ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOOR WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS

July - August 2013

2013 Contest Results



Best of Show ~ Photography

Hector Astorga "Mustang Love"

Best of Show ~ Writing

Virgina E. Parker Staat "Winter Texans in Aransas"

an essay in Stories From Where We Live - The Gulf Coast, 2002

"This is a lovely book combining creative writing of many genres, from many different voices and cultures, including the winning entry—Winter Texans in Aransas. Good natural history information is presented in a well-written, readable style that makes the discovery of the science highly enjoyable. The injection of just enough of a personal touch gives the reader a feel for the writer and her fascination with her subjects, whooping cranes. The rhythm of the writing keeps the reader interested and engaged." writing judge, Mary Taylor Young. (the essay appears on pages 5-7)

Those who have submitted entries to the annual RMOWP contest and even casual observers of the contest can attest to one thing: the entries get better each year, which must give the judges more and more headaches trying to select the best.

Twenty-nine individuals submitted a total of 493 images but only 12 written pieces to this year's contest. The list of winners in each category begins on page 3. Certificates were presented to all winners, and the best of show winners also received awards of \$50 each.

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The Judges

Photography - Tom Ulrich



highly acclaimed around the world for his nature photography skills. Many of his more than 350,000 images have been used by numerous magazines and other publications. Tom has been the recipient of many prestigious awards, including the North American Nature Photographers Association Fellow Award and the Outdoor Writers Association of America's "Best of the Best" photography award. For many years Tom has lead photo tours to remote parts of the world. Additionally, Tom con-© Don Laine ducts photography seminars and workshops around the country and lectures at numerous universities.

A freelance photographer since 1975, Tom Ulrich is

Writing - Mary Taylor Young Award-winning nature writer Mary Taylor Young has been writing professionally since 1987, and has published 15 books and hundreds of articles in periodicals such as Ladies Home Journal, Outside and Wildlife Conservation. Two of Mary's books have been regional bestsellers and two have been finalists for the Colorado Book Award. Her titles include The Guide to Colorado Birds, On the Trail of Colorado Critters: Wildlife Watching for Kids and Land of Grass and Sky: A Naturalist's Prairie Journey. Her "Words on Birds" column appeared

photo courtesy Mary T. Young

in the Rocky Mountain News from 1993 until the newspaper's demise. Mary writes from her home in Castle Rock, Colorado, where she lives with her husband and daughter and many wild neighbors.



Green Suede Shoes © Beto Gutierrez Honorable Mention Altered/Composite

Photography Winners

Image from Last Conference

1st

Kent Taylor "Taos House"

2nd

Sherry Zurey "Pueblo Home"

3rd

Richard Youngblood "Conference Arch"

Honorable Mention

Al Perry "Church at Taos" Kenita Gibbins "Best Buddy" Richard Youngblood "Framed Church"

Scenics

1st

Al Perry "Vermillion Cliffs Landforms"

2nd

Al Perry "Northern Lights with Venus and Jupiter Aligned"



Conference Arch
© Richard Youngblood
3rd place, Image from
Last Conference

3rd

Kent Taylor "Almost Heaven"

Honorable Mention

Hector Astorga "Brasstown Falls"
Katee Harrington "Mount Reynolds"
Richard Youngblood "Mesa Verde Ruins"
Terry Guthrie "Foggy Morning Lake"

Flora

1st

Al Perry "Looking Up"

2nd

Diane Deming "Colorado Columbine"



Backlight © Diane Deming 3rd place, Flora

3rd

Diane Deming "Backlight"

Honorable Mention

Al Perry "Grass with Hoarfrost"

Kenita Gibbins "Roses" Kent Taylor "Reflections in Late Summer"

> Terry Guthrie "Wild Strawberries in the Rain"

Fauna

1st

Hector Astorga "Mustang Love"

2nd

Ryan Weishalla "Harris's Hawk - South Padre"

3rd

John Thornton "Gray Hairstreak"

Honorable Mention

Al Perry "Sandhill in Flight"
Hector Astorga "Bugling Elk"
Terry Guthrie "Soaring Hawk"
Terry Guthrie "Stealing a Peanut"

People in Nature

1st

Hector Astorga "On the Edge"

2nd

Ken Papaleo "Dune Walkers"

3rc

Ken Papaleo "Rain Out"

Honorable Mention

Al Perry "Preparing for Roundup" Beto Gutierrez "Outdoor Studio" Emily Harrington "Tourist Time!"

John Thornton "Tour Guide at Florida Scrub Jay Sanctuary"

Historical

1st

Al Perry "From Garden to 1850's Kitchen"

2nd

Al Perry "Old Lock on Old Door of Old Shed"

3rd

Rick Lesquier "Stone House, Manassas, VA"

Honorable Mention

Beto Gutierrez "Alcatraz" Beto Gutierrez "Golden Gate"

Frank Zurey "Magic Sky"

Cultural

1st

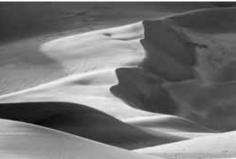
Hector Astorga "PowWow"

2nd

Ken Papaleo "Evergreen Ice Festival"

3rd

Frank Zurey "Presenting Colors"



Great Sand Dunes © Ryan Weishalla Honorable Mention, Black & White Prints

Honorable Mention

Al Perry "Navajo Playing"

Hector Astorga "Fightin' Texas Aggie Band"

Jim Baker "Rodeo"

Events

1st

Frank Zurey "Slurry Bomber 2"

2nd

Hector Astorga "Rainstorm Over Great Sand Dunes National Park"

3r

Frank Zurey "Flagstaff Fire"

Honorable Mention

Beto Gutierrez "Critical Motorcyclist" Kenita Gibbins "Little Hay"

Altered/Composite

1st

Hector Astorga "PowWow Motion"

2nd

Hector Astorga "Tricolored Heron"

3rd



Rodeo © Jim Baker Honorable Mention, Cultural

Rick Lesquier "The Mountain Man"

Honorable Mention

Beto Gutierrez "Green Suede Shoes"

Hector Astorga "Battle at Dawn"

Rick Lesquier "Grunge Barn"

Black and White Images

1st

Hector Astorga "Mustang Fight"

2nd

Al Perry "Ghost House Before Storm"

3rd

Beto Gutierrez "Let Me Go!"

Honorable Mention

Beto Gutierrez "Winging It" Hector Astorga "Mountain Creek" Ryan Weishalla "Great Sand Dunes"

Novice

1st

Emily Harrington "Avalanche Creek"

2nd

Tracey Maras "Tucked in for the Night"

3rd

Katee Harrington "Morning Tetons"



Slurry Bomber 2 © Frank Zurey 1st place, Events

Honorable Mention

Emily Harrington "Emerald Pool"

Published Images

1st

Al Perry "Fall Color and Waterfalls"

2nd

Frank Zurey "Triplets"

3rd

Kenita Gibbins "Serenity"

Honorable Mention

Terry Guthrie "Reflecting Barns"

Writing Winners

with comments by writing judge Mary Taylor Young

Newspaper or Magazine articles/columns/editorials

1s

Bob Good "A Three-Peat on Elk,"

Crossbow Connection, Feb 2013

Entertaining tale of a Colorado crossbow-hunting trip. Effective use of first person and integration of the character of the narrator into the story.

2nd

Bob Good "Carbon-fiber Crossbows,"

Crossbow Connection, Feb 2013

Short but effectively-presented analysis of a new technology. Good lead using a reference to the technology's development for use in a different sport.



Tucked in for the Night
© Tracey Maras
2nd place, Novice

3rd

Maryann Gaug "Managing Wildfire" Summit Daily, July 5, 2012

Well-reasoned letter-to-the-editor that presents facts in support of the writer's viewpoint instead of just heated rhetoric.

Newsletter & Web Writing

Jack Olson "This Could Be the Death of Me" Rocky Mountain Outdoors, Nov-Dec 2012

Written with humor and an appealing interjection of the character of the author, this piece is entertaining, informative and humorous. Great title for a piece about Death Valley!

2nd

Jack Olson "Wildlife Close to Home"



Dune Walkers © Ken Papaleo 2nd place, People in Nature

Rocky Mountain Outdoors, May-Jun 2012

A nice exposition of the pleasures and treasures to be found close to home, in a local city park. Nice theme of discoveries that are "hidden in plain sight."

3rd

Maryann Gaug "The Ancient World near Colorado National Monument" Rocky Mountain Outdoors, Nov-Dec 2012 Well-done, straight-up examination of hikes in Colorado National

Monument, discussing

not just the trail specifics, but geology and paleontology to discover along the way.

Books

1st

Virginia E. Parker-Staat "Winter Texans in Aransas," essay in *Stories from Where We Live - The Gulf Coast*, 2002 This is an engaging, well-written look at the story of Amer-

This is an engaging, well-written look at the story of America's whooping cranes and their life along the Gulf Coast, revealing the natural community and landscape of the area. Design elements, including engaging pen-and-ink drawings, enhance the writing.

2nd

Robert Stone - Day Hikes in the Santa Monica Mountains Day Hike Books, 2012

A thorough, well-presented hiking guide offering all the pertinent information needed for a successful outing, presented in pleasing, straight-forward prose.

3rd

Maryann Gaug - Best Easy Day Hikes: Vail Falcon Guides, 2013

A concise, pocket-size guide to Vail area hikes that is clean, easy-to-use and well-organized, with just a sprinkling of human interest detail to perk up the how-to.

Members' Choice Photographs

(These are voted on at conference by attendees.)

1st

Terry Guthrie "Old Mill"

2nd - Tie

John Thornton "Curious Pup"

Al Perry "Moon Rise over Monument Valley"

Honorable Mention

Terry Guthrie "Titmouse with Seed" Fred Lord "Family"

Best of Show, Writing

(Printed here by permission from the author.)

Winter Texans in Aransas

by Virginia E. Parker Staat

In 1947, only seventeen whooping cranes lived in the wild, and fifteen of those survivors wintered in Texas. Now protected in both their Canada nesting grounds and their Texas winter home, the whoopers are making a comeback. By the 1999-2000 winter, a record 188 whooping cranes visited Texas' Aransas National Wildlife Refuge. Their success is a tribute to the cranes' will to survive and the people working to protect the whoopers' home.

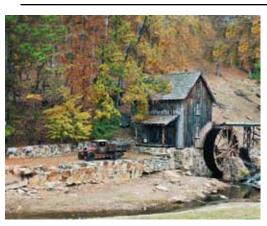
The Arrival

When the breeze along the Texas coast begins to chill, skyways fill with the sounds of birds. Brisk north winds bring arrow-patterned clouds of Canadian geese. Their chorus of honking marks the beginning of a grand migration. Hundreds of thousands of birds flock to the Texas coast, including the most famous of winter Texans, the magnificent whooping crane.

Whooping cranes migrate to Texas each winter. They fly over 2,600 miles from Wood Buffalo National Park in Canada. Traveling with young chicks who have only a few weeks of flying experience, a family of whoopers may take three months to complete their journey. They stop for days or weeks along the Platte River in Nebraska. They may stop again in Kansas and Oklahoma to rest and feed. Finally, they reach the Texas coast, filling the air with their trumpeting, territorial calls.

As November approached when I was a child, those first sounds of geese honking and cranes trumpeting stirred something wild within me. I would dash across the pasture with my arms outstretched, the wind tugging at my hair, wishing I could somehow take flight. I wanted to be the first bird, the one that led the entire flock across Goose Island, past the 1,000-year-old live oak known as Big Tree, and on to Aransas Bay.

see Aransas... page 6



Old Mill © Terry Guthrie 1st place & Best of Show, Members' Choice Aransas... from page 5

Today, bird watchers continue to gather at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge near Austwell, Texas. With binoculars and cameras ready, birders search the skies. Whoopers have become the most anxiously-awaited arrivals to the shores of Blackjack Peninsula.

By early November, the 40-foot observation tower at Aransas crowds with visitors. A stir begins whenever large birds come into view. Voices buzz. Which whooper family will arrive first? How many chicks survived the long flight? Has the flock increased its numbers?

Lucky birders finally see their reward. A huge white crane flies overhead, with black wing tips that are only visible when flying. Whoopers arrive in small numbers, normally family groups. They fly with their necks and feet outstretched.

Standing nearly five feet tall and weighing about fifteen pounds, whooping cranes are the tallest and heaviest of North America's wading birds. Their nearly eight-foot wing span stretches longer than most doorways are tall. Many refer to the birds as whoopers because of their deep, organ-like call. Whoopers have bright yellow eyes. Their strong, dark-olive gray beaks extend over six inches long. They sport a patch of red skin with no feathers on their heads. Their feet are not webbed, allowing them to spread

three large toes and wade in shallow shores.

On their arrival to Aransas, the crane's enormous wingtips skim the water. Each whooper family reclaims the same territory every year. They spend each winter in Aransas's tidal flats, a fringe of ground where sea and land meet.

Life on the Flats

The rippling tidal flats offer a perfect winter home for whoopers. Southeast-

erly winds drive sea water into bays and tidal flats. Northwesterly winds blow the water out to sea. The water constantly changes from very salty to brackish, depending on rain and tidal flow.

A distinct variety of plants and animals live in this odd environment. Wispy cordgrass and mounds of needle grass provide safety for marine life. Bright green algal mats clump along the grasses, bobbing with the tides. Crimson red wolfberries mix with knee-high marsh elder. Flower clusters of marsh fleabane dust the flats in shades of violet.

Whooping cranes wade the tidal flats, poking and jabbing for food. They enjoy eating blue crabs, mud shrimp, frogs, crayfish, and clams. Occasionally they feed on berries and grains.

The cranes spend most of their day feeding. The remainder of the time, they rest, preen feathers, and squabble among themselves over territory. Occasionally their whoops and calls signal approaching predators. When they sleep, they usually stand with one leg raised.

The Aransas Community Whoopers share Aransas National Wildlife Refuge with nearly 400 other species of birds, including herons, egrets, ducks, and geese. Aransas is also home to several other en-

Stone House Manages VA

Stone House, Manassas, VA © Rick Lesquier 3rd place, Historical

dangered birds, including brown pelicans, peregrine falcons, and wood storks.

Aransas is the oldest coastal preserve in Texas. Established in 1937 to protect whooping cranes and other migratory waterfowl, the 70,504-acre refuge boasts tidal flats, marshes, ponds, grasslands, and thickets.

Aransas fills the senses. On warm mornings, the sounds of singing insects combine with the squawking of gulls, croaking of frogs, and buzzing of bees. Dew-laced spider webs glisten in the sunlight and billow like sails in the constant breeze. The wind rustles through crackling dry reeds. Nearby blackjack and live oak thickets soften gusts to gentle sighs.

In the tidal flats and marsh, the sludge-like soil can tug tennis shoes off

feet. The sticky goo reeks with the smell of decaying plants. Restless tides lap at the ever-changing shore-line.

Moving inland, the soil changes to deep sand. Park trails reveal tracks of the abundant but shy wildlife. White-tailed deer leave two-pronged points in the silty sand. Opossum leave star-like marks. Raccoons leave baby-like hand prints.

Sharp-eyed visitors may spot bristly javelina rooting for acorns. Alligators bask in shallow waters, the crown of their head and eyes barely breaking the surface. Distant flocks of Canadian geese look like snow on grassy meadows. Rarely seen predators such as coyotes and bobcats prowl for food.



Serenity © Kenita Gibbins 3rd place, Published Images

Aransas... from page 6

Life moves more rhythmically along the coastal bend, away from bustling cities. The sun and moon tug, making the tides rise and fall. Gulf breezes add moisture to the air, lending a painter's palette of colors at dawn and dusk. Trees along the Texas coast lean gracefully in the direction of prevailing winds.

Changing seasons are signaled by the direction of winds and the flight of birds. By autumn, when the geese and cranes come home, everyone welcomes the chill in the winds that bring them.

Winter to Spring... to Winter

During a Texas winter, all creatures constantly watch for charcoal-gray clouds that signal damp and chilling winds called Northers. With no mountains and

few trees to slow cold fronts, temperatures can drop twenty degrees in a matter of minutes.

After the chill of Canada's springs, whooping cranes take Texas winters calmly. Their feathers may ruffle in blustery winds, but they rarely leave their tidal flats for warmer grounds. Whoopers normally fly inland only when the water turns too salty and they must find fresh water for drinking.

By early spring, Aransas vibrates with a new energy. During this time, whoopers begin their amazing dance. To court their mates, they fluff feathers and stomp their pencil-thin legs and feet. They wave and bow their red-crowned heads. Like stiff ballerinas, they leap, peg-legged into the air.

Soon their mate begins to mimic the leaps and bows. Within moments, the two birds point their heads upward. They begin to whoop and sing in unison. Sometimes other cranes join the wild song and strange dance.

In March or early April, the cranes become restless. They return to their nesting grounds in Canada, often making the journey in only two weeks. They weave enormous nests from rush and grass. Female whoopers lay two pale green eggs with olive-colored specks. Both parents take turns nesting until their chicks hatch. In less than three months, the chicks test their wings for flight.

When September's frosty fingers turn Canada's leaves to gold, whoopers long for the shores of Aransas Bay. With their new families, they take a half-dozen leaping strides and flap giant wings. With rapid upstrokes, they join another grand migration of birds heading south. Using steady wingbeats, the whoopers fly once again to the warm waters of their Texas winter home.

Copyright © 2002 by Virginia E. Parker Staat.



Al Perry in Iceland used in WNIN production of "Story Behind the Photos".

Photo by Haukur Snorrason.

President's Column

Story Behind the Images

by Al Perry

A few of my friends have suggested I create a photo book to share with friends and family. Small quantities of books are now possible with on demand publishing, but the cost is high and it takes considerable time and effort with text and layout.

An interesting idea to showcase and discuss my favorite images was suggested by a regional public broadcasting station. WNIN offered to create a series of one-hour interviews showcasing my images with me discussing "The Story Behind the Photos", as it was called. This idea sounded easy. All I had to do was sit back and talk about each of my images being shown.

The first one-hour show, aired June 4, 2013, included Alaska and the American West. Six other regions were also taped and may be shown later. The first airing received favorable feedback from viewers and I plan to use 5 to 10 minute podcasts of these recordings on my website and social media.

RMOWP members: You can work with a friend or colleague to record your photography (and writing). Collect your photographs (and writing) and ask a friend to interview you while being videotaped. DVD's and computer files can be made and distributed to friends, family and social media. People are interested in the story behind the images (and writing) including the photographer (and author).

If you want to view an example of taping your work, go to the link below to view WNIN's production of: "Story Behind the Photos".

http://video.wnin.org/video/2365023226/

Angelo Sciulli Humorous Photo Challenge

(Judging and captions by Angelo Sciulli)

1ef

Virginia Staat "Popeye Peter, inventor of the SBD!"



"Popeye Peter, inventor of the SBD!" © Virginia Parker Staat
1st place, Humorous Photo Challenge

2nd - Tie

Frank Zurey "Proof that idle hands are the devil's workshop!"

John Catsis "John just being fecetious" (pun intended)
3rd

Ken Papaleo "'Hold my beer, I'm gonna try something' is said before most accidents."

Honorable Mention

Ken Papaleo "Please stop at the next tree."

Virginia Staat "Over or under? If the average IQ is 100, then everybody you meet has a 50/50 chance of being over or under."

Tracey Maras "Do they make Viagra for squirrels?"
Linda Bundren "So what is invisible and smells like corn?"
Beto Gutierrez "If Angelo moves, I have a clear shot at
Beto!"

Kenita Gibbins "Per favore signore, I wanna makayou an offer you no canna refuse? Gimme sum popcorn or your hat gets it."

The Funny Foto Judge

submitted by Angelo Sciulli, so it must be true Angelo was lost as a baby and raised by a family of Sasquatch. One day, he found a discarded People

Funny Foto Judge Angelo ~ a fun kind of guy

magazine and taught himself to read English and to write. He happened to wander into a town and met a US Army Recruiter who enticed him with a set of clothes and 3 meals a day.

After discharge, he took advantage of the GI Bill to complete a course in photography from a match book cover. Longing to return to his Sasquatch roots, he brought his disposable cam-

era to the Olympic Peninsula and started a business selling wildlife images and stuffed Jackalopes.

In 2005, he met Jack Olson and Beto Gutierrez at a nude beach in Oregon and they invited him to join the RMOWP group. When he is not telling lies and bloviating, Angelo practices ghost things. He is said to dare any women to shower with a light on after he passes.

Angelo has absolutely no qualifications to judge a sleeping contest let alone a humor contest.

Addendum: There is no truth to the rumor that Angelo is in the witness protection program because he knows who really killed Kennedy and where Jimmy Hoffa is buried.

CONFERENCE 2014
Tentatively set for
Glacier National Park
Montana
late July or early August
More information in the next
newsletter.



Almost Heaven © Kent Taylor 3rd place, Scenics

It's not too late to make changes to your directory listing.

Just e-mail us at info@rmowp.org.

The directory will be included with the SepOct issue of Rocky Mountain Outdoors.

Conference 2013 Photos



Thursday morning was spent in Colorado National Monument. Many joined guide Cary Atwood on the 2.5-mile Lower Monument Canyon Trail to the base of Independence Monument.

Others headed to the visitor center trails on top of the monument, with leader Jack Olson.



Returning along Lower Monument Canyon Trail a herd of desert bighorn sheep were spotted amongst the rocks above the trail.



Entering the Fruita Paleontological area for the Friday morning guided hike with local writer Bill Haggerty.



Clockwise from front left: Jo Dodd, Linda Bundren, Cary Attwood, Rick Lesquier, and Fred & Linda Lord on Lower Monument Canyon Trail.



Jon Sheppard in Devil's Canyon



Collared lizard (above) keeping a wary eye on the suspicious characters (right) trying to hide behind those long skinny black things that make funny clicking sounds.
(Judging by the disdain with which we were tolerated, these lizards were probably British butlers in a former life.)



Beto Gutierrez, John Thornton and Kent Taylor zeroing in on the collared lizzard.

& More...



Auctioneer Beto Gutierrez gets some pointers from Keith Brown.

More than \$3000 was raised for the scholarship fund, thanks to the generosity of our members and several corporate friends including Buck Knives, T-Reign Retractable Gear Tethers, Bear & Son Cutlery, and Remington. Restop Portable Sanitation Systems donated two boxes of their products, which were gratefully snapped up by conference attendees.



Richard Holmes, Jon Sheppard, moderator Kenita Gibbins, Jack Olson and Cecilia Travis taking part in the Writers' Critique... renamed Anne Sullivan Writers Forum to honor the great lady who started it all a number of years ago.



Frank Zurey presented Members Choice Best of Show winner Terry Guthrie -- here with his winning image "Old Mill" (see p. 5) -- with the knife that Buck donated and inscribed for the purpose.



Happy Contest Winners at Conference

Left to right, front row: Maryann Gaug, Sherry Zurey, Kenita Gibbins, Jack Olson, John Thornton, Beto Gutierrez, Frank Zurey. Back row: Rick Lesquier, Ryan Weishalla, Virginia E. Parker Staat, Al Perry, Kent Taylor, Terry Guthrie.



Dishing up the banquet. Save room for those yummy desserts!

Want this newsletter e-delivered? Let us know: info@rmowp.org subject: E-mail NL *Thanks!* ,