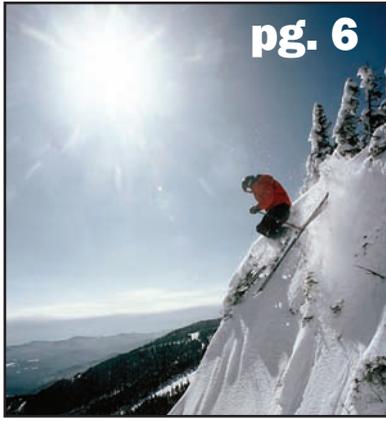


Outdoor Writers Association of America

OUTDOORS UNLIMITED

The Voice of the Outdoors December 2015/January 2016

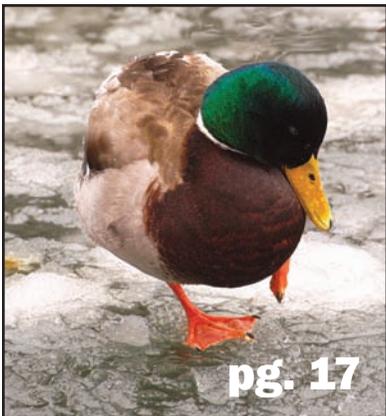




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ON THE COVER

By Jared Lloyd

Jared Lloyd captured this image of a sloth, he calls "The ceropia hunter," on Isla Bastimentos National Marine Park in the Bocas del Toro archipelago of Panama. To see more of Lloyd's work, visit his website at <https://jaredlloydphoto.com/>.

OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA

Our mission: improve the professional skills of our members, set the highest ethical and communications standards, encourage public enjoyment and conservation of natural resources and mentor the next generation of professional outdoor communicators.

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Resolve to let OWAA help you reach professional goals

New Year's is just around the corner and here at OWAA headquarters, we want to help you with your resolutions — at least the ones related to outdoor communication, you'll have to tackle the eating better and exercising more on your own.

■ Learn a new skill

If your goal is to learn a new skill, check out videos from our annual conferences in the "Member's Area" of our website at <http://owaa.org/members-area/resources/conference-videos/>.

We recently updated our website to include videos from our most recent conference in Knoxville, Tennessee, this past summer, as well as conferences going back as far as 2011. Learn about the best apps for working journalists, or how to plan and carryout your own book tour.

■ Stay involved in the organization and

industry

We also want to help keep you apprised of issues facing our organization and outdoor communication. You might have noticed this is the space where **Tom Sadler**, our executive director, normally writes his column. Instead of addressing the membership in this space every two months, Tom will regularly update you through his blog, which you can find at <http://owaa.org/blog/category/executive-directors-blog/>. This will allow him to write about news-worthy items in a timely matter.

■ Make more money

We know this is the reason so many of you joined OWAA and we are constantly working on more ways to get you more work. Billings, Montana, a gateway community to Yellowstone National Park, is hosting our 2016 conference in July. Not only is conference a great way to make con-

nections with editors and other like-minded professionals, Montana offers a wealth of outdoor adventure options you can turn into stories. Local chair **Jack Ballard** has already lined-up some pre- and post-conference trips you can read about on page 14, and more in the works. Start pitching outlets now and letting them know you'll be in Montana this summer.

We're always looking ways for you to get the most out of your membership, but you can't take advantage of OWAA benefits, if you aren't a member, so make sure to remember to send in your dues renewal. Then starting thinking about what you want to do this year and how OWAA can help you reach those goals. ■

— Editor Kelsey Dayton
editor@owaa.org

Zlotnicki joins OWAA Board

Mike Zlotnicki replaced **Shane Townsend** on OWAA's Board of Directors, taking his spot in November.

Townsend replaced **Phil Bloom** when he became second vice president in summer 2015 at OWAA's annual conference.

Townsend planned to finish Bloom's original board term slated to end in 2017, but he recently accepted the job of Foreign Agricultural Affairs Officer with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Foreign Agricultural Service which will take him overseas. Townsend starts the job in January in Washington D.C. training to work as a diplomat at a U.S. Embassy overseas.

Zlotnicki, who graduated with a degree in journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, lives in Garner, North Carolina, with his wife and three daughters. When not hunting and fishing he works as associate editor at Wildlife in North Carolina magazine.

"I'm delighted that Mike Zlotnicki has joined OWAA's board," said **Lisa Ballard** OWAA president. "He brings experience both as a newspaper reporter and as a member of the editorial staff of a state wildlife commission's magazine. I regret losing Shane Townsend from our Board and wish him success at his new post, but also feel fortunate Mike will now join OWAA's leadership." ■



MIKE ZLOTNICKI

SAVE THE DATE

VISIT *Billings*
MONTANA'S TRAILHEAD

BILLINGS IS PROUD TO HOST THE 89TH ANNUAL OWAA CONFERENCE JULY 16-18, 2016

Experience all Montana's Trailhead has to offer:

- ▶ Montana's only walkable brewery district
- ▶ Forever views and history out your hotel door
- ▶ 60 miles to the most beautiful entrance to Yellowstone National Park

We look forward to seeing you in July!

PLAN NOW: VisitBillings.com/owaa

OWAA all-star members

As I enter my third month as OWAA's president (fourth by the time you read this), I continually marvel at the depth and breadth of experience you, the members of OWAA and its supporters, have and how generous you are to share your knowledge with the rest of us. It's a vitally important aspect of our organization and the reason why we value your involvement.

Take **Paul Queneau**. Paul's day job is conservation editor of Bugle Magazine for the **Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation**. For OWAA, he has volunteered to serve on a number of committees, including the Executive Committee as secretary and chair of the Marketing Committee. On Aug. 27, Paul taught OWAA's first webinar which taught people how to use Adobe Lightroom to process and organize digital images. Twenty photographers attended the webinar. OWAA will do more webinars for its members after the success of this debut.

Tom Keer, a freelance writer who heads the Keer Group, a media and marketing company, has just put the finishing touches on new eye-catching marketing materials to help OWAA recruit new members. It's something I'll be proud to give to colleagues I know should join our ranks. Please check it out on www.owaa.org, use it frequently, and thank Tom, who put this together at no charge to OWAA.

Phil Bloom is actively involved in a different sort of recruitment for OWAA, lining up an impressive group of speakers for the 2016 OWAA conference in Billing, Mon-

tana. This former newspaper man, who now works in public affairs for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, is currently serving as OWAA's 2nd Vice President a job that comes conference planning duties. This is his second time in the progression to president. The conference will undoubtedly be one of the best ever with Phil in charge. He's also chairing the Contests Committee for the second year in a row, coordinating the many judges for the Excellence in Craft Contests.

Another former OWAA president, **Rich Patterson**, is chairing the Development Committee and serving as an Endowment Trustee.

A former long-time director of a well-endowed nature center in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, he's educating our organization about long-term fundraising and spearheading an effort to build our endowment. It might take a decade or two, but if OWAA follows the groundwork Rich has laid, our endowment will eventually grow enough to support a significant portion of our operations, allowing OWAA to provide us with more benefits with less budgetary stress.

I would be remiss not to mention board member **Colleen Miniuk-Sperry** who is chairing both the photo section and the Member Services Committee this year. The photo section is the most active section in OWAA thanks to Colleen. Under her leadership, OWAA photographers have more ways to show their work, Photo Fridays on our Facebook page and during the PechaKucha session at conference. This OWAA wonderwoman is also the driving force behind OWAA's conference survey. If you haven't taken it yet, please do, whether or not

you've been to a conference. It takes only 10 minutes, but offers crucial feedback to the organization. The input from this comprehensive survey will help OWAA customize future conferences to best fit what we want. You can find it at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2015owaaconferencesurvey>.

And then there's **Mark Freeman**. My immediate predecessor is a self-deprecating powerhouse who has arguably done more recently to help you do your work than anyone in OWAA. This award-winning outdoor writer for the Mail Tribune in Medford, Oregon, is working on behalf of OWAA's members to clarify the language various national agencies, such as the **U.S. Forest Service**, the National Park Service and the Bureau of Land Management, use to define who needs permits and who doesn't to write, photograph and film on public lands. He took the lead representing OWAA with the U.S. Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee which reviewed the Bipartisan Sportsmen's Act, which included this language. With Mark's expertise and input, we will hopefully be successful at keeping public lands open to outdoor communicators without impediment, not only to cover breaking news, but also to create stories that promote outdoor recreation, public access, conservation and stewardship of our public lands.

Wow! I am honored to be part of OWAA and to have colleagues such as these. It's one of the many benefits of belonging to this great organization, the oldest and largest group of outdoor communicators in the United States.

— OWAA President Lisa Ballard
Densmore1@aol.com



LISA BALLARD

Outdoor
Market

Jobs and editorial-needs listings are updated frequently.
Don't miss an opportunity; sign up for daily updates!

www.owaa.org/ou/category/market

The cost to acquire content

BY TOM KEER

It had been a while since I checked my voicemail and a bunch of messages had accumulated. For the most part they were mundane, but tucked in the middle was a pleasant surprise; would I like to go on a waterfowl/pheasant hunt familiarization (FAM) trip during prime time in North Dakota? Lemme think about that ... yes.

The call was from an old friend who was hosting writers for a five-night four-day all-inclusive package. I called him back immediately.

"I've got everything taken care of on the expense side," he said. "All you need to do is get here."

"You're not covering airfare?" I asked.

"All you need to do is to get here. I'll cover everything else."

"Ugh, ok."

"The only other cost is a gratuity."

"Not a problem. What percent?"

"Well, we went to a resort service fee this year."

"What's that?"

"The resort service fee is a tip pool that gets spread around to the entire staff. So we break it down to the customary guides, food and beverage staff and housekeeping. We also spread the love to the entire agricultural team. They are integral in making our hunting great, so we figured they should get part of the tips as well."

"Totally agree. What kind of numbers are we talking about?"

"We usually charge guests 20 percent of the total trip, but for writers we're only charging 15 percent. All in the cost for the trip is \$5000 so your 15 percent tip would run \$750. Are you in?"

After a few days to think about it, my answer was a regretful "no."

This scenario has become increasingly common as venues cut marketing budgets. One way places strengthen their own profits and losses is by transferring expenses to outdoor communicators. That means if you're not careful you can end up spending more acquiring content than you can make turning around and selling it.

The best way to avoid losing money on a FAM trip is to rough out expenses and your projected profits before you agree to go.

Here's an example of how I worked through my decision to forego the North Dakota trip.

Rough Expenses Out:

- Gas and tolls to the airport, roundtrip: \$75
- Parking for 6 days: \$210
- Gratuity: The total trip retailed at \$5,000 and my 15 percent gratuity based on that price would run me \$750
- Non-resident small game license: \$100
- Habitat stamp: \$17
- State waterfowl stamp: \$5
- Non-resident state-wide waterfowl license: \$150
- Airfare: \$1200 round trip

- Per diem meals while traveling: \$25/day or \$50/round trip. So my total projected costs were \$2557.

Forecasted Revenue:

I next tried to predict what kind of revenue I'd generate from the trip. I came up with five print and six online outlets that might be interested in content. Then, I reached back out to my host to learn what other writers were attending. Three writers were on the masthead of the print magazines and three were on the masthead of the online publications I'd brainstormed. That left me with two print options and three online potential buyers.

I contacted editors of these outlets to determine their level of interest. One editor of a print magazine was ho-hum about a story, while the editor of my remaining option was excited and offered me an assignment of 2500 words and 10 images. All of the online publications were interested and they were all looking for about 750 words and 5 images.

- Print magazine with images: \$1000
 - Digital magazines with images: \$500
- So my total projected revenue was \$1500.

Hobby vs. Business:

The difference between a hobby and a business is that a business makes money; in this instance I would have lost over \$1,000. There is no question that shooting decoying pintails and following English setters on point would have been fun, but consistently losing money on reporting assignments won't sustain a profitable freelance writing business.

Momma didn't raise a quitter, so here are a few final options to consider before you say no to any trip that requires out-of-pocket costs.

- Check with a state or county travel and tourism board to see if they will pay for your transportation costs.

■ Contact manufacturing companies for product to demo. While the destination market may be saturated by other members in your group, you might be able to secure placement and a new revenue stream for gear reviews.

- Research other story ideas that might come from that similar region. It could be a vineyard for a wine magazine, a new restaurant for a culinary publication, or a personality for a general interest outlet. Think outside the box, because if you're an outdoors communicator you've got many different stories within one locale. You've just got to find them. ■



Tom Keer is an award-winning writer who lives on Cape Cod, Massachusetts. Keer writes regularly for over a dozen outdoor magazines and owns The Keer Group, a full-service, outdoor marketing company. Visit www.thekeergroup.com or www.tomkeer.com.

Capture cool images in cold weather

BY SANDY MACYS

Despite the beautiful weather, my backpack bulged when I set up to shoot a skier coming down Tuckerman Ravine on Mt. Washington in New Hampshire. It was a great day, but if there is one thing I've learned in years of photographing skiing is that conditions can change quickly. One minute it might be 70 degrees and sunny and the next it could start snowing.

I have been shooting photos of skiing, ski racing, and winter scenes since 1970 for a variety of publications, and most recently as a staff photographer for Sugarbush Resort in Warren, Vermont. Over the years I learned a few things about how to keep myself and my photo gear functioning - often under adverse conditions. It all starts with being prepared.

Since cameras went digital, one of the most important items to have while shooting outside in the winter are extra well-charged batteries.

I keep at least three extra batteries on my body to help keep them warm. More batteries are even better.

I try not to put my camera between my outer jacket and body. That usually creates a cold pocket. During times of extreme cold, I have found that my body can get cold very quickly. Also carrying the camera in such a way can create moisture around the camera and when you bring it out to shoot in the cold weather that can cause problems. The best way I have found to carry a camera is in a small belly pack. If you have longer lenses, then a photo backpack might be necessary.

If you are going to shoot snow sports, chances are that at some point it's going to snow. If you don't have a cover for your camera and lens, use a shaving brush to whisk away flakes. A cloth tends to smear lenses and might cause your gear to freeze and malfunction. You can also protect your gear using a studio umbrella clamp to attach to your camera and an umbrella.

Freezing equipment can be a constant challenge- even when you get to go inside. If you head in after shooting outside in the cold, cover your equipment with a plastic bag so the warm moisture clings to the outside of the bag and not your equipment.

I like to use a hairdryer to warm and dry my shooting gear so everything is clear when I use it again.

Keeping your equipment warm enough to function is key, but it won't do you any good if you can't function.

Dress in layers. Start your clothing with good wicking undergarments and then layer up from there. That way if you have to trek across a trail and you get a little warm, you can store your top layers. Once you get to your location, you can bring the clothing out again. A breathable outer jacket is a must. It will wick moisture away from your body keeping you warmer and more comfortable.



John Egan skis the "Church," at Sugarbush Resort in Warren, Vermont. Keeping your body and your gear warm is key to getting skiing images like this, says photographer **Sandy Macys**. Photo by Macys courtesy Sugarbush Resort.

You'll also need warm insulated footgear and a good hat.

I pay special attention to my feet and fingers. When I put on my ski boots, I change into another pair of socks. You would be amazed at how much moisture accumulates in your socks just from the walk from your car to the mountain base. I use foot powder to keep my feet drier. Then I wear a pair of thin wicking socks. If you are shooting an event that involves a lot of standing, like a ski race, put a small insulated pad underneath your feet. It prevents the cold from transferring from the snow to your feet. If you are going to spend a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

Surviving the SHOT SHOW

BY KATIE MCKALIP

The holidays are over, your flight to Las Vegas is booked and you've reserved a room on the Strip. It can mean only one thing: SHOT Show is just around the corner. Are you ready?

Sportsmen and industry professionals travel from around the world to attend the Shooting, Hunting and Outdoor Trade Show, or SHOT Show. The show, which will take place Jan. 19-22 in 2016, is the largest and most comprehensive trade show for the shooting, hunting and related industries.

More than 65,000 people usually attend, including industry workers, government officials and media members.

SHOT offers a wealth of opportunities to advance your career — if you make the most of it.

Make a plan.

"For media, the best advice I can provide is to make a plan before arriving at the show," said **Bill Brassard**, director of communications for the **National Shooting Sports Foundation**, which owns and manages the SHOT Show. "This includes making appointments with people you need to interview or film — and also remembering to use NSSF press room staff as a resource for story ideas and contacts."

Glenn Sapir, former NSSF director of editorial services, seconded the value of the press room, which offers computers and printers as well as assistance with copying and faxes, for registered media attendees.

"Check your outerwear or luggage for free, grab a cup of coffee, review your schedule and begin your work day," Sapir said. "Get the schedule of press conferences from an NSSF representative at the counter and see which ones you believe will be worthwhile to attend. Use the press room as a good resting place and work station, but don't let its comfort prevent you from doing your job on the show floor."

Hit the show floor.

Remember those 65,000-plus other attendees? You will when you hit the show floor and the 635,000 square feet of exhibition space nears capacity. Visiting with

every one of the more than 1,600 exhibitors is impossible, so strategizing is essential. The website www.shotshow.org includes a complete list of exhibitors; review it before the show and pinpoint those you want to see. The SHOT website also offers navigational options, including an app, to help you plan the most efficient routes.

"If you don't focus, the show can be overwhelming," said SHOT veteran **Mark Taylor**. "Develop a list of priority companies or individuals and make those connections your top goal. Have your pitch or introduction ready to go, and keep it brief and to the point. Most importantly, follow up with those connections soon after the show."

Preparation is key, agreed media consultant **Jodi Stemler**. "Everyone who is exhibiting is typically stacked up with regular meetings or is out touring the show floor themselves," she said. "If you don't set up appointments before the show there's a good chance you won't be able to spend quality time with the companies and individuals most valuable for you to meet."

"Keep in mind that you need to book plenty of time between appointments because it can take a long time to traverse the show floor. It's really hard to line your schedule up so that all of your appointments are close together."

Relax.

Don't get overwhelmed. Longtime SHOT attendee **Jay Cassell** used to book appointments almost every half hour throughout the show.

"The last four or five years, I've backed off on that, and now make very few appointments," he said. "This gives me the opportunity not only to renew old contacts but make new ones — and view new gear that I otherwise might have missed."

Journalist T. Edward Nickens splits the difference.

"I'm always torn between making appointments with the people I know I want to meet and having enough time to wander the floor, discover all the cool new stuff out there and meet new folks," he said. "So I stack my appointments back-to-back in the mornings and try to leave the afternoons open for exploring. And hitting the free beer

in the late afternoon, of course."

You laugh, but don't overlook the value of informal social gatherings.

"Find the hot lunch — seriously," said **PJ DelHomme**, Bugle magazine hunting editor. "After a couple years of eating hot dogs, I realized various media events and lounges near the press room offer good, free food, as long as you are working press and (this the key) register for the event beforehand. Once you register as media with NSSF, you'll get more lunch invites than you have time for. It's also a good chance to bump into editors and make small talk. Free food and a captive editor. What could be better?"

Check out the products.

While face-to-face meetings are valuable, just as important is SHOT Show's main event: the firearms, ammo, knives, apparel, optics and related products. Make time to visit the new products area to see the innovative items being exhibited. The Industry Day at the Range, which happens the day before the show opens, lets you try new gear. It's too late to snag an invite for 2016, but ask exhibitors to include you on invitee lists for next year's show.

Press kits are available at exhibitor booths and in the press room. You also can ask exhibitors to send you informational materials after the show. They can obtain your contact info by scanning your badge — a handy shortcut that not only saves time but keeps you from hauling a 50-pound briefcase of product literature by day's end.

Speaking of the ends of those very long days — use them wisely. Back at your hotel, review your notes, file business cards and other materials you want to keep, and jettison the rest. Beyond that, get some rest. You don't have to resist the siren song of Las Vegas' nightlife entirely, but try to indulge judiciously. ■



OWAA Supporter Liaison Katie McKalip is communications director of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers. She looks forward to seeing many of you at SHOT.

Master mass marketing with basic email etiquette

BY ROBIN FOLLETTE

It happens to all of us. We sit down to sift through email, deleting the junk mail, flagging the important pieces and reading our favorites first.

And there it is, the email that was mass sent to multiple recipients. Every time a recipient hits “reply all” you’ll get that email again. Your risk of spam and viruses just increased. Your email address has been shared with strangers. When it happens too often it’s enough to make anyone want to hit “unsubscribe.”

Our press releases, book reviews and other media documents are an important part of our communication within the industry. These tips will help you manage the email aspect of your business without creating unnecessary headaches and losing potential clients, customers and contacts.

1. You’ve rented the list of email addresses from an organization of which you’re a member. It’s a great idea. You know everyone on the email list shares a common interest. You can introduce yourself, send a press release and otherwise communicate with the members. What should you do first? Read the guidelines for using the list.

2. Always “bcc” the email addresses. Ev-

eryone belongs to the same organization but most are not friends or even acquaintances. Using the “To:” line shares private email addresses. If one member forwards that email to someone outside the organization, they’ve shared those addresses with strangers. Sharing email addresses in this manner increases the risk of spam and viruses.

Sharing emails in the “To:” line provides the email addresses to people who might not have not paid for the right to use the list. It also allows people to accidentally hit “reply all,” flooding inboxes and sometime sharing information not intended for the whole group. If someone forgets to use “bcc” you should not hit “reply all” when you respond.

3. If you forget to use “bcc,” own the mistake. We forget, we get busy and accidents happen. Apologize quickly and sincerely to anyone who complains. Don’t argue or make excuses to those who point out the error.

4. Don’t sneak unpaid use of a membership list. Administrators will remember your personal and business names. You want to protect your ability to use the list in the future.

5. Email is often the first impression you’ll make. Always be professional. Use appropriate greetings and closings. Spell check. Make your signature relevant to your

email.

6. Resize photos. Outdoor writers might be reading from places so remote there’s little signal to download email. Clearly label your photos. PIC000123456 looks like spam. “Maine Moose Hunt” or “Kayaking Utah” is eye catching.

7. Send photos as attachments rather than inline. This keeps photos from being sent back and forth in replies.

If you’re having an unusual number of email problems you can create an email address specifically for membership lists. It’s fairly easy to change that address when necessary. Keep a list of which organizations need the new address.

Make the most of the membership list. The contacts are invaluable as friendships and business relationships are formed. Use the list, and use it wisely. ■



Robin Follette has been homesteading in the woods of Maine for over 25 years. She hunts, fishes, gardens, forages and raises most of her family's food. She is a Hooked On Fishing – Not On Drugs instructor and leads outdoor skills workshops.
<http://robinfollette.com>

Minor changes made to Illustration/Graphic Excellence in Craft Contest rules

On Oct. 31, 2015 the Board approved an update to the Illustration/Graphic Contest rules to include submissions of fine art pieces. In accordance with current Photography Contest rules, pieces sold or donated to nonprofit organizations as fine art may now be entered in the contest. This change in rules is effective for the 2016 EIC Contests. Updated language and entry forms can be found on the EIC website: www.owaa.org/eic.

WELCOME TO OWAA



While growing up, **Pete Anderson's** father took him and his brother to lakes and rivers across upstate New York. As a fourth-grader, he wrote about those angling adventures, which his teacher compiled into a book. And at the State University of New York at Plattsburgh, he studied environmental science and journalism. Today he lives in Gastonia, North Carolina., where he spent the last of nearly 20 years editing newspapers and a magazine. His first freelance article was published in 2003. Eleven years later he began a full-time pursuit of freelance editing and writing assignments, covering fishing, boating, travel, auto racing and business. His recent work has appeared in print. When he isn't working or helping his wife Angela renovate their home, he is competing in bass tournaments on nearby lakes or chasing muskies in small mountain rivers or at his favorite fishing hole, the St. Lawrence River's Thousand Islands region.



Eric Arnold is a freelance writer, photographer and publishing editor for Wildlife Control Technology magazine. While Arnold focuses on fur trapping and the wildlife control industry, he has also written multiple articles related to photography, computers, general business, hunting and air rifles. One of his favorite works covers a five year struggle helping his father take his second white-tailed deer, a 140-plus class 234 pound Ohio bruiser in 2014. Arnold's philosophy is that knowledge is worthless without the ability to communicate and he stresses this point in his writing and training events. He is an Ohio Hunting and Trapping Instructor and considered one of the top wildlife control industry trainers. Arnold has also produced "The Beginner's Beginning Guide to Fur Trapping" and "A Guide to Buying and Using Cage Traps" educational DVDs along with several DVDs specific to the wildlife control industry.



Scott A. Davis, Sr. is the host of Urban Hunting TV out of Nashville, Tennessee. He has is an avid hunter and continues to pursue all of his favorite game, large and small. He grew up in Louisiana, a sportsman's paradise, and re-located to Tennessee more 20 years ago. He has learned to pursue game in the suburbs and residential land blocks of the city and pioneered the art of urban hunting. His TV show and articles chronicle the methods, tactics, and means by which to "live life on the outside." He does not have a chosen method of pursuit, and he is adept with harvesting whitetails with a bow, muzzleloader, or rifle. He is also just as likely to pull out the air rifle and small game hunt in the neighborhood. He is proof that the outdoor way of life can be enjoyed regardless of your surroundings.



Peter Demma is an outdoor writing student from Toronto, Canada. He is an avid angler and an all-around outdoor enthusiast. His main interests are in learning and writing about threatened and endangered species and how they are declining or rebounding. He is also an avid wildlife photographer. Demma, although in his infancy when it comes to outdoor writing and photography, hopes to hone his skills and become a successful contributor to various publications and causes around North America.



Bobby Harrison is an award winning nature photographer, speaker, writer and educator based in Huntsville, Alabama. He holds a bachelor's in photography and a master's in media technology. He is currently the director of the photojournalism program at Oakwood University where he is an associate professor. Harrison is a former contributing editor to Living Bird Magazine and a contributing writer and photographer for Creation Illustrated. His work has appeared in numerous other publications. Harrison has won numerous national and international photography awards throughout his 30 year career. In 2005 he was elected a fellow of the Explorers Club in New York City. In 2006 one of his photographs was selected by Nature's Best Photography Magazine as one of the top 100 nature images of the decade. He is a charter member of the North American Nature Photography Association, and served on its board of directors from January 2001 to February 2004.



Sam Hudson is a senior editor at Sport Fishing magazine, a leading saltwater fishing publication. In 2007, he graduated from the University of Florida's College of Journalism and Communications with a bachelor's degree in journalism. During that time period, the Florida Gators won two basketball and one football national championships in back-to-back-to-back fashion. In the last eight years, he has held different editorial staff positions at Florida Sportsman, Shallow Water Angler, Salt Water Sportsman, Fly Fishing in Salt Waters and Sport Fishing. Hudson loves to experience, photograph and write about the endless saltwater fishing opportunities available in the U.S., Caribbean and beyond. In May 2017, he will graduate from the University of Central Florida with a master's degree in business administration. When not at the office, in class or on assignment, you can find him kayak fishing for speckled trout and redfish in the shallow waters of central Florida's Mosquito Lagoon.



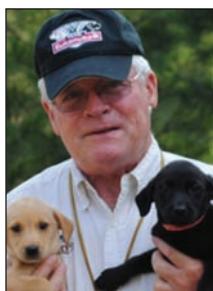
Roger W. Janssen is a lifelong resident of Flandreau, South Dakota. He was raised in the pheasant fields of the prairie. Along with pursuing pheasants, he hunted for rabbits and squirrels. At his father's side he quickly understood that respect was the key to any successful outing. Whether fishing, hunting, camping or simply being outdoors, respect for the landscape and game comes naturally for him. Writing about his experiences and collecting and publishing stories of others with a similar understanding of the outdoors is what he likes to do best. Janssen has nearly 40 years of print experience whether it is in the newspaper he works for or in The Outdoorsmen Magazine, an outdoor publication he has produced for the past 11 years. Janssen has been married to his wife Linnea for 40 years and raised two boys, Zach and Jeremiah, instilling the same love and respect for the outdoors his father taught him.



Chip Laughton is a full-time sporting lifestyle photographer, specializing in hunting, fishing and sporting dogs. He lives in North Carolina with his wife Kelly, black lab Zach and English cocker spaniel Bodie. His images are regularly featured in Covey Rise, Shooting Sportsman, Sporting Classics, Ducks Unlimited, Pheasants Forever, Quail Forever, Ruffed Grouse Society, Trout, Retriever Journal, Pointing Dog Journal, Just Labs, Gun Dog, Wildlife in North Carolina, Click, the Orvis Company catalogs, and in calendars and to illustrate books. Laughton is also a columnist for Just Labs magazine. His travels take him from Florida to Alaska; from the Gulf coast salt marshes to the prairies of the Dakotas; and from the islands to the mountains. Laughton is available for assignments, corporate shoots, website imagery, product shots and private commissions. He also has a large stock library of images available to meet your editorial and commercial needs.



Ben Long is a lapsed member of Outdoor Writers Association of America who came to his senses and re-upped after a brief absence. Long is a graduate of the University of Idaho journalism school and has written for newspapers, magazines and books, particularly on outdoors, wildlife and natural resource issues for more than 25 years. He is now senior program director for Resource Media a non-profit public relations firm serving clients in the conservation and public health fields worldwide. He is a contributor to Montana Outdoors, Bugle and Outdoor Life magazines, among others. He has won regional awards for his work in human rights, literature and conservation. He lives in Kalispell, Montana, with his wife Karen Nichols and their son Aidan. He is on the board of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers. Follow him at Twitter @BenLong1967.



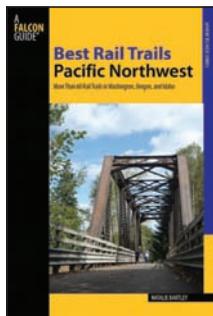
In 1996, **Robert Milner** sold Wildrose Kennels, a retriever training kennel he owned and operated since 1972. That year he also retired from the U.S. Air Force Reserve after 26 years of service as a disaster response officer. Those two paths crossed again in 2002 when Milner got a call from the Memphis Fire Department requesting his assistance with its disaster search dog program. He went to work rebuilding the program. Slow progress led him to reexamine the traditional dog training model. He adopted B.F. Skinner's positive training model which sped up the training program by 300 percent. He currently writes the gun dog column for American Waterfowler and just published his fourth dog training book, "Absolutely Positively Gundog Training." He owns and operates Duckhill Kennels in Somerville, Tennessee, breeding and training Labrador Retrievers for gun dogs and disaster search and explosive detection. His website is www.duckhillkennels.com.



Chris O'Brien is an information officer for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources where he writes and edits a variety of communications related to conservation and outdoor recreation. Born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, he grew up tromping through fields, woods and marshes – and chasing muskies on northern Wisconsin lakes with religious fervor. Since graduating from Winona State University in 2000, he has also worked as a touring songwriter and guitar player, a staff editor for North American Fisherman magazine and a fly-fishing guide. He lives on the outskirts of St. Paul, Minnesota with his wife, Kim, their young son Henry and a shepherd/lab/cougar mix named Lucille.

BOOKSHELF

Best Rail Trails Pacific Northwest; More Than 60 Rail Trails in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, Second Edition

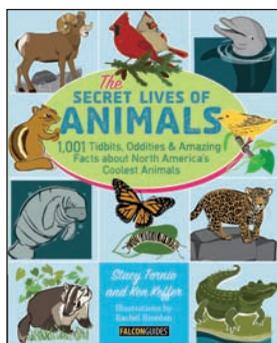


By **Natalie Bartley**; Falcon Guides; paperback and e-book; 368 pp., 71 photographs and 49 maps; \$24.95 and \$23.99.

Best Rail Trails Pacific Northwest is the complete guide to walking, jogging, biking, and cross-country skiing along more than sixty of the best rail trails in one of the most beautiful and geographically varied reaches of America. Written by a local author with expert knowledge of the region, this easy-to-use book provides mile-by-mile descriptions of the most unique rural and urban rail trails

in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, plus teaser descriptions of some of the region's other rail trails—from Washington's Elliott Bay Trail that passes through four Seattle waterfront parks, to Idaho's Route of the Hiawatha Rail Trail, renowned for its tunnels.

The Secret Lives of Animals: 1,001 Tidbits, Oddities, and Amazing Facts about North America's Coolest Animals



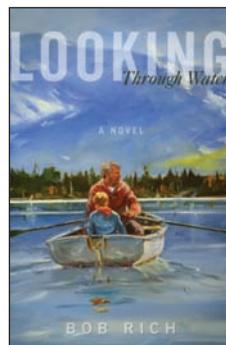
By **Ken Keffer** and Stacy Tornio, Illustrations by Rachel Riordan; Falcon Guides, an imprint of Globe Pequot Press; softcover; 254 pp.; \$19.95.

As kids who grew up in the great outdoors, Stacy Tornio and Ken Keffer know how powerful animals can be when it comes to getting kids outside. It's almost magical — kids can't resist the lure of the monarch butterfly fluttering from flower to flower or the green frog hopping near a stream. Those big animals are fascinating too — the bison

roaming the prairie, the whale jumping in the ocean and the alligator lurking in the swamps. Animals are cool and kids know it.

Now all those cool animal facts are compiled in one place. "The Secret Lives of Animals" features more than 100 animals found in North America and a whopping 1,001 facts about these species.

Looking Through Water



By **Bob Rich**, BobRichBooks.com; Skyhorse Publishing; hardcover; \$24.99.

The author of several nonfiction fishing books, Bob Rich takes on the role of a raconteur in his first novel.

"It's an adventure and love story; filled with conflict, emotion and healing," Rich said. "It has guns, shooting, dying set against backdrops I've always loved; Manhattan, the Adirondacks and the Florida Keys, with fishing too."

Sales benefit Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing. The respected business leader and

author is the chairman of Rich Products.

For a fun, upbeat interview with Rich, please contact Pete Johnson, Johnson Communications at 480-951-3654 or JohnsonCom@aol.com.

Nature Guide to Yellowstone National Park

By **Ann and Rob Simpson**; Falcon Guides, an imprint of Rowman & Littlefield, falcon.com; paperback and eBook; 288 pp., over 300 color photographs; \$16.95.



The ultimate national park, Yellowstone has been dubbed the "Serengeti of North America." Home to bison, elk, bighorn sheep, bear, moose, and wolves, park visitors often witness dramatic life and death encounters in the wild. "Nature Guide to Yellowstone National Park" is an easy-to-use field guide written to help visitors identify over 200 species of mammals, birds, butterflies, insects, fish, wildflower-

ers, mushrooms, and more. Small enough to toss in a backpack the book is packed with information to help Yellowstone's 3.5 million visitors learn about and enjoy their outdoor experience including suggested nature hikes and wildlife viewing areas, charts for driving times, visitor services, maps, and photo tips. As biologists, photographers, and writers, Ann and Rob Simpson have designed this book to engage and inspire visitors to learn about and conserve the nature of Yellowstone. ■



Kathleen Snow is a three-time novelist whose first nonfiction book will be published in 2016 by Lyons Press, an imprint of Rowman & Littlefield. "Taken by Bear in Yellowstone National Park: The History of Bear Attacks Told by Those Involved," includes many archival photographs and on-the-scene drawings. It covers the history of bear-human interactions from 1870 to 2015. It is sympathetic to Yellowstone's bears as well as to human victims. Snow's journalism has appeared in Harper's Magazine, Women in Natural Resources, Where New York, the American Journal of Nursing and the Missoulian, among others. Her new mystery novel, also set in Yellowstone National Park, will be published in late 2015 by the University of Montana Press. Snow grew up in southern Indiana, where she read the book "Indiana Outdoors: A Guide to Wild Crops, Fishing and Hunting" by Bill Scifres.

OWAA's annual conference: Billings, Montana, July 16-18, 2016

A wilderness adventure by car Exploring the Beartooth Highway

At nearly 11,000 feet, the top of the Beartooth Highway winds through open alpine plateaus carpeted with a spectacular array of mountain wildflowers.

Like a diorama, the mountainscape affords 360-degree views of the Absaroka and Beartooth Mountains. Carved by giant ice masses, the granite peaks and precipitous cliffs are as spectacular as they are unforgetting.

Designated as a National Scenic Byway All-American Road, the Beartooth Highway connects Red Lodge, Montana, to Cooke City, Montana – a gateway community to Yellowstone National Park. While many travel the road on the way to Yellowstone, the Beartooth Highway, starting an hour outside of Billings, Montana, is stunning in its own right and a must-see and drive for those visiting the area.

Shimmering glacial lakes dot the landscape. A short hike to one of these lake shorelines and you'll find water so clear, the lake bottom is visible at every depth.

The highway, which opened in 1937, is considered something of an engineering marvel. Winding 68 miles through pristine forests, alpine tundra and spectacular mountain vistas, it crosses one of the highest and most rugged wilderness areas in the lower 48 states. The drive is also unique in that it passes through a series of diverse ecosystems.

Day trippers can easily make a loop from Billings over the Beartooth Highway through the northwest corner of Yellowstone National Park then back through Gardiner, Montana.

The journey starts south of Red Lodge, where Hwy 212 enters the Custer National Forest. The byway wraps around the base of Wapati Mountain before climbing toward a series of switchbacks where the road begins a series of steep hairpin turns and twists up the mountainside. At the midway point, take time to stop at Rock Creek Vista for



The Beartooth Highway is known as a destination unto itself. It offers a chance to experience the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness by car. Photo courtesy Visit Billings.

a cinematic look at Rock Creek Canyon and Hellroaring Plateau.

As you continue the drive, be on the lookout for wildlife – this is home for marmots, elk, mule deer, black bear, grizzly bear and wolves. This rocky plateau is the preferred habitat for mountain goats, their thick white coats blending with the last sheets of snow. Adults and juveniles can often be spotted along this vista, unconcerned with the steady stream of vehicles below.

The lanes are narrow, but frequent pullouts allow visitors the opportunity to stop and admire the views or take short hikes. Don't be surprised if you suddenly find yourself driving through thick, billowy clouds which roll frequently across the mountain.

As the byway snakes across the top of the Beartooth Plateau, grand vistas appear. The awe of surrounding mountain ranges vies with the alpine tundra for attention. Both are equally compelling.



A pika peeks out of a rock along the Beartooth Highway. Keep your eyes open for wildlife along the highway. Its home to mountain goats and bears as well as small creatures like pikas. Photo by Jack Ballard.

Summer thunderstorms are frequent, seeming to appear almost instantly. Should you be lucky enough to experience one, you're in for a treat. The storm clouds are typically lower than the top of the mountain, giving a rare opportunity to watch lighting from above.

Curious changes in the landscape take



Plan time to get out of the car when you drive the Beartooth Highway. Photo courtesy Visit Billings.



The Beartooth Highway is famous for its incredible view. Photo courtesy Visit Billings.



You'll find flowers like Arctic Gentian along the Beartooth Highway. Photo by Lisa Ballard.

place as you drive the short distance over the top of mountain. Crumbled chunks of granite at the pinnacle turn to giant, smooth boulders and then to enormous outcroppings of geologic overthrust.

Glacial lakes come into view as you begin to descend. If you take a moment to hike to one of these icy cold lakes, you'll see a bounty of colorful rocks through the clear water.

The road continues down, hugging the steep mountainside. Just below 10,000 feet you pass back through the tree line, and stands of pines and aspen groves appear once again. Along the way, visitors will take in scenic waterfalls, streams and mountain lakes – perfect backdrops for picnicking or even an overnight camp.

Several historic markers and scenic outlooks help tell the story of the land and how the road was originally constructed. There is also information on the flora and fauna, and the diverse ecosystems within the wilderness area.

The Beartooth Highway officially ends at Cooke City, but the story is much grander than the 68-miles of roadway. Considered a “destination unto itself,” the Beartooth Highway allows travelers to experience the wonders of the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness by car. ■

If you go ...

Open from the end of May until mid-October, the Beartooth Highway reaches nearly 11,000 feet in elevation. At that altitude, weather conditions can change quickly, and snow is possible anytime. Be prepared and be sure to bring the following items:

- Warm jacket
- Layered clothing
- Food and water
- Roadside safety kit
- Bear spray for hiking and picnicking
- Note: There is no cell phone service

OWAA's annual conference: Billings, Montana, July 16-18 2016

Fish, hike, write (and photograph)

Pre- and post-conference trips offer variety of adventures

The slate of pre and post-conference trips surrounding the 2016 Billings conference is growing weekly. Confirmed opportunities already include: a guided fly-fishing trip on the North Fork of the Shoshone River, a historical and cultural excursion to the Little Bighorn (Custer) Battlefield, an overnight excursion to visit sustainability projects in Yellowstone National Park, a backpacking and fishing adventure in the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness and a hike in the Beartooth Mountains. Other outings in the works include more fishing trips, a tour of Yellowstone exploring wildlife issues, a visit to Red Lodge and several others.

While many trips are open to all, some require you to be on assignment and others give priority to members with confirmed story assignments or regular contributions to media outlets. These sponsors and guides are seeking some reasonable assurance there will be a return in publicity on their investment of time and resources.

You'll find out if you need an assignment for a trip when you go to register at <http://owaa.org/2016conference/pre-and-post-conference-trips/>.

If you don't already have any assignments lined up, now is the time to do it. Start thinking about potential stories and outlets. Remember, you don't have to write for a fishing magazine to write a fishing story. There are a number of possibilities for assignments. Local newspapers often jump on travel stories from far-flung destinations. Specialty magazines sometimes run articles about a first-timer's experience with a sport. If you blog or have a website with a significant number of followers that may constitute a regular outlet if you include the trip in a posting.

Have questions? Feel free to contact local chair, **Jack Ballard**, for more information. 406-696-9841 or jackballard62@msn.com.

Fishing the North Fork Shoshone River

Location: North Fork Shoshone River

Trip Date: July 14

Description: Join Tim Wade, a nationally renowned fishing guide and outfitter for a walk-wade trip. You'll cast for native Yellowstone cutthroat trout and might even see a grizzly bear.

Cost: Complementary except tips. Must buy fishing license in advance.

Photo courtesy Jack Ballard



Southeast Montana and Billings historic tour

Location: Museums and national monuments in the Billings region. Leave from the hotel.

Trip Date: July 15

Description: Visit Pompeys Pillar National Monument, the Custer Battlefield Museum and the Yellowstone County Museum with a guide from Visit Billings. You'll see artifacts, learn about the Lewis and Clark expedition and walk among the headstones of Custer's troop.

Cost: Complementary. Lunch on your own.

Photo courtesy Visit Billings

Yellowstone sustainability tour

Location: Yellowstone National Park

Trip date: July 13-14

Description: Spend two days in Yellowstone National Park touring unique energy and sustainability projects, while also visiting natural features like Old Faithful. Overnight accommodations and transportation in the park are provided.

Cost: For updated information check the conference website <http://owaa.org/2016conference/pre-and-post-conference-trips/>.

Photo courtesy Toyota



OWAA's annual conference: Billings, Montana, July 16-18 2016

Follow the money

Learn investigative skills at free workshop before conference

Whether you write about hunting and fishing, gas and oil development, or other outdoor issues, chances are there's a political aspect to your story. For example, ever wonder what states – and individuals – were the beneficiaries of more than \$977 million in donations from the energy and natural resources industries during the past decade? Did you know that contributions to ballot measure committees working to support or oppose hunting and wildlife measures total \$24 million? Guess who received some of the \$26 million in contributions from supporters of alternate energy production and services?

Representatives from the non-partisan, non-profit National Institute on Money in State Politics will lead a workshop at 2 p.m. Friday, July 15, in Billings, Montana, the day before OWAA's annual conference officially kicks off.

You'll learn how to follow the political money in your state and across state lines. Using computer assisted reporting, you can look through a database of 60 million records totaling more than \$60 billion, and learn who is trying to influence the decisions made in your neck of the woods. Bring along a story idea or two; after showing you how to navigate www.FollowTheMoney.org, staff will stick around for some hands-on use of their website. The workshop is free, as is the use of their database.

Register for the workshop at <http://owaa.org/2016conference/follow-the-money-workshop-registration/>. ■



Day hike in the Beartooth Mountains

Location: Beartooth Mountains

Trip Date: July 19

Description: Join OWAA and Montana resident **Lisa Ballard**, along with a representative from **Lowa Boots**, for a day hike in the scenic Beartooth Mountains. The trip leaves from the Holiday Inn Grand Montana. Carpool opportunities available.

Cost: Complementary

Sylvan Lake, Crow Lake backpacking and fishing tour

Location: Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness.

Trip Date: July 20-22

Description: Sylvan Lake is home to golden trout. Crow Lake is home to brook trout. You'll spend three days hiking through the Absaroka-Beartooth Wilderness and fishing. The hike is strenuous, but doable for reasonably fit individuals.

Cost: You'll need a Montana fishing license and your own backpacking and fishing gear. Participants also provide their own transportation to the trail head. No other costs other than tips in the form of an OWAA donation.

Photo courtesy **Jack Ballard** ■

Portfolio

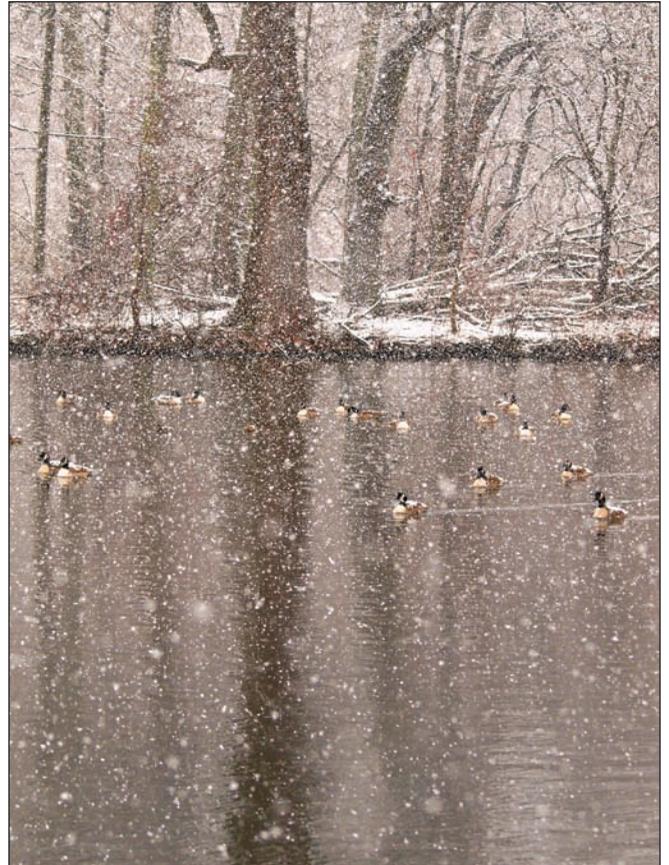
By Angelo Peluso



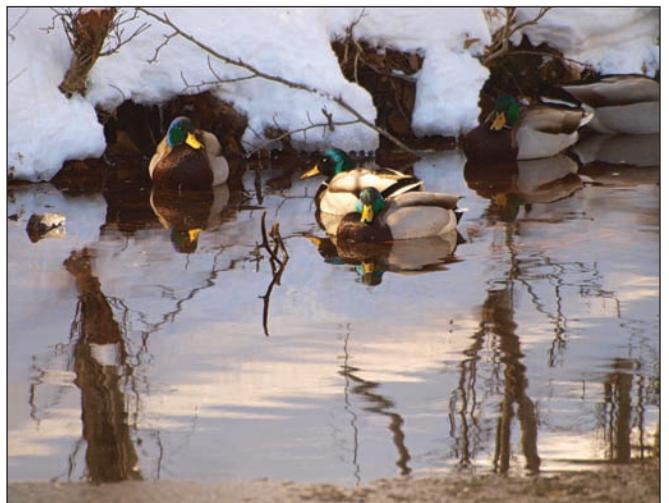
A solitary drake mallard was drawn to a small backwater pond to take some sun in an area sheltered from the elements. A natural spring kept the pond ice free throughout most of the winter.



Shore birds like this juvenile ring-billed gull, endure the winter months on Long Island, New York, traveling between resting ponds and feeding locations along the salt marshes.



The 2014-2015 winter on Long Island, New York, was extreme. These Canada Geese remained on Long Island and spent the long winter on a mill pond.



A group of young bachelor drakes hang out together on a sunny winter afternoon. Their small pond resists freezing due to moving water and underground springs.



While many American black ducks will winter on open lakes and ponds on Long Island, New York, many will spend their winters along the south shore salt marshes and bays



A gaggle of Canadian geese huddle to stay warm during one of many Long Island, New York, snow storms.



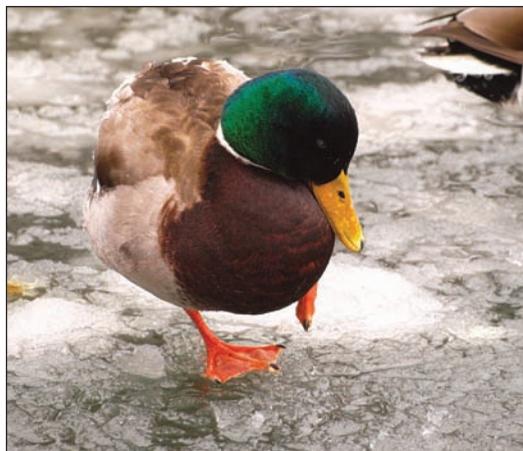
Two Canada Geese make the most of their circumstance as their wintering pond turns into an ice skating rink. Away from the rest of their flock this duo gets some shut-eye.



Two pairs of mallards try staying warm as snow lakes fall. The log is a popular resting location for waterfowl waiting out the winter.



(Far left) Two migrating mallard drakes make a pit stop at a partially frozen pond for a sip of cold water.



(Right) A mallard drake treads lightly on the ice and slush looking for a piece of open water.

Endangered Species Act faces extinction

BY RUTH RUDNER

“Nothing is more priceless and more worthy of preservation than the rich array of animal life with which our country has been blessed,”

Richard Nixon said on signing the Endangered Species Act in 1973. The goal of the act, to conserve species at risk of becoming extinct, requires protecting “critical habitat,” areas with the features necessary for survival of the listed species.

Or, it’s supposed to.

Not long after being sworn in, the 114th Congress began a focused attack on our vulnerable wildlife, and the public lands on which it depends. This Congress, the first ever to intervene in the listing process, seems generally blind to the connection between the health of the earth and the health of humans living on the earth. Willing to put politics above science, this Congress seems perfectly willing to put politics above everything. Since January 2015, Congress has introduced more than 45 bills that would undermine the Endangered Species Act, either by prohibiting listing a specific species, delisting specific species, requiring a governor’s approval before listing, or automatically delisting all species after five years. Because removing a species (or adding one) to the Endangered Species List isn’t Congress’s job, doing so means acting outside the law.

Is wildlife a legitimate political tool? And, if it is, how vulnerable is the landscape in which we hunt, fish, climb, hike, film, write? Who do anti-wildlife laws benefit? How sacred is the Endangered Species Act?

The act has been effective. Bald eagles, peregrine falcons, gray wolves, grizzly bears, Florida manatees, American alligators and black-footed ferrets are all species the act’s protections rescued

from the brink of extinction.

I had my own small part in this when I spent a summer in Montana’s Gallatin Range as a peregrine falcon hack-site attendant. When 13 years later peregrines were officially removed from the list, it was not only a triumph for the falcon, but for the government agencies, state and provincial wildlife departments, private organizations, falconers, biologists and ordinary people who worked 30 years to recover this magnificent bird. At the celebration for this success, all of us who had a part in it were asked to stand and shout, “Victory!” It was a monumental shout coming out of the gut of a thousand people at once.

That pride remains palpable for me. I imagine it when I think of wolves, brought back from an edge of extinction in the Lower 48 states only to experience a tenuous hold on their right to exist.

The choice to protect our natural heritage, to preserve the wildlife and wild lands which are a source of our well-being, is a choice each of us can offer readers or viewers. Presenting glimpses of what is at stake, what it means when any part of an ecosystem is endangered, how every part is then affected, seems to me the job of the outdoor communicator. We need the science to be correct. We need to know that balanced ecosystems take nothing away from any of us. We need to value what is wild. ■



Ruth Rudner is a Montana writer living in New Mexico, but on her way back to being a full-time Montanan. An OWAA member for over 30 years, she is the author of hundreds of articles and 13 books, most of which revolve around wild places and wildlife.

OWAA’s financial statements available online

To see OWAA’s annual financial review statements, log-in to the “Member’s Area” on OWAA website at visit <http://owaa.org/members-area/990s-financial-statements/>.



THE VOICE OF THE OUTDOORS®

“When I joined OWAA 20 years ago, I had just crossed a career threshold - I turned away from an office job and followed my love of the outdoors. The transition was scary but led to full-time work as an outdoors writer and photographer. I’m not big on absolutes, but here’s one that has proven itself for two decades: the networks, relationships and skills I developed by joining OWAA and attending OWAA conferences were the most important to my new career.”

— PAUL SMITH, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin, member since 1995



SUPPORTER SPOTLIGHT

Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition

Saving America's most important conservation program

Dysfunction in Washington has claimed another victim. On Sept. 30, Congress allowed America's most important conservation program to expire, putting our national parks, forests, wildlife refuges and outdoor recreation areas at risk.

For 50 years, the Land and Water Conservation Fund has kept a simple promise to the American people: when we allow offshore drilling for oil and gas on the lands and waters that belong to all of us, we have set aside a small portion of the proceeds to protect America's greatest places. When lawmakers refused to renew the fund at the end of September, that link between resource extraction and investment in the parks and outdoor places that make America great disappeared.

This is of particular concern to hunters, anglers and anyone who enjoys the great outdoors. The fund was the best tool we had to provide and improve access to public lands. The best game lands and national forests we protected as a nation could now be locked away behind private tracts of land.

The most ingenious aspect of the Land

and Water Conservation Fund is that it did not use any taxpayer money — zip, zero, nada. Oil extraction profits from offshore drilling funded it — that's why it was so popular with the American people and also why anti-conservation politicians are so eager to get their hands on it.

This small but influential group of politicians stalled and ran out the clock on the fund this year. They are now scheming to raid the fund and spend what should be dedicated conservation dollars on special interest projects.

What is so frustrating is that this is an entirely manufactured crisis. If leadership in Washington allowed a straight up or down vote, renewing the fund would sail through the House and Senate with large bipartisan majorities — something you rarely see in Washington these days. The program would then be permanently authorized.

Outdoorsmen and women from across the country are fighting back against this brazen assault on America's greatest places. Hunters, anglers, the outdoor recreation industry, governors, mayors, outdoor business owners, conservation leaders, landowners,

ranchers, farmers and millions of individuals are united in the push for permanent reauthorization and full funding of the Land and Water Conservation Fund because it protects and strengthens the lands that belong to all of us.

We are emboldened by bipartisan conservation champions like Senators Richard Burr (R-NC), Steve Daines (R-MT) Kelly Ayotte (R-NH), Jon Tester (D-MT), Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Martin Heinrich (D-NM), among others, who are fighting every day for our shared outdoor heritage.

We must not allow a small group of ideological politicians to raid the trust fund and we will not rest until Congress listens to the will of the people and saves America's most important conservation program.

The **Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition** is the umbrella organization of more than 1,000 of the most influential national, state and local conservation and recreation organizations working to save and strengthen America's most important conservation program. Find out more about our advocacy at LWCFcoalition.org and @LWCFCoalition. ■

Cold weather photography

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

lot of time shooting skiing, investing in heated ski boots is worth it.

The other part that gets cold on me are my fingers. I've seen photographers shooting with fingerless gloves so they can feel the camera and change settings. I can't imagine doing this. I shot photos of fireworks one evening and it was so cold with the wind that my camera froze. While changing to another camera and lens, my finger blistered from frostbite. So I believe in insulating.

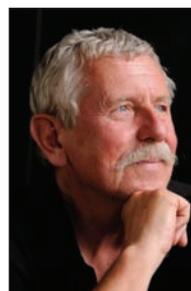
I used to wear army woolen liners while shooting. When not shooting, I put my hands into mittens. But I found that a good pair of hunting mittens with removable thin glove liners keeps my fingers manageably comfortable. Usually those mittens come with a pocket which allows you to put small hand heaters inside. With these types of mittens I can keep my hands protected and still get the photos I need. Be smart. Know your body and how far you can push it without getting in trouble.

Also know in advance what the assignment might entail. If I am shooting off-piste, or away from groomed ski runs, I bring a compass and GPS just in case. I adopted this practice after hunt-

ing in an area I knew while it was snowing. After about an hour of walking in a course I thought was straight, I came upon my own boot prints.

Let people know where you're headed and what you plan to do. Pay attention to weather reports and if applicable, avalanche warnings. And if possible, don't ski after 3 p.m. It gets even colder extremely fast as it gets dark.

No matter what, take what you can in your pack. No matter where you are shooting, in the backcountry, or at a ski resort, bad weather can move in fast. Be prepared, stay warm and create the images those unwilling to brave the cold can't get. ■



Sandy Macys is a staff photographer for Sugarbush Resort in Warren, Vermont, where he takes photos of skiing, mountain biking, hiking, fishing and other outdoor activities. He also freelances for various publications including the New York Times, Los Angeles Times and the Boston Globe. His headshot was taken by Carolyn Bates.

2015 Norm Strung Youth Writing Awards

Senior prose, First place

Those treasured weeks of November

BY BROOKE COTE

Cook Minnesota

I wake up abruptly from an unfathomable sleep; all I can hear is the relentless beeping of my irksome alarm clock. It's 4:30 a.m., and I just want to dive deep back into the warmth and sanctuary of the bubble of blankets on my borrowed single bed. But only for an instant, only until I grasp the fact that it is opening morning of deer season, 9 miles south of Grand Rapids. My adoration for this sport is indescribable, a family tradition, a passion, an obsession.

Hunting white-tailed deer used to be a chore in my family. My grandpa would wake up my mom and uncle by rudely kicking the feet of their beds saying, "Get up! It's daylight in the swamp!" Then it was more a need to fill the freezer than to hunt for sport, and from my mom's perspective, tremendously unpleasant. Things were very different then than they are now.

Nowadays, we use the three treasured weeks in November designated to open rifle season to spend time with each other, eat delicious home-cooked meals, and pass down a tradition that originated many generations before mine. I believe that the love for hunting is something that is something of nature, rather than nurture. You can never be forced to love something.

It started at an early age. My mom would wake me up at about 5:30 a.m. on opening day. She would animatedly ask me if I wanted to join her for the morning hunt. Groggily, I would agree and roll back over to sleep. Shortly after, my grandma would

come into the tiny guest bedroom at their house and tickle my feet to get me out of bed. I can tell you one thing for sure, it always got me out of that little twin mattress and mountain of blankets in a hurry!

At that point, she would have breakfast on the table. A pair of the most perfectly cooked and seasoned fried eggs, deliciously buttery toast, and a piece of thin-sliced deli ham sitting there, just for me. After that filling meal, I would don my layers of clothing, including my blaze orange hunting bibs and jacket that I found myself drowning in, because I wanted to be like all of the grown-ups in their bright outfits and not have to wear the childish, and very noisy snow pants.

I can remember the eagerness I felt as the group of us would walk to our designated stands. It was challenging trying to keep up with my papa and my mom. Most of the time I was more distracted by figuring out how to walk that certain silent way my papa walked in the woods: heel first, toes last—something I still have yet to master today.

If you walked those same trails that I have been for years and happened to look into one of our several deer stands, you can still make out the impression of a little girl trying to inaudibly amuse herself for the many hours of sitting and unwearingly waiting. Close to the floor of any one stand, on the walls, by the windows, on the door, are drawings in every hue of colored pencil you can think of. That was my favorite thing throughout my time in the stand. I would let my imagination construct stories out of images that I had scribbled on those ox board walls.

Around the age of 11, Papa entrusted me with the firing of my first rifle. I can picture it like it was yesterday. The apprehension I felt when I picked up that diminutive .22 was incredible. It felt so bulky, so alien, and so hazardous. Papa described the way to properly handle a gun, how to load it, where the safety was, and finally, how to squeeze that delicate trigger that would propel a lead bullet hurtling at a tin can approximately 15 yards away.

Years following, I was given the privilege to hunt in my very own deer stand! Painted burgundy, nestled in a serene clearing in the center of a cedar swamp, stood my personal utopia. It wasn't much, just a permanent stand, about 10 feet in the air, made out of 2 by 4s and old materials. It was the most incredible thing ever.

Now, at the age of 17, I neurotically sit in that same stand for hours on end. I enjoy the solitude and the skill it takes for the hunt. I can't get enough of it. My appetite for this sport hasn't been limited to just deer hunting. I have expanded my skill set and been fortunate enough to go on duck, pheasant, turkey, and elk hunts all around the United States.

The memories that I have of these practices with the people that I love are irreplaceable. These are the life learning experiences that I could never forget or overlook. The things that I have learned from the time I started sitting with my mom in her stand to the present are uncountable. My papa taught me how to shoot, but he could have never expected how much the first shot would be the catalyst to the beginning of a lifelong addiction. ■

Junior poetry, First place

Cycle

BY NATHAN JAMES PHUONG

Fort Wayne, Indiana

Wind whistles past my ears
 Small sprays of water
 Fountain behind my tires
 Gears slide
 I lurch forward on my bike

My eyes sting
 But I don't slow
 I slide and glide
 Over the glossy surface of the road
 But still retain my balance

Rain patters on
 The ground beside me
 Creating small rippling pools
 That reflect the sky's deep blue lighting

I approach a sharp turn
 My brakes screeching in protest
 And I whip past a tree
 Leaves speckling the road

Cattail fronds arc up beside me
 Springing back into place when I brush by
 Green stems uniformly bent
 In neatly spaced rows
 Wind swirls around me
 Tugging at my bike's pedals
 Sending a wave of cold through my jacket
 Blowing leaves around me into a frenzy

My lungs burn
 In the distance
 A faint outline sharpens
 The end of the road comes into view
 I descend the slope

My tires begin to steadily hum
 Pebbles shoot off my bike
 I plow through the end of the road
 White noise fills my ears

A mourning dove's call reverberates through the air
 Shattering the still oppressive silence
 I rest for a moment
 Then slowly begin a new trek
 Following another trail ■

Senior poetry, First place

Fish Catching

BY MICHELLE CHEN

Whitestone, New York

Ducks grow fat on water
 like unmoored hyacinths.
 I'll sit along the pier and let the brine

expand in my lungs:
 headstrong and luckless
 Love set you off like perennial blooms

in dwindling sea. The sun has turned the wooden
 cats febrile and rearing, wet hands tendering
 the Bastet-furred shorelines.

Memories of Lent anchor the flaunted symmetry
 of nymphet legs, revolving numbly
 in fanfares of cold drench.

I can hear the piper call of victory
 over wan medusa eyes, one flat legless fish
 the Ozymandias of them all.

Extinction hums between shaman knuckles,
 the valuable clutch of gazing flounder.
 Living and rotting, its mouth gaps in worldless ovals.

The water is treeless.
 Impatient,
 I prick myself on purpose.

I do it with hooks. There is an exceptional
 magnetism between fishhooks and fingertips
 when time evolves into shuddering gills and

chimneys punch through the roof of a fish's
 mouth house. Grapeleaves black and levee
 delicatessen flesh for us old dogs.

Nimbus clouds shade over my sister's
 Disappointment. Vermilion bait rings free
 On our empty hook. Their fish juts,

scales kissing the panicked dock, evergreen
 howl vanishing beneath chill surface, a miniature truss.
 Our fishhook arches curiously. She touches it also. ■

Junior prose, First place

It Was Big Enough

BY REESE BLAKENEY

Leesville, Louisiana

Kaboom!! A bullet came from the barrel of my Remington model 700 heading for the skin and bone of the biggest deer I had ever seen. As the trees moved out of the way of my bullet, doubt raced through my mind, “Was it big enough? He never looked at me, so I never got a good look at him.” I was worried because Jackson Point has a strict 15-inch rule.

Jackson Point is a “Sportsman’s Paradise” that my grandfather has been a part of since the 1980’s. It is a fertile piece of land nestled between Lake Mary and the Mississippi River. At about 2,000 acres, this land has plenty of room for deer to move around. Not only does Jackson Point have loads of deer, but also wild hogs, turkey, squirrels, and fish overturning the property. The old trees are loaded with all kinds of acorns and fruit for the deer to eat. The woods are made up of hardwood trees including white oak, persimmon, and huge cypress growing along the banks of the lake. I have seen three times more deer at Jackson Point than I have ever seen in all my other hunts combined.

Every year after Christmas, my grandfather, uncle, cousin and I go on a hunting trip to Jackson Point. We drive four hours to Fort Adams, a small, historic settlement with boarded-up churches and a gas station that is decorated with deer antlers. But we still have one more leg of the trip ... the leg that seems to take the longest, the 12-mile dirt road through the woods and off the grid. This part of our journey never goes smoothly. If we aren’t getting stuck in a giant slippery pothole, then we are wondering if the dirt bridge is even there anymore. Nicknamed “The Dump,” this flimsy excuse for a bridge has a soul-sucking dark, muddy water of doom on each side, and we fear that the truck and all of our belongings will slide in. Old oil wells and other junk line the last two miles of the road, and at this point Papaw always mentions how close Angola Prison is and how he hopes no inmates have recently escaped. When we finally get to Jackson Point, we breathe a deep sigh of relief.

On our first morning there, we all got up and dressed at five o’clock in the morning except for my younger cousin, Ty, who was the hardest to wake up out of all of us. It was like waking up a log. The four of us crammed into Papaw’s Kubota and rode off into the dark woods. It was cold and pitch-black, except where the headlights shone. A mixture of excitement and adrenaline filled us as we came to our first hunting spot. Uncle Tim and Ty jumped out and went to their stand, and we to ours. The frost was on the leaves, and I could see my breath. As daylight broke, we heard song birds chirping, crickets humming, and Papaw farting. I told him there wouldn’t be a deer within a mile of here as he pulled out of his pocket a meal fit for a king: an apple, two Nutrigrain bars and a pack of Stage Planks. He was like a chipmunk pulling out nuts from

its cheeks.

Now, for all of my hunting season, I’ve been told not to bring snacks, not to pass gas and not to pee, but Papaw did exactly those three things in the little time we sat in that stand. He told me that deer are attracted to his urine, not driven away from it. I was a little skeptical when he went out the door of the stand to urinate. I heard the trickle of urine, and then I heard the snapping of twigs. A yearling walked out sniffing the air as it went as if it were intrigued by the smell of fresh urine on the ground. Papaw came back into the stand and said while laughing, “I told you so.”

We decided to try a different spot a couple of hours later because Papaw had another place in mind. We walked four hundred yards away from our previous stand to a new one that had deer sign everywhere. He put me in the stand, handed me my rifle and left some fresh “deer attractant” at the base of the stand. Then, he was gone. There were animals everywhere, birds and squirrels. I was in the stand for not fifteen minutes before I saw a flash of horn two hundred yards away. Two four-points and two does walked in front of the stand, but this time I was not looking for the does; I wanted a big buck. So I waited. Those four came and passed. I saw a hawk swoop for some sparrows but miss. He landed in an old, gnarled oak tree in front of me. Before long Papaw was back, and it was time to make the short ride to the lodge for lunch.

We rode out for an evening hunt that afternoon when Papaw dropped me off at the stand. The surrounding area was full of white oaks and other food trees. Papaw had told me that deer love white oak. I heard some turkeys, but I never saw them. I was in the stand for forty-five minutes before two does walked out. I decided that if I could get a shot, I better take it. I only had one hunt left, so I waited for them to come to a clearing, which took probably an hour. Right before I was about to squeeze the trigger, I heard twigs breaking to my right. I turned slowly to find a spike standing in the brush with one of the earlier four points. “If it’s an 8-point, you can shoot him,” the words my grandfather had told me echoed in my head. Disappointed, I turned my head as far as it would go to find to my surprise, a large deer standing thirty yards from my stand.

He looked big.

He looked very big.

He looked big enough.

I was kind of worried how big the deer actually was, because it never turned towards me. I looked through the scope. My thoughts ran through my mind like a runaway train. He paused behind a large tree. All I could see was his head. It was excruciating to watch him from behind the tree. After what felt like hours, he moved. Figuring it was a large deer, I took the safety off my rifle, took rest on the wall of my stand, held my breath, squeezed the trigger, and prayed for the best. As I felt the kick of my rifle, memories came to my mind of the hunter’s safety course on year earlier. “After you fire that shot, you can never take it back,” the voice in my head told me.

The deer trotted slowly, tumbled around, and came to rest under a tree fifty yards from my stand.

Senior prose, Third place

The magic of the salt marsh

BY RYAN CHELIUS

Rockville Centre, New York

Just beyond the outskirts of New York City lies marshlands filled with abundant waterfowl and wildlife few know about.

During the hot summer days of June and July you will find fishermen, kayakers and birdwatchers enjoying the beauties of nature. It's a popular spot during the summer as everyone from the city and Long Island floods to the beaches to get some sun. As September turns to October and the temperatures start to drop into the 30s the marshlands become empty and new groups of winged visitors begin to fill the marsh. And then on a cool, crisp November day the marsh comes back to life as a different breed of people take to the sacred land. For most people Thanksgiving brings images of turkey, football and family. When I think of Thanksgiving I see a black duck over the decoys and hear the echo of a large 12 gauge across the bay. There is only a small group of us left but the hardcore Long Island duck hunters all do it because it's in our nature.

It's hard to know what motivates the salt marsh water-fowler. For some it's a flock of

brant coming down the channel; for other it's bufflehead buzzing over the decoys. I know for myself it's the entire hunt put together. The excitement of waking up at 4 a.m. not knowing what the day has in store. Riding down the channel with the cold air blowing in your face and the sound of 15-horse wide open. It has been a tradition of hunting Thanksgiving morning with my dad every year.

That hunt is a hunt I look forward to every year and has created memories I will forever cherish. My first black duck out on the marsh is one of those days you wish you could relive. Dad and I knew the tide was going to be perfect, and the excitement started to build. I can see the car lights in the distance as we started to pull up to the ramp. I step out of the car and I can feel the breeze coming off the bay. The sun starts to rise and more ducks began to fly. The first shots ring out over the marsh; I grip my gun tighter getting ready for a bird. Then in the corner of my eye a black duck swings low along the creek. I pull up and put the bead on the duck and BANG! A beautiful black duck floating in the creek.

I remember being so happy and seeing how proud my dad was that I was becoming a bayman. Dad was also able to knock a black duck, and together we had our limit of blacks. That day, that moment, I will never forget.

When it comes to hunting, Long Island is known for field goose hunts and big-water sea duck hunts. But there is a secret that lives out in small creeks of the bay. I don't know if people don't want to believe it or they just don't know. Long Island has some of the best black duck hunting in the country. Every year thousands of black ducks migrate to the shores of Long Island and there are very few people who invest the time and equipment to successfully hunt them. They are the king of the ducks-wary, intelligent and beautiful. If you shoot a black duck over your decoys you did something right. As a 16-year-old kid the saltwater bays speak to me like nothing else in the world. I don't shoot a dozen drake mallards in one hour like you see on TV. But when I shoot my one black duck for the day, I am grateful for the opportunity to hunt these bays I love so much. And I know that if there is a black duck in my boat at the end of the day, I hunted hard and did something right.

As January ends and the season comes to a close a sad feeling comes across me. But I know next November, just a few miles east of the biggest city in the United States, I will be able to find a very small creek with only the smell of low tide and the sound of wind against the marsh with a faint "quack" as a black duck in the distance spots my decoys. ■

Immediately, I called my uncle Tim on the radio and whispered, "Eight point!! Eight point!! On the ground!!" Uncle Tim replied "Attaboy!" I watched the other deer scatter in all directions, until the only one left was one little doe, who looked lost and confused without her mother. She came right beside my stand and darted off to the side.

After a few minutes, I heard

my buck breathe his last. I got down from my stand walked very slowly to where he was. To my surprise I discovered he was not an eight-point, but a nine-point! I sat and counted the points over and over until I was sure I was right. He was old. He had a fat face, which suggested his age. His twisted antlers were large and tall. The surface of his antlers felt like tree bark, rough on the bottom and smooth on

the top.

Uncle Tim, Ty, and Papaw rode up in the Kubota to see the monster I had sitting at my feet. He was so heavy, I struggled to hold his head up for pictures. It took three of us to load him into the Kubota. I was just happy we didn't have to drag him all the way back. As we shifted his weight to the bed of the vehicle, it tipped backwards then steadied out. We skinned the deer

and saved his head to mount. He weighed in at an astonishing 230 pounds with whopping twenty-five inch main beams, and a sixteen-inch spread. It was the biggest deer I had ever seen.

In the following hours, I relived the shot over and over in my mind. It all happened too fast. I wish I could have enjoyed it longer. I had just experienced "buck fever" as my cousin Ty calls it. ■

Junior poetry, Third place

Ode to the Conch Shell

BY SYDNEY SULLIVAN

Portland, Maine

Conch shell,
my fingers run across the delicate crevices
that guard your concealed treasure.
I follow the bumpy spiral with my index finger
Until my fingernail reaches the point.
I examine your perfect armor –
Pale yet rich brown
That fades into orange
Like a summer peach.

I turn you over to see the beauty you hold,
And your rosy insides dazzle my eyes.
I stroke the perfectly smooth surface
And follow that vibrant pink to the pearly white.
Your cool interior soothes my fingers,
sends shivers up my arms,

and eases my mind of stress.
I press you against my ear
and feel your smoothness against my temple.

Inside my ears adventures echo,
and I reflect on vacation.
I remember how I persisted,
how I discarded broken or cracked shells,
determined to find the perfect one.
Finally I found you
when I was just giving up,
a gift from the sea,
and you became my own.
To anyone else
your echo
would be the sound of ocean waves.
But to me it's my stubbornness,
my determination,
a bit of my personality,
all in a conch shell. ■

Senior poetry, Second place

Dear Mother

BY DEANNA ALTOMARA

Mahwah, New Jersey

Dear Mother,
I remember suckling on Your warmth
as You spread Your Light across the meadows
in storms of monarch butterflies,
how You cradled me in the palm of Your
calloused hand
as I inhaled the periwinkle air of twilight.
And You slowly wrapped me in Your arms,
cloak by cloak, leaf by leaf, storm by storm
as I grew into what I am

today.
Mother, can't You remember?
Mother, it's been so long.

Here I stand, short of stumbling
as smoke paints Your sky with Gray
as the wind whips grits of sand and concrete
against my sunburned face like the
jewels woven into the braided hair of a
widowed bride.

Mother, I try not to tremble
when my faithful leaves suffocate, as my
heart chokes
with fear, and sap leaks down my hollowed
cheeks.

Why can a thousand-year-old amber be

destroyed in
three fleeting days?
Why can I see the horizon creep closer,
closer, tucking away Your sunset glow?
Your crown fading silver to black as it
wisps into
fogs of methane and poison gas that
shrivels from within my fingers
and slowly rots my past.

Mother, it stings when they slice their axes
through my throat.
Mother, Mother,
How could You have abandoned me so? ■

Junior poetry, Second place

How to Be a Hawk

BY ALEX DIETZ

Zanesville, Ohio

Feel the wind on your face.
 Soar across the sky
 with your huge span:
 five feet of bronze wings flapping.
 Focus on the mouse running away.
 Scoop him up.
 Think: "My chicks are hungry."
 Screech as you spy other animals,

and watch them retreat
 to holes, nests, crevices.

Enjoy beign the predator.
 Sink your shimmering gray talons
 into the wing
 of a vulture: a common fight
 for your territory.
 Bring him down.

Soar across the land feeling
 proud of your hawk's sight.

Rule the air. ■

Junior prose, Third place

Bringing home the bacon

BY RAMSAY SMITH

Paw Paw, Michigan

Climbing into the stand, I inhaled the cold, fresh air. I wasn't nervous, for this was my first year out hunting with the bow in my hands, and I didn't know that I should be nervous.

Dad, climbing up behind me, handed me the new cross-bow that I had wanted for years. Its strings were new and strong, and it felt good to be holding it. I was new at hunting. All my life my dad had gone, and I always waited excitedly for him to come home, with a deer or without. Most years he would bag a big 8-point buck, or a nice doe. Sometimes I would go out with him, but only when he had the bow, because the gun was too loud and scary for me.

When I first got my license, Dad asked what firearm I would want to use. I told him a bow was the only thing in my future. But

not just any bow, a crossbow. So I learned how to hunt from a bowhunter's perspective.

Laying the bow in my lap, I sighed. I hope I would get a deer, or at least see one.

We sat in a two-man tree stand — Dad on the left, me on the right. It was really the only way we could do it because I'm left-handed so it was easier for me to swing to the right than the left.

After a while of sitting, Dad gave me a hard nudge. Over to the left, a deer walked in, though we couldn't tell if it was a buck or not. I stood up for a little, trying to get a good look. It stayed there a while, trying to decide if it should come out in the open. I caught my breath as the deer came into view. It was a little buck, but to me it was the biggest one I had ever seen. As he walked in, nonchalantly eating leaves off the trees, I raised the bow and found him in my scope. I was too short for the gun rest, so I freehanded it. I didn't have time to be nervous.

Dad grunted and the buck stopped, looked, and I shot. Running off to the right into the woods, we heard him blundering wildly through the brush.

Now I was shaking. Over and over I asked Dad, "Did I get him? Did I get him?"

Those 10 seconds felt like hours. Dad got down before me and found the arrow. His face shining, he told me to come down. With my knees shaking, I did, and he gave me a hug.

He went off to the left, and I went to the right. Now that I look back on the experience I think Dad wanted me to find the deer instead of him. Climbing over a fallen tree, praying that I had gotten him, I glanced to my right. There he was, lying in a small open area, half fallen over a small log.

The arrow had made a clean shot through the lungs. Calling Dad over, I touched his soft fur. It wasn't the biggest deer, but I was glad to get him. I was the only one to bring home the bacon that year. ■

Senior prose, Second place

The Delicate Arc of a Falling Pheasant

BY ELIZABETH RUBBELKE

Rogers, Minnesota

It is the last walk of the weekend, a strip of land behind the landowners's house. It is a spot faithfully preserved until the last day of opening weekend. I am anxiously anticipating hunting this spot because I shot only one bird yesterday, much to my disappointment. My father, an excellent shot, makes it look effortless, but this first pheasant hunt is more difficult than I imagined.

They flush so quickly out of the long grass, their tails cutting through the sky and peeling off to safety. My dad patiently takes me out later in the day after our group is done and that's when I pick off my one pheasant of the day. Needless to say, on this final day of the weekend I am hungry for redemption.

Our small band clad in blaze orange scans the grass intently, flinching at every dark branch that might be a rooster head. I am walking between a weathered wooden fence and my dad. Beyond the fence is an empty field that backs up to a corn field. As I turn a corner in the strips, so that I am now parallel with the road and fields, the prairie comes alive. Ahead of me I see dozens of dark heads popping up and down in the grass like bobbers on a lake.

I shoot at the birds flying back at me. Unsure of my range, I foolishly ignore a few birds and miss some shots. My dad shouts over to me, encouraging me. Finally, a bird flies at me along the fence line. I bring up my gun, squeeze the trigger, and see the tell-tale explosion of feathers. Its body drops and tumbles along the ground.

Excitedly, I reach down under the fence and put its trembling body in my vest. I fumble reloading and hurry to catch up to the line. Dozens of birds fill the sky, many flushing too far out, some over the road, and some get up only to land again quickly. Their sharp, delicate shapes slice through the otherwise uninterrupted sky. Another bird catches my eye.

It gets up on my right and I take a shot as it veers toward a small pine tree. My dad looks over at me, cheers, and pumps his fist in the air. Our black Lab darts through the brown grass, clamps down on the bird, and proudly trots back to me. I add this bird to my vest and the amount of amber feathers in my pouch doubles.

Our Lab runs back ahead of us to zigzag across the field. We are nearing the end of the strip and I hear hollers from the whole group as birds drop from the sky. I am already excited at having doubled my amount of birds from yesterday, but what I really want is a limit. To shoot my limit I need three birds. I already have two, so all I need is one more. I watch the dog cut the dry

vegetation into a grid with her sleek, black body, nose close to the ground, and I wait for my opportunity.

The frenzy in front of me fades away as a rooster peels off to my left, catching the breeze and shooting far out over the empty field. All the days skeet shooting with my dad and evenings at my summer trap league come back to me. I raise my gun up to my cheek and sweep the barrel across the sky like a paintbrush. I slowly put pressure on the trigger and gun fires with a noise I do not hear.

The delicate arc of the bird immediately stops. To me, its descent is slow and graceful. Its wings twist and twirl around itself as if grasping for the air one last time. Time catches up to me and the body falls heavily onto the dirt, bouncing up and down until it finally rolls to a stop.

Our dog wiggles under the fence and takes off across the field to retrieve it. I take its warm body in my hand and my own body shakes with relief and pure elation.

My dad congratulates me and pats me on the back as we walk back to our truck to take pictures of our birds. The heaviness in my vest reminds me of what I have just accomplished. I think about how time slowed, how it was just me and that swift creature, how my body and mind worked together, and how all the pieces fell into place.

I can't help thinking was beautiful. ■

Senior poetry, Third place

Untitled

Nights and crisp morns
Embraced by those who brave the icy
tongues of the season

Green

Grass now frozen in time

Standing at attention

Waiting

To be covered by a sweet blanket

Of white

Through mortal flesh I see
Into the heart and soul of any being

As we begin to understand the language of
nature;

Balance, serenity and tranquility ring in our
ears

Until we fully understand

Then it becomes not a ring in our ears

But a feeling in our hearts

Rocks, the only victors against the winds,

Now become home for the

Carpet of lush green moss

That carries the first seeds of new life. ■

BY WILLIAM V. HARTLEY

Tuckerton, New Jersey

Cold

Chasing the green life out of the world

Like an army in fierce retreat

Replaced

By a legion of frost, snow and ice

Inviting gleeful festivities of the coming
celebrations

Clean

Junior prose, Second place

Young lady Sherlock Holmes cracks the case

BY RYLEE GJESVOLD

Ham Lake, Minnesota

I'm running through a meadow filled with flowers. I leap into the air and soar high above the ...

"Rylee!" someone yells.

I'm no longer flying. I'm in a cabin in the middle of, well, nowhere. Squinting at the light, I open my eyes. I drag myself out of bed before someone does it for me. In the kitchen I get some cold cereal and listen to my dad's voice rumble through the small cabin.

"Rylee," my mom says from the other room.

Basically still sleeping, I stand up and try to follow her voice into the room. After tripping over a chair and almost smacking into the wall, I manage to walk through the bedroom door. Layer after layer after are put on me. Finally, almost fully awake I look in the mirror.

I look like a huge puffy orange snowman. Giggling, I walk outside and slowly crawl onto the four-wheeler behind my uncle, my mom, and my sister. I wave to my dad as he and my other sister walk to a different hunting spot.

We quietly slosh over the muddy forest floor. I can just see the sun rising above the clouds. My uncle switches off the motor. The only sound is the birds chirping overhead. My mom grabs her backpack and we start to climb the wiggly ladder to the box that I'm going to spend my day in. At first it's fun: listening to the birds, pretending I'm girl Robin Hood. But as a 6-year-old girl, I don't have much patience, especially without any toys. It gets to where I'm ready to jump and scream. Apparently my mom can tell and she hands me a bag of chips.

"Eat this," she whispers.

After devouring those, I am once again bored. Like any other 6-year-old girl I love to make noise and I soon realize that if you squeeze an empty chip bag it makes a very loud crinkling noise. After being told not to do that, I start bouncing my legs around like crazy.

I look out and see something across the field. A brownish animal emerges from the trees.

"A deer," I almost yell. I never thought a deer would save me

from my terrible case of boredom.

My sister shifts and silently lifts the gun to her shoulder.

"Bang!" The sound rings through the forest.

"I bet that woke someone up," I think. The deer takes off like a lightning bolt. "Rats," I say, forgetting the anti-talking rule.

After a while, my mom says to my sister, "Let's go see if you hit it."

"Ok," I say loudly and jump up, glad to be able to talk once again.

We find some drops of blood. We hit the deer but it is nowhere to be seen.

"Let's look for it," my mom says. "Rylee, don't go too far."

"Ok," I yell, even though I know that's not going to happen.

I go deep into the woods and start searching for signs of the deer. "I'm Sherlock Holmes," I say, "searching for my criminal in this magical forest where the trees can talk to another and the ..." I hear a sound.

"Rustle, rustle."

The trees are talking to each other, I think. I hear it again more loudly. Using my magical 6-year-old powers, I follow the sound through the magical forest. Breaking my concentration, my Mom calls and says she and my sister are going to look on the other side of the field.

"OK," I yell back. "Back to my work," I say hearing the sound again. "Maybe it's a bear ..." I think "Oh well, bears are cute! Hey! What's that? Either those are some talented leaves or I just found a deer!"

I get closer. It's definitely a deer. And it's moving, too. It looks up at me. Well, I think it does, and then it goes still.

"Whoa!" I think. "Sherlock Holmes does it again!" I stare at it for a while and then go find my mom and my sister.

I run over and tell them to follow me because I found the deer. After 10 minutes of trying to re-find the deer and convince them that "Yes, I did see the deer ... not a squirrel!" I suddenly see it lying in front of me.

They are very happy. And I am very proud.

"Come on," my mom says. "Let's go get your dad."

That was my very first hunting trip and to this day I'm still not sure if the deer actually looked at me or if it was just 6-year-old imagination. ■

ABOUT THE CONTEST...

Part of OWAA's mission is to foster the next generation of outdoors communicators, and the 2015 Norm Strung Youth Writing Awards Committee recently awarded prizes totaling \$1,700, sponsored by Safari Club International and Safari Club International Foundation. The annual contest has categories for poetry and prose in two divisions: junior



(grades 6-8) and senior (grades 9-12). Entries must be outdoors-oriented. First-place winners received \$250; second-place winners received \$125; and third-place winners received \$100. A list of this year's winners is published at www.owaa.org/contests/norm-strung-youth-writing-awards. Congratulations to the contest winners, and thank you to our contest sponsor.

ASSOCIATION UPDATE

DONORS

August and September brought monetary gifts from generous donors. These tax-deductible donations are dedicated to funds designed to boost OWAA efforts ranging from education programs to operational costs. For details about OWAA funds, contact OWAA headquarters at 406-728-7434.

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NEW MEMBERS

New member listings include references to acronyms that relate to Skills, Subject Matter, and Sections. A key for those acronyms can be found at <http://owaa.org/ou/about-owaa-skills-subject-matter-sections/>

Pete Anderson, 2011 Helen Dr., Gastonia, NC 28054. (H) 704-867-9645, (C) 704-830-7201, petemanderson@yahoo.com, www.petemanderson.com. Writer and editor based near Lake Wylie and Lake Norman in North Carolina. Fishing is his passion - he has competed in bass tournaments on the local, state and regional levels. He chases muskies too, and has dragged live bait for walleyes, trolled for salmon and waded streams for trout. He combines these adventures with almost 20 years of newspaper and magazine experience to write articles that teach readers new fishing techniques and excite them about traveling to new places. Credits, BassFan.com, BassRe-

source.com, Pennsylvania Outdoor News, Game & Fish, North Carolina Sportsman, South Carolina Sportsman, Musky Hunter Magazine, Bass Angler Magazine, VisitNC.com and others. Previously with the Gaston Gazette, the Titusville Herald and Eagle Newspapers. (Angela) Skills: EOSW; Subject Matter: AKLR; Sections: M, N. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Shane Townsend**.

Eric Arnold, WCT Group Inc., P.O. Box 357, Sharon Center, OH 44274. (C) 330-350-2161, (W) 330-350-2161, editor@wctmagazine.com, www.wctmagazine.com. Began writing a column in 2003 for Wildlife Control Technology Magazine, a bimonthly trade publication for the wildlife control industry. Maintained a column and feature articles in the magazine until taking over as editor in 2011 and then purchasing the publication in 2012. While his main focus deals with the wildlife control industry, he also writes for several trapping publications and produces fur trapping and wildlife control training DVDs. Credits include Wildlife Control Magazine, Fur Taker magazine, Pest Management Professional, Buckeye Trapper and Facility Manager. Currently working on additional fur trapping videos along with an assignment with Fur-Fish-Game magazine. Skills: EILOPS-VW; Subject Matter: DIQ; Sections: CPV. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Vicki J. Mountz**.

Griffin Bartman, GBGuns Consulting LLC, 2885 NE Hidden Meadow Dr., McMinnville, OR 97128. (H) 360-980-1829, (C) 360-980-1829, (W) 360-980-1829, goetheman2002@yahoo.com, www.GBGuns.org. NRA Instructor. Communicates under alias Graham Baates. Contributing author "How to Buy an AK47" by Rob Kay. President, GBGuns Consulting LLC. Regular reviews on www.youtube.com/GrahamBaates. Skills: BCOV; Subject Matter: D; Sections: V. Approved for Associate membership; sponsored by **Kris Millgate**.

Reese Blakeney, 22955 Highway 8, Leesville, LA 71446. (H) 337-286-9434, (C) 337-353-3303, angelblakeney@foxsleesville.com. First place winner, 2015

Norm Strung Youth Writing Contest, junior prose division. First place winner, 2015 Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association youth journalism contest, senior essay division. Third place winner, 2014 Louisiana Outdoor Writers Association youth journalism contest, junior essay division. Skills: C; Subject Matter: ABCDF; Sections: P. Approved for Student membership.

Michael Cassidy, Scout Media Inc., 2526 Carter Grove Circle, Windermere, FL 34786. (C) 407-625-0992, (W) 407-625-0992, (F) 407-625-0992, mikeofthebushveld@gmail.com, www.scout.com. Current executive vice president of outdoors content, Scout Media Inc., including North American Hunter, North American Fisherman. Past senior director, ESPN Outdoors; past associate publisher, Field & Stream, Outdoor Life, SHOT Business magazines. (Shery) Skills: E; Subject Matter: ACD; Sections: C. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Glenn L. Sapir**.

Scott A. Davis Sr., Swamp City Media, 3411 McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN 37217. (C) 615-500-1152, scott.davis@urbanhunting.net, www.urbanhunting.net. Founder of UrbanHunting.net. Executive producer, "Urban Hunting" TV show, airing on Necat Network five times per week in 19 Tennessee counties. Lifelong outdoorsman. (Toni L.) Skills: DILQTV; Subject Matter: ACFG; Sections: CMV. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Brent Frazee**.

Peter Demma, 1623-135 Village Creek Square, Scarborough, ON M1S0G4 Canada. (H) 647-999-4931, japmaple84@yahoo.ca. Outdoor writing student with an interest in wildlife awareness, conservation and wildlife photography. Approved for Student membership; sponsored by **Roger M. Brunt**.

Miles DeMott, 3215 Jasmine Rd., Montgomery, AL 36111. (W) 334-324-2665, words@milesdemott.com, www.milesdemott.com. Has been hunting compelling stories for more than three decades, writing across genres for a variety of audiences in the print and digital spaces. Author of two novels. His most recent

book “Chulee: Spirit of the Pine Tree, a unique view of the forest for the trees,” explored the lifecycle of forests and our independence with them. His most recent works for Covey Rise extol the virtues of prescribed burning and distill the essence of Kentucky bourbon. A native son of the piney woods of South Georgia, he lives and writes in Alabama. Skills: BCO; Subject Matter: CDGLR; Sections: M. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Tom Keer**.

Brett Dufur, P.O. Box 2, Rocheport, MO 65279. (C) 573-698-3903, pebblepublishing@gmail.com, www.pebblepublishing.com. Full-time writer and editor for the Missouri Department of Conservation. Authored the department’s 75th anniversary history, “The Promise Continues: 75 Years of Citizen-Led Conservation.” Editor, “A Paddler’s Guide to Missouri” and “Voices of Missouri’s Rivers,” by Bill Turner. Regular contributor to Missouri Conservationist magazine, writing about Missouri’s river and the department’s kids’ magazine Xplor. For the past 15 years, he has been a part-time editor and publisher for Pebble Publishing Inc, a publisher of Missouri guidebooks, including several he has authored, such as “The Complete Katy Trail Guidebook,” “Exploring Lewis and Clark’s Missouri,” “Exploring Missouri Wine Country,” and more. When he is not getting tangled up in words, he is probably guiding a canoe float with Mighty Mo Canoe Rentals, gabbing with guests at his small, trailside bed and breakfast or teaching rock climbing or wilderness survival at the local college. Skills: BELOPW; Subject Matter: GLMNOPS; Sections: M. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Jim Low**.

Galen L. Geer, P.O. Box 31, Finley, ND 58230. (H) 701-524-1522, (C) 701-789-0777, (F) 701-789-0777, ggeerpined@mlgc.com. Contributing editor and columnist, Whitetails Unlimited. USA editor, African Expeditions. Author short story collection “Last Supper in Paradise,” currently completing a new collection and other nonfiction projects. Adjunct faculty, Mayville State University, teaching composition. English and communications beginning fall 2015. Skills: BCEILOPSW; Subject Matter: ABCDEFGKLOP; Sec-

tions: C, M, N, P. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Colleen Miniuk-Sperry**.

Bobby R. Harrison, 444 Shooting Star Trail, Gurley, AL 35748. (H) 256-776-2003, (C) 256-337-3368, (W) 256-726-7043, bnharri@aol.com, www.bobbyharrison.blogspot.com. Columnist, Living Bird Magazine, Creation Illustrated magazine. Blogger, www.bobbyharrison.blogspot.com. (Norma) Skills: CLOSW; Subject Matter: LQS; Sections: P. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Tim Gallagher**.

Sam Hudson, Sport Fishing magazine, 460 N. Orlando Ave. Ste. 200, Winter Park, FL 32789. (H) 407-619-1896, (W) 407-571-4941, sam.hudson@bonniercorp.com, www.sportfishingmag.com. Senior editor, Sport Fishing magazine, writing features, columns and new items. He also shoots photos and video for print and web applications and edits content from contributing writers. Recipient, 2015 Bodie McDowell Scholarship. (Kimberly) Skills: EOSW; Subject Matter: B; Sections: M, P. Approved for Student membership.

Roger Janssen, The Outdoorsmen Magazine, P.O. Box 286, Flandreau, SD 57028. (C) 605-864-0334, (W) 605-864-0334, outdoorsmen@iw.net, www.outdoorsmenmagazine.com. Current editor and owner, The Outdoorsmen Magazine, located in Flandreau, South Dakota. His publication has a dozen regular columnists with a mix of local, exclusive writers, as well as a pool of syndicated writers who submit columns to be published monthly. The magazine fits well into his outdoor interests which include hunting, fishing, birding, camping, photography and simply being outdoors. Winter outdoor activities are by far his favorite — no bugs. General manager of the county newspaper, the Moody County Enterprise, which has been published continuously since 1877 in Flandreau, South Dakota. His first outdoor-related columns appeared in this newspaper starting in the late 1970s. (Linnea) Skills: ESW; Subject Matter: ACDGITU; Sections: M. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Joel Hayes**.

Chip Laughton, Days Afield Photography LLC, 241 Freeman Creek Rd., Zirconia, NC 28790. (H) 828-698-1789,

(C) 828-775-2777, (W) 828-775-2777, chiplaughton@bellsouth.net, www.daysafieldphotography.com. Full-time freelance photographer for the past 10 years. Through his company Days Afield Photography LLC he shoots editorial, commercial and stock photography. His specialties are hunting, fishing, sporting dog and lifestyle imagery. Credits include Covey Rise, Pheasants Forever Journal, Ducks Unlimited Magazine, Quail Forever Journal, Ruffed Grouse Society magazine, Pointing Dog Journal, Retriever Journal, Just Labs magazine, Gun Dog Magazine, Wildfowl, Shooting Sportsman, Sporting Classics, Wildlife in North Carolina, Trout and Click magazines. His photographs illustrate the book “Sporting Dog and Retriever Training The Wildrose Way” and was also used in the Orvis Book “Great Hunting Lodges of North America,” “The Complete Outdoors Encyclopedia,” by Vin Spirano and “The Ultimate Hunting Dog Reference Book,” by Vickie Lamb. (Kelly) Skills: SW; Subject Matter: ABCDEFKLS; Sections: M, P. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Tom Keer**.

Robert Milner, Duckhill Kennels, 350 Bailey Morrison Dr., Somerville, TN 38068. (C) 901-428-6694, rmilner@duckhillkennels.com, www.duckhillkennels.com. Gundog columnist, American Waterfowler. Author, “Absolutely Positively Gundog Training,” the 2002 Federal Emergency Management Agency Disaster Search Dog Training Manual, “Retriever Training — A Back to Basics Approach” and “Retriever Training for the Duck Hunter.” (Susan) Skills: BN; Subject Matter: CE. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Tony Dolle**.

Mary Nemecek, 7807 N. Merrimac Ct., Kansas City, MO 64154. (C) 816-210-5148, msnemecek@aol.com. Conservation chair for Burroughs Audubon Society. Writes “Grow Nature” articles for Missouri Wildlife. Newsletter contributor for Backyard Bird Center. Biologist guest for non-government organizations. Skills: CLOS; Subject Matter: OQRSU. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Bill Graham**.

Chris O’Brien, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, 11 E. Sandra Lee Dr., St. Paul, MN 55119. (H) 763-458-

1308, (C) 763-458-1308, (W) 952-259-5343, chrisobrien3@yahoo.com. Public information officer, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Regular duties include writing and editing a weekly newsletter, editing news releases and writing for Minnesota Conservation Volunteer magazine. Previously worked as a staff editor and contributor for North American Fisherman magazine. (Kim) Skills: EIO; Subject Matter: ACG; Sections: M. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Michael Kallok**.

Johnny Rosa, 950 Westcott St., Syracuse, NY 13210. (C) 781-718-9787, jarosajr@syr.edu, www.johnnyrosa.com. Recipient, 2015 Bodie McDowell Scholarship. Skills: CDEOSW; Subject Matter: GLPT; Sections: Magazine, Photography. Approved for Student membership.

John Swartz, Bemidji State University, 1500 Birchmont Dr. NE #2, Bemidji, MN 56601. (H) 218-760-2268, (C) 218-760-2268, (W) 218-755-2041, (F) 218-755-4097, jswartz@bemidjistate.edu, www.bemidjistate.edu/offices/communications/marketing/photography/. Full time photographer for the state of Minnesota based at Bemidji State University for 33 years. The university is located in the northern lakes region of Minnesota and therefore relies on strong environmental-based imagery to convey its message and brand. Also a guest lecturer in mass communications classes on photography, especially outdoor and nature photography. His free time is mostly spent in photo blinds around northern Minnesota. (Susan) Skills: IQS; Subject Matter: GJKLMNOSU; Sections: CP. Approved for Associate membership; sponsored by **Michael Furtman**.

Kathleen Snow, c/o G. McNaughton, 222 S. Fourth St. W, Missoula, MT 59801. (H) 212-249-9522, (C) 212-249-9522, kathleensnow1234@yahoo.com, www.kathleensnowbooks.com. Author, "Taken By Bear in Yellowstone National Park: The history of bear attacks told by those involved." Current president, Montana Writers Guild. Active member, Authors Guild of America. Skills: B; Subject Matter: LOPQS. Approved for Active membership; sponsored by **Katherine K. McKalip**.

REINSTATED MEMBERS

Reinstated member listings include references to acronyms that relate to Skills,

Subject Matter, and Sections. A key for those acronyms can be found at <http://owaa.org/ou/about-owaa-skills-subject-matter-sections/>.

Mike Donahue, Desert Valley Times, (Associate) P.O. Box 669, Overton, NV 89040. (H) 702-397-2079, (W) 702-735-3611, mouse@mvdsl.com. Editor, Desert Valley Times. (Linda) Skills: ELOQ; Subject Matter: ACDGL.

David Hawkins, (Active) 6320 W. Moore Tower Rd., Forest, MS 39074. (C) 601-469-7306, (W) 601-469-7306, hawkins2209@att.net. Credits, Mississippi Digital Daily, Mississippi Sportsman, Mississippi Land & Lodges, Spirit of Morton newspaper. (Jean) Skills: ELNOQRSW; Subject Matter: ABCDFGHKORST; Sections: M, N, P.

Eugene Kilgore, (Active) 809 Broadway, Ste. 1, Sonoma, CA 95476. (H) 707-939-3801, (C) 707-939-3801, (F) 707-939-3795, genekilgore@gmail.com. Skills: B; Subject Matter: L.

Ben Long, (Active) 580 4th Ave. E., N., Kalispell, MT 59901. (H) 406-756-5763, (C) 406-261-7214, (W) 406-257-8302, (F) 406-257-8074, ben@resource-media.org. Father, outdoorsman and conservationist. Has been writing about the outdoors and conservation topics in the northern Rockies for nearly 30 years. Senior program director, Resource Media. Co-chairman, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers. Freelancer, Montana Outdoors, Bugle and Outdoor Life. Founding editor, Backcountry Journal. Author, "Backtracking — By Foot, Canoe and Subaru on the Lewis & Clark Trail" and "Great Montana Bear Stories." (Karen Nichols) Skills: BCOW; Subject Matter: ACGJMORSU; Sections: C, M.

SUPPORTING GROUPS, AGENCIES AND BUSINESSES

Supporting Group listings include references to acronyms that relate to resources they provide. A key for those acronyms can be found at <http://owaa.org/ou/about-owaa-supporter-resources/>.

Black River Tools Inc., 6509 Hwy. 260, Manning, SC 29102. Contact: David Baynard, president. (W) 803-473-4927, (Toll Free) 800-346-1923, (F) 803-473-4953, info@blackrivertools.com, www.driftmaster.com. We manufacture Driftmas-

ter rod holders and trolling systems (www.driftmaster.com), Father Nature bird feeders (www.fathernature.org) and Cart Lok golf cart locking systems (www.golfcartlock.com). Family business since 1980. Supporting members of SEOPA and AGLOW. Supporter Resources: P.

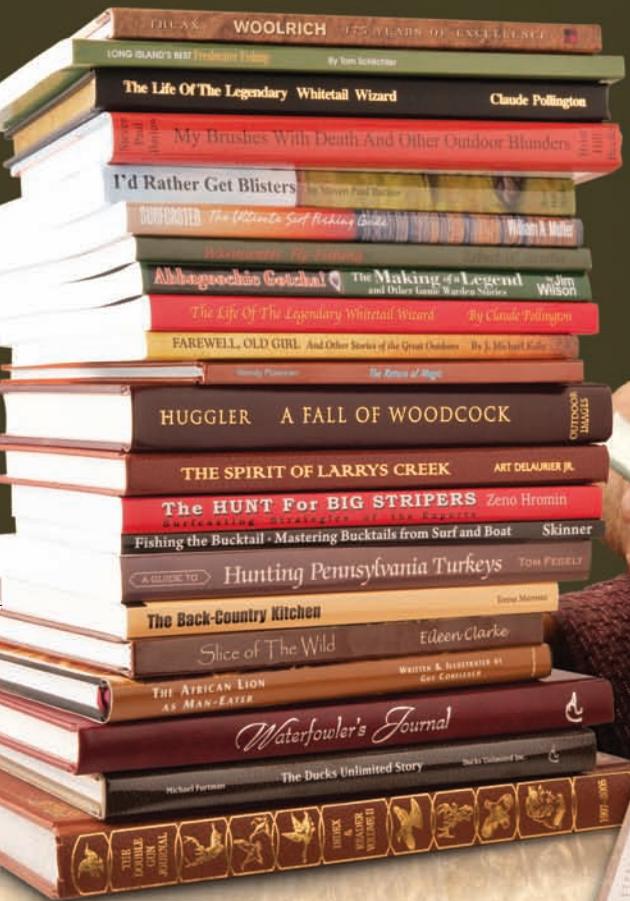
BookBaby, 7905 Route 130 S., Pennsauken, NJ 08065. Contact: Tom Lavery, business development manager. (W) (877) 961-6878, tlavery@avldigital.com, www.bookbaby.com. BookBaby has created the world's largest eBook and printed book distribution network for self-published authors around the globe. The company distributes books in more than 170 countries through more than 100 online retail stores, including Amazon, iBooks, Barnes & Noble, Powells, Kobo and wholesale networks including Baker & Taylor and Ingram. BookBaby offers a full array of publishing services including eBook conversion and cover design, as well as book printing, page formatting and print-on-demand services. The company also gives each of their authors access to BookPromo, a suite of promotional book services and BookShop, a webpage with an ecommerce option for authors to sell direct to readers. With offices in Portland, Oregon, and the Philadelphia area, BookBaby is the sister company to CD Baby — the world's largest online distributor of independent music. Supporter Resources: P.

REINSTATED SUPPORTING GROUPS, AGENCIES AND BUSINESSES

Supporting Group listings include references to acronyms that relate to resources they provide. A key for those acronyms can be found at <http://owaa.org/ou/about-owaa-supporter-resources/>.

Sportsmen's Alliance, 801 Kingsmill Pkwy., Columbus, OH 43229. Contact: Brian Lynn, vice president marketing and communications. (W) 614-888-4868, blynn@sportsmensalliance.org, www.sportsmensalliance.org. The Sportsmen's Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and advancement of hunting, fishing and trapping. We protect sportsmen from animal-rights initiatives in all 50 state legislatures and at the federal level, in the court system and at the ballot box. Supporter Resources: CO. ■

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January 2016**



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Visit: www.owaa.org/ou/category/departments/table-of-contents.

YOUR OWAA END-OF-YEAR CHECKLIST

OWAA office closed Dec. 24-Jan. 1.

In observance of the Christmas and New Years' holidays, the OWAA office will be closed Dec. 24, 2015 through Jan. 1, 2016. Headquarters staff will return to work on Monday, Jan. 4, 2016, however they will be off-site at the winter board meeting that week. The Headquarters office will reopen on Monday, Jan. 11, 2016.

Questions about EIC contests? Call today!

If you have questions on your EIC submissions, we urge you to call or email 406-552-4631 or eic@owaa.org prior to Dec. 24, as we will be slow to address concerns during the holidays.

Renew dues

The deadline for paying your annual dues is Jan. 15, 2016, to avoid a disruption in your membership. You can pay online at www.owaa.org/store, or mail your payment to 615 Oak Street, Suite 201, Missoula, MT 59801.

