GTA COMPETITION RULES

OPEN COMPETITION – JULY 30, 2024

**I. ELIGIBILITY**

1. The competition will be open to all GTA Members in good standing.

2. Entries must be executed by an individual or several specified individuals who are "ALL" GTA members. Company entries are not allowed.

3. GTA members who have received the Award of Excellence will compete in the Award of Excellence in the categories in which they qualified.

4. GTA members who obtain Masters designation in a category, may not compete in the Professional division in that category thereafter.

5. Any entry that has placed (received an award at National or World level) will not be eligible to compete in GTA’s open competition, except to compete for the Master of Masters award described in Item IX of these rules.

**II. JUDGING**

1. Judges for the GTA open competition will be selected from the qualified experts in their field of study. There will be one Bird Judge, one Fish Judge, and one Gamehead Judge. It is anticipated that one of these three Judges will judge the remaining categories, with the assistance, if needed of the other two judges. The Board of Directors of GTA may authorize a fourth Judge if it is necessary to properly judge all categories of mounts entered for competition.

2. Each Judge will score each entry separately on an approved Breakthrough score sheet. Score value is based on Judge’s opinion. Judges will also have bonus categories where additional points may be given. Half points will stand 'as is'. Scores are recorded and kept by the GTA only.

**III. CATEGORIES**

1. Regular entries are mounts entered for scoring by the appropriate judges using Breakthrough score sheets. The entries include gameheads, whitetail gameheads, mammals, fish, reptiles, birds and turkeys.

2. ½ mounts will be judged by the gamehead judge as a gamehead or whitetail gamehead, as the case may be.

3. Fish that are skin mounts will be judged separate from fish that are replicas, i.e., there will be one category for fish that are skin mounts and one category for fish that are replicas. A skin mount may have a cast head and/or cast fins.

4. Rugs with full heads will be judged by the gamehead judge as a gamehead.

5. Reptiles will be judged by the fish judge using a Breakthrough Reptile score sheet.

6. Habitat entries must be identified as such by the participant at the time of registration. The appropriate judges will also fill out a separate Habitat Score sheet. Habitat entries must have three (3) different items to constitute a habitat (i.e., rocks, grass, and dirt).

7. Novelties and crustaceans will be judged collectively by the panel of three judges and awarded a First, Second, and Third Place. The panel will provide a comment sheet but not a detailed score sheet. No Points will be awarded in this category towards the Award of Excellence.

8. Youth Division – All youth are encouraged to enter mounts, art work, etc. and each participant shall receive a purple Youth Ribbon. These entries will not be scored and there is not an entry fee.

**IV. GENERAL RULES FOR ALL COMPETITIONS**

1. The GTA Competition Committee reserves the right to restrict from open viewing any entry deemed inappropriate or detrimental to the image of Taxidermy, Hunting, or Trapping. All such entries will be judged privately.

2. Participants need not be present to compete (except for Best All Around). They must be registered for the convention and pay all applicable fees. Entries must be presented and picked up by the participant's agent.

3. The number of entries per category is unlimited.

4. Protected species must have proper permits to be entered.

5. At the time of entry, each participant must identify the species of their mount.

6. Entries in cases must have removable tops to be judged.

7. No mount may be entered more than one time in GTA Open Competition, except to compete for the Master of Masters award described in Item IX of these rules.

8. Once documentation of the entry is handed off to the competition desk outside of the competition room, each competitor will be allowed only a 10-minute grooming period before the entry must be handed off to the Competition Committee for delivery to the Competition area.

9. Competition area will be closed during judging except to the Competition Committee.

10. Entries may be made only at the times posted. No entries will be removed from the Competition area until the convention is over.

11. Several people are allowed to work on the same mount to encourage large life-size mounts. However, everyone must be identified and be a GTA member registered for the convention. This mount must be a Collective Art Piece and entered in the Adult Collective Artist award describe in paragraph 9 of Item XI of these rules. Points earned by this type mount **will not count** towards the GTA Award of Excellence.

12. Any entry may be ineligible if, in the opinion of the Competition Committee, too many of the judging criteria are hidden from view or are not included in the mount, and it is not in conjunction with another mount that can be judged. Example: Single duck head coming out of hole in tree.

13. Any infraction of any GTA competition rules will result in disqualification and forfeiture of all entry fees paid, any awards won by that entry and/or registration fees.

14. While the GTA will provide security and be as careful as possible with all mounts, anyone feeling the need should purchase insurance on their competition entries through their local insurance agent. The GTA Officers and Board of Directors shall not be responsible for any mounts entered in competition, under any circumstances.

15. Any questions arising from the GTA competition will be resolved by the Competition Committee and their decision will be final.

16. Once the convention closes, "ALL" awards, ribbons, etc. are considered 'FINAL' and may not be challenged. All complaints must be registered during the convention in order to be considered. (The only exception being mathematical errors in score sheets)

**V. SCORING**

The GTA Open Competition judges entries on individual merit against a hypothetical "perfect score" rather than against other entries.

1. Any entry receiving 90% of a perfect score is awarded a First Place.

2. 80% of a perfect score is a Second Place.

3. 70% of a perfect score is a Third Place, and

4. 5% of a perfect score is a Honorable Mention.

5. Point value for ribbons are as follows: First Place - 3 pts., Second Place - 2 pts., Third Place - 1 pt., and Honorable Mention - 0 pts.

6. Habitat entries are divided into five areas of judging criteria with each area being worth 10 points. Judges will award points to arrive at a score for a habitat. Special ribbons (HABITAT) will be awarded. Habitat scores are separate and “DO NOT” effect your score on birds, fish, etc.

**VI. SPECIAL AWARDS BY JUDGES**

1. BEST OF CATEGORY

(a) A Best of Category (Winner’s Plaque) will be placed on the Best Mount in each category.

(b) The Best of Category will be selected from the First Place mounts in each category.

(c) Selection will be made by the Judges for the best overall First Place mount in each category- regardless of numerical score.

(d) The decision of the judges is final and may not be challenged.

(e) If there are no First Place winners in a category, there will be no winners ribbon awarded for that category.

(f) Categories for Best of Category will be gameheads, whitetail gameheads (open mouth and closed mount), mammals, fish (skin mount and replica), reptiles, birds, and turkeys (turkeys will be judged separately from other birds).

 2. JUDGES CHOICE AWARD

(a) The competition Judges will collectively agree on one mount in the competition that they agree should be recognized as the Judges Choice.

(b) Numerical score may not be the determining factor for this award.

 3. MOUNTED IN ALASKA AWARD

(a) This is an award by the Judges that tells the best story.

(b) There is no entry fee for this award.

(c) The entry must be entered as professional or masters. A commercial mount will not be eligible.

4, HORIZON AWARD

(a) This is an award by the Judges for the best entry by a member 16 years of age or under.

(b) There is no entry fee for this award.

(c) It is not to be judged as a professional mount with a scoresheet.

5. BYRD/CARTER AWARD

(a) This award was created in honor of Carol Byrd and Diane Carter. It will be given out annually to the best woman's mount at the convention. The woman entering the mount must be a Georgia resident and GTA member in good standing.

(b) There is no fee for this award.

(c) The competition Judges will collectively agree on one mount in the competition entered by a woman taxidermist for this award.

(d) Numerical score may not be the determining factor for this award.

(e) Only mounts entered in Professional or Masters Division will be considered for this award.

6. BEST HABITAT.

(a) This award is for the best habitat in the competition. The habitat must have been entered to be scored by the Habitat Judge.

(b) There is no fee (other than the fee to submit your habitat for judging).

(c) The competition Judges will collectively agree on one mount in the competition that they agree should be recognized as having the best habitat.

(d) Numerical score may not be the determining factor for this award.

7. RONALD “RON” CARTER MEMORIAL AWARD

(a) This award was created in honor of Ronald “Ron” Carter. It will be given out annually to the best habitat entry on barnwood. Person entering mount must be a GTA Member and a Georgia Resident in good standing.

(b) There is no fee for this award.

(c) The competition Judges will collectively agree on one entry for this award.

(d) Numerical score may not be the determining factor for this award.

(e) Only entries in Professional or Master’s Division will be eligible for this award.

 **VII. GTA AWARD OF EXCELLENCE (A of E)**

1. ELIGIBILITY

Limited to GTA members in good standing who have earned the GTA Award of Excellence. Award winners must compete in the Division of Excellence in any of the four categories (birds, (which for purposes of the Award of Excellence shall include turkeys), fish, gameheads, whitetail gameheads, mammals) where she/he has earned 2 First Place and approved points (10) in previous competition. Award winners may continue to compete in the GTA Open Competition in categories in which they 'have not' achieved their A of E.

2. A of E CATEGORIES

(a) Birds - Any mount in which birds constitute the majority of the piece.

(b) Fish/Reptiles - Same as above.

(c) Mammals (Life-size) - Same as above.

(d) Gameheads - Same as above.

(e) Whitetail gameheads – same as above.

Note: Any question concerning category assignment will be resolved by the Competition Committee and their decision will be final.

3. A of E JUDGING

The GTA A of E will be judged by the same judges as the GTA Open Competition. There will be one judge for each category. Multiple Ribbons will be awarded.Note: The judge’s decision in the A of E is final and 'may not be challenged'.

**VIII. BEST ALL AROUND GEORGIA TAXIDERMIST**

1. This competition is open to any GTA member in good standing who is a resident of the State of Georgia. Participants must be registered members of the convention and must be present at the convention. Persons entering this competition must enter in birds, fish/reptiles, gameheads, and mammals. One of these entries must include a habitat for judging.

2. All species in this event must be Georgia Native Species.

3. Entries in the required categories may not include rugs, novelties, crustaceans, reproductions, and/or any specimens - whole or in part, that have been involved in the freeze-dry process in any manner.

4. There will be an entry fee for this special competition.

5. The person with the highest accumulative score will be the winner.

6. Entries may be composed of mounts entered in both the open competition and the GTA Award of Excellence.

7. In the event of only one competitor, the competitor must reach a score of a least 350 points combined (habitat not included) of the four categories. At least one lst place ribbon must be earned and the competitor shall have received no 3rd place ribbons to qualify.

**IX. MASTER OF MASTERS.**

1. You must be a GTA member to be eligible for this award.

2. Any GTA member in the Masters Division at World, National or State Level may compete for this award. All entries must be the member’s individual work.

3. Any mount that has won at any Master’s level (World, National or State Champion & Best of Show or mount not previously won 1st place in this Master of Masters award) may be entered to compete for this award. The entry will be eligible for only this award and no other GTA awards.

4. The entry fee will be $100.00 for each piece.

5. Judging for this award will be the most intense of all division. Painstaking attention to detail and artistic craftsmanship is required in this division. It is considered to be one of the most pristine awards to be awarded by GTA.

6. All entries will receive a numerical score and the appropriate ribbon, but the winner of this award will be in the sole discretion of the competition Judges who shall collectively agree on one mount to be the winner of this award. Numerical score will not be the determining factor for this award.

7. The winner will receive a Master of Masters Trophy and one-half of the total of the entry fees collected for this award.

**X. CHALLENGES & ALTERNATE JUDGING**

Decisions of the competition judges will be final. However, any participant requesting alternate judging after reviewing his/her score may pay a $25.00 challenge fee (Not Refundable) per entry challenged and be re-judged by the alternate judge selected for that competition. Alternate judges will be appointed by the Competition Committee prior to the completion of regular judging. Identity of the alternate judge(s) will be given to the challenger only "after" receipt of the $25.00 challenge fee. The results of the alternate judge 'WILL BE FINAL'.

**XI. GTA SPECIAL COMPETITIONS**

1. ELIGIBILITY

All GTA SPECIAL AWARDS are reserved for GTA Members in good standing. Out-of-state members must join the GTA to be eligible for the Fleming/Warren, Thompson and Furbearer special awards.

2. CHARLES E. FLEMING AWARD AND ROGER WARREN AWARD

(a) The Charles E. Fleming Award was created in Honor of Charlie Fleming.

(b) The Roger Warren Award was created in Honor of Roger Warren.

(c) These awards will be given at the GTA Convention in alternate years, i.e., in even years it will be the Roger Warren Award and in odd years it will be the Charlie Fleming Award.

(d) There will be an entry fee for this mount.

(e) All entries in this event will be voted on by the GTA members in attendance by special ballot. This ballot will be Green in color.

(f) Members will vote for the 'Most Creative' mount entered. The entry with the most votes will be awarded the Annual CEF or RW Award plaque.

(g) Mounts previously entered in competition for the CEF or RW Award may be brought back to the next convention to be entered in the CEF or RW Award, as the case may be (the award not entered in the previous year), but said Mount may only be judged at one convention.

(h) Points 'will not' be awarded in this event.

3. MATT THOMPSON AWARD

(a) The Matt Thompson Award was created in Honor of Matt Thompson

(b) This award will be given at annually at the GTA Convention

(c) There will be an entry fee for this mount.

(d) All entries in this event will be voted on by the GTA members in attendance by special ballot. This ballot will be Yellow in color.

(e) Members will vote for the Best Fish mount entered. The entry with the most votes will be awarded the Annual Matt Thompson Award plaque.

4. FURBEARER AWARD IN MEMORY OF CHRIS BARNHARDT

(a) This award replaces the Trapper's Award and was created in honor of Chris Barnhardt.

(b) This award will be given at annually at the GTA Convention.

(c) There is no entry fee for this mount.

(d) All entries in this event will be voted on by the GTA members in attendance by special ballot. This ballot will be Purple in color.

(e) Members will vote for the Best Furbearer mount entered.The entry with the most votes will be awarded this award.

5. UNITED TAXIDERMIST ASSOCIATION (UTA) ARTISANS AWARD

(a) This award is given by United Taxidermist Association

(b) This award will be given annually at the GTA Convention

(c) All entries in this event will be voted on by only the persons who have entered mounts for competition by special ballot. This ballot will be white in color.

(d) Persons voting will vote for their favorite mount. The entry with the most votes will be awarded the Annual UTA Award.

6. SPECIAL MOUNT

(a) The 'Special Mount' was created to put a little fun and challenge into our competitions. We will have a Special Mount competition at the annual Conventions

(b) The Special Mount must be a Georgia Native Species.

(c) This category must be a 'Single Mount', i.e. it may be only one of the special mount species, but may be in a mount with other mounts/species.

(d) There will be an entry fee for this mount.

(e) The winner of this event will pick the species to be considered the 'Special Mount' for the following competition. In a hat will be placed the categories “mammal”, “gamehead”, “fish”, “reptile”, and “bird”. The winner of this event will draw from the hat and then name the species in that category the winner wants to name for the special mount at the next convention, i.e., if the winner selects “bird”, the winner can then assign the special mount species that is a bird for this competition at the next convention. For purposes of this event, turkeys shall be included in the definition of “bird”.

(f) GTA members attending the competition will be given a special ballot and will vote for the 'Special Mount' of their choice. The entry receiving the most votes will be declared the winner. These ballots will be Blue in color.

7. MEMBERS CHOICE

(a) The Members Choice will be selected by the voting of the registered GTA members.

(b) The Members Choice ballot will be Red in color.

8. YOUTH COLLECTIVE ARTIST AWARD

(a) This award was created for youth members 16 & under that have had help from a parent or member.

(b) There is an entry fee for this award. There will be a deadline date to enter for this award prior to convention.

(c) This award will be awarded annually.

(d) Award is based on score. In the event of a tie, the judges will collectively decide the winner.

9. ADULT COLLECTIVE ARTIST AWARD.

(a) This award was created for adult GTA members that have created a mount together. However, everyone must be identified and be a GTA member registered for the convention and all participants must have a part in mounting one animal.

(b) There is an entry fee for this award. There will be a deadline date to enter for this award prior to convention. There must be two or more entries for this award or it will not be awarded.

(c) Only one animal on the entry will be scored and habitat will not play a part of scoring the collective piece.

(d) This collective piece will not be eligible for any other award except Adult Collective Artist Award.

(e) This award will be awarded annually.

(f) Award is based on score. In the event of a tie, the judges will collectively decide the winner.

(g) There is one trophy provided for this award. The option to purchase as second trophy will be available at the discretion of the competitor and at the competitor’s expense, i.e., GTA will not pay for this second trophy.

10. BEST OF PROFESSIONAL MOUNTS “BILL HAYNES” AWARD

(a) This award will be given to the highest scoring Professional Mount.

(b) There is no entry fee for this award. By paying the fee to have your mount scored as a Professional Mount you are automatically entered into competition for this award.

(c) In the event of a tie, the Judges will select the winner of this award.

11. BEST WALL MOUNT AWARD

(a) This award will be given to the highest scoring wall-hung mount in Masters Division and Professional Division (2 awards). Floor pedestal and table mounts are excluded from this award.

(b) There is no entry fee for this award. By paying the fee to have your mount scored as a Professional Mount or in the Masters Division you are automatically entered into competition for this award.

(c) In the event of a tie, the Judges will select the winner(s) of this award.

12. GEORGIA COMPETITORS AWARD.

(a) This award will be given to the GTA member who has the highest score (260 points and above) in the professional division for three mounts entered in the competition.

(b) This award will be given to the GTA member who has the highest score (260 points and above) in the masters division for three mounts entered in the competition

(c) There will be an entry fee for this award.

(d) In the event of a tie, the Judges will select the winner of this award.

13. PRESIDENT’S CHALLENGE AWARD.

(a) The GTA President will choose 1 species per year to be considered for this award.

(b) There will be an entry fee for this award

(c) This award will be given out annually.

(d) This will be a Judge’s Choice. Numerical score may not be the determining factor for this award.

(e) Only entries in Professional or Master’s Division will be eligible for this award.

14. IN THE EVENT OF A TIE

Except as otherwise herein provided, if there is a tie in any of the special competitions named in this section of the Competition Rules, the President of the GTA will select the winner.