



VOWA NEWS

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Virginia Outdoor Writers Association, Inc. Newsletter

www.vowa.com
Marika Byrd, Editor

CHALLENGE TO GET INVOLVED IN YOUTH WRITING CONTEST

Season's Greetings! Deer season that is. I did something this year I haven't been able to do for many years. I took some days off work to spend time with some dear old friends in the early muzzleloader season. This was particularly gratifying as I was able to spend some "quality time" afield with a variety of hunting companions--old timers, persons with disabilities, some first time hunters and especially several young hunters. It was inspiring to experience the camaraderie, excitement and enjoyment by everyone just grateful for the opportunity to be afield.

During a break from the treestand one afternoon, when our small hunting party got together to share some jerky, a refreshing drink and sighting reports, I asked one of the youngsters how his morning went. Even though I knew he hadn't gotten to shoot, he replied without hesitation, "I had one of the best times I can remember!"

He continued to tell the adults gathered around about every detail about he and his dad getting to their stand in the dark using red lights, the bird songs at sunrise, hearing turkeys fly down from the roost, seeing a doe, yet too far to shoot, squirrels racing around in the leaves--well you get the picture.



It then dawned on me that these simple, familiar, almost routine experiences for me, were having a profound influence on this teenager.

These experiences were what made our Youth Writing Contest such a great opportunity for students to express and share their great memories and the positive influence on them, their family and friends.

Sitting back in my deer stand that evening I pondered the positive influence VOWA members could have on young students by promoting, sponsoring or mentoring them and selected teachers to participate in the writing contest.

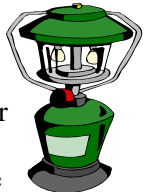
Note we have initiated an Entry Submission form to be able to better track entries and follow-up with schools and teachers. Several members have asked me what they could do to get more involved in VOWA. I have decided to make the Youth Writing Contest a priority project in which our entire membership could get involved. I challenge each member to do three simple things in December:

1. Contact an eligible student(s) you have met or know of and offer to mentor or promote their participation in the contest. Often all it takes is bringing it to their attention.
2. Follow-up with the student(s) school and find a teacher who would like to work with the students or a particular class, possibly as an 'over holiday break' or early January assignment, to get best stories in by the January 31, 2008, deadline.



Note with the teacher there are numerous opportunities to correlate this assignment with the SOLs appropriate to their subject and grade level. Many of the stories will have underlying science-based themes of conservation, environmental awareness, life cycles, or creative writing, language development, composition, etc.

3. Stay in contact with the teacher, students, or class to get their entries in on time and offer assistance through VOWA member contacts to provide guidance and sources of good writing to review: Virginia Wildlife magazine, your and colleagues columns, other publications or on-line resources.



We had a copy of the contest notice and promotion sent to the schools, teachers and the home schooled by the Virginia Department of Education in November, and they are on our web site for your reference.

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Several teachers have already contacted me with questions on participating in the contest due to this promotional notice they received at school.

With all the concern about kids not getting outdoors experiencing nature and the dire ramifications resulting in a loss of conservation ethic and knowledge in the future, our writing contest is a step in the right direction for these future conservation leaders.

I plan to follow-up in December with a telephone call to every member to get to know you better and talk about how VOWA can benefit you and how you can add to the effectiveness of your association.

Please contact me anytime if I can be of any assistance to you. I hope to get VOWA more involved and members more active in participating in the conservation, enjoyment and promotion of Virginia's wild outdoors.

Season's Greetings...we wish you and yours peace and joy throughout this blessed season and the new year!
David Coffman

UNDERGRADUATE WRITING CONTEST

Contacts were made with several colleges from whom we received entries last year. Additionally, Bill Hightower, with the Virginia Community College System, was instrumental in notifying their English and science professors about our contest.

Ms. Kathleen Kincheloe, of the State Council on Higher Education, was provided the announcement and guidelines.

If any member knows an individual to contact at a particular college or university please go ahead and contact them; also let the committee know so we can add this to our growing contact list.

We anticipate an increase in the number of entries this year.

Your assistance is appreciated.
Marika Byrd and Frank Mundy

WHO IS RUNNING THE STORE?

by Gary Collins

Forbes.com announced in July that Virginia had been named the best state in the union for [its] business environment. This was the second year running that Virginia had earned this "Best State for Business" honor.

Somehow this just didn't set right with my recent trip up U. S. Route 340 from Elkton to Front Royal. Gone were the little eateries, mom and pop stores, bait houses; bed and breakfast operations were struggling and campgrounds were not filled or closed. I guess Forbes doesn't look at small business in its evaluation.

At this point you have to be asking what does this have to do with the out-of-doors. Well, most of those establishments based their livelihood in some manner on the fishery that the South Fork of the Shenandoah gave both the locals and the many tourists and fisherman that visited the Valley. Somebody needs to tell Forbes that fishing is a 34 billion dollar business that rivals NASCAR.

No, someone needs to listen to Ronnie Stoneberger in Stanley. His fishing license sales and fishing tackle sales are almost non-existent. He relies on the hunting market now to keep his business at Hidden Acres Guns going. Ronnie is a good man and doesn't complain much about the not-sold-fishing tackle section of his store.

July 11 was a very busy news day! It was the same day that the Governor's news release told the

public of Virginia's award as the best business environment. Buried in an AP release was the following article "Task Force Advised to Study Poultry Litter Effect on Fish Kills." Two professors, one from Virginia Tech and another from Virginia Commonwealth University, after examining the fish kill task forces studies and data, have recommended narrowing the focus to that area. The traces of arsenic in fish tissue samples and the inter-sexed (fish having both male/female cells) fish were contributors for their making this recommendation.

That trip up U. S. Route 340 produced disturbing information, other than the obvious decline of fishery based enterprises.

Page County is a large poultry producer with 118 chicken operations and 20 turkey operations (2005 statistics).

I listened in on a discussion of the fish kill among some locals and the disturbing fact arose that litter was now taking a different route for disposal since the fish kill and the publicity surrounding it.

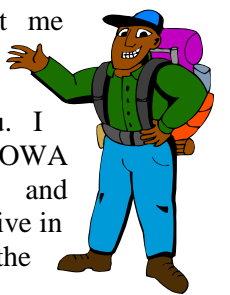
More and more of the litter was crossing the mountain on Route 211 and being disposed of in the Rapidan and Rappahannock River watersheds; some are within a rock-throw distance of Lake Anna.

A relative of one of those talking had moved 10 tractor trailer loads of chicken litter so far that week. Most of us are aware of the massive amounts of chicken litter (54 million pounds) moved into the Cowpasture and the upper James watershed and the fish kills there this spring. Will the Rapidan and Rappahannock be next?

The Forbes announcement struck other chords. Merck has applied for a discharge permit to the South Fork of the Shenandoah that would increase nitrogen by 400% and phosphorus by 200%.



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Coors recently obtained a permit from DEQ to discharge up to six million gallons to the South Fork when it only has capabilities for treatment of two million gallons. The permit also allowed Coors to increase the discharge of suspended solids by 200%.

DEQ's logic for the increase is that the river is already impaired. DEQ has proposed to the State Water

Control Board to increase its standard on the allowable amount of fecal bacteria in Virginia's streams, lakes and rivers (bacteria such as e coli from human and other animal waste). That will most likely take care of the problem at Smith Mountain Lake. DEQ still allows the poultry waste processing plant in Timberville to dump 360 million gallons of waste water per year into the North Fork of the Shenandoah River. Jeff Kelble, of The Shenandoah Riverkeeper, has announced it intends to file legal action.

When Virginia was selected the "Best State for Business", I guess Forbes asked different people than I did.

CHANGES AT VDGIF

On November 30, 2007, the Board of the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries terminated the employment of J. Carlton Courter, III, as he apparently failed to provide leadership the Board expected.

Mike Bise, Colonel of the Law Enforcement Division, was named Acting Agency Director after agreeing to delay his planned retirement.

The Board has announced they plan to have new Director named by February 1, 2008.

A new leader in the Law Enforcement division was announced by Bise, who writes: As most all of

you are aware I announced my plans to retire back in October. As a result, a process was begun to select my replacement as chief of the Agency's Law Enforcement division. The final piece of that process was to convene a panel to conduct interviews of the applicants. The credentials of this panel are impressive: Lieutenant Colonel Bob Northern, Virginia State Police, Colonel Terry West, chief of law enforcement, Georgia DNR, and Bob Duncan, Chief of Wildlife, DGIF.

First my congratulations and thanks to the three applicants. It is encouraging to know that folks with the abilities demonstrated in this process are willing to step up and ask for more responsibility. This was a solid field of candidates, and not an easy decision. We should certainly be proud of their service to the Agency thus far and in what they brought to this process.

As a result, I am pleased to announce that Dabney "Dee" Watts will lead the law enforcement position as Colonel, Division Chief, effective immediately.

Please join me in offering Colonel Watts congratulations, and all the candidates our best wishes for the future.

Mike Bise, Acting Director

OUTDOOR REPORT'S FIRST ANNIVERSARY

by David Coffman
(edited reprint)

Be Responsible, Be Respectful, Be Thankful...

On the first year anniversary of the new, revived electronic **Outdoor Report**, we [were] a bit sentimental and humbled about all the hard work and support from colleagues, partners, contributing reporters and readers that have made this newsletter successful. We hope you have been informed, educated

and even inspired on occasion to do something new and different to enhance your outdoor experiences, or better yet, share with others. This edition is posted right in the middle of what I observe as the great American heritage appreciation month [November] where we need to be responsible, respectful and thankful. This is a time to "walk the walk and talk the talk." [On] Election Day, were you a responsible citizen and vote[d]!? The following Sunday was Veterans Day, honoring the brave men and women who have fought and died to protect our freedoms--especially the privilege to vote. I hope you showed your appreciation in some way to our veterans. [The] Saturday opening day of deer season [has come and gone]—hunters, this is the most important time for us to be respectful. Common courtesy and safety are no accident--be respectful of other hunters, landowners and the wild game you pursue and harvest. And finally, be Thankful for the opportunity to participate in all these wonderful blessings, for treasured friendships, and for the service, courage and sacrifice by our military, law enforcement and emergency services people and their families.

DECOY CARVING WORKSHOP MAKES A GREAT HOLIDAY GIFT

Looking for a unique gift for a special sportsman or sports-woman? Holiday Lake 4-H Educational Center Director, Brian Branch, suggests making a reservation in the decoy carving class March 9-13, 2008, [which is] open to novices and advanced carvers alike!

Brian is offering a unique opportunity for a VOWA member. He is inviting one member to come and take the class for free--asking only that the member/participant publish some articles in various publications to promote future workshops.

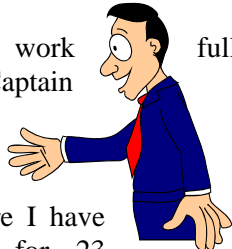
First time carvers will carve and paint a working canvasback, one of the most popular of all decoys. Returning or experienced students will carve and paint a decoy of their choice. Decoys will be carved from a favored wood. Decoys will be carved the traditional way using knives and rasps. For hunters wishing to carve their own decoys or outdoor enthusiasts who want a decoy to show, this class is a great deal. Meals, lodging, instruction and all materials are all included in this exceptionally priced class. Participation is limited to 15 people. Contact them at <http://www.ext.vt.edu/resources/4h/holiday/decoycarving.html>



NEW MEMBER

We welcome **Beau Beasley** (wife Leila) to membership. He writes:

I currently work full time as a career Captain for Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department where I have been employed for 23 years. I have three AA degrees in Fire Science and a BA in Business Administration.



My first book, *Fly Fishing Virginia: A No Nonsense Guide to Top Waters*, was released in May of 2007 and covers 39 locations to fish in Virginia complete with color maps. The publisher is No Nonsense Guidebooks from Tucson, Arizona www.nononsenseguides.com 520-547-2462 Editor, Howard Fisher.

I first started writing for Virginia Outdoor Weekly and currently write various outdoor publications including Virginia Living, Virginia Wildlife, American Angler, Fly Rod and Reel and Eastern Fly Fishing.

The Mason-Dixon OWA named Beau winner of their 2005 Conservation Writing Award.

MEMBER UPDATE

Marika Byrd is recuperating nicely from her second cancer surgery this year. A stage four melanoma on the left lower leg was removed October 9, 2007, and the recovery has not kept her down.

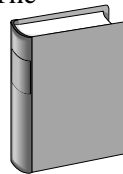
Bill Cochran and the late Jack Randolph were honored recently at the Virginia Big Game Show in Franklin. The show sponsor, the Virginia Peninsula Sportsman's Association, organized in 1940, awarded plaques of appreciation to Cochran and to Randolph's widow for the two writer's coverage of the outdoors through the years, including the big game show.



Randolph, a former member of VOWA for several years, wrote for a number of magazines and newspapers during a long career and served as assistant director at the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.

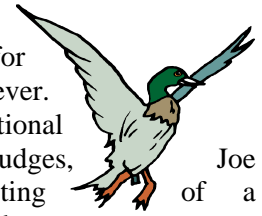
Cochran has been a VOWA member since 1960, was outdoor editor of the Roanoke Times for 36 years and now hosts an outdoor Web site, www.billcochran.com. His work has appeared in a multitude of magazines.

Lillie Gilbert and **Vickie Shufer** announce their long-awaited third book is about to debut. The book is at the printer and should be here around December 8! Thanks for your interest and support over the past few years as this book has been coming together!



Lee Graves reports that he is "now senior editor with the U.Va. Alumni Association communications office, writing and editing for their print magazine and online publications. Many thanks for being in touch--I miss my outdoors buddies."

Gene Hester, a VOWA member from Springfield, VA, was one of the judges for the 75th Anniversary Duck Stamp contest in Sanibel, Florida. The judging resulted in a three-way tie for first place, for the first time ever. After additional voting by the judges, Joe Hautman's painting of a pair of pintails was selected for first place. Joe, of Plymouth, Minnesota, has won the Duck Stamp contest twice previously—in 1992 and 2002. This artwork will be used for the 2008-2009 Duck Stamp. It can be seen on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service website (www.fws.gov) Click on More about our Duck Stamp program.

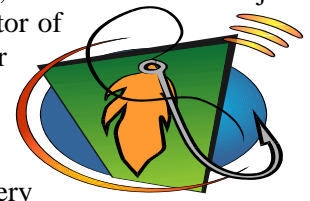


Reb Stewart writes to the VOWA Secretary: "I hope all is well with you and VOWA. Lynn and I hated to miss OWAA in Roanoke, but my back doesn't handle long distance travel well.

Recently, I was invited to join FOWA and attend the Annual conference in Homosassa (the Holy Land of tarpon fishing). About 150 attended the four day event. It was quite a show.

Outdoor writing is quite an industry in Florida. There must be two dozen fishing magazines in the state, and every newspaper features outdoor columns and articles. Many of the top guides are also writers. We met some bona fide characters and made some very interesting friends.

In June, I took on a new job: Exec. Director of the Taylor County Fly Fishing Guides—a small but very talented and active group. My duties consist mostly of P. R. and tying flies. Plus, I get free trips to [the] flats on their days off.



We invite our old pals in VOWA to visit us if they are ever down in

this neck of the swamp—either at Celestial Indolence in Steinhatchee or Mount Tarpon in Homosassa.

You do a great job with VOWA News. It is good to get the news on new activities and old friends.

Give our best wishes to all.”

Mary Winegar, 89, of Gate City, Va., died October 25 in a local nursing home after a four-long battle with Alzheimer’s disease. Mrs.

Winegar was the mother of **Garvey Winegar**, long-time VOWA member. After retiring as outdoor writer for the Richmond Times-Dispatch, Garvey moved back to Gate City and bought the old home place overlooking the North Fork of the Holston River. His mailing address is 2084 Apple Orchard Road, Gate City, VA 24251 and e-mail: garveywinegar@aol.com.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL NOTICE

January 2, 2008, begins our membership renewal season. Remember, our membership fees are Paid on a calendar year basis. Below is the renewal form.

Calendar Year 2008 Membership Renewal Form January 1 to December 31, 2008

Name _____

Address _____

e-mail: _____ hone # (_____)

Check one membership category:

Active	\$ 20.00	Corporate	\$100.00	Student	\$10.00
Associate/Apprentice	\$ 20.00	Senior Non-Active	\$ 20.00		

Note: Membership expiration dates can be located to the right of the page in the VOWA Membership Roster. Changes are in bold.

Make check payable to: **VOWA, Inc.**

Mail to:
Jim Crosby, Treasurer
5571 Brookwood Road
Crozet, VA 22932

VOWA Board Meeting

February 20, 2008,
at 10:00 a.m.

Va. Department of Forestry
Fire Protection Conference Room.
Charlottesville, VA.

VOWA NEWS

Next deadline is April 5, 2008

Mark your calendar now so you do not forget. A reminder will be sent later. Early submissions are always welcome.

Submit to: byrdm@vcu.org

Virginia Outdoor Writers Assoc. Inc. Board Meeting Notice

Wednesday, March 19, 2008, promptly at 10:00 a.m.

Location: Department of Forestry
in the Fontaine Research Park,
900 Natural Resources Drive, Charlottesville, VA 22903
Phone 434/977-6555 Fax-434/296-2369

DOF and the Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy share the same Natural Resources building.

DIRECTIONS

From Exit 118 from I-64:

Take Business Route 29 North; take first exit ; at the end of the ramp go right to first traffic light and take first right into the Fontaine Research Park; go to the "Stop" sign and take right; continue to where the road ends and a parking lot begins (watch for a road directional sign when you are in sight of the Natural Resources building).

From southbound Route 29:

Proceed through many traffic lights to Charlottesville, exiting right onto the Route 250/Route 29 bypass towards I-64 (Wachovia Bank, KFC and Best Buy are landmarks). Travel on the bypass three miles, taking the Route 29 Business/Fontaine Avenue exit.; go to traffic light at Fontaine Research Park and take a right; go to the "Stop" sign and go right; continue to where the road ends and a parking lot begins; (watch for a road directional sign when you are in sight of the Natural Resources building).

MEETING SITE INFORMATION

The meeting will be in the Training Conference Room, located to your left as you enter the building. The Aroma Café is across the hall from this room. Rest room facilities are off the hallway behind the café.

A Reception/Information Desk is located to your right as you enter the building.



**Seasons Greetings
and
Merry Christmas from
your
Board of Directors
and membership.**