

# Rocky Mountain Outdoors

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

May – June 2018

## Unexpected Beauty

RMOWP member John Thornton writes about a recent experience at his Stillwater, Oklahoma home:

“We had a wonderful, beautiful experience this morning (Sunday, April 29). Since it was quite warm, Beth decided to prop the front door open so Casey could come and go.

Almost immediately, a small bird flew in through the open door and into the kitchen. A closer look revealed that it was a newly arrived male painted bunting. He let me photograph him and then I opened the kitchen windows and sent him back outside where he belongs.

What a beautiful small bundle of nature. Life is wonderful.”



© John Thornton

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### Writer's Corner

## Tapping the Storyteller

by Virginia Parker Staat

*“Tell me the facts and I'll learn.  
Tell me the truth and I'll believe.*

*But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever.”*

~ Native American Proverb

Years ago I attended a literary reading series. After one of the writers finished reading his essay aloud, he asked the audience an intriguing question, “When did you enter this piece?”

The answer for me was easy. When he told a personal story. Up until that moment, I had not connected with the reading. But when he used a story as his example, I was hooked. His essay came alive, and his purpose became clear to me.

Long before we had written languages, we had storytellers. Folks would gather around someone who imparted wisdom, preserved history, explained traditions, warned about dangers, motivated, persuaded, inspired, or simply entertained. As writers, when we inject memorable stories into our work, we tap into the same transformative power as the storyteller.

Stories are one of the most powerful tools we can use to connect with another human being. In Lee Gutkind's *You Can't Make this Stuff Up*, he explains that people remem-

ber facts longer and are persuaded more quickly and effectively when information and ideas are presented in story form. Outdoor writer John A. Murray agrees, “Nature writers have... a dual responsibility: to educate their readers about the processes of nature and to entertain them with a memorable story along the way.”

The stories we use in our work should evoke empathy and create emotion. We include stories that connect with our readers and their values. We include stories to immerse and draw readers into our work. We include stories to illustrate our facts and our motives.

We write good stories by using the essential elements of oral storytelling. We tap into our emotions to set the story mood. We include action and tension to propel the story's narrative arc to a climax. We use tight, vivid descriptions with sensual imagery, metaphors, and similes. We create satisfying endings that reinforce our reason for including the story.

Facts, numbers, and mere words don't connect a reader to our work, stories do.

Writers need both good stories and great words to capture readers. The best stories share something meaningful about our subject. Done well, using stories in our writing helps our readers relate to our message, making our work accessible and transformative.

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## Conference Workshops Finalized

In addition to the many field trips planned during, pre- and post- conference, several workshops have now been nailed down. We will learn how to hone our writing and photography skills, plus how to live through the worst that nature throws at us. Read on, McDuff.

Peter Anderson, professor at Adams State University in Alamosa who specializes in outdoor writing, will present a program titled **“A Certain Slant of Light: The Poetry of the Postcard.”** He tells us this will help outdoor writers approach the task of writing about a place in a different way.

RMOWP’s own Bill Horton will present a photography workshop – **“Visual Fluency: Empower your Images with the Language of Graphics,”** an interactive program designed to help us escape the straitjacket of rules and clichés and boost our ability to use visual vocabulary, grammar, idiom, and metaphors to convey our photographic message.

Heading out into the wilds? Then you won’t want to miss the program on **“Outdoor Survival”** by RMOWP member Peter Kummerfeldt, an expert on outdoor survival and author of *Surviving a Wilderness Emergency.* Kummerfeldt is a former U.S. Air Force survival school instructor and director of survival training for 12 years at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs.

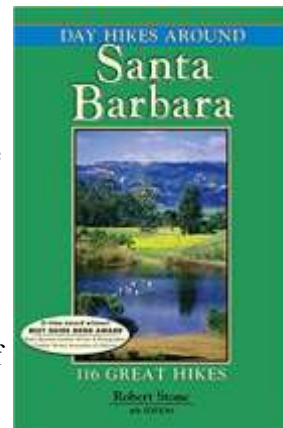


“Great Sand Dunes” © Ryan Weishalla  
Honorable Mention, Black & White  
2013 RMOWP Photo Contest

## RMOWP Member Announces New Book

Longtime RMOWP member Robert Stone has released the fourth edition of *Day Hikes Around Santa Barbara*, part of his popular Day Hike Books series.

Stone tells us that Santa Barbara is a captivating, inviting community along California's Pacific coast, 90 miles north of Los Angeles. The temperate climate and refreshing ocean breezes, similar to the Mediterranean, have distinguished this area as "the jewel of the American Riviera," he says, with mountains, forests, wilderness, and stretches of undeveloped coast, plus miles of quiet, secluded hiking trails.



*Day Hikes Around Santa Barbara* includes 116 hikes within a 65-mile radius of the city. Most trails are located in natural, undeveloped areas, including 80 miles of coastline, the Santa Ynez Mountains, and the Santa Ynez River Valley. The 384-page book, with 388 maps, describes a wide range of hikes, from coastal beach walks to steep canyon climbs, and even a few urban trails.

Highlights include oceanside bluffs, beaches, tidepools, wetland preserves, sculpted gorges, rock outcroppings with caves, numerous waterfalls, secluded pools in mossy canyons, mountain ridge trails, historic sites, and stunning overlooks of the Pacific Ocean. Dog access information is also included.

Since 1991, Stone has been writer, photographer, and publisher of Day Hike Books. He spends summers in the Rocky Mountains of Montana and winters on the California Central Coast. His books are available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) and other booksellers. For more information see Stone’s website, [www.dayhikebooks.com](http://www.dayhikebooks.com).

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## Southern Colorado On Display at Annual Conference

As we hope you know by now, RMOWP's 2018 conference takes place **September 23-26** in the **Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve** area, with headquarters in **Alamosa, Colorado**. See the March-April issue of *Rocky Mountain Outdoors* for details.

Page numbers below refer to additional information within this newsletter.

- Lodging - \$89 at the Alamosa Super 8 (719-589-6447). Or stay at one of several campgrounds in the area.
- Pre-conference field trips to photograph **wild horses** (pg. 6).
- **Field trips** into Great Sand Dunes and a nearby national wildlife refuge.
- Several **workshops** have been finalized (pg. 2).
- Post-conference all-day trip on the historic **Cumbres and Toltec** steam train.

Alamosa is about

- 235 miles southwest of Denver
- 245 miles southeast of Grand Junction, CO
- 200 miles north of Albuquerque, NM
- 140 miles north of Santa Fe, NM

All have airports, some bigger than others.

A **Registration form**, included with the March-April newsletter, is available online ([www.rmowp.org](http://www.rmowp.org)), where you can register and pay through PayPal, or mail your registration with a check.

## Buck Knives Expands 110 Folding Hunter® Line of Knives

Buck Knives, a longtime supporter of RMOWP, has introduced a variety of new knives, including additions to its famed 110 Folding Hunter® line, the knife that put the company on the map in 1963.



Photo courtesy Buck Knives

The new 110 Auto Elite is easily deployed with the push of a button, readying the S30V blade quickly and efficient-

ly. Featuring a G10 handle with nickel silver bolsters, the 110 Auto Elite will easily become a new collectible for those avid 110 fans, according to Buck, and is the perfect blend of premium performance with precise action. It has a suggested list price of \$250.

The Folding Hunter® is now available in a lightweight version, called the 110 Folding Hunter® LT. It weighs in at only 3.2 ounces, compared to the 7.2 ounces of the original. Utilizing the same blade, the bolster and handles were replaced with lightweight molded nylon to reduce weight. List price is \$38. Another addition to the 110 family is the 110 Folding Hunter® Pro, available with an upgraded S30V blade and rugged G10 handle with nickel silver bolsters. Suggested list price is \$125.

The additions to the 110 Folding Hunter® line all feature blades finished with Buck's advanced Edge2x™ technology that makes them sharper out of the box, and enables them to hold an edge longer and re-sharpen more easily. All are made in the U.S. and backed by Buck's Forever Warranty. For details see [www.buckknives.com](http://www.buckknives.com).

## Visit RMOWP's Valued Friends' Websites

RMOWP welcomes support from businesses and organizations with an interest in the outdoor experience, and especially photographing and writing about that experience. Many of you have purchased their products at our annual auction.

These friends include:

**Buck Knives**, a leader in the knife industry for over 100 years. [www.buckknives.com](http://www.buckknives.com).

**Buddy Beds**, which makes the best memory foam dog bed available anywhere. [www.buddybeds.com](http://www.buddybeds.com).

**Cotton Carrier**, producer of specialized straps and carriers that keep your valuable cameras and binoculars from swinging about while you're on the trail. [www.cottoncarrier.com](http://www.cottoncarrier.com).

**Green Living Dog Beds**, which makes soft comfy dog beds out of recycled plastic bottles. [www.greenlivingdogbeds.com](http://www.greenlivingdogbeds.com).

**LensPen**, manufacturer of gizmos to keep your camera lenses, sensors, and touchscreens clean without fear of scratching them. [www.lenspen.com](http://www.lenspen.com).

**PahaQue Wilderness**, maker of top-quality tents, shelters, and hammocks for your outdoor experience, whether in the backyard or miles from civilization. [www.pahaque.com](http://www.pahaque.com).



Jack's Jaunts

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust

Article & photos by Jack Olson

I came west for the mountains. Mountains, mountains, mountains. Who knew that a third of Colorado was plains? I would surely never head out east. What's out there?

A story.

The Denver Post used to have a Sunday supplement called Empire. I'd been in Colorado for two years in 1967 when I read a story about the intriguing town of Keota, way out there on the prairie. Population six. How can that be? Six?

But then the author told of a man, Clyde Stanley, who had lived there most of his life, took requests for publications on his old time printing press, ran the post office, and sold candy.

The author had gone out to Keota to interview Mr. Stanley and find out how a person lived out there--and why. He got the story of how the town once had a population of two hundred and was based on homesteading. Railroads had produced glowing brochures of the bountiful harvests and healthful life in the west. Keota was a stop on the "Old Prairie Dog Express." When the author finished his interview he asked Mr. Stanley if, out here miles and miles from, well, anywhere, there was anything he needed. Mr. Stanley responded that he could use a green eye shade.

That was enough for me. I had to go out there. My girlfriend, Julia, and I loaded up lunch, filled the gas tank, and I grabbed my Kodak Pony IV camera and a roll of Kodachrome 25 slide film. As usual, I was right on top of the latest in photography. We consulted the official state map and were on our way.

Just a side note. The Keota area was the inspiration for James Michener's *Centennial*. The tales of the area were the tales of Keota. I later read that Michener interviewed Clyde Stanley and that he is one of the people to whom the book is dedicated. This is getting more interesting. The striking Pawnee Buttes out there were renamed Rattlesnake Buttes in the book. If you've read it you know why.

We got out to Keota in a couple of hours, drove over an

abandoned railroad track and by a collapsed depot. There was still a crossing sign in case a ghost train passed through this ghost town. We drove down a dirt main street and stopped by a needless fire hydrant. The former businesses and homes of Keota were mostly weathered wood

scattered on the ground. Peering down into a hole we saw what must have been a vault in what must have been a bank.

Just then a small, feisty woman confronted us and asked what we were doing. I explained that we had read the article, were very interested in the history of the town, and wanted to see it. Her mood changed instantly to one of welcome and she invited us into her home, one of two in the town.

Her name was Fae Oram. She explained that people would come out from the Front Range and take away wood reminiscent of the 'Old West' that they could put in their den or rec room. But to her these relics had been part of a friend's home or business, or a church or school. Bit by bit her beloved town was disappearing.

Fae enthralled us with stories of Keota's heyday. She had been a school teacher. She showed us her postcard collection. People from all over the country would write her. She took down information about us and our addresses. She'd write to us from time to time and comment about the things we'd told her. Then she said she would take us



*There's not much left of Keota, once a town of 200, on Colorado's eastern prairie*



*Hotel from the long-gone railroad. Clyde & Fae Oram's home and shop in the distance.*

to the shop next door and introduce us to her brother, Clyde Stanley. Be still my heart. We went into the business next door: print shop, post office and candy store. The



*Remnants of a bank with the ever-present water tower in the background.*

small man came out, hand outstretched. He was wearing a green eye shade.

Thus began a friendship that lasted for several years. Friends and I would go out to camp at the Pawnee Buttes and always stop in to see Clyde and Fae. Then one year they weren't there. The other people living in the town told us they had to move to Greeley for health reasons. Years passed and I wondered what had become of them. On one camping trip my friends and I stopped at the Keota cemetery and there we found the gravestones of Clyde Stanley and Fae Oram. I began to feel my eyes getting moist. The inscription on Clyde's gravestone read, "Keota, my home of 63 years."



*Gravestones of Clyde (above) and Fae (below)*



## Enhance Your Photographic Skills at the 2018 Photo Workshop

RMOWP's annual Photo Workshop is planned **June 26 to 30** in Rocky Mountain National Park, and coordinator Nic Showalter tells us that there are several openings available.

Up to ten participants will join Showalter and instructors Fred Lord and Jared Gricoskie in photographing the wildlife and spectacular scenery of the park, high in the Colorado Rockies.

Showalter says that while instruction includes detailed



*In the field at the 2015 RMOWP Photo Workshop  
© Nic Showalter*

presentations in the classroom, the greatest amount of time is spent learning and shooting in the field. Same-day critique sessions of participants' images provide immediate feedback of each photographers' progress, and increase the learning opportunities for everyone.

Cost is \$1,345 per person. For additional details, see [www.rockyphotoworkshop.com](http://www.rockyphotoworkshop.com).

### 2018 RMOWP Calendar

May 30 ~ Scholarship application deadline

June 25 ~ Contest submission deadline

June 26-30 ~ Photo Workshop in Rocky Mountain National Park

September 23-26 ~ Annual Conference — Alamosa, Colorado, and Great Sand Dunes National Park & Preserve

See [www.rmowp.org](http://www.rmowp.org) for details



## Wild Horse Photo Tour News

All photos © Judy Barnes

Judy Barnes writes to tell us of the new additions to the wild horse herd we will be photographing next September on our pre-conference field trip..



*Three generations: Mama Mesa, baby, and Grandma Smidgen*

As of this writing there are several openings available on the Saturday, 9/22, Wild Horse Photo Tour and even a few available on Sunday, 9/23.



*Second 2018 baby, about an hour old, with mama Wendy*



*Papa.*

*This 30-plus-year-old white stallion was abandoned on a preserve in New Mexico and was little more than a skeleton when he arrived. He wasn't expected to survive the winter. But he's a tough one, and being with the other wild horses probably saved his life.*



*Papa sparring with Napoleon*

### rmowp.org notes

By Barb Laine

The website experienced a few technological bumps last month, and although we are fairly certain everything has been resolved, let me know if you have problems. Email [admin@rmowp.org](mailto:admin@rmowp.org) with any comments or questions.

Here are a few reminders and highlights of changes:

- The password was changed April 1 for accessing the RMOWP membership directory.
- Contest information is available online - both the guidelines and entry form.
- When the pre-conference wild horse field trips fill up we will post that information in the conference area.
- Conference registration can be handled through the website.
- Links to members' websites can be found in the Member area. If you'd like to be added just send an image — maybe a logo, and a short blurb, to the above email address.
- Newsletters prior to May-June 2003 are being re-scanned to a lower dpi (7MB for an 8-page black-and-white NL seemed overkill) and will be uploaded when complete. Meanwhile I've removed the huge files from the site.

By the way, one quick fix to try if you're having problems signing in to the members only area: delete cookies from your browser so no old data hangs it up. I also find that periodically powering down my laptop clears it out and even speeds it up, at least for a while.

## Traveler

by Don Boone

The other day, using round numbers, I found that I have averaged about ten thousand miles of travel for each one of my twenty-two years. I can remember the first new car our family had, a green forty-eight Ford that my father bought at Christmastime in anticipation of a trip to Kentucky. My strongest memory of that trip was of lying on the deck of the rear window watching the stars as we drove through the mountains on our way south. The only thing that separated me from the freedom of the stars was a piece of glass.

Six years later the glass had disappeared but not the proximity of parents. Three of us were "back yard camping" in the field next door with our sleeping bags spread out on a pile of hay. It was late October and the night was cool but not cold; hence the absence of a tent. We had joked and played, reveling in the freedom of being on our own, as much on our own as we could be at thirteen, and now we were quiet and beginning to relax, peacefully exhausted. There was no moon and the night sky was like a piece of ebony studded with diamonds. By lying flat and gazing directly up, our field of vision was limited to the dome of the sky. Suddenly one of the stars "fell." That night we lost forty-seven of our "stars" before falling asleep. It was four years and two thousand miles from that field before I was free from everyday life to be treated to another of nature's aerial fireworks.

My uncle had taken my brother and me high in the Sierra Nevada mountains of California for some night fishing. We had hiked about four miles from the road to get to this trout pool my uncle liked. When we got there, with the help of a long branch and some rope, Unc' hung a powerful flashlight about six feet over the water twelve feet from shore. The stillness was a comfort from the day's dins, and the cool air scented with fir and balsam was a welcome change from the smog of the city. The "swish-whir-r-r" of the fly-rod, the "splunk" of the fly hitting the water and the rustle of our jackets were the only sounds that broke the quiet. Four or five casts later the quiet was broken by the splash of a hooked trout and our shouts of glee.

After we broiled our trout (we each caught three) over an open fire, we lay down around the almost dead campfire and prepared to sleep. Now as we looked skyward it

was as if we looked through an open tunnel, for the Sitka spruce grew straight and tall all around us and formed a natural gigantic telescope. Then, as before, one "star" fell and that was the beginning signal for others to fall.

What more could I want? A hike in the mountains, camp beside a pool; catch, cook, and consume my own food, a rain of meteors – what more did I need? Again, for a time, I was free. I wanted for nothing – nothing more than to extend that moment forever.

In the years between then and now, the mileage I have logged has been all my own. I have had three cars and a motorcycle and they have accounted for forty-five thousand five hundred miles in a little less than four years. I attended Colorado State University for four quarters, and have gone through seven jobs. Now I am holding two jobs and attending night school. And, as night schools become more and more prevalent around the country, there is no counting the miles I can rack up before I finish school, for the summers are long and night schools are not nearly as expensive as day schools. The jobs don't have to be great, and with grades held at the minimum allowed for transfer I can see a lot of the country and get an education from life that cannot be gotten from books or lectures.

I'll settle eventually, I don't know where, but there will always be time for a trip or two. There are plenty of places to see and explore in this country and as long as I'm able, I'll do and see as much as I can.

*[Note from Barb Laine: Don Boone was my older brother, whom some of you met at the Alamogordo conference in 2001. He died last November. In going through his papers, I found a number of essays he'd apparently written at our southern New Jersey home, for a creative writing course (they still bore the professor's red-pencil marks). This one, dated 12/2/1965, I thought was suited for RMO and I hope you enjoy it.]*



"Milky Way—Meteor Arch" © Al Perry  
Honorable Mention, Scenics, 2017 RMOWP Photo Contest

Want this newsletter e-delivered?

Let us know: [info@rmowp.org](mailto:info@rmowp.org)

Subject: E-mail RMO

Thanks!



## Anne Sullivan Writers Forum Guidelines

We want to encourage all aspiring authors to bring a written piece to conference to share during the Anne Sullivan Writers Forum. Here's what you need to know:

- The subject matter must be the outdoors.
- Unpublished non-fiction, fiction, and poetry are all welcome.
- This should be something either you are having difficulty with or have some specific concerns you wish help with—not a polished work.
- Maximum word count: 1200.
- You are welcome to include up to 2 photos.
- Bring 12 copies to conference to share amongst the listeners.

Please let moderator Kenita Gibbins know if you intend to participate as a reader, and indicate the word count of your piece. You may email her at [writersforum@rmowp.org](mailto:writersforum@rmowp.org).



*Kenita Gibbins, Panel Moderator — George Gibbins, Writer*  
© Kenita Gibbins

## A Crane Photography Tip

Text & Photo by Don Laine



Living just a few miles from the Rio Grande, one of the major sandhill crane migratory routes, and having made numerous treks to national wildlife refuges throughout the Southwest, you would think I would have dozens of great photos of cranes. But alas, no. Perhaps I just haven't been in the right place at the right time, or maybe it's because I don't like to be up and out as early as the cranes do.

But the issue has now been resolved, as you can see in the accompanying photo – the best photo of a crane I've ever captured. The trick was to hire a metal fabricator to raise the roof on our

carport so it would accommodate our eleven-foot-tall motor home. The crane spent an entire day and a half at our house and I had ample opportunities to photograph it. Now I just have to figure out how to get the oil stains off the driveway.

### **Rocky Mountain Outdoors**

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