



## Press Release

### Virginia Outdoor Writers Association – Bass Pro Shops 2012-13 High School Writing Contest Winners Announced

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Winners of the Virginia Outdoor Writers Association (VOWA) – Bass Pro Shops 2012-2013 Annual High School Writing Contest were recently announced at the organization's Annual Meeting, held in the beautiful Staunton, Augusta, Waynesboro region of the Shenandoah Valley. Two of the three winners of the contest attend Broadway High School. The theme for this year's contest was a memorable outdoor experience.

First place winner, receiving a \$150 Bass Pro Shops gift card, Alpen Optics, and other prizes from the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management was Chelsea Ellington, a Senior at Broadway High School from Linville, VA . Her essay, entitled "Hunt of a Lifetime" was a about a hunting trip she took with her father in Texas.

Chelsea is very active in 4-H and FFA and serves this year as FFA president as well as secretary of the Plains 4-H club. She lives on a small farm where she raises show lambs, hogs and a commercial heifer for youth exhibitors. The past two years she was a member of the VA State Livestock Judging team and competed in the national contest this past fall. She was recently accepted to Virginia Tech and plans to major in animal and poultry sciences. She hopes to be a livestock nutritionist in the future.

The second place winner was Evan Hylton, who received a \$100 gift card from Bass Pro Shops, an assortment of Birchwood Casey targets, and other prizes from the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. Evan is also a Senior at Broadway High School and is from Broadway. His essay, entitled "The Amber Leaves Hunting Trip", was about taking his first deer.

Evan plays trumpet and is a member of the varsity soccer team. He performs in the jazz band, advanced band, and also pit orchestra for musicals. He will attend James Madison University and major in the ISAT program.

“It is very unusual that we had two winners from the same High School in this contest,” said Terry Lewis, VOWA Chairman of the Board and former Harrisonburg resident. “This is the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this statewide contest, and this has never happened before. Folks in the Valley should be very proud of this accomplishment and their high school educators,” he said.

The three contest winners were recognized by a group of more than 65 members and guests at a special joint conference and annual meeting of the Virginia Outdoor Writers Association (VOWA) with the Mason-Dixon Outdoor Writers Association (M-DOWA representing 5 surrounding Mid-Atlantic States) – some of the best writers on the East Coast! A celebratory lunch was graciously provided by the National Shooting Sports Foundation (NSSF). Mark Taylor, President of the national Outdoor Writers Association of America (OWAA), congratulated the winners and gave them an honorary OWAA student membership.

This year’s winning essays can be seen at the VOWA website: [www.vowa.org](http://www.vowa.org) and will be published by the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries *Outdoor Report* and in other venues. The contest will be held again next year, with the deadline for entries around the first of February. Young writers are strongly encouraged to submit their essays.

The Virginia Outdoor Writers Association, Inc. is a coalition of writers, photographers, and video/film producers who inform various media on the out-of-doors, its enjoyment, and conservation. Through this association, VOWA members strive to improve themselves in their craft and increase their knowledge and understanding of the outdoors. Visit t [www.vowa.org](http://www.vowa.org) for more information and photos.