

Greetings WOCA Members!

We're less than four weeks away from our 42nd annual conference, and I'm looking forward to seeing all of you there. Let's try to beat last year's record attendance of 30 dues-paying members.

Below you'll find attachments for your annual membership renewal, the conference/lodging registration form, and our agenda and first draft of the speakers' bios and contact information. If you're already renewed for this year, just worry about registering for the conference. If you're not certain whether your dues are up to date, contact Laurel Steffes for your status.

News, Updates and Reminders:

1) Meeting Registration: Register now! We need to make room assignments and provide a head count for meals by early August. Please fill out the conference registration form asap and return it to Laurel Steffes with your registration fee. Laurel's address is on the form. Laurel must deliver our room assignments to Trees for Tomorrow by Friday, Aug. 4. Conference prices are the same as the past couple of conferences. Trees is holding two bunkhouses for us, so we can accommodate everyone both nights.

2) Check-In Reminders: Our two bunkhouses at Trees for Tomorrow will open for check-in at 2 p.m. on Friday, Aug. 11. A staff member will be available from 2 to 9 p.m. to help with check-in, setup, etc. Be sure you check out by 10 a.m. Sunday, Aug. 13. Also ...

-- Stay out of the cafeteria and its kitchen during our Friday evening cookout.

-- We have access to the big classroom Friday 5 to 10 p.m., and Saturday 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. A Trees staff member will be on hand Saturday all day.

-- Trees will provide a breakfast snack cart by 7 a.m. on Saturday in the classroom, and it will be refreshed with afternoon items by 12:30 p.m.

-- If you have special dietary needs, let Laurel know by Aug. 4.

3) Membership: I've attached our membership application and renewal form. Please fill it out and send your annual \$25 dues to Laurel Steffes before the conference. If you plan to attend the conference, you can pay Laurel in person. HOWEVER, please send your conference registration info to her ASAP so we can get a head count for rooms and meals.

-- As always, please try to recruit new members and re-engage previous members. Also, as we've discussed at previous conferences, encourage bloggers to attend. Once they're WOCA members, we can try to help them find ways to make money from their communications.

4) Toyota Sponsors Friday Night Cookout: Curt McAllister, Midwest public relations manager for Toyota Motor North America, arranged to have Toyota sponsor WOCA's Friday night cookout and social at the fire pit. Curt hopes to join us for the conference, but hasn't yet confirmed whether he'll be able to make it. Toyota's generous donation allows WOCA to earmark more money for our annual scholarships and charitable donations.

Toyota has been active supporting Wisconsin's outdoor programs. Earlier this month, it donated \$3,300 as part of its "Toyota Cares" program to La Crosse's Outdoor

Recreation Alliance through a dealership, Toyota of La Crosse. Each month, a Toyota of La Crosse employee chooses a charity to receive the Toyota Cares donation. The Outdoor Recreation Alliance helps maintain trails in Upper Hixon, and advocates for area outdoor recreation.

5) Dan Small, Mark LaBarbera, Jeff Kelm, Paul Smith and Candice Gaukel Andrews Win OWAA Awards: Big congratulations to Dan Small, Mark LaBarbera, Jeff Kelm, Candice Gaukel Andrews and Paul Smith for racking up many well-deserved honors in June at the annual Outdoor Writers Association of America conference, which was held in Duluth. Our fellow WOCA members received these awards for their 2016 work:

Hunting or Shooting Sports Category, TV (Sponsor: NRA):

— 1st place: Mark LaBarbera and Dan Small, “Wild Turkeys in Wisconsin,” Fox Sports North/Fox Sports Wisconsin.

— 2nd place: Mark LaBarbera and Dan Small, “Deer Hunt Wisconsin 2016,” Milwaukee PBS.

Conservation or Nature Category, Radio/Podcast (Sponsor: The Pew Charitable Trusts):

— Third place: Dan Small, “Woodcock Research,” WRJC 92.9 FM.

Family Participation/Youth Outdoor Education Category, Radio/Podcast (Sponsor: Realtree):

— 3rd place: Dan Small, “Squirrels Unlimited,” WRJC 92.9 FM.

Fishing Category, Radio/Podcast (Sponsor: Ocean Conservancy):

— 2nd place: Dan Small, “Collecting Antique Lures,” WRJC 92.9 FM.

Gear/Technical Category, Radio/Podcast:

— 1st place: Jeff Kelm, “Treadwright Tires,” interview with Treadwright CEO Anthony Showen, WRJC 92.9 FM.

— 2nd place: Dan Small, “Man Overboard,” WRJC 92.9 FM.

— 3rd place: Jeff Kelm, “Hunt Wisconsin App,” an interview with app creator David Manske, WRJC 92.9 FM.

Hunting or Shooting Sports Category, Radio/Podcast (Sponsor: NRA):

— 1st place, Jeff Kelm, “Training a Deaf Dog to Hunt,” WRJC 92.9 FM

— 2nd place: Dan Small, “Recovering Lost Deer with a Trained Dog,” WRJC 92.9 FM.

— 3rd place: Jeff Kelm, “A Bowhunt to Remember: Great Hunt, But No Deer,” WRJC 92.9 FM.

Hunting or Shooting Sports Category, Newspaper (Sponsor: NRA):

— 2nd place: Paul Smith, “The Grateful Heart of a Hunter at Sunset,” Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel.

Column Contest, Overall Category:

— 2nd place: Candice Gaukel Andrews, Good Nature Travel blog

5a) AGLOW Winner, Late Announcement:

AGLOW 2016 Photography Contest:

— 1st place, Gary N-Ski, Black-and-white photography, “The Only Boss I’ll Ever Have is A Customer.”

6) Dates for 2018 Conference: Our dates for the 2018 WOCA conference will be July 20-22, with the same two bunkhouses for lodging.

7) Spooner Hosts Upper Great Lakes Canoe Assembly, Aug. 25-27: The Wisconsin Canoe Heritage Museum in Spooner will host the Upper Great Lakes Canoe Assembly’s annual gathering Aug. 25-27. The event draws explorers, guides and antique canoe collectors, as well as builders and manufacturers of equipment and supplies for canoe enthusiasts.

The main activities will take place Saturday, Aug. 26, on the shores of Shell Lake in the city’s Memorial Park and campground. Memorial Park is 5 miles south of the museum.

Besides vendors, dozens of antique wooden boats will be displayed. Building and restoration workshops will also be offered, as well as paddling demonstrations. The evening’s activities will feature a canoe parade on the lake.

Organized paddling trips will be available for those interested. These trips will include a paddle down the St. Croix National Scenic Riverway, or through the Birchwood Canoe Primitive Area, a nonmotorized unit of the Washburn County Forest.

The canoe shop portion of the museum is a 2,500-square-foot facility that celebrates the legacy of canoe craft to inspire and educate new builders. Participants in canoe shop programs experience traditional and contemporary construction and restoration techniques through formal and informal instruction by skilled mentors.

8) Aldo Leopold Foundation Retains Bast Durbin Advertising: The Aldo Leopold Foundation has retained Bast Durbin Advertising to help market and create a book titled “A Conservationist’s Guide to Hunting.”

“We have several goals for this project, including recruiting new hunters and increasing the number of people who are ‘hunting-curious’ and are considering hunting,” said Alanna Koshollek of ALF. “We hope this handbook helps individuals see a pathway into hunting and opportunities for hunting. ... (It’s) a way to live their values and demonstrate their commitment to conservation through hunting.”

Koshollek said the group hopes the handbook will also inspire hunters to mentor people in the sport, and help build support for hunting and its critical contributions to conservation.

Dan Durbin said the BDA team was excited to help with the project. "This book can be a new tool for (ALF) to help open the eyes of potential new hunters in a user-friendly way in a style that educates from a different perspective. As hunters ourselves, we owe it to the sport to try and approach hunter-recruitment in new ways, and this book does just that."

[Bast Durbin Advertising is a full-service agency serving the hunting, fishing and outdoor recreation industries. The firm specializes in social media, media planning, public relations, content management, graphic design and more.](#)

8) Reminder on Silent Auction and Raffle Prizes: Just a reminder for those who missed the 2016 conference: After the 2015 conference, WOCA's officers agreed to change the schedule for our annual silent auction and raffle, given its size, time constraints, and bill-collecting and bookkeeping requirements. Our first attempt with the revised schedule worked well at our July 2016 conference, and so we'll again conduct it that way this year.

To recap, we will end the silent auction at 11:50 a.m. on Saturday (Aug. 12) after our panel discussion, and announce the prize winners. If two or more members are still competing for a prize at that time, we'll go to a live auction to determine a winner. You must pay for your items before leaving the conference. All items and bid sheets will be set up for review by 7 p.m. on Friday, so you will have plenty of time to check things out and make your bids before the lunchtime cutoff Saturday.

We will continue to hold the annual door-prize raffles and giveaways after concluding the business meeting in late afternoon Saturday.

9) WOCA Website address Reminder: For the past two years WOCA has had a new website address, courtesy of Bob Haase: www.w-o-c-a.org. We extend thanks to Dan Small and Dave Zeug for adding their photos and bios to our website's Members Information page. They joined other WOCA luminaries who previously provided a photo and full bio, such as our VP, Bob Haase; and Ed Culhane, Lisa Gaumnitz, Gary N-ski, Tim Eisele, Tom Luba, Judy Nugent, Ron Weber and me, Pat Durkin. Please send a short bio and photo of yourself to Bob (flytier@milwpc.com). The sooner you do it, the sooner we'll quit pestering you.