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PHOTO CAPTION: Chris Batin with his OWAA First-Place awards.

Chris Batin Sweeps 12 Awards—Including Best Outdoor Column in The United States—in the Outdoor Writers’ Association of America and Northwest Outdoor Writers’ Association’s 2016 Excellence in Craft Awards



The Outdoor Writers’ Association of America (OWAA) has announced that Chris Batin is a four-time, first-place winner in its 2016 Excellence in Craft national awards competition, which includes the distinction of “best outdoor column in the United States.”

Batin’s winning outdoor essays and columns on Alaska life and off-the-beaten-path adventure tourism appeared in Alaska Coast magazine, published monthly out of Anchorage by Alaska Adventure Media.

“I’m thrilled, yet humbled that national judges chose my entries for recognition over the exceptional work and talents of veteran journalists and outdoor writers at the largest newspapers and magazines in the country,” Batin said. “It’s truly the case of David vs. Goliath, where I went head-to-head and won against established national media with multi-million-dollar production budgets.”

In the OWAA national competition, out of 707 total entries, 64 individual winners received 123 awards, plaques, and prize money totaling \$13,678. The average winner pocketed \$214. Because of his four, first-place sweeps in the highly competitive magazine category, Batin received \$886. All entries must have been published in a printed magazine or posted on a website (e-zine).

The “Best Column” award is one of the OWAA’s most competitive categories. Writers are required to submit three published columns on any outdoor recreation, nature, or conservation topic. Batin’s winning columns included a story on the importance of investing outdoor time with family; a conservation essay on the importance of Alaska salmon; and an introspective column on inter-generational fishing. He competed against veteran journalists who submitted entries from the San Francisco Chronicle, Sawyer County Record, and other major newspapers and magazines across the country.

In the magazine division, Family Participation/Youth Outdoor Education Category, sponsored by Realtree, Batin won first place for “Through the Ages,” that appeared in Coast magazine, which described a 92-year-old grandfather who takes his 14-year-old grandson on his first Alaska fishing trip.

In the magazine category awards, sponsored by the Ocean Conservancy, Batin won first place for “Praise the Salmon,” an essay on why he reveres Alaska salmon. He also received first place in the Gear/Technical Category for “DEET: The Four Letter Word,” a humor/technical story on how to effectively use insect repellent. In the magazine humor category, his fifth award earned third-place recognition for “Cold Case,” a humor story of fishing with friends in bad weather in Prince William Sound, Alaska.

In an earlier, separate competition sponsored by the Northwest Outdoor Writers Association (NOWA) at their annual convention at Diamond Lake, Oregon, Batin also won seven regional writing and photography awards and prize money in six competitive categories at NOWA’s 2016 Excellence in Craft awards ceremony.

The NOWA awards were as follows:

First Place – Article in Website, E-zine, or Blog (Photographing Alaska’s Northern Lights)

First Place – Photography in Website, E-zine, or Blog (Adventuring Alaska’s Stikine Wilderness)

First Place – Travel, Camping, Recreation Article ((Kayaking Among the Alaska Icebergs)

First Place – Fishing Article (Through the Ages, Grandfather and Grandson Adventuring Alaska)

Second Place – Managing Our World (The Alaska Family Who Fishes Together, Stays Together)

Third Place – Humor on Any Outdoor Subject (Racing from the Rain, Alaska)

Third Place – Article on Website, E-zine, or Blog (The Bear Necessities: Surviving in Bruin Country)

“It’s an honor to be recognized with these awards by the talented professionals in the Northwest Outdoor Writers’ Association,” says Batin. “These articles and columns showcase Alaska as I know it best; from first-hand experience with its residents, in-depth interviews with visitors and

conveying the wonder of its many natural resources in a cutting-edge style that appeals to today's reader. It's tough competing against some of the largest and best publications in the Pacific Northwest."

Batin writes a monthly column for Alaska Coast magazine, and serves as the magazine's Fishing Editor and Editor-at-Large. He is also an award-winning contributing writer for Outdoor Life magazine, is the long-time Alaska Editor for TravelAge West magazine, and is editor-in-chief and publisher of Alaska Angler Publications, a business he started in Fairbanks in 1980. An Alaska outdoor photojournalist with over 41 years' experience, Batin has appeared on the covers of 14 national magazine covers, is the author of nine books, and is the recipient of over 120 writing and photography awards for his Alaska coverage that have appeared in regional, national and international publications. He is the 2013 recipient of the Enos Bradner award, given by Northwest Outdoor Writers' Association, for a lifetime of professional excellence and achievement. Veteran outdoor writer Doug Kelly featured Batin in Chapter 25 as one of "Alaska's Greatest Outdoor Legends" in an award-winning book by the same name recently published by the University of Alaska Press. Batin also wrote the foreword for the book and served as a consultant.

After meeting him at the NOWA awards conference, Henry Hughes, Professor of Literature and Writing at Western Oregon University, wrote this about Chris' writing:

"Congrats again on your many awards! Although we only met for a moment, I immediately got a great and generous vibe from you and spent some time this morning reading your work. The writing was superb. I'll be using a paragraph (from one of the stories) in my classes as a brilliant example of physical-emotional association. Great work, Chris."

To view samples of Batin's Alaska outdoor and travel articles, visit www.AlaskaAngler.com/publications, www.TravelAgeWest.com, www.coast-magazine.com, or www.outdoorlife.com. Media note: For his-res photos, editable text, or more information regarding past awards and future projects, please visit www.AlaskaAngler.com or contact Chris Batin at BatinChris@gmail.com or Heather Fries at heather.deanne.fries@gmail.com.

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