

Rocky Mountain Outdoors

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

September — October 2015

Places for Autumn Color Around Ouray

Article and photographs by William Horton

Your Ouray-Area Fall-Color Cheat Sheet is ready for download from the RMOWP Website (<http://rmowp.org>). On the home page, this article appears at the top of “Recent News.” Click *continue reading* to access the link to the Cheat Sheet). It is in PDF format and will print out nicely so that you can take it along with you on your leaf-color tours. For each location, you will find specific directions and notes, plus **CAUTIONS** you should keep in mind on your journeys, such as road and trail conditions, where to park, and navigation landmarks.

Okay, with all that out of the way, here is a preview of the locations covered in the cheat sheet.

Around Ouray

It is not for naught that Ouray bills itself as Switzerland of America. Rugged peaks surround a gem of a town. And, autumn brings pilgrims seeking the best leaf color in colorful Colorado. Around Ouray are some scenic locations great with and without fall color. Plan on visiting Box Canyon Falls, Baby Bathtubs Trail, Amphitheater Campground, and Cascade Falls.

Highway 550 - The Million Dollar Highway

Highway 550 from Ouray to Silverton routinely makes the worldwide top-ten list of scenic roads—and the list of the most dangerous and scary in Colorado.

To the photographer, the highway offers layer-cake cliffs, U-shaped glacial valleys, cirques, red mountain slopes, gaudy boulders, ancient calderas, sweeping curves, panoramic vistas, avalanche chutes and shelters, ghost towns and mining ruins, aspen groves, mountain lakes, and some of the cleanest air in the United States.

Some of the stops along the way to Silverton include: Lookout Point, Bear Creek Falls, the Double S-curve, Crystal Lake, Ironton ghost town, Idarado Mine complex, Red Mountain Pass, FS 825, and Chattanooga ghost town.

Once in Silverton, visit Christ of the Mines Shrine and Hillside Cemetery.

Past Silverton, but still on 550, stop at Little Molas Lake, Molas Pass, and Andrews Lake. Finally, cap off the drive with a trip down Old Lime Creek Road, if you dare!



Figure 2: Chattanooga ghost town on US 550.



Figure 1: A white aspen bole stands out among its siblings in an aspen grove along Last Dollar Road.

Cutler Creek Road - CR 14

County Road 14 provides a scenic, if bumpy, ride through autumn color. Along the route enjoy the mountain views, a racing creek, and breathtaking aspens.

Highway 62

Highway 62 runs west from Ridgway. Along the way, the snowcapped Sneffels range backstops authentic Western ranches. Off this highway you will find four of the most productive fall-color routes anywhere, plus a spectacular viewpoint. They are: CR 5 (Girl Scout Camp Road), CR 7 (East Dallas Creek Road), CR 9 (West Dallas Creek Road), Dallas Divide (pull off), and the Last Dollar Road.

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Conference 2015 September 21-24 Ouray, Colorado

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Figure 3: Along Owl Creek Pass Road toward Courthouse Rock.

Ridgeway State Park

Ridgeway State Park is a triple blessing for photographers: a convenient base of operations, a scenic and wildlife-rich area, and a viewpoint for distant mountain ridges. Wildlife includes 140 species of resident and migratory birds, deer, elk, big horn sheep, moose, marmots, black bears, bobcats, and mountain lions. At sunset, views from Elk Ridge Campground and the Visitor Center Overlook are sublime.

Owl Creek Pass Road

The Owl Creek Pass road has what the fall photographer needs: every leaf color possible; picturesque ranches and stunning vistas; jagged, serrated, and fluted ridges; volcanic towers, spires, and chimneys; the setting for a classic John Wayne movie; wildlife; and the occasional cattle drive.

Specific areas and points-of-interest include the ranch zone, oak forest, Vista Point, views of Mt. Sneffels and the Cimarron Ridge, aspen groves, Katie's Meadow (from *True Grit*), Owl Creek Pass, three forks of the Cimarron River, Silver Jack Reservoir, and Beaver Lake.

A Reminder

One more time ... **download the PDF Cheat Sheet** before you head out to these locations. In it you will find directions, GPS coordinates, photography notes, and cautions.

In addition to the cheat sheet, you'll find links to two Google maps at the end of the article on the RMOWP website: One for the Ouray area and another for the Ridgeway area. All the points listed in the Cheat Sheet are on these maps, plus many more. It is my planning map for when I go to Ouray.

Enjoy!

Writer's Corner

Only in My Dreams

Virginia Parker Staat

"Art is never finished, only abandoned." ~ Leonardo Da Vinci

I spent four years trying to write a dream. It was an amazing dream about a children's book I had written. In my dream the picture book was completed. I sat with the book in my lap and turned each page, looking at the intricate watercolor drawings that accompanied the text and savoring every word with joy. The book even had a title, *The Day the Iceman Thawed*. But bringing this dream down to earth turned out to be one of the most difficult writing tasks I ever encountered.

During the next four years, I easily abandoned the 32-page book a dozen times. One of the things that helped me through those years of frustration was knowing that singer/songwriter Billy Joel often dreamed songs and had the same problem bringing them down to sheet music. Even when he successfully accomplished the task, he felt that the earthly version paled in comparison to the dream. It certainly was the same for my *Iceman* story.

Abandoning your work is an important writing tool. There are three definitive reasons to abandon your writing: First, when your work isn't working. Secondly, when there is no hope of its resuscitation. And thirdly, when your piece is completed.

When my work isn't working, like when writing *Iceman*, I often let it "heal itself" by putting the piece in a drawer and leaving it... for weeks, months, or even years. I find that letting a story incubate allows the piece to work out its issues on its own. When I pick it back up, it is fresh,

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and I can easily see both its flaws and goldenness. After such a long period of time, I am also no longer attached to anything I have written. It makes it easier for me to edit... with a hatchet, if necessary.

While plenty of my story beginnings have ended up in the second category, I have only had one major manuscript fall into the permanently abandoned pile ... a 268-page young adult novel. It took nine dedicated months to write the piece, but it nagged on my conscience. It sat in a drawer for years. Each time I pulled it out, I became less and less satisfied with it. It felt like a decent piece of writing and had a good story line. The problem was with me... I had changed. The story no longer represented who I was. I came to the conclusion that I had to let it go. Strangely, it was somehow freeing when I hit the delete button on my computer and shredded all evidence of the book.

It is the third reason to abandon your writing that causes most of us to stumble. When is a work completed? We writers can get caught up in words, grammar, punctuation, and lyrics so much that we refuse to let a piece fledge. Perhaps one more tweak... one more edit... one more check of the rhythm... then it will be perfect.

While I hate to admit it, perfection is not possible in writing. Creativity is never finished. We have the choice to either abandon our writing to another day (i.e., put it in a drawer to heal itself), abandon it completely, or abandon it to a publisher. If Leonardo DaVinci, the man who painted the *Mona Lisa* and *Last Supper*, can say "art is never finished, only abandoned," then surely I can concur. For me, perfection is available only in my dreams.



Wildflowers in Motion © Kent Taylor
(1st Place, Flora category, 2014 RMOWP Photo Contest)

Ouray Road Work

They're Tearing Up the Roads!

Road work is going to make getting to and from Ouray at conference time somewhat interesting, to say the least, with construction causing delays on U.S. 550 both north and south of the town.

Work on Red Mountain Pass, south of Ouray between Ouray and Silverton, will result in single lane alternating traffic, according to the Colorado Department of Transportation. There is also roadwork on U.S. 550 just north of Ridgway (north of Ouray).

We'll monitor the situation and email conference registrants with updated conditions as we get closer to the conference. You can also check the Colorado Department of Transportation website – cotrip.org – for current conditions.

The Who and What of This Year's Conference

By Don Laine

With RMOWP's 42nd annual conference just around the corner (and over the mountain), some of you might be wondering what you're getting into. In addition to an all-day 4X4 tour of the high country, time to explore on your own, and some party time, we've lined up programs and workshops guaranteed to educate, enlighten, and entertain. (No, it's not a money-back guarantee).

Here are a few of the highlights:

Tuesday, September 22:

This year's Showcase of Selected Members Photography features presentations from former RMOWP President **Tom Cummings**, a Cushing, Oklahoma resident whose photography includes scenics, wildlife, and Americana (see www.tomcumingsphotography.com); Stillwater, Oklahoma resident **Merrilyn Hartman**, a college professor, writer, landscape photographer, and ceramic artist; and **Jack Wendleton** from Hermann, Missouri, an award-winning freelance photographer and National Park Service retiree.

There will be a workshop on how to turn your ho-hum photos into prize winners using the latest computer software, presented by Boulder, Colorado resident **Bill Horton**, president and CEO of William Horton Consulting, which specializes in the design and development of e-learning. Bill is also an award-winning author and photog-

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Who and What... cont. from page 3

rapher. See www.horton.com, and be sure to follow the links to his three photography websites. That will be followed by a presentation by **Ken Papaleo** of Evergreen, Colorado. He was a staff photographer with the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Rocky Mountain News* for 28 years, until the newspaper's demise, which he says presented him with an opportunity to create his own photo assignments. Ken is now a freelance photographer who specializes in photographing wildlife, landscapes, and golf courses, and also hand-tints black & white photos – coloring only part of the image to create a collusion of black and white and color. See www.kenpapaleo.com.

During Tuesday's lunch we will have a presentation on Una Whinnerah, a pioneering Ouray photographer of the late 1800s and early 1900s, a time when men dominated the field. The talk will be presented by **Don Paulson**, PhD, curator at the Ouray County Historical Society and Ouray County Museum, who is also a retired professor of chemistry where he specialized in organic chemistry. He is an active member of the Ridgway Railroad Museum and an avid hiker, off-road enthusiast, and photographer. Don promises that many of Una Whinnerah's original photographs, most taken using 8" x 10" glass plate negatives, will be shown.

The afternoon will include a group discussion on the best writing or photography advice our members have ever gotten or given. The discussion leader will be RMOWP Executive Director and newsletter editor **Don Laine**, a writer of travel guides and a former radio station news director and newspaper reporter. Don, who lives in El Prado, New Mexico, just outside Taos, claims he doesn't know very much so he's depending on the audience to contribute their best tips. Please come prepared.

Thursday, September 24:

Anybody who writes anything – from the Great American Novel to magazine articles to photo captions – should make their way to the writer's forum, to be led by Denver resident **Kenita Gibbins**, a published photographer, self-described emerging writer, world traveler (see her article on page 8 of this newsletter), and a docent with the Denver Art Museum. There will also be an informative workshop on how to get started blogging with **Kit Horton** of Boulder, Colorado, the other half of William Horton Consulting, who specializes in electronic communications technologies. She works in visual design of books, business publications, and technical graphics; speaks at e-learning conferences; and designs websites, including a tremendous redesign of the RMOWP website. Kit has also designed jewelry and with husband Bill designed furniture and cabinetry that was featured in *Better Homes and Gardens*. See www.horton.com.

Thursday also includes a short photo presentation on

Santa Clara Ranch, a wildlife sanctuary and nature photographers' dream in the Rio Grande Valley of south Texas. The presentation will be given by **Beto Gutierrez**, owner of the ranch, who is a medical doctor and RMOWP's official medical advisor. Former vice-president of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish Commission and the New Mexico Bow Hunters Association, Beto, who lives in Edinburg, Texas, is a writer as well as a photographer who specializes in – guess what? Wildlife. See www.santaclararanch.com.

Another short program on Thursday is titled "Sunday Morning," and will be presented by Stillwater, Oklahoma resident **Jim Baker**, a veterinarian and former RMOWP president. Jim is a writer and photographer, and won first place in last year's Members' Choice photo contest in West Glacier, Montana.

RMOWP Conferences – the Early Years, Part III

Article & photos by Jack Olson

1982 was the last year I missed a conference. Some friends were going to be touring Europe and wanted me to join them. I drew the short straw so I went. But everyone else had a really good time at the conference and missed me, I hoped. The group went to **Park City, Utah**, the first of two times we would visit that beautiful mountain community. By this time we were scheduling out-of-the-ordinary activities. There was shootin' trap at Browning Arms, and a tour of their archery factory. Our birders enjoyed the Farmington Wildlife Refuge. A tram ride to dinner at the Snowbird Ski Area topped off the festivities.



Hiking to the cliff dwellings in Walnut Canyon Nat'l Monument

Europe was OK but I was glad to be home for the 1983 conference in **Flagstaff, Arizona**. Oh, so close to Grand Canyon. But we more than made up for it with an extensive round of bus excursions to Walnut Canyon, Wupatki, and Sunset Crater Volcano national monuments. We spread out a sumptuous picnic dinner at the last at, appropriately, sunset. We hiked in each of these national monuments but my favorite was the Wupatki Ruin. It is wide-

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Early Conferences... cont. from page 4



Trail ride in Shoshone National Forest

spread, dramatic at sunrise and there was a nearby Ball Court, site of a mysterious game played by the Sinagua culture. Our cars kicked up clouds of dust as we drove up a dirt road to a Forest Service lookout for a view of the surroundings. It was (cough, cough) worth it.

No matter which direction we traveled from **Pahaska Tepee** in 1984 we were exploring fresh territory for RMOWP. We were smack dab at the east entrance to Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, and we didn't hesitate to take advantage of it. There was a guided bus tour with many stops, such as whenever we saw a buffalo. We savored a classy lunch at the Lake Hotel Dining Room overlooking Yellowstone Lake. The Buffalo Bill Center of the West in Cody can consume almost an entire day. There are exhaustive exhibits of western art, Plains Indians, natural history, firearms, photographs and images of Buffalo Bill's life and times. Staff at the museum took us behind the scenes into their storage area to view artifacts they have no room to display for the public. The final day we took a thrilling horseback ride up steep hills into the Shoshone National Forest. We had a brief snack and then a screaming ride straight downhill as a thunderstorm approached.



Helen Shields keeping it clean in Old Trail Town, Cody, WY

We trooped underground in 1985. Well, at least for a while at **Carlsbad, New Mexico**. The high point---no, the low point---was a descent into Carlsbad Caverns National Park. I've been in several caves across the country but this is my favorite. We could wander and marvel at the varied formations. I had time to set up a tripod and make a photo-

graph that is still being bought in the gift shop 30 years later. I did not, however, make any friends when I took a group photograph of everyone. Do you know what a flash does to people's eyes in the dark? One of the most unusual and exciting events was watching a few hundred thousand bats stream from the cave at dusk. We made our first, and only, foray into Texas to scramble to a couple of sites in Guadalupe Mountains National Park. We whizzed along the Pecos River through Carlsbad in a jet boat. Our group got up close and personal with tarantulas, peccaries, and mountain lions in Living Desert State Park.



Descending into Carlsbad Caverns

[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.]

President's Column

Last Column as President

Al Perry

My term as president of the Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers organization expires at our annual conference in Ouray, Colorado. One of my goals during the last four years has been to preserve the free exchange of ideas related to outdoor writing and photography which existed long before I joined the organization.

With RMOWP, I see an organization running smoothly and efficiently. I have followed the lead of our executive director who listened to divergent ideas and almost always came up with a good solution in behalf of all members.

I am not the first to recognize the contribution from long time members including Tom Ulrich, Jack Olson, Jim Baker, John Catsis, and many others who helped make RMOWP what it is today. Also, Mike Hammond and Beto Gutierrez have been very generous with their financial

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contributions to the organization. Finally, I believe Don and Barb Laine have provided an historical perspective and pragmatism to make things work for the good of the organization. Of course there are others who have also contributed and your names are listed in the membership directory.

In the coming years I plan active participation as a member of RMOWP and help whenever possible. RMOWP has much to be proud of going forward.



Al Perry in Iceland. Photo © Haukur Gnorrason

Annual Auction Promises Great Stuff

Those attending the auction during RMOWP's annual conference will have the opportunity to bid on a number of excellent outdoor products and services donated by RMOWP's friends and members.

Among the most sought-after auction items in recent years is a photographers' package to **Santa Clara Ranch** in south Texas. Owned and operated by RMOWP members Beto and Clare Gutierrez, Santa Clara Ranch is a wildlife sanctuary set up for two purposes: to preserve habitat for the abundant wildlife found in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas, and to provide opportunities for photographers to photograph the many species of birds, reptiles, and mammals found there. There are water holes, blinds, and even accommodations for human visitors. Beto and Clare have promised to again donate a package for a visit to Santa Clara Ranch for the auction. We don't have details yet, but in the past the package has been for guide services and lodging for several individuals, and at times RMOWP members have teamed up to bid on it. This is an opportunity that all nature photographers will not want to miss. See santaclararanch.com.

Remington Outdoor Company, one of RMOWP's oldest corporate friends, has sent a certificate for two 22-calibre rifles from its sister company Marlin Firearms.

They are the XT22MR and the XT22TR. See marlinfirearms.com and remington.com. We are also receiving several knives from another long-time friend, **Buck Knives**. One knife will be awarded to the top winner in the Members' Choice photography contest that takes place during the conference, and two knives will be included in the auction. All three knives are engraved especially for RMOWP. See buckknives.com.

Buddy Beds, a Denver company that manufactures memory foam dog beds, is donating several products that will give your dog a first class travel experience. These are a memory foam SUV travel bed that eliminates the vibration and bumps of car travel, and a rugged car seat protector blanket. See buddybeds.com. And a brand-new company, and also a brand-new RMOWP corporate friend, is sending another sleeping option for our furry friends. **Green Living Dog Beds** makes soft, comfy dog beds from Eco-Soft fiberfill, made completely from recycled plastic bottles and covered with durable and washable suede microfiber or soft fleece. See greenlivingdogbeds.com.

Another of RMOWP's corporate friends, **LensPen**, is sending several of its products to the RMOWP auction. This small Canadian company specializes in revolutionary tools to easily clean fingerprints from high-quality camera lenses, binoculars, scopes, smart phones and similar screens. See lenspen.com. **Cotton Carrier**, which produces specialized straps to keep cameras and binoculars from swinging all over the place while you're out hiking, climbing, or biking, is sending samples of its products to RMOWP for the auction. See cottoncarrier.com.

Conference Checklist

Don't forget to pack:

- Items for the auction
- Matted photos for Members' Choice contest (maximum print size 8"X12" matted to 12"X16")
- Images for the photo critique (3-5 digital images on CD or flash drive)
- Written work for the Anne Sullivan Writers' Forum (12 copies of your story, poem, photo essay, etc., not more than 1200 words)

RMOWP Conference 2015 -- Tentative Schedule

Ouray, Colorado

Meetings & Group Meals at Ouray Community Center except as noted.

Monday, September 21

- 1:00pm Board of Directors Meeting (open to all members)
- 4:30pm Welcome, Handouts & Last Minute Info - President Al Perry & Friends
- 5:00pm Registration, Opening Reception, Happy Hour and Light Buffet (included in registration fee for registrants & guests)
- 7:00pm Presentation of All Photo Contest Submissions

Tuesday September 22

- 8:30am General Membership Meeting
- 9:00am Showcase of Selected Members Photography
- 10:00am "Fixing Flawed Photos: Editing Your Way to Beauty," with Bill Horton
- 11:00am "The Evolution of a Professional Photographer," with Ken Papaleo
- 12:00pm Lunch Buffet (included in registration fee or \$15 for non-registrants), with Guest Speaker Don Paulson, curator of the Ouray County Museum: "Una Wheeler Whinnerah, Pioneering Ouray Photographer of the 19th century"
- 1:30pm "The Best Advice I Ever Got," Group Discussion led by Don Laine
- 2:30pm On Your Own: Drive to Box Canyon Falls, the mines of Iron-ton; explore the Ouray County Museum; or soak up some of Ouray's healing waters
- 7:00pm Dinner on Your Own

Wednesday September 23

- 8:00am All-Day 4X4 Tour - Ghost Towns in Fall Splendor (\$125 per person, including box lunch)
- 6:30pm Dinner Buffet (\$25, including tax & tip)
- 7:30pm Photo Critique with Tom Ulrich and Jack Olson

Thursday September 24

- 6:00am Sunrise Photo Shoot with Jack Olson
- 9:00am Anne Sullivan Writers Forum with Kenita Gibbins
- 11:00am "So You Want to Blog? – What You Need to Know to Get Started," with Kit Horton
- 12:00pm Lunch Buffet (\$15, including tax & tip), with a presentation on Santa Clara Ranch wildlife sanctuary by Beto Gutierrez
- 1:00pm "Sunday Morning," a presentation by Jim Baker
- 1:30pm Break
- 2:00pm Auction with Beto Gutierrez
- 6:30pm Banquet (\$35, including tax & tip) and Awards Ceremony



Late Night © Gayle Biggs

(Honorable Mention, Events category, 2014 RMOWP Photo Contest)

Joys and Hazards of Traveling Alone as experienced by Kenita Gibbins

We as women can prevail in the big, wide, wonderful world by ourselves. We just have to follow a few rules.

As photographers we know we must chase the light early and late in the day. I've heard more than once "Do Not go out into the dark". Grr! The environment determines how brave I am - not people.

But I do take sensible precautions.

- In Krakow, Poland I told the hotel clerk where I planned to go, and when I expected to return. I made an appointment with my friends for a specific time and place at the end of the day.
- I always have a cell phone armed with the capability of making international calls. I tend to get side-tracked and follow narrow paths, so it is important to remember the rule of not traveling with sparkling jewelry. I only wear my simple wedding band. In Poland a wedding band on your left hand means you are a widow. Of course I'm not a widow. A ring just might be a sign not to attack.
- I don't carry a great deal of money. I do have a safety bag with a steel band under the strap. I always have a hotel card with a phone number and address. My camera is probably more vulnerable to abduction than my body. I quit trying to carry my Nikon D700, heavy lenses and a tripod on my urban trips. I will lug the big equipment if I'm on a domestic driving trip with my husband George. (He doesn't like long airplane rides across the pond.)



*Kenita, camera in hand, explores a fishing village.
Photo © Shelia Wertheimer*

I love taking people pictures, and I always ask for permission. I can do this in any language: I just point to the person, then my camera, and smile. The potential model is more likely than not to give me permission to take the picture. I will engage in conversation when possible. You simply can't do this when traveling with a group which is the main reason I like to go off on my own.

It is fun to photograph my neighborhood in Denver, Colorado. The night of the blue moon provided the perfect night to go to Fairmount Cemetery. I asked a friend to come with me because sometimes you need a partner, in the dark, in a cemetery. No, you can't go into that cemetery at night without tickets for their Historical Society fund raiser. You can go anywhere you want on the grounds without other photographers.

When I photograph children, I always show them their image. People of all ages love it when you share. I will send them a copy of the image if they have an email address. I won't say or promise something that I can't do. We are the voice of our country when we travel out of our borders.

My students in Poland always like it when I turn my camera or computer over to them. No child has ever betrayed my trust. They are very careful. Yes, I go to Poland by myself and I always have a purpose like teaching English in rural schools. On these trips, I stay in a safe environment with other Global Volunteers. I'm never afraid to wander in a nearby village or on the country roads. I always tell someone which direction I'm going. It is just good manners not to mention safety.

Once I left a group of Methodists in S. Korea and flew to Osaka, Japan. I stayed in a hotel near the train station. I did my research and made my reservations before I left home. The next morning I got help to get a train ticket to Kyoto. I have no Japanese words, just my pointing and smiling skill. Although many Japanese speak English, they just don't like to use English if they think their words aren't perfect. The hotel made city tour reservations for me. The night I went to see the Japanese cultural show and a tour of the Gion district I was adopted by a family of three from Australia.

I've observed and experienced that citizens of different countries will go out of their way to visit with a person by herself. The extra plus is I learn more about their lives and feel safer walking back to my hotel. The following day I took a train to Nara. After the tour I still had time to wander back in Kyoto. I walked and walked and found a preschool. No one seemed to mind as I clicked and clicked while the tiny children played and marched around the playground. I doubt if I could have done this in the USA because of so many safety rules for children.

My train ride to Tokyo went quickly. I didn't talk with

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the lady sitting next to me because of the language difference plus knowing not all people are as outgoing as I. She smiled and gave me a little umbrella when we parted. I felt honored.

This trip I listened to advice from my friend in Tokyo before leaving for Asia. He said only bring small suitcases. There is little room on the very modern trains and the sidewalks of Tokyo are way too crowded to struggle with much luggage.

Arif and I have been friends for seven years. My daughter-in-law and I met him in Venice, Italy on a photography trip. He is a US citizen from Pakistan, living in Tokyo. He and his beautiful wife Ayako were waiting for me when I arrived at my hotel. They spent two and a half glorious days with me. We photographed weddings all over the city and saw little hidden areas of quiet places. Ayako isn't a photographer, but she was skilled at pointing out good photo opportunities for Arif and me.

George and I have a place in the Colorado mountains. I can go out by myself and find marvelous creatures. One pronghorn came very close to me. We had seen each other several days in a row. When she approached I didn't move. She made mew sounds. I felt like she wanted to tell me something. We talked softly with each other a long

time – maybe less than three minutes. A couple of days later I saw her with a baby. I like to think we were talking “woman to woman.”

In India I spent two weeks with a photography group. I do like group photography trips because the leaders can get me to places I can't go by myself. I don't like to go on any other kind of group tour for the most part.

The leaders just don't get that noontime is lousy to finally say go take pictures.

My Indian friend told me again, “Do Not Go Out Alone”. I said to myself, “Susan, what is a female to do with the dawn about to break?” I did always tell the hotel front desk person good-bye whenever I went out alone. I knew exactly where I wanted to go. Asians are early risers. I saw many people out running.

As “Ms. Directionally Challenged” I did get confused once in the dim light. The people selling coffee at a little shack didn't look like English speakers. I couldn't believe my eyes. In front of me stood a police station. I went in and explained where I wanted to go. I came out of the station with simple instructions. I even found a fisherman who invited me to sit down and watch the men fishing with the Chinese net. The nets were first brought to India 900 years ago by an explorer. He explained the entire procedure to me. I'm so lucky, but I also give myself opportunities.

I did not go out by myself in Trivandrum, the capital of the state of Kerala, India. My friend Susan engaged a guide for me. Sashu spent six full days as my guide, driver, and protector, and I grew to like him as a friend. He probably didn't think of me that way because of the caste system. I did pay him daily. He was so worth the little pay that he requested.



“I hope this doesn't catch on in the USA.”

© Kenita Gibbins (Honorable Mention Cultural category, 2012 RMOWP Photo Contest)

In my carry-on bag...

- I take my laptop, tiny external hard drive, iPhone and my Sony RX10 camera. I need at least two camera batteries and several memory cards. All the annoying cords are necessary.
- Bose white noise protector, plus ear plugs, Kindle Fire and a curling iron I could do without. Let's just think of them as nice to have. These require an electricity converter and I bring a couple of plug-ins for charging all the electronics.
- I pack an assortment of prescriptions, vitamins, Advil, Imodium and Kaopectate plus a list of my meds. I make copies of my passport, credit cards and itinerary, who to call in an emergency locally and at home.

In my checked suitcase...

- A compass is handy, if you come to light from say the Metro in Paris.
- Of course I need a wine bottle opener.
- I can get by with two pair of shoes and one smashing outfit with scarves & cheap jewelry. I feel better going into houses of worship wearing a skirt.
- In addition, I usually have four pair of black pants, six tops, a sweater, a rain coat, umbrella, hat, sun glasses and the unmentionables. I never carry more than I can manage, but I will accept help. Oh, and don't forget a wash cloth – you won't get one in Europe.

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2016 RMOWP Calendar

May 30 ~ Scholarship deadline

June 1-4 ~ Conference in Bryce Canyon, Utah

June 21-25 ~ Photo Workshop in Rocky Mountain National Park

See www.rmowp.org for details

Kenita... cont. from page 9

As brave as I may sound, my husband, children and friends know my daily itinerary. I check in by phone or email regularly. Before I leave our country, I register with my government. This precaution brings me emails that tell about a crisis or potentially relevant news. When I was in Warsaw President Obama was there also. I knew where demonstrations were happening. I have many phone numbers typed on paper and in my phone data base. I know where U.S. embassies are located in each country. I didn't start out traveling alone when I first became an adventurer. I gained experience, many friends around the world, and I have grown in my confidence. George has never told me "don't go." I wish he too had the wanderlust. I come home and I'm glad he is always waiting for me.

Remember, as women we can have wonderful times by ourselves. We can prevail in the world of travelers with joy.

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Let us know: info@rmowp.org

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Thanks!



Jon Sheppard has been experimenting with star photography in and around his hometown of Avon, Colorado. Here is one of his recent images.

Star Photography Tips from Jon Sheppard

1. Start with the highest ISO then work down to what works well for you.
2. Turn on high noise reduction. (I have also found very good noise reduction in Photoshop and Topaz Labs.)
3. Use a 30-second exposure. Longer exposures cause the stars to begin to streak.
4. Color balance to Tungsten to get a bluer, cooler image.
5. Use some land lights for added visual feelings.

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