

# Rocky Mountain Outdoors

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

May – June 2019

## RMOWP 46th Annual Conference is Calling...

**Where:** Estes Park, Colorado (elevation about 7,500 feet)

**When:** Monday through Thursday, September 9-12

**Why:** Rocky Mountain National Park

**Headquarters:** 800 Moraine Avenue Event Center at Trout Haven Resorts, just outside the Beaver Meadows entrance to the park

Rocky Mountain National Park is extremely popular. It received over 4.5 million visitors last year – third highest among national parks – so advance planning is essential. Here's what's cooking:

**Guided Tour into the park with Rocky Mountain Conservancy – Choose One** (both leave our headquarters at 2pm and return around 9pm):

- **High elevation** (to about 12,300 feet) up Trail Ridge Road, stopping at various viewpoints, including the Beaver Meadows Overlook, Rainbow Curve, Forest Canyon Overlook, Alpine Visitor Center, and coming back to the Rock Cut Viewpoint, one of the best spots in the park to view sunsets, in time for – guess what? – sunset! Along the way you'll get good views of tundra and see some of the most spectacular scenery in the park, including a variety of wildlife, especially smaller mammals such as marmots.
- **Lower elevation** (to about 9,450 feet) stopping along the way at Moraine Park – one of the best places to see elk at this time of year and hear the males bugle – plus view several mountain lakes, including Sheep Lakes, where we hope to spot bighorn sheep. Another stop will be at the park's popular Alluvial Fan, a big cascade of water over fan-shaped deposits of rock and other material created by a major flood in 1982. This tour will conclude at Beaver Meadows Overlook for

sunset views of the Continental Divide before heading back to town.

A simple box supper (a box lunch served in the evening) is included in the tour fee (\$85). Seating is limited in the Conservancy's vans so please get your registrations in as soon as possible.

The high-elevation tour will provide more spectacular scenic views but fewer opportunities to see elk because this is mating season, and most elk have come down from the higher elevations to find mates. The elk mating season is known as the rut, from the Latin word for roar, because of the bulls' call, called a bugle. However, Moraine Park is just ten minutes or so from our meeting room so those going on the high-elevation tour can easily get there on their own Wednesday or some other evening, and likely see plenty of elk.



*"Morning in the park" © Terry Guthrie  
1st place Image from Last Conference, Photo Contest 2009*

**Workshops:** In addition to plenty of time for exploration, we've

- lined up several exciting and even educational workshops.
- **A five-hour pre-conference workshop, "The Glimp of Light on Broken Glass: Building Imagery in Your Writing"** will be presented Monday morning and early afternoon by nature writer **Mary Taylor Young**, RMOWP's annual contest writing judge and author of numerous books and articles, including one her most recent books, *Rocky Mountain National Park: The First 100 Years*. ([www.marytayloryoung.com](http://www.marytayloryoung.com))  
About the workshop Mary tells us: "Vivid imagery creates a strong sense of place and draws readers into the world of your writing, helping them engage with the emotions of the characters (or if nonfiction, of you as "narrator"). Sessions on craft and techniques will

*Cont. on pg. 2, see "Conf."*

"Conf." cont. from pg. 1

alternate with writing drills and in-the-field writing time to practice new techniques. This workshop will also help photographers plan and set up shots to create more effective photo essays. Take your writing to the next level by building powerful images that enliven your prose, enhance your photos and engage your reader. This workshop will incorporate a PowerPoint presentation, in-class writing drills, and outdoor writing time."

- Tuesday morning, before the guided tours of the park, we'll have a program on "**Shooting Rocky Mountain National Park**," with tips on photographing the park by Colorado photographer **Fred Lord** ([www.fred-j-lord.pixels.com](http://www.fred-j-lord.pixels.com)). A long-time instructor with RMOWP's photo workshop held in Rocky



Sunset at Rock Cut © Cynthia May (RMOWP Photo Workshop 2014)

Mountain National Park and the photography judge for RMOWP's annual contest, Fred has had a successful career in architectural and home interior photography, and now specializes in nature, landscape, wildlife, and adventure sports photography.

- Also Tuesday morning, **Mary Taylor Young** returns to present a writing workshop, "**Finding a Narrative Thread**." She tells us, "Effectively-rendered nonfiction is not just a collection of facts. To resonate with an audience, it needs a narrative framework. Where do

you begin and how do you tease the 'story' out of your topic? Whether you are writing only text or want to enhance your photos, a narrative thread gives intention and structure to your presentation. Attendees are encouraged to bring works-in-progress (text and/or photos) to practice on."

- Wednesday's workshops include "**Gadgets, Gizmos, and Gew Gaw: Gear to Make You a Better Writer or Photographer**," by **Bill Horton** ([www.horton.com](http://www.horton.com), [www.photos.horton.com](http://www.photos.horton.com)). An experienced writer and photographer, Bill will lead this interactive discussion of tools, tips, hacks, and tricks that help writers and photographers work faster and better. He will demonstrate purchases that proved good long-term investments, and along the way, you as the workshop participants will contribute by sharing what works for you. The presentation will cover items of value to both photographers and writers, ranging from a retractable fountain pen to clothing that renders photographers invisible. About himself, he tells us, "Bill Horton has squandered buckets of bucks on X-ray glasses, decoder rings, and virus-like software. By luck and the law of odds, he has stumbled on some things that actually work."
- Also Wednesday, **Kit Horton** ([www.horton.com](http://www.horton.com), [www.photos.horton.com](http://www.photos.horton.com)) will present "**Get Found and Noticed**." As Kit says: "You built it but they didn't come. Your superb writings and photographs are going unsold, and worse, undiscovered. Let's face facts. You are competing with 1.8 billion (with a B!) other websites, with 14,000 new ones every day. In this presentation you will learn the secret to attracting eyes and minds to your content, namely optimizing your Website for search engines like Google. Yes that is a thing. It is called Search Engine Optimization, or SEO among the cool kids. You will learn techniques such as picking key words that match what people search for, crafting titles that pop to the top of the list, and writing enticing descriptions that manifest the value of your content. And you'll discover more tools and techniques to make finding your images and writings simple and easy."

Of course we also plan the usual writers' forum, photo critique, showcase of selected members' photography, sunrise photo shoot, presentation of contest submissions, and plenty of food, drink, and camaraderie.

Still debating whether or not to attend September's conference? Check out *Jack's Jaunts* on page 4.

"Ready for Take-off"  
© Jim Baker  
Honorable Mention,  
Image from last Conference,  
Photo Contest 2009



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## The Cutting Room Floor

By Virginia Parker Staat

"Cut a good story anywhere, and it will bleed."

~ Anton Chekhov



Virginia with her beloved  
Roxanne

I remember my first attempt at writing a young adult novel. It took nearly six months of my life to complete it. I immediately put it in a drawer to let it heal itself. When I read it in its entirety several weeks later, I was astonished to discover the book actually began about sixty pages into the piece. It hurt me deeply to lop off all those lovely words and toss them into the trash.

They represented hours of work. Today – some forty-plus years of writing later – I look forward to revising. It is almost a game for me now. I enjoy finding words I can delete and ways to make my work better and tighter.

Self-editing can be challenging, but we have guidelines to help us. For larger sections, we ask ourselves questions: Have I begun my story too early? Does this scene move the story forward? Is this section germane to my topic? Does the dialog accomplish its purpose?

Then we turn to small edits. It's amazing how many words we can eliminate through minor reductions, often called line editing. A line edit focuses on how we use language to communicate our stories to our readers.

Our goal in line editing is to cut the deadweight from our work. We look for abstractions and replace them with visual detail. We pump up our verbs and simplify our sentences. We delete unnecessary clauses and modifiers. We eliminate weak words.

Abstractions are those words that offer ideas or concepts but can remain wishy-washy in our reader's mind. We want to use concrete terms in our writing. As an example, we may say that something is beautiful. What does the word *beautiful* mean to our reader? By offering visual detail or concrete words, we eliminate ambiguity.

We pump up verbs by eliminating the passive voice and using action verbs rather than weak "to be" verbs. Sol Stein in *Stein on Writing* considers action verbs, short sentences, and frequent paragraphing as "amphetamines" for speeding up pace and increasing the tempo of our work.

William Zinsser offers examples of unwanted clauses and modifiers in his book *On Writing Well*. He writes, "'I might add,' 'It should be pointed out,' 'It is interesting to note that' - how many sentences begin with these dreary clauses announcing what the writer is going to do next? If you might add, add it. If it should be pointed out, point it out. If it is interesting to note, make it interesting. Being

told that something is interesting is the surest way of tempting the reader to find it dull; are we not all stupefied by what follows when someone says, 'This will interest you'? As for the inflated prepositions and conjunctions, they are the innumerable phrases like 'with the possible exception of' (except), 'due to the fact that' (because), 'he totally lacked the ability to' (he couldn't), 'until such time as' (until), 'for the purpose of' (for)."

It requires a keen eye to recognize weak words that weigh our story down and slow our readers. As an example, we need to watch for qualifiers and delete them immediately. Editor Taylor Graham writes, "The most superfluous and often-used words are: *really, very, just, and seem*." Strunk and White in *The Elements of Style* add *rather, little, and pretty* to the weak word list. They admonish our using these dreaded qualifiers, saying, "these are the leeches that infest the pond of prose, sucking the blood of words."

If you're stuck in your revision efforts, we have an online tool available to us for line editing. The Espresso app is free and may help you examine your words more efficiently. Go to <https://www.expresso-app.org> and cut and paste the text in question. The program analyzes the number of filler words, weak verbs, vague determiners, clause-heavy sentences, cluster nouns, and verb modifiers. It even offers synonyms and determines rare word usage. While it may be a bit over the top in its suggestions, the app does offer some interesting approaches to revising our work.

When a story is tightly written, it becomes fast-paced and entertaining for our readers. But what about all those lovely words left on our cutting room floor? We can take solace in the words of Nobel Prize-winning author Isaac Bashevis Singer: "The wastebasket is a writer's best friend."



Beauty in Rocky Mountain National Park © Dave Elendt  
(RMOWP Photo Workshop 2015)

Jack's Jaunts

## Rocky Mountain Dreamin'

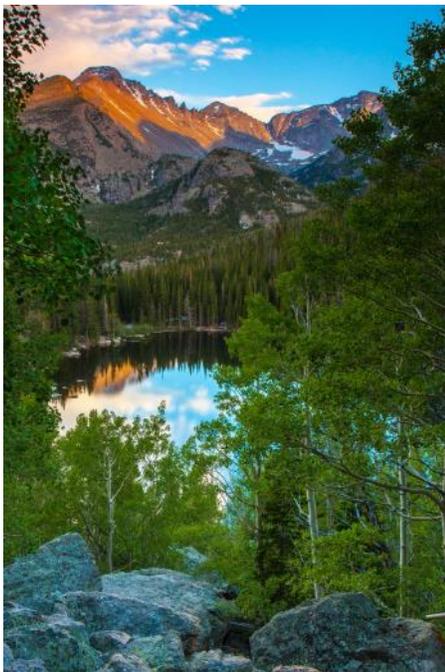


By Jack Olson

I sure hope you're planning to attend the RMOWP conference in Rocky Mountain National Park in September. It's stunning, inspiring, magical. That's just a few adjectives. Supply your own when you come. I taught up there for about a dozen years at the RMOWP photo workshop and I figure I've been in the park two hundred or more times.

There are some must-see features in Rocky. Each could be experienced in one day or part of a day. I've done a good bit of backpacking, and climbed Longs Peak, but let's just think of drives or short hikes. Or buttonhole me at the conference and I'll overwhelm you with tales of the back country.

Well, everyone goes to Bear Lake, elevation 9,450 feet, sometimes too many. In the busiest months the park has a shuttle to take you there. The shuttle runs until October 8. There's a 0.7 mile trail around the lake, with knock-your-socks-off views of Hallett Peak and Longs Peak. There are side trails to other lakes connecting from Bear



*Bear Lake © Nic Showalter (RMOWP Photo Workshop 2014)*

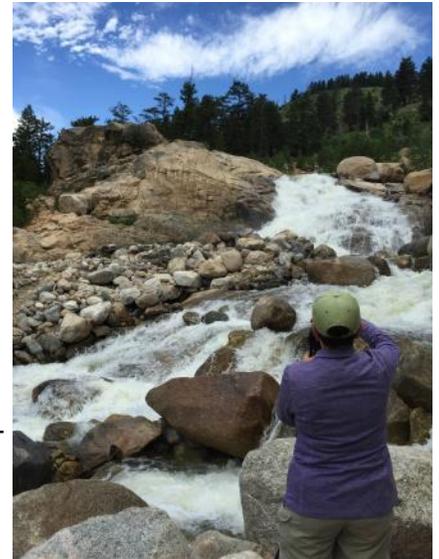
Lake. It may not be quite as crowded in September but expect to meet several fellow citizens.

I really like Sprague Lake, down the road from Bear Lake. You can take a shuttle there but it has a big parking area and often you can drive to it. There's a 0.8 mile trail around the lake, which is located at 8,700 feet. If you walk to the east side of the lake and look west there's a sweeping view of the Continental Divide. Get there at sunrise and you will ooh and aah. It's possible you could even see a moose out there, or a fisherman on the lake.

Let's go a little lower where the valley opens up to Moraine Park. There are a multitude of opportunities in this big meadow. For one thing, there may be elk. But if there

are elk there will also be a multitude of photographers. It goes with the territory. One of the major rivers in the park is the Big Thompson, which separates the meadow from the west end. Here's a hint: there is a photogenic clump of trees at the west end of the meadow.

One more feature before we go up to where the air is thin. Go over to Horseshoe Park and take the short road to the Alluvial Fan. The Roaring River had been a peaceful stream until 1982 when an earthen dam far above collapsed. Screaming down the canyon the waters killed three campers and flooded downtown Estes Park, causing heavy damage. The torrent pried out enormous boulders upstream and then dropped them when they hit the level



*Alluvial Fan © Nic Showalter (RMOWP Photo Workshop 2015)*

Horseshoe Park. These boulders, some as big as cars, now form the Alluvial Fan and the waters of the Roaring River tumble over them in fascinating patterns. Shorts trails from east and west parking areas lead to a viewpoint. There is a wonderful picnic ground on the west side among stately, yes stately, ponderosa pines.

But here's what you came for. If you do nothing else, you must drive up Trail Ridge Road. This is the signature feature of the park. Yellowstone has Old Faithful, the Black Hills have Mount Rushmore, Death Valley has heat. Rocky Mountain National Park has Trail Ridge Road. It's 48 miles from Estes Park on the east to Grand Lake on the west. Eleven breath-taking miles are above timberline, where jagged peaks roll in all directions. It's rocks and tundra, and snow much of the year. The high point of the road is over 12,000 feet above sea level. With your feet on



*One of the many moods of Moraine Park © Jack Olson*

the ground you've seldom been able to see this far in all directions. Take along the Park Service map and see if you can identify twenty or thirty mountains.

In summer, and maybe early fall, you may find elk in the tundra, and even some bighorn sheep. Marmots scramble around doing funny marmot things up here. Look for them especially at the Forest Canyon viewpoint and Rock Cut. There's also a nice trail uphill from Rock Cut. As you continue on you drop a little in elevation past other viewpoints. The Alpine Visitor Center has exhibits on high elevation nature, a gift shop and snack bar, restrooms, and views in all directions. There's also a trail to 12,000 feet.

Going west stop at Medicine Bow Curve with views into Wyoming. You're also closer to the Never Summer Range on the west boundary of the park. You'll soon get back into the forest and cross the Continental Divide at Milner Pass. You can drop down and travel along the headwaters of the Colorado River. Look for moose in this area. Trail Ridge Road leaves the park at Grand Lake.

But as sunset approaches, let's go back up to Rock Cut and its wide-open views in all directions. You can run every which way to get the setting sunlight hitting peaks all around. Be sure to look at Longs Peak. There are rocks on the south side of the cut which frame the peak or provide excellent foreground. Or hike the trail uphill where there are interesting rock formations. And if the clouds are right, in the west you might get spectacular color over the Never Summer Range.

Go back down. Go to bed. Have sweet dreams.



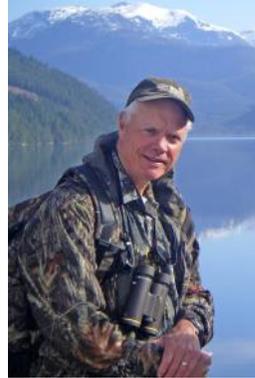
Bear Lake in Rocky Mountain National Park © Jack Olson



Elk on Trail Ridge © Jack Olson

## Near Misses

By Peter Kummerfeldt



There have been times in my life, and I suspect in yours, that something has happened where your life was placed in danger but you managed to avoid a catastrophe by sheer luck. These are the "near misses" in our lives that we all experience from time to time. I suspect that for every accident that happens there are probably dozens, if not hundreds, maybe

thousands, of "near misses." Situations that we seldom hear about, but situations that we could learn from if we were made aware of the details.

When an accident happens, especially a serious accident where people are injured and sometimes killed, an investigation usually follows. An accident investigation board may be convened. Witnesses are called. Experts testify as to how the accident happened and how it could have been prevented. Then recommendations are published hoping that a similar situation can be avoided in the future. Seldom does the same sequence of events take place following a "near miss" in our lives - but it should!

Sometimes someone else causes the incident that leads to a "near miss" and there's probably little that we can do about that except to be as observant as we can and then react quickly enough to avoid a problem. Sometimes the problem is of our own making, and when it is the situation is particularly dangerous because we are often completely unaware of what is about to happen.

If we were honest we would admit that sometimes we just get lucky and nothing bad happens. But I for one don't want to go through life depending on "luck" to keep me safe. I want to be aware of what's going on around me. I want to be able to detect the precursors to life-endangering situations and *then avoid them*. I want to pay attention to the "near misses," learn from them and then, in similar circumstances, recognize what is about to happen and back off before an accident happens! As much as possible I want to be in control of my destiny and not depend on chance or the activities of others to determine my future.

So the next time you have a "near miss," take the time to analyze the events leading up to the incident. Identify the conditions that existed that played a role in creating a situation where you (or someone else) could have been injured or killed. Objectively and honestly determine your part in the scenario. And then, after you have evaluated the evidence, determine the "lessons learned." Remember that unless those "lessons learned" result in a change in your behavior you may be doomed to have another "near miss" and this time you might not be so lucky!

## RMOWP CONTEST QUICK LIST

- Must be a member of RMOWP to enter.
- Deadline: Monday, 10 June 2019 – postmarked or dropboxed.
- Entry fee: \$10.
- Submissions will be displayed at the 2019 conference in Estes Park, Colorado, September 9-12, 2019.
- Full category & submission details, and entry form are included with this newsletter mailing, and are available for download at [www.rmowp.org](http://www.rmowp.org).
- Awards – 1st, 2nd, 3rd, honorable mention, and Bests of Show Photography (from categories 01-12) & Writing (from categories 24-28) – will be announced at the conference banquet.
- Time frame constraints:  
Categories 1-11 must have been produced since January 1, 2018.  
Published Images, category 12, must have been published since January 1, 2017.  
None for Members' Choice (category 13).  
None for writing and video (categories 24-35) but may not have been entered in a previous RMOWP contest.
- Any image having received any award in a past RMOWP contest may not be entered in any category of this contest.
- Images may be entered in only one category.
- Entry material can be taken or based anywhere in the world.
- Entries are limited to three (3) per category except for Members' Choice which is limited to two (2).
- Include completed entry form with your submission. Type or print clearly, use as many pages as needed.
- Submit digital images for categories 01-13 and 40, using a CD, DVD, or USB flash drive, PC-compatible, or via Dropbox.
- Image size: 6" on longest side and 300 ppi at the highest quality jpg format.
- Image filename, no more than 50 characters: the 2-digit category number underscore photographer's first name underscore last name underscore image title.
- Except in categories 09, 12 and 13, images are not to be altered or manipulated outside of normal darkroom techniques such as dodging, burning, color correction, and use of filters. A stitched panorama and an HDR processed image are not considered manipulated.

Questions? Call or email Awards Chair, Frank Zurey, 303-642-7566, [frank@zureyphoto.com](mailto:frank@zureyphoto.com)

## CONTEST CATEGORIES

You may enter up to three images in each category except 13 Members' Choice.

### PHOTOGRAPHY

01. Images from Last Conference
02. Scenics
03. Flora
04. Fauna
05. People in Nature
06. Historical
07. Cultural
08. Natural Phenomena
09. Altered/Composite
10. Black and White images
11. Novice images
12. Published Images
13. Members' Choice (limited to 2 prints)

### WRITTEN WORKS

24. Newspaper, Magazine, or other publication – Articles/Columns/Editorials/Short Stories
26. Newsletter Writing and Web Writing
28. Unpublished Written Works (If a book, submit one chapter.) An unpublished written work may be entered in only one RMOWP contest.

### VIDEO AND BOOKS

30. Full Length Video
31. Video Clips
35. Books

### ART

40. Art – works with an outdoor theme

### ANGELO SCIULLI HUMOROUS PHOTO CHALLENGE

A digital image with an outdoor theme that fits into contest categories 01-08, with no time limit. Filename same as above except 'hum' replaces the category number.

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*"Badger" © Beto Gutierrez  
2nd Place, Image  
from last Conference,  
Photo Contest 2009*



## Member News

Long-time RMOWP member **Mary Alice Murphy**, founder and editor of [www.grantcountybeat.com](http://www.grantcountybeat.com), a digital-only news source in Silver City, New Mexico, has published a book compiling 81 interviews she has done over the years with World War II veterans in southwest New Mexico.

*God's Umbrella: Southwest New Mexico World War II Survivors* recounts, in the words of these men and women, the tragic, humorous, and other memorable parts of their service during wartime.

Humorous, you ask? Mary Alice tells us that most of these veterans were in their late teens or early 20s when they volunteered or were drafted, and they played pranks, which created levity in lives that they perhaps could not otherwise have tolerated. The title, she says, comes from a quote from a survivor of the Bataan Death March, who told her, "God had an umbrella over me."

Some of those interviewed teared up with memories or would not talk about the painful parts, but they shared their words with the local readers of the newspaper, where many were first published. Now, readers from other parts of the country and world will have an opportunity to read what these survivors of World War II told about their experiences. The photos, from their service days and when interviewed, provide a sliver of history from the four counties of the southwesternmost corner of New Mexico.

"I describe the book as a labor of love," Murphy said. "I dedicated it to my father, who served as an enlisted man in World War I, stayed in the Army Reserves between the wars and because of his fluency in five languages, in addition to English, was called back to serve as a translator for Allied Occupation Headquarters during World War II." Both stints of service took place in the European Theater and he was honorably discharged in 1945 as a Captain, a so-called Mustang.

"This book recognizes the sacrifices veterans and their families have made in service to and in love of country to preserve our freedoms," Mary Alice tells us. "May we never forget their selfless actions."

*God's Umbrella: Southwest New Mexico World War II Survivors* is available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), as well as various Silver City locations, including the Silver City Museum.



**Robert Stone**, another longtime RMOWP member, has also announced the publication of a new book, the fourth edition of *Day Hikes Around Ventura County*.

Part of Robert's popular Day Hike series, *Day Hikes Around Ventura County* includes 123 of this California county's best day hikes, providing access to both well-known and out-of-the-way greenspace.

Hikes range from the Pacific Coast to the mountainous interior and forests, highlighting coastal estuaries and tidepools, long beaches backed by bluffs, waterfalls, swimming holes, forested canyons, secluded creek paths, caves, ridge walks, historic sights, filming locations, and rugged outcroppings.

The large number of hikes provides an excellent cross-section of scenery and levels of difficulty, with a mix of relaxing, scenic strolls and mountain-to-coast treks with panoramic views, according to Robert. Most hikes are from one to three miles long, and hiking times range from 30 minutes to seven hours.

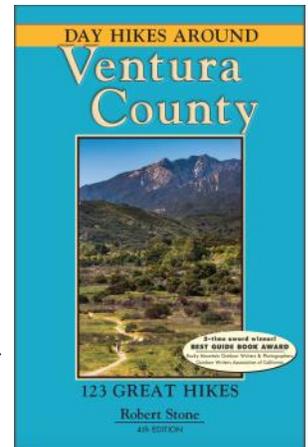
The 400-page book is organized by location and contains 388 maps, at least one map for each hike. Companion guides include *Day Hikes Around Santa Barbara*, *Day Hikes Around Los Angeles*, *Day Hikes On the California Central Coast*, *Day Hikes On the California Southern Coast*, and *Day Hikes in the Santa Monica Mountains*.

Since 1991, Robert 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. *Day Hikes Around Ventura County* is available through Robert's website, [www.dayhikebooks.com](http://www.dayhikebooks.com), and also at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

RMOWP welcomes new member **Randy Watkins** of Cushing, Oklahoma. A photographer, lecturer, and artist, Randy is a native Oklahoman, having been born in Stillwater, according to his website.

About himself, Randy writes, "Something in my being finds Oklahoma nature and its myriad forms and textures absolutely enthralling. Oklahoma's land, water, the astonishing variety of cloud shapes and the play of light on them all, in these I sense a peculiar and profound beauty... This is my art, this is my land and people. I wish to share it with you."

To see some of Randy's photography visit his website, [www.randywatkinsphotography.com](http://www.randywatkinsphotography.com).



### 2019 RMOWP Calendar

May 30 ~ Scholarship application deadline

June 10 ~ Contest submission deadline

September 9-12 ~ Annual Conference —  
Estes Park, Colorado, and Rocky Mountain  
National Park

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



*"Guardian elk outside our Trout Haven cabin" © 2018 Don Laine*

**Due to unforeseen circumstances,  
the 2019 RMOWP Photo Workshop in  
Rocky Mountain National Park  
has been cancelled.**



*"Now I see your point of view." © Peter Kummerfeldt  
The Bird Contortionist Award, 2018 Angelo Sculli  
Humorous Photo Challenge*

## Advice from the Good Old Days

"There are twelve negatives on one roll of Rolleiflex-size film. Would it be of advantage to have much more on a single load? It is, to say the least, doubtful. Some professionals certainly prefer a larger reserve of photographic ammunition in the camera and hate to have to reload while they are on the job. Others, particularly among advanced amateurs, maintain that big loads have an adverse effect on their feeling of responsibility: they so often catch themselves snapping haphazardly and uselessly just to finish the roll... Needless to say, this sort of habit does not improve one's photography."

~ Rolleiflex Guide, by F.W. Frerk, 1945

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