



VOWA NEWS

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Virginia Outdoor Writers Association, Inc. Newsletter

www.vowa.org.
Marika Byrd, Editor

President's Message

By Terry Lewis

The strong downturn in the world and U. S. economies has taken its toll on almost everyone, and our individual and corporate members are no different. The Board Members of VOWA continue to review the financial status of our organization to keep us secure and retain each valued member relationship as well as welcome new members. We have decided to cut back in some areas, but also need to spend money in other ways to keep our organization strong and vibrant.

We continue to receive wonderful cooperation and assistance from our supporting and corporate members who donate valuable items for the winners of the High School writing competition and our Silent Auction. Letters of thanks have been sent to them, but look at the directory and, if and when the opportunity arises, please also express your thanks for their support. Their donations make it possible for all of us to invest in the future outdoor writers through our youth contests, probably the most important task of our association.

At the July 29 board meeting, two new sections for our newsletter were approved. In response to a new corporate member, a Corporate Member News section was created. This will be a vehicle to give our corporate members in good standing the opportunity to provide valuable product information to our membership. Submissions will contain up to 250 words, a small jpeg photo, along with a web site linkage for more information. This is not meant to be offered as pure advertisement, and cost information will not be included. Locate the first submission later in the newsletter; it was initiated with one review so that the details and what type of format would work best when submissions are sent to the Editor. Corporate members will receive the details directly and in sufficient time to participate if desired. This new section is at no additional cost.

The other new section will be a Member Product Review. This will allow our regular members in good standing an opportunity to provide reliable product information about goods and services they use. It is also limited to up to 250 words with a web link for more information. Again, this is not meant for advertisement and no cost information will be included. Both of these new sections will help keep our membership informed of new and worthwhile products that might make their work or their time spent in the outdoors even more enjoyable.

A lot of hard work, coordinated contacts, and a significant amount of time are involved in preparing and placing this publication on our web site. Marika Byrd, our Secretary and Editor, has done this pro gratis for many years. She also takes the notes at Board Meetings, helps coordinate activities, and does numerous other behind the scenes tasks that keep this a functioning association. To that end, the board approved a small payment to the Editor for each publication of this newsletter. It really is a token for the amount of work and effort put in by Marika, and we all owe her a debt of gratitude for the valuable services she provides to us and to all the other interested persons who visit our web site.

The January 31, 2010, deadline for all VOWA competitions is fast approaching! The deadlines are for High School (grades 9-12 including home schooled), the Collegiate Undergraduate, and our own Excellence in Craft (EIC) contests. Members can expect notification when the criteria are finalized and placed on our web site. Changes in the EIC now call for the naming of two winners in each category where there are three or more member submissions in each category. The EIC monetary awards for 2010 will be \$50 for first place and \$25 for second. Committee chairs for 2009-2010 are EIC--Dan Genest; High School writing competition--Frank Mundy and David Coffman, and the Collegiate Undergraduate--Marie and Milan Majorov.

Plans are now being drawn for an exciting 2010 annual meeting, to be held in April-May. We look at different venues each year, and after a tremendous meeting in Hampton, VA last year, we hope to keep a winning tradition by holding a Friday-Saturday event at Graves Mountain Lodge in Syria, VA. We'll have some outdoor activities, special speakers, and a craft improvement session. This is a spectacular area, so plan to join us for another super meeting. Look for specifics in the near future.

The next board meeting will be Friday, September 25, at the Meadowood Special Recreation Management Area in Northern Virginia. Board members will be given a behind the scenes look at wild horse adoptions after the meeting and on Saturday. Who knows, they might be riding a mustang back home! See the article later in this publication.

So even though the economy is causing all of us to alter our lives to some extent, these are still exciting times for VOWA. Please get involved in the association, encourage your friends and acquaintances to join, help get our young people away from the TV and the computer screen to discover the outdoors and enjoy the bounty and beauty of nature.

Youth Writers Featured at Bass Pro “Next Generation” Youth Seminars

By David Coffman

Two of the High School Youth Writing Contest winners discovered that they were not only excellent writers, but dynamic public speakers as well. “Let’s have some fun this coming hunting season!!” This was the message presented by teenage speakers at the Next Generation Weekend at Bass Pro Outdoor World in Hampton August 22-23. In partnership with VDGIF, Virginia Outdoor Writers Association, Inc., and other youth-oriented sportsmen organizations, Bass Pro staff hosted fun-filled youth oriented activities and seminars throughout the facility.

VOWA Youth Writing Contest Chairman, David Coffman, made the most out of this unique opportunity when Bass Pro Promotions Director, Sonja Horton, contacted him to get some ideas for youth speakers for seminars to get kids interested in hunting and fishing during their special “Next Generation” promotion. Sonja noted, “We wanted to have teens present their experiences to other youngsters rather than adults so they could better relate. Having the VOWA sponsored youth writers was most impressive as these accomplished and talented teens shared their stories with other young aspiring hunters was a powerful message for them and their families.” Featured speakers were Micheala Bryant, the 2008 first place winner from Virginia Beach and Scott Rollins, the 2009 second place winner from King George. Both thrilled the audience of young hunters and their parents with stories of their “most memorable outdoor experiences.” They also gave tips on how to improve hunting skills along with the benefits of families hunting together. Teen sister and brother, Kara and Michael Venable, represented the Virginia Peninsula Sportsman’s Association [Supporting VOWA member] and volunteered to help staff the VDGIF exhibit promoting the *Outdoor Report*, the new Youth Deer Hunting Day on September 26, and the opportunity to get an Apprentice Hunting License for a friend or family member wanting to try this rewarding sport.

Bass Pro Marketing Manager, Mary Scott, commented that the teens who volunteered to help with this event were very impressive and are great role models for the future of hunting and fishing.

Another highlight of the weekend event was the completion of an 18-month plan for Micheala to buy a new slug shotgun to hunt with her dad. For a young teenage girl deer hunter, time spent in the woods with her dad can be very special and full of great memories. When your dad is a Navy Commander deployed for months on an aircraft carrier, those hunting opportunities become even more memorable. For Micheala, her deer hunt with her dad in 2006 provided her most memorable hunting experience and first place for her comical and touching story about her encounter with some “gossiping does” and the different accounts of the event between her and her dad. Michaela was awarded several prizes, including outdoor gear and a \$150 gift card from Bass Pro. She had decided to use the gift card to purchase a new slug gun from Bass Pro to go hunting with her dad that fall (2008). But when her Dad was called up for overseas duty the shotgun purchase got delayed. When the August Bass Pro youth event was being planned, Coffman suggested they use the occasion to buy the special shotgun. The whole family came to participate in the event and help Micheala select the perfect slug gun.

Timing turned out great, with a weekend Remington gun purchase promotion, they got a scope, sling, and expert advice from Bass Pro Hunting Manager Dennis Holt. Michaela commented that this fall she will be ready for the “attack of the does” or a big buck for that matter! Good luck Micheala and Mike--there may be another winning story in the making.

Thanks to the Bass Pro staff for hosting this fun and exciting weekend event to inspire the “next generation” to go hunting with family and friends... you will all be better for it!

High School and Collegiate Writing Contest Winners Featured in Regional Publications

In an effort to promote the VOWA youth writing contests, Chairman David Coffman has made numerous contacts with supporting member publications and colleagues to publish winning articles submitted by the students. What better way to acknowledge the developing skills of these young writers than to get their stories in print where more than just a handful of judges and teachers get to read them.

Promoting the use of the stories got its biggest boost when Coffman, Editor of the VDGIF bimonthly electronic newsletter the *Outdoor Report*, decided to feature the top 30 best articles in a new section of the newsletter beginning in March 2009. The section is entitled “Winning Outdoor Adventure Stories from Young Writers,” and includes a special introduction that gives a student author biography and how the article relates to the newsletter’s seasonal theme. Since then more than a dozen articles have been posted in the electronic format that is emailed to 23,000 readers the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month.

The story selected for each edition supports the seasonal theme of other articles and events featured in that edition, like deer and turkey hunting, fishing, camping, or canoeing in summer. There have been numerous follow-up requests to re-print the articles in hometown newspapers, regional hunting and fishing magazines, and sportsmen organization newsletters.

Other outlets for the articles include Charlie Finley, Editor and publisher for the “*Forest Landowner News*,” who has begun adding a topical story in his quarterly newsletter that goes out to 12,000 subscribers in the Mid-Atlantic states. Denny Quaiff, Editor of *Whitetail Times*, published by the Virginia Deer Hunters Association, will be featuring the 2009 second place winning story, “Monarch of the Pines,” by Scott Rollins, from King George High School. He will be selecting deer hunting stories from the 2009-10 contest for use in future editions.

Member Mark Fike has mentored Scott for several years and having him fill in with articles in Mark’s newspaper column. This is a great example of how we as individual members can mentor students to become better writers, sportsmen, students, and, hopefully, future VOWA members and colleagues. Please contact David Coffman {david.coffman@dgif.virginia.gov} if you have contacts or ideas for more opportunities to publish the great stories of our future generations “most memorable outdoor experiences.”

Collegiate Undergraduate Writing Competition by Marie & Milan Majarov

Fall is upon us and once again VOWA’s Annual Collegiate Undergraduate Writing Competition is set to get underway. Notice we have a new title: “Collegiate Undergraduate.” The board felt this was more descriptive and inclusive of all college students at both 4-year college, university, and community college institutions. Students are asked to write on how experiences in the outdoors have influenced their lives. Committee Chairs, Marie and Milan Majarov, are sending out notices to schools throughout our Commonwealth. The deadline for entries is changed this year to January 31, 2010. President Terry Lewis, of the Bureau of Land Management, will once again put together a fine team of judges. We need the support of all members in encouraging the college students they know to enter. Cash prizes and publication opportunities will be awarded at our spring annual meeting.

Craft Improvement Corner

Watermarking Photos

By Marie Majarov

Putting your special images on the web or sending them by email can be a cause for some angst – there are smooth, high tech pirates out there. Check out the website photo galleries of my OWAA mentor, nationally recognized photojournalist Michael Furtman (www.michaelfurtman.com) and Canon Explorer of Light, Lewis Kemper (www.lewiskemper.com). Both watermark their images. Watermarks protect you, the image owner, from anyone staking a claim to your work. It is a signature of sorts.

Methods for watermarking images range from simply using a text tool to write your name on the image and flattening the image, to specially designed programs for watermark protection. All protection begins with making sure to embed your copyright information into the “File Info” that is part of each digital image. This is a must!

My personal routine involves a few simple steps in Photoshop, beginning with a 72 ppi JPEG. On a new layer I draw out the “©” symbol with the “Custom Shape” tool, followed by my name layer using the “Text Tool” (figure 1). I apply the “Emboss Filter” to each layer (figure 2) and then change the “Blend Mode” to “Hard Light,” the “Opacity” to about 40%, and flatten the image (figure 3). Email me, marie.milan@majarov.com, for complete step-by-step details.

With practice, the process goes quickly. For standard sized images, you can record a Photoshop Action. If you have additional tips on this topic, or other craft improvement subjects, I hope you will consider writing a piece for our VOWA newsletter. Sharing tips, ideas, and craft information is a valuable benefit of membership.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

VW Annual Photography Contest

By Marika Byrd

Excitement is in the air and it is time to dust off the digital photographs and select your entries for the 2009 competition in the **Virginia Wildlife Annual Photography Contest**. For those wonderful, exciting, and even unusual shots about nature and wildlife, **November 2, 2009**, is the deadline to enter the various categories listed for adults, youth, and children. That time will be here before you catch your breath in the coming fall air.

Imagine one of your photographs gracing the cover or somewhere in the much-sought-after publication. Contest information can be found on the inside back cover of the March 2009 issue showcasing the 2008 competition, or reviewed at <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/photocontest>. The big winners' showcase comes in the March 2010 issue.

Member News

Terry Lewis continues recuperating nicely from his knee replacement surgery. He is anxious to get going actively outdoors now, testing that bionic hinge. Terry has continued to lead the association through this ordeal. We wish him well as he continues getting back to his old self.

Spike Knuth writes [edited]: "I'll be cutting down on my submissions to Virginia Wildlife. According to Editor Sally Mills, someone in Wildlife Diversity will be writing the articles every other month and I will do only artwork starting in February. We were getting into more so-called threatened and endangered species, which I have to research extensively since I don't know much about them.

I still do an article and art for Chesapeake Style, Cooperative Living, plus Ducks Unlimited Dinners [paintings]. I also want to do some art for Susie and just paint subjects like botanicals/tropical fish/WWII War birds, and landscapes. I start displaying at the Crossroads Art Gallery October 1 and want to enter some state and the Federal duck stamp contests.

We want to visit the grandkids as often as possible down in Wake Forest and Mooresville, NC. I also have some reading and studying, maybe gather material for a book, take a trip to Wisconsin, and visit gardens around the Mid-Atlantic.

It's getting more and more difficult to get around anymore. Still try to garden a little, do the grocery shopping, and most cooking to stay active.

Basically I want to finally retire "a little bit more"--not completely--but with fewer deadlines. Spike"

John Ross honored by Trout Unlimited

Jason McGarvey, Virginia Council of TU, announced that on August 22, in Grayling, Michigan, their Distinguished Service Award was presented to John Ross, author of Trout Unlimited's Guide to America's 100 Best Trout Streams and Rivers of Restoration, the history of TU released last year. For the past five years, he has chaired the Virginia Council of TU. During that period, the council has initiated a youth camp, more than 75 Trout In The Classroom Programs, and a campaign to improve coldwater resources in the 13,000-square-mile Interstate-81 corridor, which includes TU's first Home Rivers Initiative in the Shenandoah Valley.

Trout Unlimited is the nation's oldest and largest coldwater fisheries conservation organization. It has over 140,000 members dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds.

The Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited is made up of 16 chapters and 4,000 members committed to conserving, protecting, and restoring the state's mountain streams, spring creeks, and the trout fisheries they support. Visit www.vctu.org.

Contact Jason Garvey at Virginia Council of TU, jason.mcgarvey@gmail.com, (301) 602-3818.

Corporate Member News

Promaster Infinity Elite ELX Binoculars

Whether you are an avid birder, boater, hunter, or simply enjoy observing things around you with great detail, a good set of binoculars is something that no outdoor enthusiast should be without. This month I had the opportunity to review a set of Promaster Infinity Elite ELX binoculars. The ELX series is at the top of Promaster's binocular line-up, and carries the reputation of being able to rival the optical quality of binoculars priced nearly 3 times what the ELX sell for.

These binoculars were built to last. The body is made of a magnesium alloy and they are coated with a hard textured rubber. They are well balanced and at 27 ounces they have enough heft to make holding them steady a simple task. These binoculars are incredibly bright and sharp. The ELX's achieve this impressive resolution due to a few key design elements. The roof prism on the ELX's are silver and phase coated to reflect the most light to your eyes. The 2 objective lens are made of (ED) Extra Low Dispersion glass that greatly reduces color

fringing. Also all of the lens surfaces are fully multi-coated to help diminish internal reflections. All of these features together mean more light is transmitted where it is needed; your eyes.

The Infinity Elite ELX series binoculars perform great, are available in 8x42 and 10x42, and come packaged with a case, strap, and lens cloth.

Jonathan Lawton jlawton@wbhunt.com Hunt's Photo & Video 1-800-221-1830 <http://www.wbhunt.com>

The following letter [verbatim] was received too late to be included in the last issue of the VOWA News.

Members:

As a long time member and a director of VOWA, I want to thank those few who worked so tirelessly to create a splendid experience in Hampton. Yes, we owe thanks to Hampton Visitors Center and to M-DOWA and all the sponsors, but in all the accolades to others, I think we may have overlooked the exhaustive efforts of our own David Coffman. The schedule didn't just happen, nor did the very successful silent auction. Very seldom did I see David sitting and resting, but instead he was checking on "things." While many of us enjoyed the seminars on Saturday, David, Terry Lewis, and the Laysers were busy laying out and organizing the silent auction. I heard many congratulating King Montgomery and the other presenters, but I heard very few of us expressing the same appreciation for one of our own. I guess this goes back to the "grass is greener" syndrome. Also, for those of you who could not attend, I want you to know just how hard David Coffman worked to assure an organized, educational and entertaining conference and I am sorry you missed it! This was one of the best--if not the best--experience I have ever had with fellow Virginia outdoor writers. Therefore, I say Thank You to all who helped make this such a historic and successful conference, but I want to go on and tell David Coffman just how much we appreciate not just his talents, but also his dedication, energy and determination to put VOWA on the map--again! Jennifer Hensley

(See next page)

Celebrate National Wild Horse Adoption Day

Release from Terry Lewis, VOWA President and Chief, External Affairs, Bureau of Land Management.

On September 26, 2009, organizations across the nation will be supporting and participating in the first National Wild Horse Adoption Day. Uniting with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the greater good of wild horses will be other wild horse and humane animal advocacy groups.

Wild Horse Adoption Day is a day dedicated to supporting and protecting the livelihood of wild horses. Participating organizations in this event hope to encourage more people to adopt these wonderful animals. One of the numerous wild horse adoption sites planned for that day will be held in Lorton, Virginia at the BLM's Meadowood recreation site.

The BLM is the organizer of the wild horse adoptions and whose purpose is to manage wild horses and burros on the western public rangelands. By allowing a certain number of wild horses and burros to be adopted into good homes each year, the BLM is able to control the wild horse and burro population from exceeding the carrying capacity of the western rangelands.

The adoption held in Virginia will provide participants with an educational experience that will showcase the history and mystique of the wild horse. Inspiring stories involving wild horses, training sessions, expos, and more will all be held at the adoption event. Forty wild horses will be available for adoption. They cost only \$125--a real bargain for a young and trainable horse.

Adopting a wild horse is said to be one of the most rewarding experiences of a lifetime, said Juan Palma, BLM-Eastern States Director. The unique bond that is created between the adopter and the animal is a relationship with limitless potential.

Wild horses are noted for their endurance and intelligence. With time and patience, these wonderful animals can be gentled and used for dressage, trail riding, and western events, as well as any activities where a domestic horse can be used.

Here is your chance to join a community of active supporters of wild horses.

For more information on the application process, call 1-866-4MUSTANGS or visit www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov; www.es.blm.gov/whb, www.wildhorseandburro.blm.gov/adoption; <http://nationalwildhorseadoptionday.org>. <http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/bpd.html> Key word is horses; or Davida_Carnahan@blm.gov or 703/440-1717 for photos

Adoption Address: 10406 Gunston Rd, Lorton, VA 22079 Directions: From Route 1, take Gunston Rd (east), go 2.4 miles, past the BLM Meadowood main entrance, to right to Harley Road.

The two pictures above are courtesy of the Bureau of Land Management, Palamino Valley National Horse and Burro Center, north of Sparks, Nevada.