

Virginia Taxidermist Association Newsletter

October 2025



OUR MISSION

The mission of the Virginia Taxidermists Association is to promote a standard of quality, fairness and conduct for all of the Virginia Taxidermists and our associates. To this end we shall encourage all interested parties through education and example to better themselves and their practices for the benefit of our customers, ourselves, and the general public.

Virginia Taxidermist Association Newsletter

October 2025

Welcome to the October 2025 Newsletter

A Message from your President, David McKinney



Hunting season is almost here, and I hope everyone is geared up and ready to go. Along with the adventures in the field, I'm praying for a good season in your shops. Don't forget, our next show is about five months away—so it's a good time to start thinking about your pieces. I'm looking forward to a busy season for you all and to seeing what everyone brings to the competition.

~David McKinney, President

A Message from your Vice President, Jarvie Robinson

It's that time of year again to start thinking about competition pieces. So get them creative ideas going and put that next masterpiece together. The show will be here before you know it. I can't wait to see everyone again and catch up.

~Jarvie Robinson, Vice President



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A Message from your Secretary/Treasurer, Amanda Robinson



Hope everyone is doing good! The show is only 5 months away and will be here before you know it! Check out the show update page here in the newsletter, we have added some categories, new awards and even giving away a hunt to the winner of our new Avian Challenge! Also be sure that you are checking into the member portal on the website. Paid members have access to it which has any forms you may need and our approved financials/meeting minutes. Keep eye out in January for Convention Pre-Registration!

Can't wait to see everyone in March!

~Amanda Robinson, Secretary/Treasurer

OUR CONVENTION IS ONLY 5 MONTHS AWAY

MARCH 5-7, 2025

MAKE PLANS TO BE THERE!

BEST WESTERN

109 APPLETREE LN

WAYNESBORO, VA

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2025 Board Members



2025 VTA Board Members



David McKinney
President



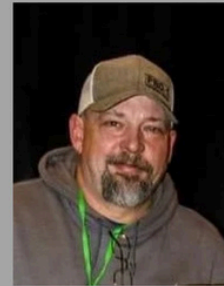
Jarvie Robinson
Vice President



Amanda Robinson
Secretary/Treasurer



Megan Burner
Executive Director
& Jason Burner
Board Member



Mike Stevens
Board Member



Jessica McKinney
Board Member



Shawn Powell
Board Member



Dave Britts
Board Member



Derrick Clinedinst
Board Member



Steve Morgan
Board Member

If you would like to volunteer to become a Board Member next year or nominate someone for the board please visit your member portal on the website, our link tree, or find the QR code in this newsletter to fill out the form.

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VTA Board Meeting Schedule

NEXT BOARD MEETING: October 16, 2025



VTA Meeting Schedule

March 2025 – March 2026

1st Quarter Meetings @ Best Western Waynesboro

General Membership Spring Meeting - March 7, 2025 @4:30PM

Special called current Board Members ONLY meeting – March 9, 2025 @8AM

2nd Quarter Meetings

April 10, 2025 @ 7PM via Zoom

Closed Session Board Meeting

3rd Quarter Meeting

July 17, 2025 @ 7PM via Zoom

Regular Session Board Meeting

4th Quarter Meeting

October 16, 2025 @ 7PM via Zoom

Regular Session Board Meeting

SHOW PREP MEETINGS

December 4, 2025 @ 7PM via Zoom

January 8, 2026 @ 7PM via Zoom

February 19, 2026 @ 7PM via Zoom

***Board members are required to attend the board meetings. If you miss 2 consecutive meetings without just cause, then you may be asked to resign as board member.**

Meeting days and times are subject to change.

Additional meetings could be added as necessary.

Scan the QR Code below with your phone's camera to
access the official link tree for the VTA.



It is the one stop shop for all
VTA links and information.
Use it to nominate someone
for a Service Award or
board member, submit
ideas, concerns, questions
or comments to your board,
access your member portal
and so much more.

You can also visit
<https://linktr.ee/vataxidermists>

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Virginia Taxidermists Association Members compete in the North Carolina Taxidermy Competition



Pictured Top Row: Nick Shelton, Tom Jeffers & Dylan Gusler

Pictured Bottom Row: Shawn Thacker, Jeszi Padgett, Lane Thacker, Dalton Jeffers, & Johanna Dobek

Not Pictured: Danny Waters



Lane Thacker
BOC Professional Whitetail
Blue Ribbon Habitat



Jeszi Padgett
1st Place Challenge of the Arts



Dylan Gusler
Professional Red Ribbon

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Virginia Taxidermists Association Summer Seminar Series WHITETAIL CLASS WITH JARVIE ROBINSON



Pictured: Jason Burner, David McKinney, Jonathan Barlow, Gabe Robinson, Jon Skinner, Steve Morgan, Alden Rader, Jarvie Robinson, Mike Stevens



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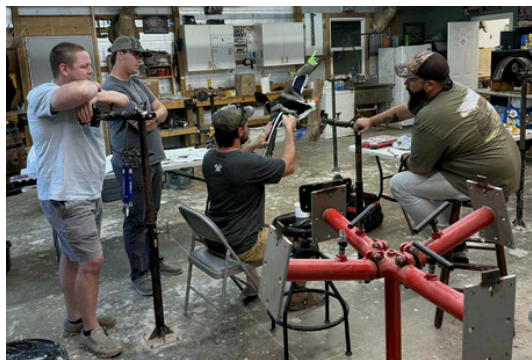
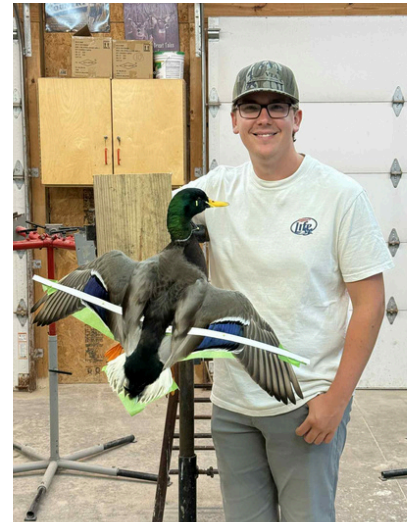
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Virginia Taxidermists Association Summer Seminar Series

WATERFOWL CLASS WITH SHAWN POWELL



Pictured: Brad Marshall, Kyle Cooper, Jonathan Barlow, Shawn Powell



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Virginia Taxidermists Association Summer Seminar Series

FISH CLASS WITH WOODY POMPELL



Not Pictured: David McKinney & Woody Pompell



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Virginia Taxidermists Association Scholarship Fund

Our new scholarship fund was funded via the summer seminar series.
Scholarship amount will increase as the fund grows



SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

NOW ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS

Eligibility Criteria:

- VTA Member for 2+ years ✓
- Complete Application by Dec 31st ✓
- Attend approved class/school ✓
- Complete class within 12 months ✓

Application can be found on our website in your member portal

(2) \$500 Scholarships
1 Youth Recipient
1 Adult Recipient

For More Info Contact:
AMANDA ROBINSON

VTA SECRETARY/TREASURER
VATAXIDERMIST@GMAIL.COM ✉

276-275-9879 📞

VATAXIDERMISTS.COM 🌐

Deadline to apply is December 31, 2025

Youth recipient will actually receive \$700 this year. We received a donation for the youth scholarship in honor of the Jeffers family

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Members News

Membership is the key to our association. Without our members we could not be here so thank you all that become members every year.

We have Individual, Family and Business memberships available.

If you would like to become a member please reach out to Amanda Robinson
vataxidermist@gmail.com or visit www.vataxidermists.com



Mark your Calendars!!!



**2026 Annual Convention & Competition
March 5–7, 2026 in Waynesboro VA!**

**REGISTRATION DESK OPENS THURSDAY
FROM 1PM – 4PM MOUNTS ACCEPTED**
Save time at the desk and PRE-REGISTER.

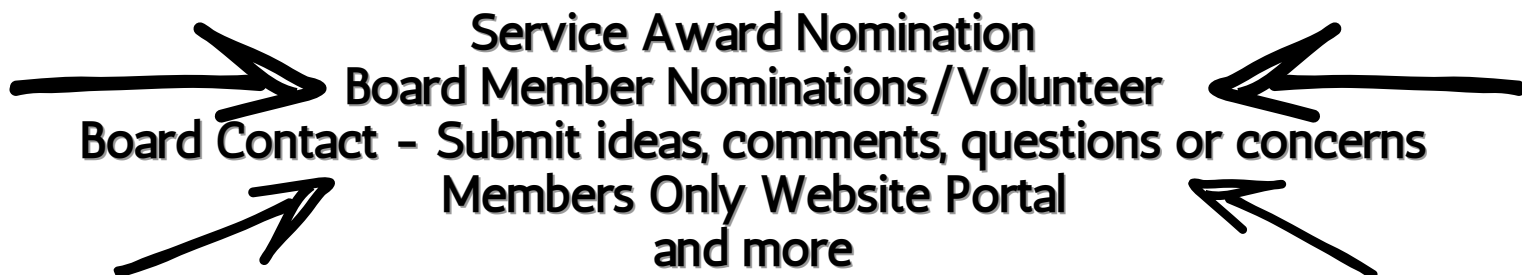
We will have a separate line for
pre-registers that are not adding anything and only
picking up their packets.

FREE VTA T SHIRT
WITH PAID MEMBERSHIP & CONVENTION PRE-REGISTRATION

**Newsletters will go out quarterly and be available
in January, April, July, October**

IMPORTANT

Visit our Link Tree @ <https://linktr.ee/vataxidermists> to find the following links:



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VTA Annual Convention and Competition

2026 Competition Judges



Whitetail Clint Rickey

My name is Clint Rickey, I live in Dodgeville Wisconsin. I am a full time taxidermist and co-owner of Champions Choice Supply. I have been doing taxidermy full time since 2003 specializing in whitetails and game heads, and have been actively competing since 2009. Some of my major accomplishments on the competition side of taxidermy is my two Best in World titles, one with a whitetail and the other with an aoudad. I love competitive taxidermy but my true passion is helping others achieve their goals.

Besides taxidermy some of my favorite things to do is, golf, mow my grass, sit by the pool on the weekends and drink beer, watch my daughters play sports, and kill animals.

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VTA Annual Convention and Competition

2026 Competition Judges



Fish/Reptiles Cole Cruickshank

My name is Cole Cruickshank and I have been asked to judge your show this year. It's always a little weird writing these bios, because I don't ever know what it is that you as competitors want to know about me. I've been a taxidermist in NW Missouri for over 25 years, and in that time have built a nice little business for myself. My wife and I are almost empty nesters, with 1 child a sophomore in college, and the other a software engineer for a large company. I've been competing for a long time, and judging for over 10 years. I remain an active competitor, as I feel that is important as a judge to remain connected from the competitor's side of things. I'd describe my judging style as honest and fair. I'm not there to sugar coat things, or crush anyone's dreams. I place a high importance on anatomical accuracy, and at the same time appreciate the artistic appeal of a piece. I'm pretty strict about laziness...things that are easy fixes, yet simply ignored. Things like dirty eyes, visible attachments, and unfinished parts of a mount are generally going to get hit pretty hard. As I said, I too love to compete.

I've never been much of a specialist of any one thing, and instead I enjoy competing in several categories. I've been successful with game heads, turkeys, mammals and fish. Some of my accolades over the years include 17 State Championships, 4 Wasco Awards, NTA Challenge of the Art, NTA Distinguished Taxidermist, 4x National Champion, 2x Breakthrough winner, North American Runner up, and North American Champion. The accomplishment I'm most proud of in the industry is the media company I started, Taxidermy University. We took how-to taxidermy videos to a whole different level, with world class instructors teaching their competition methods. That success has spilled over into some beginner level 101-type DVDs as well, but the competition videos are the ones that really get me excited. Instructors willing to share their knowledge, holding nothing back, helping and teaching it all are who I've chosen to partner with, and it's changed competition taxidermy for so many people. I love to see it. Thanks for having me this year, and I look forward to seeing what your state has to offer.

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VTA Annual Convention and Competition

2026 Competition Judges



Mammals/Gamehead Greg Cuvelier

Hi my name is Greg Cuvelier ,I live in Aplington Iowa. I started doing taxidermy in 1990 and started competing in 1991. I have been fortunate to have won some awards throughout the years , I am a National Champion, North American Champion ,3 time National Best all Around Taxidermist , an International and World award winner, and a 4 time Joe Meder Masters of Masters Award winner with gameheads and life-sized mammals. I started judging in 2005 and have been actively judging ever since I'm really looking forward to coming back and judging the Virginia show again .Thank you!

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VTA Annual Convention and Competition

2026 Competition Judges



Birds
Kevin Whidby

Kevin Whidby of Gray Georgia. Kevin is the recipient of multiple best of categories for birds, deer and reptiles, multiple Breakthrough Awards, Woody Awards, State and National Awards of Excellence, State Champion Awards, Ducks Unlimited Awards, multiple first place birds in the World Taxidermy Championships, third highest scoring puddle duck at the World Taxidermy Championships in 2022 and Multiple Wasco Awards.

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2026 Competition Judges



Habitat,
Wildlife Art &
Horizon
Rick Denzler

Rick is Lifetime VTA member and will be judging habitats again: For many years Rick has encouraged our youth & amateurs to do the very best they can . His experience and knowledge should help and reward the efforts taxidermist put into their work.

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VTA Annual Convention and Competition

2026 Show Update

Date: March 5–7, 2026

Where: Best Western 109 Apple Tree Ln, Waynesboro, Va

**Judges: Whitetail – Clint Rickey
Game Head/Mammals – Greg Cuvelier
Fish/Reptiles/Crustaceans – Cole Cruickshank
Birds – Kevin Whidby
Habitat – Rick Denzler**

Seminars: Schedule Coming Soon

President's Award: Any FISH

NEW for 2026 Avian Challenge – Pheasant

**REGISTRATION DESK WILL OPEN FROM 1PM – 4PM THURSDAY EVENING THIS
WITH SEMINARS STARTING AT 5PM.
MUST BE REGISTERED TO ATTEND**

**Virginia Taxidermist Association
Annual Convention & Competition**

**46TH
Anniversary**

SAVE THE DATE
March 5th-7th, 2026
Best Western
109 Appletree Ln, Waynesboro, VA

Judges
Whitetail - Clint Rickey
Mammal/Game Head - Greg Cuvelier
Fish/Reptiles/Crustaceans - Cole Cruickshank
Birds - Kevin Whidby
Habitat/Wildlife Art - Rick Denzler

Registration desk opens THURSDAY 3/5/26 @1PM

THURSDAY SEMINARS
5PM Business - Cole Cruickshank
The forgotten Art of Taxidermy, Making MONEY -
(Focusing on Good Business Practices, Marketing, Time Management, Customer Relations, & Networking)
6 PM Feather Art - Millie Aliff

**Mail in Pre-Register by 2/11/26
Online Pre-Register by 2/18/26**

Book your rooms now
March 4 & 5 - \$111/night
March 6 & 7 - \$124/night

**President's Award
Any FISH**



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VTA Annual Convention and Competition

Show Updates Continued New for 2026

NEW for 2026 AVIAN CHALLENGE

Sponsored by: Mountaineer Upland Hunting

Bring a PHEASANT in any pose to enter into this year's Avian Challenge.

\$25 entry fee per mount to be entered into the challenge.

Mount will still be eligible for all other awards.

There are no divisions and winner is not based on score.

The membership will chose the winner through special ballot

The person winning the Challenge will then get to pick the bird species for next year's Challenge.



PRIZE

UPLAND GAME HUNT AT MOUNTAINEER UPLAND HUNTING

FOR WINNER AND 1 GUEST FOR 12 BIRDS TOTAL

4 PHEASANT

4 QUAIL

4 CHUKAR

SKEET SHOOTING

BIRD CLEANING & PACKAGING INCLUDED

OTHER GUEST CAN BE ADDED FOR ADDITIONAL COST



Virginia Taxidermists Association
Annual Convention & Competition
March 5th-7th, 2026

Best Western

109 Apple Tree Ln Waynesboro VA

Registration Desk

Opens Thursday 3/5/26 @1PM

Avian Challenge PHEASANT

Winner will be determined by members in attendance
via special voting ballot

PRIZE

Upland Game Hunt with Mountaineer Upland Hunting

For winner and 1 guest for 12 birds total

4 Pheasant

4 Quail

4 Chukar

Guest can purchase their own birds and you can add
more guest to your hunt if they want to purchase a
spot to go with you.

Skeet shooting, bird cleaning & packaging is
included.

We will be dividing the Whitetail Division this year
into Open and Closed mount in Master's Division.

***More details to come later

Best Wall Mount Whitetail - More details to follow

NEW for 2026 New Whitetail Divisions

Virginia Taxidermists Association
Annual Convention & Competition
March 5th-7th, 2026

Best Western

109 Apple Tree Ln Waynesboro VA

Registration Desk

Opens Thursday 3/5/26 @1PM



OPEN & CLOSED MOUTH IN MASTERS
BEST WALL MOUNT WHITETAIL



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Show Updates Continued

New for 2026

New Categories for 2026

Birds

Upland Birds & Waterfowl split into 2 categories

Whitetail

Open & Closed Mouth in Masters

Youth Division is renamed HORIZON with ages 12 and under.

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VTA Annual Convention and Competition **SHOW UPDATES**

**ROOM BLOCK IS NOW OPEN
RESERVE YOUR ROOM TODAY**

**Virginia Taxidermists Association's
46th Anniversary
Taxidermy Convention & Competition
March 5-7, 2026
Room Block is NOW OPEN**



Rooms are limited so call or visit online today to reserve yours!

**Best Western Plus
109 Apple Tree Ln
Waynesboro, VA 22980
540-942-1100**

Room Rates:

March 5, 2025 - \$110.99

March 6 & 7, 2025 - \$120.99

NEW THIS YEAR BOOK ONLINE 🖱️

https://www.bestwestern.com/en_US/book/hotel-rooms.47131.html?groupId=3H7EA6X9

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Service Awards

**NOMINATIONS ARE NOW BEING ACCEPTED
UNTIL OCTOBER 10, 2025 FOR THE
FOLLOWING AWARDS:**

MCKENZIE DISTINGUSHED TAXIDERMIST AWARD

Awarded to an individual in recognition of outstanding contributions toward professionalism, education and the advancement of The Art of Taxidermy.

VTA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Awarded to an individual who during their lifetime has made a creative and significant contribution to the Virginia Taxidermist Association.

VTA Service Award

Awarded to an individual for outstanding service to the Taxidermy Community.

BEEFY COLLINS AWARD

Awarded to an individual who shares Beefy's qualities of creativity, hard work, dedication, willingness to share and educate fellow taxidermist



Scan with your phones's Camera to
access the form directly
or
visit the VTA Link Tree
<https://linktr.ee/vataxidermists>



You can also visit the
member portal section of
our website to access any
forms you may need.

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Business Members



**If you'd like to become a
Business Member please reach out
to Amanda Robinson @
vataxidermist@gmail.com**

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Special Thanks to all our Vendors and Sponsors that help make all the awards, auction items and show a success!

If you would like to Sponsor the VTA or set up a vendor space please reach out to vataxidermist@gmail.com

Sponsors of the VTA

**Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation
Breakthrough Magazine
Pro-1 Proformance Chemicals
McKenzie Taxidermy Supply
Ohio Taxidermy Supply
Wildlife Gallery
Robins Nest Animal Rugs
Second to Nature
Black Widow Bows**

**Valley Athletics
Gary's Custom Pedestals
Beatty Woodworks
Hilton Eppley Forms
Custom Whitetail Taxidermy Matt
& Kayla Jones
Shawn Powell
David & Jessica McKinney
Mountaineer Upland Hunting
Virginia Bear Hunters Association**

Vendors at the 2025 show

**Pro-1 Proformance Chemicals
McKenzie Taxidermy Supply
Ohio Taxidermy Supply
Wildlife Gallery
Robins Nest Animal Rugs
Bobby Harmon Driftwood
Rock Ridge Wildlife Artistry**

**Gary's Custom Pedestals
Beatty's Woodworks
Ruozzi & Sons Supply
Ingles Wood Working
Hilton Epply Forms
Valley Athletics
Calloway Custom Woodworks**