

Rocky Mountain Outdoors

the newsletter of Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers & Photographers, Inc.

Conference 2015 – Ouray, Colorado
September 21-24, 2015

May–June, 2015

The next issue of Rocky Mountain Outdoors will include the usual checklists for conference attendees. But in the mean time:

- Registration form is enclosed, and is also available at www.rmowp.org, where you can fill out the form, save as a PDF to email it, and pay with PayPal.
- Is your calendar properly marked?
- Lodging reservations made? (Details in the last newsletter, available at www.rmowp.org if you can't locate your copy.)
- Plane reservations made or driving route plotted?

If you have questions, please contact Don Laine at info@rmowp.org or 575-758-8922.

As you can see from these two photos, taken just a few days apart in the fall of 2013, no matter what Mother Nature has in store, there will be stupendous photo opportunities.

Additional conference information can be found on pages 6 and 8.

See you there!



Early snow highlights autumn aspens
©2013 William Horton



Autumn Sunburst ©2013 William Horton

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President's Column

I feel like the Rodney Dangerfield of Nature Photography

Al Perry

Sometimes I don't get any respect.

I printed a limited edition two-volume coffee table sized *Al Perry Nature Photography* photo book bound in Corinthian leather. I showed the book to a few friends who I knew would give me an unbiased review. Here are three comments that came back:

"When I touched and viewed your beautiful leather book cover I expected great photos inside. Your book gives new meaning to: Don't judge a book by its cover."

~ Mary, Illinois

"Al, you should change your motto to: Whatever I lack in substance I make up in packaging."

~ Peter, Ohio

"You went all the way around the world taking photos and that's all you came back with?"

~ Joyce (my wife), Indiana

I feel like the Maytag repairman waiting for people to call and order my book. My wife has given me three months to sell at least one car space of books in our garage in order to park her car.

This column was written April 1, 2015.



My favorite gull, ivory gull, in the Arctic
© Al Perry

RMOWP Calendar

May 30 ~ Scholarship deadline

June 22 ~ Contest deadline

June 23-34 ~ Photo Workshop in Rocky Mountain National Park

June 25 ~ Newsletter submission deadline

Sep 21-24 ~ Conference in Ouray, Colorado

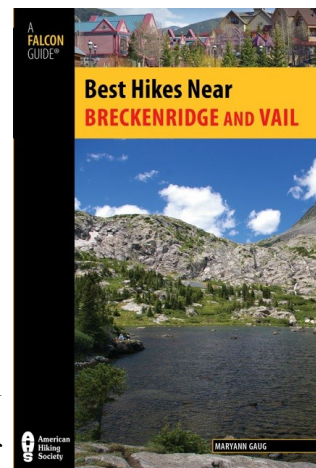
See www.rmowp.org for details

News from Maryann Gaug

Maryann Gaug's latest hiking guide, *Best Hikes near Breckenridge and Vail*, a Falcon guide, is a must-have guide for hiking trails in Colorado's high country near those two famous towns. The book describes 40 hikes of varying lengths and difficulties including 18 in Summit County (Breckenridge area), 18 in Eagle County (Vail area), and four near Glenwood Springs.

Several hikes wander through old mining areas complete with relics. The Vail area in particular offers hikes with farming and ranching remains. Both the Eagles Nest and the Holy Cross wilderness areas are explored via numerous trails, where spectacular, colorful wildflowers fill high alpine meadows during the short summer months. Hikers will revel in the splendor of the rugged Gore Range and the famous Mount of the Holy Cross. The Glenwood Springs hikes include three in side canyons off Glenwood Canyon and the fourth trail leads to the site of a wildfire that killed 14 firefighters.

Each hike includes detailed directions to the trailhead, trail details, local contacts, and information about each area, which may include human history, geology, flora and fauna, and canine compatibility. Distance, difficulty, and approximate hiking times are also noted. Maryann hiked all trails using a GPS for accuracy, and GPS coordinates are listed for each trailhead and important points along the way.



Writer's Corner

Fearful Symmetry

Virginia Parker Staat

*TYGER, tyger, burning bright**In the forests of the night,**What immortal hand or eye**Could frame thy fearful symmetry?*~ William Blake, from *The Tyger*, 1794

The tiger... known for his symmetrical stripes.... stripes capable of illusionary camouflage. The beast fascinates me with his raw beauty, remarkable stealth, and ferocious power. Amazingly, the tiger also offers an incredible parallel to good writing.

Symmetry exists when elements balance one another... like a tiger's stripes. Symmetry offers unity and harmony. Humans long for symmetry in design, whether it be in nature or art. As photographers, we aim for symmetry in a nine-grid frame. In writing, we aim for symmetry in grammar and format. When symmetry is missing, our work has an awkward, jarring, confusing effect.

A good example of failed symmetry is a recent encounter I had with a production of Charles Dickens' *Christmas Carol*. The *Carol* is probably my favorite story, movie, and play. I love its profoundly redemptive plot, its Victorian setting, and its rich characters. I have read it, taught it, and watched it... over and over.

When a young friend wanted to go to his first opera to celebrate Christmas last December, I found the premier season of the *Christmas Carol Opera* playing in Houston. We immediately booked tickets.

Granted, I am hardly an opera connoisseur, but this opera failed miserably in meeting audience expectation. No Victorian setting, no beautiful melodies, no bright-eyed children. For ninety minutes (without intermission), we listened to one actor. That's right... one. A single tenor, dressed in a modern-day business suit, valiantly sang the role of twenty characters. The stage set was a moveable staircase and six skewed, white chairs. A fifteen-piece orchestra played the score with each instrument playing a different tune. Whole sentences were sung in a single note. People left throughout the performance. Scathing reviews followed.



Tiger © Kenita Gibbins

What went wrong? In my humble estimation, the opera lacked symmetry. It was incongruent with Dickens' original novella. The audience longed for period costumes and furniture. We longed for lyrical melodies that beckoned Christmas. We longed for characters to love. Not only did we long for it... we expected it. The contemporary opera simply did not deliver.

Lack of symmetry in writing affects our readers in a similar fashion. In hallowed halls, symmetry is called parallel structure. Faulty parallel structure is called shifted construction. Shifted construction messes with a reader's mind.

Parallel structure permeates every facet of writing from verbs to phrases to clauses to bulleted paragraphs.

Parallel structure balances sentences, clarifies meaning, unifies format, and creates a satisfying rhythm to our work. Recent research indicates, "When it comes to making people care about information, visual appeal matters" (Gasper and Middlewood, *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 2014). Their study further reported, "Asymmetrical designs may grab people's attention, but if your goal is to get people intrigued, inspired, or involved, proportionality is your pal."

The simple key to attaining symmetry in your writing is to maintain patterns. If you begin with an action verb, don't change to a passive verb in the same sentence. If you begin a series with a gerund, all subsequent terms should be gerunds. If you begin your bulleted paragraphs with an imperative verb, stick with it throughout the list.

Symmetry also answers most writing questions. Here are a few examples:

- Should my tense be present or past?
- Should my voice be first or third person?
- Should my style be personal or impersonal?

The answer to each is the same... whichever choice you make (and each is acceptable), maintain it throughout your manuscript. It provides your readers symmetry.

Faulty symmetry confuses our readers, giving our work a choppy, inconsistent feel. By maintaining symmetry in our writing, we, like a tiger's stripes, create an illusionary camouflage that focuses our reader's attention on our words rather than form. Symmetry provides an alluring rhythmic pattern and clarity that brings our readers back time and again.

RMOWP Conferences — the Early Years, Part II

Jack Olson

1978 continued the trend of spectacular locations for RMOWP's annual conferences. We set up headquarters at a nice motel right in the heart of **Jackson, Wyoming**. You could walk to the central park beneath entrances made of elk antlers. Many of the founders of the organization were in attendance. I was lucky, attending my first conference. I knew no one, but everyone knew me right away because the conference committee asked me to put on a program about my trek to Mount Everest the year before. Most members at that time were writers of outdoor columns in newspapers or articles in magazines such as *Field and Stream* and *Sports Afield*. Many other early members were editors or book publishers. Photography was mainly an adjunct to illustrate the articles. The conference committee organized outstanding craft improvement sessions, a feature of all subsequent conferences. There was really only one slight misstep. Partly due to inclement weather, we hardly left the motel. The Tetons never saw RMOWP. But



Rafting on the North Platte River above Saratoga
© Jack Olson

the Tetons saw me. I bailed out during board meetings. **Spear-fish, South Dakota**, located just north of the Black Hills, was our destination in 1979. In the early years we often traveled to field locations by bus. The most exciting, thrilling and chilling, bus adventure took us throughout Custer State Park, the largest state park in South Dakota. We encountered buffalo (bison, if you will), pronghorn, and the charming, begging wild burros. How do you get a wide bus through a tunnel just a couple of inches wider? Let the riders off first. Still out and about we feasted at a big chuck wagon cookout in the woods followed by a vivid portrayal of American Indian life by Rex Alan Smith, author of *Moon of Popping Trees*. Our hosts gave us honorary Indian names, but for the life of me I can't remember mine. I think it had to do with a buffalo.

In 1980, RMOWP traveled to **Mesa Verde National Park** in Colorado. A World Heritage Site, this Ancestral Puebloan (also called Anasazi) community of homes, ritual kivas, and agriculture lasted for hundreds of years,



Exploring the dramatic Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde
National Park © Jack Olson

most exciting was an exclusive venture into the Wetherill Mesa area, not yet open to the public, led by the park archeologist. We clambered over ancient trails to archeological ruins only slightly stabilized since their rediscovery. Our headquarters was lodging right within the park. We could peek out our room windows and spy deer grazing in the lawn.

Back to **Wyoming** in 1981. The small town of **Saratoga** in the southern part of the state was a secluded conference location for what had grown to become a raucous, although law-abiding, organization. The town absolutely laid out the welcome mat for us and we never lacked for exciting activities. We boarded water craft on the North Platte River upstream of Saratoga. Some members squeezed into big rubber rafts. I got the fishing boat. We stopped at a heronry on an island in the river. The Cheyenne Frontier Days Committee sponsored a steak fry shindig for us along the banks of the Encampment River. On the final morning we stuffed ourselves at a chuck wagon breakfast along the North Platte.



Chuckwagon Breakfast
Saratoga, WY © Jack Olson

[Editor's note: This is a continuing conference retrospective by Jack Olson, an RMOWP member since 1978. They will appear a few at a time over subsequent issues. The intent is to stir nostalgia and remembrance in old-timers and foster a connection to our history with newer members.]

ending without a clear explanation around 1300 A.D. We toured the main ruins and cliff dwellings throughout the park, including the dramatic Cliff Palace. But

Newcomer

Andrew Fowler

I am a stranger entrenched in a familiar land. Familiar at a distance - until now. From afar, I've always seen the mountains around me here in Northern Utah, pinched up in their enormous forms. To travel a mile seems so simple sometimes. It's about 12 cents to travel one in my car. The form of the mountains or even the entire world can seem so reduced in these terms. But now I have traversed the inclines I've always seen, beset on all sides by pine trees and ethereal breeze, and the truth of the natural scale became apparent in my young writer's mind.

The ways one can experience the natural setting are as expansive as evening shadows. I have taken part before in ways such as hiking, though now I am in much deeper. Last fall I was invited by my closest friend to attend his hunting trips with him, and I was enamored with the opportunity to be guided through the surrounding peaks and canyons by a seasoned outdoorsman, and to at last be a part of the mountains I grew up around.

After some rigorous training, there I was, clutching a rifle, and scanning my way through the evergreens. My friend and I reached a peak, where below us the sheer bases of mountains rolled together. We set down our guns and picked up binoculars to scan down over the grey landscape of late fall. As we munched on crackers from a MRE meal, we watched as the silent mountainside before us crawled with life. We observed the does scampering the steep sides, and breezes creaking bleak trees. We saw a bulky moose and her young cow drink from a pond before ambling off through the bending canyons, and grouse beat their way between the dry lower shrubs.

Such an experience is uncontested, and serves as a wealthy moment for a writer. It allows you a wider sense of perception. You can fall back on your memories, the minuscule pebble and the majestic profile of a sunset all become part of your vocabulary. If you can encapsulate just a molecule of nature in your writing, you can introduce some of that arresting sense of wonder you feel into what you are writing. Do not devalue this gift of being a mountain-dweller. I can confirm as a newly ratified outdoorsman that finally becoming ingrained in the mountains that have always been the backdrop of my home has enhanced my writing. Even as a student, aging only seventeen, I hope to advocate for this pristine place, and share it with others through words informed by the mountains themselves.

[Ed. Note: Andrew lives in Providence, Utah, and recently joined RMOWP.]



View from Rock Cut © 2014 Cynthia May

Want to take a shot like this? Cynthia took this in Rocky Mountain National Park during RMOWP's Photo Workshop. This year's is June 23-27 (see www.rmowp.org for details).

Call for Articles

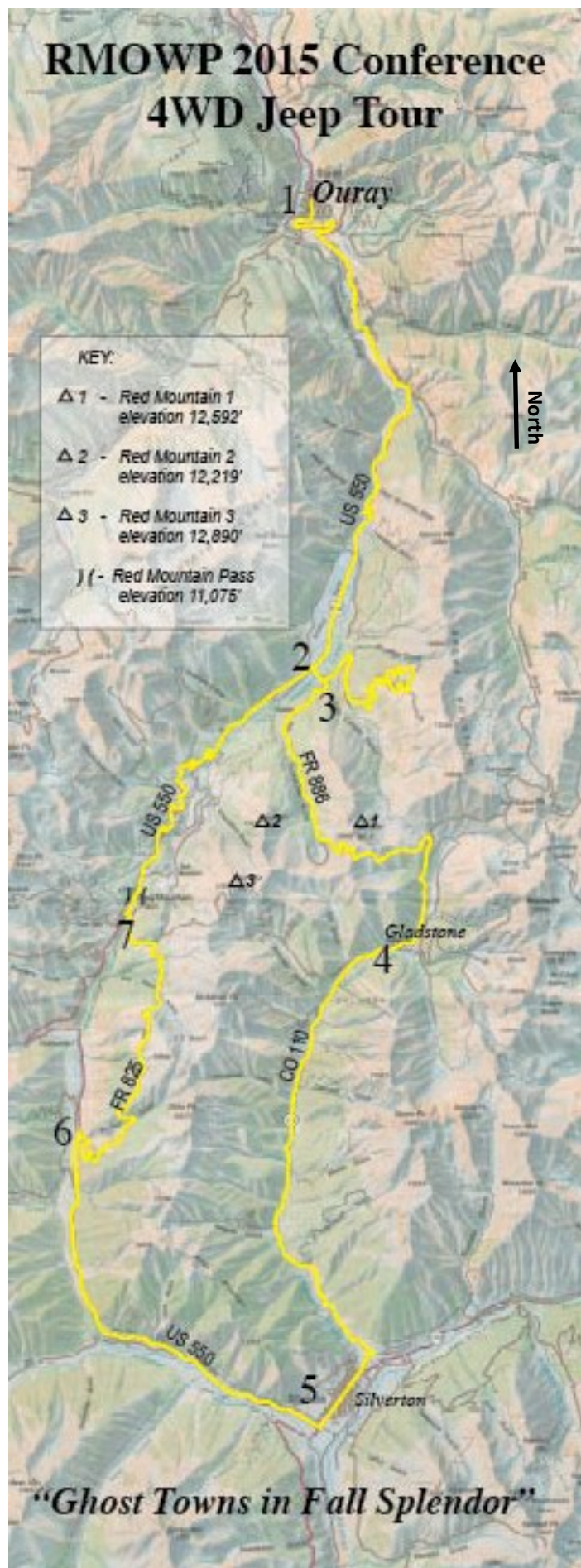
Our RMOWP members have a wealth of knowledge. Contributing an article to the RMOWP newsletter is a great way to share what you know with others. Your articles can encourage members, inspire novices, and entice those considering joining this grand group. Need some ideas? Here are a few to kick-start your imagination:

- Tips and tricks of your trade or specialty
- Personal essays
- Interviews
- Gear or book reviews
- Theme specific articles, including technical, historical, ethics-related, or examining the newest techniques and trends
- Where to photograph or experiences photographing specific landscapes, flora, and fauna

Writing an article not only benefits newsletter readers, but it also has great benefits for you. Once your article is published, you can add it to your list of accomplishments. Additionally, the article is eligible to enter in next year's conference contest... "May I have the Envelope, please?"

Articles should be approximately 150 to 750 words in length. Feel free to include a photo or illustration. Email your article to info@rmowp.org. We look forward to "reading all about it" in an upcoming newsletter!

RMOWP 2015 Conference 4WD Jeep Tour



Switzerland of America 4-Wheel-Drive Jeep Tour *Ghost Towns in Fall Splendor*

Barb Laine

As we all know, or at least those of us who live in the Rocky Mountains know, all projected trips into the high country are dependent on the weather. Switzerland of America—aka SOA—has many years of experience in and around Ouray and we are putting ourselves in their hands. If we get snowed out of any of the proposed areas, they will come up with an alternate plan. Be assured the trip will be fun and photogenic, with frequent stops to capture images, both scenic and historic.

The planned route is below, with numbers corresponding to those on the map to the left. *[Note: I scanned the map we picked up at SOA and sketched in the proposed route. Those of you with national forest or USGS quad maps can trace the route on them.]*

1. Start in Ouray, head south on US 550.
2. Turn left onto road into Gray Copper Gulch, taking first left up towards Brown Mountain. (I think this is where Brandy of SOA said we would have views of all three Red Mountains.)
3. Then back almost to 550, turning left onto FR 886 along Corkscrew Gulch between Red Mountain 1 and Red Mountain 2, winding around and down to Gladstone.
4. From Gladstone, take Colorado 110 along Cement Creek to Silverton.
5. Turn north (right) onto US 550 for a few miles.
6. Turn sharp right on FR 825, the Skyline, crossing Brown Gulch & Bighorn Gulch before meandering back onto US 550 shortly before Red Mountain Pass. (Unless we spend too much time elsewhere, in which case we'd have to skip this part.)
7. Follow 550 back into Ouray.

Want this newsletter e-delivered?

Let us know: info@rmowp.org

Subject: E-mail RMO

Thanks!



Being Roped © Ken Papaleo
3rd Place 2014 Cultural

Thoughts from the Executive Director

Don Laine

I don't like that title. Executive Director. It's pompous, even arrogant. For a while I called myself assistant chief flunky, but some in RMOWP thought that was silly and possibly demeaning, so my title became Executive Director, the same as what the person in charge of every other group is called. I'd prefer something different – maybe The Big Cheese or Head Honcho. If anyone has any better ideas please send them along.

I got to thinking about my title and my role with Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers when for some unknown reason I started wondering what it is about RMOWP that I like so much. The answer came quickly: It's the people, it's you.

We all learn a lot from the conference workshops and newsletter and website articles, and I think we all enjoy the sights, sounds, and food at the conferences. But there are plenty of spectacular places we can go on our own, and craft improvement programs, articles, and video presentations are everywhere, like ants at a picnic.

Those who join RMOWP come to improve their photography and writing skills, to show off their work and knowledge to others with similar interests, and often to mingle with like-minded individuals. Somehow, though – I don't really know how – RMOWP has managed to attract really nice people, individuals who are fun to be around and always happy to share their knowledge, even to potential competitors.

Come to a conference and you'll see that the people of RMOWP are the opposite of pompous and arrogant. They're serious about their work but not about themselves, and perhaps more important, RMOWP members go out of their way to lend a helping hand.

When something needs to be set up during a confer-

ence, as if by magic a dozen hands suddenly appear. When someone with mobility problems faces a steep staircase, a steadying arm or shoulder materializes. More than once I've seen someone outbid another bidder at the auction and then give the losing bidder the item, with a comment such as "Just trying to get the price up to help Rocky."

Even this newsletter is a showcase of generosity. *Writer's Corner*, *Jacks' Jaunts*, other articles, and all the photos are donated. No one is paid for their contributions (except me as editor).

So thank you all for being who you are, and helping to make Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers the best organization I have ever been involved with.



Hi-ho—I'm a city boy! © Shane Balleck
2014 Humorous entry

Membership Renewal Reminder

Thanks to all of you who've already renewed your RMOWP membership.

Renewal notices were emailed near the end of February. If you don't remember seeing it and wish to renew, please email me at meagug@earthlink.net. I'll reply to your email with your renewal notice just in case your email changed in the last year, or it was lost in the electronic bit bucket. Remember that you need to be a member to participate in the annual awards competition, deadline for which is June 22, 2015.

I look forward to hearing from more of you. And seeing all of you in Ouray in September.

Thanks,
Maryann Gaug
Treasurer, RMOWP

Santa Clara Ranch – Star of a New Book

Don Laine

Those who attend RMOWP conferences or even look at the winning photographs from the annual contest are well acquainted with **Santa Clara Ranch**, a wildlife photography retreat in South Texas owned by longtime RMOWP members **Beto and Clare Gutierrez** and managed by another RMOWP member, professional photographer **Hector Astorga**.

The ranch's wildlife, as photographed by Astorga, is the highlight of a new book, *Wildlife in Focus VII*. The book contains winning images from the Wildlife in Focus annual contest, in which Hector took overall first place honors as well as numerous firsts in individual categories.



The contest covers the 32 counties surrounding Corpus Christi, Texas, with photographers teaming up with land-owners to get the best wildlife photos possible, and at the same time to promote conservation and publicize the need for the protection of South Texas's wildlife and wildlife habitat.

Santa Clara Ranch is a 300-acre wildlife sanctuary, with strategically placed pit blinds and water holes where nature photographers can capture images of numerous species of birds, mammals, and reptiles. There is no hunting permitted and no agricultural activity takes place.

For details, see www.santaclararanch.com, and for information on the Wildlife in Focus book and to see some spectacular images, many by RMOWP's Hector Astorga, see www.wildlifeinfocus.org.

Attention Historic Train Enthusiasts!!

The weekend after our conference, the Durango and Silverton Narrow Gauge Railroad will be offering their Annual Fall Photographer's Train Rides. That's Saturday and Sunday, September 26-27, departing from Durango, about 70 miles south of Ouray via US 550.

Unlike the regular passenger trains, these trains will stop at several pre-determined places to allow photographers to detrain, after which the locomotive will back up out of sight, and after two whistle blasts, come steaming back past the line of photographers – all against the backdrop of fall foliage in the San Juans. A wonderful opportunity for both still and video photography.

For more information visit www.durangotrain.com, and for reservations call 888-872-4607. Call now to be placed on a wait list and they will call you when the fares are finalized. Last year's rates were \$175 - \$275. The trains fill up, so call soon.



The Durango-Silverton Narrow Gauge
Comin' around the bend © William Horton

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