

## **INTRODUCTION**

Thank you for expressing interest in the *Academy of Realistic Taxidermy (A.R.T.)*. As a student, you will be instructed by North American and World Masters in their field. 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. All of our instructors 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, and as successful business owners. Their experience and expertise is the key to your success and the foundation of the *Academy of Realistic Taxidermy* – “*masters building future masters*”.

*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 offers extensive business training, meaning each student can leave *A.R.T.* with a full knowledge of how to set-up and operate their own taxidermy business. Students will be given instruction on writing a business plan, financial forecasting, money management, pricing your product, licensing and disclaimers, and business set-up costs.

## **INSTRUCTORS**

“The instructors are proven masters in their fields – men and women who have dedicated their lives to the art of taxidermy and proven their abilities in competition, as judges, and successful business owners.”

Garry Blew	Washington	Fish
Scott Brewer	Washington	Mammals
Manny Chavez	New Mexico	Gameheads
Shawn Dawson	Montana	Gameheads/Lifesize
Dan Gill	Montana	Fish
Joe Kaiser	Missouri	Birds/Fish
Jeff Mourning	Colorado	Fish
Danny Owens	Texas	Birds
Mike Ross	Colorado	Fish
Gary Senk	Wisconsin	Fish
Mark Smart	Montana	Mammals
Jan VanHoesen	Michigan	Mammals
Wagner, Clay	Texas	Gameheads/Lifesize
Tom Weickum	Wyoming	Mammals

## **COURSE CURRICULUM**

Each student will mount at least 2 gameheads, 3 birds, 3 fish, and 2 life-size mounts. Each mount is the property of the student to take home. In addition, A.R.T. also offers intense, six-day intermediate classes to experienced taxidermists.

A.R.T. also offers extensive business training, meaning each student will leave A.R.T. with the knowledge of how to set-up and operate their taxidermy business. Students will be given instruction on writing a business plan, financial forecasting, money management, 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. The business courses will instruct the student on preparing a business plan. 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, methods of pricing, and how to define start-up costs and basic bookkeeping.

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.

### **Gamehead Taxidermy**

Students guaranteed a minimum of 80 hours learning gamehead taxidermy, and will develop the skills needed to mount gameheads. The following components will be taught:

- Head 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

- Repair of holes and other damages
- Mounting on form
- Finish work
- Painting techniques with airbrush
- Techniques for mounting antlers plaques and European mounts.

### **Life-size Taxidermy**

Students guaranteed a minimum of 80 hours learning lifesize taxidermy, and will develop the skills needed to mount a life-size mammal. The following components will be taught:

- Animal anatomy
- Accurate measurement procedures for mannequin selection
- Preparation of hides for tanning, including turning procedures for eyes, ears, nose and lips
- Eye setting techniques
- Form alteration
- Sculpting
- Repair of holes and other damage
- Mounting on form
- Finish work
- Painting techniques with airbrush
- Base and habitat selection

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 Seminars**

Students will be offered business training. Each student will leave the academy with knowledge of how to set-up and operate their taxidermy business. Each instructor has offered to pass on his or her secrets of success. Additionally, a specialist comes in during the last week of class to give a

business seminar. The instructors and the specialist will teach the following topics:

- Financial forecasting
- Cash flow and money management
- Bookkeeping
- Pricing your product/service(your time is valuable)
- Customer service/satisfaction
- Licensing and disclaimers
- Identifying business set-up costs
- Continuing education
- Advertising budgets, techniques, and markets

### **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. The one (1) time cost includes a one (1) year subscription to ***“Breakthrough”*** magazine, the nations leading taxidermy publication upon completion of the course.

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. These costs will be deducted from the \$300.00 damage deposit identified in the "Enrollment" section of this catalog.

### **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, of which \$300.00 will be held as a damage deposit, and will be refunded in full if no damage is done to the housing or equipment is lost or broken. The remaining \$500.00 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 with refund, less \$500.00 registration fee, if the cancellation notice is received 45 days prior to the first day of class. 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 \$500.00 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 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;  
***A.R.T.* is a dry campus NO Alcohol**
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. 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.
8. Any suspected violation of any Federal or State game law will result in immediate dismissal of the student.
9. 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.
10. 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 disciplinary action. *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 are the responsibility of the student, and A.R.T. will not reimburse any student for hotel costs.

## **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 instructor to another. Students learn the different techniques of four (4) different instructors in the eight (8) week course.

Students do not have to take the full eight (8) week course. If a student just wants to learn fish, for example, he/she can take only that portion of the course.

**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 the top instructors/competitors in their specialized areas, and learn their techniques for fish, birds, lifesize mammals and gameheads, all in one place. Glen Browning, Jeff Mourning, Brenda Duvall, and Norman Smith, were all fabulous 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 place, two (2) second place, 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 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 instructors are all world or national champions and also selected for their teaching abilities. The owners are friendly and helpful. Their main goal is to see that each student gets 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 advanced 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. I feel that this school is the best because it is not taught by just one instructor. Each class is taught by someone who is a specialist in his field of expertise.

**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 staring 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. Steve has top notch instructors and they are all well respected in their field. 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. The instructors were knowledgeable and informative. 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 would have 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. Man I mean to tell you, these people know their stuff. They have been in the business for years and competed in World Shows against the best in the world and won. They are anxious to teach you all the aspects of this industry. 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. To bring quality to taxidermy and taxidermy to a standard of an art form. One more thing, I am disabled and they have worked with me and my disability. 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. We were instructed by some of the taxidermy industry’s finest – Jeff Brain, Collin Campbell, Scott Brewer and Danny Owens. All of them are National Champions and taught their award winning secrets.

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. We were instructed by some of the world’s greatest taxidermists. 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.