

TOWA

The Official Publication of the **Texas Outdoor Writers Association**

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Teamwork Creates Good Conference as TOWA Gets Right with State

As you all have probably heard, the 2010 Conference was a big hit. Not because of what I did, but because the board of directors spread the work out and everyone pulled in the same direction.

About the only thing I did this year was to have the Member Directory and the Membership/Press cards ready and in the member packets that were handed out at the registration desk.

The registration desk was manned by Judy Mills, Pam LeBlanc and Jerry Harris from the Kerrville Convention and Visitors Bureau. As usual, Judy and Pam were right on top of everything and Jenny was there to fix my mistakes on name badges.

Again I must say, "As usual," Jonette Childs was everywhere making sure everything with the hotel worked and on time. We could not have done it without her.

I could go through and list all of the board members and what they did, but I would be writing a book instead of an update.

Going forward, I have the TOWA legal with the State of Texas. We were in bad standing with Texas and about to lose our name but we are good now. I have hired a CPA and he is doing his magic to keep us in good shape with the state and get us square with the IRS.

Our scholarship fund was removed from Morgan Stanley because we lost \$18,000 with their help so I pulled the money out last year and it has been in the checking account because I could not put it in a CD. Now that we are in good standing with the state, the interest rates are poor. As soon as the interest rates skyrocket over one percent I will move it into a CD.

I would like to request that if you have not paid your 2010 dues and wish to remain a member of the TOWA you do so by Memorial Day because that is when I close 2010 and start to get ready for the 2011 conference.

— Larry LeBlanc

CALENDAR

May 28-30 – The 73rd Annual Ducks Unlimited Convention and Sporting Expo will be held at the Gaylord Texan Resort in Dallas. Further information is available at www.ducks.org.

June 27-July 3 – A Kids Outdoor Zone hunting camp for boys will be conducted in the Fowlerton area. TOWA members interested in participating or assisting in the event may contact Board Member TJ Greaney at tj@countrylinemagazine.com for further information.

July 11-16 – A Kids Outdoor Zone fishing camp for boys will be conducted at Lake Buchanan. TOWA members interested in participating or assisting in the event may contact Board Member TJ Greaney at tj@countrylinemagazine.com for further information.

NATIONAL OUTDOOR NEWS

U.S. SPORTSMEN'S ALLIANCE UNVEILS SENTRY PROGRAM

COLUMBUS, OH – The U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance has unveiled a new initiative called the Sentry Program that is aimed at building an army of sportsmen from coast to coast to protect America's outdoor heritage for future generations.

The USSA program is free to join and represents an intense effort focused on attracting sportsmen to become active players in the fight to preserve hunting, fishing and trapping rights whenever they are threatened.

By becoming a Sentry, sportsmen gain

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TOWA OFFICERS, BOARD

PRESIDENT

Bob Lusk (903) 564-5372
pondboss@texoma.net

PRESIDENT-ELECT

David Sikes (361) 886-3616
sikesd@caller.com

TREASURER

Bill E. Mills (281) 448-5811
offtheroad.mills@earthlink.net

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Larry J. LeBlanc (936) 856-6788
904 W. Montgomery, Ste. 4
Willis, TX 77378
towa@suddenlink.net cell (936) 524-0761
fax (936) 856-6788

BOARD MEMBERS

BOARD CHAIRMAN

John Goodspeed (210) 250-3417
john@johngoodspeed.com

T.J. Greaney (2013) (512) 789-3838
tj@countrylinemagazine.com

Mike Price (2011) (281) 431-0085
bymikeprice@comcast.net

Kendal Hemphill (2013) (325) 347-6440
jeep@verizon.net

Peggy York (2012) (210) 647-7053
peggy.york@sbcglobal.net

Steve LaMascus (2012) (830) 563-2656
slamascus@sbcglobal.net

Susan Ebert (2013) (512) 919-4248
sebert@austin.rr.com

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN

David Sikes (361) 886-3616
sikesd@caller.com

CONFERENCE PROGRAM CO-CHAIRS

T.J. Greaney (512) 789-3838
tj@countrylinemagazine.com

David Sikes (361) 886-3616
sikesd@caller.com

SCHOLARSHIP

Judy Mills, Marianne Odom (281) 448-5811
offtheroad.mills@earthlink.net

MEMBERSHIP

David Sikes (361) 886-3616
sikesd@caller.com

SITE SELECTION

Jonette Childs (361) 729-0239
saltex@pyramid3.net

AUCTIONS

T.J. Greaney (512) 789-3838
tj@countrylinemagazine.com

EIC AWARDS

Kendal Hemphill (325) 347-6440
jeep@verizon.net

TOWA PHOTOGRAPHERS

Gerald Burleigh and David Redwine

TOWA HISTORIAN

John Thompson

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TOWA was formed in 1958 as a professional/social organization for those who communicate about hunting, fishing and other outdoor pursuits, as well as those in business and industry connected with the outdoors.



The TOWA Newsletter is proudly sponsored by Gulf States Toyota. For information, go to www.buyatoyota.com.



HOTLINE CALLS UP 33 PERCENT

OGT Billboards Increase Awareness of Violations

AUSTIN – Calls to the Texas Parks & Wildlife Operation Game Thief hotline reporting game and fish violations have increased by more than 33 percent from 2006 to 2010. The increase is being attributed to public awareness of the program thanks to billboards erected across the state informing drivers about how to report poaching.

The billboards began appearing in 2007. A dramatic spike in the number of calls occurred in 2008 as more Texans began noticing and reacting to the billboards – the number of calls is still rising.

Billboards carrying the anti-poaching message were placed along major highways. At first, they were sponsored by conservation and sporting organizations. As exposure increased, corporate interest emerged. The first corporate sponsor, British Petroleum (US) joined the team in 2009, and BASS-ESPN recently became a billboard sponsor.

"Companies recognize the value of becoming involved in protecting the resources of the State of Texas," said Joe McBride, OGT chairman and manager of the family-owned McBride's Guns in Austin. "The billboards remind the citizens of Texas that it's their responsibility to report violations."

Game Warden Lt. Eric Howard, OGT program director, pointed to one particular case that is being prosecuted thanks to an OGT call. A Webb County Game Warden received the OGT call advising that a subject from North Carolina had recently trapped Harris hawks near Laredo without any state or federal permits.

The Game Warden verified that the suspected poacher did not have the necessary state permits for trapping hawks, nor a required state hunting license. Since a Lacey Act violation had also been committed, a local US Fish and Wildlife Special Agent was contacted. A Special Agent in North Carolina called upon the suspect there and obtained a written confession and confiscated two juvenile Harris hawks. The hawks were rehabilitated and ultimately released back into the wild near the site of their capture outside Laredo. State and federal charges are pending.

Since Operation Game Thief began, more than 28,000 calls have been received through the hotline number (1-800-792-GAME), which is manned 24 hours a day, seven days a week. More than \$1,180,000 in fines has been assessed. Rewards in excess of \$200,000 have been paid to callers, whose names have been withheld.

The Texas OGT program has been a model for other states and is respected and admired nationwide by the wildlife enforcement community.

Howard can be reached at (512) 389-8801 for information about OGT or sponsoring an OGT billboard.

IN MEMORIAM

Clarence Steward (1938-2010) passed away April 11. He was a great friend of many of our older writers, and probably quite a few of the younger guys. He frequently made our annual meetings and was an associate member for a number of years.

Clarence turned his love of fishing and hunting into a profession when he founded Steward-Stevenson Sales in 1968 as a representative of hunting and fishing equipment, with his lifelong friend Ronnie Stevenson. He continued to operate the business until the end along with his wife of 44 years, Norma, and his son Mark.

A former Texas State Champion bass fisherman, he loved to bass fish and was planning a trip to his home on Lake Amistad with Ronnie when he finally gave in to cancer. He will be missed throughout the industry and in hunting and fishing circles for many years.

— Submitted by John Thompson

A New Breed of Veterinarian?

TDA and Texas A&M Team up for Deer

By Judy Bishop Jurek

Veterinarians are in high demand. There seems to never be enough of them. According to the Bureau of Labor statistics, veterinarians held 62,000 jobs in 2006 across all fifty states. Of those numbers, three out of four were involved in solo or group practices. Another 1,400 worked for the United States Department of Agriculture, Health and Human Services, and even Homeland Security.

The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) shows there are thirty-two vet colleges in the United States and Canada. Each year in the U.S. an estimated 2,700 students graduate with a degree in veterinary medicine. The AAVMC also represents nine Departments of Veterinary Science, seven Departments of Comparative Medicine, three Veterinary Medicine Education Institutions and six International Col-

leges of Veterinary Medicine.

In 2005, the latest information available, the Labor Bureau statistics show only one in three applicants was accepted into vet schools. There's keen competition among those seeking to be doctors of animal medicine and health. Veterinarians are necessary for the entire range of mammals, birds, reptiles, fish and exotic species of all kinds. Many vets participate in research only. The most popular veterinarian is the small animal practitioner, namely working with dogs and cats.

In recent years deer breeding has intensified into its very own unique industry. There has been very little deer medicine out there for a veterinarian, or on the other hand, a deer patient requiring medical services. A call to the local vet concerning a deer crisis may have resulted in an answer such as, "I don't know nor do I have any idea. I've never dealt with a deer other than hunting one

or eating venison." No rudeness intended; it was simply a truthful statement.

As the commerce and scale of deer breeding has grown, something new in the world of whitetails (and other cervids) is always being discovered. Lessons have been learned the hard way for many whitetail breeders as well as landowners and property managers simply trying to improve their herds. There's relatively little medical knowledge of deer diseases, treatments, health and welfare of these animals.

Texas A&M University's College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM), as well as other vet schools across the country, began getting calls as the deer industry has grown. Suddenly there was a multitude of deer questions springing up all over. However, there were too many problems and not enough answers. So exactly where is this article going? In a round about way, it's leading into a somewhat unknown field and the pos-

TOWA 2010 Excellence in Craft Winners Receive Recognition

As an effort to highlight the achievements of our members and to present some of our best works of the past year for our members' entertainment, the following is one of a series of TOWA Excellence in Craft contest first place winners that will be published in the newsletter.

This piece by TOWA Member Judy Bishop Jurek, called "**A New Breed of Veterinarian? TDA and Texas A&M Team up for Deer**," was selected by the judges as the top submission in Category 14 Magazine Feature Under 25,000 that was published in the July/August 2009 edition of "Tracks." In their comments, the judges stated:

"Judy Bishop Jurek has a singular style of writing that gets to the core of the story in an easy-to-read and unassuming manner. Add to this the fact that she is an excellent researcher and a good writer and you have a winning combination. Her article on "A New Breed of Veterinarian" is a solid informative and investigative piece. It has great detail, is well researched and, yet, in this in-depth perspective, she does not forget the human element of her story. Well done!"

We congratulate her on the award and encourage all our members to enter the EIC competition next year.

sibility of a new generation of veterinarians – the deer vet!

Let's first get a little background about the Texas Deer Association (TDA) and how it came into being as this all ties in together. Not long ago Gene Riser of Riser Whitetails told me, "TDA came about partly due to non-users making rules for deer breeders and nobody doing anything about it. Some of us decided to fix that. A group of landowners/deer breeders started meeting at my house in 1996 to visit. We talked a lot about our deer operations and common problems we had with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)."

The group consisted of Lee Wheeler, Tommy Dugger, James Kroll, Jerry Johnston and Gary Machen, all charter members of the Texas Wildlife Association (TWA), the big wildlife organization of the time. According to Riser, this little group (with some others) petitioned TPWD for a meeting to air their grievances. TPWD honored them with a meeting in 1997 and treated the group well. All the activity led directly to the founding of TDA. Those aforementioned busy men meeting informally in South Texas often discussed the need for an organization to push forward their goals but it simply took a while to get it started. In early 1998, Jerry Johnston, Gene Riser and Dr. James Kroll met in Johnston's Texas Trophy Hunters office and took the first steps to plan what soon became TDA.

ORGANIZATION GROWS ALONG WITH DEER INDUSTRY

As the organization has grown and deer breeding has become an industry within itself, there've been numerous questions and difficulties along the way. Some things have been simply the result of lack of information, research and overall knowledge of whitetail deer. Much is now known about the relationship between nutrition and antler growth but those are only two pieces of a huge, hard-to-put-together puzzle.

The onslaught of Chronic Wasting

Disease (CWD) caused alarm, confusion and many headaches for wildlife agencies, hunters and most certainly, deer breeders. It was already known that diseases such as anthrax and pneumonia could kill deer quickly. Then there was the infectious Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHD) and blue tongue virus (BTV), both known killers but without a vaccine preventive.

Add to the list of possible diseases the fact that whitetail deer, unless taken as a fawn and hand-raised, are wild animals. Highly excitable, their natural instinct is to flee from anything that may present a danger, such as a person. Being in an enclosure doesn't guarantee calmness. Whitetails are quite agile and quick yet at the same time their bones are delicate, often snapping easily.

So what happens when the deer breeder, with a sizable investment in time, effort and genetic pedigree in an animal suddenly sees their valuable commodity appearing very ill or injuring itself seriously? The obvious answer is: "Call the vet. Get him (or her) out here quick!" That's much easier said than done as knowledge about deer health is greatly lacking in the normal, everyday general practice veterinarian.

As TDA has grown, its members have helped each other as much as possible, passing along tips, advice, suggestions and expertise gained from the school of hard knocks. As stated before, many breeders learned the hard way, often with dire financial losses not to mention headaches and heartaches. Medications used on deer along with medical techniques and procedures have occurred through trial, error, much tribulation, and of course, prayers.

TDA has been fortunate to have several fine veterinarians within their membership who stepped up to aid those in need. Many strides in deer herd health, handling facilities and disease awareness have been made through the help of these men, now known as THE deer vets. Drs. Scott Bugai, Joe Ables, Dan McBride and Ken Waldrup have helped

too many breeders in too many ways to account for them all. They, along with TDA, recognized the shortage of information available to those in the deer industry.

ADDRESSING HEALTH NEEDS, FOSTERING KNOWLEDGE

On January 25, 2008, a meeting was held at the Triple JJJ Ranch in Somerville between TDA, practicing deer veterinarians and Texas A&M's College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM). All parties present wholeheartedly agreed there was a huge void concerning the health needs of the rapidly growing whitetail deer breeding commerce. One main worry was lack of veterinarians with any sort of deer knowledge.

Dr. Richard Adams, the dean of CVM, was asked what kind of training veterinary students receive in relation to cervid medicine. His answer was quite simply, "None." Following much discussion it was suggested that perhaps A&M should be a leader in cervid medicine, that the CVM offer something to see if there was any interest among current undergraduates studying veterinary medicine. Thus the ball began rolling.

The course actually resulted from the aforementioned conference developed by Dr. Don S. Davis and Dr. J. R. 'Dick' Cain. Together they brought together the stakeholders of the deer industry and A&M's CVM. "We had wonderful participation by members of TDA, CVM, TPWD, Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) and practicing vets to discuss the needs of the Farmed Deer Industry in Texas," Cain stated.

An elective course in Cervid Medicine for third year vet students was scheduled in the fall of 2008. It was determined that Dr. Don Davis was the most qualified member of the faculty to teach it due to his involvement with both the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology and the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Science. "My teaching load was doubled," chuckled Dr. Davis.

Twenty-eight students in their third year professional curriculum signed up

for Cervid Medicine as soon as it was offered. The course consisted of four hours per week (2 hours on Thursday mornings; 2 hours on Friday afternoons) throughout October and November, 2008. The class also included a trip to Big Rack Ranch south of College Station, a working deer breeding operation. A total of 26 students actually attended.

The four aforementioned active deer vets assisted Dr. Davis as each one was actually practicing real life cervid medicine, particularly with whitetail deer. Dr. Cain, a retired A&M professor, rancher and deer breeder in Saint Jo, (north of Dallas/Fort Worth), also played an important part of the class courses. Topics ranged from overall herd health medicines and vaccine development; EHD/BTV; physical restraint and deer handling facilities; chemical immobilization; reproductive manipulations, Lap AI, semen collection and fawn raising; nutrition; anthelmintics (wormers); and various whitetail deer regulations required by an assortment of wildlife, animal health and other governmental agencies. Photographs of dozens of case studies accompanied instruction and discussions of various whitetail diseases, their signs, symptoms and lesions.

"We hope this cervid medicine program will expand and help provide additional large animal interest and income for rural vets," said Dr. Cain. "Hopefully it will inspire some wanna-be's to pursue what is becoming a lonely club of rural vets. We discussed research, extension and teaching opportunities – all three of which have made significant progress in the deer field."

CERVID MEDICINE STUDENTS MOVE FROM CLASS TO FIELD

All said and done, feedback from the students expressed much interest and was quite positive, indicating the course was well received. Many students took time to talk directly with the various speakers, even arranging for further contact and instruction. Mela-
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nie Smith graduated in May 2007 with an A&M degree in Biomedical Science. She is currently pursuing her master's in Veterinary Microbiology while also working as the Assistant Manager at Big Rack Ranch. In addition, this bright young lady has been Dr. Davis' graduate teaching assistant.

"This was a great course," Smith said with enthusiasm, "It was very basic, very introductory as to what deer mean to Texas. It was also really fascinating to hear the speakers talk about their work and the innovative ideas they came up with along the way. They're vets who all had to learn the hard way. Many of them have 10-15 years of deer experience."

Smith stated the course was a real eye opener for students who'd never had any hands-on with deer or exotics. "You really have to actually see an operation such as Big Rack Ranch to appreciate what it takes to raise and handle deer." Smith laughed, "Most people are afraid of a 2,000 pound bull and will get out of its way. But deer are so fast and unpredictable as to which way they'll go. Some students never realized a deer might hurt you!"

Third year student Travis Halfmann was inspired to become a veterinarian by Dr. Dan McBride, having worked for him for five years. Halfmann said, "I enjoyed the course, it was very informative because nothing has really been published about deer medicine. While each speaker gave a general overview, they covered different topics and talked about their individual experiences. They had to learn from actually doing it."

Dr. Scott Bugai has a thriving practice at Seguin and is also the immediate past president of TDA. He's considered a leading authority on cervid medicine, one who has most certainly learned much through trial and error with both good and bad results. Bugai is passionate about whitetails and sees a true need for a deer veterinarian.

"Everything so far has been learned

2009 TEXAS LEGISLATURE NEWS

The 81st session of the Texas Legislature provided two new bills that may well encourage students of veterinary medicine to focus on new areas of practice. As Dr. Dick Cain stated earlier in this article, being a practicing large animal health doctor "... is becoming a lonely club of rural vets." Due to efforts of TDA and others, there may be some relief in the future.

Senate Bill 1667 was authored by Senator Craig Estes of Wichita Falls. It primarily focused on providing tuition reimbursement incentives to attract veterinarians willing to locate in rural areas and specialize in care for large animals and deer. **The Veterinarian Tuition**

Reimbursement Bill was passed and signed by Governor Rick Perry in June. A related bill, **House Bill 1684**, presented by Representative Betty Brown of Athens (and co-authored by Representatives Drew Darby, Pete Gallego, Ryan Guillen, Tim Kleinschmidt, David Leibowitz, Sid Miller, Charles "Doc" Anderson, Jimmie Don Aycock, Yvonne Gonzales-Tourelles and Warren Chisum) requested funding for SB 1667. Governor Perry signed HB 1684 after it passed unanimously throughout all phases of the legislative process.

—J.B.J.

on-the-job," said Bugai, adding, "The medicine and techniques are similar to that of goats but vet students need to receive some education regarding cervid medicine. Experienced vets are asking for it, too, as they encounter the need as deer breeders increase. I believe TDA and Texas A&M can fill that void but it's going to take some time and effort."

"Not too long ago I encountered a somewhat unusual problem. A deer breeder had a deer that needed back surgery," Bugai recalled. "A vet was contacted at Louisiana State University who would work on the deer. The problem was the deer could be transported to Louisiana's LSU but regulations wouldn't allow the deer to be brought back into Texas." A whitetail could be

exported but not imported; it didn't matter if the owner was only seeking medical attention for it.

It's this sort of lack of knowledge and understanding the deer breeding industry faces. Those vets working with cervid must also know at least the basic laws and regulations from the various government agencies when handling and servicing deer. It's a very tall order for the common veterinarian, most certainly the rural vet coming into contact with deer on a more frequent basis.

Dr. Randy Volkmer and his partner Dr. Ralph Cole of Bay City Veterinary Clinic in Bay City are deer hunters and experienced vets who received their degrees from A&M. "We never used to get calls about deer," Volkmer said, "But now we do as deer breeding operations are coming into our area. We mostly get antibiotic, herd health and parasite questions."

Volkmer added he and Cole enjoy working on deer as it's something different from the everyday horses, cows, dogs and cats. "But it's a big challenge, too," said Volkmer, "We're using what we know and do with cattle on deer. We need to learn more ourselves." That sentiment, echoed by deer breeders for years, is now being heard coming from veterinarians all over the Lone Star state as the deer industry expands daily.

Located in the North Texas town of Decatur, Dr. Joe Ables was also a speaker at the Cervid Medicine course. "The diseases we see in deer we didn't even know at vet school. Even the common cases, antibiotics and wormers that work are 'life in general' things but the school doesn't teach you," said Ables. "Those of us working with deer learned on our own. You have to be cautious. It's scary learning as we go."

When asked about difficulties, Ables stated that EHD and BTV are genetically very close. Work is being done on an EHD vaccine. It's believed survivors of both diseases pass immunities down through the females. It may be an even more important factor for fawns to get

the doe's first milk before being pulled to bottle raise.

"Stress in deer is well known," said Ables, "It's also well known that artificial insemination and in-vitro fertilization is much more successful on tame deer as the first 30 days afterward are critical." When asked what he liked most working with deer, Ables replied, "For me, doing orthopedics is something I really like."

FUTURE FOR "DEER-ONLY" VETERINARIANS IMMINENT

Ables passed credit on, saying, "Dr. Dan McBride is very knowledgeable and a tremendous asset to this industry. He's been a mentor to me and many others." Asked if he believed in the future there may be specialized deer only veterinarians, Ables quickly responded, "Yes, I believe a vet could make a living solely on deer. There may be 3-4 months a year with a little down time, but I see it as a possibility as the deer breeding industry continues to grow."

Dr. Dan McBride is quite familiar with whitetails, their health and problems. "I've seen this industry grow so much. Every day I'm asked to work more and more on deer," said McBride. "A vet sees everything in ten deer than in 4-5 times that of any other species. There's trauma, abscesses, hoof problems, broken bones, e-coli, digestive problems...I set a broken jaw today. The deer is also a remarkable healing animal"

On the evening we spoke by telephone Dr. McBride stated he'd received at least thirty deer calls just that day while also performing three surgeries on whitetails. He's currently planning a new clinic designed specifically to handle deer, with deer herding, surgical and recovery facilities that can also be utilized for sheep and goats.

When asked to be a speaker for the Cervid Medicine course the Burnet veterinarian jumped at the chance. McBride saw it as a new beginning in veterinary medicine, a way to let students know there are more than just

cats, dogs, horses and cows out there. "Dr. Davis' leadership is great. He was instrumental for TDA, starting this program from ground zero," said McBride. "I believe the program was well attended and well received."

"Some students don't realize the value of deer. There's a whole new field of exploration and development out there dealing with laparoscopic AI, embryonic transfer, orthopedics, CWD testing, herd health...there's a huge demand out there." Dr. McBride stopped for a moment, adding, "There are still diseases to identify and then trying to treat and control them. A veterinarian could make a living working on nothing but deer."

Another veterinarian agreed it's highly important for A&M vet students to at least get a look at the cervid industry before trying to provide vet services for producers. Dr. Ken Waldrup is based in El Paso, currently serving as the Trans-Pecos Zoonosis Control veterinarian for the Texas Department of State Health Services. Although he went to vet school at Oklahoma State University, Waldrup received a PhD for ticks and tick-transmitted diseases in white-tail deer and holds a master's degree in wildlife (waterfowl) diseases. He's proud to be a double Aggie!

This well-rounded vet started his career with two years in rural Missouri, spent 4-1/2 years in New Zealand working with red deer and elk, then returned to Oklahoma where he was the on-site veterinarian for a game park with over 500 cervid of various species.

Later he became the Texas Animal Health Commission's CWD program director. Waldrup laughed, saying, "Any number of long-standing TDA members will gladly tell you how they cursed my very birth for that!"

"Lots of us experienced folks learned deer medicine by trial and error. There's no need for anybody to repeat the mistakes I've made," said Waldrup. He works closely with TPWD on disease issues and participates with Safe-Capture

International. He's worked extensively on whitetail and other cervid immobilization, artificial insemination, semen collection and storage.

"For what it's worth, I think it's highly important for A&M vet students to at least get a look at the cervid industry before they start trying to provide veterinary services for producers." Waldrup continued, "The drugs vary, the procedures vary, the husbandry varies from species to species. The students need to know this. I see a definite need growing out there for deer veterinarians."

EXISTING VETS INTERESTED IN CERVID MEDICINE, TOO

When this writer queried my local vets Volkmer and Cole about their veterinary deer experience, both agreed they'd be most interested in acquiring more cervid medicine knowledge themselves. The men already advised a first year vet student helping at their clinic to learn as much as possible about deer.

The first cervid medicine course at A&M resulted in several externships. It was reported many graduate students in their final year were somewhat jealous they weren't offered the chance to take the course. Plans are underway for another class to be offered in the fall 2009 semester, again to third year undergraduates. The problem of finding teachers is being resolved as this is written.

The future of deer breeding operations is on the brink of a new era in regards to cervid medicine. It is totally possible there will be veterinarians specializing in all that is whitetail. Livestock drug makers, feed companies and equipment manufacturers are just a few of the many industries that have stepped up to the plate for the deer breeders and farmers. Texas A&M CVM and other institutions are beginning to follow suit.

Perhaps it won't be too far off before someone with a sick or injured deer hollers, "Call the vet, the deer vet!" The reply may come back: "Which one?"

2010 Scholarship Winner Offers Thanks to TOWA

The following letter was sent to the TOWA board and is reprinted here to demonstrate how we can continue to encourage youth involvement in the outdoors through our Youth Scholarship and Outdoor Education Fund.

Dear Texas Outdoor Writers Association,

I would like to take this opportunity to thank this organization for the scholarship that I was honored to receive. Your financial support in helping me continue my education and helping me reach my goal of graduating from Texas A&M University Kingsville with a major in Range and Wildlife Management.

Having been graduated early from high school, I am a 17-year-old freshman at Sam Houston State University in my hometown of Huntsville. I will be transferring to Texas A&M University Kingsville in the Fall of 2010. Growing up hunting was not only a tradition in my family, but also a way of life. Throughout my life I learned that the only way to keep a healthy balance between humans and wildlife was through accurate management. I want to increase the quality and population of wildlife across the great state of Texas.

Once again, I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping me make my dreams come true, one step at a time. I am extremely honored to have been chosen as the 2010 Texas Outdoor Writers Association Scholarship recipient.

Sincerely,
Britani Lolley

President's Report Prompts Member's Response

With interest I read our new TOWA president Bob Lusk's letter to members as he begins his term and was quite taken by his words: "I came away with these thoughts ... writers have no idea about the value of their words."

It's true. Many times I've been astonished by someone informing me that something I wrote had deep meaning to them or made some sort of impact in their lives. Once I wrote about how boring hunting can be if no game or wildlife is around, your eyes and ears hurt from straining and your rear end from sitting. A youngster called me, saying he was so impressed that someone else felt the same way! He asked how I knew how he felt?!

This past year at a hunting show I was talking to a taxidermist. After asking my name, he said he read an article I wrote MANY years ago that influenced him immensely. It was about seeing a deer's 4 legs sticking out of the back of a pickup in the Brady area with the temp about 60. Five hours later in 80 degree Columbus weather the same truck passed again. The man said taking proper care of game became a priority from that point on, even more so once he began taxidermy. Sure made me feel good.

The biggest compliments I've ever received have been when a person tells me that they enjoy reading my hunting stories...even though they don't hunt anything! The other is when someone says I made them feel like they were RIGHT there! Bob's right: we may never know the value of what we write.

I also want to compliment Kendal Hemphill for his winning entry in Opinion Writing - it was OUTSTANDING! I especially loved (and will plagiarize) his reference to granola types! Only Kendal! Congratulations! I'm passing along your valuable, insightful article.

Two more cents and I'll be quiet. Just my opinion but I would prefer an 'Open' category in the EIC for something that doesn't fit under a specific title rather than the same photo, article, video, etc. being allowed to be entered in more than one category.

That's it. South Texas has a few less gobblers thanks to the great calling ability of my best hunting partner and hubby John! Take care, all. — Judy Bishop Jurek

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access to instant email communications about local and national threats to their outdoor rights as they happen. They will also be given specific instructions on which public officials to contact and when as these threats emerge. This communication network will enable sportsmen to mobilize quicker and more effectively than ever before.

In addition to getting sportsmen involved in the decision-making process, the Sentry Program offers additional benefits, giving sportsmen a "one stop" Web site for key information including state hunting regulations, information on where one can find a shooting range and other hunting and fishing tips from recognized leaders in the outdoor community.

"There are many anti-hunting organizations seeking to do away with what we love," said Bud Pidgeon, USSA president and chief executive officer. "By coming together under the Sentry Program, sportsmen will enhance our ranks and collectively stand tall against those groups."

Joining the Sentry Program requires only a minimal amount of information from those interested. For more information, call (614) 888-4868, visit the USSA website at www.ussportsmen.org/BeASentry or e-mail info@ussportsmen.org.

POMA RALLIES WITH OUTDOOR GROUPS IN ATTEMPT TO PROTECT SPORTFISHING

JOHNSTOWN, PA – The Professional Outdoor Media Association has joined with the U.S. Sportsmen's Alliance, Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation and American Sportfishing Association in urging President Obama to ensure recreational sportfishing is protected under the National Ocean and Great Lakes Policy.

"Recreational sportfishing is an American heritage sport," said

POMA Chairman Chris Chaffin. "If it is not protected, the economic impact will be enormous — on POMA members, on the thousands they employ and on our country. Supporting the heritage of fishing in the United States is just one facet of POMA's mission to help members maintain and grow their businesses."

The policy agenda was put into motion in mid-2009, when President Obama created a task force to develop a policy for managing all of the United States' ocean territory and the Great Lakes. The president gave the task force 90 days to develop a plan.

Part of the rushed policy-making involved the potential for setting up a process by which regions might develop zoning structures. Many fear that could lead to closure of vast areas of fishing waters nationwide.

Responding to an overwhelming outcry from citizens, the White House made a statement that said the policy would not include "blanket zoning."

Reacting to the statement by the White House, Jeff Crane, president of the Congressional Sportsmen's Foundation, said he was pleased to hear from the administration, explaining the statement was the first time the administration has made a clearly positive statement about recreational fishing. However, Crane said he was cautious in his optimism.

"It remains to be seen how recreational angling is going to fare in its own right as well as other factors that could impact access, especially the issue of marine spatial planning (ocean zoning)," Crane said. "Like most things in Washington, the devil is likely going to be in the details, and while the administration isn't going to come out and just ban fishing, by potentially limiting access through zoning, they could have a serious impact on recreational angling."

Further information is available on the POMA Web site at www.professionalooutdoormedia.org.

TOWA MEMBER NEWS

Hemphill Releases Column Collection Called "The Buck Never Got Here"

AWARD-WINNING COLUMNIST AND TOWA BOARD MEMBER KENDAL HEMPHILL has ventured into the book business with the release of "The Buck Never Got Here."

A collection of Hemphill's columns, mostly humor but some with a serious message behind the prose, will sell for \$14.99, plus shipping and handling.

"Down to earth and grounded are two of the most praiseworthy compliments one can receive. Kendal Hemphill deserves both of these compliments and verily reeks of this aboriginal down and dirty connection to the good mother earth. Take a breather and enjoy Kendal Hemphill," writes rocker and outdoor spokesman Ted Nugent.

Past TOWA President John Jefferson wrote the foreword for the book by Hemphill, who is described as "a cross between Dave Barry and Pat McManus."

The book is available by contacting Hemphill at jeep@verizon.net or by calling (325) 347-6440.

