

ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOOR WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

MARCH - APRIL 2013

President's Column

Aerial Photography

Article & photo by Al Perry

In the January-February edition of *Rocky Mountain Outdoors*, Jack Olson gave us a funny and captivating story about his trip flying home from Florida. Jack's flight reminded me of an airplane ride of my own a few months earlier.

While in Iceland for two weeks during September 2012, I contacted a retired pilot of Icelandair and asked if he could fly me around the lava fields, geysers and glaciers to take photos. We met at a grass strip and it took us some time to figure out how I was going to get into his 1950s era French built, wooden fuselage, fabric covered, single engine



Thermals, moss covered lava fields and glaciers of Iceland ~ taken as our small plane fought to stay in the air.

airplane. It looked to me to be a 2/3 scale model of a Piper Cherokee I learned to fly 43 years before. We took off on the calmest and sunniest day of my visit. For those who haven't been there, Iceland is almost always windy and usually cloudy.

This was my last full day in Iceland and it was one of the best; smooth flying, views of volcanic craters, old and new lava fields and glaciers, including the largest glacier in Europe. All was going well until I noticed the engine sputtering. I suspected the carburetor was iced up and, sure enough, my retired transatlantic airline pilot applied carburetor heat, but to no effect. We were flying about 1500 feet above ground level when the engine started acting

CONFERENCE 2013
FRUITA, COLORADO
(see page 6)
DON'T MISS IT ~ MAY 15-19

up. At about 500 feet above the lava fields and glacier crevasses, I asked the pilot why the engine was sputtering. He replied calmly: "I don't know. I'm looking for an emergency landing site." I knew this wooden plane with canvas for skin was no match for abrasive lava or 100 foot deep glacier crevasses, but I had faith in the pilot so I continued taking photos as we flew closer to our subject.

To make a long flight short, we limped back to the air field. The next day when I flew out of Reykjavik, Icelandair gave me a first class seat with a clean, unscratched window for our late afternoon flight to New York. We followed the setting sun across Greenland as I photographed icebergs, fjords and ice fields along with glaciated mountains protruding through the ice---all from 35,000 feet. There was no sputtering of the Boeing 757 engines on our flight over Greenland. When I arrived in New York, I sent an email to the retired Icelandair pilot and thanked him for the first class upgrade.

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Armchair Wildlife Photography

Article & photo by Richard Holmes

As a refinement to civilized wildlife photography, discussed in a previous newsletter, I continue with the goal of not chasing after wildlife, but allowing them to approach me.

Rather than standing behind a tripod or crawling around on the ground with it, the logical progression toward this goal is to place a chair, an armchair of course, in a convenient photo location, choice of subject being important. The overriding principle is to avoid spending undue energy in the quest for wildlife photos.

I saw this technique in action while I was a guest of John Thornton and his wife, Beth, at their home in Stillwater, Oklahoma, last summer. I was given free range of Beth's many flowerbeds, a butterfly haven, and had spent much time on their acreage moving among various flower patches chasing after butterflies. I'm sure John had done this many times. When I walked around the house I noticed that John had become stationary. He had the good sense to plant himself in an armchair near a flowerbed, tripod in front of him, and the late afternoon sun over his shoulder.

So I pulled up a chair to join him. As butterflies landed on

nearby flowers, and we leisurely turned our telephoto lenses to get the photograph, an idea began to form in my mind about the wisdom of this approach. It was beautiful. It was productive. It was simple. We would merely remain in place. Every butterfly would eventually land on one of those flowers. And if it became partially obscured, would we get up to get a better angle? Of course not. To



Fritillary

rise and follow a butterfly across a flower garden would compromise our principles.

We continued photographing in this manner and eventually I noticed a movement from the corner of my eye. It was the approach of wine, two glasses of it, carefully tendered by Beth. A small table

appeared between our chairs. I said to John, "Do you always have such special service"? He replied, "It doesn't get any better than this." At that point I knew I had levitated to a higher plane of photography.

So with one hand at the ready for the shutter, and the other hand at the ready for the wine, it took only an instant to become accustomed to this marvelous concept of armchair photography. Now, unencumbered by the compulsion to relocate myself, I felt I had attained the ultimate refinement to civilized wildlife photography.



Aspen Strike © Ken Papaleo
2nd Place, Flora category 2013

Writers' Corner

Proofreading Tips

by Virginia Staat

"I do my best proofreading after I hit SEND." --Author Unknown

Your manuscript is completed. Done. Finito. One task remains, however, before launching it on its journey to publication: proofreading. As author Maggie Murphy said in *ByLine*, "Careful proofreading isn't going the extra mile for editors; it's part of your job as a writer."

Most proofreading tips are simple and easy to remember. They include the following:

- Let your manuscript rest before your final proofread. Stick it in a drawer overnight, turn off the computer and go for a brisk walk, enjoy some music... anything that will reinvigorate you so that you can proof with fresh eyes.
- Use a pen or pencil other than black to mark corrections. (While red is the standard color, it sends me into flashbacks of too many writing courses and professors "bleeding" over my work. I use pencil, standard proofreader marks, and also tick the offending line in the right margin.)
- Slow down when proofreading. Reading quickly encourages identifying words by their shapes rather than individual letters.
- Proofread several times. For many, it is helpful to first proof for spelling and hyphenations, and then grammar and punctuation, followed by double-checking commonly misused and misspelled words.
- Proof titles, tables, captions, numbers, and names.
- Proof your formatting. Check for consistent fonts, alignments, and orphaned lines. A great tip is to turn the page upside down to check spacing.

There are two additional critical steps when

proofreading. With nearly all manuscripts now being written on computers rather than old-fashioned notepads, it is essential that the final proofread uses a printed or "hard" copy. This difference offers proofreaders a double gift. It rests the eyes from the glaring computer screen and makes it easier to find stray commas and transposed letters.

Over the years, I have heard many proofreading tips, including proofreading backwards. The idea is to slow your reading down and to train yourself to check each word. Perhaps I am too forward thinking, because this method simply doesn't work for me. I have found instead that reading the manuscript aloud allows me to hear syntax. It tests the lyrical nature of my writing. It also forces me to sound out words, thereby making it easier to catch grammar and spelling mistakes. It is my single, best proofreading tool.

Meticulous proofreading enhances your credibility and professionalism. Most importantly, it allows readers to focus on your manuscript's content, launching you ever closer to that well-earned acceptance letter.

BRING TO CONFERENCE

- items for the auction
- matted photos for the Members' Choice contest
- photos for the photo critique
- written work for the writing critique
- flash drive for the photo scavenger hunt

Winter Close to Home

Article & photos by Jack Olson

Winter in the big city can deposit a soft layer of glistening snow; it can encourage hardy birds to remain or migrate in; it can freeze your face off.

Last spring I wrote a column on "Wildlife Close to Home", with feathered friends bearing young, swimming in warm waters. They even wander about the gardens, plucking leaves and petals. In winter it's surprising how many birds remain, and how many migrate from the north. Once again, we'll visit popular Washington Park, about five minutes from my home.

In late autumn, the gardens fade and then are dug up. Leaves turn and then fall. Cormorants head for warmer, fish-filled waters. Robins flee for---wherever.

But quiet doesn't descend on the park. Hundreds, even thousands, of Canada geese stick around to swim, peck away in the lawns and wing out to surrounding farm fields. Hundreds, even thousands, of Canada geese make a tremendous racket that can be heard from some distance away. When geese in the lake are preparing to take flight they make a higher pitched, nervous babbling before lift off, after which they assume a coordinated honk.

Ducks fill the lake. Northern shovelers shovel away in their tight revolving circle. Mallards are prominent, the males with their luminescent green heads. There are common mergansers, hooded mergansers, goldeneyes, ring necked ducks, a coot or two. A black-crowned night heron showed up in late January. And redwing blackbirds have already begun to stake out their territory in reeds by nearby Lily Pond.



Mt. Evans backdrops Washington Park

Sometimes we hardly notice, and forget to mention, our common wildlife neighbors. Every day we encounter pigeons,

gulls, ravens, crows, starlings, goodness knows what else. Squirrels scramble everywhere. You even hear them scratching as they vault out of waste cans.

But nothing, nothing, could prepare me for what occurred in late January and the first half of February. A young woman ran up to me excitedly and blurted that there was a bald eagle across the lake. She pointed to a tree and I could see something large, about the size of a cormorant, perched on a branch. But over the next few days, the mystery bird remained elusive. I finally began parking at the far side of the lake to more easily approach the tree.



Harassing the bald eagle

And then I struck gold. There it was, a magnificent, glorious bald eagle. Over the next two weeks I met up with my eagle at least a half dozen times. It was sort of like we were neighbors. But then the neighborhood became much more crowded. Some large crows were angrily harassing the eagle, two of them within maybe three feet of it and two zipping through the air buzzing it. Finally the eagle had enough and flapped away. Many people noticed this striking visitor to the city center and it became famous on TV and in the newspaper.

It's not all wildlife that attracts me to the park. We had only light snow into February, but snow adorning trees makes for an enchanting sight. There's ice on the lake, in different patterns and hues. Shadows from trees, stretching long from the low sun, streak the ice. If it's warm at all, and you stand quietly, you can hear the ice creak and crack.

There's something about winter that seems to make for spectacular clouds. As Denver lies just east of the foothills of the Rockies, we get what are called "mountain wave" (or lenticular) clouds. There's nothing like them. Right below these clouds,

more visible since there are no leaves on the trees, loom the mighty Rockies themselves. The highlight of the view from



Huddling together in open water

Washington Park is 14,264 foot Mount Evans, easily seen from the east side of the lake.

RMOWP membership is scattered across the country. But all of us have a city park, a nearby pond, or a foot-hill stream that abounds with discoveries and treasures. If you have an hour or a half day, look to see what you can observe, photograph, or describe.



Paddling in City Ditch after a light snow

Member News

Annapolis, Maryland photographer **John Hanou** is RMOWP's newest member, thanks to a nudge from president Al Perry. John tells us that his photographic interests include landscapes and cemeteries, and that in addition to photography he writes and lectures. His professional credits include fine art photography and other books including *A Round Indiana: Round Barns in the Hoosier State*; *The Angel of Angel Hill: A Visual Journey of Smith Cemetery*; *Mourning Blooms*, volumes 1 and 2; *Light is Life*; and *Lilly's Wake*. Welcome aboard, John.

Barb and Don Laine have a new mailing address: 76 Eototo Road, El Prado, NM 87529.



Centralia Balloon Fest © Linda Bundren
Honorable Mention, Cultural category 2012

Final Farewells

Former RMOWP member **Betty Parker** and current member **Ronald Bettger** passed away recently.

Betty Parker, who along with her husband Riley, was active in RMOWP in the 1980s and '90s, died in Albuquerque January 22nd at the age of 81. She and Riley, who died in 1996, owned and operated Parker Books of the West in Santa Fe, which specialized in southwestern subjects, and they were also expert in antiquarian books. During her active years with RMOWP Betty served as a board member and newsletter editor. She was a photographer, specializing in nature and art photography, and was also a musician and taught recorder. Survivors include a son, Justin.

Ronald Bettger, 73, died December 29th in Omaha, Nebraska. He loved nature and wildlife from the beach to the mountains, according to his wife Karen, who added that Ron had been interested in photography since high school and it became his passion after his retirement from the auto parts industry in 2000. Ron was a participant in the 2009 RMOWP Photo Workshop, and workshop coordinator Nic Showalter told us, "He had a great and frequent smile and a ready laugh...My life was enriched by getting to know him just a little bit (at the workshop)." Survivors include his wife Karen, son Richard, daughters Shari Cahill and Lori Moore, and six grandchildren.



Blushing Bougainvillea © Kent Taylor
Honorable Mention, Flora category 2013

2013 CALENDAR

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

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

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

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

Forward to Fruita!

by Don Laine

Yeah, I know, the alliteration is terrible.

But RMOWP's 40th annual conference, May 15 to 19, is going to be great and I hope that as many of you as possible will be joining us.

You'll find lots of information, including a tentative schedule, in the Jan-Feb newsletter and at RMOWP.org, but there are a few things we should go over here.

New this year is a **photo scavenger hunt**. No, we won't be shooting scavengers so you won't need a gun, but a memory stick is necessary, so please bring at least one.

And just what is a photo scavenger hunt, you ask?

At the start of the conference, attendees will be given a list of six words and asked to "hunt" for and digitally capture the essence of three of them. Those three images will then be put on a memory stick (please label it with your name), and collected by RMOWP's official projectionist Frank Zurey on Friday. The photos will be shown Saturday morning and the audience will guess which word goes with each image. This should be fun.

Next subject: Those who have not yet made their Fruita motel reservations have a phone call to make.

Conference headquarters is the **Fruita La Quinta Inn**, which is giving us group **lodging rates of \$79** per night plus tax for one or two people, which is about half of what you would pay on your own for those dates. This rate is **available only until April 15**, though, so don't tarry. 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 waffle bar, and they accept pets. All rooms are non-smoking.

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.



Avon, Colorado fireworks ~ February 2013
© Jon Sheppard

See you there!

RMOWP Welcomes New Corporate Friends

It's nice to have friends, and Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers & Photographers is fortunate to have some well-placed friends in the outdoor recreation business community.

We welcome three new additions to our circle - Bear & Son Cutlery, T-REIGN Retractable Gear Tethers, and RESTOP Personal Portable Sanitation Systems.

Looking for a top-quality made-in-America knife? **Bear & Son Cutlery** makes all of their high-quality knives in their state-of-the-art factory in Jacksonville, Alabama. Joining Ken Griffey on the Bear & Son management team are his wife Sandy and son Matt, making it what he calls "a family company, and we are dedicated to keeping it exactly that way." Bear & Son manufactures a wide range of knives - from big Bowies to popular Butterflies - covering almost every knife need. See www.bearandsoncutlery.com.



For those of us who keep forgetting where we put our tools and small electronic devices, and worry about dropping them when we're out on the trail, **T-REIGN Retractable Gear Tethers** offers an easy remedy. T-REIGN is an outgrowth of a company called KEY-BAK, started in 1948 by Ray Lummis, who developed a key reel to help keep railroad linemen from snagging large, dangling key chains on trains. After years of seeing their key reels used in the outdoors, KEY-BAK initiated an outdoor division, T-REIGN, so hunters, anglers, hikers and other outdoor enthusiasts can keep their tools and electronic devices safe at hand by securing them to a T-REIGN Retractable Gear Tether. See www.t-reignoutdoor.com.



Maybe not a subject for dinner table conversation, but **RESTOP Portable Sanitation Systems** are the answer for people on the go, and who need to go. Long used by the military, law enforcement, and emergency medical units, RESTOP portable and disposable sanitation solutions now are being introduced for use by outdoor enthusiasts who care about the environment. Hunters and wildlife photographers especially will appreciate RESTOP after spending hours waiting for the wildlife to arrive, with no restroom in sight. See www.restop.com.

