



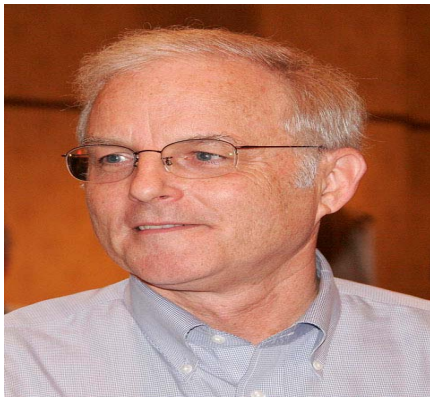
# VOWA NEWS

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Summer 2007

Virginia Outdoor Writers Association, Inc. Newsletter

www.vowa.com  
Marika Byrd, Editor

## 2007 OWAA HAPPENINGS



Richard Louv, keynote speaker at OWAA and author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. He promotes children (as well as adults) being active in the outdoors and as one way of overcoming obesity. ©Marie and Milan Majorov.

### OWAA Breakout Day Events

**B**reakout Day provides the exhibitors a time to enlarge their activities and the attendees can engage in games for prizes. The breakout was Monday, June 19, at Green Hill Park, Salem, Virginia, despite the sunny and rather hot day. Most of the afternoon was spent at the shooting range.

VOWA member Gene Hester correctly identified the birds in the Virginia bird identification game. In addition, each of the contests awarded points--casting, hatchet throwing, bird identification, mineral identification, etc. Gene also won third place in total points from all of these contests.

Jennifer Hensley, VOWA Board Member, showed some of the gentlemen that slow and easy



Bernice Johnson, Bureau of Land Management, is assaying the "gold" as the would-be "gold panners" seek their fortune at the BLM gold panning demonstration at the Outdoor Writers Association of America's Breakout Day. ©Bureau of Land Management—Eastern States Public Affairs Office.

is a better way to hit the bull's eye in the hatchet throwing contest. Some of the males liked throwing hard and fast. Gutsy Lady!

VOWA members and spouses attending the all or part of the OWAA and VOWA meetings/conference include: Bruce Brown, Marika Byrd, Tee Clarkson, Bill and Katherine Cochran, David and Julie Coffman, Jim and Patsy Crosby, Lee Graves, Jennifer Hensley, Gene and Katherine Hester, Spike and Susie Knuth, Terry and Maryanne Lewis, Ken Perrotte, Bill Rooney, Nancy Sorrells Mark Taylor and David Whitehurst.

### Bob Gooch Memorial

Ginny Gooch, and daughters, Pam and Pat, were in attendance for OWAA's Sunday morning breakfast honoring fathers, and specifically our own—Bob Gooch.

Pat talked and showed slides about our late VOWA member and friend. It was a most



An OWAA participant tries his hand at throwing an Atlatl (a type of hunting "spear") at the target while Bill Davenport, BLM-Eastern States and other OWAA participants watch. ©Bureau of Land Management—Eastern States Public Affairs Office.

poignant moment for the Virginia delegation.

### Recruiting Members

VOWA's co-hosting the OWAA annual conference provided us the opportunity to recruit some new members: like the Virginia Chapter National Wild Turkey Federation and Wheelin' Sportsmen, which is a part of that group.

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Also the Hunters for the Hungry are joining.

VOWA President David Coffman added that he hopes we can recruit other state agencies and organizations that help conserve, protect and manage outdoor resources.

## VOWA Annual Meeting

### Writing Competitions

The second annual Undergraduate Writing award was presented to Joshua Johns, Stafford, Virginia. Josh is a rising senior at Virginia Tech majoring in Natural Resource Recreation with minors in Forestry and Leadership.

His article was entitled “How Experiences in the Outdoors Have Driven My Career Choice.”

The theme of the article matched that of the keynote speaker, Richard Louv, author of *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder.* Josh’s entry was submitted before he even knew Mr. Louv was speaking at the OWAA conference.

### Youth Writing Awards

The 14<sup>th</sup> annual Youth Writing awards were presented to: First place—Leo Brett, McLean, who wrote “First Miss.” William Solis, Troy, whose article was Entitled “My Most Memorable Outdoor Experience” took second.

Christine Haitel, of Waverly, won third place for “An Awesome Fishing Experience.”

Three of the four Undergraduate and Youth Writing Award recipients were present on June 19; they and their families were guests of OWAA for the lunch, sponsored by Hummer.

The first place Youth winner’s article is being published in the

L to R: David Coffman, VOWA President, Joshua Johns, the Undergraduate winner; Leo Brett, first place and Christine Haitel, third place as Youth winners. William Solis, second place Youth winner was absent. Photo by Dan Genest.



September 2007, issue of *Virginia Wildlife* magazine. The Undergraduate winner’s article will be in the October 2007 issue of the same magazine. All four winning articles will be placed on the VOWA web site no later than September 1.

### Excellence-In-Craft

Article writing—Ken Perrotte, of King George, won for “Still Paradise” in the March 2006 issue of *Army Times*.

King Montgomery, of Burke, took second place honors for “Fishing Raven’s Island in the Feb-Mar issue of *Virginia Sportsmen*.

Emily Grey, Onancock, took third place for “Treasures in Wood” which was published in the October 2006 issue of *Virginia Wildlife*.

The Bob Gooch Column Writing Award went to Bill Cochran for “You Are Never More Alive Than When A Predator.” He wrote this on the November 30, 2006, *Roanoke Times Web*.

Ken Perrotte won second place for “Old Firearms Have Tales To Tell,” which was published in the August 3, 2006, *Fredericksburg Free Lance-Star*.

“Don’t Forget About Natural Bridge, in the Staunton *News-Leader* for March 23, 2006, won

third place for Nancy Sorrells, of Greenville.

### Elections

Two new faces were welcomed to the Board this year. Frank Mundy, of Broadway, and Lee Graves, of Richmond.

Frank, with the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, was named to a two-year term as a Board Member.

Lee, an outdoor writer for the Richmond Times-Dispatch, was elected First Vice President.

Selected to continue on the Board are: Spike Knuth, Chair of the Board; David Coffman, President; Jennifer Hensley, Vice President; Marika Byrd, CPS, Secretary; Jim Crosby, Treasurer, and Dan Genest, Board Member. Steve Richardson, Jr., Board Member, continues into his second year term.

### FROM THE CHAIRMAN

In the last 12 years I have been Vice President of VOWA for four (or was it six?) years, President for four, and Secretary for two years. Some of those years were extremely busy; others [were] easy to work into my schedule. But they were all learning experiences and were worth it. This past March, my last term as President came to an end though the gavel wasn’t



**Virginia Outdoor Writers Board of Directors 2007-2008**

*Left to right, front row: Marika Byrd, CPS, Secretary; Jennifer Hensley and Dan Genest, Board Member. Back row: Jim Crosby, Treasurer; Frank Mundy, Board Member; David Coffman, President; Spike Knuth, Board Chair, and Lee Graves, First Vice President. Steve Richardson, Jr., Board Member, was absent. ©Terry Lewis*

“officially” passed until the June meeting in Roanoke.

I first want to take the opportunity to thank Dave [Coffman], our new president, who picked up part of my slack over this past year. I’ve not only been very busy with art assignments, art shows and staying in touch with our family and now six grandchildren (Allison Ann Knuth was born June 19 to youngest son Matt and his wife Stacie down in Mooresville, N.C., while we were in Roanoke) and I have been trying to adjust to some increased physical immobility.

While he normally would have taken over way back in March anyway, Dave has done a remarkable job of keeping the VOWA business in line as well as a full schedule he and Julie had at the OWAA Conference in Roanoke. Dave brings an energy and enthusiasm to our organization that we needed.

I thank Marika Byrd (“Secretary for life” as she puts it!) for keeping us informed,

making arrangements for all our meetings, doing the newsletter, and always reminding all our officers of various rules and constitutional items that needed to be addressed. She also kept the little organizational details in order while Dave was involved with OWAA.

Treasurer Jim Crosby continues to handle the membership lists, collecting dues and paying the bills--another time-consuming job. I know Jim doesn’t want to be “Treasurer for life,” so I would hope someone out there might consider serving in this capacity in the future.

Many thanks to Terry Lewis for his leadership in keeping us focused, in line and moving forward with a positive attitude during his two years as President and four years as Board Chairman. He was the one who always had to make the longest journeys to the meetings and didn’t let us down. He was also instrumental in making the necessary contacts for donations of prizes to our membership and youth contests.

In June we had a special opportunity to attend the OWAA Conference in Roanoke. A chance to rub shoulders with some talented writers, photographers, videographers, etc. A chance to put faces to the many bylines we see in magazines.

Special “well-dones” to Bill and Katherine Cochran, Mark Taylor, Terry and Mary Ann Lewis (hope I haven’t missed any other VOWA members), for their efforts at the OWAA Conference in Roanoke. It was great to meet some old acquaintances, make some new ones, and to spend time in conversation with other VOWA members. It was good to meet other state and federal people whom I have never met as well.

Frank Mundy and I especially were “waxing eloquent” in discussing a number of things with each other. You shoulda heard us! Well, maybe it’s good you didn’t! But therein is one of the most important reasons for our organization. Not only that we have similar interests, but it’s the contact we have with each other as

friends. I treasure the time we spend together to just enjoy a lunch, a drink, a dinner together. I guess that's a sign of old age. As an old German proverb goes, "Ve get zo zoon olt, und zo late schmart!" Too often in this day and age we tend to think of "what's in it for me?"

As I near my 70th birthday I found that no matter how successful any gathering was as far as the seminars, activities and the like, it was the renewing contact with good friends that lifted me up and seemed to energize me.

As I begin to serve as Board Chairman, I thank all those who have offered to serve as officers and on the board for the next two years. We are all so very busy in this fast-paced world, the last thing we need is another responsibility and giving up more time. You are special for doing so. I look forward to being chair for the next two years and look forward to seeing you all down the road at one time or another.

Spike Knuth

## 2007 Spring Fling

The weather was cool but the hearts were warm on the Thursday and Friday (April 19-20) for our Spring Fling. Those in attendance for part or all of the event include: Marika Byrd, Bruce Brown, Dan Genest, Jennifer and Thurman Hensley, Terry Lewis, Marie and Milan Majarov and Nancy Sorrells.

Jennifer and Thurman, despite his five month recovery from the bear-biting attack, graciously hosted a tour around portions of their vast property to show how they are managing the wildlife estate which abuts part of the

Shenandoah National Park. Some of this was over the same area where Thurman's hunting party had its encounter with the large black bear.

After dinner Paul Bugas, Fisheries Division of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), talked about the environment of the Shenandoah River watershed. He fielded many questions after the presentation.

Friday morning, several of us met for breakfast and then traveled to Grand Caverns, at Grottoes. Andy Wells, Executive Director, and Charmaine Detrow, Education Coordinator, provided information and the tour of the caverns.



*Grand Caverns water crock.* ©Marie and Milan Majarov.

We learned that there are several caverns in that area: Madison, Fountain, and a new section of Grand Caverns was discovered. Right now access to the new section of the caverns is limited to spelunkers. Many of the areas have limited "crawl" space and have not yet been prepared for "other visitors." If you have not been to these caverns in a while it is worth your time to make a visit.

Grand Caverns has moved its Admissions and Gift Shop down the hill into the "flat land."

The caverns upper-level entrance now houses educational specimens, including barred, spotted and barn owls; the newest

acquisition is the North American Otter, and a coyote on loan from VDGIF. They also include rock specimens from the grounds.



*Unfinished Living Fish Aquarium, established by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries.* ©Marie and Milan Majarov.

The Grand Caverns staff and board are excited about the newly-built aquarium on the lower-level of the building housing the cave entry. VDGIF was there finalizing the setup and getting the water running over the rocks so they can then stock fish native to the Shenandoah River watershed.

Also they are establishing an Invertebrates tank.

The facility is on the Virginia Birding and Wildlife Trail, has an abundant facilities on the grounds for games, hiking, birdwatching, swimming, picnic shelter, and fishing in the South River.

There have been talks between the Upper Valley Regional Park Authority (which owns Grand Caverns and Natural Chimneys at Mt. Solon) about Grand Caverns becoming a part of the state parks system. However, there are many details to work out before this becomes a reality in the unforeseeable future.

Following a cool and damp morning at the caverns, the group gathered for lunch before departing for home.

## VOWA Honors Bob Gooch

The VOWA Board of Directors has approved the purchase of a paver from and will have it placed at the Virginia Press Association (VPS) headquarters at Innsbrook in Glen Allen, Va., once the wording is completed and engraved into the paver.

Steve Richardson, Jr. and Bill Cochran will develop the wording for the 11X11 paver which will have four lines with 15 characters

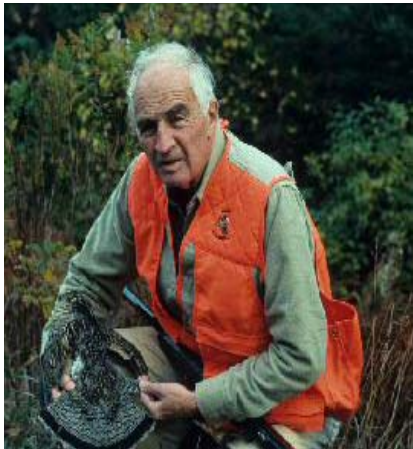


Photo courtesy of the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries

per line. Once the Board approves the final wording then the Board will contact VPS to make the paver and install the same. More on this as it develops.

## MEMBER UPDATE

**Curtis Badger**, and son, Tom, are doing a father and son photo exhibition at Stage Door Gallery in Cape Charles July 21 through Labor Day. The show opens with a reception at the gallery on the evening of the 21st. The exhibit runs through September 3, 2007.

**Art and Joan Cone** were unable to attend the OWAA/VOWA conference at the Hotel Roanoke. Joan developed

pseudo gout and the doctor would not allow her to drive the long distance. A card was made available for messages and signatures from their friends. Joan is now much better and back to being herself. Art is doing fine.

**King Montgomery** reports: "I'm feeling better than I have in years and he went to Alaska in late July and early August; to the Grand Canyon, Bryce and others in September, back to Maine in October and bonefishing in the Yucatan in November. And we maybe [going to] Chilean Patagonia in December or January. Whew!

Plaudits to **Spike Knuth**. OWAA honored him by using one of his walleye after minnows acrylic and water color painting. It graces the cover for the 2007-2008 OWAA Directory. It is great art, and made a fine cover. Thanks to **Gene Hester** for letting us know of this feat.

**Lynda Richardson** says: "This fall, a book will hit the streets where I was the chief photographer. "University of Mary Washington: Moments in Time," is a book celebrating the 100 year anniversary of the college/university in 2008. This book will help kick off the celebration starting this fall at Homecoming. There will be an exhibit of photographs, a book signing and I'll present a lecture.

The 128 page book will start with a 20-some page historical beginning followed by the rest of the book filled with contemporary images that I shot starting in the fall of 2005 ending this spring. The book is filled with the energy and diversity of the university. I think folks will love it! I loved shooting it. For those interested, it was all shot digitally, and my

husband Mike Ostrander laid it out.

This past June **Lee Walker**, Editor of Virginia Wildlife magazine, and his 16 year-old son Rob, reached new heights after completing a four-day trek through the Swiss Alps. Lee, who turned 50 back in March, was treated by his wife, Maryanne, (who happens to be from Switzerland) and a host of other family members to a trip of a lifetime. Their adventure began at 12,000 feet atop the Jungfrauoch, which joins the Eiger and Monch, as one of the most famous mountain ranges in all of Switzerland and then down the Aletchgletscher, which also happens to be the longest glacier in Europe. The trek took the adventurers over 30 miles through deep snow, up and down steep mountain faces and traversing over huge ice fields along the glacier. "It was the most physically challenging thing that I have ever done," said Lee. He also added that the trip was a great success and a wonderful bonding experience for both he and his son.

While Lee and Rob were hiking, Mary Ann, Beth [daughter] and relatives took a two day trip to Paris—a high school graduation present for Beth.

## VOWA FUTURE OUTING PLANNING

The Board of Directors has begun plans for a **Fall Outing** in Bath County. The selected dates (in order of preference) are: first--October 3, 4 and 5; second--October 24, 25, and 26, or third--September 26, 27 and 28. We are considering locating near the Jackson River and Douthat State

Park. The fishing should be good and the trees in their full color.

The **Spring Fling** is tentatively scheduled for the Eastern Shore for the dates of May 24, 25, and 26. We are considering the Kiptopeke State Park

The above dates are contingent on lodging availability. Efforts are being made to contact the Department of Conservation and Recreation's state parks for their available dates.

Jennifer Hensley and Lee Graves will be making the arrangements for the events. Look for planning information as it becomes available.

## VOWA BOARD MEETING VO MINUTES

**A**t its July 25, 2007, meeting the Board decided to transmit its minutes to members via e-mail once they have an opportunity to review the drafted minutes.

## VOWA Board Meeting

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

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

## VOWA Annual Meeting

**Wednesday, March 19, 2008, at the  
Virginia Department of Forestry, Charlottesville, Va.  
10:00 a.m. in the Training Room—  
go left after entering the front doors.**

## VOWA NEWS

### Next deadline is Nov. 16

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](mailto:byrdm@vcu.org)**



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