

ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOOR WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2013

Conference Update

Time to get aboard for the 2013 conference of Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers & Photographers, which takes place **May 15 to 19 in Fruita, Colorado**, just west of Grand Junction at the entrance to Colorado National Monument. We'll explore the national monument, shoot it's fantastic scenery from above and below, talk with locals about efforts to elevate the monument to national park status, and hunt for ancient petroglyphs and dinosaur bones.



© Barb Laine

On our recent trip to Fruita, to complete arrangements for the conference, we were greeted with extreme temperatures. Read COLD. There was snow everywhere, and it was definitely not melting. This is a shot of Fruita from the national monument. Hopefully things will look different in May. And all this moisture should bring out many spring flowers ready to smile for the camera lens.

- Showcase of selected members' photography
- Something new - A photo scavenger hunt
- Jack Olson's famous sunrise photo shoot
- Auction to Benefit the Scholarship Fund
- And too much food!

To see the tentative schedule, with emphasis here on the word tentative, see page 8, and to register, please use the official registration form included with this newsletter.

Although we are currently not planning any trips into Grand Junction - there's just too much to see and do in and near the monument - those coming to the conference may want to schedule an extra day or two to see Grand Junction's museums, Art on the Corner, Botanical Gardens, and other attractions on their own. There's also a nifty car museum - for classic car aficionados like us - about 65 miles (1.5 hours) southwest of Fruita on scenic Colorado 141.

Conference headquarters is the La Quinta Inn at Fruita, which is giving us group lodging rates of \$79 per night for one or two people. This rate will be available only until April 15. Based on availability, the La Quinta will also offer these rates for a day or two before and after the conference.

Our rooms have fridges and microwaves, rates include a continental breakfast with a do-it-yourself

see Conference... page 4

Special programs include a workshop from writer, photographer, and lecturer Virginia Staat titled, "If the World's a Stage, Then Who's the Audience?" This program will help writers of all levels determine their voice, purpose, and audience when preparing and selling manuscripts. Also scheduled is a program by western Colorado writer Bill Haggerty, an expert on the region's natural areas, and formerly with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, on how to make money from your outdoor adventures.

Photographers won't want to miss the workshop on how to shoot prize-winning images by Tom Ulrich, an internationally-known photographer and RMOWP's longtime photo contest judge, and a program on how to create mind-blowing altered images by Bill Horton, photographer, author, and computer guru.

We are pleased that 3 of the 4 presenters are RMOWP members - and we're working on Bill Haggerty.

What else are we planning?

- Guided walks and hikes in and near Colorado National Monument
- Writing & photo critiques

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President's Column

Winter Photography

article & photos by Al Perry

I have always enjoyed the challenge of winter. As a teen in North Central Indiana, I rose two hours before sunrise in the coldest months of the year to run a mile-and-a-half long trap line. More recently, I've



Moonrise over Half Dome, Yosemite National Park (HDR)

grown to rejoice in the photographic opportunities heralded by the cold snowy months of winter. Wildlife looks best in the winter; especially with snow as a background. Landscapes take on a whole new form with the gentle accumulation of snow and ice.

We all know the downside of photographing in the winter: shorter days, more clouds, difficult travel, shorter battery life and yes, colder temperatures. As I write this, it is minus 18 degrees F outside my camper in West Yellowstone. However, these challenges offer opportunities for creating distinctive images in a serene wintry setting.

Each year I find myself doing more winter photography. I begin each journey with modest expectations and return with more than I sought. This winter my travels include Yo-



Hoarfrost on grass & woven fence, Nevada



Sunrise in Yosemite National Park

osemite, Yellowstone, Iceland, and Alaska. In making the effort to embrace the challenges of winter photography, I have created images not possible at more comfortable latitudes.

These three winter scenes were taken the last week of December 2012.

Jack's Jaunts

The Flight from Hell

by Jack Olson

This column has gone on, in some form, for well over a decade. It has usually involved hikes, or something driven to and then a walk. We've never involved a plane flight as the featured mode of transportation. That streak has ended.

I was down in Florida visiting my sister and the whole family for the holidays. Fun, food, and exploration as always, from the beginning. That streak

was about to end. My sister and brother-in-law drove me to the airport in Ft. Walton Beach. A nice woman at the American Airlines desk recognized that I didn't know what I was doing concerning the boarding pass or much of anything else. She also advised me that there was a 45 minute delay on the flight, but that I should still make it to Dallas in time for my connecting flight. Just a minute, was that the soundtrack from "Jaws" playing in the background?

I should admit now that I am 74, and will turn 75 in April. But when I got to the man checking IDs in security he told me I didn't have to take my shoes off. On this trip I seemed to run into kind people who appeared perhaps to be noticing my bumblingness. Another TSA man sidled up to me as I was beginning to dump the possibly suspicious items in the plastic tub for scanning. He whispered, "You are over 74, aren't you?" I fumbled with the truth but he cut me off with, "You ARE over 74, aren't you?" I finally got his drift and confidently avowed the fact that I was indeed over 74. But being a professional, he inquired if I was wearing a belt. I couldn't much hide that so I came clean. He replied, "I think you might do something about the belt." His integrity remained intact.

The nice lady who had checked my bags in was now working in the boarding area. She announced that there had been a further delay in the flight. It only took some simple math to realize that I was not going to make my flight from Dallas to Denver. The nice lady confirmed my math. So, instead of the 7:05 flight she rebooked me for a 10:30 flight from Dallas. Goody, more time in Dallas. But the plane from Ft. Walton did make it out and landed in Dallas in a driving rainstorm.

The impending trouble was that it happened I was on a small plane, the overheads weren't far overhead, and the "Jaws" soundtrack was getting very close to the young lady's legs. I stood upon landing,

cracking the top of my head and, as we all know, the scalp is a rich source of blood. I checked and my hand had acquired a red hue. When I entered the terminal I wobbled to a restroom and dabbed a paper towel on my head. Not too much blood. I'm OK.

I walked into a newsstand to buy a newspaper to pass the time, and a Milky Way for comfort food. The stand was operated by three people who I took to be Pakistanis. I went to pay for my items and a tall woman in a head scarf looked at me and gasped, "Did you fall down?" The smaller Pakistani woman came over, and after the first woman told me to bend my head down, she gasped, too. The Pakistani man came over but didn't gasp.

The tall woman exclaimed "ointment" and "bandage". They seemed to be concerned, worried sick really. The woman crossed over to their displays and picked out a \$1.99 medical kit. She instructed the man, "alcohol", and he somehow produced some. She daubed it on my head and asked if it hurt. I grimaced "no". She ordered the man "tissue" to wipe the alcohol running down my face. Then she applied the ointment and bandage to the top of my head. We both

beamed at the results. I got out a five dollar bill to pay for the medical kit and told her to keep the rest for nursing services. She would have none of that.

I sat down in the waiting room to occupy my mind before the 10:00pm boarding call. I completed all the crossword puzzles and the Sudoku, just as 10:00 rolled around. Then came the dreaded announcement. The flight has been delayed until midnight. Oh great, the Milky Way is gone, puzzles finished, and

see *Jaunts...* page 5



Hope Jack's plane wasn't anything like this replica of a 1916 "Jenny" (JN-3) — although the Jenny does have more headroom than Jack encountered.

(photo taken at Pancho Villa State Park, NM by Barb Laine)

FUNNY FOTOS NEEDED

(see page 5 for details)

Remember:

- the more the merrier
- no time limitations/date requirements
- same size requirements as the annual photo contest
- no altered image or black & white

DEADLINE: 10 MARCH 2013

Start thinking about what you should bring to Conference

It's never too early to begin gathering the stuff you'll be schlepping to the conference. So here's a quick checklist to get you started:

DONATIONS FOR THE AUCTION

Silly stuff, serious stuff, big stuff, little stuff. But remember: this isn't a yard sale. It's a fun event to raise funds for our scholarship.

Things we've auctioned off in recent years have included members' matted photos and published books, craft and gift items, photo equipment and the like.

PHOTOS FOR THE MEMBERS' CHOICE CONTEST

Start going through your pix, not forgetting those from the distant past. There's no limit to when these photos were taken. You may submit one or two matted prints, in color or black and white, and altered/manipulated images are eligible.

Categories are Scenic, Flora and Fauna; and print size max is 8" x 12" matted out to 12" x 16". No framing please. Write "Members' Choice", your name, and a title on the back of each submission. They'll be displayed at the conference for everyone to judge.

PHOTOS FOR THE PHOTO CRITIQUE

Entertaining and informative for all, Tom Ulrich and Jack Olson review your photos with an eye to how they could be improved. Bring 3 to 5 digital images on a CD or flash drive.

WRITING FOR THE WRITING CRITIQUE

Bring 12 copies of your work for participants and audience to follow as you read it aloud. All will then discuss its good points and suggest possible ways it could be changed. Stories, poems, photo essays, or other formats are welcome. Although length can vary, about 1,200 words or less are best.

FLASH DRIVE or CD for PHOTO SCAVENGER HUNT

Details forthcoming at registration, but a flash drive or CD will be needed to get your pix up on the screen.



Arizona Fire © John Thornton
2nd place, Events Category 2012



Sneffels Range © Jack Olson
1st place, Published Images Category 2012

Heads up!
Annual Contest entries must be submitted by February 11.
Deadline for Humorous Challenge (details on page 5) is March 10.

Conference... cont. from page 1

waffle bar, and the Fruita La Quinta accepts pets.

We have reserved 25 rooms - 10 kings and 15 doubles - and suites and other upgraded rooms are also available at discounted rates. Those making reservations should call the motel directly at 970-858-8850 and tell the reservations clerk that you are with the Rocky Mountain Outdoor Group. If you have any questions or problems ask to speak to the motel manager, Chadd Rogers.

Those who want to camp will find the very attractive Fruita section of the James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park practically next door to the Fruita La Quinta. Camping fees range from \$16 to \$24 nightly and in addition you have to pay the daily park pass fee of \$7. See www.parks.state.co.us. There is also a very nice campground in Colorado National Monument (www.nps.gov/colm), although it is a bit of a drive on a windy mountain road. Across the street from La Quinta there is a commercial campground, Monument RV Resort, www.monumentrvresort.com.

See page 6 for how to get to the conference.

CALENDAR

Feb. 11, 2013 ~ RMOWP Contest deadline

Mar. 10, 2013 ~ RMOWP Humorous Photo Challenge deadline (see below)

May 15 - 19, 2013 ~ RMOWP conference Colorado National Monument, Fruita, Colorado

May 30, 2013 ~ Scott-McKenna Scholarship application deadline (see www.rmowp.org)

June 25-29, 2013 ~ RMOWP Scenic & Wildlife Photo Workshop in Rocky Mountain National Park

Sep. 14-16, 2013 OWAA conference, Lake Placid, NY

Jaunts... cont. from page 3

the concession stand closed. Time to walk, and walk.

The plane did leave at midnight and streaked its turbulent way to Denver. Finally, I'm almost home. But why do I hear the climactic chords of "Jaws?" My bags were among the first off the carousel, soaking wet from sitting in one of those carts in the rainstorm. I limped over to Super Shuttle at 1:00am to catch my prepaid whisk into the city. But wait (wait). There are no people behind the counter. Maybe they're taking a bathroom break. No.

A man at a nearby information counter asked my problem and I babbled to him in one syllable words. He said the Super Shuttle people had left for the night and wouldn't be back until about 6:00. He questioned where I wanted to go and I croaked, "Home." The nice man said he would call Super Shuttle and see if they would get me a cab ride. I was on hold for a long time but eventually talked to an unrecorded person and begged or demanded, I forget which, to get a cab ride on them. The man put me on hold but came back and triumphantly announced that they would put me on Yellow Cab for a free ride. The cab was the car for which the word "Rattletrap" was coined. I wondered to myself if I had gone through this only to die when a cab disintegrated on the Interstate.

There was one last challenge after reaching my apartment building. My suitcase was very heavy and I didn't think I could carry it up the stairs to the third floor. I'd probably have to take the smaller bag and cane up, bring down a shopping bag, take half of what was in the suitcase and then come back for the suitcase. Funny how something like that seems like such a big deal in the middle of the night. But I couldn't hear "Jaws" anymore. A couple was talking outside at two in the morning, for crying out loud.

The young man asked if I could use some help. My guardian angel. Ten minutes later, bags unopened, I was snuggled in bed.

Two things I learned from this experience: There are kind people you meet all over the world, if you are nice to them and are, perhaps, a little pitiful. I imagined I had the word "Help!" tattooed on my forehead. And....

I wonder how long it takes to walk to Florida?



"Take my picture at your Perry!" © Kenita Gibbins
2nd Place 2012 Humorous Challenge

(Ed. note: That's RMOWP president Al Perry in front of the hood, aiming his camera at an unidentified photographer peering through the cab.)

The Angelo Sciulli Humorous Photo Challenge 2013

Since it's inception in 2007, the humorous photo challenge has been an outstanding hit, but its success depends on your participation. Remember: There is no time limit on when the image was taken (cave paintings included).

Please email your entry (up to two photos per person) to Frank Zurey, zurey.photo@mrhc.net, by March 10 or include them with your annual contest entry (due Feb. 11).

The humorous photo should be a digital image with an outdoor theme and can be in contest Categories 01 through 08 (see the 2013 RMOWP Awards Competition Rules for category descriptions). No manipulated entries!

Please include a caption or description of the photograph, and follow the contest rules for sizing: six inches on the longest side at 300 ppi in high-resolution jpg format. If you do not have the software to resize the image, submit the file as produced by your camera. The file name of the humorous entry should be hum underscore photographer's last name underscore photographer's first initial underscore image title (i.e.: hum_smith_r_elk dancing). The judge will select the top three photos and will present a humorous slide show at the 2013 conference in Fruita, Colorado featuring all of the entries.



Christmas Lights in Denver © Frank Zurey
2nd place, Cultural Category 2012

yellowed pages and broken spines to find answers to reference questions, some prefer using the internet. Many of the above-mentioned writer's tools are readily available online. (For a nominal fee, you can even purchase a "Writing Toolkit" app for your smart phone!) While most style manuals require an online fee, a short list of free online reference tools includes the following:

- *The Merriam Webster Dictionary* (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary>) is available online and offers additional search options including Spanish-English, thesaurus, and medical terms.
- *Roget's Thesaurus* (<http://machaut.uchicago.edu/?resource=Roget%27s>) allows you to search headwords or full text entries.
- *Elements of Style* (<http://www.bartleby.com/141/index.html>) is available courtesy of the Bartleby project.

Writers' Corner

A Writer's Toolbox

by Virginia Staat

"If you have any young friends who aspire to become writers, the second greatest favor you can do them is to present them with copies of The Elements of Style. The first greatest, of course, is to shoot them now, while they're happy." – Dorothy Parker, *The Collected Dorothy Parker*

In search of a byline, writers tend to focus on their story and sometimes neglect the basic mechanics of writing. Unfortunately, many very good manuscripts have been rejected simply because the author failed to correct poor spelling, grammar, or formatting. To combat such pitfalls, writers need only a short list of resource books in his or her toolbox. These must-have titles include the following:

- *Webster's Dictionary* offers spelling, word division, and definitions.
- *Roget's Thesaurus* provides synonyms and antonyms.
- *20,000 Words* by Lois A. Leslie is a tiny, quick reference book providing spelling and syllable divisions for 20,000 of the most used and most often misspelled words.
- *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White is a concise reference guide encompassing proper grammar, principles of composition, commonly misused and misspelled words, and writing dos and don'ts.
- *The Associated Press Stylebook* and/or *The Chicago Manual of Style* are guides offering proper formatting and citation styles for various types of writing (including journalistic, technical, grant, research, etc.).

While some writers (including myself) prefer the rather archaic process of leafing through books with

Getting to Fruita, Colorado

Fruita, the site of the 2013 RMOWP conference, is just over 250 miles from downtown Denver via I-70, and Rand McNally tells us it takes four hours and two minutes to get there. Don't forget to allow for that extra two minutes.

For those brave enough to fly after reading Jack Olson's *Jaunts* elsewhere in this newsletter, you can fly to Denver International Airport (www.fly-denver.com) and rent a car - most major airlines and car rental companies operate there - or fly into Grand Junction, just ten miles east of Fruita.

Grand Junction Regional Airport (www.gjairport.com) has direct flights from Denver, Salt Lake City, Phoenix, Las Vegas, Dallas/Fort Worth, and Houston, and connections from most other major cities. Airlines serving Grand Junction are Allegiant, American/American Eagle, Delta, United, and US Airways. Car rentals are available at the airport from Alamo, Avis/Budget, Enterprise, Hertz, and National.



Orange Blossoms © Emily Harrington
3rd place, Novice Category 2012

Sights in Colorado National Monument

In the last RMOWP newsletter I wrote about my experiences in the ancient world near Colorado National Monument. This article will give you some ideas of what to see in the monument while you're at conference in May. While I haven't explored every nook and cranny, I have seen some great places. Several short walks take you to some spectacular views, interesting places, and flora.

From the west (Fruita) entrance, head to the visitor center but make sure to stop at the various overlooks along the way. You'll pass Redlands View (I saw the desert bighorn near here) and Balanced Rock. The road goes through two tunnels blasted through the rock walls. Three more scenic overlooks provide nice views and historical information. Just before the visitor center, turn left to check out the quarter-mile Window Rock Trail. In addition to Window Rock, the view includes Wedding and Monument Canyons and Independence Rock. The campground is one of my favorites and the picnic area provides a nice spot for a snack or a meal.

Head back to Rim Rock Drive and the visitor center. Colorado National Monument celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2011 and new exhibits were installed. Take some time to read the displays about geology, the evolution of this edge of the Uncompahgre Plateau, flora and fauna, and very interesting human history. The park movie is great, too!



Piñon and juniper trees under a moody sky

Across from the visitor center is the Alcove Nature Trail, a half-mile easy walk next to some short cliffs to a pour-off (always been dry when I've been there). As you enter the cozy confines of the dead-end of the trail, look in the sand for little holes made by antlions. When ants or other insects fall in the antlion pit, they can't escape due to the mini-landslide of sand and the grasp of the antlion. Along the way you can photograph various flowers and interesting twisted juniper trunks.

Another nice walk not far from the visitor center is Otto's Trail (a half mile one way), which overlooks Wedding Canyon. About six miles from the visitor center is the Coke Ovens Trail and the Upper Monument Canyon Trail. The trails start out together and gradually descend the top of a cliff. Sounds like an oxymoron, but it's pretty cool, wide, and easy. After



A little upside-down tree on Upper Monument Canyon Trail just below its junction with Coke Ovens Trail

0.2 mile, article & photos by Maryann gaug
the trails split. The Coke Ovens overlook is another 0.3 mile. If you like unusual trees, head left and downhill about 60 feet, and look up the cliff to your left. A small tree is growing upside down, its roots above it clinging for dear life in little rock crevices - a photo opportunity or just a jaw-dropping sight.

Eleven viewpoints between the visitor center and the east entrance make for frequent stops. Although I have not hiked it, the Serpents Trail is part of the original Rim Rock Drive and is 1.75 miles one way. Grab a few friends and set up a car shuttle, then decide whether to hike up or down this twisty trail with a 770-foot elevation change (roughly 8% grade). Near the east entrance is the Devils Kitchen Picnic Area, in case you're hungry after all that exploring.

Each viewpoint has its own interesting features. I can't remember which stop has the juniper and piñon pine trees right next to each other, but they make for some interesting photography, especially if the berries are thick on the juniper tree. The west entrance lies at 4,690 feet while the high point on Rim Rock Drive is 6,640 feet. Make sure to bring a jacket just in case. And of course - the camera!



Indian paintbrush nestled against twisted juniper trunk along the Alcove Nature Trail

Former RMOWP Member Dies

Former RMOWP member Harold (Hal) Shymkus of Espanola, NM, died December 13 following a brief illness. Hal, 86, participated in RMOWP activities for several years, including the 2001 conference in Alamogordo, New Mexico.

He was an avid golfer and fisherman, a potter and painter, as well as an author whose works included the book "Nightcrawlers, Bait and Beer To Go." Hal was a long-time member of the New Mexico Outdoor Writers & Photographers Association.

Survivors include his wife, Mary Beth, a son, daughter, and grandchildren.

RMOWP Conference 2013 (Tentative Schedule)

Fruita, Colorado

Meals and workshops at Fruita La Quinta except as noted

Wednesday, May 15

- 5:00-7:00pm Registration & Opening Reception, Happy Hour & Light Buffet (included in registration fee for registrants & guests)
- 7:00pm Welcome, Handouts & Last Minute Info - President Al Perry & Friends
- 7:30-9:30pm Presentation of All Photo Contest Submissions

Thursday, May 16

- 8:00am-noon Field Trip - Carpool to Colorado National Monument for Ranger Guided Hikes & Walks (Lower Monument Canyon Trail, 5 miles RT, moderate; or several easier walks)
- 12:00pm Lunch buffet (included in registration fee; guests \$15 including tax & tip)
Luncheon Program: Colorado National Monument, or Should that be National Park?
- 1:15pm Workshop - The Art of Altered Images with Bill Horton
- 2:15pm Break
- 2:30pm Writing Workshop - If the World is a Stage, Then Who's the Audience? with Virginia Statt
- 3:45pm Break
- 4:00-7:00pm Carpool to Saddlehorn Picnic Area in Colorado National Monument for photography, scenic walks, and a picnic supper (included in registration fee for registrants & guests)
- 8:00pm Showcase of Selected Members' Photography

Friday, May 17

- 8:30am-noon Field Trip - Carpool for Guided Walks in the Fruita Paleontological Area and Devils Canyon with local writer Bill Haggerty
- 12:00pm Lunch buffet (\$13 including tax & tip)
- 1:00pm Workshop - How to Make Money from Your Outdoor Adventures with Bill Haggerty
- 2:00pm Break
- 2:15pm Workshop - In Pursuit of the Winning Image with Tom Ulrich
- 3:30pm Board of Directors Meeting (open to all members)
- OR
- Free Time
- 6:00pm Dinner buffet (\$18 including tax & tip)
- 7:00pm Photo Critique with Tom Ulrich & Jack Olson

Saturday, May 18

- 5:30-8:00am Sunrise Photo Shoot with Jack Olson
- 8:30am General Membership Meeting - President Al Perry
- 9:00am Results of the Photo Scavenger Hunt
- 10:00am-noon Writing Critique with Kenita Gibbins (spectators encouraged to attend & comment)
- 12:00pm Lunch on your Own & Free Time
- 3:00-5:00pm Auction to Benefit Scholarship Fund with Jim Baker & John Catsis
- 6:30-7:00pm Happy Hour (beer, wine, & soft drinks, included in registration fee)
- 7:00-10:00pm Banquet Buffet (\$29 including tax & tip), Introduction of New Officers & Board Members; Tributes; Awards Ceremony

Sunday, May 19

- 8:00am Field Trip - Guided Photo Walk with Jack Olson & Maryann Gaug
- 11:00am Lodging Check-Out