The Service rounds up errant wolves and re-releases them. More area is needed into which the animals can expand.

Back in the 1920s, in a rimrock area of Arizona, a forester came upon a pack of wolves frolicking with each other. Par for the time, he and his companions shot the entire pack. But something happened. He saw the fierce green fire dying in a female wolf’s eyes. After watching the fire die out, he realized that neither wolf nor mountain agreed with the view that no wolves meant more deer and a hunter’s paradise. That forester was Aldo Leopold who later founded The Wilderness Society and was part of the movement to create the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Gila Wilderness claims the title of the nation’s first designated Wilderness.

If the Mexican wolf is to survive, somehow the Gila Wilderness being their refuge seems fitting.

