

Atmosphere

By *Howie Flomberg*

In the on-line dictionary that my operating system provides, the second definition of the word *Atmosphere* is:

2 the pervading tone or mood of a place, situation, or work of art: *the hotel is famous for its friendly, welcoming atmosphere* | *this crisis further compounded the prevailing atmosphere of gloom.*

- a pleasurable and interesting or exciting mood: *a superb restaurant, full of atmosphere.*

A Thesaurus lists synonyms for Atmosphere as: *ambience, air, mood, feel, feeling, character, tone, tenor, aura, quality, undercurrent, flavor or informal vibe.*

The pervading *tone or mood* of this writers' group is delightful. If I had to choose a specific word, I think I'd pick collegial. I've never heard a negative phrase applied to anyone or anyone's work. The *tenor* of the group is excellent.

Living in Colorado provides a *fascinating tone or mood of a place*. When I drive out of Windsor Gardens on Clinton Street and turn left on Alameda Avenue, ninety percent of the time I have to gasp at the beauty. The magnificent Rockies are there from Pikes Peak to Rocky Mountain National park. The snow-capped peaks are etched against the cobalt blue sky. Most of you have noticed that I am wheel chair bound. On more than one occasion I've taken the Highline canal trail to Alameda Avenue and sit there captured by the beauty.

The expression that there is less Oxygen in air in Denver than at sea level is a misnomer. Our *atmosphere* is 20.95% oxygen. That is true no matter what your altitude is. It is true at 14,000 feet a few miles west of here. It is true at the shores of the Dead Sea. The difference is barometric pressure. Here at our current altitude the pressure is lower than at sea level. Basically barometric pressure is measured by the amount of air above us pushing down. We live in a mile high environment. Therefore I must use supplemental oxygen.

I grew up in New York in the 1950's. The *atmospheric* pressure is still higher there. The higher atmospheric pressure and my increased general health aided me in my daily activities. However there were distinct differences. The: *mood, feel, feeling, character, tone, tenor, aura, quality, undercurrent, flavor and informal vibe* were quite different.

A clear day is a unique property in New York. I recall once going to Manhattan and going to the visitors platform of the Empire State Building. I wasn't able to see three blocks away. The air in New York has a definite, if subtle, taste. In Denver, if you can see the mountains, you're looking west. In New York the Empire State Building serves that function. If you are south of the Empire State building and you can see it, you're looking north.

The street layout in Brooklyn has no rhyme or reason. There is no obvious plan to the Borough. From Brooklyn if you cross the fabled Brooklyn Bridge, or it's younger sibling the Williamsburg Bridge, you find logic. Manhattan is laid out quite rationally. The Avenues run north and south. They are numbered from the East River, on the east to the Hudson River on the west. The building numbers, east and west, start at Fifth Avenue. The streets run east and west from one river to the other river. The numbering really makes sense from about 14 Street up. Below 14th Street Manhattan still suffers from the lack of planning by the Dutch.

Atmosphere is a fascinating word, isn't it?