

ROCKY MOUNTAIN OUTDOORS

A Newsletter for Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers

Upcoming Events

Conference Registration Deadline

Registration forms are due to Maryann by Sept. 1. If the mail won't get to her in time, email her (megaug@earthlink.net) with your meal choices and activity choices. Don & Linda need head counts for the caterer and tours.

Bring to Conference

- An article to read at the Writers' Forum
- Photos for the Photo Critique
- Photos for Members' Choice Contest
- Donations for the Auction - lots and lots
- Bring your checkbook to pay for all the wonderful treasures you'll buy at the Auction
- Members' Showcase with a Twist information on Page 3

Celebrating RMOWP's 50th Anniversary

At RMOWP's annual conference in Los Alamos, NM from October 3-6, 2023, we'll be celebrating our 50th anniversary with various events. To help get you in the celebratory mood, whether you attend conference or not, two long-time members, Jack Olson and Russ Bromby, reminisce about the group's journey.

Outdoor Odyssey

A glimpse at the 50-year journey of Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers

By Jack Olson and Russ Bromby

Us "old guard" of Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers (RMOWP) have seen a lot in our years since first joining the fledgling regional writing and photography group in the 1970s. Laboring with hot type, film cameras, typewriters, darkrooms and the like, it seems like a long time ago now. We've been members a long time, not quite the 50 years that this now venerable organization has developed into. We were the young whippersnappers of those days.

In those bygone days, as a way of building participants, members would sponsor folks they thought would have an interest in joining this new group. Russ was sponsored by founding member Bill Staley. Bill and his wife Marge were the proprietors of Staley Studio in Denver. They produced films for schools and education on the outdoors. Russ joined the group in 1976 and first attended the 4th conference in Moab, Utah in June of 1977. Russ had started working for the Colorado Division of Wildlife in early 1973 doing graphics and publications.

Jack was sponsored by Gregg Chancellor of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs in the Tourism Section. They met when Jack and Gregg shared adjoining cubicles and a friendship was soon established. Jack was a budding photographer and Gregg recognized that talent and recommended that he join RMOWP. Jack joined in 1978 and first attended the 5th conference in Jackson, Wyoming in June of that year. He would have probably joined earlier but he went on a month-long trip to Nepal in 1977 with a group that flew in to Kathmandu and then trekked 250 miles to a base camp at 17,000 feet near Mt. Everest. Jack wowed participants at his first conference with

cont'd page 2

a slide show of his Everest adventure. It was an early version of the Member's Showcase, always a highlight of later conferences. As Jack's photographic expertise grew and he began to sell more images and gain confidence he decided to take the plunge and go fulltime. Not very long after joining RMOWP Jack informed member and book publisher Mel Davis of Utah of his decision to quit his job and freelance fulltime. Mel's response was an incredulous "You WHAT?"

RMOWP was the brainchild of a group of writers and photographers who saw a void in outdoor-oriented journalism in the Rocky Mountain region. The founding members need to be remembered and mentioned here. They hailed from across the region. From New Mexico were Bob Kline, Fred Patton, Aleatha Scholer, E.A. "Swede" Scholer, Harper Simms and Dwight Williamson. From Colorado came Don Domenick, Joe and Dorie McKenna, J.B. Scott, and the aforementioned Bill and Marge Staley. Tom Hough represented Wyoming. Charles Most hailed from Montana. From Idaho was William Paler. John Malo represented Illinois.

The story goes that Joe McKenna felt that there was a void in the Rocky Mountain region of an organization that could benefit outdoor-oriented writers and photographers. Joe was a member of the national and international Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA) and thought that a regional outlet would benefit professional writers and photographers as well as those folks who were just starting out in the field (like Jack and Russ). OWAA had then, and continues to have, stringent membership requirements that does not favor newbie writers and photographers that are just learning their craft. RMOWP seeks to welcome those people. As stated in the organization's original purpose outline, "To provide part-time and would-be writers and photographers with the benefits of interaction with other writers and photographers...." That guiding principle has fostered many careers that are dedicated to outdoor journalism. That benefits all of us. RMOWP was incorporated in Wyoming in 1982. And the group went through many levels of bureaucratic necessities such as by-laws, officers, a board of directors with a chairperson (we used to call them chair "men"), we even have a creed to guide us. The colorful RMOWP logo was designed by an employee of Colorado State University and submitted and approved by the membership in 1975. The board chair position was eventually dissolved and an executive director was added to the mix in 1990.

In the 50-year history of RMOWP there have been instances where some members have tried to overturn those guiding principles and turn the organization into a mini-OWAA. It even went as far in one instance where the disgruntled parties withdrew from RMOWP to form a rival organization, namely WOW (Western Outdoor Writers). That group folded within a year, resulting in a great feeling among faithful members of RMOWP involved in the kerfuffle of "Schadenfreude," loosely defined as "the experience of pleasure or self-satisfaction that comes from learning of the failure of another." That certainly was our feeling regarding the matter. Fortunately, thus far, efforts to "professionalize" the organization have always been turned back. Russ personally witnessed that attitude while attending an OWAA meeting years ago. The executive director at the time was asked in a workshop session about RMOWP. Her response was a snobbish "oh, they're only a club." Indicating that RMOWP was not worthy of consideration as a professional organization and dismissing the group as beneath the lofty ideals of OWAA.

RMOWP's band of intrepid communicators has stayed true to the founders' establishing guidelines, and many fine professionals have grown through the welcoming attitude of the group. Maybe it is best described as a fellowship of dedicated individuals who treasure the outdoors. We have made and sadly, lost, many friends over the years.

There have been many programs over the years. Foremost, is probably the award programs presented at the annual conference. That concept has survived nearly unchanged and has only expanded with succeeding meetings including the addition of the ever-delightful Humorous Photo Challenge. A highly appreciated recognition that is part of the awards is the Spark Plug Award, presented to the individual that the board feels has done the most for the organization during the year.

A staple for RMOWP, beginning in 1994 and running through 2018, was the annual Scenic and Wildlife Photography Workshop that featured top instructors from the organization teaching two-to-five-day sessions to a small group of participants. The first workshop was held in Carlsbad, NM and locations changed in succeeding years until it found a more stable home in Rocky Mountain National Park. Unfortunately, changing costs and dwindling interest resulted in the workshops being discontinued in 2019.

cont'd page 6

FUN THINGS PLANNED AT THE LOS ALAMOS CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 3-6, 2023 is set aside for the upcoming Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers Annual Conference and 50th Anniversary Celebration!

Let me (Linda Haehnle) be the first to welcome you to beautiful Los Alamos, NM, where we will be headquartered at the Sheriff's Posse Lodge. There are many historical activities planned, as well as workshops for both the Writing and Photography contingencies of the group. And, of course, a gathering of old friends to catch up and socialize during these few days together.

Besides the Writing and Photography category submissions we will be introducing a new FUN area of participation for conference attendees only.

The '**Members' Showcase With a Twist'** is to let our participants showcase their most favorite work!

Rules for Submission:

1. This submission has not ever been presented in an RMOWP contest, or picked for an award at any prior conferences.
2. Submit a very favorite photograph, or piece of writing that is meaningful to you - ie: favorite location, favorite subject, launch of your career, or most memorable time in your life, etc.
3. Photo submissions will be presented alphabetically, and each of you will 'Tell the Story' behind the photo in no more than 150 words. (PLEASE - We are being sensitive to time and seeing everyone engaged!)
4. For the Writing submissions, we won't be able to show the written article, but the information needed is: the author, title, date, published Y/N. And the author will also briefly describe the situation for the audience, and read the article if it is not too lengthy. (Time sensitive again!)
5. Something NEW, something FUN - please participate and share!
6. Submissions can be given to Frank Zurey at the beginning of the conference, at the same time photos for critique are turned in.

The Conference Committee looks forward to seeing you all soon! Safe travels!

PLEASE IGNORE THIS NEWSLETTER'S FORMATTING

We are all spoiled by Barb Laine's great talents at creating newsletters. Virginia stepped in and created a new style of newsletter. She's in Canada. Linda and Maryann struggled with the style, and you see the result.

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RMOWP Officers:

President: Linda Haehnle, Aurora, CO
 Vice President: Steve Cochran, Rangely, CO
 Secretary: Kent Taylor, Richardson, TX
 Treasurer: Maryann Gaug, Silverthorne, CO

Board of Directors:

Ron Belak, Kittredge, CO (2024)
 Debbie Holte, Taos, NM (2024)
 Frank Zurey, Golden, CO (2025)
 Richard Youngblood, Katy, TX (2025)
 Dan Bernskoetter, Lohman, MO (2026)
 Al Perry, Herriman, UT (2026)

WHAT TO BRING TO CONFERENCE

It's never too early to start organizing the stuff you'll want to cart along. Here's a checklist:

WRITING FOR THE ANNE SULLIVAN WRITERS FORUM - Your written work will be gently and positively examined with the purpose of finding ways to improve it. Works can include stories, poems, photo essays, or other formats with an outdoor theme. Participants should bring at least 12 copies of the work, and although the length of the works can vary, about 1200 words or less would be best. It should not be your best work, but something you would like help with. Spectators - and commentators - are welcome!

PHOTOS FOR THE PHOTO CRITIQUE - Entertaining and informative for all, this program looks at photographs with an eye to how they could be improved. Please bring images that you're maybe not too happy with, certainly not your best. Those who want their photos critiqued should bring 3-5 digital images on CDs or flash drives.

PHOTOS FOR THE MEMBERS CHOICE CONTEST - Conference participants are the judges for this one. Members may submit one or two matted prints, either color or black and white, and the photos may have been taken at any time since the beginning of photography. Altered/manipulated images are eligible. Each entry is to be designated as Scenic, Flora, or Fauna. Print size is a maximum of 8 X12 inches that is matted to a final size not to exceed 12 X 16 inches; Entries should not be framed. On the back of each submission write "members Choice" but not your name - we'll keep track of which belongs to who.

DONATIONS FOR THE AUCTION - The RMOWP Auction is not only a lot of fun, but also raises some necessary funds for the organization. Bring your own matted photos or note cards, published books, craft and gift items, photo equipment, or whatever you find laying around the house - NO spouses allowed!!!



Pueblo at Puye Cliff Dwellings



Cliff dwellings at Bandelier Nat'l Monument



Valles Caldera sign and panorama



CONFERENCE UPDATE

Conference Speaker Loves the Outdoors

Adrienne Pond will present a writing workshop exploring personal essays and memoir—mining personal experiences to illuminate, share, and foster love for the outdoors.

As a freelance editor, Adrienne helps emerging writers and published authors hone their stories to reveal their unfolding experiences and how they change during this unfolding.

Her years as a university English instructor at the University of Texas at Austin have given her a deep love for language and our ability to wield words, allowing others to step into our personal worlds. Everyone has stories that—if shared—will deeply imprint in readers' memories, take them on a journey, teach them something new, mirror their humanity. And if sharing your writing is not your goal, writing is still an incredible gift to yourself.

In *Wildly Into the Dark*, Tyler Knott Gregson writes, “There is magic out there, so it’s magic we’ll seek. Adventure lives a whisper beyond our comfort zones, just a half breath after No turns into Yes. Here’s to the wild life we will never stop living, here’s to the wanderlust and light we were born to chase.”

How do we use language to reflect the wild lives that we all live and the various ways we connect with the outdoors, wildlife, and wild flora?

We pick up our cameras.

We put pen to pad.

And we continue to turn to the outdoors for our much-needed adventures.

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by Past President Virginia Staat

It's time for the swan song ... my final president's column. First, thank you. It has been a privilege and honor to serve as your president these past four years. To be quite honest, I wasn't sure I could do it. Following Kent Taylor, with his eloquence and many talents, I knew I couldn't fill his shoes.

But we managed ... through the pandemic and losses and many changes. It was executive director Don Laine and his beloved Barb who provided me with the guidance and support I needed. It was our illustrious Board members who made the tough decisions and steered us through. Thanks to each of you for your service, time, and effort.

I particularly want to thank each of you, our members, for your input, participation, and tenacity in keeping RMOWP a vibrant and welcoming group.

And now, your new president, Linda Haehnle, is leading RMOWP into a new era. Linda has already stepped in to co-coordinate the Los Alamos conference with Don and, with her insight and many abilities, is making decisions and suggestions to keep us heading in a positive direction.

With all her many duties at the upcoming conference, Linda and I will share a few responsibilities during conference meetings to help with the transition and passing the baton. Then Linda and your new vice president, Steve Cochran, will take the reins.

I have great confidence that RMOWP is in good hands and will continue to be an example of how a great organization can continue to thrive because of our shared interests and in spite of turmoil and uncertain times.

Again, thanks to each of you for your support, your kindness, and your friendship. It has meant the world to me.

Outdoor Odyssey Continued from Page 2

A similar fate was in store for the Scott-McKenna Scholarship Program which sought to award a small scholarship (up to \$1500 some years) to a deserving student who had an interest in outdoor communication. The program ran from 1992 through 2019 and was named in honor of two of the group's founding members. The annual and entertaining auction at each year's conference provided a funding source for the scholarship.

A Selected Works recognition for nominated members ran for several years, but was unsustainable. Likewise, a traveling library idea was discontinued as being impractical.

All is not lost, however. The group recently added Zoom presentations to its activities, free to members. There have been three highly entertaining and educational events to date, one that was a presentation on the wildlife of the Galapagos Islands and mainland Ecuador, a tour of Greenland and another that heralded the wonders of Iceland. The newsletter, Rocky Mountain Outdoors, is the prime communication tool for members and the website, rmowp.org, provides up-to-date information on current happenings.

But the highlight of RMOWP's year has to be the annual conference. Except for a Covid cancellation in 2020, the annual event draws many members to the best locations in the Rocky Mountain west. To paraphrase Johnny Cash, "we've been everywhere!"

We've stood at the Trinity site in New Mexico, ridden on steam engines through western forests of Colorado and New Mexico, treated to a special tour of the "closed to the public" Wetherill Mesa cliff dwellings of Mesa Verde, been allowed to walk on the outstretched arm of the Crazy Horse Memorial in South Dakota, been wined and dined at South Dakota's Wall Drug, journeyed into the depths of the earth on a mine train tour in Montrose, CO, and soared to the top of the Rockies on Mt. Evans near Denver, taken to horseback at Buffalo Bill's Pahaska Tepee Lodge in Wyoming and had a behind-the-scenes special tour at the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, witnessed the wonders of Yellowstone, rode in Conestoga wagons near Casper, WY, attended such disparate events as the Black Hills Passion Play and being inducted into the "Singing Tribe of Wahoo" in the Black Hills of South Dakota to a rendition of the song "I'm My Own Grandpa" presented at the Flying W Ranch in Colorado Springs, a thrilling guided tour of the Going-to-the-Sun Road on Glacier National Park's 1930s-vintage Red Jammer buses and toured the red rock country of 5 national parks in Utah. What more could you want?

But there have been difficulties along the way as well. Highly publicized and unexplained deaths in the Four Corners area before our visit threatened to cancel the 1993 Farmington, NM, gathering. Some folks cancelled out and some valuable members even withdrew from the organization due to the reports. The illnesses and deaths were later attributed to an outbreak of hantavirus, spread through contact with rodents and their droppings. We soldiered on and the meeting went on as scheduled, including some excellent visits to area Anasazi sites.

The conferences feature writer forums, workshops, a good cop/bad cop critique of photos submitted by brave members, and the obligatory tours of local wonders at the conference site.

We would like to mention many other names of members who have contributed and continue to support the organization, but going down that road guarantees that many worthy individuals would be left out. We wanted to avoid that.

We will be there is spirit in 2073 when RMOWP celebrates its centennial.



Jack Olson, left, Fred Lord in August 2016



Russ and Barb Bromby in June 2016