The Blade

September - October 2026

The Official Publication of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers



"Autumn Morning and the Dew is Thick", photo by Tom Berg

Hoosier Outdoor Writers

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers was formed in 1969 and has brought together many diverse groups and individuals with shared interests. The Hoosier Outdoor Writers, known among its members as HOW, is a group of dedicated media professionals who are keenly interested in the wise use of natural resources in the Hoosier State.

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2027
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2028
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2027

At Large:
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Troy McCormick – 2027
Mike Schoonveld – 2027
Phil Bloom – 2028
Rich Creason – 2028
Dave Hoffman – 2028

All submissions and correspondence in regards to the newsletter should be directed to: Tom Berg (e-mail: director@hoosieroutdoorwriters.org), or to Tom Berg, 2142 Nondorf St., Dyer, IN 46311.

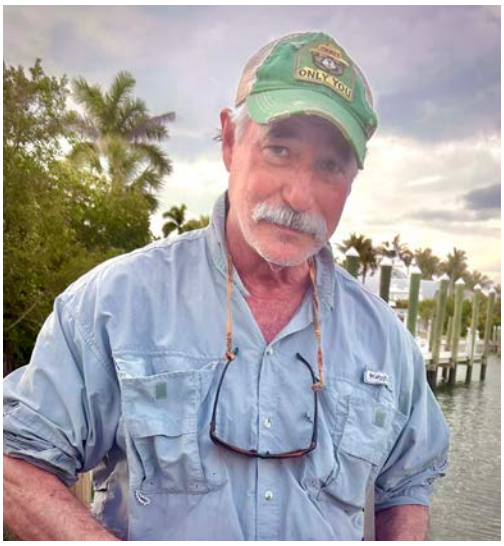
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HOW website: www.HoosierOutdoorWriters.org.

On the cover: *Cooler fall weather brings beautiful red, orange and yellow hues to the trees as the leaves turn different colors. The cool weather also makes for foggy mornings and dew-covered grass and leaves. This leaf provided the perfect photo op for a fall photo session. Photo by Tom Berg.*

President's Message

by John Maxwell



Modernizing HOW Member Classifications

HOW subcommittee nearing final proposal,
and my three tiny addendums.

Hoosier Outdoor Writers' members Brent Wheat, Don Cranfill and Trent Marsh have been busy this past summer finalizing proposals for bringing HOW membership criteria into the 21st Century.

After running proposed changes past HOW's legal advisor Bill Keaton, the HOW Board of Directors will vote later this fall on suggested proposals via a Teams meeting, or if a Teams meeting is not workable, by an email ballet.

Currently, active HOW members are required to show they are regularly engaged in paid dissemination of outdoor-oriented information. But the traditional income model alone is no longer practical or sufficient.

"Should Hoosier Outdoor Writers simply recognize those who have been paid? Or those who are actively practicing the craft of outdoor communication?" Brent Wheat said. "Modern media economics no longer make those categories identical."

Wheat says historically, payment served as a reliable proxy for professionalism because: publishing access was limited, editorial oversight functioned as vetting, and compensation pathways were stable and transparent.

But today, "many highly skilled communicators build audiences before monetization, and revenue often comes indirectly through sponsorships, licensing, platform revenue and other avenues. Traditional freelance rates have declined or disappeared and some paid work is promotional rather than communicative in nature."

Wheat proposes HOW use a Professional Practice Model. Monetary compensation remains relevant – but is considered one form of validation, not the sole criterion.

Given the complexity of modern media, qualitative review is essential. A membership committee should evaluate applications holistically. distinguish between recreational content and professional communication, and maintain standards without relying on rigid formulas.

Proposed membership categories:

Active Members are individuals demonstrating sustained professional practice. Active members retain voting rights, eligibility for office and eligibility for Excellence in Craft recognition.

Associate Members would be individuals developing toward active status but not yet meeting full criteria.

(continued on next page)

Associate status should be limited to three years, reinforcing the organization's role as an incubator. This status provides mentorship and engagement opportunities, but does not include voting privileges.

Affiliate Membership would be intended for individuals who support the mission of Hoosier Outdoor Writers or work adjacent to the field of outdoor communication but do not meet, or are not currently pursuing, the criteria required for active membership.

Affiliate Members may include individuals such as those who want to remain engaged with the organization, industry partners, educators, subject-matter experts, or enthusiasts who contribute to the broader outdoor communications community without regularly producing qualifying professional work.

Affiliate status allows these individuals to participate in the organization's activities and maintain a connection with the HOW community while preserving the professional standards associated with Active membership.

Affiliate Members shall not hold voting privileges, serve in elected office, or participate in Excellence in Craft competitions.

More detailed suggested membership updates will be posted online soon so all HOW members can review them. If you would like to join a HOW Google group and add suggestions, please send an email to Brent Wheat at bw@brentwheat.com and he will get you set up.

My own three tiny proposals include:

1. Allowing HOW member stories or illustrations that are published in HOW's magazine ***The Blade*** to be eligible for the Excellence in Craft awards -- regardless of member class. This would hopefully increase quality and relevant submissions to ***The Blade***, and allow retired or associate members to develop skills or stay engaged. On occasion I've had ideas for Blade stories, but had to skip the chance to donate a fishing or hunting story, and instead prioritize paid writing and illustration gigs.

2. Another idea would be to include in active-member benchmarks any unpaid volunteer communicator work donated to a legitimate non-profit organization.

3. Lastly, should we resurrect retired status under the new guidelines, or include it in associate or affiliate statuses?

Hope to see you down the trail.

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers

New Members, Past Presidents and Memorial Section

HOW Extends a Warm Welcome to our Growing Ranks of Outdoor Communicators:

No new members for this issue.
See Member News Section
starting on page 21.

Memorial to Deceased HOW Members

Those Who Have Gone Before Us:

Jack Alkire – HOW President 1979
Bill Beeman – Executive Director Emeritus
Don Bickel
Ed Blann
Charlie Brown
Gary Carden
Jim “Moose” Carden – HOW President 1982-83
George Carey
John Case
Bill Church – HOW President 1972
Gene Clifford
Jack “Big Jake” Cooper
Mark Cottingham
Larry Crecelius – HOW President 2003
Jerry Criss
John Davis – HOW President 1984-85
Ray Dickerson – HOW President 1988
Gary “Dox” Doxtater
Dick Forbes
Tom Glancy – HOW President 1977
Dale Griffith
Phil Hawkins
Fred Heckman
Marty Jaranowski – HOW President 1996
Phil Junker – HOW President 1975+2002
Jack Kerins
Mike Lyle – HOW President 1981
Ralph “Cork” McHargue – HOW President 1976
Dick Mercier
Bob Nesbit
Hellen Ochs
Jack Parry
Harry Renfro
“Bayou” Bill Scifres – HOW President – **6 Terms**
George Seketa
Hal Shymkus
Al Spiers
Robert “Doc” Stunkard
Butch Tackett
Bill Takacs
George Tilford
John Trout, Jr.
Joe West

Past Presidents of HOW

“Bayou” Bill Scifres	**1969**
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	**1970**
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	**1971**
Bill Church	**1972**
Rick Bramwell	**1973**
Jack Ennis	**1974**
Phil Junker	**1975**
Ralph “Cork” McHargue	**1976**
Tom Glancy	**1977**
Bob Rubin	**1978**
Jack Alkire	**1979**
Louie Stout	**1980**
Mike Lyle	**1981**
Jim “Moose” Carden	**1982**
Jim “Moose” Carden	**1983**
John Davis	**1984**
John Davis	**1985**
Ray Harper	**1986**
Ray Harper	**1987**
Ray Dickerson	**1988**
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	**1989**
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	**1990**
“Bayou” Bill Scifres	**1991**
Jack Spaulding	**1992**
Jack Spaulding	**1993**
John Rawlings	**1994**
Phil Bloom	**1995**
Marty Jaranowski	**1996**
John Martino	**1997**
Mike Schoonveld	**1998**
Jack Spaulding	**1999**
Jack Spaulding	**2000**
Sharon Wiggins	**2001**
Phil Junker	**2002**
Larry Crecelius	**2003**
Bryan Poynter	**2004**
Phil Bloom	**2005**
Brian Smith	**2006**
Brian Smith	**2007**
Brent Wheat	**2008**
Bryan Poynter	**2009**
John Maxwell	**2010**
Brandon Butler	**2011**
Josh Lantz	**2012**
Ben Shadley	**2013**
Bob Sawtelle	**2014**
Alan Garbers	**2015**
Ken McBroom	**2016**
Don Cranfill	**2017**
Troy McCormick	**2018**
Mike Schoonveld	**2019**
Kenny Bayless	**2020**
Kenny Bayless	**2021**
Phil Seng	**2022**
Jarrett Manek	**2023**
Bob Sawtelle	**2024**
Marilyn Culler	**2025**

Hoosier Outdoor Writers
Turn in a Poacher/Polluter Writing Contest
Official 2026 Contest Guidelines

Once again, the Indiana Turn in a Poacher (TIP) Citizen's Advisory Board is sponsoring a writing contest to encourage HOW members to promote the TIP mission and the hotline. For 2026 the prizes are again **$500 for first place; $300 for second place; $200 for third place.** Be sure to write your TIP article right away!

Requirements are simple and entering is easy! Article must be at least 400 words in length and must include:

1. Brief description of TIP (see below—does not have to be verbatim)
2. TIP Hotline (1-800-TIP-IDNR)

Although it is not required, preference will be given to stories that:

- Feature a compelling story that demonstrates how TIP can help conserve or protect fish and wildlife for the people of Indiana.
- Are published in paid publications.

To enter, submit an electronic copy of an article published between **January 1, 2026** and **December 31, 2026**. The TIP Citizen's Advisory Board will review all entries and will select the entries that best promote the mission of TIP and encourage citizens to get involved. **Entries should be marked as "TIP" entries and sent to Contest Coordinator Phil Seng (phil@djcase.com). They must be emailed by March 1, 2027.**

What is TIP?
Turn in a Poacher and Polluter, Inc. (TIP) is a non-profit conservation organization that works hand-in-hand with Indiana DNR Law Enforcement to protect our fish and wildlife resources by increasing public support and involvement in bringing violators to justice.

A poacher is a thief who illegally steals wildlife that belongs to each Indiana citizen. Poachers rob licensed, ethical hunters and anglers from recreational opportunities they bought through license fees. Pollution kills Indiana's valuable fish and wildlife resources and harms habitat.

Citizens can help stop poachers and polluters in two ways. If you see, hear or learn about a poacher or pollution that results in the death of fish and wildlife, or any other fish and wildlife violation:

- Call 1-800-TIP-IDNR
- Submit a TIP online at www.tip.IN.gov

If your TIP leads to an arrest, you may receive as much as a $500 reward, and you can remain anonymous. More information is available at https://www.in.gov/dnr/lawenfor/2745.htm

HOW Conference Announcement

2027 Conference Site and Conference Dates Chosen



The Abe Martin Lodge at Brown County State Park will be the site of next year's HOW conference. Be sure you attend!

We made this announcement in a recent email, but we are repeating it again (especially since a couple of our members don't use email). The Hoosier Outdoor Writers group is pleased to announce that the 2027 HOW Conference will be held at the Abe Martin Lodge inside Brown County State Park, near Nashville, IN. The conference will take place on the weekend of April 9-11, 2027, with the main meeting occurring on Saturday, April 10th.

The date of this conference was chosen very carefully to minimize conflicts with Easter, Mother's Day, turkey season and other spring events, so hopefully most HOW members will be able to plan their schedules ahead of time so they can attend. Be sure to mark your calendars today and SAVE THE DATE!

We chose Brown County State Park as the conference site this year as part of our ongoing effort to move the conference around the state and give our members a chance to experience parts of Indiana that they have not yet seen. Most HOW members have been to Brown County SP before, but probably not all! South-central Indiana is also within easy driving distance of a large majority of HOW members, and is very convenient for those living in and around Indianapolis.

There is plenty to do in and near Brown County, too. Sprawling Lake Monroe is located just to the southwest of the state park, and Yellowwood State Forest is just to the west. Opportunities for hiking, biking, fishing, boating, swimming, photography, nature watching, horseback riding and many other outdoor activities abound. Nearby Nashville is well-known for its quaint craft and antique shops, and it is also known as the "Artist Colony of the Midwest". Many shops feature areas where visitors can watch the local craftsmen as they work – whether it is glass blowing, painting or any of their crafts. HOW members should head for Brown County next spring and join the fun!

As usual, we will have plenty of interesting seminars and speakers at this conference. We will also announce the winners of our annual awards-in-craft contests and elect new officers.

For everyone who has come to love the HOW Raffle over the past several years, we are planning to make it even bigger and better this year. It will be hard to top the quality and quantity of the last few years, but we will do our best! If you haven't attended a conference recently, come see what it's all about!

More details will be forthcoming in future editions of ***The Blade***. Besides our annual HOW Fun Shoot on Friday, April 9, we will have a Friday evening BBQ and we are planning a fishing outing for Sunday, April 11. Whether you decide to attend the entire weekend or just the annual meeting on Saturday, the trip to Brown County State Park will definitely be worth it.

Don't miss the 2027 conference!

Save The Date!

Conference: April 9-11, 2027

Annual Meeting: April 10, 2027

Interesting Bird Sightings in the Great Outdoors

We have been asking HOW members to submit photos and reports about interesting or unusual birds that they have seen during their outdoor adventures. The sightings do not have to take place in Indiana; anywhere in the world is fair game. All photos on these pages were submitted by those reporting.

We hope this page will not only interest bird enthusiasts, but all HOW members who enjoy spending time in the great outdoors (i.e. everybody). You may just learn something new, too!

Report from Mike Lunsford:

Despite the high temperatures we've endured in early fall this year, HOW member Mike Lunsford is still reporting a good season for warblers, although not a very colorful one. As of mid-October, Lunsford has had luck both in Parke and Tippecanoe counties spotting northern parulas, American redstarts, and warblers like the Tennessee warbler, bay-breasted, yellow-rumped, blackpoll, and blackburnian warblers. The photo at left shows a beautiful **Blackburnian Warbler** (*Setophaga fusca*) that he photographed as it paused on a nearby tree branch.



Lunsford hopes cooler temperatures will bring one final push of these small, insect-eating songbirds through his area.

The highlights of his fall birding came on a short hike at Celery Bog in West Lafayette and a walk along Big Raccoon Creek, both in early October. "Thirty to forty species of warblers come through Indiana as they head south for their wintering grounds," Lunsford said. "But with this persistent warmth, I am wondering if they have been delayed a little. I saw black-and-white warblers on only one day so far this fall and have yet to see a black-throated green warbler at all. I normally spot those and yellow warblers in my woods by September."



Lunsford did spot a fine-looking **Blackpoll Warbler** (*Setophaga striata*) while birding, and these birds look much different (photo at right) in the fall than when they are in their spring breeding plumage.

HOW members are encouraged to send their interesting bird photos to newsletter editor and bird enthusiast Tom Berg via email (thomas.berg@comcast.net) for use in future editions of the "Interesting Bird Sightings" page. Don't worry, it need not be a rare bird. Your fellow HOW members would love to hear your birding stories and see your exciting bird pictures.

Did you take a cool bird photo while exploring afield recently? Did you see the bird in your back yard? While you were traveling far from home? Send the photo in for other members to enjoy!

DNR Indiana Department of Natural Resources

NEWS

DIVISION OF FISH, WILDLIFE & NATURE PRESERVES

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
402 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

For immediate release: September 8, 2026

Protect Indiana's Waters: Clean, Drain, Dry



The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) identified hydrilla, an aquatic invasive species (AIS), in the Hardy Lake state reservoir in early July, 2026. AIS are any non-native aquatic animals, plants, microorganisms, and pathogens that can harm the state's native plants and wildlife. Hydrilla has been called "The Perfect Aquatic Weed" because it is so effective at forming dense populations that disrupt ecosystems, displace native species, and impair fish and wildlife habitat.

AIS like hydrilla come to our state in a variety of ways, including being carried by trailers, boat hulls, motors, and fishing gear. That is why the public has an important role to play in stopping their spread. Hoosiers can help by remembering to:

- **Clean:** All equipment that touched the water should be cleaned when leaving by removing any visible plants, algae, animals, and mud. This includes cleaning watercraft hulls, trailers, shoes, waders, life vests, engines, and other gear.
- **Drain:** Any accumulated water must be drained from watercraft or gear, including live wells and transom wells, before leaving the ramp or public access point to the water.
- **Dry:** Let all gear fully dry out for five days or more before using it in a different water body.

STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™
Be A Good Steward.
Clean. Drain. Dry.

If hydrilla is not eradicated or its spread contained, it could rapidly spread to other Indiana waters. It will then form monocultures of vegetation, impede recreation, reduce biodiversity, and result in decreased access to and use of many shallow lakes in the state. Due to the proximity of hydrilla to boat ramps at Hardy Lake there is an increased risk of spreading it. For that reason, we urge you to always Clean, Drain, Dry to help protect Indiana's waters.

For more information on Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) and hydrilla, see https://on.IN.gov/AIS.

Media contact: Aubree Szczepanski, Aquatic Invasive Species Biologist, Division of Fish, Wildlife & Nature Preserves, phone: 317-233-0755, email: aszczepanski@dnr.IN.gov.

DNR Indiana Department of Natural Resources

NEWS

DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
402 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

For immediate release: October 5, 2026

Hunters Can Donate Deer to Help Feed Hungry Hoosiers

Governor Mike Braun is encouraging Indiana hunters to donate harvested deer to help feed Hoosiers in need. "For many Hoosier hunters, sharing their hard-earned game with others is the best part of the hunting experience," said Gov. Braun. "Indiana Hunt for Hunger gives hunters the opportunity to do just that, helping those throughout the state who are in need. I encourage all hunters to consider donating a harvested deer to Hunt for Hunger this year."

Hunt for Hunger, a program administered by the DNR Division of Law Enforcement, provides grants to the division's nonprofit partners, including Hoosiers Feeding the Hungry, the Dubois County Sportsmen Club, and Hunters and Farmers Feeding the Hungry, to pay for meat processing fees when hunters donate legally harvested deer.

"Hunt for Hunger gives hunters a simple way to make a big difference," said Col. Steve Hunter, director of DNR Law Enforcement. "Each donated deer helps put nutritious food on the plates of families who need it."

Participating in the program is simple:

1. Enjoy a deer hunting experience.
2. Legally harvest an Indiana deer.
3. Drop off the field-dressed deer at a local participating processor.
4. Processing fees are paid for by Hunt for Hunger (no cost to the donating hunter).
5. The processor creates healthy ground venison to distribute to non-profit food banks and free meal programs.

The participating organizations notify non-profit food banks throughout Indiana when venison is ready to be collected from certified Hunt for Hunger processors. The food banks distribute venison to soup kitchens and food pantries.

More than 500,000 pounds of venison have been donated by Hoosier hunters since the program's inception in 2008. For information on donating harvested deer and a list of participating processors, please visit on.IN.gov/huntforhunger.

Media contact:
Capt. Jet Quillen, DNR Law Enforcement
Phone: 317-903-1671 or email: jquillen@dnr.IN.gov.

DNR Indiana Department of Natural Resources

NEWS

DIVISION OF FORESTRY

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
402 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204



For immediate release: October 8, 2026

Indiana Tree Nursery Program Opens Spring Ordering for Native Trees

The State of Indiana Tree Nursery program is now accepting orders for trees for spring pick-up or delivery. Orders will be accepted until the inventory is exhausted.

Each year the Vallonia State Tree Nursery grows millions of high-quality, native trees for Indiana residents to purchase and plant.

Indiana DNR operates two tree seedling nurseries. The Jasper-Pulaski State Tree Nursery is in northern Indiana just north of Medaryville, and Vallonia State Tree Nursery in southern Indiana is in Jackson County near the community of Vallonia.

Orders may be picked up in the spring at either location. Alternately, if you are unable to pick up your trees, they can be delivered to your address.

For more information: https://www.in.gov/dnr/forestry/tree-seedling-nurseries.

Media contact:
Phone: 812-358-3621 or email: ValloniaNursery@dnr.IN.gov.





DNR Indiana Department of Natural Resources

NEWS

DIVISION OF FISH, WILDLIFE & NATURE PRESERVES

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
402 W. Washington St.
Indianapolis, IN 46204

For immediate release: October 22, 2026

Indiana DNR Modifies 2027 Lake Michigan Stocking Plan to Support Larger, Healthier Fish

The Indiana Department of Natural Resources will adjust its 2027 stocking plan for Lake Michigan to ensure anglers continue to have access to healthy, sizeable fish populations for years to come.

The modifications will also allow DNR hatcheries to stock larger winter-run steelhead yearlings in the spring and create space to raise an additional 20,000 fall fingerling Skamania steelhead.

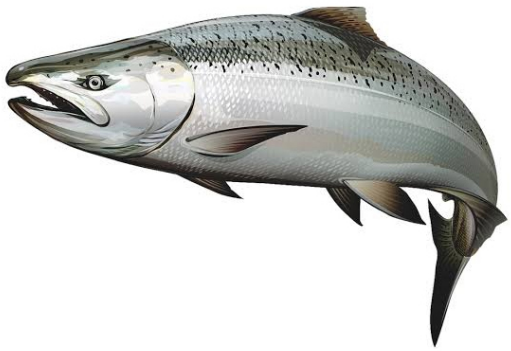
“With these stocking changes, we are hoping to stave off any further decrease to baitfish populations and maintain a strong and stable salmon fishery into the future,” said Ben Dickinson, Indiana DNR’s Lake Michigan fisheries biologist.

Biologists with DNR observed an increase in salmon population across Lake Michigan along with a reduction in salmon size and baitfish populations. This raised concerns about the balance of predators and prey in the ecosystem. To address these trends, DNR will be reducing the 2027 chinook salmon stock from 275,000 to 200,000. This will result in approximately 67,000 salmon placed at each of the stocking locations in East Chicago, Portage, and Michigan City.

Lake Michigan managers have adjusted stocking levels several times in the last 20 years to keep salmon and baitfish populations in balance. For Indiana, the 2027 update amounts to an 11% reduction in fish stocked compared to 2026. This work continues the successful management of sportfish in the state.

More information about Lake Michigan fishing is available at on.IN.gov/lake-michigan-fishing.

To view more DNR news releases, please see dnr.IN.gov.



Media contact:
Ben Dickinson, Lake Michigan Fisheries Research Biologist, DNR Fish, Wildlife & Nature Preserves, phone: 219-878-8219, email: bdickinson@dnr.IN.gov.

THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE US

Raymond Earl Dickerson – Age 85
April 22, 1941~ September 26, 2026

Raymond Earl "Ray" Dickerson, 85, The Gad-a-bout publisher and HOW Past President, went to be with the Lord on September 26, 2026, surrounded by family.

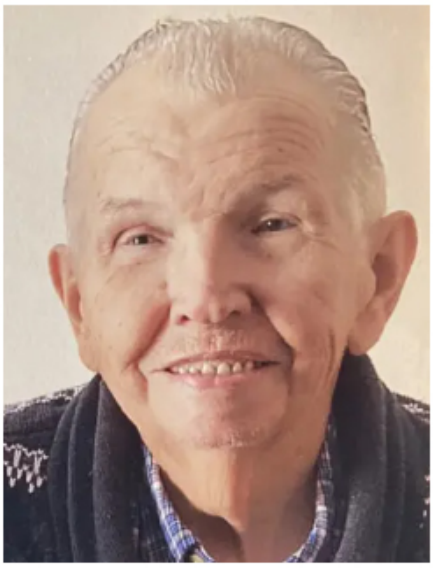
In addition to his wife, Sherry Diane Dickerson, he leaves to cherish his memory his daughter, Amy (Paul) Yevcak; grandsons, Dylan Smock and Logan Yevcak; granddaughter, Breanna Smock; sisters, Kathy Miller and Wilma Dickerson (Mark Connery); brother, George "Georgie" (Georgina) Dickerson; sister-in-law, Vickie (Kent) Greene; brothers-in-law, Dwight Kendall, Larry (Sue) Kendall, and sister-in-law, Robin Kendall. He leaves many nieces, nephews, and cousins as well. He was preceded in death by his parents; brother, Robert Dickerson; sister-in-law, Mary Dickerson; brother-in-law, Jerry Miller; and special friends, Jim and Esther Kaucher.

He was born to Raymond Eugene and Rosemary (Weaver) Dickerson on April 22, 1941, in Richmond, Indiana. Raymond graduated from Centerville Senior High School in 1959. Afterwards he enlisted and served in the USAF, mostly in England, for four years. Ray married the love of his life, Sherry Diane Kendall, on July 1, 1967. A few years later they welcomed their daughter Amy into their family.

Ray started his work history at Ford's Grocery Store while in high school. Following his four years of service in the Air Force, he worked at Adam H. Bartel, Richmond Baking Co., Penn Central Railroad, and Union County Development Corp. He retired from General Telephone.

Ray was a talented, enthusiastic, and a lifelong hunter who learned from his dad. His writing journey began with a column in The Graphic, which led to the creation of The Gad-a-bout in 1973. Through his paper, he shared his love of hunting, fishing, camping, boating, and other outdoor activities until he stopped publishing it in 2022. He was a longtime member of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers and was the president of HOW in 1988.

Ray also contributed to the Western Wayne News and The Centerville Crusader. When the Centerville Crusader ceased publication, he continued his writing in a publication he called The Centerville Truth for a brief period of time.



Ray also believed in serving the community. He and his sisters formed a Zoo-Op fund-raising group for the Glen Miller Park Zoo. For many years, he put on Frontier Days in Union County, attended outdoor sporting events all over the state, and worked with the Indiana Conservation Department on the TIP (Turn in a Poacher) program.

He also had a screen-printing business, making hats, shirts, and jackets. Ray began attending the 79th Battalion reunion as his father, Ray Sr., had attended prior to his passing. Ray even hosted the reunion in Richmond at one point.

Ray attended the Boston Methodist Church. The family requests that donations be made to Boston Methodist Church at 211 West Main Street, Boston, IN 47324 in his memory.

Chautauqua County's Perch Bonanza

by Tom Berg

When making plans to attend the recent AGLOW conference near Niagara Falls in mid-October, Mike Schoonveld and I also made arrangements to stop and fish for a couple of days in Dunkirk, New York on the way. Dunkirk is located near the eastern end of Lake Erie in Chautauqua County and is a well-known fishing destination. Our plan was to drive to Dunkirk on a Friday, and then head out on Lake Erie for a morning of perch fishing the next day. The yellow perch fishing had reportedly been very good there recently.

Early the next morning we headed for the marina and met our guide, Captain "Dapper" Daryl Glasner, the owner of CEO Guide Service (ceoguideservice.com). CEO stands for Chautauqua Erie Ontario, and Capt. Daryl really knows these waters. He runs a multi-species charter service, so he fishes for perch, walleye, smallmouth bass, muskie, salmon and trout. The best fishing for each species varies throughout the year, and we were hoping to get in on the tail end of the season's best perch fishing.



Lake Erie was calm that morning, and as soon as he launched the boat we headed out to the fishing grounds. Capt. Daryl had commented that mud flats in 50-60 feet of water had been holding schools of jumbo perch lately, so that was our target area. Daryl stopped the boat in 53 feet of water when he saw promising signs of fish near the bottom on his sonar and we started fishing.

Live emerald shiners were my bait of choice, but Mike opted for salted shiners instead. Daryl had both onboard. "The salted shiners seem to stay on the hook better," Mike said. We both started catching fat jumbo perch right away, so I couldn't argue with him. In fact, the perch rigs Capt. Daryl uses include two hooks, and Mike began setting the hook and reeling up two big perch at a time!

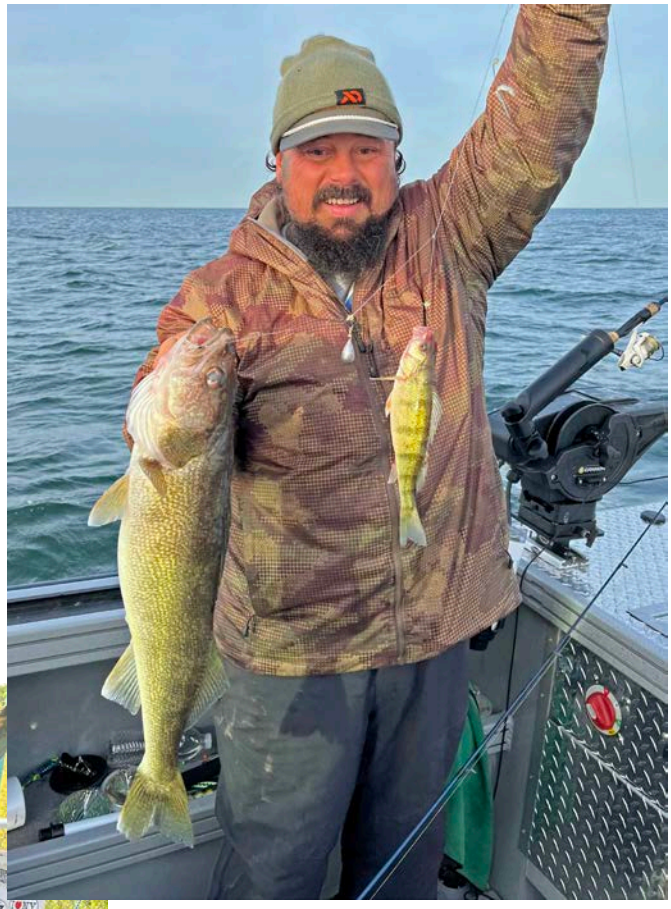
Capt. Daryl decided to fish with us, too, and soon all three of us were fighting big, fat jumbo perch. Almost as soon as our baits got down to the bottom, a perch would inhale the minnow. Most of the perch that we cranked up from the depths were bragging-sized specimens measuring 12-14 inches. The livewell was quickly becoming crowded! We caught very few small yellow perch, although we did catch a few smaller white perch and even a white bass or two.



At one point during the morning I hooked a fish near the bottom and it suddenly started pulling a lot harder than any perch should be able to muster! The lightweight Fenwick rod that I was using got a real

workout as the fish kept diving for the bottom, so I yelled for Daryl to get the net. "I don't know what it is, but it's definitely not a perch," I said excitedly. I figured it was a hefty catfish or a big sheepshead.

Capt. Daryl prepped the landing net and leaned over the side of the boat to get a glimpse of the fish when it same within sight. "Walleye!" he exclaimed. I didn't see it at first because it immediately dove under the boat, but when I pulled it back into view I said "No, it IS a perch!" A jumbo perch had appeared, but then a big walleye suddenly appeared right behind the perch. Wow! The perch was on the top hook and the walleye was on the bottom hook!



After I made several more cranks of the reel, Capt. Daryl was able to scoop up the perch in the net and then scoop the walleye, too. Success!! Daryl had told us earlier in the morning that walleyes often shadow the schools of perch out here, looking for an easy meal. Evidently the big walleye was zeroing-in on the perch on my line when the emerald shiner appeared right in front of his nose – and he couldn't resist!

By late morning the perch bite had slowed considerably, and although we tried various depths from 50 to 58 feet, the fish had become very scattered and we decided to call it a day. We had a lot of fish to fillet.



When we got back to the marina and brought the fish to the fish cleaning station, we counted a total of 85 jumbo perch between the three of us. What a day!

The fishing for jumbo perch (and walleye) is great in the waters of Lake Erie near Dunkirk. Check it out for yourself! Be sure to explore the Chautauqua County website at: www.tourchautauqua.com for more information about other things to do in this beautiful area, too.

Above Right: Capt. Daryl Glasner lifts the walleye/perch doubleheader.
Left: Mike Schoonveld (L) and the author pose with their excellent catch!

Chasing Confederate Gold!

by Troy McCormick

The moon shone brightly through the night as the twenty-two Confederate soldiers rode into the undermanned Union camp guarding the wagon train of gold and silver heading north. Within minutes the camp was under the control of the raiders and millions in gold and silver coins were being dumped on the ground as the barrels and chests were broken open and pillaged.



This Civil War gold story is one that I ran across while researching lost treasures in the south, and after pursuing it further I submitted the concept for a TV episode to the executive producer of The Discovery Channel's hit series, ***Expedition Unknown***.

During the following months I worked with the producers, writer, and crew developing the storyline and seeking permissions for metal detecting. In my research I discovered that for 160 years people had been looking at the wrong plantation for where this robbery had occurred at the end of the Civil War. Working with a local historian and author, we uncovered military documents, maps, and first-hand accounts that led us to the real site of the robbery. Cast and crew are shown below. (continued on the next page)



A crew of nine videographers, cameramen, producers, writer, and TV host, Josh Gates, met myself and a small group of metal-detectorists that I put together to search for the estimated nine thousand missing gold double eagle coins and unknown number of silver Mexican Reales in Georgia this past April. We spent five days setting scenes, riding ATVs, cruising on jet skis, filming in the woods and on the water, metal detecting, and more metal detecting.



We found numerous artifacts of the period, including an 1861 Mexican 8 Reales, silver coin about the size of a U.S. silver dollar. The Confederacy was selling cotton to Mexico during the war, and this currency was popular for the time in the South. The cameras were rolling as we searched through the woods, and I called Josh over when I got a really high numbered signal (97 out of 100 on my Minelab Manticore detector). As I dug the plug and bent to scoop loose dirt from the hole, a silver shine caught our eyes at the same moment. I was totally shocked as I had never found a coin like this before. And it was right where the lost treasure legend had said it should be.



Above Left: The Mexican 8 Reales silver coin found by Troy on the show. **Above Right:** Troy McCormick and Josh Gates pose with their new-found treasure! **Below:** Troy and Josh having fun on their jet skis while filming.

One of the Confederate thieves had later written that his friend rode off that night and the saddle bags on his horse burst from the heavy load, leaving a shining river of silver in the moonlight. I may not have found the full treasure, but I most certainly found a piece of it.

This episode of ***Expedition Unknown*** aired August 12, 2026, and I was surrounded by friends and fans at a watch party in Georgia that night it was first on. If you get a chance to watch the re-runs, this was Season 17, episode 8, and the episode was called “Chasing Civil War Gold.”



Tiny Hooks, Big River

by Mike Schoonveld

"Can you handle three of us?" I asked when I saw we'd be fishing for smallmouth bass out of an 18-foot boat. "Sure," our guide said, "Hop in." As we were settling in and backing away from the dock he explained that he frequently hosts three or even four anglers on his boat, ranging from beginners to experienced fishermen.

"Getting everyone to fish effectively with jigs, crankbaits or other casting lures can be a challenge," he said. "With beginners," he admitted, "there's the danger of someone accidentally hooking a fellow angler in a crowded boat. Experienced casters are less likely to do that. Also, for me, positioning the boat so everyone can reach productive water with their casts is another challenge."

Instead, the experienced captain headed for areas he'd found with rocky bottoms and current eddies where he can drift with the wind or current in the big river. Then he uses his bow-mounted trolling motor to keep the boat positioned sideways to the drift. Everyone fishes almost straight down with a three-way rig and a golden shiner. No casting, fewer tangles and an equal shot at the fish.

This lesson was learned on the "get outside day" at the recent Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writer's conference held at Niagara Falls. We (myself and a couple of other AGLOWers) were fishing in the Niagara River, below the falls with second generation Niagara River fishing captain, Connor Cinelli (cinellisfishingadventures.com).

I checked out the three-way rig on the rod he handed me. A three-way swivel was tied to fifteen-pound test main line, then a one-ounce sinker tied to the swivel with a short dropper made of 10-pound line. Finally, an eight-pound fluorocarbon leader was tied on to the remaining loop, tipped with a tiny, #8 red hook.

When I examined the rig I was surprised by the tiny hook. "I've fished for bluegills with larger hooks," I thought. "Do you always use hooks this small?" I asked.



Captain Connor said, "I learned to use these small hooks fishing with my dad. Using them, we always get more bites because the shiners or other bait minnows aren't weighed down by a big hook. The small hooks also hang up less on rocks or other bottom debris. Once the fish are landed, the fish are easy to unhook." Lesson over. Time to fish!

We dropped our rigs to the bottom, then let out another five feet of line or so. I could feel the sinker ticking and scraping across the rubble below. "Maybe that commotion would attract a bass, which would then spot the shiner swimming just above the rocks," I thought.

The ticking turned to tugging. Fish on! My first smallmouth was firmly hooked on that tiny red hook. My two fishing buddies were catching their share, too. What surprised me most was how few fish we missed or lost on the way to the boat. Smallmouths jumped, shook their heads and fought hard, yet they stayed hooked until we removed the hook from a lip or just inside the mouth.

Right then, my rod doubled over again. I grinned. Using that tiny hook paid off once more and reinforced the lesson. Sometimes, downsizing your hook is the biggest improvement you can make.

Three Dozen Eggs – and an Accident

by Jarrett Manek

Hunting season is upon us and as I lay here in the recliner eating an egg sandwich, I'm reminded constantly about the importance of gun safety. We all know somebody – or we are that person – who has a gun propped up in the corner of the closet, behind the door or by the bed. When was the last time that you checked that gun?

The past two days, I have had an influx of memories, reflections and forethought on how I can be better in regards to gun, hunting and outdoor safety. We all think that an accident won't happen to us even though it happens to somebody every year.

On Wednesday evening of November 4th, I get a message from my older neighbor asking me if I could use any fresh eggs. Of course I did not turn them down since our chickens were on strike. As I partake in a little chitchat and offer compensation for the eggs in which he declined, he insisted a couple times on me coming inside to see his new TV.

As I enter his singlewide trailer (carrying the three dozen eggs), I get a glimpse of an older-looking rifle leaning up by the door. I didn't think much about it being that just about every country home seems to have a similar scenario. I've grown up around guns and it was not out of the normal from what I was used to seeing.



While standing in the small kitchen looking towards him and his living room, I compliment him that it's a nice big new TV. Instantly I'm startled by a loud crack, and feel an odd sensation in my leg that is difficult to explain and nothing like I have ever felt before. It felt as if someone was hiding under the table and whacked me with a baseball bat. While surveying everything behind me trying to figure out what had just happened, I feel my leg throbbing and I notice the gun pointing in my direction laying down on the floor about six feet or so from me. That's when it hits me that I might have just been shot.

The correlation between the sensation of pain in my leg and the gun on the floor made me instantly start to figure out if I had actually been shot. When I saw the pool of blood coming from my shoe, it removed all doubt. That's when my first responder training kicked in. I miraculously remained calm, trying to figure out how much I was bleeding. Whether or not it was immediately life threatening was also a huge concern.

After determining that the bleeding wasn't out of control, I called my wife to let her know what happened and that she needs to drive me to the hospital immediately. I walked out of the trailer and waited for her arrival. When she got there I put the three dozen eggs in the car and climbed into the vehicle.

After a speedy drive to the ER (and being the calmest person in the vehicle), we were greeted by a flurry of

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doctors, nurses, police officers and staff when they heard that someone had pulled up with a gunshot wound.

Through the course of the night, there was of course pain medicine, antibiotics, X-rays, a CT scan and a lot of questioning. Did I mention pain medicine? The X-rays and scan located a .22LR bullet lodged in the middle of my foot. The entry wound was through my shoe at the back of my heel. It broke a few bones before stopping, but remained in my foot.

The doctors are saying there's going to be a little bit of recovery, of course, along with crutches, an air boot, and possibly surgery. But for now the bullet will have to remain in my foot – if not stay there permanently. To my surprise, it is not uncommon to leave a bullet in the body. Upcoming doctor visits will say for sure.



It's not something that any of us thinks would happen to them, but accidents do happen. It's unfortunate that most accidents can be prevented with a little precaution and awareness. My neighbor was pretty tore up over the incident. He kept saying that he had the gun's safety on, and he thought it was unloaded. But he was sure the safety was on.

Most people who know me, know that I am a stickler when it comes to gun safety and or outdoor safety in general. One can't predict everything or control every circumstance, however, taking precautions and having common sense will go a long way. You can only control what you do and not necessarily someone else and you should never assume that the other person is as safe as you are or understands good precautionary measures.

Life creates lessons but sometimes we can create a safer environment so those lessons are a little less painful. Please check your guns, lock them up, wear your harness in the tree stand, determine your target before you shoot, practice shooting in a safe direction and on and on.....

My season might be already over this year before it started but yours doesn't have to be. Take a mental safety note each time you go afield and get home. Preach and practice it with others as your life depends on it.

It looks like I'll be eating what is left of last year's deer as well as the three dozen eggs that I hung onto during the entire incident. On the way heading to and from the hospital, besides being very thankful it wasn't worse, I was proud that I didn't break a single egg.

HOW Member News

Ken McBroom is "Called Out of Retirement"

HOW Past President Ken McBroom moved from Indiana to Kentucky a few years ago, but he has lived in many places throughout his adult life. One of the more interesting places was Alaska. He has spent a lot of time out west again this year, but not in Alaska. Here is his tale:

"As some of you know, I was a helicopter mechanic for 20 years in the Alaskan bush," said McBroom. "I finally left the field of aviation to move to Kentucky after my kids were out of college. My first job in Alaska was working on a Skycrane helicopter logging the Tongass National Forest, before they shut it down. Phil Kemp was the man who hired me there more than 30 years ago."



"I mention Phil because last year he called me and asked if I wanted to work on the Sikorsky 61 helicopter, fighting fires. I was hesitant, but I accepted a 12-hour on, 12-hour off schedule. This job has taken me out west, usually in the mountains, where the fires are most active. There's still time to write between fires. This is one way Phil was able to talk me into going. I am working with four mechanics again that I worked with 30 years ago in Alaska, and that's pretty cool."

"The heat is relentless, with temperatures regularly over 100 degrees. We saw 109 degrees in Salt Lake City this year, which was the hottest day on record there. We were parked next to The Great Salt Lake and were able to experience that heat firsthand."

"Working on helicopters again has been exciting, with new adventures that include a little fishing along the way on beautiful rivers like the Rogue and the Williamson in Oregon. You can see an article I wrote about the Williamson River at the following address."
https://www.ramblingangler.com/fishing-the-williamson-river-in-chiloquin-oregon/

They say life can often come full circle. It has in this case, very unexpectedly.

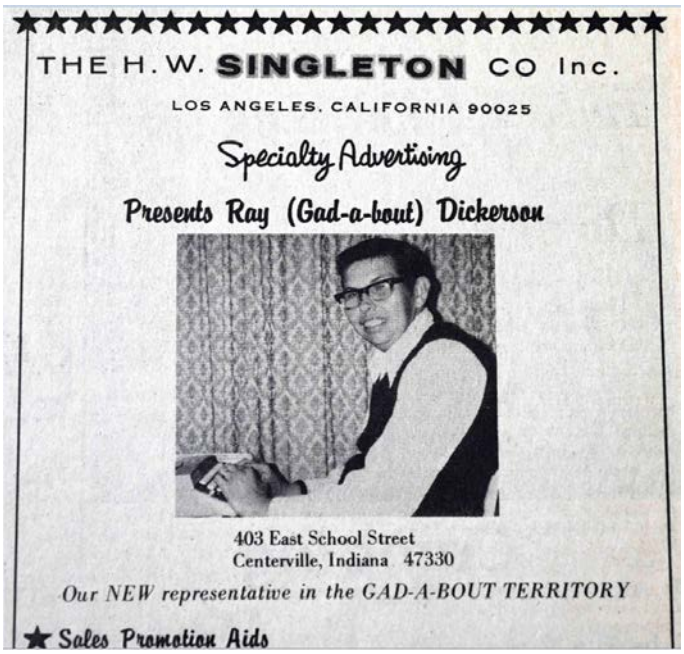


Top: Driving across Utah (and beautiful scenery) to another fire. We call it chasing fires.
Above: An engine wash and a cool bath for the Sikorsky at midnight. Photos by Ken McBroom.

Memories of HOW Past President Ray Dickerson

Memory from Jack Spaulding:
I owe a lot to Ray Dickerson. Back in the mid 1980's, Ray ran a column in a newspaper in Richmond on an organization called the Hoosier Outdoor Writers. He was the president of the organization that particular year. I was struggling to start my career as an outdoor communicator, and I contacted him. With Ray's encouragement, I became a member of HOW. He introduced me to a myriad of characters who helped shape my career, including Bill Beeman, Moose Carden, Al Spires, Dale Griffith, Phil Junker and many others.

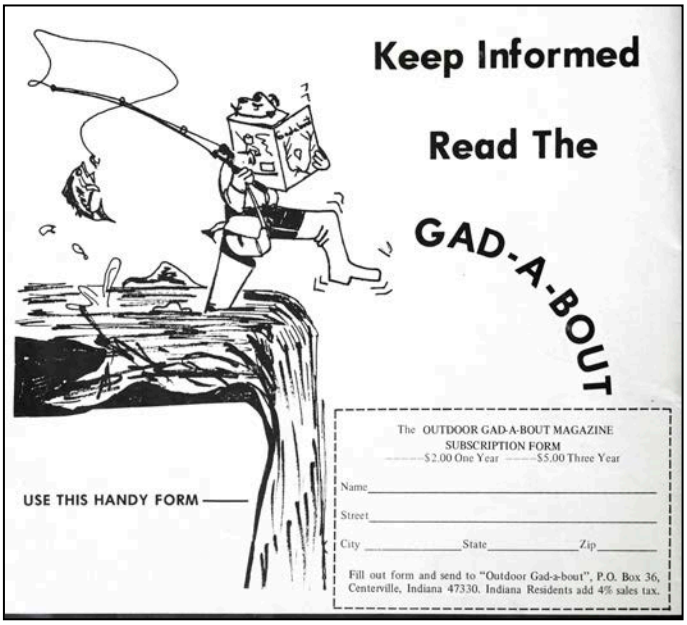
I can honestly say, the coaching and assistance of the members of HOW made me the writer I am today. All because of Ray Dickerson! I'm going to miss you, old friend! God speed!



Memory from Mike Schoonveld:
Ray Dickerson was a truly unique individual. During my life, I've crossed paths with thousands of people. Some are casual acquaintances, plenty of them I could call friends but only a few of them I would classify as truly unique.

Ray and I weren't close friends. We just interacted, mostly through Hoosier Outdoor Writers – and I contributed columns for his publication the ***Outdoor Gad-a-bout*** for many years. He didn't pay much. He didn't have much to pay – but by golly, he earned every nickel and he worked his butt off for each one. For the last several years ***The Gad-a-bout*** was published, I submitted columns in trade for an advertisement for my charter business or for Indiana's North Coast Charter Association.

I'm sure Ray inspired some. I'm sure he angered a few. I'd guess he bewildered most that crossed paths with him. The first few times I met him at HOW meetings I was bewildered; but with time, I realized he was a truly unique individual and I'm glad I had the chance to meet him, get to know him and interact with him. Life doesn't offer many of those opportunities.



Memory from Brandon Butler:
In 2006, Ray gave me an opportunity to share stories with readers of ***The Gad-a-bout***. Of course, I had to deliver papers for him all around the Lake Monroe area to be a contributor, but it was worth it.

We all started somewhere, and for me, Ray and ***The Gad-a-bout*** gave me an opportunity to begin what has turned into an unbelievable 20 year run in outdoor media. I'll always be glad for having met Ray and I'll remember each time his van pulled into my driveway with the next issue ready.

Schoonveld Toys With AI Photo Enhancement

HOW Past President Mike Schoonveld recently posted two photos on Facebook after returning from a fishing trip to Lake Erie – an original photo and an AI-edited version. The original photo is on the left:



"On my recent Facebook post," said Schoonveld, "Facebook included a notice that said '**AI content'** in a label. That's right! I used an AI program to modify the photo, but it wasn't to make the fish look big."

"Actually, when I took the original photo, my 'aim' was off and I cut off the shoulder of the fisherman on the right. So I went to an artificial intelligence (AI) program (ChatGPT) and told it to center the fishermen in the photo and add the left shoulder and arm to the angler on the right. The before and after photos are above. Bingo! An amazing transformation."

Editor's Notes:
Admittedly, the AI-enhanced photo looks very good at first glance. However, if you look closely you will see that ChatGPT made subtle changes that were not asked for. For example, in the original photo you can clearly see three fishing rods (the rod tips, anyway) behind the angler on the left. The base of the third rod is hidden behind that angler. In the AI photo, you can see two rods in the rod holders, but only two rod tips above the angler's head (the third rod is gone). And the left-most rod tip disappears behind the black hat and is too far over to connect to the left-most rod in the rod holder.

Also, in the original pic, just to the right of the right-most rod, there is a clip attached to the planer board cord (which is visible). The planer board cord completely disappears in the enhanced pic, but AI left the

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clip hanging in mid-air since it didn't know what to do with it. These are all minor details, of course, especially since AI did a great job of centering the anglers and re-creating the right-hand angler's missing arm. AI also added a bit of the left-hand angler's right arm which was originally hidden behind the fish, and that looks better than the original, too.

But this example clearly shows that you need to be careful when using AI programs to "enhance" your photos. Some changes may be subtle and insignificant, but others might be downright embarrassing.

Here's another example provided by Schoonveld:

"This photo (below left) is one I also AI-ed," reported Schoonveld. "I needed a photo of a sturgeon I caught at Lake of the Woods. The best photo I had (that someone took with my camera) showed the far shore of the lake apparently running uphill. The dreaded 'cap shadow' on my face was also readily apparent. I asked ChatGPT to level the horizon and remove the shadow on my face. It also lightened-up the overall photo. What do you think?"

"Most of us (except John Maxwell) can take crummy fish photos, but our publications want good photos," he continued. "ChatGPT is free, Photoshop is expensive and you need to learn Photoshop to use it for good results."





Editor's Notes:
Photo enhancement, whether done by today's AI engines or by other software like Photoshop, can definitely make your photos look a lot better. But again, you need to be careful. The enhanced photo above looks much, much better than the original, but be aware that AI programs often have trouble with words and text. See a close-up enlargement of the logo on Mike's sweatshirt below.

The original is on the left and the enhanced version is on the right. You can see the text is garbled on the enhanced version because AI does not handle re-creating letters and text well. But if your final photo resolution is low or the text will be too small to easily see, you may not need to worry about it. Just another thing to be aware of!





HOW Member Fares Well in Photo Exhibits

It has been a good past few months for HOW member Mike Lunsford and his camera. Lunsford took top photo honors in the 18th annual **River City Art Association Open Show** in August with his black-and-white image, 'Mending.' He was awarded second place honors in the **Midwest Photography Exhibition** at the Link Art Gallery in the same month with his black-and-white 'Art Appreciation,' then won the photography division at the **Covered Bridge Art Association's Fall Open Show** in September with his black-and-white photo titled 'The Bookseller.'





Above: Mike Lunsford and his wife Joanie at the Swope Art Gallery. **Right:** Lunsford stands with art judge Christel Gutelius at the CBAA Open Show, and holds his winning photo 'The Bookseller'. Congratulations, Mike!

Most recently, Lunsford won a Purchase Award at the **Wabash Valley Exhibition** at the Swope Art Gallery in early October with 'Mending,' which means someone bought his photo. "I was very lucky to even get into the Wabash Valley exhibition," he said. "There were more than 900 pieces entered by different artists, and mine was one of seventy-eight that went into the show."

"This has been a very busy year for my photography," he said, "and I still have a few exhibits left in 2026. I love what I do, and it keeps me out of trouble."

Grammar Tip for Numbers and Quantities

Use the words 'more than' when referring to numbers (do not use 'over'), although the AP Style does accept 'over' as a synonym for 'more than'. For example: More than 500 people attended the event.

Spell the word when beginning a sentence with a number, or find a different word to begin the sentence. For example: Three hundred people were arrested. Or better yet: The police arrested three hundred people.

Written numbers should be used for numbers zero to ninety-nine. For example: Staff members processed forty-nine complaints from consumers. There are exceptions, of course. We may cover them in a future issue.

HOW Member Catches Unusual Fish

HOW member and "fish species hunter" Mike Berg loves traveling to new locations in search of different fish species, and a recent trip in early October was no exception. This was a 'fun' trip to Missouri to fish for a few prehistoric fish species, such as spotted gar, longnose gar and paddlefish (plus whatever other fish were willing to bite).

Berg fished with his friend and local guide Tyler Goodale, and they spent much of their time fishing the St. Francis River in southeastern Missouri. Goodale has permission to fish a section of the river's shoreline on private property, and this particular spot hosts one of the deepest pools in the river for many miles. That's where he and Mike Berg started their quest.

As they got their gear set up, Berg said he could see a surprising number of good-sized gar come to the surface to gulp air every once in a while. He said the occasional paddlefish would break the surface, too. A very good sign!

Although he never did hook a gar on this trip, he managed to hook and land two different paddlefish from this spot. Paddlefish season was not currently open on the St. Francis River, so those fish were safely released after a few quick photos.

The surprise of the day was when Berg reeled in a paddlefish that had no paddle, or rostrum! Berg had never seen a paddlefish without its paddle before, but Goodale said he sees them once in a while. He did





Above Left: Mike Berg holds a "normal" paddlefish that he caught and released back into the St. Francis River in Missouri. **Above Right:** Berg holds an unusual paddlefish that he caught that had no rostrum, or paddle. This fish was released, also. Although losing their rostrum does not happen often, paddlefish can survive without it, as this photo certainly proves. Photos by Tyler Goodale.

admit that they are pretty uncommon, though. Researchers say that paddlefish use their rostrum to help them find the zooplankton that they eat under low light conditions and in muddy water. They also use their paddle to help them stay balanced while swimming.



Berg also caught some other species during his recent trip. One of those was a shadow bass (*Ambloplites ariommus*), which is not found in Indiana. These fish look very similar to our Hoosier rockbass. See photo at right.

Shadow bass typically have dark bands or blotches on their sides, which rockbass do not have. There are other differences, but the easiest way to tell them apart is by where you encounter them. They live in a few select spots in Missouri, but are common in Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia.

HOW Members Win 2026 TOWA EIC Awards

The TOWA Excellence in Craft awards ceremony was held during the annual meeting of the Tennessee Outdoor Writers Association at Dale Hollow Lake in Celina, TN on October 13, 2026. TOWA's best writers, photographers and broadcasters were recognized for their outstanding work, and two of our very own HOW members were among the winners. Congrats to Richard Hines and Tom Berg! Here are the awards details:

Best B&W Photography – Photo Series
3rd Place – Richard Hines
Topwater Fly Fishing

Best Color Photography – Wildlife/Landscapes
3rd Place – Tom Berg
Wood Frog in the Grass

Best B&W Photography – Hunting
2nd Place – Richard Hines
Squirrel Hunter

Best Color Photography – Hunting
2nd Place – Richard Hines
Hunter on the Trail
3rd Place – Tom Berg
A Fine Fall Pheasant Hunt

Best Radio/TV Broadcast/Podcast
1st Place – Richard Hines
Willie Outdoors

Best B&W Photography – Wildlife/Landscapes
3rd Place – Tom Berg
Mourning Doves

Best B&W Photography – Fishing
1st Place – Tom Berg
Lake Trout Success

Best Color Photography – Fishing
2nd Place – Richard Hines
Sunrise on Lake Erie

HOW Member Wins 2026 AGLOW AIC Award

The AGLOW Awards in Craft ceremony was held during the annual meeting of the Association of Great Lakes Outdoor Writers near Niagara Falls in Lewiston, NY on October 15, 2026. AGLOW's best of the best in the outdoor communications industry were recognized for their outstanding work, and one of our very own HOW members was among the winners.





The AGLOW Awards in Craft winners who were present at the conference are shown above. Tom Berg is pictured at the center in the back row.

Congrats to Tom Berg! Here are the details on his winning photo entry:

Best of Photography – Outdoor Scenic
1st Place – Tom Berg
Palm Warbler During Spring Migration

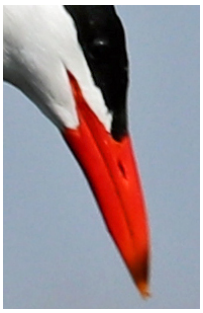
Unusual Nature Photos from the Hoosier Outdoors
Sponsored by Pure Fishing

The Caspian Tern is the Largest of All Terns Worldwide



Close-up →

Original ←



The "What is it?" photo from the previous issue was harder than the last one, since it was identified by only eight (8) HOW members. Bill Keaton, Mike Lunsford, Jack Spaulding, Troy McCormick, Mike Schoonveld, John Maxwell, Brandon Butler and Jarrett Manek were all able to identify it. When we drew a name at random for the **W.R. Case** pocket knife and assorted swag, Mike Lunsford was the lucky winner. Congrats, Mike! We will send the prize to you.

As can be seen in the photo at left, the mystery creature for this issue was a **Caspian Tern** (*Hydroprogne caspia*). We decided we would accept a guess of Common Tern in addition to Caspian Tern this time, mainly because we didn't realize those two species look almost the same when looking at their heads. Experts know that you can tell Common Terns and Caspian Terns apart by looking at their legs and their tails (look it up).

The Caspian tern is the largest of all terns and can be found all over the world. It is about the size of an American crow. It migrates through much of the United States in the springtime, and in North America it breeds in isolated spots along the Great Lakes and large bodies of water in Canada. There are also some breeding colonies in the western USA and along both sea coasts. This bird got its name in 1770 when Prussian zoologist and explorer Peter Pallas collected a sample on the shores of the Caspian Sea, where these birds are still common today. Evidently he did not know how widely these terns ranged throughout the world.

For this issue, our friends at **Pure Fishing** have donated a very nice prize package for the HOW member who is able to guess the right answer to this issue's "What Is It?" question. This time the prize will be a Pure Fishing bundle including a Shakespeare rod/reel combo and a Plano waterproof zip pouch. See below for additional info.

Berg Poses Another Nature Photo "What Is It?" Question



Tom Berg has posed another Nature Photo mystery. The photo shown at right is part of a close-up photo of a creature that can be found throughout the state of Indiana. You might even see it in your own back yard. Have you ever seen this image when spending time outdoors?

This creature may be easy for some people to identify, and harder for others. But we'll see. Do you know of any creatures that look like this? This time you must identify the exact species. If you think it's a snake, for example, go ahead and guess "garter snake" (hint: it's not a snake). If you think you know the answer, send it in an email to thomas.berg@comcast.net. If you're right, you'll be entered in this issue's prize drawing!



As mentioned, **Pure Fishing** (www.purefishing.com) has donated a very nice prize package for the HOW member who guesses the right answer to this issues nature question. Included is a Shakespeare Wild Spinning Travel Combo (3-piece, 6'6" rod) and a Plano Stowall Waterproof Zip Pouch for storing your tackle, electronics (phone) and other gear. This is an excellent prize (MSRP around $130) for anyone who loves fishing, so start thinking! If multiple people guess correctly, we'll draw a winner at random from the correct entries. All nature photos on this page by Tom Berg.

HOW Supporting Member News

These pages are devoted to the loyal supporting members of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers. Brief descriptions of new products, award-winning products and press releases are listed here. HOW members interested in reading more can visit the supporting member websites or call or email the media contact for more information.

Gill Expands Its Outdoor Collection With the Orion Reversible Jacket and Vest

Jacksonville Beach, FL (November 5, 2026) – Whether heading out for an early morning fishing trip, spending a full day on the water, or exploring the outdoors, changing conditions call for gear that can keep up. Gill introduces the Orion Reversible Jacket and Vest, a versatile, insulated collection designed to deliver lightweight warmth, practical performance, and adaptable style for anglers and outdoor enthusiasts.

Built for unpredictable weather and active days outdoors, both the Orion Jacket and Vest feature ultra-light synthetic insulation that provides dependable warmth without unnecessary weight or bulk. A SHIELD® PFAS-free durable water-repellent finish helps protect against light rain, water spray, and damp conditions, making both pieces reliable layering options when temperatures and weather begin to shift.

Versatility is at the heart of the Orion collection. Both styles feature fully reversible construction, giving outdoor enthusiasts two distinct looks in one garment. The Orion Jacket and Vest combine a classic exterior with a quilted reverse. Each features a YKK reversible front zipper with an integrated chin guard for added comfort and easy adjustment.

Designed with functionality in mind, both garments offer storage on either side, including secure zippered pockets on the smooth exterior and convenient hand pockets on the quilted reverse. The Orion Jacket provides additional insulated coverage for cooler conditions, while the Orion Vest delivers lightweight core warmth and unrestricted mobility for more active pursuits.

From early mornings on the water or in the woods to changing weather on the trail, the Orion Jacket and Vest are designed to transition seamlessly between fishing, outdoor adventure, and every day wear.

Key Features:

- Ultra-light synthetic insulation for dependable warmth without added bulk.
- SHIELD® PFAS-free durable water-repellent finish.
- Fully reversible construction with two distinct colorways.
- YKK reversible zipper with integrated chin guard.
- Functional pocket storage on both sides.
- Lightweight, versatile designs ideal for layering.



For more information about the Orion Jacket and Vest, visit www.gillmarine.com.

About Gill
Founded in 1975, Gill is a global leader in technical marine apparel engineered for life on the water. Established by lifelong sailor Nick Gill, the brand was built on a no-compromise approach—premium fabrics, purpose-driven features, and uncompromising quality. Today, Gill is trusted by anglers, sailors, and adventurers worldwide, with every product designed, engineered, and tested beyond standards in the Gill Lab and on the water.

Media Contact:
For more information, HOW members may contact Michele Eichstead, Marketing Manager at Gill, email: michele.eichstead@gillna.com.

HOW Supporting Member News

Head to Gaylord, MI for an Unforgettable Fall Driving Tour (and More!)

Gaylord, MI – The Gaylord area in northern Michigan is a wonderful place to experience fall colors. Local hardwood forests put on a real show as the woodland canopy changes from green to gold, orange and different hues of red. Oak, birch and maple are just a few of the native trees that provide a beautiful and colorful backdrop to this pristine area.

Hop in the car and head for the Pigeon River Country State Forest just a half-hour drive northwest of Gaylord. The nearby Pigeon River Country Scenic Overlook provides breath-taking views and magnificent fall colors. Another option is to drive to the Deadman's Hill Overlook for more scenic views. Good hiking trails are also available there for those who want to get out of the car and stretch their legs.

Anyone looking for more places to visit on their driving tour should head to the Louis M. Groen Nature Preserve, located about 17 miles east of Gaylord. There is plenty of color to see on the way there, and if you like hiking this beautiful nature preserve features a variety of different hiking trails, with difficulty ratings ranging from easy to moderate. Much of the trail system is wooded, so be prepared to take some photos of the colorful foliage.



Closer to Gaylord, and actually just a couple of miles from the downtown area, is the popular Aspen Park. This small park is situated right next to Gaylord's City Elk Park. Hikers can easily view the elk herd inside the 108-acre fenced-in park. Many of the elk are huge, too. Some of the larger bulls reportedly weigh well over 800 pounds. If you hear them bugling in the distance it is a sound you will not soon forget.

The small northern Michigan city of Gaylord is located right in the middle of an outdoorsman's paradise, so after checking out the fall colors, feel free to spend a little time fishing, hunting or hiking. Woods and waters are everywhere. Nearby Otsego Lake is known for its walleye fishing, and other waters are teeming with bass, pike, walleye, trout and panfish of all types.



Public hunting land is plentiful around Gaylord, and the surrounding Otsego County is well-known as a hunting hotspot. Whitetail deer are common, and upland bird hunters will find plenty of opportunities to chase ruffed grouse and American woodcock. Waterfowl hunters will find numerous places to hunt geese and a variety of duck species, as well.

Can't make it to Gaylord in time to see all the beautiful fall colors? No problem – plan a winter trip instead! Gaylord becomes a winter wonderland every year and there is plenty to do, whether you like skiing, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, sledding, snowboarding or icefishing. Gaylord is just a little over a four-hour drive from Fort Wayne in northern Indiana, so taking a long weekend to make the trip north is very doable. Better yet, take a whole week to experience everything Gaylord and northern Michigan has to offer!

Media Contact:
For more info, HOW members may contact Paul Beachnau, Executive Director of the Gaylord Area Convention and Tourism Bureau, email: paul@gaylordmichigan.net, phone: 989-732-4000 or 800-345-8621 (toll free). Be sure to visit www.gaylordmichigan.net.

HOW Supporting Member News

Pink Rods for a Purpose

St. Croix Rod helps raise funds for Casting for Recovery during National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Park Falls, WI (September 14, 2026) – Casting for Recovery (CfR) was founded in 1996 with the mission of enhancing the lives of women in all phases of their battles with breast cancer. CfR not only connects these women with one another, it does so amidst the beauty of nature through the therapeutic aspects of fishing. Over the past 30 years, Casting for Recovery has helped bring emotional and physical healing to over 13,000 women via over 1,100 oncology-informed outdoor retreats.



Casting for Recovery provides these healing outdoor retreats at no cost to participants, each of whom find inspiration, discover a renewed energy for life, and experience healing connections with other women and the great outdoors. A not-for-profit 501(c)(3) organization, CfR relies on over 1,800 volunteers and donations from individuals, foundations, companies, and other organizations. **St. Croix Rod** of Park Falls, WI – handcrafters of the Best Rods on Earth® for nearly 80 years – is one of those companies.

"St. Croix has built a big fishing family over the past 80 years," says St. Croix CEO, Scott Forristall. "And like most families, we've all been touched by breast cancer in one way or another. We not only applaud the healing work of CfR, we are also committed to supporting it financially."

Throughout October, just 1,200 limited-edition Casting for Recovery St. Croix TRIUMPH rods were offered for sale at www.stcroixrods.com. Finished in Survivor Pink, five different models were available, delivering versatile St. Croix performance in a wide variety of fishing applications.

Retail prices included free shipping for rods sold in the Continental US. The campaign continues through October 31, or until each of the 1,200 rods is sold. Upon the sale of all limited-edition rods, St. Croix will donate $50,000 to Casting for Recovery.



"St. Croix is a family-owned American company that's widely known and loved for handcrafting rods that give anglers the upper hand on the water," says Casting for Recovery Executive Director, Susan Gaetz. "But these 1,200 rods will deliver much more than that. The people who buy and enjoy fishing with these beautiful St. Croix rods will be supporting real women currently battling breast cancer, breast cancer survivors, their families, and their communities."

For women who have had surgery or radiation as part of their treatment, the gentle motions of fishing can be good physical therapy for increasing mobility in the arms and upper body. Fishing also provides an opportunity for mindfulness—a meditative exercise that brings calm and awareness to the present moment – which can be extremely helpful for health and healing.

"Surrounded by the beauty of nature and focused on learning a new skill, Casting for Recovery retreat participants find respite from the many worries and stresses that accompany a breast cancer diagnosis, treatment and recovery," Gaetz says. "Combine this with the emotional benefits of connecting with other women on similar paths and receiving support from oncology professionals, and CfR retreats provide powerful medicine."

Media Contact:
For more information, HOW members may contact Josh Lantz at St. Croix Rods, email: joshl@stcroixrods.com.

HOW's Supporting Member Websites

Archery Trade Association - www.archerytrade.org
B'n'M Pole Company - www.bnmpoles.com
Black River Tools - www.blackrivertools.com
BoatUS - www.boatus.com
BPI Outdoors - www.BPIguns.com
Church Tackle Company - www.churchtackle.com
Cocoons Eyewear - www.cocoons.com
Daisy Outdoor Products - www.daisy.com
Dardevle by Eppinger - www.dardevle.com
DEX FingerLight - www.fingerlight.com
Ducks Unlimited - www.ducks.org
Egret Baits - www.egretbaits.com
Fight'N Flies - www.facebook.com (search)
Finn Tackle Company - www.finnspoons.com
Flying Fisherman - www.flyingfisherman.com
G Pucci & Sons - www.p-line.com
Gapen Company - www.gapen.com
Gaylord Area CTB - www.gaylordmichigan.net
Gill Fishing - www.gillfishing.com
Grundens USA - www.grundens.com
Habit Apparel - www.habitoutdoors.com
Hawke Sport Optics - www.hawkeoptics.com
HHA Sports - www.HHAsports.com
Hi Mountain Seasonings - www.himtnjerky.com
Hobie Eyewear - www.hobieeyewear.com
Hornady Manufacturing - www.hornady.com
Indiana Destination Development Corporation - www.visitindiana.com
Kehrer Fish Co - www.kehrerfishcompany.com
Lawrence County Tourism - www.limestonecountry.com
Li'L Tuffy Swimbait - www.ramblingangler.com
MEC Outdoors - www.mecoutdoors.com
Mepps by Sheldons', Inc - www.mepps.com
Mercer Sport - www.mercersport.com
Mister Twister - www.mistertwister.com
MOJO Outdoors - www.mojooutdoors.com
Moving Water Outfitters - www.mwoutfitters.com
Mustad - www.mustad-fishing.com
Nat'l Shooting Sports Foundation - www.nssf.org
National Wild Turkey Federation - www.nwtf.org
Nesco Vacuum Sealers - www.nesco.com
Norsemen Outdoors - www.norsemenoutdoors.com
Nothead Tackle - www.notheadtackle.com
O.F. Mossberg & Sons, Inc. - www.mossberg.com
Old Salt Angling - www.oldsaltangling.com
OnX Maps - www.onxmaps.com
Otis Technology - www.otistec.com
OutCast Lures - www.outcastlures.com
Owner Hooks - www.ownerhooks.com
Pheasants Forever - www.pheasantsforever.org
Plano Molding - www.planooutdoors.com
Pro-Cure Bait Scents - www.pro-cure.com
Pure Fishing - www.purefishing.com
Quad 4 Plastics - www.quad4plastics.com
Rapala VMC - www.rapala.com
RCBS - www.rcbs.com
Realtree - www.realtree.com
Renfro Productions - www.renfroproductions.com
Riton Optics - www.ritonoptics.com
Roberts Camera - www.robertscamera.com
Safari Club International - www.safariclub.org
Seaguar Fishing Lines - www.seaguar.com
Shooter's Choice - www.shooters-choice.com
Sierra Bullets - www.sierrabullets.com
Spartan Precision Equipment – www.javelinbipod.com
Speedhook Specialists - www.speedhook.com
Sporting Classics - www.sportingclassics.com
Spypoint Trail Cameras - www.spypoint.com
St. Croix Rods - www.stcroixrods.com
Steuben County Tourism – www.visitsteubencounty.com
Steelhead Outdoors - www.steelheadoutdoors.com
Sturm, Ruger & Co. - www.ruger.com
Swab-Its - www.swab-its.com
Sweet Owen CVB - www.sweetowencvb.org
Target Communications Outdoor Books - www.targetcommbooks.com
Toyota Motor Sales - www.toyotanewsroom.com
Traveler's Guide to Firearms Laws of 50 States - www.bookvalueusa.com
TTI-Blakemore Fishing - www.ttiblakemore.com
Vicious Fishing - www.getvicious.com
Vortex Optics - www.vortexoptics.com
Whitetails Unlimited - www.whitetailsunlimited.com
W.R. Case - www.wrcase.com

HOW members are encouraged to check these websites for general info and answers to product and service questions.

Hoosier Outdoor Writers

Application For New Membership

(Check Desired Classification below)

$30 _____ Active
$25 _____ Associate
$50 _____ Supporting
$15 _____ Active Student
$10 _____ Associate Student

Personal Information:

Name: _____
Company (Supporting members only): _____
Address: _____
City: _____State: _____Zip: _____
Phone: _____
Email: _____

Professional Information:

Employer (if outdoor-related): _____ Position: _____
Business Address: _____
Business Phone: _____

1. Describe your work in the outdoor field: Full Time _____ Part Time _____

2. Check your field(s) of outdoor work:

_____ Newspapers	_____ Magazine	_____ Radio	_____ Artist
_____ Books	_____ Photography	_____ Lectures	
_____ Television	_____ Teaching	_____ Trade Journals	
_____ Blog/Online Work	_____ Public relations	_____ Government Info - Ed	

_____ Other (Specify): _____

3. Are you paid for your outdoor work? Yes _____ No _____

4. Your work is published or disseminated: Daily ____; Weekly ____; Monthly ____; ____ times a year

Attach samples or other proof of your work in the outdoor field: newspaper clips, letters from station managers attesting to frequency of radio or TV broadcasts, lecture schedule or publicity clips, photo clips or artistic prints, title of latest book, masthead of trade journal showing your position, etc.

Send completed application and article copies to: **Tom Berg, 2142 Nondorf Street, Dyer, IN 46311**.

I have read the principles and membership requirements of the Hoosier Outdoor Writers and would like to enroll in the classification checked above.

Signature: _____

Sponsor: _____

Who We Are

The Hoosier Outdoor Writers was formed in 1969 and has brought together many diverse groups and individuals with shared interests. The Hoosier Outdoor Writers, known among its members as HOW, is a group of dedicated media professionals who are keenly interested in the wise use of natural resources in the Hoosier State.

What We Do

These are the purposes of HOW:

1. To improve ourselves in the art, skill and effectiveness of our craft, and to increase knowledge and understanding of the whole state.
2. To help ensure the wisest and best conservation of Indiana's resources, and the most wide-spread fair use of Indiana's recreational potential.
3. To provide a vehicle for bringing together and joining in common cause all Hoosiers who by profession, hobby or interest are devoted to the outdoors.
4. Conduct an annual Awards-In-Craft Contest among its members. The award winners are announced each year at HOW's annual conference.

What We Stand For

These are what we strive to accomplish:

1. To give the profession of outdoor writing/reporting greater recognition and understanding, even higher standards and enlarged scope.
2. To encourage and enforce high standards of professional ethics.
3. To strive always for the truth, accuracy, clarity and completeness in the dissemination of outdoor information.
4. To help friends and fight the foes of wisely conserved Indiana resources.

Membership Requirements

Membership is open to anyone who meets one of the following:

1. Active

Members are those regularly engaged in the paid dissemination of outdoor-oriented information via newspapers, radio, television, internet/online, magazines, trade journals, books, photographs, art, lectures, or other fitting media. (Basic guidelines of "regularity" of dissemination are: 20 newspaper articles, photos or broadcasts a year; 20 online articles, blogs, vlogs or podcasts a year; two national or four regional magazines or specialty journal articles a year, or one book, 10 lectures, or 20 bona fide outdoor news releases a year). The legal advisor for the association shall be an active member without meeting the basic guidelines.

2. Associate

Members are those who have a strong direct interest in the outdoors, either professional or personal, such as conservationists of all kinds; nature lovers; sportsmen; outdoorsmen; public employees in outdoor fields; educators teaching related subjects; fishing guides and tournament anglers, and retail-level dealers in outdoor goods, equipment or facilities.

3. Supporting

Members are those engaged in major commercial efforts directly related to the outdoors, such as manufacturers, distributors, service providers, manufacturers' representatives, or advertising agencies serving any of these.

4. Active Student

Members are those between the ages of 18 and 24 years who are bona fide college students with a major in journalism, communications, or natural resources sciences.

5. Associate Student

Members are those who are students who have an active interest in the outdoors in the areas of fishing, hunting, boating, hiking, nature, ecology, or in preserving the environment in general.

Calendar of Events

AGLOW 2026 Conference: October 11-15, 2026
(www.aglowinfo.org)
Lewiston, NY

ATA Show Week 2027: January 7-10, 2027
(http://ATAshow.com)
Indianapolis, IN

SHOT Show 2027: January 19-22, 2027
(http://shotshow.org)
Las Vegas, NV

Safari Club International 2027 Convention: January 20-23, 2027
(https://convention.safariclub.org/)
Nashville, TN

NWTF 2027 Convention and Sport Show: February 11-13, 2027
(www.nwtf.org)
Nashville, TN

Ford Indianapolis Boat, Sport & Travel Show: February 19-21 & 24-28, 2027
(www.IndySportShow.com)
Indianapolis, IN

Indiana Motorcycle & Powersports Expo: February 19-21 & 24-28, 2027
(www.IndySportShow.com)
Indianapolis, IN

Indiana Deer, Turkey & Waterfowl Expo: February 19-21 & 26-28, 2027
(www.IndySportShow.com)
Indianapolis, IN

HOW 2027 Annual Conference: April 9-11, 2027
(www.HoosierOutdoorWriters.org) (Annual meeting on April 10)
Abe Martin Lodge, Brown County State Park
Nashville, IN

HOW members may submit upcoming events, along with dates, locations and other details to the newsletter editor at: director@hoosieroutdoorwriters.org for possible inclusion in a future issue of ***The Blade***.