

TOWA

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

TOWA PRESIDENT'S REPORT

April 21 TOWA Board Meeting Charts Course for 2013-4

Burney and Valerie Brown of Professional Association Management Services deliver report to Board, present recommendations for record- and bookkeeping

I'm happy to report TOWA has contracted with Burney and Valerie Brown's Professional Association Management Services in Austin to maintain our financial records, file our federal and state tax documents and generally make sure we operate within the guidelines of TOWA's 501(c) 6 nonprofit status.

Burney and his team specialize in nonprofit management, something TOWA is not equipped to do on its own.

In addition to revamping our bookkeeping system, Burney is in the process of creating a perpetual membership database. This has never been done for TOWA to this extent. We plan to go back as far as possible to include past members to provide an historical perspective for the organization, while maintaining a proper accounting of our current membership.

Burney's expertise has been invaluable in demonstrating ways we can become better organized and above board. Part of this will involve creating a TOWA Policies and Procedures manual. This perpetual document will outline everything from how to organize a conference to guidelines for each committee and officer. Some of this is covered in the bylaws and constitution, but this manual will go into greater detail.

Meanwhile, Executive Director Lorraine Lawrence has begun the arduous chore

of updating the contact information for our supporting members. In many cases company employees listed as TOWA contacts are no longer employed or have been promoted or transferred.

This is as much to help maintain relationships as it is a recruitment effort to return supporting members to the fold. Wish her luck and offer to help if you can.

On a completely different note, while the TOWA Board of Directors was involved in a marathon meeting, dining and fishing during Rockport's Spring Fling, Jonette Childs was finalizing the deal with our chosen conference hotel in Fredericksburg. Most of you know Jonette chairs our conference site selection committee. Actually she is our site selection committee.

Anyway, after the details were ironed out and everyone left the table, Jonette got a surprise phone call to say the hotel had been double-booked and that TOWA was the come-lately party.

Other available dates conflicted with events such as the Bassmaster Classic and the Holder Show, something we try to avoid. So we walked away.

Fredericksburg is out. Hastily Jonette, at the board's direction, contacted the good folks of New Braunfels and explained the situation. Thankfully the spanking-new hotel where we staged our 2012 conference

welcomed us back.

So the 2014 TOWA conference is scheduled for Feb. 27 through March 2 at the Courtyard by Marriot New Braunfels River Village on the beautiful banks of the Guadalupe River. — David Sikes

P.S. Board meeting minutes will be published in the June newsletter, as Recording Secretary Peggy York, who is the newly appointed Director of Women in Shooting Sports for the Texas State Rifle Association, was headed out for an extended time to an event in South Carolina.

CALENDAR

May 3 - 5 — NRA 2013 Annual Meetings & Exhibits, George R. Brown Convention Center, Houston. For more information, visit nraam.org.

May 4 — Cinco de Mayo Celebration at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center, with a day of dancing, fishing and food. For more information on the event contact James Booker at (903) 670-2266, james.booker@tpwd.state.tx.us.

May 4 - 5 — Spring Turkey Season, South Zone Special Youth Season (in all counties that have an open season for those species)

May 18 - 19 — Spring Turkey Season, North Zone Special Youth Season (in all counties that have an open season for those species)

June 1 - 9 — National Fishing & Boating Week. For more information, visit takemefishing.org.

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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.



TOWA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

On the Horizon for TOWA Executive Director Lorraine Lawrence

After starting the new executive director position with TOWA, my first mission has been to become familiar with the members and the inner workings and organization of TOWA. One of our priorities has been to update and streamline the business practices and accounting for the organization. Making sure we are in compliance with our non-profit status and up-to-date with both state and federal governments is a project that several of us have been diligently at work on. We are looking at establishing a strong foundation of policies and procedures that can be easily understood and followed by future executive directors and others to make a smooth running organization.

In the weeks to come, there will be work on our website, both updates (and please, if you have changes that need to be made to your listing, send an email and I can help you with updating your material) to the current site, and the documents and articles featured there. This will tide us over as we are also working on the development of a new website. We hope that the additions that a new website can bring will help create more interest in the organization and also feature information useful to all TOWA members and be more interactive and easy to use.

Another area that I will be concentrating a lot of effort on is the cultivation of new members, both active and supporting. As a part of the development of membership, I will be looking at ways TOWA can be more beneficial to our membership. I have been talking to some of our members about developing more social and sporting events, working on ways to further contact between our supporting and active members, looking into presenting or sponsoring a few ways to help our membership with new contacts and learning opportunities such as presentations or articles on e-business and social networking that may benefit some of our members.

I look forward to hearing from and meeting more of our members and talking to you about ways I can help make your TOWA membership a valuable credential and asset to your communications. I would also like to thank all the members that I have had the pleasure of meeting over the past month for all the support and help that they have offered while I adjust to the job at hand.

— Lorraine Lawrence

2014 TOWA ANNUAL CONFERENCE SET FOR NEW BRAUNFELS, FEB. 27 - MAR. 2

Welcome, Willkommen, Bienvenidos to New Braunfels for the 2014 TOWA

Conference! We're honored and excited to have been chosen again as your host for this event and look forward to making it a huge success for TOWA.

The New Braunfels CVB would be happy to make all of the arrangements to show you everything that New Braunfels has to offer. The beautiful, award-winning Courtyard by Marriott River Village will be your host hotel. This 125-room property is perfectly located on the Guadalupe River and is within minutes of all area attractions, restaurants and shopping. Even Gruene Hall and the Gruene Historic District are a short five minutes away.

The New Braunfels CVB will be hosting your opening night reception and we plan on making it something special. After all, how often do we have the opportunity to host such a great group of outdoor writers?

Thank you so much for choosing New Braunfels, the "City of a Prince." When New Braunfels is mentioned, most people across the state immediately think of our rivers and Schlitterbahn, so we've come up with a new slogan that seems to fit perfectly:

INSTANT MEETING...JUST ADD WATER!!!

Near-Death Experience Teaches Man Life Lesson

by John Gill

Judges' Comments: Judges' Comments: Stories of tragedy and how people handle their bad luck often tear at the heart and show how human beings can overcome much trauma and persevere. That is exactly what John Gill did with his story, and in the process gave us some important information and life lessons, as well.

SAN ANGELO, Texas — Charlie “Chuck” Bowers is a contract welder, cowboy, hunting guide and cook.

The Knickerbocker resident is the epitome of a West Texas oil patch wrangler — tough, resourceful, dependable and always ready to tackle any job handed to him.

Bowers had his toughest challenge yet on May 11, 2009, and he's still rebounding from it.

“Life really changed for me that day,” he said.

On that wet spring day near Christoval, Bowers was inspecting a barn roof when he came in contact with a 7,200-volt electric charge that almost killed him and eventually took both his hands above the wrists.

He was rushed to Shannon Medical Center, where doctors told his wife, Linda, that he needed to be transferred to Parkland Burn Center in Dallas.

“The last thing I remember that day and for the next 60 was lying in the back of an airplane as it ran down the takeoff strip at Mathis Field,” he said.

“They kept me in an induced coma for all that time because of the pain.

“A few weeks after taking me from the coma, they began preparations for fitting me with prosthetic devices, and soon afterward rehabilitation training started.”

When Bowers asked what his limitations would be with his “new hands,” his doctor told him that “if I had been a ballroom dancer before, I probably would be again.”

More seriously, “he said that I could get back to my core trades, but it would require new ways of going about them.”

Back home in Knickerbocker after physical and psychological therapy, Bowers, 55, immediately began adapting, and his progress has amazed his friends and family.

“I’m still doing the same things that I did before the accident, but a little slower,” Bowers said.

“The main thing the accident taught me is patience. I’ve had to learn how to do all sorts of things over, from walking in the early days of coming out of the coma to using my new hands. It’s been a project in progress and will be for some time to come.”

Bowers is working again for two of his former employers, Skipper Duncan and Tom Thorp. He guides hunters and cooks for Duncan, who operates Adobe Lodge hunting resort west of San Angelo.

“When Charlie started guiding hunters after his accident, I had some concerns if he would be able to do all the things necessary for the customers, but he has not let anything stand in the way of relearning how to function effectively at anything he did before the accident,” Duncan said.

“He is a world class mechanic, and I’m sure his skills in this area have assisted him along the way.”

Duncan is impressed with Bowers’ spirit.

“He has never shown signs of taking a ‘poor me’ attitude. He just

came home from the hospital and set out to correct the situation. He’s an inspiration to everyone around him,” Duncan said.

Max Sanders, who has known Bowers for many years and has worked with him at Adobe Lodge, enlisted his help in the Wounded Warriors program, where Bowers helps counsel military veterans who have similar injuries.

“He is a good Christian man who radiates strength, determination and all the things needed to overcome life-changing events,” Sanders said. “He’s fun to be around and always full of enthusiasm.”

Thorp, who owns Thorp Transports in Mertzon, uses Bowers to weld special deer-proof bumpers and perform other work on his fleet of trucks.

Along his route of recovery, Bowers uses his new hands to saddle his mules and horses and unlatch combination locks on the gates he passes through during a guided hunt. He remains a master cook.

He has participated in three cross-country trail rides since the accident, and “I’m in the process of retraining myself to rope calves,” he said.

Bowers credits most of his progress to the support of his wife of 35 years.

“As I learned later, when out of the coma, there was a debate over if and when to remove my hands. Linda was dead set against it, but when they explained that leaving them could result in additional problems or death, she made the decision to take them, and I agree,” he said.

Encouragement and assistance from his daughter, Sherry, have been invaluable, he said, and “the people at West Texas Rehabilitation have been the best.”

Bowers also thinks his rearing in a rural atmosphere has helped give him the strength to face his tough situation.

“My grandfather Woodrow Harris raised me, and he definitely was from the old school. There was no lying around his house; everybody worked hard. He had a dairy, and I recall the 100 cows that I had to feed each morning before school,” he said.

There have been rough patches in the path to recovery, though.

“During the first few weeks, it was sitting on my front porch and watching my friends go to work in the morning and seeing them come home in the afternoon,” he said. “It was tough at first, but as I’m getting back to work myself, it’s better.

“I’m still learning to cope with some strangers’ reactions to my very visible disability. It has not only troubled me but Linda as well, maybe her more than me. I want to be treated just like I was before.”

But he knows he’s lived through something few people have, and he’ll discuss it when people ask. “I don’t mind talking about the accident,” he said. “It’s all part of the process.”

This feature appeared in the May 9, 2012 edition of the San Angelo Standard-Times.

MEET YOUR TOWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



NAME: DAVID SIKES
BOARD POSITION: *President*
TERM: 2013 - 2014
CURRENT COMMITTEES: *Co-chair, conference committee*
TOWA MEMBER SINCE: 1998
Current Staff Position and/or Outdoor COMMUNICATION VENUES: *Outdoors columnist, Corpus Christi Caller-Times*
Favorite Outdoor Activities: *Fishing, bird hunting, photography*

LAST THREE BOOKS READ: *Joe Doggett's Outdoor Chronicles; Great Tales from the History of South Texas by Murphy Givens; Hard Heads & Half Gales: Tales from Tarpon, Texas by Jim Wiggins.*

SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TO SHARE WITH THE MEMBERSHIP: *I am a product of Catholic and Cajun upbringing in New Iberia, La., where I grew up fishing and hunting in the Bayou Teche area of South Louisiana, and an Eagle Scout.*

I have newspaper ink in my veins thanks to my great grandfather, who founded the Teche News in 1886, a weekly newspaper still published in Saint Martinville, La.

I have promoted and written extensively about the Billy Sandifer Big Shell Beach Cleanup, the reopening of Cedar Bayou, red snapper and trout regulations, freshwater inflows and seagrass conservation.

I live on North Padre Island with my biologist/school-teacher wife Katie, who teaches middle school science at Seashore Middle Academy on the island and is an adjunct professor at Texas A&M Corpus Christi, where she teaches prospective teachers how to be science teachers.

- *Served on the Texas Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame Selection Committee.*
- *Board of Directors Wildlife in Focus conservation/education organization*
- *Awards: Ducks Unlimited Wetland Conservation Achievement Award for 2012 in the communications category.*
- *Charley McTea Media Award from the Texas Wildlife Association*
- *Harvey Weil Foundation 2012 Professional Conservationist of the year*



NAME: TJ GREANEY
BOARD POSITION: *President-Elect*
TERM: 2013 - 2014
CURRENT COMMITTEES: *Co-chair, conference committee*
TOWA MEMBER SINCE: 1998
CURRENT STAFF POSITION AND/OR OUTDOOR COMMUNICATION VENUES: *Co-Host, The Outdoor Zone radio show on ESPN Austin. Publisher/Owner of Country Line Magazine, a Texas lifestyle magazine*

since 1996. Freelance writer for numerous national, regional, travel and outdoor magazines. Founder of The Kids Outdoor Zone Youth Outdoor Adventure Ministry, a national outdoor and mentor-based ministry founded in 2007.

FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES: *Bow hunting or hanging out at the ranch, any ranch.*

LAST THREE BOOKS READ: *The Bible, God, The Red Circle: My Life in the Navy SEAL Sniper Corps and How I Trained America's Deadliest Marksmen by Brandon Webb, Coyote's Guide to Connecting with*

Nature for Kids of all Ages and their Mentors by Jon Young. SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TO SHARE WITH THE MEMBERSHIP: I am passionate about getting kids involved in the outdoors. We launched our program nationally in February and have been asked to partner with the Wildfire Weekend organization as they launch their conferences around the country. It's an exciting time for us.



NAME: JOHN GOODSPEED
POSITION ON BOARD: *Chairman of the board. Served as president for two years, president-elect one year, board member for two three-year terms.*
TERM: 2013 - 2014
CURRENT COMMITTEES EITHER CHAIRED OR ON: *Member, membership recruitment committee*
TOWA MEMBER SINCE: 1998
CURRENT STAFF POSITION AND/OR

OUTDOOR MEDIA VENUES: *Run own public relations firm with clients including Texas Pride Barbecue and freelance for The Journal of the Texas Trophy Hunters, Texas State Rifle Association Sportsman, San Antonio Man magazine, Racks & Reels magazine, Best in Texas magazine, San Antonio Express-News and Action Magazine.*

FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES: *Hunting, fishing, sporting clays, handgun and rifle shooting in general and especially 1911 and AR-15 platforms, kayaking, camaraderie with others of similar interests and just being outdoors and enjoying the natural world.*

LAST THREE BOOKS READ: *"The Confrontation: Winning the War Against Future Jihad" by Walid Phares, "The Infiltrator: My Secret Life Inside the Dirty Banks Behind Pablo Escobar's Medellin Cartel" by Robert Mazur, and "The Cobra" by Frederick Forsyth.*

SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TO SHARE WITH THE MEMBERSHIP: *I'm a native San Antonian who can trace his roots in America to 1637, and that ancestor was granted the right to own a firearm in 1642 by the king of England (thank goodness his descendents fought in the Revolution, which led to the Second Amendment); married with two grown children; the kind of outdoor enthusiast who processes his own meat and stuffs his own sausage; technical skills besides writing, editing and photography range from welding and 4x4 mechanic to carpenter, plumber and electrician; avid reader of fiction and non-fiction; follows politics as a spectator sport.*



NAME: SHANE TOWNSEND
BOARD POSITION: *Treasurer*
TERM: 2013 - 2016
CURRENT COMMITTEES: *Facilitator, Membership Recruitment Committee*
TOWA MEMBER SINCE: 2012
CURRENT STAFF POSITION AND/OR OUTDOOR COMMUNICATION VENUES: *Freelance writer for*

FalconGuides, Canoe & Kayak magazine, and others.

FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES: *Kayaking, fishing, hunting*

LAST THREE BOOKS READ: *By Line: Ernest Hemingway, Up River & Downstream, The Natural Navigator*

SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TO SHARE WITH THE MEMBERSHIP: *Shane is a Texas Master Naturalist who has lived on three continents, traveled in 20*

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countries, and served in the Peace Corps in Bolivia from 2003 to 2005.



NAME: **LEFTY RAY CHAPA**
 BOARD POSITION: *Board Member*
 TERM: *2013 - 2016*
 CURRENT COMMITTEES: *TBD*
 TOWA MEMBER SINCE: *2000*
 CURRENT STAFF POSITION AND/OR
 OUTDOOR COMMUNICATION VENUES:
*Freelance and frequent contributor to
 Southwest Fly Fishing magazine, San
 Antonio Express-News newspaper,
 Saltwater Texas newspaper, American*

Waterfowler magazine, Texas Parks & Wildlife magazine
 FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES: *Fly fishing, waterfowling*
 LAST THREE BOOKS READ: *The Sinatra Club, Tom Mix & Pancho Villa,
 and Tales from Development Hell.*

SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TO SHARE WITH THE MEMBERSHIP: *The nickname "Lefty" comes from my high school golf team playing days. While actually left-handed, I learned to play golf right-handed using my dad's extra set of golf clubs. While the team as a whole was not in the caliber of Tiger Woods, our golf coach was often overheard saying to other coaches that "His team could probably not outplay their team, but his team could out-drink, out-gamble, and out-fight any other team in the state of Texas!"*



NAME: **SUSAN EBERT**
 BOARD POSITION: *Board Member*
 TERM: *2013 - 2016; two previous board
 terms in 1999 - 2002 and 2010 - 2013.*
 CURRENT COMMITTEES: *Membership
 Recruitment Committee, Communications
 Committee*
 TOWA MEMBER SINCE: *1998*
 CURRENT STAFF POSITION AND/OR
 OUTDOOR COMMUNICATION VENUES:
Columnist for Sporting Classics magazine,

*contributor to Houston Chronicle, Cabela's Outfitter Journal
 and others; Publisher & Editor of Western & English Today, TOWA
 newsletter editor.*

FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES: *Waterfowling, turkey hunting,
 freshwater and saltwater fishing, fly fishing, kayaking ... being outdoors!*
 LAST THREE BOOKS READ: *Empire of the Summer Moon by S.C.
 Gwynne, Being Dead is No Excuse: The Official Southern Ladies
 Guide to Hosting the Perfect Funeral and It's Only Slow Food Until
 You Try to Eat It by Bill Heavey*

SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TO SHARE WITH THE MEMBERSHIP: *The
 second book listed above I found on my mother's bedside table after
 we moved her into hospice care shortly before her demise; a final bit of
 tongue-in-Southern-belle-cheek tutelage from the glorious Miss Ruby
 Jewel, since she couldn't be there in person ...*

NAME: **CODY RYAN GREANEY** *Photo not provided*
 BOARD POSITION: *Board Member*
 TERM: *2011 - 2014*
 CURRENT COMMITTEES: *Not provided*
 TOWA MEMBER SINCE: *Not provided*
 CURRENT STAFF POSITION AND/OR OUTDOOR COMMUNICATION
 MAY 2013 TOWA NEWSLETTER

VENUES: *Host of The Outdoor Zone radio show; monthly column in
 Country Line Magazine; freelance.*

FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES: *Not provided*
 LAST THREE BOOKS READ: *Bible, Do Hard Things, Steve Jobs biography*
 SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TO SHARE WITH THE MEMBERSHIP:
90% of the time I tie a polymer knot.



NAME: **KENDAL HEMPHILL**
 BOARD POSITION: *Board Member*
 TERM: *2013 - 2014*
 CURRENT COMMITTEES: *EIC
 chairman, member recruitment
 committee*
 TOWA MEMBER SINCE: *1997*
 CURRENT STAFF POSITION AND/
 OR OUTDOOR COMMUNICATION VENUES: *Texas Fish & Game*

*Commentary columnist; weekly outdoor humor columnist (Mason
 County News, Brady Standard, Junction Eagle); TPWD Weekly Fishing
 Report contributor; freelancer; book author, The Buck Never Got Here*

FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES: *Hunting, fishing, camping, hiking,
 backpacking, canyoning, canoeing, kayaking*
 LAST THREE BOOKS READ: *1356 by Bernard Cornwell, The Third Bullet
 by Stephen Hunter, The Covenant by James Garlow*
 SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TO SHARE WITH THE MEMBERSHIP:
Volunteer firefighter



NAME: **BOB HOOD**
 POSITION ON BOARD: *Board Member*
 TERM: *2012 - 2015*
 CURRENT COMMITTEES EITHER CHAIRED
 OR ON: *Chairman, Membership Committee*
 TOWA MEMBER SINCE: *1970, former TOWA
 president, current lifetime member.*
 CURRENT STAFF POSITION AND/OR
 OUTDOOR MEDIA VENUES: *Hunting
 Editor for Texas Fish & Game magazine,
 contributor to Texas Sporting Journal, Fort*

*Worth Star-Telegram print editions and Fort Worth Star-Telegram
 DFW OT Sports electronic magazine; Texas Sportsman magazine,
 Texas Parks & Wildlife, Texas Outdoors Journal and others.*
 FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES: *Hunting, freshwater and saltwater
 fishing, fly fishing, camping, outdoor cooking, wildlife photography,
 canoeing, boating, calling turkeys, predator calling, frog gigging, and
 all the rest.*

LAST THREE BOOKS READ: *Characters and Critters by Skipper
 Duncan; Savor Wild Game Cookbook by Chuck and Blanche Johnson,
 Wild Feasts by Ducks Unlimited.*
 SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TO SHARE WITH THE MEMBERSHIP: *The
 day before I wrote my first outdoor article for the Fort Worth Star-
 Telegram in 1968, a fellow sports writer named Harold McKinney
 gave me a short but life-saving piece of advice when I told him I hoped I
 would be able to find enough material to write about to meet the then-
 daily deadlines 6 days a week. McKinney said:*

"Bob, you can't write about the outdoors by staying indoors."

*I have followed that advice throughout my now 45 years of writing
 outdoors articles, photographing and communicating via television
 shows and radio programs. I think all current and aspiring outdoor*

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writers and communicators could reap great rewards by following my friend's advice. Sure, it's great to become an expert in one field, or maybe two or three, but I think none of us should ever skirt the opportunity to learn about all they can that the outdoors has to offer.



NAME: PEGGY YORK
BOARD POSITION: Board Member
TERM: 2012 - 2015
CURRENT COMMITTEES: Recording Secretary
TOWA MEMBER SINCE: 2002
CURRENT STAFF POSITION AND/OR OUTDOOR COMMUNICATION VENUES: Director, Women in Shooting Sports for the Texas State Rifle Association, certified by the National Rifle Association in teaching

pistol, rifle, shotgun, Refuse to be a Victim and a Range Safety Officer; on staff with the NRA Women's Wilderness Escape.

FAVORITE OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES: Shooting, hunting

LAST THREE BOOKS READ: Not provided

SOMETHING ABOUT YOU TO SHARE WITH THE MEMBERSHIP: In 2007, Peggy graduated from the Colorado Outdoor Adventure Guide School giving her the credentials needed to validate her knowledge and the ability to accomplish her adventures.



TOWA MEMBER JONETTE CHILDS WAS INDUCTED INTO the 2013 Texas Maritime Museum's Perry R. Bass Memorial Sports Fishing Wall of Fame on March 25. Also inducted was Jim Friebele (above right).

In 1995, Childs launched *Saltwater Texas*, which has won the EIC Competition's Best Publication Under 25,000 category numerous times. She has been a TOWA member for 17 years, and has served as a board member, president, chairman of the board, and currently as site selection chairman. Childs is also the 2013 winner of the L.A. Wilke Lifetime Achievement Award.



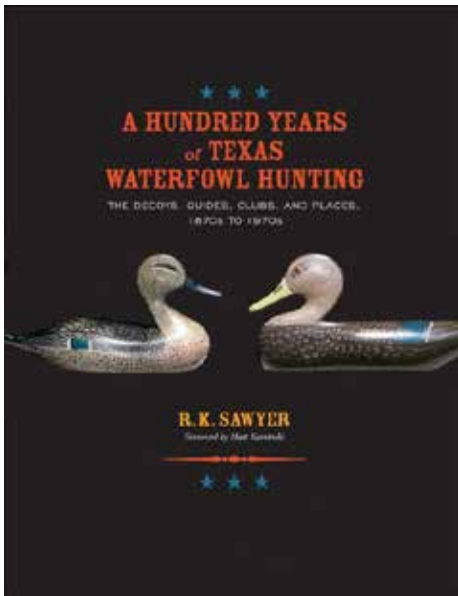
Provided by TOWA member John Gill, a photo from somewhere between 1969 and 1973, from a TOWA meeting at the YO Ranch. Top Row, from left: Russell Tinsley (*Austin American Statesman*), Charlie Schreiner III (YO Ranch family), Bob Brister (*Houston Chronicle*), A.W. McLaughlin (*Marble Falls newspaper*), Roy Swann (*Corpus Christi Caller-Times*), Tom LePere (*Dallas Times-Herald*), L.A. Wilke (The Founding Father of TOWA), Bob Hood (*Fort Worth Star-Telegram*), Stan Slaton (*Houston Post*), John Gill (*San Angelo Standard-Times*), John Thompson (*Fort Worth Star Telegram*), Unidentified Member. Front Row, from left: Ira Stockebrand, Fred Maly (*San Antonio Light*), Dick McCune (TPWD), Texas Governor Preston Smith, Dan Klepper (*San Antonio Express News*), and Vern Sanford (Texas Press Assn. executive director). Photo by Hal Swiggett.



Welcome to new TOWA member **R.K. (Rob) Sawyer**, who attended the 2013 TOWA Annual Conference as a speaker.

Sawyer's first book, *A Hundred Years of Texas Waterfowl Hunting*, is in its third printing by Texas A&M Press, and his second book, *Texas Market Hunting: Stories of Waterfowl, Game Laws, and Outlaws* is due out in Fall 2013.

Sawyer, a Houston-based petroleum geologist, also serves on the staff of the Thunderbird Hunting Club in Matagorda County.



EDITOR'S Note: TOWA welcomes contributions from its members to our monthly newsletter, and offers a tip o' the brim to Kendal Hemphill for the following. — SLE

Craft Improvement

Kendal Hemphill

EACH OF US, NO MATTER HOW GOOD WE ARE AT OUR JOB, HAS ROOM for improvement. Nowhere is this axiom truer than in the field of writing. Every piece we turn out can be tightened up and enhanced, if we take time to do the work.

An editor once sent me a story and asked for my opinion. I 'edited' the first couple of paragraphs and sent it back, with a note that the rest needed similar work, but that I didn't have the time at the moment. I pointed out that the writing was somewhat disjointed, and gave examples of how it could be reworded and improved. Since I had no idea who had written the piece, I took liberties from that anonymity.

As it turns out, the editor had written it. And he must have agreed with my ideas, at least to a point, since I'm still writing for him. None of us is above perfecting our craft.

Strive to delete unnecessary words, such as 'that.' Mark Twain once advised writers to change each 'that' to 'damn.' He said, "Your editor will delete them, and your writing will be just as it should."

I would add 'very' to Twain's list. Using 'very' is akin to punting in football, or a DJ offering the time of day. It's a filler, used by desperate writers stretching for a word count as does a drowning man for a rope.

Repetition is another mood killer. Come up with your own synonyms or use a thesaurus. Using the same word twice is boring, three times is tragic, and any more than that is criminal.

One of my editors threatens to shoot any of his contributors who use contractions. He claims they aren't used correctly most of the time, and he gets tired of correcting the work of professional writers. But since I depend on contractions to give my columns a more friendly, one-on-one feel, I petitioned to be allowed to use them. He relented, with the caveat that, if he caught me using one incorrectly, I would have to stop.

We use contractions in conversation, but for more formal writing (whatever that is) they may not be appropriate. Your judgment — and your editor's — is required to tell the difference. Personally, I love double contractions, such as 'wouldn't've,' but such beautiful words can cause baldness in the editing field.

One word that is probably misspelt more than any other is 'its.' Far too many writers don't know the difference between its and it's. The difference is simple, as Larry Bozka pointed out at a TOWA conference once. He said, "It's eye tee apostrophe ess if it's 'it is,' and it's eye tee ess if it ain't." In other words, 'it's' is a contraction of 'it is,' and 'its' shows possession, as in 'its fur,' or 'its tail.'

My personal pet peeve, which irritates me to the point where I will burn a book (the cardinal sin, I know), is when a writer fails to use 'of' after 'couple' when necessary. If I read 'He waited there for a couple hours,' instead of 'He waited there for a couple of hours,' I'm likely to take a swing at the writer's mailbox with a baseball bat.

Obviously, we need to have a fair knowledge of our subject, because no matter how obscure the topic, an expert will read the story and take grievous, personal offense at every faux pas. Never depict a shooter pumping a Remington model 1100 shotgun, never report the spread of a mule deer's 'horns,' and never, ever say someone took a revolver off 'safe.' Readers have elephant memories, and it takes them longer to forgive than to forget.

We should all take as much care in editing our own work as we would if asked to edit that of a friend. And the editor's creed should be the same as the doctor's: First, do no harm. Don't over-edit to the point that the original story is lost, or your story will read like an entry in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

My seventh-grade English teacher used to give me an 'F' on any paper in which I began a sentence with 'and' or 'but.' Now, I make sure to do it in everything I write. And I get paid for it. Point: Break a few rules now and then. Because ... well, just because.

TWA ESTABLISHES RELIEF FUND FOR WEST

THE TEXAS WILDLIFE ASSOCIATION is collecting monetary donations to benefit the victims of the April 17 tragedy in West and to support relief efforts in the community.

TWA will coordinate with the City of West to ensure the best allocation of donations received, based on the community's highest needs. All donations received from TWA members and friends will be collected and forwarded in a timely manner as a Texas Wildlife Association donation to support this critical relief effort.

TWA contacted this week a TWA Member in West and a parent of a Texas Youth Hunting Program participant in West. Both individuals thanked TWA and its members for their concern, and they encouraged TWA to not worry so much about them and their own personal impacts from the explosion (impacts that were noteworthy), but to support and help others in the community who are in far more desperate circumstances. They said their neighbors and friends need help now.

It was the inspirational words and community spirit expressed by these TWA family members that prompted our Texas Wildlife Association relief effort.

How can you help? You may make a monetary contribution by calling the TWA office at (210) 826-2904 or you may send a check made payable to "Texas Wildlife Association" to 3660 Thousand Oaks, Suite 126, San Antonio, Texas, 78247. Please write "West Relief Fund" in the check memo. Please note that donations to the Texas Wildlife Association relief effort are not tax-deductible as a charitable contribution.

As an alternative, you may wish to consider a donation to the Heart of Texas Area Chapter of the American Red Cross at this link <http://www.redcross.org/tx/waco/ways-to-donate> or by calling (254) 523-4985.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued thoughts and prayers for the residents of West and their entire community.

Growing Demand From Female Hunters, New Investor Converge for Bright Future at Próis Hunting & Field Apparel

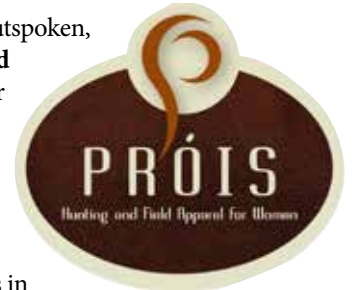
In 2008, female hunters worldwide were awoken by the outspoken, fun and downright wacky team at **Próis Hunting & Field Apparel**, shining a long-awaited spotlight on the need for women's high-performance technical huntwear. The growing demand for Próis gear over the years has been phenomenal. In fact, Próis now has a dedicated following (AKA the "Próis Posse").

The Próis fire continues to burn strong year after year and with the company's new financial partner, the "Próis Posse" is in a strong position to go after their ultimate goal: total female world domination. And, why not? This company has a stellar reputation for rapid growth. In fact, Próis has seen a 200% growth each year in business thanks to the growing demographic of die-hard female hunters. And this awesome group of ladies has proven its growth: According to the National Sporting Goods Association (NASGA), female participation in hunting rose 36 percent between 2001 and 2010, to a total of 2.4 million women hunters. Plus, according to CBS News, the national total for female gun owners has doubled in the past decade, increasing to nearly 5 million women since 2001. These impressive stats support the writings on the wall, which is women hunters currently are and will play an integral role in the future of hunting.

"The new partnership has allowed Próis to add three additional manufacturing facilities, all while maintaining bulk production right here in the U.S.," said Kirstie Pike, President/CEO of Próis Hunting & Field Apparel. "We're excited to put our innovative plans into play – starting with enhancing our product line to feature the popular Mountain Mimicry camo pattern, as well as launch a robust lineup in 2014 that's sure to take the hunting world by storm – you'll have to stay tuned!"

Próis was created for women, by women and they are proud to serve as the premier manufacturer of hardcore women's hunting gear.

To learn more about Próis' innovative line of serious, high-performance huntwear for real women, visit proishunting.com or contact President/CEO Kirstie Pike at kirstie@proishunting.com or (970) 641-3355.



Public Approval of Hunting Highest Since 1995

NEWTOWN, Conn., April 2013 — **The National Shooting Sports Foundation** reports that a new survey shows 79 percent of the American public approve of hunting. This marks the highest level of support for hunting since 1995, according to data compiled by Responsive Management, an independent research firm.

The nationwide scientific survey showed the public's approval of hunting rose five points in the past year, up from 74 percent in 2011. The survey, conducted in February 2013 using random digit dialing and supplemental cellular telephone sampling, was the fifth in a series of similar surveys by Responsive Management to track trends in public approval of hunting since 1995.

Support for hunting has remained generally consistent during this time: 73 percent in 1995; 75 percent in 2003; 78 percent in 2006; 74 percent in 2011; and a peak of 79 percent in 2013.

Mark Damian Duda, executive director of Responsive Management, is still looking at survey results to better understand why approval has in-

creased. Said Duda, "Approval of hunting among Americans is fairly stable and bounces between 73 and 79 percent. The reasons for this increase are still unclear, but it is probably related to the increase in hunting and shooting participation.

Added Duda, "Since 2006, hunting participation has increased by 9 percent while shooting participation has increased 18 percent since 2009. Other studies we have conducted on public opinion on hunting show that the strongest correlation for approval of hunting is knowing a hunter—over and above demographic variables or anything else. With the increased number of hunters in the field and sport shooters at the range, it is possible that this is being reflected in this uptick in support for hunting."

Responsive Management specializes in public opinion research on natural resource and outdoor recreation issues. **The National Shooting Sports Foundation** is the trade association for the firearms industry. For more information, visit nssf.org.