

OCTOBER/NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2019

Member Spotlight



**BLAKE
YODER**

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My name is Blake Yoder, I am 14 years old and I live in Harleysville, Pennsylvania and I am a 9th grader in high school. I started hunting whitetail when I was seven years old. Every year since my interest in hunting grew until one day in 2016 my grandfather and I went to our mountain house and went archery hunting. We hunted in the morning and then we came in for lunch and turned on the TV to watch the outdoor channel, then a commercial for a taxidermist shop came on and it showed a man airbrushing an elk's nose, at that moment I knew I wanted to be a taxidermist.

When I went home I began to look on YouTube for videos on mounting whitetails, at the end of the video the taxidermist mentioned Joe Coombs. I looked up Joe Coombs and it took me to a taxidermy supply company and I saw a dvd on mounting whitetails. So for Christmas I asked for the DVD.

Christmas morning the DVD and a Joe Coombs catalog sat under the christmas tree. As I watched the DVD, I couldn't wait to begin pursuing my dream of being a taxidermist.

I would not have been able to do it without my parents because my dad was willing to give up a corner of the basement and build a wall for me and now because of him I have a nice shop that fits all of my personal needs. My mom even homeschooled me

for my sixth grade year and I was able to do taxidermy which counted as my art. I also would not have been able to do it without the help of a great taxidermist named Jason Rumsey who owns and runs Rumsey Taxidermy. Without Jason's help I can guarantee you that I would not be writing this article right now.

As of now I am mostly mounting ducks. I won best of category in junior amateur at the Cabela's show with a hen wood duck and the state show with a drake bufflehead. This year I won best of category in amateur decision at the Cabela's show with a banded goose that I shot last year.

I am still trying to improve my whitetails and small mammals so they are good enough for commercial work, and for my waterfowl and all other bird taxidermy. I am also trying to get some more customers.

I am so glad that I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxidermy Association. At the state show I was able to meet some great people and learn some new things. I am especially thankful for the show at Cabelas because that is what got me started in competing. Becoming a member of the PTA was one of my best decisions and I would encourage anyone with an interest in taxidermy to join.