

# STUDENT HANDBOOK

for

Academy of Realistic Taxidermy

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Approved for Veteran's Training

**A.R.T. RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REFUSE ENROLLMENT/SERVICES  
TO ANY PERSON FOR ANY REASON**

Revised Edition #9, December 2008

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you for expressing interest in the Academy of Realistic Taxidermy (A.R.T.). As a student, you will learn the art of taxidermy through lecture, discussion, and **hands-on training**. A.R.T. will offer what we believe to be the finest taxidermy instruction available. A belief based on the principal that a school is only as good as the instructors who teach.

Due to the current economic state of our country, A.R.T., like every other business in the country, has had to cut costs, however, A.R.T. will **not be raising its tuition cost**. Due to the expense of bringing in instructors A.R.T. has had to cut this expense but will still periodically have a visiting instructor.

You will be instructed by Steve Faechner the owner and operator of A.R.T. Steve has been doing taxidermy for 20 years and has been taught more tricks of the trade at A.R.T. for over the last 8 years by taxidermists who are proven masters in their fields – men and women who have dedicated themselves to the art of taxidermy and proven their abilities in competitions, as judges, as instructors at A.R.T., and as successful business owners.

Steve began his taxidermy career in 1987 when he completed taxidermy school. He has owned a taxidermy business for 20 years.

In 1994 he expanded his taxidermy business to include a commercial tannery which he maintained until 2000, when he began the Academy of Realistic Taxidermy (A.R.T.).

Steve continued his taxidermy education from the time he completed taxidermy school to today by attending State, National, and World taxidermy competitions.

Since A.R.T. opened in 2000, Steve has had the opportunity to continue his taxidermy education and learn taxidermy from National and World Champions throughout the U.S. and Canada.

Steve attended sculpting classes with one of the best sculptors in the world, Joe Kish.

Won a 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in the World in collective artists, 2 Awards of Excellence at the National level, many 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place ribbons at World, National and State competitions. Steve has also won numerous outstanding service awards at National and State competitions one of them being the highest service award “THE PRESIDENTS AWARD” from the NTA.

In 2008, a letter of thanks from Retired General H. Norman Schwarzkopf for the help with the Be Bear Aware program and Wildlife Stewardship Campaign. *See back page*

Steve has served as a board of director for the National Taxidermists Association, United Taxidermist Association, and the Montana Taxidermists Association, and served two terms as President for the Montana Taxidermists Association.

Steve’s experience in owning his own taxidermy business for 20 years along with a commercial hair on tannery for 7 years, and having been instructed by over 20 master taxidermists teaching at A.R.T. over the last 8 years, is the key to your success and the foundation of the Academy of Realistic Taxidermy.

A.R.T. will also periodically bring in guest instructors who have been trained by world and national champions, and who have proven themselves masters in their field.

A.R.T. offers a full range of classes including birds, gameheads, life-size mammals, fish, and business courses. Intermediate classes are also available. Course lengths are available from two to eight, weeks (based on 40 hours per week), and students may choose any number of classes for training.

A.R.T. also provides business training throughout the entire course which includes how to set-up and operate your own taxidermy business. Students will be given instruction on pricing your product, licensing and disclaimers, and business set-up costs.

### **COURSE CURRICULUM**

Each student will mount at least 2 gameheads, 3 birds, 3 fish, and 1 life-size open mouth mount. Each mount is the property of the student to take home.

In addition, most A.R.T. students as a class project will be doing a life size mount for the Be Bear Aware program and the Wildlife Stewardship Campaign. These mounts (the majority of the mounts being grizzly bears) will be displayed in forest service visiting centers with credits going to the students involved.

In addition, A.R.T. also offers intense, six-day intermediate classes to experienced taxidermists.

A.R.T. also offers business training throughout the course which includes how to set-up and operate their taxidermy business. Students will

be given instruction on pricing your product, licensing and disclaimers, and business set-up costs.

Taxidermy has evolved into a full-fledged form of wildlife art, and successful taxidermists of today must be artists as well as businessmen and women. So many begin their taxidermy careers as a hobby and have difficulty making a living because the business was not developed from the beginning. Therefore, students will be taught the value of their time, and methods of pricing.

Students are allowed to work on their projects at any time, day or night. The school building is open twenty-four (24) hours per day, seven (7) days per week. The administration strongly encourages each student to spend as much time as possible in the classroom.

### **Bird Taxidermy**

Students are guaranteed a minimum of 80 hours learning bird taxidermy, and will develop the skills needed to mount birds in both flying and standing positions. The following components will be taught:

- Bird anatomy
- Skinning and fleshing
- Preservation and degreasing
- Accurate measurement procedures
- Form selection and/or carving
- Skin and feather preparation
- Mounting on form
- Finishing work
- Painting techniques with airbrush
- Base and habitat selection and positioning

## **Fish Taxidermy**

Students are guaranteed a minimum of 80 hours learning fish taxidermy, and will develop the skills needed to mount wall and pedestal mounts. The following components will be taught:

- Fish anatomy
- Accurate measuring procedures
- Incisions for wall and pedestal mounts
- Skinning and fleshing
- Degreasing and preservation
- Form selection and/or carving
- Mounting on form/casting heads
- Finish work
- Painting techniques with airbrush (comprehensive time will be spent using the airbrush and developing airbrush techniques)
- Base and habitat selection and positioning.

## **Game head/Life-size Taxidermy**

Students guaranteed a minimum of 120 hours learning skinning and tanning along with game head and life-size taxidermy, and will develop the skills needed to mount game heads. The following components will be taught:

- Head and Animal anatomy
- Accurate measurement procedure for form selection
- Preparation of hides for tanning, including turning procedure of the eyes, ears, nose and lips
- Placement of antlers/horns on forms
- Eye setting techniques
- Form alteration
- Sculpting
- Repair of holes and other damages
- Mounting on form
- Finish work
- Painting techniques with airbrush

- Techniques for mounting antlers plaques and European mounts.

Students guaranteed a minimum of 40 hours learning habitat and base work, and will develop the skills needed to recreate habitat. The following components will be taught:

- Snow
- Different rock making methods
- Artificial water and splashes
- Faux marble – granite
- Mosses and ground cover
- If it is recreating nature we can do it!

During the eight-week instruction course, four weeks will be devoted to gamehead and life-size taxidermy, two weeks each. Any student wanting to learn gamehead taxidermy would more than benefit by taking the life-size course at the same time.

### **Business Training**

Students will be given business training which includes how to set-up and operate their taxidermy business. Each instructor will pass on his or her secrets of success.

- Pricing your product/service (your time is valuable)
- Customer service/satisfaction
- Licensing and disclaimers
- Continuing education

### **SCHOOL BUILDING**

A.R.T. has a seven thousand (7000) square foot building, which includes the large classroom, three (3) paint booths, supply room, tool room, habitat room, library, showroom, photography studio, and restrooms.

## A.R.T. LIBRARY

The library provides learning and information resources which support the mission and goals of A.R.T. The library has the following academic goals:

- To provide reference and research materials for students and faculty that supports the curriculum and educational programs at A.R.T.
- To assist in developing and applying higher educational research skills
- To provide a collection of audio-visual media and materials which will be available for instructional use in the school.
- To provide state-of-the-art library services by integrating technology. Students must obtain clearance from school administration before removing library materials from the library. Students who withdraw or graduate from the school are expected to return the library materials borrowed from the library. Failure to do so will result in graduation certificates being withheld and loss of tuition and all deposits.

## TUITION

Enclosed with this Student Handbook is a breakdown of the tuition costs.

Student housing is **FREE**.

Each student will also receive various tools of the trade, which will include an airbrush at no additional cost to the student.

Each student will be given the supplies necessary to complete all the specimens required to complete the eight-week taxidermy course, if used properly. The Administration has calculated the amount of supplies, i.e. bondo, hide paste, glues, adhesives, etc., necessary to complete the required

specimens. If a student requires more supplies than are required, they will be charged additional money for additional supplies.

Each student is also given the forms, eyes, capes, skins, etc., necessary to complete all specimens required to complete the eight-week taxidermy course. If the forms, eyes, capes, skins, etc. are destroyed or lost due to the student's carelessness, the student will be charged additional money to replace these items.

Upon completion of the eight-week beginner taxidermy instruction, a student can purchase a lifetime membership, which entitles the individual to three days of intermediate instruction every year thereafter. Lifetime membership is a one-time fee of \$2,000.00 and may be purchased by any alumni.

Also, upon completion of the eight-week beginner taxidermy instruction, a student can purchase a three-day refresher course to be taken within two years of completion of the eight-week session. The three-day refresher course has a fee of \$750.00 and must be purchased less than thirty days from the date of completion.

### **HOUSING**

Dormitory housing is provided by A.R.T. for the students at **NO COST**. There are two (2) houses provided for the students on A.R.T.'s campus. Each student has his or her own bedroom. One (1) house has four (4) bedrooms, a fully equipped kitchen, dining room, living room, two (2) bathrooms; satellite TV, VCR/DVD, and washer and dryer for the students' use. The second house also has four (4) bedrooms, one (1) bathroom, and exercise and weight equipment.

Students are required to bring bedding for a twin size bed and towels. Phone cards can be purchased for long distance telephone calls and e-mail is available in the reference library.

### **MEALS**

Meals are not provided in your tuition costs. Students will be responsible for purchasing and preparing all their own meals. The housing has a fully equipped kitchen with two (2) refrigerators.

### **HANDICAPPED ACCESSIBILITY**

A.R.T. is fully wheelchair accessible. In addition to providing services to the disabled, A.R.T. also offers sign language interpretation to the hearing impaired, as well as special tutors for those individuals needing assistance with the academic portion of the course. Any individuals needing these accommodations should mark the appropriate sections on the registration form.

### **DAMAGED OR LOST EQUIPMENT FEE**

Upon each student's arrival, they will check-in with A.R.T.'s staff and be assigned a room. Students will complete a checklist of the condition of their room and turn it in on the first day of class. This checklist will be held until the end of session, at which time the student and staff will do a walk through to determine any damage.

On the first day of class students will be assigned a workstation and be given a tool kit. Each workstation is supplied with tools and supplies that will remain the school's property. An inventory sheet will be provided for each student to complete and return immediately before instruction begins. Upon completion of the course, students will be required to checkout. Each

student and a staff member will do a walk through to determine any damage or lost equipment.

Students will be charged replacement costs of any lost or damaged equipment and repair costs for any damage done to school property (this does not apply to everyday wear and tear). These costs will be paid before students can take their mounts home.

### **ENROLLMENT**

Class size is limited to eight students per session. Enrollment reservations are accepted any time prior to the first day of class provided there are openings available. Early registration is strongly recommended.

To register, please complete the Registration Form and return it to A.R.T. with a registration fee of \$800.00. This \$800.00 will be applied to your tuition costs, but is non-refundable upon cancellation. Half of the tuition cost is due two (2) months prior to the beginning of class or with registration if received less than two (2) months from the start of class and the balance is due four (4) weeks prior to the first day of school. All supplies necessary to complete all specimens required to complete the eight-week taxidermy course will be provided by A.R.T. Students will not receive a discount on tuition for bringing their own capes, hides, etc....

### **CANCELLATION & REFUND POLICY**

#### **A.R.T. Cancellation prior to the beginning of Class:**

If class is cancelled by A.R.T., enrolled students will receive a complete refund of the student's \$800.00 registration fee. The school will not be held liable for any loss the student incurs due to the cancellation of the class. For VA students, please see page 20

**Student Cancellation prior to the Beginning of Class:**

A.R.T. will cancel a student's enrollment, however, the \$800.00 registration fee is non-refundable.

For students who have made tuition payments, if the cancellation notice is received 45 days prior to the first day of class, students will be reimbursed their tuition payment, less the \$800.00 registration fee. Cancellations made by the student less than 45 days of the first day of class will be refunded 75% of the payment made to A.R.T.

**Cancellation during Class:**

Cancellation made during sessions will be refunded based on the percentage of class completed. Students completing up to 25% of the registered class will receive 60% of the tuition paid less the \$800.00 registration fee. Students completing 25% to 50% of the class will receive 40% less the registration fee. Sessions completed over 50% will not be refunded. The student must make all requests for refunds in writing to the school administrator. If student signs up for the 8 week class, (320 hrs), 4 weeks, (160 hrs), is considered 50% completed.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Your attendance in class is vital to your learning. You're either present, absent or tardy for class. Attendance is taken every class session and instructors will mark you for which ever applies to you, the student. Written medical, emergency, or other absences must be submitted to the school administrator for program use only. Failure to notify the school concerning absence can result in dismissal after two consecutive or five total unexcused absences. No refund of any tuition monies will be given to any student that is dismissed due to failure to attend class.

**STUDENT CONDUCT**

It is the student's responsibility to attend classes on time and be fully alert. Students must abide by all rules and regulations of the school. Failure to abide may result in immediate dismissal. Grounds for immediate dismissal include:

1. Violation of any and all safety regulations;
2. Interference with other student's work;
3. Obscenity or vulgarity;
4. Stealing;
5. Coming onto the property under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or bringing onto the property alcohol or drugs. **A.R.T. is a dry campus NO Alcohol is allowed.**
6. Damage to school property; and
7. Use of Controlled substances.

The following list is intended to provide examples of inappropriate behavior the school will not tolerate:

1. Violation against any other member of the school, this includes physical or verbal assault, nuisance or threatening phone calls, and any individual or group effort designed to harass or to ridicule any other member of the school;
2. Theft or damage to the school's property or property of any other students, staff members, or visitors to the campus;
3. Obstruction or disruption of teaching, research, administration, or other school activities;
4. Dishonesty, such as knowingly furnishing false information to the school;
5. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of school or personal identification records;

6. The possession or use of alcohol or illegal drugs on campus;
7. Entering the property under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs, or bringing onto the property any alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs;
8. Creating, maintaining, or participating in a situation detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the school community. This includes tampering with fire equipment, setting fireworks, bomb threats, and similar behavior.
9. Any suspected violation of any Federal or State game law will result in immediate dismissal of the student.
10. Bringing on the property of the Academy of Realistic Taxidermy any specimen prohibited or protected by Federal or State laws (without appropriate permits) shall result in immediate dismissal of the student.
11. A Conviction in any court of any crime relating to violation of Federal or State game laws will also result in immediate dismissal of the student.

No refund of any tuition monies, monetarily or otherwise, will be given to any student that is dismissed for failure to abide by the rules and regulations set forth above.

### **COMPUTER USE POLICY**

A.R.T.'s computer policy includes, but is not limited to the following and offenses constitute a violation of the student conduct code and can lead to serious disciplinary action or immediate dismissal:

1. Theft and/or abuse of computer facilities (software and hardware).
2. Unauthorized use of computing facilities to interfere with the work of another student, faculty member, or school staff.

3. Use of computing facilities to send harassing or abusive messages.
4. Use of Internet for purposes other than reference for class use, preparation of school assignments, or other educational material for use during the school session. (Use of Internet for obtaining or viewing pornographic materials is forbidden).
5. Unauthorized file transfers.

No refund of any tuition monies, monetarily or otherwise, will be given to any student that is dismissed for failure to abide by the rules and regulations set forth above.

### **DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY**

All students of A.R.T. are expected to comply with federal, state and county laws regarding the sale and use of alcohol and drugs. Students will be held responsible for any violations. Failure to adhere to regulations relating to alcoholic beverages and/or drugs will result in immediate dismissal. **A.R.T. is an alcohol free campus.**

### **PERSONAL PROPERTY**

The Academy of Realistic Taxidermy is not responsible for the loss or destruction of the personal property of the students.

### **STUDENT HEALTH SERVICES**

A.R.T. provides no formal student health services. All students are encouraged to file with the school administrator:

1. Family member to contact in case of emergency;
2. Family doctor's name, address, and telephone number;
3. Identification of existing medical conditions or problems.

Students needing medical attention will be taken to the nearest U.S.

Medical facility, Northern Montana Hospital, approximately forty (40) miles south of the school at the student's expense.

Further, for your protection and ours, we ask that all students provide proof of a current Tetanus shot (given within the last 10 years) and results of a Tuberculosis test (PPD) given within the 3 months. These shots can be obtained at your doctor's office or your local County Health Department or we can make arrangements for you to have these shots here in Havre, MT.

### **TRAVEL INFORMATION/REQUIREMENTS**

The nearest large airport is located 150 miles from the A.R.T. campus. Therefore, any students traveling to A.R.T. by airplane **MUST** contact A.R.T. to obtain information from the Administration regarding the dates they should fly in and out of Great Falls, Montana. Any hotel costs incurred by students as a result of flying to Montana or returning home, are the responsibility of the student. A.R.T. will not reimburse any student for any hotel and travel expenses.

### **STUDENT'S APPROVED FOR VETERAN'S TRAINING**

All of the above sections apply to students approved for Veteran's training with the exception of the following sections:

### **GRADING SYSTEM**

While A.R.T. has previously been a pass/fail course, beginning January, 2003, we have implemented a grading system. Students receiving grades A – D pass the taxidermy instruction course. Students receiving an F will fail the taxidermy instruction course. However, the instructors and administration will do all in their power to ensure that any student that is having extreme difficulty, and is likely to receive a failing grade, will receive one-on-one instruction to enable them to receive a passing grade.

The instructor and Administration will do this through extra hours of one-on-one instruction with the student.

Students that are not able to pass the taxidermy instruction course, and want to re-enter the program, can do so at any time. However, they will be charged the full tuition rate to repeat the course.

The instructors, as well as Administration monitor the student's progress, constantly. A.R.T. prides itself on small class sizes to enable each student to receive one-on-one instruction. Progress records are kept by the Administration, and provided to the students upon request.

Students are graded on the following criteria:

### **Bird Taxidermy**

#### **A. CRAFTSMANSHIP AND MECHANICAL SOUNDNESS:**

1. Correct Use of Artificial Parts
2. Correct Use of Paint
3. Shrinkage
4. Proper Alignment of Skin on Body
5. Appearance of Seams
6. Grooming
7. Secure Attachment of All Parts to Subject
8. Basics
9. Secure and Convincing Attachment to Base or Hanger
10. Cleanliness
11. Odor

#### **B. ANATOMICAL ACCURACY**

1. Head – Overall Shape and Anatomy symmetry:
2. Neck:
3. Eye set
4. Body, Accuracy of Shape
5. Belly
6. Tail
7. Feet and Legs
8. Wings and Legs
9. Profiles and Balance

## 10. Overall Pose

100 – 90 = A

89 – 80 = B

79 – 70 = C

69 – 60 = D

59 – 50 = F

### **Fish Taxidermy**

#### **A. CRAFTSMANSHIP AND MECHANICAL SOUNDNESS:**

1. Proper Alignment of Skin on Body
2. Appearance of Seams
3. Shrinkage
4. Skin and Scale Detail
5. Correct Use of Fillers, Convincing Epoxy Reconstruction
6. Paint Application
7. Molding Techniques
8. Odor and Cleanliness
9. Secure and Convincing Attachment to Base or Hanger

#### **B. ANATOMICAL ACCURACY:**

1. Side Profile
2. Front Profile
3. Top Profile
4. Head to Body Junction
5. Body Contours
6. Head Exterior
7. Mouth Interior
8. Eyes
9. Fins

#### **C. ACCURACY OF COLOR:**

1. Head Exterior and Body
2. Mouth Interior
3. Fins
4. Eyes

100 – 90 = A

- 89 – 80 = B
- 79 – 70 = C
- 69 – 60 = D
- 59 – 50 = F

### **Gamehead Taxidermy**

#### **A. CRAFTSMANSHIP AND MECHANICAL SOUNDNESS:**

1. Correct Use of Fillers
2. Correct Use of Paints
3. Shrinkage
4. Drumming
5. Appearance of Seams
6. Proper Alignment of Skin on Forms
7. Grooming
8. Basics
9. Cleanliness
10. Odor

#### **B. ANATOMICAL ACCURACY:**

1. Nose Exterior
2. Nose Interior
3. Mouth and Lips
4. Open Mouth
5. Eye set
6. Eye Anatomy
7. Eyelid Placement
8. Tear Ducts
9. Ears
10. Ear Butts
11. Anatomy of The Head
12. Anatomy of Neck
13. Anatomy Shoulder
14. Anatomy of Brisket
15. Neck Musculature
16. Shoulder Musculature

- 100 – 90 = A
- 89 – 80 = B

- 79 – 70 = C
- 69 – 60 = D
- 59 – 50 = F

**Lifesize Taxidermy**

**A. CRAFTSMANSHIP AND MECHANICAL SOUNDNESS:**

1. Correct Use of Fillers
2. Correct Use of Paint
3. Shrinkage
4. Drumming
5. Appearance of Seams
6. Proper Alignment of Skin on Form
7. Grooming
8. Secure Attachment to all Parts to Subject
9. Basics
10. Cleanliness
11. Odor
12. Nose
13. Mouth
14. Lips

**B. ANATOMICAL ACCURACY:**

1. Eye set
2. Eye Anatomy
3. Ears
4. Ear Butts
5. Head – Overall Shape and Anatomy
6. Neck
7. Body
8. Front Legs and Shoulders
9. Rear Legs and Hindquarters
10. Tail Area

- 100 – 90 = A
- 89 – 80 = B
- 79 – 70 = C
- 69 – 60 = D
- 59 – 50 = F

**CREDITS FOR PREVIOUS TRAINING**

A.R.T will evaluate all credits for previous training and experience. Appropriate credit will be given for previous education and training and the program will be shortened proportionately if credit is granted.

However, A.R.T. believes that the full eight (8) week course is extremely beneficial to even the intermediate taxidermist, as techniques vary from one specimen to another.

Students do not have to take the full eight (8) week course. If a student just wants to learn fish or birds for example, he/she can take only that portion of the course. However, gameheads and lifesize must be taken together, as the skinning and tanning aspects are incorporated into both of these courses.

**Cancellation and Refund Policy for Students Paid Under the V.A. Plan:**

Students paid under the V.A. Plan, withdrawing from A.R.T. will have the remainder of the course fees refunded in accordance with the following refundable table. In accordance with DVA Regulations, should a student withdraw prior to start of the course, \$10.00 of the registration fee will be retained by A.R.T., and the remainder will be subject to the pro rata policy.

10% of program completed.....	90% refunded
20% of program completed.....	80% refunded
30 % of program completed.....	70% refunded
40% of program completed.....	60% refunded

50% of program completed.....50% refunded  
60% of program completed.....40% refunded  
70% of program completed.....30% refunded  
80% of program completed.....20% refunded  
90% of program completed.....10% refunded

We agree to administer the Department of Veterans Affairs regulation {21.4255} regarding the refund policy for non-accredited courses as stated above. This refund policy is in effect for veterans and/or other eligible students.

## **STUDENT COMMENTS**

### **Dave Vaught - Wildlife Conservators - Panama City Beach, Florida. Member National Taxidermists' Association and Florida State Taxidermists Association - Student April 2002.**

My biggest goal, of course, was to open my own business, my way, on my time. After several months of searching for a top taxidermy school to attend, I finally settled on A.R.T. Distance from my home did not matter if the learning experience was there. I wanted to learn from one of the top instructors giving me enough knowledge in a brief time to short cut years of trial and error/failure in my business.

Now, almost three years later, my shop work is backed up 10 to 12 months, and I may soon have to hire one or two employees. Last month, January (04), I went to Orlando/Kissimmee for the annual Florida State Taxidermist Association Convention and Competition, basically to attend seminars and once again learn new techniques. I took five **customer** mounts and entered fish, birds, a gamehead and lifesize mammal all in professional division, not really expecting to win anything. I was floored and humbled when I won three (3) first places, two (2) second places, a Best of Category, the Star Fish Award (best repo fish) and Polytranspar Award, and lastly, won Best All-Around Taxidermist in FL. This probably never would have happened had I not attended A.R.T.

Steve and Kim Faechner are terrific hosts, accommodations are very good, and I believe I have covered how good the school is.

So, no matter where you live, it is **absolutely** worth the drive. In my case, 2350 miles each way was worth it.

**UPDATE: In July of 2004, Dave competed at the National Taxidermist Convention in Huntsville, Alabama. Dave won the Mayor's Choice Award at this competition.**

### **Submitted by David J. Baldwin – Washington – Student April 2002 –**

I attended A.R.T. during the spring session. I learned so much in nine weeks it would blow your mind. The owners are friendly and helpful. Their main goal is to see that students get the very best instruction available. Most classes are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. but we were allowed to work longer on extra projects to increase our training. I am now very comfortable to start my own shop and look forward to advance training at this school later. Another goal of the school is to have a student win a world or national title and return to teach.

**Submitted by Sal Caruso - New York – Student Spring 2003**

I had a great time at the school and I'm looking forward to competing as soon as I get some space to work. I think the stuff we learned at the school is going to open the general public eyes on the different things that can be done instead of just normal everyday deer starring into space. Thank you for the experience. It was awesome.

**Submitted by Reed Prosser – California – Student April 2003**

I had been doing taxidermy for 10 years as a hobby. Two years ago I broke my leg in a construction accident. I could not do my duties as a carpenter so I went to full-time taxidermy. I had never done birds or fish, so going to A.R.T. was perfect. I learned so much at A.R.T. it was money well spent. It took my skills to another level. I am going to enter my first California Taxidermy Competition in March 2004.

**Submitted by Eric H. Couch – Kansas –Student Fall 2002**

I wanted to write you a letter to tell you thank you for all your assistance before school, during school, and after school. When I first contacted your taxidermy school, you were excited and everything came from the heart. I did some more checking on your school through the N.T.A. and some instructors. The school and you and your family came very highly recommended.

I learned so much at A.R.T. I learned all the basics and even was able to do a lot of advanced work. This helped me when I competed in our state show. I placed with a first in gameheads and three thirds on my fish and two bird mounts. I am pleased with this due to the fact I entered the Professional Division and I have only been doing taxidermy seriously for 5 months.

I just want to tell you thank you for all your help and your confidence in me. I have called you since school with questions, and you have always given me answers I can use and work with in my mounts. Your school was invaluable for me and I would do it all over again.

**Submitted by Jerry Burnham – South Dakota – Fall 2002**

As a current student at A.R.T., I found the housing to be extraordinary “just like home.” The school itself I could not believe when I first arrived. Huge man huge. I am so glad that I waited to go to school until now. I have been interested in this field for a lot of years now, and finally got the opportunity to fulfill one of my major dreams. If I had this opportunity two years ago, this school would not have been available. I would not have had the pleasure to be taught by the BEST OF THE BEST. Bring lots of paper; you’ll need it just to keep track of all the “tricks” and the secrets of the trade. Quality is their goal, and to bring quality to taxidermy and taxidermy to a standard of an art form. One more thing, I am disabled and they worked with my disability and me. To you other disabled persons, check your local Vocational Rehabilitation.

**Submitted by Keith Short – Montana – Student January 2004.**

I just finished eight weeks of training at Steve Faechner’s school in Montana.

One of the students had just finished a 10-week course at another school and complained that he hadn’t learned very much. He spent over \$15,000 by the time all of his mounts and supplies were purchased. He said **the hidden costs were far more than he expected** and that he wouldn’t recommend that school.

Steve offers a one-rate package that is almost half the cost of this other school and includes all supplies, animals, and forms. After attending this school, I have been pounded by potential customers looking for a qualified taxidermist. I feel confident that my new skills from A.R.T. will pay huge dividends.

**Submitted by Bryan Todd – California – Student January 2004**

I just finished up my eight weeks of taxidermy instruction at the Academy of Realistic Taxidermy headed by Steve Faechner. I am convinced that I was able to attend the best school there is. Unlike most schools, there were no hidden costs. With the total amount being much less than other schools. A.R.T. provides a large clean working environment, unlike what I have heard about other schools. With the education I received at A.R.T., I feel confident in starting a business right away. The phone calls have already started! Don’t let distance be the reason you choose a poor education.