

KANSAS

Wildlife & Parks Magazine

FOR HUNTERS, ANGLERS AND OUTDOOR ENTHUSIASTS | \$2.75 | JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2018

2018 PHOTO ISSUE | NATURAL PATTERNS



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THIS 2018 PHOTO ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF PATTERNS IN NATURE. THE DEFINITION OF "PATTERN" HAS MANY REFERENCES, BUT TWO FIT THIS ISSUE: AN ARTISTIC, MUSICAL, LITERARY, OR MECHANICAL DESIGN OR FORM; AND, A NATURAL OR CHANCE CONFIGURATION.

REPEATING FORM CREATES PATTERNS IN NATURE – LIGHT, WIND, WATER, VEGETATION, AND CLOUDS. THESE FALL UNDER THE DEFINITION OF NATURAL OR CHANCE CONFIGURATION.

HOWEVER, SOME PATTERNS HAVE A PURPOSE. THE ARMADILLO'S SHELL PROTECTS IT FROM PREDATORS. PATTERNS IN A BIRD'S FEATHERS MAY BE THERE TO ALLOW FLIGHT OR TO ATTRACT A MATE. PATTERNS CREATED IN THE SCALES OF A MASSASAUGA RATTLESNAKE HELP IT BLEND IN AND GET CLOSE TO PREY.

WE HOPE YOU ENJOY THE PHOTOS IN THIS ISSUE AND APPRECIATE THE SIMPLE BEAUTY OF PATTERNS IN NATURE.

THIS ISSUE ALSO FEATURES THE WINNERS OF THE 2017 WILD ABOUT KANSAS PHOTO CONTEST ON PAGES 36-45. THE ANNUAL CONTEST IS OPEN TO ANYONE WITH AN INTEREST IN OUTDOOR PHOTOGRAPHY, AND PHOTOS ARE JUDGED IN ADULT AND YOUTH CATEGORIES. FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE 2018 WILD ABOUT KANSAS PHOTO CONTEST AT [WWW.KSOUTDOORS.COM](http://www.ksoutdoors.com). WHO KNOWS? YOUR PHOTOS COULD BE FEATURED IN THE 2019 *KANSAS WILDLIFE & PARKS MAGAZINE* PHOTO ISSUE.

Contents

FRONT COVER The pattern created by the American bittern's feathers is perfect camouflage. Danny Brown photo.

INSIDE FRONT COVER Light, contrast and texture create striking patterns on this milkweed pod. Gail Huddle photo.

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Editorial Creed: To promote the conservation and wise use of our natural resources, to instill an understanding of our responsibilities to the land.

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As I write this, the fall weather pattern has been similar to the past few years - very dry. I sincerely hope that between now and when this issue is published, we get rain or snow and this column is merely a trip down memory lane. If we don't, it will be much too relevant.

While most of Kansas received ample rainfall last spring and summer, the rain clouds shut off in October. And while that is an issue for our wheat crop, especially that planted for winter pasture, it presents a more dire threat this spring - wildfires.

We've been through this the past two years. In 2016, a fire named for Anderson Creek in northern Oklahoma raged through Barber County, burning more than 400,000 acres in both states. It was the perfect storm of high winds, low humidity and heavy grass. The fire killed more than 600 cattle and destroyed 16 homes and structures, as well as countless miles of fence.

The winds, rough terrain and thick grass made this fire difficult to control. While the prairie ultimately benefitted from the fire, especially because of the millions of eastern red cedar trees that were killed, the damage this uncontrolled fire caused was a high price to pay.

As frightening as the 2016 fire was, those in 2017 were worse. Conditions were drier, humidity was lower, fuel may have been heavier and winds were more severe. This was truly a recipe for disaster. Multiple fires burned across western Kansas, spreading fire crews thin. The biggest fire was one that started in Oklahoma and raced to the northeast.

Dubbed the Starbuck Fire in Oklahoma, this fire surpassed the Anderson Creek Fire to be the largest wildfire recorded in Kansas. The fire burned so quickly, pushed by 60 mph winds, that fire crews had no hope of getting ahead of it. Burning embers carried on wind currents started fires far ahead of the fireline. It was literally a nightmare for the farming and ranching residents of Clark County. Thousands of cattle were killed, dozens of homes and structures were destroyed, and one person's life was



taken by the fire.

The Starbuck Fire burned more than 500,000 acres in Clark County alone, blackening two-thirds of the county. Another 200,000 acres burned in Comanche County. And there were fires in Reno, Ness, Ellis, Rice and Rooks counties burning at the same time.

If you watched or read any news last March, these facts are nothing new. However, keeping these catastrophic events in mind as we endure the current dry spell could help prevent repeat fires this spring. Anyone who spends time in the Kansas grasslands must take precautions. I think this every time I see a driver carelessly toss a still-burning cigarette butt out of a window, sparks spraying as it hits the pavement. Just driving a vehicle through tall grass or weeds could start a fire as the muffler or catalytic converter may be hot enough to ignite dry grass. Everyone must be vigilant to ensure a fire is not started carelessly.

I'm still holding out for some snow or rain to break this cycle. But if it doesn't come, I hope everyone remembers our recent history and takes the necessary precautions. Let's start 2018 off with care. 🐄



Backlash Stand-out Memories

with Mike Miller

My memory is full of outdoor experiences and each brings a smile to my face. The brightest stand out for different reasons – people, weather, dogs, game seen, fish caught, or something insignificant. But I’ve noticed that recent stand-out memories are different than those from my younger years.

I remember a late-winter mallard hunt from my youth. We broke ice and endured high winds and frigid temperatures. Four of us took turns taking shots as small groups of mallards came to our calls and decoys. We took limits, never shooting more than one drake from a flock. I didn’t think it could get any better. I hadn’t taken many daily limits of ducks before that day, so that was how I measured the hunt’s success.

A Glen Elder icefishing trip many years ago also stands out. We struggled to catch fish for most of a morning, but when we moved to a new area, we stumbled on to a large school of white bass. It was truly the best fishing I had ever experienced, and we loaded our sleds with fat white bass. I bragged about how sore my thumb was from pressing the “on” button of my electric knife while cleaning so many whites. While I appreciated the company of those friends at the time, I took it for granted. What stood out for me then was the number of fish we caught. Today, I fondly remember time with those friends. We rarely get together any more.

I still love a good duck hunt when mallards respond to my calls and I would give anything to have another hour or two of icefishing like we enjoyed that day at Glen Elder. But today, my favorite memories stand out for very different reasons.

A recent outing is a perfect example. On a beautiful November morning, one of my best friends and I hunted ducks on his pasture pond. It’s a magical place for me and just being there is often enough. But on this day, I was concerned about working with my young Lab, Ki, and enjoying the morning with Rex. Ducks would be a bonus.




Rex and I have been hunting with each other since we were in high school, and it feels natural when we’re in the field together. On that morning, I think we killed five ducks. We could have easily killed our 10 drake mallards to fill our limits, but that wasn’t important to either of us. I was happy to see Ki make several long retrieves and mostly behave in the duck blind. Rex seemed happy just being there, amused I think, at my antics working with the young dog.

However, ducks we didn’t shoot made the morning a stand-out memory. We had several big flocks of mallards approach at high altitude. When they were above and slightly in front of our blind, they dropped nearly straight down to our spread. I’ll never forget the sound of air hissing through their wings as they descended. The sight of those green heads with wings cupped and feet extended is etched in my mind. One large

group approached without either of us noticing, but we heard the sound of their wings cutting air when they were close. Ki was already watching the flock when we craned our necks to look. Twenty or 30 mallards passed over quickly and landed just out of range. Neither of us even thought to take a shot when they passed over. I remember saying, “That made the morning, right there.” Rex just grinned and nodded. We quit early and watched from a distance as more ducks dropped in.

To top the morning off, we walked one weedy draw, flushed a dozen rooster pheasants and killed three. The last bird sailed 200 yards and dropped into a stand of thick kochia. After some worried searching, Ki found it and I was a proud papa.

The morning wouldn’t have registered as a Top 10 experience 25 years ago, but it does today. I’m not suggesting I’m better than a hunter who measures success in numbers. I’m merely older, maybe wiser and not as hungry for outdoor experiences. I still treasure them all – just for different reasons. 



 EASTERN MEADOWLARK
BOB GRESS



 COMMON SNAPPING TURTLE
DAN WITT




 BLACK AND YELLOW GARDEN SPIDER
BOB GRESS



 SHELF MUSHROOM
DAVID BUTEL



 TIGER SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLIES
BOB GRESS



 WHITE-TAILED DEER
TONY PIANALTO



 BARRED OWL FLEDGLING
DAVID BUTEL





 WOLF SPIDER
JUDD PATTERSON

 MAXIMILLIAN SUNFLOWERS
TONY PIANALTO





KANSAS RIVER SAND BAR
JON BLUMB



 COUNTRY ROAD
TONY PIANALTO



 PHEASANT HARVEST
MARC MURRELL





 LECONTE'S SPARROW
DAVID SEIBEL



 NINE-BANDED ARMADILLO
DANNY BROWN



 MASSASAUGA RATTLESNAKE
DAN WITT

 MOSS
GREG PAULSEN

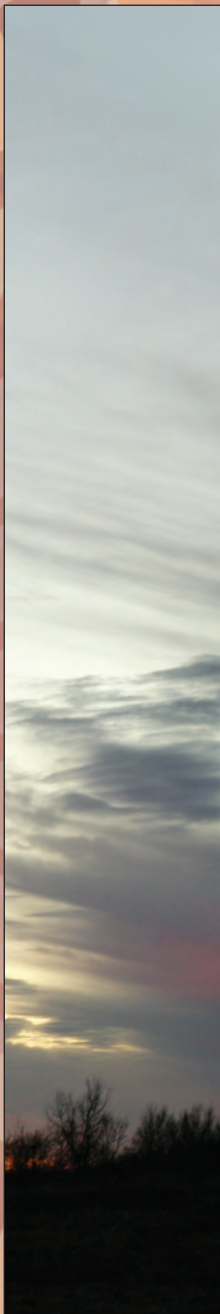




 INDIAN BLANKET
JUDD PATTERSON



 NORTHERN SCREECH OWL
DANNY BROWN





 SUNSET
JON BLUMB



 SANDHILL CRANES
KAROLE ERIKSON

 RED-WINGED BLACKBIRDS
TONY PIANALTO






 MAYPOP PASSION FLOWER
JAY MILLER

 BURNING CEDAR
JUDD PATTERSON





 COMMON BUCKEYE BUTTERFLY
BOB GRESS



 EASTERN WILD TURKEY
TONY PIANALTO



 PRAIRIE FOXTAIL
DAVID BUTEL



 WILD TURKEY
BOB GRESS




 WHITE-TAILED DEER FAWN
TONY PIANALTO



 BOBCAT
BOB GRESS





 BLUEJAY
GAIL HUDDLE




 ZEBRA SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLY
BOB GRESS



 WATERFALL
JUDD PATTERSON



 ALTOCUMULUS CLOUDS
JON BLUMB



 HOAR FROST
GREG PAULSEN



HOODED MERGANSER
DANNY BROWN



 KILLDEER NEST
TONY PIANALTO

 STARLING MURMURATION
KAROLE ERIKSON





 BLUE WIDOW SKIMMER
GREG PAULSEN





CRAPPIE
MARC MURRELL



BLACK SWALLOWTAIL CATERPILLAR
GREG PAULSEN



 EUROPEAN STARLING
GAIL HUDDLE



 WATER DROPLETS ON MAIDENGRASS
GREG PAULSEN

 PICKERAL FROG
DANNY BROWN





 STRIPED SKUNK
BOB GRESS




 PINK-SPOTTED HAWK MOTH
BOB GRESS





 RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD
TONY PIANALTO



 HILLSDALE STATE PARK
JON BLUMB

 BUFFLEHEAD
BOB GRESS



 THREE-TOED BOX TURTLE
DANNY BROWN



 BULLFROGS
MARC MURRELL



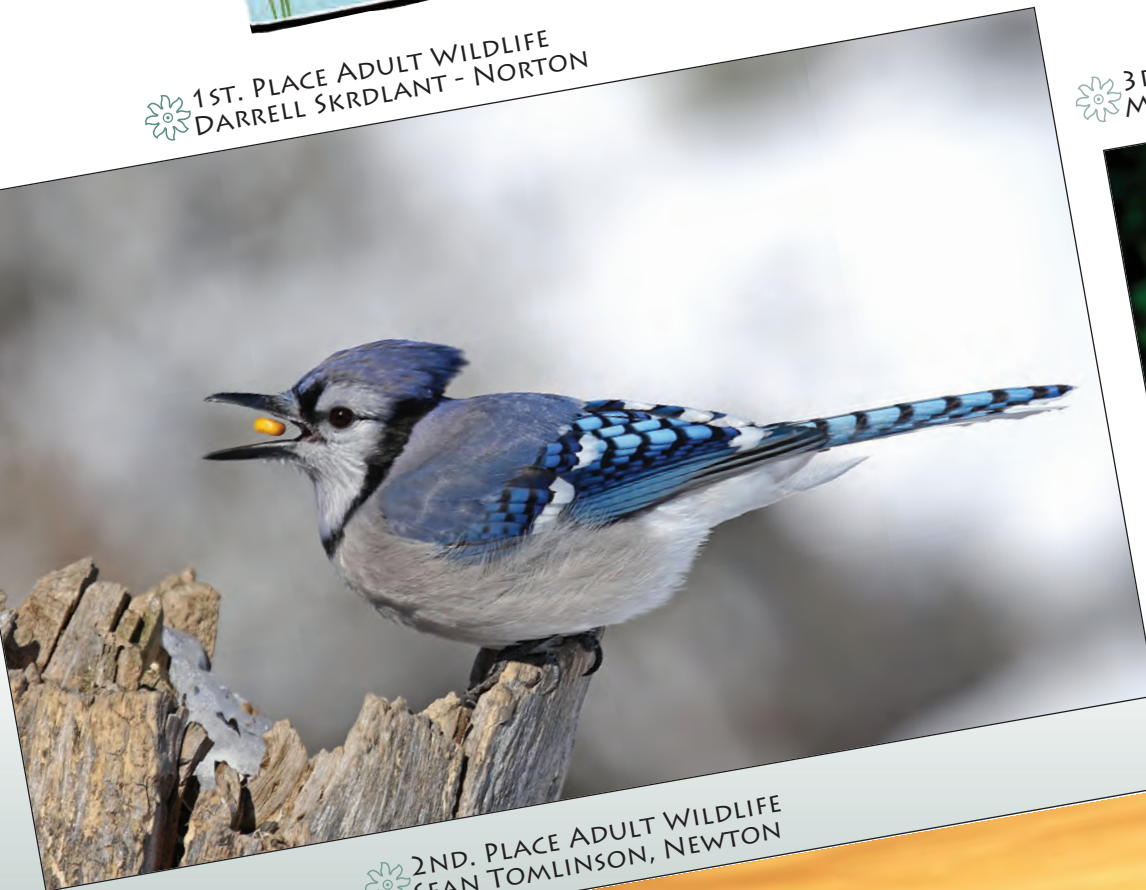
 SPECKLED KINGSLAKE SHED SKIN
BOB GRESS

WILD ABOUT

WINNERS 2017



1ST. PLACE ADULT WILDLIFE
DARRELL SKRDLANT - NORTON



3RD. PLACE ADULT WILDLIFE
MANICKAM DHANDAPANI - MANHATTAN



2ND. PLACE ADULT WILDLIFE
SEAN TOMLINSON, NEWTON

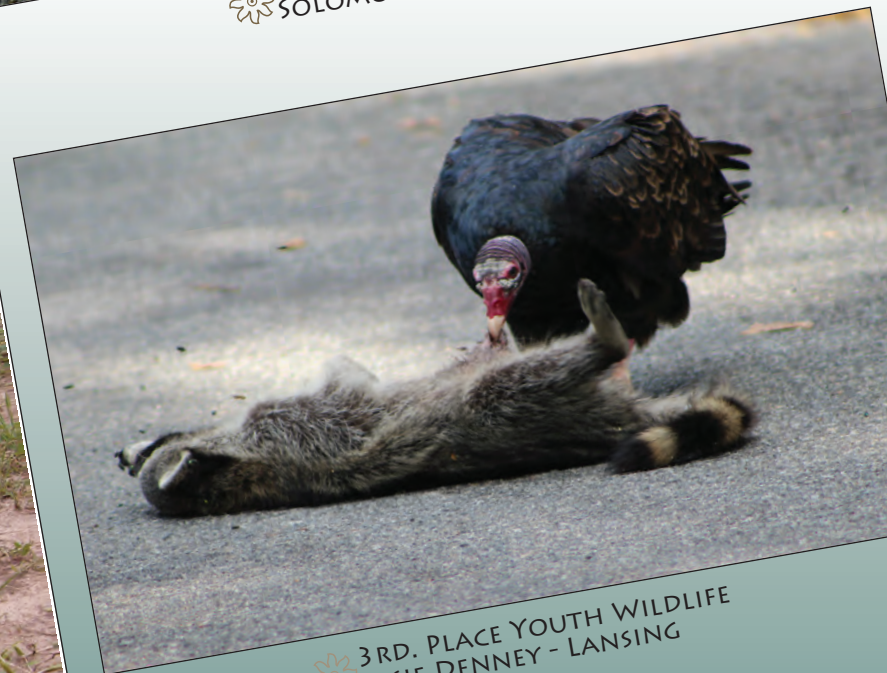


UT KANSAS



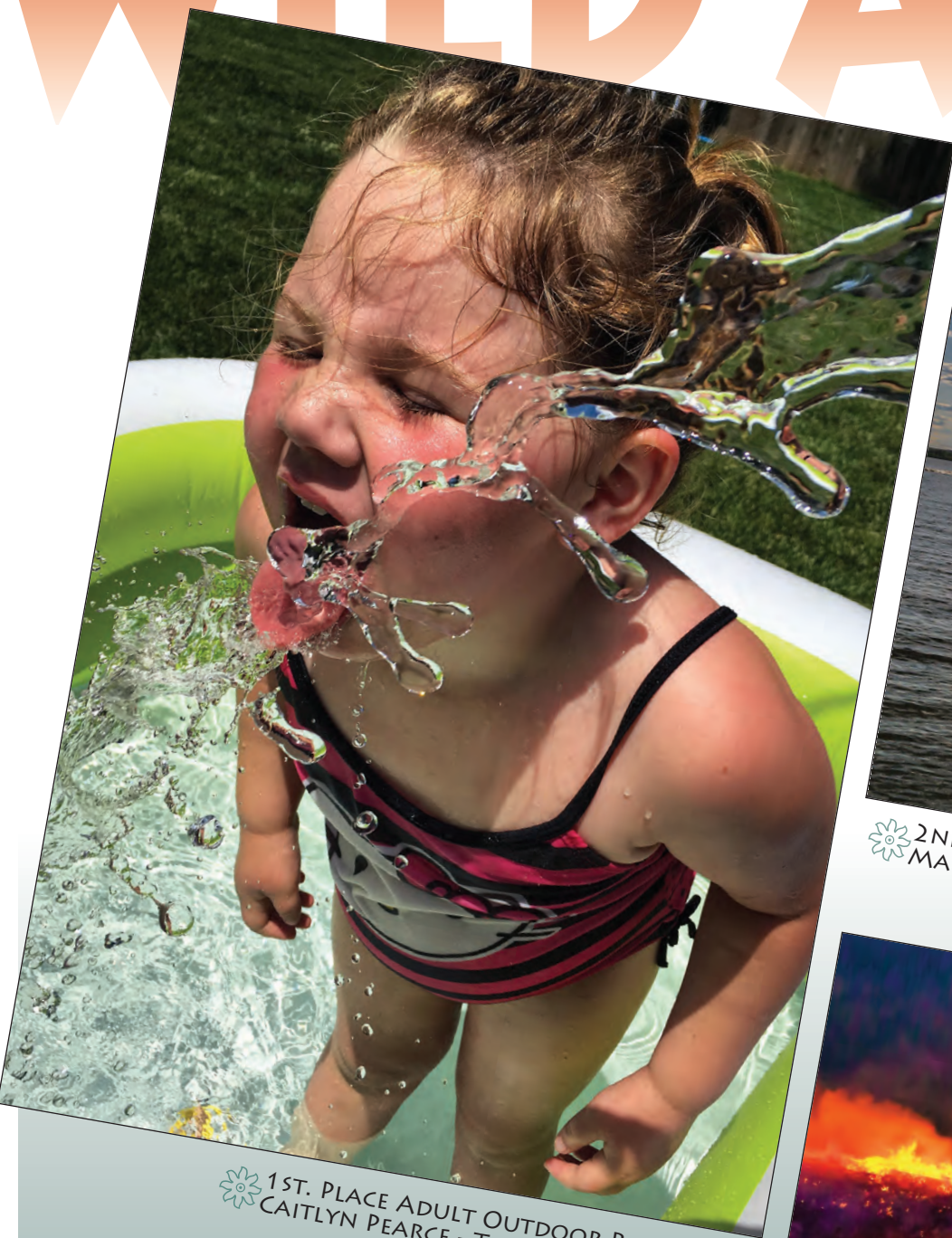
1ST. PLACE YOUTH WILDLIFE
SOLOMON SHULTZ - BURLINGAME

2ND. PLACE YOUTH WILDLIFE
KALEB MASHKE - AUGUSTA



3RD. PLACE YOUTH WILDLIFE
JOSIE DENNEY - LANSING

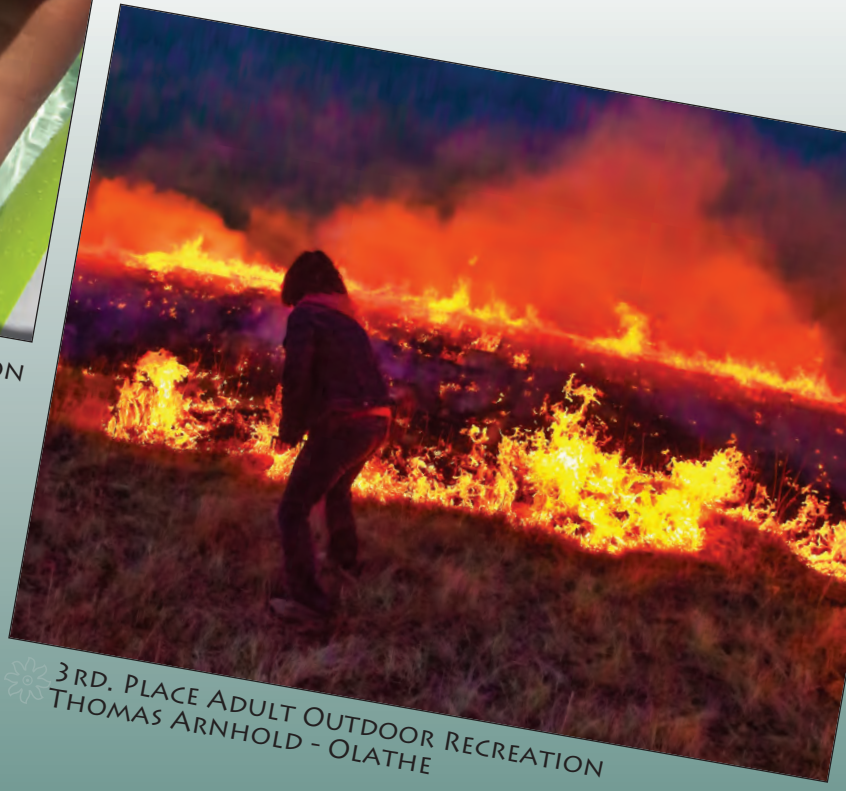
WILD ABOUT



1ST. PLACE ADULT OUTDOOR RECREATION
CAITLYN PEARCE - TOPEKA

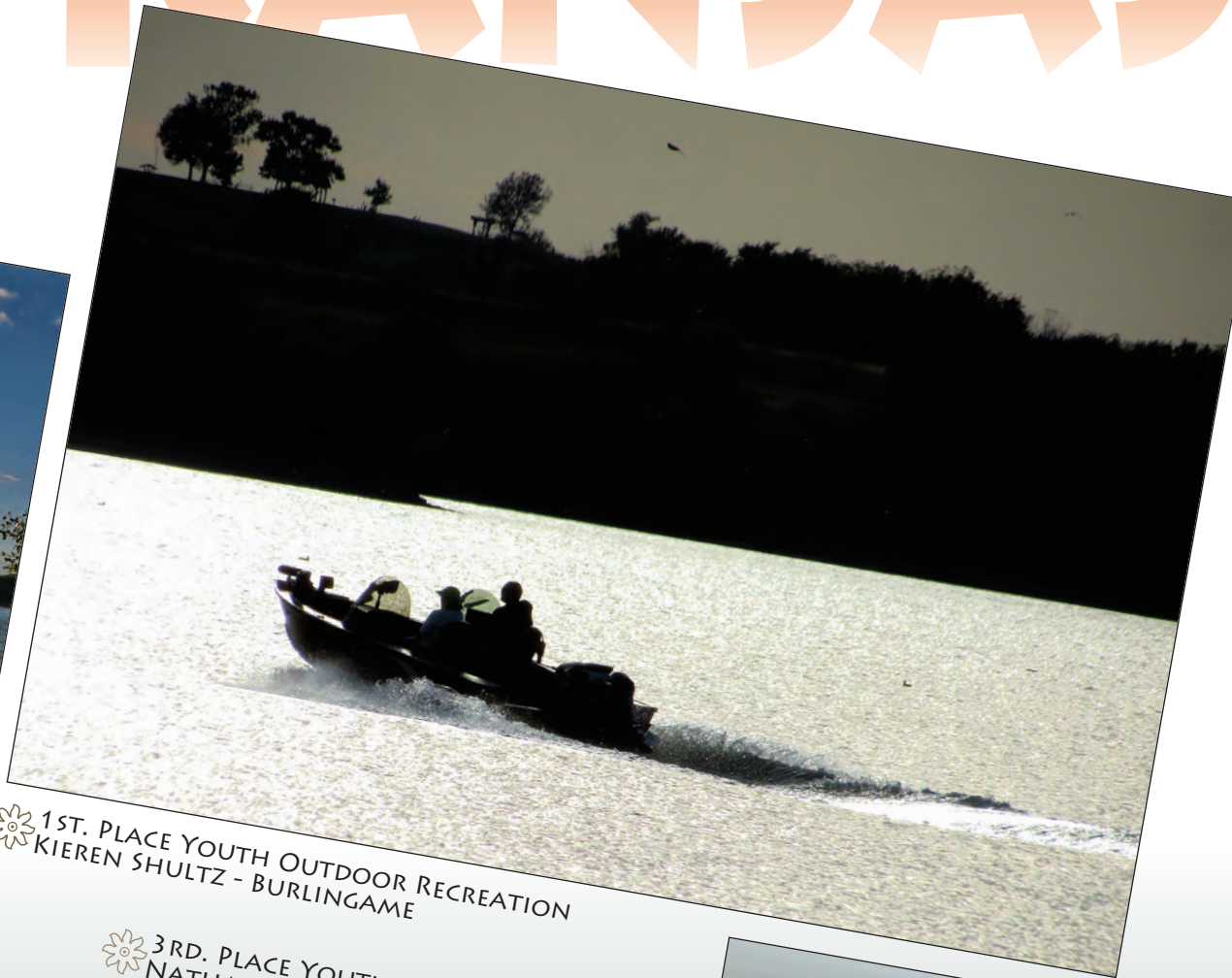


2ND. PLACE ADULT OUTDOOR RECREATION
MARILYN FRIESEN, TOPEKA



3RD. PLACE ADULT OUTDOOR RECREATION
THOMAS ARNHOLD - OLATHE

OUT KANSAS



1ST. PLACE YOUTH OUTDOOR RECREATION
KIEREN SHULTZ - BURLINGAME

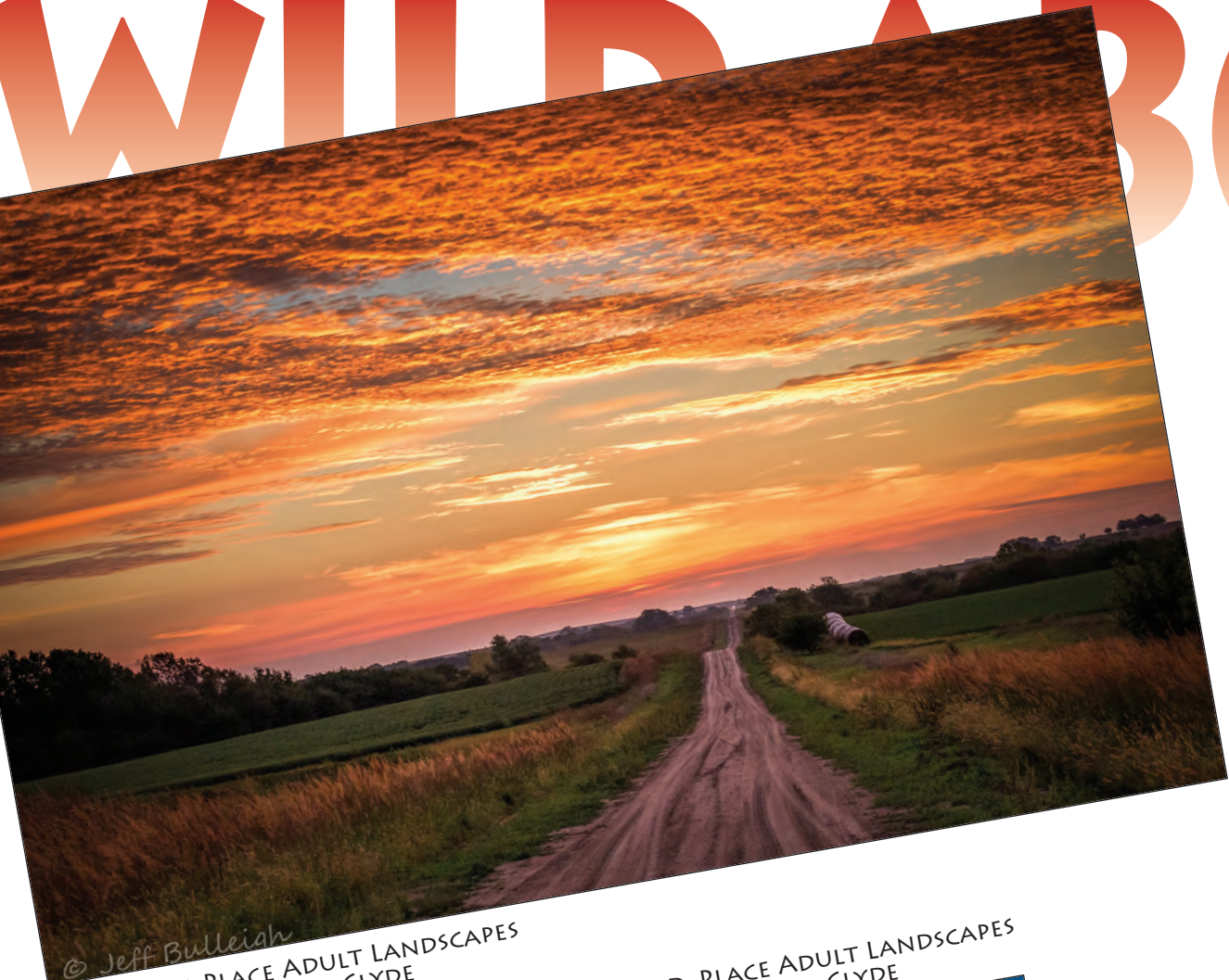
3RD. PLACE YOUTH OUTDOOR RECREATION
NATHAN KNAPP - SENECA



2ND. PLACE YOUTH OUTDOOR RECREATION
NATHAN KNAPP - SENECA



WILDLIFE BOU



© Jeff Bulleigh

1ST. PLACE ADULT LANDSCAPES
JEFF BULLEIGH - CLYDE



2ND. PLACE ADULT LANDSCAPES
JEFF BULLEIGH - CLYDE

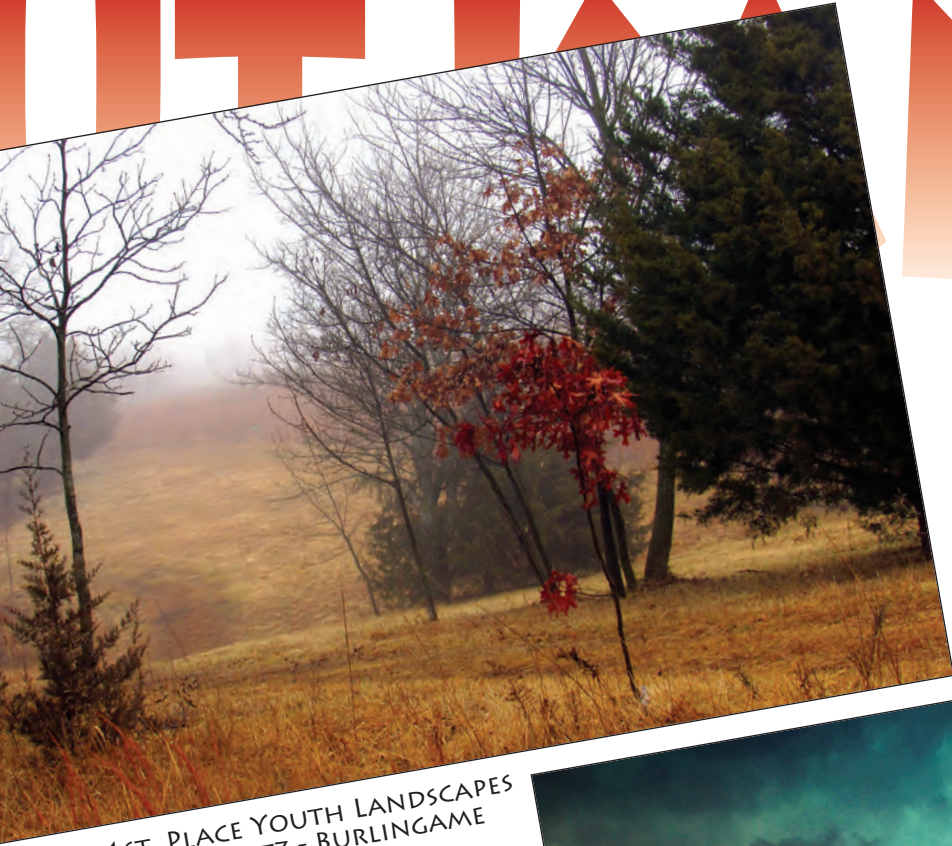


Wildlife & Parks



IT TAKES VILLAGE

NSAS

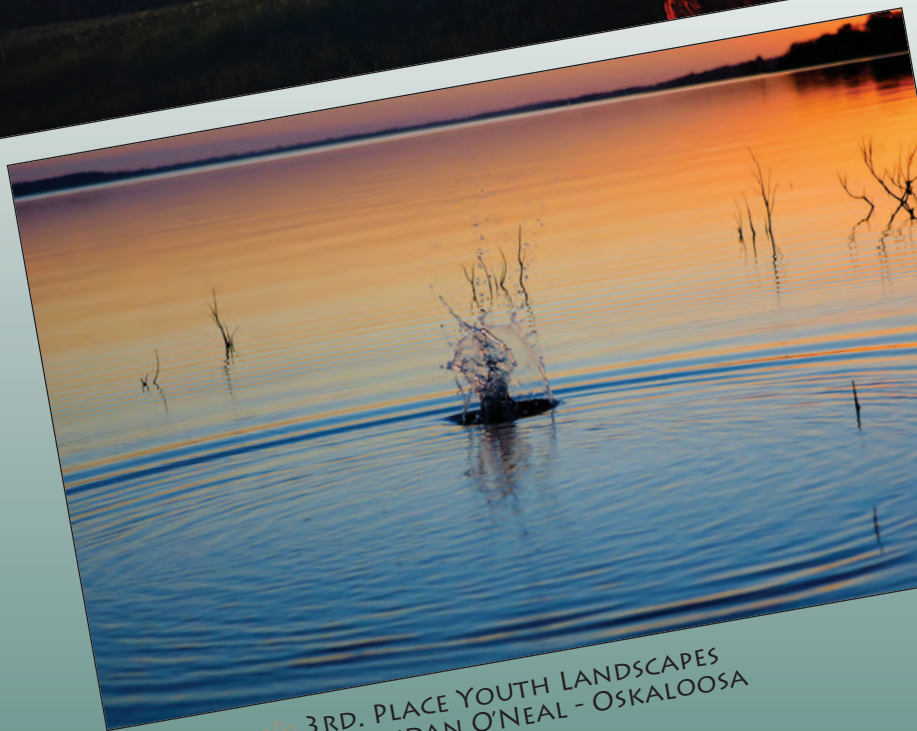


1ST. PLACE YOUTH LANDSCAPES
ISAAC SHULTZ - BURLINGAME

2ND. PLACE YOUTH LANDSCAPES
JAMES BARTLETT - LECOMPTON



3RD. PLACE ADULT LANDSCAPES
ROGER ARNOLD - BALDWIN



3RD. PLACE YOUTH LANDSCAPES
MCKENDAN O'NEAL - OSKALOOSA



1ST. PLACE ADULT HUNTING AND FISHING
MOLLY BROWNING - TOPEKA



2ND. PLACE ADULT HUNTING AND FISHING
TESSA HERRING - PARSONS



3RD. PLACE ADULT HUNTING AND FISHING
MOLLY BROWNING - TOPEKA

1ST. PLACE YOUTH HUNTING AND FISHING
JOHN WALKER - FRANKLIN



WILD ABOUT



🌸 1ST. PLACE ADULT OTHER SPECIES
JESSE MORGAN - RUSSELL

🌸 2ND. PLACE ADULT OTHER SPECIES
SHELLY BODENSTEINER - GIRARD



OUT KANSAS

1ST. PLACE YOUTH OTHER SPECIES
ISAAC SHULTZ - BURLINGAME



3RD. PLACE ADULT OTHER SPECIES
JD BAUMAN - HILLSBORO

3RD. PLACE YOUTH OTHER SPECIES
ALEXIS WILSON - HIGHLAND



2ND. PLACE YOUTH OTHER SPECIES
MCKENDAN O'NEAL - OSKALOOSA

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