

Rocky Mountain Outdoors

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

March - April 2022

Conference Set for June

RMOWP's 2022 Conference takes place in **Golden, Colorado, Sunday through Wednesday, June 26-29**, plus post-conference field trips on Thursday, June 30. The Thursday field trips include a high-elevation excursion to Mount Evans, 14,271 feet above sea level (see Jack's Jaunts, below) plus lower elevation options for those who aren't comfortable that high up.

Conference headquarters is the meeting room at the **American Legion Post, 500 9th St., Golden**. Conference attendees will make their own lodging arrangements (see Golden Lodging Ideas, page 2 for suggestions).

If you have ever been in an American Legion meeting room, you'll feel right at home in our conference headquarters – walls covered with American flags and photos of local military veterans, and an adjoining bar. Conference organizer Maryann Gaug is currently arranging catering, and RMOWP will supply non-alcoholic beverages. However, conference attendees will be required to buy any alcohol they want from the American Legion's bar.

Tentative schedule information was in the Jan-Feb newsletter and it's still being fine-tuned, but we're looking at several field trips to Golden-area attractions along with photography and writing workshops, the writer's forum, photo critique, sunrise photo shoot, presentation of contest submissions, and time for socializing.

There is plenty to see and do in the area, such as checking out Buffalo Bill Cody's Grave (where the famous bison hunter, Civil War soldier, and showman may or may not be buried), visiting the Lookout Mountain Nature Center and Mother Cabrini Shrine, exploring the Colorado Railroad Museum, stopping by the old mining town of Georgetown for a ride on its historic railroad, touring the historic Argo Mill in nearby Idaho Springs, and of course signing up for a thirst-quenching tour of the Coors Brewery.

See page 5 for a list of links to pertinent websites.

Jack's Jaunts

Tundra Travels on Mount Evans



Text and photos by Jack Olson

Looming about fifty miles west of Denver, Mount Evans is one of the most spectacular and diverse natural locations anywhere in the West and so close to a major metropolitan area. There is an unmatched combination of wildlife, highest altitude trees, wildflowers galore, endless tundra, a frigid lake, jagged

rock formations and cliffs, and a view to take your breath away. Literally.



Majestic mountain goat on Mt. Evans © Jack Olson

rock formations and cliffs, and a view to take your breath away. Literally.

Zip up Interstate 70 to Idaho Springs, where you take the Mount Evans exit. You have begun your climb up the Mt. Evans Scenic Byway, the highest paved road in the United States. Winding, curving, and ascending fourteen miles you'll briefly top out at Echo Lake. Turn up Colorado 5 and the excitement begins.

For a short distance you'll loop through dense woodland, but soon the forest drops away and the views expand. Wildflowers sprinkle the roadside, signaling the approach to timberline.

Timberline: one of my favorite words. I'd rather hike at and above timberline in Colorado in summer than any other place in the world. And guess what? There's a nature center right at timberline where you can pull into a small lot. Do it.

Dos Chappell Nature Center is run by the Forest Service and Denver Botanic Gardens. They boast that they feature the



Nature trail from the nature center

See "Jaunts" on p. 4

Golden Lodging Ideas

By Maryann Gaug

Check www.visitgolden.com for additional information on lodging - including Bed and Breakfasts, Airbnbs and VRBOs - plus dining and more in the Golden area.

Here are some of my observations and suggestions —

Hotels in Golden are over \$200/night for the conference dates in June. Table Mountain Inn (303-277-9898), Golden Hotel (303-279-0100), The Eddy (720-442-8150).

Hotels along West Colfax and West 6th Avenue near Golden are \$120 and mostly higher per night. These hotels are located 4 – 8 miles from the American Legion meeting room.

- Baymont by Wyndham – 800-337-0550
- Aiden (Best Western) – 303-277-0200
- Denver Marriott West – 303-279-9100
- Quality Inn – 303-231-9939
- Courtyard by Marriott – 303-271-0776
- Hampton by Hilton – 303-278-6600
- Holiday Inn Express – 303-278-2388
- LaQuinta Inn (I-70 and Youngfield) – 303-279-5565

SAFETY WARNING!

Several RMOWP members who live in the west Denver area advise us to avoid staying at the motels near the intersection of I-70 and Kipling St. (CO 391) due to neighborhood safety concerns. Motels in that area include Affordable Inns Denver West, Comfort Inn, Holiday Inn & Suites Wheat Ridge, Best Interstate Inn, Super 8, American Motel, and Motel 6.

Several hotels are located **south of Golden along West Hampden and around Wadsworth**. These hotels are about 16 miles from the American Legion meeting room. They're \$150/night and up.

- Holiday Inn Lakewood – 303-980-9200
- LaQuinta Inn – 303-969-9700
- Comfort Suites – 303-988-8600
- Courtyard by Marriott – 303-985-9696
- Residence Inn Lakewood – 303-985-7676

Camping

Clear Creek RV Park. This campground is within walking distance of the American Legion, right along Clear Creek. I've heard that it's very popular and you definitely need reservations, possibly a year in advance. When I walked by it in January, many spaces were filled. 303-278-1437, find via visitgolden.com

Dakota Ridge RV Park. About 5 miles south of the American Legion. 303-279-1625, dakotaridgerv.com

Bear Creek Lake Park, City of Lakewood, about 15 miles south of Golden along West Hampden. 303-697-6157, find information via www.lakewood.org

Golden Gate Canyon State Park. About 15 miles west of the American Legion on a twisty road. 303-642-3856, find information via cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/Parks/goldengatecanyon

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Member News

Vail, Colorado, member **Michael Salomone** has been busy. Among his projects were as a guest on an *Upland Nation* podcast with Scott Linden, where he talked about hunting "Blue" Grouse as well as a recent writing award he received for his *Upland Almanac* magazine article on Blues published last November. See www.uplandnation.com/e/bird-hunting-advice-from-a-fly-fishing-guide-who-knows-blue-grouse-tips-why-we-hunt-win-a-vest/

Earlier, Michael had a feature article in *Upland Almanac* magazine titled "Snipe @ 10,000' " It appeared in the Autumn 2021 issue. He was also the guest on an *Upland Nation* podcast in August, also with TV host Scott Linden where they discussed his Snipe article and related subjects. See www.uplandnation.com/e/bird-hunting-yep-snipe-are-real-and-well-learn-how-to-hunt-them-at-10000-feet-make-your-hunting-dogs-road-trip-stellar-too/

Michael is a professional fly fishing guide as well as an award-winning writer with numerous published articles, primarily on fly fishing and other outdoor subjects. He's also an artist, and you can view his photography and artwork on his website: www.michaelsalomone.com.

"A good photograph is knowing where to stand."

~ American Photographer Ansel Adams

(1902-1984)

NOTES & REMINDERS:

Contest deadline is just around the corner: Monday, March 28. The rules & entry forms were emailed the end of February, and are available on our website.

The **Conference Registration Form** is in the works and will be emailed as soon as a few more things are nailed down. It will also be posted on the website.

Membership renewal deadline is March 31. Not sure if you've paid your dues? Contact treasurer Maryann Gaug at treasurer@rmowp.org. On April 1 the membership roster will be finalized.

The **Membership Directory** will be updated in early April - watch your email for your listing and options - then printed and mailed out in early May.

President's Column

Friends, Family, and the Open Road

By Virginia Parker Staat

As I write this, I'm sitting under a canopy of pines near Athens, Georgia. Yellow daffodils and the redbud trees are beginning to bloom. David and I are on our first camping trip with our new Golden Retriever pup, Samantha. Tomorrow we visit our granddaughter who studies at the University of Georgia. Then we turn south to visit our 16- and 12-year-old grandkids. We haven't seen them since the spring before all the lockdowns began... nearly three years ago. I'm bracing myself for how much they have grown.

I know the lockdowns were a sacrifice for all of us, particularly with concerns about infecting family and friends and the isolation it brought. Like the springtime just emerging here in Georgia, however, it feels like the entire country is opening up again. It gives me great hope.

I realized how much I have missed interacting with friends and family during our last RMOWP conference. It was wonderful getting together with folks I hadn't seen in two years and to visit both old and new friends.

Now David and I look forward to RMOWP's next conference in Golden, Colorado. We're hoping even more folks will attend this conference.

It is no great stretch for me to say that RMOWP has become like family to us. Thanks to each of you for your continued participation in this great organization. We look forward to seeing as many of you who are able to be in Golden at this year's conference. David, Sam, and I look forward to meeting you there.

What's up in that tree?

Text and photo by Steve Cochrane

Who knew porcupines climbed trees? This is the normal response when I take clients to view and photograph porcupines.

Winter and early spring, while trees are naked of their leaves, is an ideal time for spotting tree-dwelling porcupines. They commonly will move into the upper trees to eat and sun themselves. When a porcupine is hungry, they will move to the outermost branches to nibble newly budding twigs. During night hours or bad weather, the porcupine will supplement their diet with fruit and ground plants or shrubs.

Porcupine in Latin means "quill pig," but when I look at a porcupine's face, I think "quill monkey."

Porcupines have soft hair mixed with sharp quills all over their body except for their belly, face, and feet. On average, a porcupine has 30,000 quills. A misconception about porcupines is their ability to shoot their quills. The quills stand up when a porcupine feels threatened and detach easily when touched. The quills have barbs at the tips that detach when touched. When a porcupine loses a quill, it grows a new one. Baby porcupines are born with soft quills that harden within an hour. Baby porcupines can start climbing trees within hours of birth. Most babies will set off on their own within a few months of birth.



If you encounter a porcupine in the wild, don't worry. As long as you don't approach or touch them, they will leave you alone. The most likely victim of porcupines is the family dog that gets a nose full of quills.

The next time you're walking among the trees, take a moment and look up. You might just see a bound-up ball of quills, nested in the highest branches.

Want this newsletter via e-mail?

Let us know: info@rmowp.org

Subject: E-mail RMO

Thanks!

"Jaunts" from p. 1

highest altitude alpine garden in the world. Paths meander behind the visitor center and little signs identify which alpine wildflowers are blooming at the time. Maybe you'll be lucky to have someone at the center go out into the garden and answer questions for you. Ask them. Hint: sidle over to the west side, stoop down low, and look for the miniature columbine.

Surrounding the alpine garden are bristlecone pines, among the oldest trees in the

country. Twisted by incessant winds, they struggle to rise above the mountainside and hang on to life itself.

Head on up the road. Now you're in tundra country. Tundra: another of my favorite words. After about a mile there's a parking area on the left. A trail here leads back down to the nature center. The Botanic Gardens may be leading wildflower hikes down this trail in the summer. If you really want to learn your flowers, try to take one of these hikes.

On and on, the drive rewards your perseverance with sweeping expanses of tundra and rock. My niece's family and I saw a big herd of elk on the run, thrilling us. You may spot bighorn sheep in this area or even mountain goats. In June, you might just get a close look at the wobbly little baby goats, unbelievably fuzzy and cute. In a few miles, you'll reach Summit Lake, at 12,840 feet, where you can park. The lake is often partially frozen well into summer.



Sizing each other up



12,840-foot Summit Lake, a Denver City Park

Take time to wander on trails down to the lake and on a trail to the north beside the lake. Sneak your head over and glimpse the Chicago Lakes, thousands of dizzying feet below. There should be carpets of wildflowers and stunning scenes of the cliffs ascending to the top of Mount Evans. Sometimes rangers or naturalists stationed here with spotting scopes can aid you in finding creatures on the slopes. Many different wildflowers frame the lake, but hunt for the huge rose crowns back along the road.



Rose crowns at Summit Lake

Now for the final push. A few pulloffs are spaced along the road to the top. This is the area where you are most likely to encounter mountain goats. Driver, keep your eyes on the road and everyone else look for goats. You're in a magical mixed land of tundra, rocks, and ponds. More and more of the surrounding, almost limitless landscape opens before you. Driver, keep your eyes on the road!

Finally, you hit the top. The parking area isn't too big, so let's hope you started early or luck out. To reach the actual top of the peak you must hike a short, rocky trail to the summit, 14,271 feet. Once on top, there's plenty of room for many people to scatter, sit, and marvel at the views. Fourteen thousand foot Grays and Torreys peaks poke into the sky to the northwest, Longs Peak and Rocky Mountain National Park occupy the north horizon, Pikes Peak stands tall and isolated to the south, and jumbles of ranges spread in all directions. You may just catch the glint of the sun off the State Capitol dome in downtown Denver.

QUIET YET TOUGH

Whenever I ascend to Summit Lake I recall an experience from the 1970s. I was a leader in a program called "Hike Out", for disadvantaged boys and those from troubled homes.

There was a group of rough and tumble 10 to 12 year old boys from poorer families and one boy, obviously from better circumstances, a quiet child. The others kept apart and didn't show much respect for him.

We were hiking around the lake when we spied a bird flying up and then falling back into the water, over and over. Tangled in fishing line, it was tiring in the effort.

The "tough" kids were startled, scared, and shied away from the spectacle. Without hesitation, the quiet boy waded into the shallow water, picked up the bird, unwound the line, and set the bird flying free.

The other boys were stunned, and he became a hero for the rest of the program.

Jack Olson

"Jaunts" from p. 4

Caveats: This narrow road has sheer dropoffs and no guardrails. If this scares you, maybe just drive to timberline, or possibly Summit Lake. If you have problems with breathing at high elevations, you shouldn't take this drive. I had a girl become faint just driving up in the car.



Bristlecone pines at timberline on Mt. Evans

It might be 90 degrees in Denver and 40 on top. Bring warm clothing. The road has indeterminate dates to be open. The Department of Transportation opens the road in May, certainly by Memorial Day. Snows in October finally close it for the season. You might want to go early in the day. The road has become very popular with many cars and bikes.

I have often said that everyone should make a visit to the Grand Canyon once in their lifetime. Everyone who reads this should also make at least one ascent up Mount Evans. If you've been before, make another.

[Reprinted from Sep - Oct 2012 issue of *Rocky Mountain Outdoors* by permission from Jack Olson.]



A forever view from atop Mt. Evans...

Attention: Jack has Moved

Longtime RMOWP member **Jack Olson** recently moved from Denver to Florida to be near his sister. For Jack's current contact information put in a request by email to info@rmowp.org.

Pertinent Conference Websites

Below and at rmowp.org are links to many of the local attractions' websites.

Argo Mill and Tunnel Tour, Idaho Springs (24 miles): argomilltour.com

Buffalo Bill's Grave & Museum, Lookout Mountain Park and Nature Center: www.buffalobill.org; www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/denver-parks-and-recreation/parks/mountain-parks/lookout-mountain.html and www.jeffco.us/1281/Lookout-Mountain-Preserve-and-Nature-Cen

Central City and Black Hawk (21-25 miles): www.visitcentralcity.com and visitblackhawk.org/

Colorado Railroad Museum: coloradorailroadmuseum.org

Coors Brewery Tour: www.coorsbrewerytour.com

Dinosaur Ridge and Triceratops Trail: dinoridge.org

Georgetown: georgetown-colorado.org

Golden Visitor Information: visitgolden.com

Mother Cabrini Shrine (near Buffalo Bill's Grave): mothercabrinishrine.org/

Mount Evans (Individual timed reservation required, but not yet available - details later. 25 miles to Echo Lake, then 15 miles to top): www.botanicgardens.org/other-locations/mount-goliath; www.fs.usda.gov/recarea/arp/recarea/?recid=28508; www.recreation.gov/timed-entry/10087438; and www.colorado.com/byways/mount-evans

Red Rocks Park and Amphitheatre: www.redrocksonline.com/explore-red-rocks/; and www.denvergov.org/content/denvergov/en/denver-parks-and-recreation/parks/mountain-parks/red-rocks-mountain-park.html

Roxborough State Park (26 miles): cpw.state.co.us/placestogo/parks/roxborough

Writer's Corner

It Depends on Your Point of View

By Virginia Parker Staat

"Reality simply consists of different points of view."

~ Margaret Atwood



Virginia with her beloved Roxanne.

Before writing any story, we must choose our narrator's position to describe events and opinions. Then we must stick to it. This position is called point of view (POV). It is an important discipline in our writing because readers become confused when writers head hop from one character to another, particularly within the same paragraph. Point of view is about creating intimacy between our reader and our subject.

The three basic points of view include first person, second person, and third person. In *Stein on Writing*, Sol Stein explains them as follows:

- I saw this, did that. (First Person)
- You saw this, did that. (Second Person)
- He saw this, did that. (Third Person)

Second person is rarely used because it has so many pitfalls. The writer must develop a character known as "you" and remain consistent throughout the story. Because of its rarity and the difficulty in maintaining second person POV, this article will focus on first person POV and third person POV.

When using first person POV, the writer is the character who is telling the story and is most often the protagonist. First person POV uses pronouns including I, me, my, mine, myself, we, us, our, and ourselves.

First person can be limiting for a writer because the reader can only see things through the narrator's eyes. It is also from a position of things having already happened, taking

place in past tense. As a benefit, however, first person POV builds an immediate intimacy between the writer and the reader, plunging the reader into the protagonist's experience. William Zinsser reminds us in his book *On Writing Well*, "Writers are at their most natural when they write in first person."

When using third person POV, the writer speaks as a narrator outside the story. Third person pronouns include he, she, it, they, him, her, it, one, them, his, hers, theirs, himself, herself, itself, oneself, and themselves.

Third person POV offers the writer two choices in narration. Writers may choose from a third person omniscient point of view, telling the story from a position of knowing everything and writing from any character's perspective in a consistent manner that makes it easy for the reader to follow. The second option is using a third person limited point of view, where the writer narrates from only one character's perspective at a time. While most third person POV stories are written in past tense, present tense is also acceptable. Sol Stein cautions, "Third person works best when the story is seen consistently from the point of view of *one character at a time*, though the author is free to report what any of the characters hear, smell, touch, and taste."

The inherent danger with writing from any point of view is maintaining it throughout our story. As Sol Stein reminds us, "Writing is a discipline. And one of the most disciplined techniques is the point of view. The choice of point of view is yours, but once you've decided, be sure that you stick to it as if your reader's experience of the story depended on it. Because it does."



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