

MEMBER

Spotlight

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John Czerniakowski



Hello my name is John Czerniakowski and have been a proud member of the PTA since the beginning in 1979. My wife Patti and I have two children and three grandchildren. My grandson Nathan is six years old and has developed quite an interest in fishing. We fish as much as we can and I always look forward to our fishing trips. His younger sister Veronica enjoys fishing too and we have quite a time of keeping our lines in the water at the same time while Catherine looks on from the baby stroller.

I have always enjoyed turkey hunting especially in the spring and usually hunt in several states each year. I was fortunate to harvest my first Pennsylvania black bear in 2005 that weighed 550 pounds and scored 21 9/16" which ranked it 72 in the Pa record book. Patti and I have a hunting camp in Centre County where I recently built my new shop near Potters Mills. We really enjoy spending time at camp where I do my taxidermy work.

My early taxidermy experience began with the Northwestern School of Taxidermy Course in 1968. There was not much information available to learn taxidermy years ago, however, one point I never forgot from the course was to "always finish the mount before moving on to other things". Taxidermy supplies were very limited in selection and quality with sometimes long wait times for supplies to arrive. There was a tendency not to change or alter any of the forms as they were viewed as accurate since they were purchased from a "taxidermy supplier".

I served a taxidermy apprenticeship through my high school years with Tom Harrington who operated a part time shop in Jamison, Pa. who really helped me in the early years improve my taxidermy skills. Tom was patient with me and always encouraged me to do my best in all the mounts. I will never forget all the wild pheasants we mounted back in those days. It seemed like we mounted pheasants for months! Tom came with me when I successfully passed the

PGC taxidermy exam in 1976 after I moved to Mifflin County and will always be grateful to him for his interest in me.

I have operated Seven Mountains Taxidermy Studio since 1976 during my teaching and school administrator career in Lewistown. I have become a full time taxidermist since 2009 when I retired from the Mifflin County School District. Over the years I have served the PTA as secretary, treasurer and board member and I have felt honored to have received the PTA service award on two occasions.

Despite a very busy career in public school education along with raising a family and getting customer work completed I was able to earn a masters title in turkeys and blue ribbons in upland game birds and small mammals. I hope to compete in more taxidermy competitions in the future. I also served on the PGC Taxidermy Exam Board along with some very talented and accomplished taxidermists from the PTA. I always enjoyed spending time with our fellow taxidermists while helping those taking the exam improve their skills.

I have attended nearly all the PTA conventions since 1979 and what I still value most are the friendships and relationships that have formed with the fine people I have met through the years. I have seen many people cycle through our organization and sometimes wonder if they are still involved in taxidermy. I wish them all well and the very best. Our state organization represents some of the finest and talented taxidermists in the country. Our future is bright as an organization. Those becoming interested in taxidermy wonderful opportunity to become part of an exciting future.

I would like to thank the PTA for its leadership in the industry by creating a learning environment where everyone involved has an opportunity to reach their full potential as a taxidermist. The PTA has meant a lot to me and hope I am able to continue to help and support our great organization for many years to come.

Best wishes,
John Czerniakowski

