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James F. Stevens to join staff of Montana State University Writers Conference; Fillers gleaned from the Montana Almanac

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FOR RELEASE WEDNESDAY, MARCH 30

A teller of tales who has been intimately associated with Northwest regional affairs for half a century will be a member of the staff of the Montana State University Writers Conference, scheduled May 25 through 28 on the campus, according to conference director Jack Barsness, visiting professor of English.

James F. Stevens of Seattle, dean of Washington's professional writers, will be in charge of conference sessions on the potential for writers in the use of regional materials, Barsness said.

Stevens is the author of "Paul Bunyan," "Saginaw Paul Bunyan," "Big Jim Turner," and other novels and short stories based on Northwest lore and legend. His work appears in 53 anthologies and he has published stories and articles in Saturday Evening Post, American Mercury, New York Times Sunday Magazine, and many other periodicals. His weekly syndicated column, "Out of the Woods," was carried by 33 newspapers.

Stevens' first sale was an article, written when he was 14, published in Hoard's Dairyman in 1907. He received $1.50 for this maiden effort. In 1916 he broke into Saturday Evening Post with four poems, and he has been publishing regularly since 1924.

His participation in the Writers Conference will renew an association with the University begun some 30 years ago when MSU Prof. H. G. Merriam published two of Stevens' stories in Frontier and Midland. These stories later appeared in the O'Brien collections of best short stories of the year. Stevens and his wife were also friends of the late Joseph Kinsey Howard, founder of the MSU conference.

(more)
Even before his contact with Dr. Merriam, Stevens was familiar with Montana. In May 1909 he followed the Lewis and Clark trail to Armstead to skin mules in the grading of the Armstead and Pittsburgh Railroad for Salmon City.

Stevens is an active worker in the cause of conservation. He is a founder of the Keep Washington Green Association, a co-founder of the Save our Snakes Society, a retired member of the Society of American Foresters, and a member of the Association of Conservation Education. His book, "Green Power," published in 1958, deals with natural resources, and he is planning four other books on this theme.

He is consultant for Cole and Weber, Inc., the agency that has twice won the Saturday Review award for public service advertisements. He was public relations counsel for the West Coast Lumberman's Association from 1937 to 1957, and he serves as public relations chairman for the Washington State Council of Churches and the Seattle-King County Council of Churches. He is a World War I overseas veteran and a member of the American Legion as well as several other organizations.

Mrs. Stevens will accompany her husband to Missoula. The veteran newswoman and radio writer is now concluding a term as president of the Seattle branch of the Penwomen.

Barsness said that inquiries about registration for the conference should be directed to him at Montana State University, Missoula.

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FILLERS CLEANED FROM THE MONTANA ALMANAC

The first football game between Montana State University and Montana State College was played on Thanksgiving Day of 1897, according to the Montana Almanac.

The so-called "Chinook Belt" of Montana extends from the Browning-Shelby area southeastward to the Yellowstone Valley above Billings. These warm winds can be strong, up to 50 miles per hour, and can persist for several days. They have been known to melt a heavy snow cover in a matter of hours, according to the Montana Almanac.

The lowest temperature ever recorded in the continental United States was a minus 70 degrees, noted at Roger's Pass, Montana, on January 20, 1954, according to the Montana Almanac.

The total distance around the boundary of Montana is 1,943 miles—approximately the distance from Missoula to Memphis, Tennessee, according to the Montana Almanac.

The total area of Montana is 147,138 sq. miles. Of this, 822 sq. miles is water area, according to the Montana Almanac.

More than 1/3 of the total land in Montana is owned by the Federal Government, according to the Montana Almanac.
With the admission of Alaska as a state, Montana is now the fourth largest state in the Union. The area of the state is roughly 4% of the total land area in the continental United States, according to the Montana Almanac.

The largest county in Montana is Beaverhead County in the state's southwest section, with a total of 5,580 sq. miles. The smallest county in the state is Silver Bow, with 716 sq. miles, according to the Montana Almanac.

The highest temperature recorded in Montana was 117 degrees noted in Glendive on July 20, 1893, and equaled at Medicine Lake on July 5, 1937, according to the Montana Almanac.

The second largest fresh-water lake west of the Mississippi is Flathead Lake, Montana, with 188 sq. miles of surface area, according to the Montana Almanac.

According to the Montana Almanac, there are 59 reservoirs storing 5,000 acre-feet or more of water in the state. The largest of these is the Fort Peck Reservoir with a capacity of 14,900,000 acre-feet.

More than 2,000 species of wild flowers and non-flowering plants are to be found in Montana, according to the Montana Almanac.

There are more than 90 species of mammals in the state of Montana, according to the Montana Almanac.
The first recorded earthquake in Montana occurred at Helena on May 22, 1869, according to the Montana Almanac. Most recent, of course, was the quake of August, 1959, in the Yellowstone Park area and its after-tremors.

The first white men to enter the present state of Montana were the La Verendrye brothers, who sighted the Big Horn Mountains in southcentral Montana in 1743, while on an expedition for French fur trading interests, according to the Montana Almanac.

According to the Montana Almanac, the first fur trading post in Montana was founded by Manuel Lisa in 1807, at the mouth of the Big Horn River.