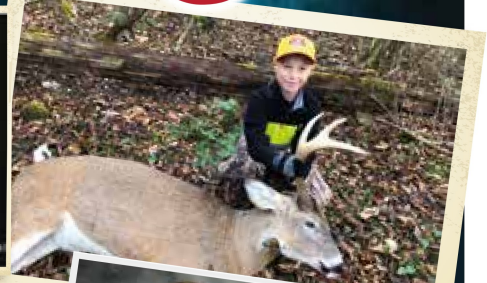


OCTOBER | NOVEMBER | DECEMBER 2020

# Member Spotlight



Hello PTA members, my name is Jens E. Jorgensen and I live in Mercer County in western PA. I have been happily married to my wife, Rosanne, for going on 18 years. We have two wonderful children, our son, Jens A., is nine, and our daughter, Julianna, is seven. Taxidermy is a part time job for me (Rosanne might beg to differ!), but truly a passion I have had for most of my life. My day job, selling spine surgery equipment, keeps me busy in OR's in western PA as I am present and involved in all the surgeries. We also have a farm, raising cattle, pigs, and deer, as well as a couple businesses I have with my brothers. I am also heavily involved with my children's sports and sit on the board of our local Little League. My other passions outside of all this are hunting and fishing here in PA, as well as hunting Western big game most every year.

My journey into taxidermy started as a youngster, always having an interest in it as a child. My mom tells stories how there were always "dead animals and birds in our freezer", and when she'd ask why they were there, my response was "cause I'm gonna mount 'em!". Most of those were casualties of my BB gun. My dad is really who got us all interested in the outdoors, hunting and fishing as time would allow. He also would travel out west on occasion hunting elk and mule deer, and I vividly remember anticipating phone calls every night hoping for news of him connecting on game out there. I would read every hunting magazine I could get my hands on. As I got older into high school, sports consumed a lot of my time, but I still managed to hunt and fish. College was much the same, between studying and collegiate sports, I had a full schedule, but I still got outdoors as much as I could.

Once out of school and working, I then felt it was time to pursue my lifelong dream of taxidermy. I bought a couple deer mounting DVD's and I was hooked! Early on I did some deer for family and friends, but was yearning to get better and learn more. Online I found the PTA, and called a couple people who lived close to me from the member list. The one who sticks out was Dan Snyder. He told me to come visit his shop some time and we could chat. I took him up on that, and his biggest recommendation for me to improve was join the PTA, and so I did. That was a complete game changer for me. I still remember walking into the competition room that first year and being awe struck. The artwork I saw was both amazing and inspirational. I have not missed a show since then.

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As I look back early on, myself, family, and friends thought my work was fantastic, and it was ok. But, I wanted more than that, and the shows truly opened my eyes into quality taxidermy. The knowledge I have gained over the years attending the conventions has made me look at this art form completely differently, regardless of what my customers think. I cannot quantify what the PTA has done for me along this path of taxidermy. Let's face it, things change and advance over time in everything, taxidermy is no different. Going annually has allowed me to keep "up to date" with supplies and techniques. I have learned so much attending seminars, meeting and talking with other taxidermists, and visiting others shops that I have met thru the PTA. Between all the knowledge gained, the friendships created, and saving on supplies, I truly can't afford not to attend our annual convention!

I haven't competed as much as I'd like, but hoping to change that in the near future. I have always just brought customer shoulder mounts, by doing so I have learned so much from the judges. I always had the mindset to listen to their critiques and use that to drive me to go home and study to improve. I encourage everyone to bring pieces to the show, what a valuable learning tool. What has given me the most joy, is watching my son over the last few years compete. From an early age we saw he had interest in art, and figured what a great way to express that in taxidermy. He has taken to doing fish (which oddly I don't do). He truly has an eye for color, and extreme patience for a child his age. I've enjoyed watching every piece he has done, and taken tons of pictures and videos of each one along the way. He has come so far in the last four years, I can't wait to see where this journey takes him. I also look forward to him trying mammals and birds as he gets older.

In closing, I want to say a big "Thank You" to the PTA, and everyone who has helped me along this journey. I have gained so much from being a member of the PTA, and look forward to many more learning experiences. I currently sit on the BOD hoping to help the organization flourish to help more taxidermists in the coming years. I feel I need to do my part to give back to an organization that has given so much to me. Lastly, the biggest "Thank You" to my wife and family for supporting my passion for taxidermy, I couldn't do it without them.