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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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2026 Robert Traver Fly-Fishing Writing Award Winner Announced

The John D. Voelker Foundation and the American Museum of Fly Fishing (AMFF) are pleased to announce the winner of the 2026 Robert Traver Fly-Fishing Writing Award: **“The Restraint of the Hunter” by Andrei Romanov**. This story, set in Romania, shows the development of a conservation ethic and respect between a father and son through poignant scenes that occur decades apart. Mr. Romanov’s writing is clean, clear, and compelling.

The winning entry will receive a \$2,500 prize and is available to read on the American Museum of Fly Fishing’s website at amff.org/traver-winners-2026/ and the Voelker Foundation website at www.voelkerfoundation.com. “The Restraint of the Hunter” will be published in the Winter 2027 issue of the *American Fly Fisher*, the journal of the American Museum of Fly Fishing.

Andrei Romanov is an award-winning writer and historian based in Portugal. Born in Bucharest, Romania, he learned to fly fish in the Danube delta. His narrative history, *Masters of the Ocean Sea* (Sagres Heritage Press), won the 2026 London Book Festival Award for General Nonfiction. Romanov’s short fiction and essays have appeared in *Touchstone*, *The*

Windhover, and *Thin Places*. In 2026, he won the memoir category of Ireland's Write By The Sea competition.

The Traver Award judges also bestowed Honorable Mention recognition on two other entries:

"The Goddess of Compassion, Holding Open the Door" by Steve Duda, Seattle, WA

"The Big Band Theory" by Tim Schulz, Houghton, MI

The two honorable mention stories are available on the American Museum of Fly Fishing and Voelker Foundation websites, and their writers will each received a \$250 prize.

The 2026 competition drew a field of 77 stories and essays. Entries were judged anonymously, resulting in seven finalists. The other four finalists were:

"Falling Scales" by Genevieve Bentz, Bethesda, MD

"Hands and Fish" by Henry Hughes, Monmouth, OR

"Hatches of the Mind" by David Lynch, Concord, MA

"The Gorge" by Norm Richter, Lexington, MA

The Traver Award is named after Robert Traver, pen name of the late John D. Voelker, author of *Trout Madness*, *Trout Magic*, *Anatomy of a Fisherman*, the 1958 best seller *Anatomy of a Murder*, and the fine historical novel *Laughing Whitefish*. Judge Voelker also served on the Michigan Supreme Court as its 74th justice from 1956 to 1960. A collection of Voelker's finest "yarns" and observations about fishing was published posthumously by Nick Lyons in 2001 under the title *Traver on Fishing*.

A new anthology of Traver Award stories from 2008 through 2025 titled *Trout Do Not Lie* will be released November 3, 2026 by Stackpole Books/Globe Pequot. Two earlier anthologies of Traver Award winners, finalists, and other stories have been published: *In Hemingway's Meadow* (2009) and *Love Story of the Trout* (2010).

The Traver Award was created in 1994 to encourage and recognize "distinguished original stories or essays that embody the implicit love of fly-fishing, respect for the sport, and the natural world in which it takes place." The winning story or essay must demonstrate high literary values in one or more of these three categories:

- The joy of fly-fishing: personal and philosophic experience
- Ecology: knowledge and protection of the natural world
- Humor: piscatorial friendships and fun on the water

The Voelker Foundation and the American Museum of Fly Fishing joined forces in 2018 to administer the Traver Award and publish the winner in the AMFF journal. For more information, see www.voelkerfoundation.com and www.amff.org.

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