



Outdoor Writers Association of America

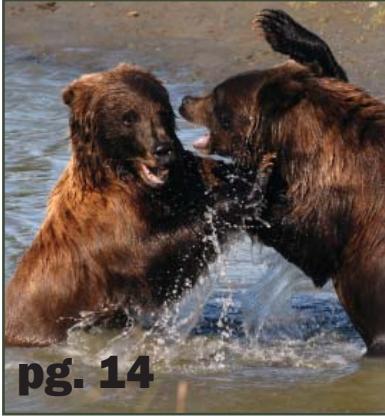
# OUTDOORS UNLIMITED

The Voice of the Outdoors | October 2011

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## ON THE COVER

By Lisa Densmore

Featured on this month's cover, a maple sapling displays its autumn colors. View more of Densmore's fall foliage photos in this month's Portfolio on pages 8-9. A member since 2003, Densmore is a freelance writer and photographer, as well as an Emmy-winning TV host and producer. View more of her work at [www.densmoredesigns.com](http://www.densmoredesigns.com).

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## 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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### NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

615 Oak St., Ste. 201  
Missoula, MT 59801  
406-728-7434, Fax: 406-728-7445  
[info@owaa.org](mailto:info@owaa.org), [www.owaa.org](http://www.owaa.org)

### STAFF

Executive Director: Robin Giner  
Editor: Ashley Schroeder  
Membership and Conference Services Coordinator: Jessica Pollett

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The screenshot shows the homepage of the OWAA Excellence in Craft contests website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with links for "EIC Home", "2012 Excellence in Craft contests and rules", "Entry forms for the 2012 EIC contests", "FAQs", and "OWAA Home". The main header features the "OUTDOOR WRITERS ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA" logo and the text "Excellence in Craft contests" in large orange letters, with the subtitle "Recognizing and honoring the best work of outdoors communicators." Below the header, a large orange banner says "The EIC contests are now open!" and encourages users to "Submit your entries today!". To the right, a sidebar lists steps: "Step 1: Read the rules", "Step 2: Submit entries", and "Step 3: Pay entry fees". The central content area has a sub-headline "Be rewarded for all your hard work." followed by a paragraph about the contests and categories. A sidebar on the right contains a search bar with "Enter search keyword" and a "SUBMIT" button.

## 2012 EIC CONTESTS: BE REWARDED FOR ALL YOUR HARD WORK.

OWAA's annual Excellence in Craft contests include new contests and categories for the 2012 competition. Entry forms are now available online.

- New media-based contests include Blogs and Columns.
- And there are more subject-based categories, too.
- Read your September issue of Outdoors Unlimited or go to [www.owaa.org/eic](http://www.owaa.org/eic) for the complete list of contests and rules.

**Welcome to OU's Online Exclusives! This page features a sneak peek of all the extras we just couldn't fit into the monthly publication. To check out these bonus features, refer the website links mentioned below.**

-ASHLEY SCHROEDER, OU EDITOR

## 2012 Conference Blog

Jessica Pollett, OWAA's conference coordinator, is now blogging at [www.owaa.org/2012conference/category/news](http://www.owaa.org/2012conference/category/news).

Her goal is to provide timely and interesting updates about what promises to be a once-in-a-lifetime OWAA conference experience.

Upcoming blog posts will cover travel tips, and cell phone and wireless Internet solutions.

## Outdoor Market

Have you thought about joining a stock photo agency to increase your exposure. Want to travel for a job or just travel for the weekend? What about writing for a bow-hunting magazine? Then you better check out these money-making opportunities at [www.owaa.org/ou/category/market](http://www.owaa.org/ou/category/market).

## News Tips from Supporters

OWAA supporters often send out breaking news that doesn't fit into OU's once-a-month publication cycle.

To help get supporters' news out to members on a timely basis, OWAA headquarters has responded to supporters' request for a more instant online "news feed" on Outdoors Unlimited Online.

OWAA supporters (and individual members) can submit news that will be posted daily, Monday through Friday, on OU Online. Visit [www.owaa.org/ou/submit-news-tips](http://www.owaa.org/ou/submit-news-tips) for details on how to submit your latest news.

### 2011 President's Choice Award recipients

Past President **Tony Dolle** judged first-place winners of the 2011 Excellence in Craft contests, picking the best of the best work from each type of media recognized in the contests.

This year's Presidents' Choice Award winners are:

■ Magazine category: **Tim Christie** of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. "A Long Shot," published in the September/October 2010 issue of Colorado Outdoors. Christie won first place in the Magazine category of the Big Game Hunting contest, sponsored by the Outdoor Channel.

■ TV/Video **Ron Schara** of Minneapolis, Minn. "Kyle's Safari," broadcast on Schara's television program, Minnesota Bound, May 23, 2010. Schara won first place in the TV/Video category of the Big Game Hunting contest, sponsored by the Outdoor Channel.

■ Newspaper: **Kris Millgate** of Idaho Falls, Idaho. "Little Green Thumbs," published in the Post Register, Aug. 24, 2010. Millgate won first place in the Newspaper category of the Family Participation/Youth Education contest, sponsored by RealTree.

■ Art/Photo: **Colleen Miniuk-Sperry** of Chandler, Ariz. "Climbing in Devil's Canyon." Miniuk-Sperry won first place in the People category of the Fine Arts contest.

■ Radio: **Ty Stockton** of Cheyenne, Wyo. "Duck Hunting Ain't Cheap," broadcast on Cowboy State News Network, Nov. 3, 2010. Stockton won first place in the Short Format category of the Radio/Podcast contest.

The 2012 contests are now open! Visit [www.owaa.org/eic](http://www.owaa.org/eic) for details.

# Success requires some creativity

### INTERESTING, FREE NEWSLETTER FOR CREATIVES

Looking for advice on things creative? Visit [www.creativefreelancerblog.com](http://www.creativefreelancerblog.com), where there's a place to sign

up for a free newsletter. The author is one of those creative people who always has ideas you can use. You'll receive regular updates from the Creative Freelancer Blog & Conference and you can download Ilise Benun's "Working Collaboratively" article from the March issue of HOW Magazine.



MIKE WALKER

### THERE ARE WAYS TO SURVIVE THE RECESSION

Where has all the business gone? Anyone who relies on freelance assignments from magazines and newspapers can tell you. These media have either folded or rely on staff writers. This means no income, no matter how good you are.

That doesn't mean there aren't opportunities. I've noticed more opportunities are found in regional media outlets than the national ones. And more and more, the Internet presents the best opportunities for creative writers. OWAA members are a creative, resilient bunch who will find a way through this financial mess.

### NEW MEDIA EQUALS NEW MEMBER CATEGORIES

New membership categories were announced in late August. Why? OWAA needs to bring in new members and to remain at the forefront of the outdoor communications industry.

At its summer board meeting, the Board of Directors voted to establish membership criteria for Digital Media Journalists. They also updated membership criteria for three options: Lecturers; Book Authors; and Website Content Director, Writer, Editor, Photographer, Artist or Designer.

The board currently has the ability to make changes in membership criteria and, if approved by a two-thirds board majority, such changes are effective immediately,

unless overruled by the membership by vote. Changes to the criteria will be put before the membership for a final vote in conjunction with the Board election in May 2012.

**Digital Media Journalist** (engaged in producing blog/vlog or other online-only content creation) – To qualify under this category, applicants must show proof of at least 500 average unique views per month over a 12-month period and meet three of four of the following qualifications: 1) Maintain a digital media site on outdoor-related activities in any format that allows response feedback for a minimum of one year; 2) Proof of income from communicating about outdoor-related subjects; 3) Average at least two editorial postings per month over a 12-month period; redistribution of press releases does not qualify; 4) Must reveal source for all outside support contributing to content of postings.

**Lecturer** criteria will be revised as follows: Submit itinerary including dates and estimated attendance of 18 compensated appearances in the past 12 months. Include samples of brochures, newspaper clips or other promotional materials and/or website addresses.

**Book Author, Editor, Designer or Publisher** criteria will be revised as follows: Submit one sample copy of income-producing book produced in the past 36 months, including proof that the book is still being published and marketed. A signed publishing contract for a book in progress counts as a published book. Works requiring unusual effort will be given additional consideration. Several booklets may be substituted for a single book, but promotional booklets for commercial enterprises are not acceptable. Multi-authorship will be equally prorated among all authors.

**Website Content Director, Writer, Editor, Photographer, Artist or Designer** criteria will be revised as follows: Submit 24 URLs of website content or design work published and compensated in the past 12 months, including web features or web pages developed. Web editors should submit supporting pages demonstrating regular content updates. The same piece appearing on multiple websites counts as one submission. ■

— OWAA President Mike Walker,  
[mike@walkeragency.com](mailto:mike@walkeragency.com)

# Take advantage of membership perks

**A**fter I hung up the phone with our Endowment Trustees late on the evening of Sept. 6, I scurried across town to The University of Montana in hopes of welcoming our newest Student Chapter to OWAA. I missed the group by just minutes. As I flung the door open, I was greeted by three smiling faces: OWAA board member **Paul Queneau**, spring intern **Hannah Ryan** and 2011-12 McDowell Scholarship applicant Sam Lundren. While I just missed meeting the students as they made time to join one another during a hectic first week of school, I was delighted to hear about plans laid in place for future meetings and to find out that ten interested individuals joined Paul, Hannah and Sam for the first gathering. The University of Montana joins the University of Missouri as the second OWAA Student Chapter.

These students are finding out what you, our members, have known all along: It pays, literally and figuratively, to belong to a group who shares your interests and passions and can help you out along the way toward a rewarding career.

Autumn not only brings students back to school, but also brings our members back to OWAA. It's that time of year when we share the past year's accomplishments, let you know what we have in store for the next year, and ask you to renew your dues and remain a part of the nation's premier outdoor writers organization. Continue your affiliation with a group that shares your passion for the outdoors.

A year ago, OWAA staff traveled to Salt Lake City to meet up with **Mark Taylor, Brett Prettyman, Tom Wharton, Brian Brinkerhoff** and an expansive group of representatives from around Utah to begin planning our 2011 conference. Were you there in July? Conference is the single most beneficial way to make the most of your annual membership. Craft improvement seminars, newsmakers sessions, networking and pre- and post-conference trips all help you bring home the bacon. If you weren't able to attend, visit the OWAA store at [www.owaa.org/store](http://www.owaa.org/store) to purchase videos of select sessions on a variety of topics. Never been to conference? Let us know — we'll apply 50 percent of your 2012 dues toward your conference registration. We'll meet Sept. 4-6, 2012, at Chena Hot Springs Resort, near Fairbanks, Alaska.

Since the beginning of the year, it was apparent that not all our members were pleased with the changes to the Excellence in Craft contest. More revisions were made and the 2012 competition more



ROBIN GINER

## REMEMBERING SYLVIA

It is with a heavy heart that we share news of **Sylvia Bashline**'s passing on Tues., Sept. 20. Sylvia served as OWAA Executive Director from 1984-1994, and it was her dedication to the organization that made us what we are today. We send our condolences to Sylvia's family and friends, and recognize the great loss in the OWAA community. Sylvia and Jim Bashline counted many members of OWAA among their most dear friends; and combined, they left an indelible mark on the field of outdoor writing.

The Sylvia and Jim Bashline Writers Fund was recently established to honor their memory; more information will be available in the November OU.

closely resembles the contests of old with more subject-based ways to enter your work, and of course, more ways to win! The 2012 rules are available in the fall 2011 hardcopy issue of OU and at [www.owaa.org/eic](http://www.owaa.org/eic) — take a look and figure out what you want to enter this year. OWAA and EIC sponsors awarded \$15,000, plus plaques and conference registrations, to 2011 winners. Why don't you plan to be among those winners in 2012? The contests opened Oct. 1.

Not so sure about that online submission process? OU Editor **Ashley Schroeder** put together a video showing you how to prepare your entries for the 2012 contests, including instructions for creating PDFs of your submissions and blocking out your byline on a PDF. Watch this video at [www.owaa.org/eic](http://www.owaa.org/eic).

Next time you login to OWAA's website, take the time to look around. In addition to the EIC contest site, video downloads and conference registration information, you'll find resources like the Outdoor Market, where you can find jobs and editorial needs with your favorite publications, outdoor companies and conservation groups. In the coming months we'll be expanding the simple list of member websites available in the members-only section to a searchable database. Supporting Groups can now upload press releases for members to read on OU Online; this news feed will be updated daily to help you keep abreast of the latest happenings in the outdoor industry.

In November, the Strategic Planning Committee, a group of OWAA Board members, will gather in Missoula to hash out a new strategic plan for the future of the organization. The last strategic plan expired in 2008. Building on a draft proposed by **Matt Miller** and **Jason Jenkins**, the committee will develop actionable steps to help grow membership numbers and to expand benefits.

Your membership dollars have worked to contribute so much to the future of the organization. In the past year we've expanded our membership to include bloggers, started student chapters that are beginning to pop up at leading universities around the country, invited youngsters (6th-12th graders) to learn about the field of outdoor communications as a career through their own Becoming an Outdoors Communicator youth workshop, held the first ever Goldenrod Writing Workshop in Missoula, improved the OWAA website to be more interactive, and so much more. We can't do this without you.

2012 marks the 85th year of OWAA. Over the years the organization has grown and contracted and honed itself to become the leading organization for all outdoor communicators, regardless of medium or market. Please return your dues by the end of the year, and help build OWAA for the next 85 years. ■

— OWAA Executive Director Robin Giner,  
[rginer@owaa.org](mailto:rginer@owaa.org)

# Teaming up

*Find a business partner to build your business*

BY SHAWN PERICH

**F**reelancing is a lonely occupation. It's just you and the keyboard or camera, collecting material, creating a product and then selling it wherever and however you can. When confronted with an occupational challenge that might require outside assistance from someone with special skills, such as the task of building a website, the typical freelancer will shrug and say, "I can do it myself."

A can-do attitude is an admirable and necessary trait for a freelancer. But just because you can do it doesn't mean you should do it. After all, freelancers are most often hired to do work requiring their skills as communicators. You'd think they would appreciate the special skills of others.

I am a writer, not a graphic designer. When I decided to self-publish a book a few years ago, I contracted with a freelance designer to produce it. A light bulb clicked and **Amber Pratt** and I realized combining our skills made it possible to pursue larger, more lucrative projects. So we began doing so. Though she is a designer, she also knows how to sell advertising. It was her idea that we ought to start an outdoor publication. On no more than a handshake, we did.

Many business partnerships begin under similar, serendipitous circumstances. We operated for a couple of years with our outdoor publication, Northern Wilds, as a product of the combined effort of our individual freelancing businesses. But our mutual publishing enterprise took on a life of its own when local real estate companies approached us about producing a weekly real estate publication. At that point, we had to hire our first employee.

Suddenly, our informal partnership was responsible for a payroll. Now we needed a formal business agreement. By this time, we'd been working together long enough to know we could get along in a business environment. We also had an idea that we were creating a business we could continue to grow. However, we were also successful freelancers with numerous irons in the fire. If we were going to make our business successful, both of us had to devote 100 percent of our efforts to it. That meant all of our endeavors, including freelance work, had to come under one banner.

Creating a partnership wasn't easy. We talked to spouses and to each other. We asked a lot of questions that began with "What if?" We sought advice from our accountant and our attorney. We looked at all the legal options for a partnership, which included a general partnership, a limited liability company and a corporation. For our situation, the best choice was to become an S corporation. Our attorney drew up the articles of incorporation and our informal partnership became Northern Wilds Media, Inc.

Since then, our business has grown as we've added products and employees. While most freelance communicators probably don't

want the headaches and distractions associated with having employees, it is still worth looking at ways to team up with someone to extend your reach and make more money. Many writers, for instance, are mediocre photographers. Teaming up with a professional photographer to provide first-rate text and photo packages has proven a winning combination for more than a few outdoor communicators. Some photographers work with a salesperson who sells the work and finds new markets, although this is more of an employee relationship. Still others have developed successful husband-and-wife freelancing teams.

Working in mixed media — a reality for most of us whether we like it — offers many opportunities to match our skills with a creative partner. The one truth of this brave new publishing world is that all forms of media need quality content. Very often, folks with the technical skills that new media requires lack either the time or creative talent to produce content. By the same token, many communicators have limited technical ability. Partner up with the right techie and you can build a potent creative team.

Another weak point for many communicators is salesmanship. You may have a great idea for a website or publication, but unless you can sell it to advertisers, it ain't gonna fly. The only problem is most communicators either have little sales experience or don't enjoy the sales process. Why not team up with someone who has sales skills? Together you can create and sell a communications product.

Teaming up with a partner won't work for everyone, but it may open doors to new, lucrative opportunities. For me, a partnership took me from the daily grind and financial uncertainty of freelance writing for multiple publications. Equally important, I was challenged by new endeavors and forced to step up my game as a communications professional. Creating and building Northern Wilds Media has required hard work and sacrifice from both partners, but it's also been a lot of fun. Without a doubt, it's been the most rewarding endeavor of my communications career. And I could not have done it alone. ■



Shawn Perich, of Hovland, Minn., has been a member since 1985. In addition to his duties as editor and publisher of Northern Wilds Media, he is a columnist for Minnesota Outdoor News and a book author. Contact him at editor@northernwilds.com

# Budget cuts jeopardize conservation programs

BY JODI STEMLER

The budget woes of the federal government are beginning to bleed into some very sensitive areas for the conservation community. Conservation programs including the Land and Water Conservation Fund, the North American Wetlands Conservation Act, State and Tribal Wildlife Grants, Farm Bill conservation programs and others have found themselves stripped to a minimum as Congress begins to tackle the Herculean effort of balancing the budget. Organizations that work closely on conservation on Capitol Hill say that the cuts to conservation programs are going too far.

“Finding ways to reduce the massive federal deficit must be done. But in doing so, let’s support those federal investments that pay for themselves several times over — and be critical of those that are wasteful,” commented Dale Hall, CEO of **Ducks Unlimited Inc.** “Conservation pays for itself. Congress and the administration should approach the budget challenge with facts and analyses, not a meat cleaver.”

The U.S. House of Representatives began work during the summer on appropriations bills that fund government agencies and programs, with big cuts to agriculture programs. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program is slated for a \$350 million reduction, 20 percent below current levels authorized by the Farm Bill. The Conservation Stewardship Program would be cut more than 20 percent relative to its Farm Bill-mandated level which, if passed as currently written, would require the government to back out of contracts it has already signed. The Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program would drop \$35 million, 41 percent below Farm Bill authorization, and the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program would be cut by \$50 million, 25 percent below Farm Bill authorization. Funding for the Voluntary Public Access

and Habitat Incentive Program, also known as Open Fields, was completely eliminated. The acreage caps for the Wetlands Reserve Program was cut by 64,200 acres (effectively a \$200 million, or 32 percent, cut from Farm Bill mandatory spending levels) and the Grasslands Reserve Program was reduced by 25 percent from Farm Bill mandatory spending levels. And the operating budget for the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s conservation programs would fall nearly \$100 million from the fiscal year 2011 continuing resolution.

The House then moved on to the Interior Appropriations Bill that had significant reductions to agency budgets and conservation programs. The Land and Water Conservation Fund was proposed to be cut to \$61.8 million, an 80 percent reduction from what it received in 2011 and far less than the \$900 million full funding proposed in the President’s budget. However, in floor debate, a bipartisan effort to increase the funding level added \$25 million to the program including \$5 million to facilitate access to public lands for sportsmen and recreationists. The Cooperative Endangered Species Fund (funded within the LWCF account) is slotted to receive just \$2.85 million, a 95 percent reduction from fiscal year 2011. The North American Wetlands Conservation Act fund is slated for \$20 million (\$30 million below fiscal year 2011 levels) and the State and Tribal Wildlife Grants Program would be cut to \$22 million, which is \$40 million less than in fiscal year 2011 and a 77 percent reduction from the President’s budget request. Climate change mitigation and adaptation activities within the Department of the Interior and the Environmental Protection Agency would be cut by 22 percent. Agency operating budgets have also been sliced dramatically.

The House never voted on a final package for the Interior Appropriations bill and, as with the Agriculture Bill, the Senate has yet to act. Congressional leaders are anticipating that all remaining appropriations bills

will be lumped into one massive spending bill, but key conservation programs may not fare any better during the negotiating process. In addition, the recent agreement to cut another \$2 trillion in discretionary spending as part of the deal to raise the debt ceiling will further jeopardize conservation programs.

Rep. Mike Simpson, R-ID, chairman of the Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee, said that EPA and Interior will have to brace for leaner times along with other federal programs. “They won’t have growing budgets, that’s just the reality,” he said. “Nobody will have growing budgets.”

It is because of looming budget cuts that a new coalition of more than 600 organizations has formed to support the overall funding allocations for conservation programs. In a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-NV, and Speaker of the House John Boehner, R-OH, the groups called on Congress to address the federal deficit while still investing in critical conservation, recreation and historic preservation programs in 2012.

“The Federal budget cannot and should not be balanced disproportionately on the backs of conservation, outdoor recreation and preservation,” the letter stated. “Doing so will impose on the future generations whose well-being depends on the conservation and preservation of our common natural and historic resources.” ■



*Residing in Denver, Colo., Jodi Stemler is a consultant specializing in fish and wildlife policy communications. She is also the chair of OWAA’s National Affairs and Environment Committee. Contact her at [jodi@stemler-consulting.com](mailto:jodi@stemler-consulting.com).*



Canada geese take flight against a backdrop of fall foliage. Photo by Lisa Densmore.



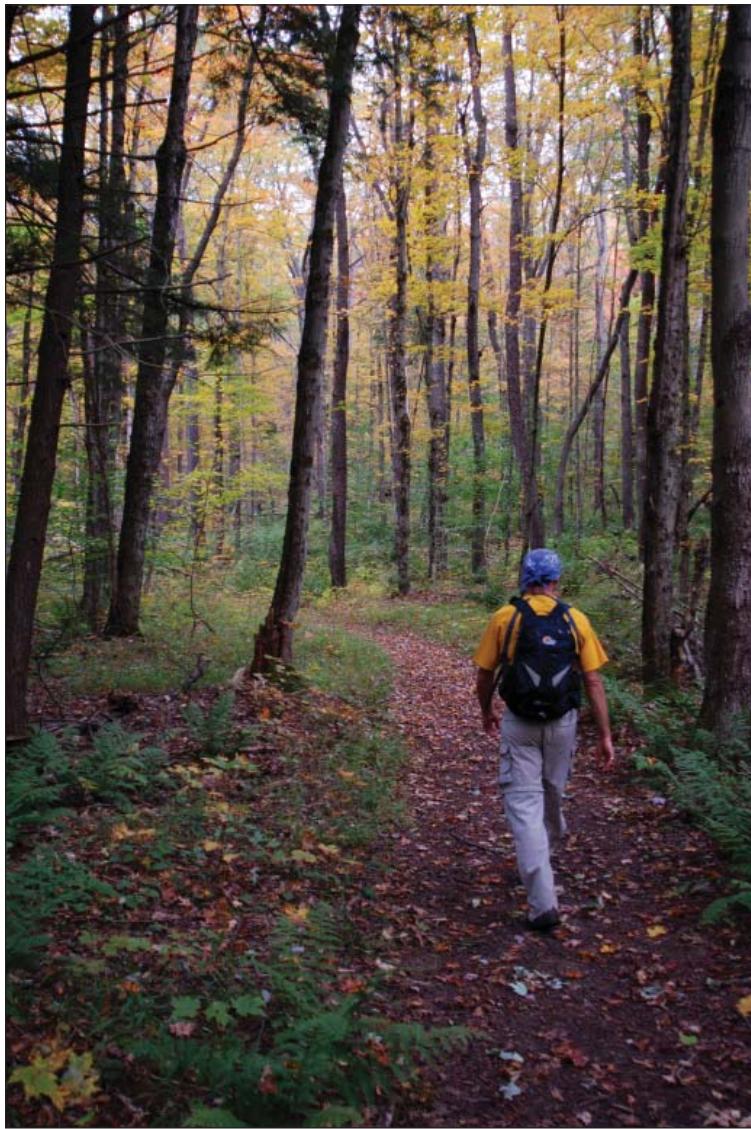
Leaves from a maple tree stand out against a tree trunk. Photo by Lisa Densmore.



Red leaves of a maple tree in fall. Photo by Lisa Densmore.



Lacy maple leaf. Photo by Lisa Densmore.



A hiker enjoys cooler weather and autumn colors. Photo by Lisa Densmore.



Maple leaves on first snow. Photo by Lisa Densmore.

# Portfolio

by Lisa Densmore

# Illustrate this

## DEALING WITH EDITORS AND ART DIRECTORS

BY BRUCE COCHRAN

**W**hether we are writers, photographers, illustrators or cartoonists, we all like to pick up new clients. When we first begin to deal with someone new, that's the time to make sure both parties understand the ground rules so there won't be any surprises later.

If you are an illustrator and have been in this business a while, you may encounter rookie editors or art directors who have little or no experience dealing with freelancers. In fact, the titles "editor" and "art director" can have many different meanings. At one time, I had a freelance contract to write and illustrate humorous greeting cards for a large card company. In this case, the editors and art directors were usually 20-somethings, just out of college. Their job was to bundle up the stuff other freelancers and I turned in and take it to the office of the person who actually made the decisions. You may occasionally find yourself dealing with a person at a publication or ad agency who functions the same way.

A few years ago, I received a phone call from a magazine editor with whom I had never worked. He introduced himself, told me a little about his publication and said he needed illustrations for an upcoming article. I asked him all the usual questions and when I got around to the big one about money he said, "Send me the drawings and after I look at them I'll tell you what I want to pay you."

I explained to him that freelancers can't work that way and that we should establish a mutually agreed upon price. After some grumbling, he conceded, we established a price and things went smoothly from there.

Cutting the guy some slack, I assumed it was just ignorance on his part. In fact, he later admitted that he had never worked with a freelancer before. We eventually developed a working business relationship

that lasted several years.

I'm fortunate to now be dealing with editors and art directors that I have worked with for some time. They are all knowledgeable, fair-minded professionals who are good at what they do. But situations change, and people retire, move to another publication or move to other fields.

From an illustrator's standpoint, here are the things that should be settled before you start to work with an unfamiliar editor. (For the purpose of brevity all editors and art directors will be referred to as he).

**From an illustrator's  
standpoint here are the  
things that should be  
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editor.**

—BRUCE COCHRAN

Does he have a pre-set budget for this piece, and if so, what is it? If you can't work for that amount, tell him. At this point he may launch into the "nobody is making much money in outdoor publications" spiel. Don't believe it. If this were true there would be no outdoor publication field. He may not make much money, and he may not be able to pay you much, but somebody is doing OK.

Does he already have ideas in mind for illustrations or will he rely on you to choose the parts you think lend themselves to visual interpretation?

How many illustrations does he need?

Does he want the lead illustration to span two pages? One full page? A half-page? Some editors will email you the page layouts. I find this helpful because then I know

the sizes and shapes I'll be working with.

Does he want to see pencil roughs first or should you go straight to the final product?

When does he need the finished art?

Does he need hard copy or will emailed images do?

Personally, I like to do pencil roughs first, then email them to the editor or art director for his approval. These are not stick figures or loose sketches. They are accurate pencil versions of what I intend the finished product to look like. You should make it clear that this is the time to make changes if necessary. That's what roughs are for. Later, after you've submitted the finished illustrations, you have every right to ask for more money than the previously agreed upon price if he changes his mind and wants some alterations.

I'm convinced some editors like to play a game of "Stump The Illustrator." He'll tell you he wants seven deer standing in a cornfield with a house, a barn, a silo and a combine in the background, and four hunters getting out of an SUV. And of course he wants all this in a vertical 2-by-4-inch space, and he needs it tomorrow.

When this happens you should gently remind him that you are an illustrator, not a magician. Sometimes you can convince him that it would be better to eliminate a couple of the deer and one or two of the hunters. If not, consider it a challenge. You may find that you actually can get seven deer, a house, a barn, a silo, a combine, four hunters, and an SUV into a 2-by-4-inch vertical space.

And you'll be a better person for it. ■



A member since 1996, Bruce Cochran hails from Prairie Village, Kan. He is a freelance cartoonist and illustrator, and humor writer. Contact him at [bcochran@kc.rr.com](mailto:bcochran@kc.rr.com).



# Social networking can boost readership numbers

**BY MARK FREEMAN**

**O**ne day last spring I filed a standard Monday blog post at my Oregon newspaper's website, then posted a link to it on my Facebook account because I thought some of my "friends" might enjoy it.

Not 20 minutes later, a techie from the paper's Web division popped her head over her partition and asked who the heck do I know in Utah because she's just seen more than 100 hits from Utah on my blog.

Well, **Brett Prettyman** at the Salt Lake Tribune made me a momentary hero in the Dow Jones Web world and illustrated a new way that newspaper outdoor writers can help themselves — and each other — through social media.

Prettyman simply "shared" my post on his Facebook account, and the army of Utahans who regularly read his posts instantly got access, and Prettyman's endorsement, to read my blog.

The time of poopoo-ing social media is over. Portals like Facebook present an incredible opportunity to generate more traffic to newspaper outdoor websites and pages, solidifying our ilk as important niches in our businesses' transition from print to Web.

Regardless of how vapid you consider the world of social media, you can't get left behind here — even if it means asking one of your grandkids to set up Facebook and Twitter accounts for you.

Social media is a wonderful way to expand your readership and get more unique page views on your blog and, hopefully, your outdoor pages and columns. Newspapers' advertising rates are based on unique page views, so any extra hits you generate for your blog or page is more money for your paper and more reason for you to hang around.

Once you get comfortable with it like Prettyman has, the Facebook profile or page becomes a new medium for your craft.

"One of the things I have found is that (Facebook) has become, for all intents and purposes, a second blog for me," Prettyman writes in, of course, a Facebook message. "One that is easier for me to manage because I can just hit 'Share.'"

Simply go to [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com) and [www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com) to set up free accounts that identify you by name and as an outdoors writer.

In Facebook, you simply add friends by looking for people you know. Once you have a few friends, readers will discover you and ask you to "friend" them. Friends can view everything you post to your Facebook account, while everyone else can view only what you choose to show to the public.

It's the same on Twitter, except you "follow" others and they follow you, meaning you get access to each other's "tweets."

The best purpose for these posts is something not foreign to OWAA members: self promotion.

Think of Facebook and Twitter as cyber versions of plastering your name on your clothes and the side of your boat.

Except these generate more readership than stencils on your bass boat or pickup.

Prettyman has been on the forefront of the social media integration among outdoor writers, and his readership has jumped exponentially.

"It's interesting for me to pay attention to the number of my followers on Twitter," Prettyman writes. "I thought 300 was good, then 500 and now that I am over 900. I'm kind of excited about 1,000. Not sure why."

On Facebook, many media outlets are asking their writers to create pages as "news personalities." That allows writers to troll for readers and enjoy conversations with readers without mixing in family members and friends who enjoy more personal posts.

That also creates a very helpful buffer from Zumbo-ing yourself. Colorado outdoor writer Jim Zumbo suffered immensely from a blog post criticizing a form of firearms. It serves as a lesson that we need to steer

clear of posting anything that might harm our reputations for the objectivity that we in newspapers guard so fiercely.

Avoid endorsements just like you would in your news columns. And don't post any pictures of what you're having for lunch.

But you would be surprised at how loose and fast newspapers can play in this new social media world as long as it generates unique page views.

One of the new newsroom adages is, "It's all about the hits, baby."

I once did a blog about an Oregon lake with off-the-charts rainbow trout catches. In the Facebook tease, I wrote, "Did I really just write that catching trout at Diamond Lake is easier than catching an STD in Thailand?"

In the old days, that would get me called into the Fishbowl for a major chew-out by the managing editor. Now, one of the techies says that was cool and that blog traffic jumped 25 percent. The managing editor laughed. And the hits keep coming.

On Facebook, I have a personal profile and news personality page. They are friends with each other, so a post on one goes on the other. I write nothing except posts with links to blogs and stories.

By adding fellow outdoor writers as "friends," you and others can replicate how Prettyman gets me more hits with him than without him, and vice versa.

By hitting "share" or "like" on a fellow OWAA'ers link, we can generate more readership for everyone when we have a broader network than just local followers. ■



Residing in Medford, Ore., Mark Freeman has been a member since 1993. He is a staff writer and columnist for the Mail Tribune. Freeman is also an adjunct professor of journalism at Southern Oregon University. Contact him at [mfreeman@mailtribune.com](mailto:mfreeman@mailtribune.com).

### 2012 Excellence in Craft contests now open

With 10 contests and 48 categories, there's something for every outdoors communicator, from news reporter to feature photographer to online radio show host! Be rewarded for all your hard work.

With a cash purse worth up to \$15,000, more than 50 cash prizes will be awarded. First place in a sponsored contest is worth up to \$500.

Dec. 1, 2011, is deadline for the Book/E-book contest. Early bird deadline for all other contests is Jan. 9, 2012.

The 2012 contests reflect recent changes, as approved during the Board of Directors summer meeting.

Many of the rules used in the former contests will be incorporated. Such as, categories will need a minimum number of entries to be judged.

The contests will continue with the new digital online entry system first instituted in 2011. For entries submitted this way, the entry fee will remain as it has been for the past few years, at \$10 per submission. For those who choose to send in their entries via postal mail (for example, magazine clips instead of PDFs submitted online), the fee will be \$20 per entry. This fee increase excludes books, CDs and DVDs. The fee increase covers admin costs for digitizing paper entries.

For the 2011 contest, all award recipients received free registration for the annual conference so they can attend the awards banquet. For 2012, only first place winners will receive free conference registration.

To view the complete list of contests and rules, visit [www.owaa.org/eic/rules](http://www.owaa.org/eic/rules).

# Be the best on radio

*When Deb Ferns, author of "Babes with Bullets," released her book in early 2006, she wasn't prepared for the numerous requests for radio interviews she received. With more than 500 radio interviews, plus hosting of her own local talk radio show for several years, Ferns gives helpful hints on how to be an effective radio guest.*

*To make digestion of these hints even easier, she divided them up in short learning lessons noted as Radio 101 to Radio 109.*

### BY DEB FERNS

#### RADIO 101

■ When contacted by a radio host, you want to firm up which day and date, what time you will be on their show (in their time zone) and how long the host anticipates your interview will be.

■ Make sure to get what landline you will call in on or what landline they will call you on. No cell phone radio interviews if at all possible.

■ Follow up with an email to the show host, thanking them for the invite, reconfirming time, date/day and subject matter.

■ To prepare for your radio interview, check the show's website. Listen to a few archives from previous shows if they are available, to get a handle on the style of the radio host or hosts you will be dealing with.

■ Write a cheat sheet to keep in front of you during the interview, including the first name of all hosts in bold type, along with the name of the radio show. It's embarrassing to forget the name of a host, or worse yet, call them by the wrong name, when they will be most likely conveying to their listening audience that you are new best friends.

#### RADIO 102

■ Have a list of prepared "sound bites" that integrate your message with the format of the radio show where you are a guest. A sound bite

is a very short statement related to your story or your experience; basically whatever the theme line is for the radio interview.

■ A sound bite has to come across the radio as authentic, credible and must be delivered with passion or excitement. Remember; radio is not television! The passion or excitement in your voice is a huge selling point since no one can see your body language or facial expressions.

■ It always helps if you can back up your sound bite with a dramatic statistic, or possibly a notable quote. Always share where you found your information in case the listening audience wants to do their own homework.

■ Know in advance what your host's "hot buttons" are — both good and bad. Hot buttons equal energy, and both the interviewer and the interviewee need to portray energy through the radio waves. Hot buttons are also a perfect way to introduce the sound bites you've prepared.

Stay tuned next month for advice on how to get rid of nerves and sound confident during an interview. ■



Deb Ferns, of Tucson, Ariz., is co-founder of the women's action shooting camps, Babes with Bullets, held across the country since 2004. She also writes a column, "Outside My Comfort Zone," and is the executive producer of the Babes with Bullets webisodes hosted at [OutdoorChannel.com](http://OutdoorChannel.com). Contact her at [dferns@earthlink.net](mailto:dferns@earthlink.net).

# Steady does it...

**BY JIM SMITH**

There's no question, attempting to photograph flying birds or a fleeting antelope is difficult at best. Maybe even impossible. When using your view finder, it is hard to anticipate a bird's flight path. Some of us may recall the "sports sight" on some of our older cameras. This was just a wider view of your shooting area, but it went away. Now, using a simple BSA Red Dot RD30 scope with the new and improved Xtend-a-Sight Plus, you will be able to pick up your subject quicker and follow it for multiple exposures.

These products retail for \$26.95 each. The scope plate slides into a camera's hot shoe. After you attach it to the scope, you will only have one piece of equipment to handle.

The Xtend-a-Sight and scope combo can simplify your life. Here are a few techniques to getting the most out of using this unit:

1. Place the camera strap over your head and brace the camera by holding it out in front of you to steady it. Make sure the strap is pulling against your neck with no slack.

2. The "gold standard" for focusing when shooting wildlife has been to set your metering mode, or focus, to dot or spot metering. Instead, set it to a center-weighted or evaluative mode. When focusing on moving subjects, aim for the head as opposed to aiming for the eye.

3. Do not focus so tight on your subject that you do not have enough room to later edit and crop the image.

4. For large animals, I'll typically set the aperture priority at f/5.6 – 8.0. I'll change that whenever I am shooting birds. Within that range is the sweet spot for my lens, where I can expect reasonably good sharpness. However, when in doubt, shoot program mode, paying attention to the ISO and ensure the speed is equal or close to the



**Jim Smith** demonstrating Polaride Stabilizing Shoulder Mount. Photo courtesy Jim Smith.

stated focal length of the lens.

5. Use the No. 5 position on your scope for the laser intensity. I find it easier than the lower numbers and I just like it better.

6. The auto focus on most digital cameras has different modes. For Canon, they are one shot, al focus, and al servo. The Nikon cameras refer to these modes as single servo AF [S] and continuous servo AF [C]. I try and keep my camera on the Al Servo focus, which means that your lens automatically tracks the subject in the frames, keeping it in focus.

Use a shutter speed of 1/1000 per second in order to freeze the action.

I want my camera programmed to AEB (bracketing) or Sports mode so that I can shoot images continuously, just by holding the shutter button down.

Point the camera toward where the subject currently is and then pan ahead to where you think you should begin shoot-

ing your photos. Now move your feet (and body) to face this second position. Keeping your feet pointing toward this second position, rotate at your waist to point your camera back to the subject's current location. This way, as you start photographing, following the subject with your camera, you will not be all twisted and unstable as you press the shutter release.

Continue following your subject and pressing on the shutter button. This is an important step. Don't stop your swing — follow through! ■



Residing in Surprise, Ariz., Jim Smith has been a member since 1992. He is a freelance writer and photographer. Contact him at [jamessmith@cox.net](mailto:jamessmith@cox.net).

# To and from Alaska is (at least) half the fun

BY JOE BYERS

**A**laska is by far the largest state, yet has the smallest paved road system. Even so, a person can drive from Fairbanks, in the interior, through Anchorage, all the way to Homer, on the coast, in about 10 hours. The point being: drive a little, see a lot. You can't just fly to Fairbanks and then back home. Plan a pre- or post-conference trip, or both.

In 1985, I delivered a Chevy Suburban press car from Seattle, Wa., to Anchorage and chose the coastal Cassiar route for a taste of the traditional, all-gravel Alaska Highway. The highlight of the Cassiar was visiting Hyder, a small Alaska town that's more of a secret than a California governor's love child. Hyder is about 900 miles north of the Canadian border, so you can visit Alaska before you get there, so to speak. It's a quaint town of about 100 people, yet has great views of the Tongass National Forest, plus salmon fishing, bears, eagles, glaciers and more. The Cassiar is a windy, gravel mountain road that eventually links up with the Alaska Highway at Watson Lake.

Flying to Fairbanks and renting a car is also a good road trip strategy. In addition, visitors routinely travel to one part of Alaska and depart from another. Why not fly to Fairbanks, take the train to Anchorage, rent a car, and fly home from there?

## ALASKA IN A WEEK

I promised my grandson an Alaskan adventure when he turned 16 years old and pondered at length what to do: a wilderness lodge, a fly-in camp or a road trip. Thankfully, I chose the latter and we spent seven days exploring the Kenai Peninsula, experiencing many of the state's iconic animals, landforms and recreation.

We rented a Ford Explorer in Anchorage, thinking we needed four-wheel drive. But we didn't. A midsize car will meet your needs and save gas. Here's our story in a nutshell:

**Day one:** Drove to Seward, saw Dall sheep along the highway, hiked to Portage Glacier, took great wildlife photos at Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center and onto Seward.



Make plans to road trip during your travels for the 2012 OWAA conference. The author saw these grizzlies while touring the Kenai Peninsula. Photo by Joe Byers.

**Day two:** Chartered for silver salmon and halibut in Resurrection Bay, saw the Alaska SeaLife Center and gorged on beer-battered halibut.

**Day three:** Float-fished the Upper Kenai River with Alaska River Adventures and reached our limit of sockeye.

**Day four:** Stopped at the Alaska Horsemen, rode into the mountains, panned for gold, fished on our own, and ate 100-year-old pancakes at Alaska Sourdough B&B.

**Day five:** Stayed at the Diamond M Ranch in Soldotna where we watched a black bear stalk caribou from the deck of our \$100 per night cabin. Walked to the Russian River and caught and released salmon galore; fished with Hardy's Alaskan Adventures.

**Day six:** Drove to Homer, played golf, kayaked, hiked, and stayed overnight at the upscale Tutka Bay Wilderness Lodge.

**Day seven:** Chartered from Captain Bob's in Homer and caught a boat load of fish, literally. Had them filleted and frozen for our return trip the next day.

Regrettably, bad weather prevented a flight to Katmai National Park and a brown bear viewing trip. One participant termed it a "life-altering experience."

When a 60-year-old and a 16-year-old set off on a road trip, a lot can go wrong. Fortunately, the Kenai offered so much adventure, we didn't have time to disagree. I even tied his golf score! ■

*Author's Note: The Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council was very helpful with making reservations and suggesting activities. For assistance, contact the director at shanon@kenaiPeninsula.org or 907-262-5229.*



*A member since 1986, Hagerstown, Md., resident Joe Byers is a still photographer with credits appearing in numerous publications. Byers has been to Alaska a dozen times since 1963. Contact him at joebyers@erols.com.*

# North to Alaska! BIRD HUNTING

**BY CHRIS BATIN**

This is part of a series of overviews that will help OWWAers prepare for the September 2012 Alaska conference. Expect a variety of tips, recommendations and ideas on Alaska fishing, hunting and outdoor recreation opportunities. Descriptions and reservation info for guided and unguided trips will be provided as I receive them, but all will be posted by February 2012.

## Bird Hunting

Alaska waterfowl hunting season will be in full swing in early September, but I'll address that activity in one of the future monthly updates. This month, I am going to focus on the many species of grouse in Alaska's Interior that are easy to hunt.

Alaska's grouse and ptarmigan season is at its peak during September. Leaves start to fall off the birch and aspens. Young birds are fully fledged out and focused on eating ground-level berries. I've hunted for grouse in the hills and flatlands of Alaska's Interior for more than 30 years, and action is usually good to excellent.

Throughout Alaska's Interior, hunters will find spruce, ruffed and sharptail grouse, with large flocks of willow ptarmigan in the upper elevations of the White Mountains, starting about 10 to 20 miles from city center. The bag limit is generous, and it is possible to hunt areas that offer several species of birds in a morning of hunting. I have frequently taken grouse in the lower elevations near Livengood, while heading to the high country of Manley and taking ptarmigan and sharptails on the windblown ridges overlooking Minto Flats.

Most of the good grouse hunting can be had on state and federal land off the main highway system.

Recommendations include the forested sections east and south of Delta Junction, as well as the White Mountains to the north and east of Fairbanks. Many hunters have good luck in the Tanana Flats



Pictured is a spruce grouse. Photo by Chris Batin.

and hills just south of Fairbanks. I have always enjoyed chasing birds on a drive out to Circle Hot Springs, spending the night, and hunting again on the return trip to Fairbanks. Tok has some great sharptail hunting in early season in the fire-burned timber areas. Maps of these areas are available at local Bureau of Land Management offices in Fairbanks.

For more information on Alaska grouse hunting, refer to the chapters on upland bird hunting in my book, "Hunting in Alaska: A Comprehensive Guide."

Most bird hunting I have done in Alaska has been without the use of a dog, but if you care to bring your own dog, be sure it is well trained and that it quickly obeys verbal commands. Bears are plentiful in Alaska berry patches where birds like to congregate.

Shipping firearms to Alaska on the airlines is no different than transporting them to any other state. If you plan to drive through Canada, you'll need to adhere to Canadian customs and regulations regarding transport of firearms. Some might consider shipping firearms to a local gun dealer in Fairbanks. Check online for the

most current information on firearm regulations and passport requirements for driving through Canada.

Coming up next month: Alaska travel considerations and tips. ■



Chris Batin has been a member since 1979. He is the 2012 conference local chair. He is also editor and publisher of Alaska Angler, and Alaska Hunter Productions and Video Productions. Contact him at [ChrisBatin@AlaskaAngler.com](mailto:ChrisBatin@AlaskaAngler.com).

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## NEW MEMBERS

Jason Daniel Belts Kauffman  
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 Mike McKenna  
 Patricia Mary O'Kane  
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## ASSOCIATION UPDATE

Association. Gun Dog Editor, Labrador Retriever Club, Inc. Retriever training demos for retailers and hunting shows.

## CREDENTIALS REVIEWS

The following members successfully passed the review of their member credentials:

**Leonard Belcaro**  
**Tom Berg**  
**Cheryl Lyn Dybas**  
**Jack Elbert**  
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## NEW SUPPORTING GROUPS, AGENCIES AND BUSINESSES

**Honda Power Equipment**, 4900 Marconi Dr., Alpharetta, GA 30005. Contact: Sara Pines, manager, public relations. (W) 678-339-1385, (F) 678-339-2360, sara.pines@ahm.honda.com, www.honda.com. Makers of generators, outboard engines, and lawn and garden products.

## DECEASED MEMBER

Sylvia Bashline

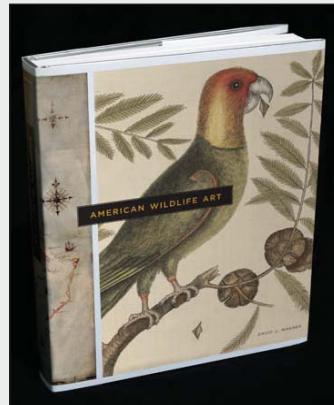
## CONTACT UPDATES

**Bushnell Outdoor Products**, Paul Arnhold, PR Manager, paul.arnhold@bushnell.com, (W) 913-752-6105, (F) 913-981-1878.

**Tom Stienstra**, 2280 Grass Valley Highway, Box No. 305, Auburn, CA 95603, (H) 530-261-1954.

## REINSTATED MEMBERS

**Beth Ann Amico**, (Active Member) 12601 S.E. 15th St., Chocaw, OK 73020. (H) 405-769-4108, (W) 405-769-4108, (F) 405-769-7842, gundogwriter@cox.net, www.deepforkretrievers.com. Pro retriever trainer and owner, Deep Fork Retrievers. Member, Professional Retriever Trainers Association and Dog Writers



## AMERICAN WILDLIFE ART

By David J. Wagner, with foreword by Kent Ullberg and introduction by Robert Bateman, Marquand Books, hardcover with jacket, 424 pages, 280 color illustrations, 30 black-and-white illustrations, \$75.00.

Author David J. Wagner tells the story of how this classic art form evolved from early watercolor drawings, like those by Mark

Catesby, to John James Audubon's classic masterpiece Birds of America, to the achievements of today's great wildlife painters and sculptors, including such notable names as Robert Bateman, Bob Kuhn, and Kent Ullberg.

*Wagner's book was provided to all conference attendees. If you reviewed the book for your publication, or would like more information, please contact him at davidwagnerllc@yahoo.com.*

## Bookshelf

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