

ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

THE NEWSLETTER OF ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOOR WRITERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS
HOLIDAY 2008

2009 Conference is Sooner Than You Think

It may still be 2008, but now is the time to book your rooms at Zion Lodge for the 2009 conference of Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers & Photographers, scheduled March 25 to 29 in beautiful Zion National Park. We need your choice of room type and dates plus a deposit by December 29, and final payment and conference registration by February 20. Changes and cancellations with full refund can be made until February 20. The conference registration form will be sent with the next newsletter in early to mid-January. We expect registration to cost about \$50 per person and the banquet to be in the \$30 to \$35 range. All conference attendees will pay their own national park entrance fee, which is \$25 per vehicle for up to seven days. Of course, many RMOWP members have America the Beautiful or other federal passes that would cover the entrance fee.

Conference Headquarters - Book Your Room Now

The conference is taking place in March - much earlier than usual - to beat the heat and crowds, and also because we were offered an excellent rate at Zion Lodge, the only accommodations inside the boundaries of the national park. However, to get this group rate we are required to handle all lodging reservations ourselves and send in a



© Jon Sheppard

Wanda Warthog (or is it Wally?) wants you to attend the RMOWP conference in Zion National Park in March 2009.

deposit three months in advance.

Conference attendees will pay \$75 plus tax per night for motel rooms, \$85 plus tax per night for cabins, and \$125 plus tax per night for suites, and these rates will be honored for a few days before or after the conference (through March 31 only) for those who want to spend additional time in the park. Including mandatory National Park Service utility charges, gratuities for housekeeping staff, and tax, rates total \$85 for motel rooms, \$96 for cabins, and \$140 for suites.

All units are non-smoking and have full bathrooms, phones, hairdryers, radio alarm clocks, and air condition-

Mark your calendar!

Important Deadlines

- 29 Dec. 2008 - Room reservation & deposit
- 9 Jan. 2009 - Contest submission postmarked
- 1 Feb. 2009 - Humorous Photo submission
- 20 Feb. 2009 - Final room payment & last chance for changes or cancellation

see also
www.rmowp.org



Conference Headquarters -- Zion Lodge
Zion National Park



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www.rmowp.org



© Barb Laine

Hotel rooms at Zion Lodge

ing, but no televisions. Most motel rooms have two queen-sized beds. The cabins have two double beds and gas log fireplaces. The lodge has four handicap accessible rooms (two with roll-in showers), an excellent restaurant, an auditorium where we will have our workshops and banquet, and a gift shop. Those coming to the conference by themselves who would like to share a room can contact Don Laine (see below) to put you in touch with others seeking roommates.

For additional details on the lodge check out www.zionlodge.com, but remember that room reservations must be made directly with RMOWP (form enclosed) and not the lodge.

Those who prefer to camp - and are prepared for chilly nights - can stay at either of the park's two campgrounds. Nightly fee is \$16

with no hookups or \$18 with electricity (Watchman Campground only). Camping and additional lodging choices can be found in Springdale, just outside the park entrance. See www.zionpark.com, the website of the Zion Canyon Visitors Bureau.

The Park

Zion National Park, which celebrates its 100th anniversary in 2009, is known for its

towering multicolored cliffs and deep, narrow canyons, but also boasts lush forests with hanging gardens dangling from sandstone walls, rushing rivers, and an abundance of birds. Located in southwestern Utah, the park's elevation varies from 3,666 feet to 8,726 feet, and is at about 4,000 feet at Zion Lodge. In late March we should be prepared for nights dropping into the upper 30s and daytime highs in the upper 60s, with the possibility of rain or even a light snow. Several RMOWP members who have been there in late

Cabins at Zion Lodge



© Barb Laine

Opening for Photo Workshop Instructor

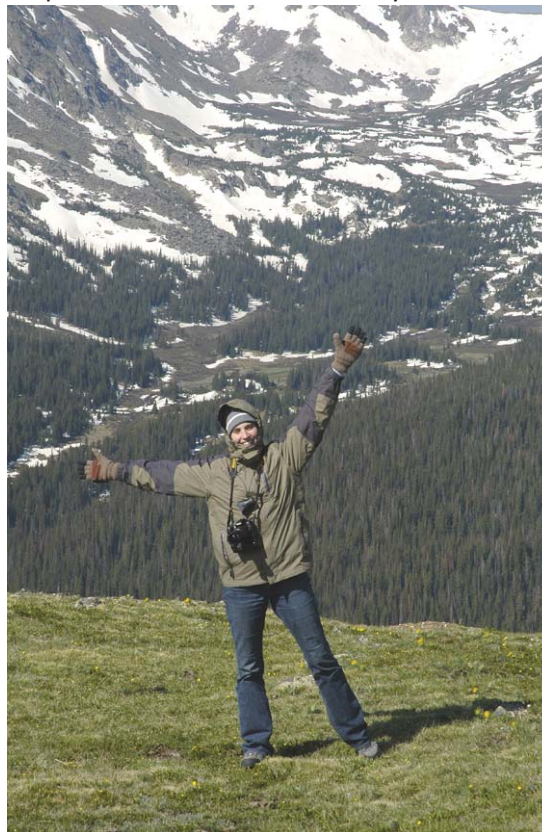
As many of you are aware, last summer Tom Ulrich announced that he would be stepping down as one of the RMOWP Photo Workshop instructors. Tom and Jack Olson have been involved since the early years of the workshop and together with coordinators Beto Gutierrez, John Catsis, Tom Cummings, and now Nic Showalter have worked successfully together to grow the workshop from 6-8 students in the early years to the last 2-3 years of maxing out at our capacity of 15 students. Last week Nic spoke again with Tom and he reconfirmed his decision. We appreciate the years that Tom has been a crucial part of our workshop and recognize he has been an integral part of its success and growth.

So, we now must move on and select an instructor for our future photo workshops. We would encourage any RMOWP member who feels they would meet or exceed the qualifications and talents required for this position to apply for consideration. We will not limit our search to RMOWP members only. We are looking for the best candidate for this instructor position. We are looking for that candidate that possesses the following:

1. A passion for photography and helping others grow their own skills, knowledge and understanding of the principles of photography.
2. The ability to explain and teach photography - both in a large group setting and in one-on-one situations.
3. An emphasis on the unique skills and information necessary to teach wildlife photography with a particular emphasis on the wildlife of Rocky Mountain National Park.

Experience and/or knowledge in animal science, biology and nature is a welcome benefit to workshop participants.

4. An eagerness to enhance the workshop experience by planning in advance carefully but also being ready to change plans quickly in order to accommodate the variables of



© Jack Olson



© Jack Olson

Checkerboard Mesa on the south side of the road as you drive into the park from the east along Utah 9.

winter have volunteered that the rock formations are spectacular with a light coating of fresh snow. For information on the park, see www.nps.gov/zion.

The Conference

The tentative conference schedule (see pg. 8) includes guided walks and hikes, a talk on the park, craft improvement sessions for both photographers and writers, and the annual banquet and awards presentations.

Several photo field trips are planned. We will explore the park in groups of eight to ten in carpools, in part because of parking and trail limitations but mostly because Zion National Park restricts group hikes into wilderness areas to 12 or fewer individuals. The Zion Canyon shuttle bus begins its season April 4, necessitating our use of carpools, so please bring your minivans and SUVs.

Conference programs include a panel discussion on how to survive in the changing world of freelance writing and photography, and a workshop, ArtFull Photography with Connie Thibeau Catsis, that focuses on what photographers can learn from artists and designers about composition, including four factors for improving both your pictures and your photographic experience.

A special pre-conference full-day hike is scheduled Wednesday, when Jack Olson will lead a group of no more than 11 people along Taylor Creek Trail to Double Arch Alcove, located in the Kolob Canyons section of the park. See Jack's Jaunts, elsewhere in this newsletter, for details.

More Info?

Those with questions, suggestions, or even complaints can contact Don Laine (laine@newmex.com; 575-758-8922), Jack Olson (jackolson1@aol.com; 303-777-8998), or Cecilia Travis (catravis@bigfoot.com; 303-885-8467).

This is the kind of exuberance you can expect from our photo workshop participants.

Daniela Negreda of Toronto, Ontario, near Trail Ridge Road, Rocky Mountain National Park. Photo Workshop 2008.

the workshop experience.

5. A vision to see the workshop experience broadly and an ability to nurture all persons relative to their particular skills, experience and style.

This instructor will be responsible for the bulk of our wildlife experience during the workshop and therefore it is necessary that the instructor arrive a day early to scout locations for birds and other wildlife and to have a good knowledge of the park.

It is important for the instructors to be very familiar with RMOWP and speak knowledgeably and positively about the organization. The instructor should understand that he/she is not only teaching for a salary, or even for personal satisfaction, but also for the benefit of RMOWP.

If you are interested in being considered for this position or if you know of someone who might be, please mail/email Nic Showalter the following:

1) At least one written personal reference describing how your skills, personality and experiences equip you for this task.

2) A gallery of at least 15 wildlife images that represent your skills and abilities in wildlife photography.

3) A personal statement of no more than 500 words describing your interest in and passion for giving leadership to this photography workshop.

We need to move on this so we are asking those interested to send their material by Dec. 8 to:

Nic Showalter

27 N. Deer Lake, Villa Grove, IL 61956

217-714-2905

Nic512@yahoo.com

Jack's Jaunts

Zion, here we come!

Story & photos by Jack Olson

Zion National Park, the site of our 2009 conference, is in an absolutely spectacular region of the country, abounding with amazing natural and historic attractions. But first, there are a couple of great spots you won't be able to visit at the time of our conference in late March. The road into the north rim of Grand Canyon National Park will still be closed due to the winter snows. And almost certainly the road into Cedar Breaks National Monument will also be closed by snow.

Right now, let's look at some of the wonderful hikes in the park that we won't be able to include as activities during the conference. Zion is truly a great hiking park. We are planning a pre-conference hike into Double Arch Alcove, but if you want to go in on your own, here are the directions. This hike is in the Kolob Canyons area of Zion National Park, about an hour's drive from our headquarters location in Zion Canyon. Drive south and west from Springdale on Utah 9, about 20 miles to Utah 17. Go right about six miles to Interstate 15. Then travel about 20 miles north to exit 40, marked Kolob Canyons,



Echo Canyon on the East Rim Trail

Zion National Park. There's a visitor center right after the exit, with information and a restroom. Drive a couple of miles into the park and there's a parking area on the left for the Taylor Creek Trail.

The total distance of the trail is 5.4 miles round trip. There's not much elevation gain, but the dirt trail winds back and forth across the creek. You will first wander through woods, and spy a couple of historic cabins. Then the trail enters a tight canyon, with huge walls of red rock towering above. The trail ends at Double Arch Alcove, the main feature being an enormous cave, echo and all, and



Double Arch Alcove, at the end of Taylor Creek Trail

streaked with vivid color. The dominant hue is red. The sun never reaches the alcove, so midday light is fine. Light reflects off facing sandstone walls and infuses the alcove with a magical glow. I've been in here a half dozen times, including once in March, and I consider it one of my favorite short hikes in America.

For a scenic drive, you can continue along the road into the Finger Canyons area of Kolob. There are pull-offs with beautiful views into these canyons. Late day would be the time to go for the best light.

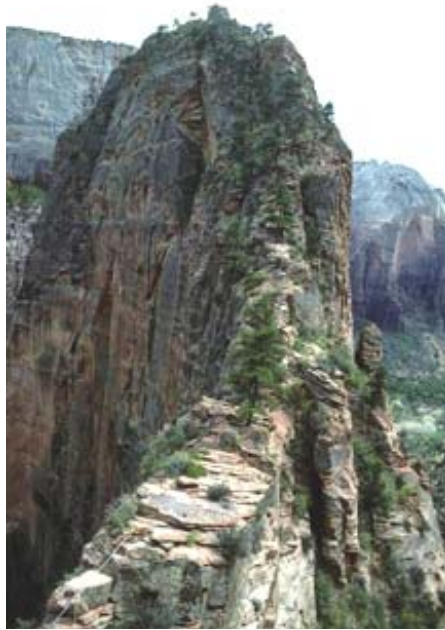
There are a couple of trails in Zion Canyon that are long, exhilarating, and fun. What's so good is that you don't have to go all the way to the end. There are so many features along the way that you can make the hike just as long as you want. The East Rim Trail is eight miles round trip and a 2,100 foot ascent. If you make it all the way to the top, you will look down, and across, the length of Zion Canyon. What a stunning scene! On the way up, there's a side trail into Hidden Canyon, where you can disappear into a tight little nook. A bit farther up, you snake through Echo Canyon. Drop down off the trail and enter a secret spot where flowing water has created swirls in the rock.

The West Rim Trail is 12.8 miles round trip, with a 3,000 foot elevation gain. Like its counterpart across

the canyon, you can go as far as you want; the views are magnificent all along the way. This trail features descriptive locations. Refrigerator Canyon is well-named, with a frequent cool breeze comforting the sweaty hiker. Walter's Wiggles gives me the giggles. It's twenty-one steep, connected zig-zags, to a moment of truth. You can stop here and enjoy the view, or continue to the top of the canyon, for more of the expansive scene, including the Great White Throne. OR, you can head for Angel's Landing. A caution here; read the park's description of this trail. It is not for those with a fear of heights or poor balance.

To climb to Angel's Landing, you'll ascend two and a half miles from the West Rim trailhead, and gain about 1,500 feet. The last

half mile is on a narrow fin of rock, with drops of nearly a thousand feet on either side. There are chains to hold onto in certain spots. Do not attempt this climb if it is rainy, stormy, windy, if there is ice or snow on the trail, or if you are feeling especially stupid that day. I climbed it once, but that will be my last time. If I haven't talked you out of it yet, the climb is euphoric and the view from the top awesome.



Angels Landing - we may rename it Angelo's Landing if we can entice him up there...

Except for those making an airport arrival in Las Vegas, and driving up Interstate 15 from the south, most of you will be approaching from the east. The entrance into Zion on Utah 9, from U.S. 89, is arguably one of the most jaw-dropping drives in the U.S. The road winds back and forth, as it continues to steeply descend, and the pace is slow. That's perfect for soaking it all in. There are occasional pull-offs. Take advantage of some of them. When you finally reach the bottom, you can turn right into Zion Canyon and to our headquarters at Zion Lodge.

The next "Jaunts" will discuss some of the exciting attractions in the area of Zion. Bring lots of pixels.



Walter's Wiggles on the West Rim Trail

Snake in the grass
Zion Lodge, Zion National Park
(We tried to sign him up for the conference, but he slithered off.)



© Don Laine

Just a Walk in the Park

Tom Cummings,
RMOWP President

A few months ago, Lynda and I took a drive to the Northwest. This was Lynda's first trip to our great Northwest. It was a great trip and we were fortunate to have great weather for all but a couple of days. We enjoyed and photographed mountains, high plains desert, waterfalls and the ocean, forests, and rainbows. We also had the opportunity to photograph an abundance of wildlife.....including bears. Now bear with me as I tell you my adventure. Sorry, couldn't resist.

We were in Glacier National Park. We had spent most of the day photographing along the Road to the Sun highway but decided in mid afternoon to drive up to the Mini Glaciers entrance to the park. This entrance follows the river for a distance and then dead-ends at one of the lodges. A few miles into the park, we came on an area that had several cars pulled to the side of the road. This usually means an animal has been spotted and so we stopped and grabbed our cameras to find out. The small river was next to the road with a few trees growing on the riverbank but through a break in the trees I was able to get one photograph of a grizzly as it walked down the river stream. One shot before he moved past the opening in the trees. Not a great photograph but enough to prove you had seen a bear. But, of course, not enough.

Now, this entrance to Glacier has 3 wildlife corridors. These are areas of the road where you are not allowed to stop, or be out of your car. They might be a couple of hundred yards long and are marked by signs telling you that you are entering the wildlife corridor and then another sign that you are leaving that wildlife corridor. The rangers do patrol and strictly enforce the no stopping rule. We were stopped immediately before the start of one of the wildlife corridors and the 2 grizzlies were entering the corridor. I told Lynda to quickly get in the car. Hopefully, this corridor was not very long and we could find a pull over spot past the corridor but we would have to hurry to beat everyone else. This corridor was only a couple of hundred yards long and good fortune gave us a small spot to pull off. We were the first. But at this location, the river swung away from the road creating a large meadow and the trees at the side of the road were numerous and perhaps 25 yards deep making a photograph from the roadside impossible. That just wouldn't do.

I told Lynda I had to get past the trees. We had driven a couple of hundred yards so I figured the bears should still be a safe distance. Lynda insisted on a hug before departing. I then slipped down the steep embankment of the road with my camera and tripod and made my way through the trees. Even though I felt the bears should be a safe distance from my location, I must admit, as I approached the meadow and the last of the trees, I moved slowly, peering around each of the last trees not wanting any surprises. As I crept past the last tree, fortunately both bears were still a couple of hundred yards away. They had not followed the river which swung off to my right but were following the tree line coming right at me. Unbelievable! I moved past the trees, set up and started shooting. They were in no hurry. Just a slow steady pace toward me, sometimes close together, sometimes a few yards apart. A photographer's slice of heaven.

After the initial excitement calmed (and several shots), I realized that I had been so intent on creeping around those last few trees that I had not really surveyed my surroundings. So as I relaxed from my camera and looked to my right toward the river I was shocked to discover another grizzly bear feeding at the side of the river. Cool! I turned further to look more behind me and, lo and behold, there was another grizzly. Unbelievable! Of course, I swung the camera around and started shooting the two new discoveries. Then I would swing back to the original two and then back to the new two and then back.....you get the idea. I almost felt like a gate. How do you describe the feeling of being almost surrounded by four grizzlies? I focused back on the original two and photographed until they were a hundred yards or so from me. They knew I was there. The wind was at my back and they were sniffing the air as they even eyeballed me a time or two. They definitely knew I was there. But I was never scared or concerned for my safety until the one bear started sniffing the air much more and looking my way. At about the same time I remembered Lynda had substantially increased my life policy before we left home, I also found a couple of slices of salami in my back pocket that I have no idea how they got there. Hummmm. You connect the dots. Just a "fast" walk in the park.

New Member

Darrell Taylor, from Camdenton, Missouri, has been a full-time freelance writer since 1994. A self-taught writer and photographer, his work appears regularly on two web sites and in five hardcopy publications, three of which he has masthead credits. Including syndication, Darrell is published over 200 times a year, often accompanied by his images.

Darrell is currently Chairman of the Board for the Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers (AGLOW), an active media member of Boating Writers International (BWI) and Missouri Outdoor Communicators (MOC) where he is a board member. Go to www.darrelltaylor.net to learn more about our newest RMOWPer.

A National Park of a Different Continent

Story & photos by Jon Sheppard



I left Denver on September 20 and flew to Chicago, where I met fellow photographers for the overnight flight to London. The next day we flew to Nairobi, Kenya following a flight path that took us directly over Paris and Geneva and just east of Italy.

The North African coast was beautiful and, as the sun was going down in the west, the Sahara Desert was most unique. The trip started the following day to Amboseli National Park. Our accommodations faced us right into Mt. Kilimanjaro.

For two weeks we travelled all over northern Tanzania. Wildlife was plentiful, the lodges and food were excellent, and I had a super grand time.

We finished up back in Nairobi and I stayed on for another week.

There I was guided to the wonderful Masai Mara and other areas of Kenya.

The animals were fantastic to photograph. And you can get rather close to them. I do recommend a long telephoto lens for a snug shot of what you are photoing.

If you saw the movie *Out of Africa*, I was there. The images will speak for themselves.

For those interested, I am forming a trek for next September. It would be ten days in Kenya plus air travel. This is something you would not want to miss as it's a fantastic photo journey. Please contact me for more information (jonshepp@vail.net).



Call for Photos for the Humorous Photo Challenge

Send a humorous photo and share the fun!

We have continued the humorous photo challenge this year. It can only be successful if you send your entries. Angelo Sculli's humorous photo challenge has been an outstanding hit. Angelo says there's no time limit on when taken (cave paintings included). Please email your humorous photo entry (two photos per person) to Frank Zurey, zurey.photo@mrhc.net, by February 1, 2009. The humorous photo should be an outdoor theme and can be in contest Categories 01 through 08. See the 2009 RMOWP Awards Competition Rules for category descriptions. No manipulated humorous entries! Please follow the contest rules for sizing. (Here they are for convenience: Digital image size should be 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. (Example: hum_smith_r_elk lounging). Angelo will judge the entries and select the top three. He will also present a humorous slide show at the 2009 conference in Zion National Park featuring all of the entries.

Holiday decorations
Taos style...

© Don Laine



Creative Writing Course Offered

Spalding University, in Louisville, Kentucky, offers a four-semester, brief-residency Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing. The course combines superb instruction with unparalleled flexibility. At the beginning of each semester, students and faculty work together at a 10-day residency (in Louisville or abroad), after which they return home to correspond one-on-one through an exchange of 5 packets between the student and the faculty mentor for the rest of the semester. Study fiction, poetry, creative nonfiction, writing for children and young adults, screenwriting, or playwrighting.

Request brochure FA35 by email: mfa@spalding.edu, by phone: (800) 896-8941, ext 2423, or visit their website: www.spalding.edu/mfa.

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Delorme Mapping, a leading provider of mapping products for professional and consumer markets, including state atlases with detailed topographic maps in books plus Topo USA® software covering the entire country. www.delorme.com.

Maptech, producing Terrain Navigator Pro, CD-ROMS combining topo maps and aerial photos, plus specialty CDs of national parks, highest mountains, the Continental Divide, and marine charts and navigation display systems. www.maptech.com.

National Wild Turkey Federation, Inc., a grassroots, nonprofit organization supporting scientific wildlife management on public, private, and corporate lands as well as wild turkey hunting as a traditional North American sport. www.nwtf.org.

Remington, manufacturer of fine sporting arms, ammunition, gun care products and knives, plus factory-authorized gun parts. www.remington.com.

Singh-Ray Corporation, manufacturer for over 40 years of top-quality Singh-Ray filters for digital and film cameras. www.singh-ray.com.

The Sportsman Channel, available nationwide through cable and satellite television providers, is the only network devoted to America's more than 50 million sportsmen, delivering complete hunting, fishing, and shooting programming 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.thesportsmanchannel.com.

RMOWP Conference 2009

Zion National Park, Utah

Tentative Schedule

All meals and workshops at Zion Lodge unless noted otherwise

Wednesday, March 25

- 7:30am-4:00pm Pre-Conference Guided Hike to Double Arch Alcove with Jack Olson (11-person limit)
4:00-7:00pm Registration
5:30-7:00pm Welcome Reception: RMOWP President Tom Cummings
Happy Hour and Light Buffet (included in registration fee)
7:30-9:00pm Presentation of Photo Contest Submissions

Thursday, March 26

- 8:00-8:30am Welcome & General Membership Meeting
8:30-9:15am What Makes Zion Special: Talk by a Park Ranger
9:15am Break
9:30am-noon Guided Walks (easy & not-so easy) on Emerald Pools Trail
Noon Lunch on your own
1:30-5:00pm Photo Field Trip - We will divide into small groups (8-10) and take guided photo trips led by a few of RMOWP's top nature photographers
6:00pm Dinner - Italian Buffet (cost TBA)
7:30-9:00pm Photo Critique Session

Friday, March 27

- 8:00-11:00am Photo Field Trip - We will divide into small groups (8-10) and take guided photo trips led by a few of RMOWP's top nature photographers
11:00am-noon ArtFull Photography, with Connie Thibeau Catsis
Noon Lunch on your own
1:30-3:00pm Writing Critique Session
3:00pm Break
3:30-5:00pm Panel Discussion: How to Survive in the Changing World of Freelance Writing & Photography
5:00-7:30pm Dinner on your own
7:30-9:00pm Showcase of Selected Members' Photography

Saturday, March 28

- 6:00-6:30am Continental Breakfast (included in registration fee)
6:30-9:00am Sunrise Photo Shoot with Jack Olson
9:30-noon Board of Directors Meeting (open to all members!)
OR
Free Time
Noon Lunch on your own
1:30-2:30pm Copyrights and the Web
2:30-3:00pm Break
3:00-5:00pm Auction to Benefit Scholarship Fund: John Catsis & Jim Baker
6:30-10:00pm Banquet Buffet (cost TBA) and Awards Ceremony

Sunday, March 29

- 10:00am Zion Lodge Check-Out