

Rocky Mountain Outdoors

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

January — February 2016



Hoodoos

The Gutierrezes at work: Clare waiting patiently for Beto to get his shot. (conference 2000)

“a helluva place to lose a cow...”

Article & photos by Don Laine

The above quote from Ebenezer Bryce (1830-1913) pretty much sums up his feelings about the brief time he spent trying to homestead in what is now **Bryce Canyon National Park**, the spectacularly beautiful southern Utah destination that will be the site of **RMOWP's 2016 conference June 1-4**.

You were emailed a copy of the tentative schedule, registration form, and lodging information on January 18th, and those items are now available at www.rmowp.org. The tentative schedule is just that - tentative - but should be pretty close.

We'll have writing and photography workshops, the writers' forum, photo critique, sunrise photo shoot, some group meals, and a chuck wagon dinner. We're also arranging some easy guided walks and one somewhat serious hike down into Bryce Amphitheater.

The Bryce Astronomy Festival takes place on the same dates as our conference, with activities daily and into the early morning hours, so we have tried to allow time in the schedule for attendees to spend some quality time with a telescope. The park service has not put the details for this year's festival on the park website as of this writing, but you can get an idea of what to expect by looking at the schedule from last year's festival. See www.nps.gov/brca.

Our **headquarters** will be the Best Western Plus Ruby's Inn, just outside the park entrance, with lodging for \$109 per night at Ruby's and \$79 per night at Bryce View Lodge, a more basic but perfectly adequate motel across the road that is part of the Ruby's Inn complex. Ruby's also has an adjacent full-service campground and several restaurants on site.

There is some confusion on the motel websites about the cancellation policies, but our contact there assures us that there will be no charge if you cancel by 4pm the day of arrival. Ruby's rooms are located in several buildings, more or less clustered about the main lodge which houses the common areas of restaurants, gift shop, store, and of course our meeting room. It has an elevator, which you can use to get to the meeting room if you enter the building from the back

See Bryce... page 2

Bryce... cont. from page 1

(closest to many of the rooms). If you go into the lodge from the main door in front, you'll be on the same floor as the meeting room.

Getting to Bryce Canyon is interesting. The nearest major airports are Las Vegas, NV and Salt Lake City, UT, both about 270 miles away, with just about any airline you can think of. The closest airport with commercial service is Cedar City, UT, about 80 miles from Bryce Canyon, with very limited service from Delta (SkyWest); and the next closest is St. George, UT, 125 miles from Bryce Canyon, with limited service from United and Delta. If you fly to Grand Junction, CO it's a very scenic but slow 326-mile drive down UT highways 24 and 12 through Capitol Reef National Park.

Early June in Bryce Canyon National Park should be pleasant, but be prepared for chilly temperatures evenings and early mornings. Average high temperatures for this period are in the upper 60s and average lows are in the mid-30s, although historic extremes are highs in the low 80s and lows in the mid-20s. Light snow is unlikely but possible. Elevations in the park range from 6,620 feet to 9,115 feet, so like most high-elevation areas in the West, dressing in layers is advised.

More details on the conference will be coming soon.

And for a look back at our last journey to Bryce Canyon, see Jack's Jaunts on page 6 of this newsletter.

National Park Service Celebrates Centennial with Free Days

The National Park Service, created when President Woodrow Wilson signed it into existence on August 25, 1916, has announced numerous birthday celebrations at parks throughout the country, plus 16 free admission days in 2016.

This means, for those who do not have one of the America the Beautiful or similar passes, that you can enjoy any of the parks, monuments, and other properties managed by the National Park Service for free on those days. Of the 409 sites under the park service's jurisdiction, 127 charge entrance fees for individuals or vehicles ranging from \$3 to \$30.

Fee-free days in 2016 are:

- January 18, Martin Luther King Jr. Day
- April 16-24, National Park Week
- August 25-28, National Park Service Birthday Celebration
- September 24, National Public Lands Day
- November 11, Veterans Day

For information on all the sites managed by the National Park Service, including special national park birthday celebrations, see www.nps.gov.

RMOWP Photo Workshop June 21-25

The RMOWP Photo Workshop takes place in Rocky Mountain National Park in Colorado June 21-25, and RMOWP members are being offered a special rate through March 1. Completely separate from RMOWP's annual conference, the photo workshop offers five days of intense learning and opportunities to capture spectacular photos in one of the most beautiful areas of the American West. Wildlife instructor is Jared Griscoskie, landscape specialist is Fred Lord, and coordinator/instructor is Nic Showalter. All are RMOWP members.

Showalter tells us that the workshop is for photographers of all skill levels, from beginners who want to master photographic skills quickly to those who want to push themselves to the next skill level, as well as experienced photographers who especially enjoy being put in the right spot at the right time to capture a stunning sunrise, huge moose, or a great shot of moving water.

"Over the last several years we have blended post-processing techniques with our after-lunch critique sessions," Showalter says. "Participants submit images for critique and as part of that feedback we do post-processing of the image on a screen so all can see."

Regular registration fee is \$1,195, but there is an early registration discount of \$200 through April 1, and an additional \$100 discount until March 1 for RMOWP members. That means that until March first, RMOWP members will pay just \$895 for the five-day workshop. Lodging and meals are additional.

RMOWP members were sent an email about the workshop earlier this month, and information and a contact link are online at www.rmowp.org and www.rockyphotoworkshop.com.

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Writer's Corner

He Said, She Said

Article & photo by Virginia Parker Staat

Say what you have to say, not what you ought. Any truth is better than make-believe. Tom Hyde, the tinker, standing on the gallows, was asked if he had anything to say. "Tell the tailors," said he, "to remember to make a knot in their thread before they take their first stitch." His companion's prayer is forgotten.

~ Henry David Thoreau from *Walden*

Being a native Texan in Alaska in August has distinct disadvantages. We would have been in shorts and sweating at home. Instead we braved 38 degrees and misty rain. Within ten minutes of setting up on Denali's park road, David and I were wearing every available piece of clothing, wistfully hoping slender tripods might block at least the brunt of the brutal wind. No such luck. We stood on hard pavement, toes numbing in our boots, watching a tangle of velvet antlers visible just above the alders. We waited for the great beast to rise.... and waited.

As our vigilance continued, a Pennsylvania fellow dropped by for the third time and asked me, "How long you gonna wait?"

"As long as it takes, I suppose," I said, noticeably shivering within my down parka.

Perhaps it was pity's sake that moved him. "I'll get him up," he said.

My protests ignored, the man walked straight into the alders as cavalier as if he were approaching a prairie dog. Photographers who had begun packing their gear repositioned along the roadside. Others spoke loudly about the man's apparent stupidity. Still others of us prayed.

The moose did rise... actually two moose, lying side by side. Then the third bull rose from his position several feet behind them. The startled man began quickly backtracking. Thankfully, the bulls simply eyed him with contempt.

At the sight of three bulls, one photographer exclaimed to his companion, "This is epic!"

A towheaded boy, shoulders hunched around his ears, said, "Dad, we've seen these already. Let's go. It's cold!"

The Pennsylvania fellow returned and asked, "How about fifty dollars?"

Dialogue is one of the most important characterization tools in a writer's arsenal. John Murray writes, "Dialogue

is one of the two major means by which character is revealed, in literature as well as in life. The other is action. Both involve decisions. In the case of dialogue, character is revealed by how we inquire, represent ourselves, interact with other people, respond to events and relate to nature."

Dialogue can be an important tool in outdoor writing, although we often see dialogue used more sparingly in nature writing than in fiction prose. It is most often used as an opening, closing, or transitional device. Dialogue also reveals action or advances the story.

Outdoor writers, when writing from personal experience, often include dialogue to further characterize a situation or point of view. By combining dialogues with our writing, we can also use them as symbolism, metaphor, allegory, or imagery. As an example, Edward Abbey uses dialogue to punctuate his otherwise monastic life in his essay, *Fire Lookout*. Terry Tempest Williams uses dialogue with her dying mother as metaphor to the dying Bear River Migratory Bird Sanctuary in *Refuge*.

The danger comes when we invent dialogue to move our piece along. As soon as that happens, our writing strays from the realm of nonfiction to creative nonfiction. So how do we include true dialogue in nonfiction? Unless we are privy to the conversation, research is our single best tool. It is important to allow our subjects to speak for themselves. To find their spoken words, we often must scour archives and meticulously source those quotes in the manuscript's back matter.

When writing creative nonfiction or a personal narrative, dialogue can add richness to our work, propelling our readers along, immersing them deeper into our story by adding tension, humor, or an identifying hook. Writing convincing dialogue is a true art form. Both Eudora Welty and Mark Twain were so focused on the importance of dialogue that they kept notebooks of overheard conversations to use in their stories. I also keep a collection of dialogue snippets in a fancy wooden cigar box on my bookshelf. I particularly like conversations between children, exchanges overheard at coffee shops or while standing in



Denali Moose

See He Said... page 4

He Said... cont. from page 3

line, and old wives' tales that my grandmother would say. I return to these bits of conversation time and again to remember the exact expressions and context of these priceless spoken words. Often they become the launching point for a story idea.

There are several techniques to help your dialogue writing. Self-talk allows you to check its flow and tempo. After writing several lines of dialogue, read it aloud. Listen for clarity and authenticity. Compare the dialogue with the personality traits of your character.

To help your readers navigate through written conversations, properly punctuate your dialogue. The rules are simple. Begin a new paragraph each time a speaker changes. All punctuation is contained within the quotes. When using multiple paragraphs for a single speaker, place an open-quotation at the beginning of each paragraph and a close-quotation mark only at the end of the final paragraph. Keep speaker tabs simple, using *said* and *ask* unless you have a distinct purpose in using a more expressive tag. *He said* becomes invisible to your readers and doesn't distract from the dialogue's flow. Speaker beats, short phrases that show action, should be used sparingly.

Dialogue advances plot and communicates personality. It adds richness and texture, quickening the pace of our stories. It illuminates our characters, sets tone, and creates atmosphere. Finally, dialogue can be used as a metaphor, allowing readers to understand our point of view and experience our story more fully. In short, incorporating dialogue into our writing can speak volumes to our readers.



*"Through the Years" © Jo Dodd
1st Place Black & White
2015 Contest*

President's Column

Gifts and Graces

Article & photo by Kent Taylor



Kent Taylor

Sometime during the night, the snow began to fall and, by morning, it showed no signs of letting up. Looking out across the yard through groggy eyes, I remember feeling the same swirl of excitement I felt as a little kid growing up in southern Illinois. Snow day! Time to find the boots, the gloves, the sock hat; time to get out there and look around; time to play.

Surprisingly to me, the cedar waxwings had also arrived in droves that morning along with the snow. To say they came to eat the berries that remained on the red tip photinias would be an understatement. They were voracious consumers.

I had never noticed a cedar waxwing in our neighborhood before, nor since. They were, to me, one of the coolest looking birds I had ever seen with their gorgeous markings and their hey-check-out-my-sunglasses kind of vibe. For the next hour, I photographed the birds, mesmerized by the pagentry of it all, grateful for the surprise, this little grace.

As a new year begins, it will undoubtedly hold twists and turns that we've never imagined, experiences and encounters that have never been, thresholds through which we will go. Wherever this year takes you, blessings to you on your journey. May a myriad of gifts and graces guide your way.

Looking ahead, as we plan for the future of this great organization, I look forward--as your new president--to working with the board, with Don and Barb, and with all of you to develop this creative community dedicated to sharing the outdoor experience. I hope to see you at Bryce Canyon in June. We'll have a good time.

Note: Kent Taylor lives with his wife Laura in Richardson, Texas. They have two children: Kelsey (27) who is married to Matt and works as a speech pathologist in Dallas; and Kyle (18) who is a freshman at Hill College and a pitcher on their baseball team. They have two 8lb guard....errr.....lap dogs named Frank and Ben (Cheweenies.) Laura is a high school choir teacher and Kent has been a hospital chaplain for the last 25 years. Kent's entry into RMOWP came through his participation in the photo workshop in Estes Park in 2007.



Cedar waxwing

(Editor's note: The following article is reprinted from the June-July 2002 issue of Rocky Mountain Outdoors. Anne Sullivan was an active member of RMOWP from 1992 until her death in October 2012. All who knew her loved her, and we miss her still. Anne had begun the writers forum and after her death the name was changed to honor her memory.)

Anne Sullivan: From Broadway to Datil A Journey of Dedication and Passion

Article & photo by John Catsis

Anne Sullivan leaves the post of RMOWP Secretary next month after serving six years in that demanding position. But that's Anne: a person who has always been dedicated, caring, and passionate. She has conducted RMOWP's business from her home in Datil, a sleepy, one-gas-station village in west central New Mexico that she's called home for the past 15 years. Long time friends are not surprised about her lifestyle. It reflects what RMOWP is all about. And to know Anne is to recognize that she has had a love affair with the West ever since she was a child. She was introduced to the Rocky Mountain area during an annual grade school course that involved a six-week study of Indians. That school was in New York City — Manhattan to be exact — where Anne was born to a surgeon and a housewife mother. An only child, the tendency might have been to pamper her. But when dad joined the military during World War II, Anne became an Air Corps brat. Quite the opposite of being pampered, the experience taught her independence.

Anne's other love was theater. While in high school, she thought of becoming a playwright, but decided that working behind the scenes was more satisfying. She honed her skills at prestigious Smith College in Massachusetts, where she received a degree in theater. As you read this, Anne may be attending her 50th class reunion this month.

For the first three years following graduation, Anne worked as an apprentice stage manager on off-Broadway productions. Life was tough, but she got by, thanks to that independent streak, living in a cold-water flat in Manhattan's Little Italy. Her big break came when Anne became second assistant stage manager in the Broadway production of "Inherit the Wind," starring Paul Muni and Tony Randall. Life became better with her new \$85 a week salary.

Anne's third love was travel. Within a short time she had saved enough money to go around the world. She hitchhiked over much of New Zealand and Australia. She stayed in Australia for a year, working as a stage manager in both Sydney and Melbourne.

But with Broadway still on her mind, she returned to New York, where Anne obtained her first leadership position as production stage manager. The show, "Cabaret," was a touring show that performed all over the country. She found that she liked being on the road. Over the years, as she worked one road show after another, Sullivan

learned two things about herself. First, working on a touring show meant she could live anywhere in America. Second, whenever a show performed west of the Mississippi River, "I was happy," but the closer the show was to the East Coast, "I became."

That's when she decided to search for a new home in New Mexico, which Anne determined was her favorite state. As she initially checked out the state's various towns, she concluded her ideal community had to have a library, movie theater, swimming pool, and a JC Penney department



Anne with her literary friend, Sylvia, on the front stoop of their home at the end of Swingle Canyon in Datil.

ment store. That was obviously well before discovering Datil!

At one point she decided the Socorro area was the place. So in 1970 she bought a small house in nearby Lemitar for the princely sum of \$2,700. Sullivan lived there for the 17 years.

During that time, Anne broke all ties with New York, when she gave up her Manhattan apartment in 1976. Ten years later, she worked as production stage manager for the last time, overseeing the touring show "La Cage aux Folles." The following year she moved to Datil, where she had purchased 40 acres and the 74-year-old log home she lives in now, located at the end of a box canyon amid towering pines, just a mile-and-a-quarter south of U.S. Highway 60.

She was convinced she had made the right decision. First, "Lemitar was just too hot in the summer." And second, she had fallen in love with the site of her much larger new home.

Now in Datil for good, Anne's goal was to read all the books she'd always wanted to read. A tour of her house confirms there's a lot of reading to be done, and a lot of music to listen to, as well, as evidenced by the hundreds of audio cassettes found throughout the sprawling home. But always energetic, Anne soon became involved in the community, joining the EMT.

Ten years ago, Anne Sullivan joined RMOWP as a recruit of Kelly Gatlin, who lives nearby. The organization was just what she needed to re-ignite the writing bug that

See Anne Sullivan... page 6

Anne Sullivan... cont. from page 5

had first bitten her in high school. "Way down deep," she confided, "it's what I always wanted to do; especially humor."

She has written three major articles and nine short stories for *New Mexico Magazine*. Other stories have appeared in *New Mexico Wildlife* and *Route 66 Magazine*, among other publications. Her dog, Sylvia, which she describes as a mutt, also has taken pen in paw and writes an occasional article for the local paper. Her cat, Ringworm, and horse, Brandy, have yet to follow suit.

While her term as RMOWP Secretary ends this June, she continues to serve as President of the New Mexico Outdoor Writers and Photographers Association, a post she has held three times. See what I mean about dedication and passion? One tour of duty just isn't enough.

Her future goal is to write and publish even more, especially a children's book. After that she wants to go to China, one of the countries she did not visit during her post-collegiate around-the-world tour.

Meanwhile, Anne readily welcomes RMOWP members as visitors as well as those from her theatrical past. And she is quick to correct anyone who mispronounces the name of her home town. Dat in Datil rhymes with Cat, she reminds.

Anne Sullivan shows no sign of slowing down, but when she does, she says she probably will move back to Lemitar, where health facilities in nearby Socorro are more convenient. That would close another chapter in the life of the girl from the Big Apple who ended up in the Big Canyon.

Datil be enough.

Jack's Jaunts

Bryce Canyon National Park 2000 Revisited

Article & photos by
Jack Olson

In June 2000 RMOWP congregated at Bryce Canyon for an annual conference which we planned some years before. We wanted to choose a location which would be spectacular, and memorable, for this auspicious year. For those of us oldtimers who attended that

Sherryl Brandes navigating the tunnel on the Queens Garden Trail



*RMOWPers gather on the rim...
"Hey Jack, where's the blasted sunrise?"*

one it turned out to be one of the most exciting conferences in our history. Let's return to that conference to show you a bit of what you can expect at the 2016 conference.

There are some national parks, such as Yellowstone, which reveal their attractions bit by bit, due partly to their vast size. When you get to the rim of Bryce Canyon it knocks your socks off. I guarantee. If you've been to Bryce before you know to watch out for your socks. But that's just the beginning. As in 2000, this year we will descend into the canyon to meander among the stunning eroded red features called hoodoos.

The year 2000 was significant for another reason. It was the first time we offered a sunrise photo shoot. It's a chance to photograph a remarkable location in the best light, as well as to gather with your friends in the dark. The leader chosen to introduce this significant activity to the conference was, well, me. Not a problem. We only had to stroll a couple hundred yards from our cabins to the rim. Sunrise was at 6:00 a.m. so I suggested a time to arrive at the rim well before that to pick out a good spot and to capture the early pre-dawn light. Members might rise at 5:15. Not a problem.

There was just one problem. When we arrived at the rim we found the sky totally filled with clouds. Totally! Grumbling began. Inappropri-



*Poking around at Twin Bridges
on Navajo Loop Trail*

ate expressions were uttered which included my name. I edged back into the trees, anticipating an insurrection. Just when photographers were calculating the hours until breakfast a few rays of sunlight miraculously pierced invisible holes in the clouds and bathed the hoodoos in welcome light. Immediately forgetting their animosity, our group raced to the rim, unlimbering their tripods. Thus, the sunrise photo shoot was saved and survives.



*Sunrise at Bryce Point
overlooking the hoodoos*

A program feature, then in its growth process, was the writing forum. Led by our dear late member, Anne Sullivan, the critique has now been dedicated to her. We have members who create a short written work and read it for a panel of writers and other members who attend the session. The writing forum has grown to become a popular element in the conference. Panelists and audience members offer constructive comments.

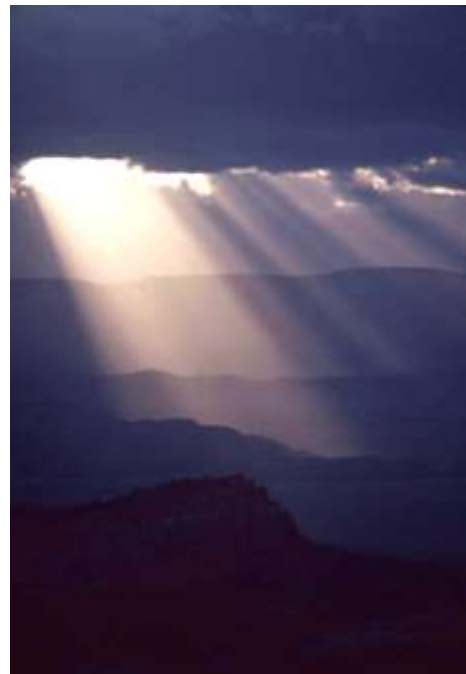
We enjoyed guided walks into the canyon, along the rim, and out to the ancient bristlecone pines. You come across some few trees scattered amongst the hoodoos but forests spread on and on back from the rim. There was even a short side trip to Red Canyon in the Dixie National Forest, located on nearby Utah 12, one of America's most beautiful Scenic Byways.

The park has an abundance of trails; there are numerous opportunities for hikes on your own. One organized hike, led by an RMOWP member, followed the Queens Garden

and Navajo Loop Trails. You drop down into the sculpted hoodoos, winding around dramatic features, squeezing through a tunnel, threading Wall Street and then ascending a corkscrew to the rim. We had a thrilling time on this loop hike.

But there were significant differences between the 2000 conference and the one we will hold this year. For one thing, the conference attracted 32 members, not an unusual number for early conferences. Our Ouray conference welcomed a record 66 attendees. And look at one of our featured programs on the final morning in 2000, right after the general membership meeting. "Workshop: The Digital World - Is It Time To Trash Our Nikons And Canons?" Anyone for film?

All of the above is completely true. Verified. But our executive director and newsletter editor has brought to my attention a disturbing, and questionable, charge. Cabins were paired at Bryce. My side joined that of Don and Barb Laine. After a long hike I luxuriated in a hot bath. Aaah! Don claims they were left without hot water on their side. A likely story. But such are the tales we're certain to weave after Bryce 2016.



*Bryce Amphitheater
The sunrise that almost didn't...*



Hiking along the bottom of the canyon on the Navajo Loop Trail

**Reminder: Check
www.rmowp.org for
conference updates.**



Anne Sullivan Writers Forum in Ouray last year
© Don Laine

Writers — Put Your Minds and Fingers to Work

By Kenita Gibbins

Last year we had exciting, funny, informative, and educational stories presented. Our audience encouraged and enlightened the writers. No writer can have any kind of gratification, except maybe their own, out of writing without people to read and listen to their work. During our time in Bryce, we will again have the “Anne Sullivan Writers Forum.” We need you as writers, listeners, or both.

As the chair, I’m going to ask you to consider how we want to publish the work after we polish our prose. I can continue to publish a little booklet of manuscripts. Frank Zurey pointed out to me the majority won’t get to read and ponder the stories with that format alone. People looking on the web for people like us just might be swayed to join RMOWP because of our writers. Please think about this idea.

To be a listener, you just have to show up at the forum with paper and pen to write down ideas for the writers with a gentle touch. As a writer, you need to bring a document, 1,200 words or less, either finished or in process. Please bring at least 12 copies for the audience and the panel. The subject matter is up to you, but it should be something about the outdoors. We have funny writers and writers who teach. We need YOU.

Want this newsletter e-delivered?

Let us know: info@rmowp.org

Subject: E-mail RMO

Thanks!

RMOWP Respects Your Privacy

Most RMOWP members have received several emails from RMOWP in recent weeks. To clarify the organization's position on your personal contact information, quite simply, we do not share your address, phone, email, or whatever with anyone outside RMOWP.

As you know, the membership directory is online, protected by a member-only password, and any emails, snail mail, or phone calls you will receive will pertain only to official RMOWP business, such as conferences, the photo workshop, and the like. RMOWP's corporate friends, as much as we like and respect them, are not technically members and do not have access to your personal information. We assume that those of you who provided email addresses for the membership directory are agreeable to receiving emails from RMOWP, but if this is not the case, please email info@rmowp.org.

(Editor's note: The article below was part of the 2015 Writers Forum. More from the Forum will be printed in upcoming newsletters.)

Llamas on My Mind

Article & photos by Kenita Gibbins

Llamas in Peru have jobs. The first ones my friend and I met were running down the Inca Trail straight toward us. We hovered against the mountain wall as they quickly passed. I had the presence of mind to take pictures. The beautiful, funny animals sleep along the Inca Trail. The ones running down the trail were on their way to entertain the tourists at Machu Picchu.



As we continued our journey to Cusco by bus, we continued to see llamas and the shorter alpacas on the countryside. The species migrated to South America three million years ago. We watched them work as beasts of burden. While on that trip, I got the idea that alpacas are only used for their fiber. They have not been bred to be beasts of burden. It didn't take me long to know I wanted alpaca sweaters for my girls and myself.

For years I thought llama fiber wasn't suitable for wearing. I was wrong. Their outer coat is coarse and used for making rugs. The under coat is soft and used for weaving many types of garments and pillows. Plus, the fiber isn't as expensive as alpaca wool. Fiber from both breeds can be dyed into colors or used in their beautiful natural shades.

Some llamas look more like camels than others, but of course they are much prettier without the hump. Both spe-

cies are of the Camelid family. Camels are known for spitting. I've never been spat upon by a llama. This is not to say they can't spit. They are more likely to spit, chest bump and maybe kick, if they want to move up the social ladder. For the most part they are friendly and like being in a herd. They are smart and can learn with just a few repetitions to carry a pack for you. They can be great for the calming effect. If you are tense and need an understanding ear, go find a llama. Llamas like each other and they like people. Rural youth raise them from the time they leave their mothers for 4-H or scout projects to show at fairs or the National Western Stock Show in Denver.

I know llamas make good guards for sheep. However, sometimes they get to visiting with their llama pals and forget the sheep. When alert a llama can kick the perpetrator, usually a coyote, down to the ground and kill it by raking their back feet over its body. Generally the coyote just runs away.

Back to why llamas are nice, they are very tidy with their poop. The poop is dropped in tiny pellets, and they tend to drop in a community pile. They will even wait in line for their turn at the pile! It doesn't even smell badly. Another reason llamas are wonderful to raise is they don't tear up the grass like a cow does. They take grass from the top and it can continue to grow. I don't know if this is because they aren't blessed with upper teeth. They have a tooth or two up above, but they aren't like we know teeth. They do relish all kinds of greens.

When it comes to getting pregnant, they have a better way than most animals. The female will get down on all four legs (this is called a "kush" position) and raise her tail. The male then mounts her. The female doesn't ovulate until after the mating making getting pregnant very easy. I'm told a whole lot of vocal exchange can be heard from a long distance.

The gestation period of a llama is 11 1/2 months. The dam (that is the name for a female) doesn't lick off her baby because they have a tongue that doesn't reach outside of the mouth. I would like to hear a mother hum to her baby and watch her nuzzle him. The cria (from the Spanish for baby) is born and generally stands within the first hour. The girlfriends will stand around the mother and baby and protect them from the young males. A dam produces little milk for each nursing. The baby must be fed frequently to get enough nutrients.

I got in the way of one llama I was visiting. Cookie is a very big hermaphrodite who was rescued as a baby when her mother rejected her. She has a more aggressive nature than the rest of the herd. (I learned about her/him after she scared me.) We both had wandered away. She wanted to get back to her friends. I saw her coming toward me as I



happily clicked away with my camera. And then she picked up her pace. I thought I was back in Peru. She skirted around me just in time. Llamas can run really fast.

I do admire breeders. Many know as much about the llamas genealogy as zoos know about their animals. Rescuers of llamas also make a huge commitment to these smart, winsome creatures. They must be strong and resourceful to care for their charges who live from ages 15 to 25. Caregivers need to have few physical challenges. They must be able to perform clipping of nails, shearing, grooming, scooping poop and moving hay. Keeping the environment safe is also necessary. Many times extra help must be hired. Winters and high altitudes are not much of a challenge for the animals, but new crias must be coated or put in a shelter since they can't handle climate changes.

You too can get to know llamas during Burro Days. One weekend in July, Fairplay, Colorado turns over their town streets and mountainsides to the llamas and their running partners on a Saturday. They leave town before the burros take over the following Sunday. This weekend has got to be the most joyful event in all of Colorado. The stars seem to enjoy running not to mention all of the attention they get. Llama are usually very social animals both with other llamas and with people. Their runners and owners just walked them around on halters and lead ropes. They look like they are smiling and hold their proud heads high while showing off their cute tails and banana ears.



2016 RMOWP Calendar

March 1 ~ Contest Deadline

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

2016 RMOWP Photography & Writing Competition

Deadline for entries: March 1

Rules and entry form were emailed to everyone January 16. It is also online at rmowp.org. If you didn't receive it and can't find it online, email info@rmowp.org and we'll get it to you.

Come to Bryce to see all the entries, and of course the winners.



"Shattered Dreams" © David Staat

*Hon. Men.
Historical Cat.
2015 Contest*

And don't forget your Funny Fotos — for the Humorous portion of the contest.



*Do ducks have belly buttons? © Tom Ulrich
2015 Humorous Contest*



*"Colorado Columbine" © Frank Zurey
2nd Place Flora Category, 2015 Contest*

Looking for a Coyote?

Michael Huff, a member of Pennsylvania Outdoor Writers Association, has asked that we let RMOWP's members know about his new book - *Understanding Coyotes: The Comprehensive Guide for Hunters, Photographers and Wildlife Watchers*.

The book was self-published in October 2015, and Mike tells us that it provides a comprehensive overview of every aspect of the coyote's life, including the different types of coyotes, their territories, diet, and predation on deer, furbearers, and domestic livestock. He adds that hunters will be especially interested in the coyote's super senses of vision, smell, and hearing, and how to overcome those traits to get close to them in the field.

The book is available through Amazon.com and other sources, and RMOWP members who would like to write a review of *Understanding Coyotes* can email us at info@rmowp.org and we will forward your information to Mike. A portion of the profits from book sales are donated to organizations providing food to the needy.

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