

Taxidermy takes skill

# Family stuffs with pride

By DOUG BUTLER  
Of the Emerald

They won't do reptiles or dead pets, but Adams Taxidermy will mount just about any other creature that squawked, growled or ruminated.

In 22 years of business in Eugene, Ken Erickson and his family have mounted game animals from Oregon, Alaska and around the world.

"Yeah, we've done a few African safaris," says Erickson's wife, Elaine.

Among the African trophies they've done are cape buffalo, elands and antelopes. There's even a pair of elephant feet in the showroom.

Near them is a bobcat's head and a Mississippi paddlefish, named for its beaver-tailed nose. The whole store resembles a natural-history museum. Dozens of small mammals, ducks and pheasants peer sightlessly from the shelves and trophy cases.

In the center of the showroom stands the polar bear that Erickson's father shot. Its lip curls in a plastic snarl. An enormous bison head dwarfs the other heads — moose, elk and caribou — mounted on the wall.

"It is from a herd that was transplanted to Alaska," Erickson says. "You can only hunt them once in a lifetime."

Though they mount exotic



Photo by David W. Zahn

Steve Erickson applies a fine touch to a stuffed deer head.

species bagged in faraway lands, most of their business comes from "the mill-working guy who just enjoys getting out in the country," Erickson says.

And business has been good. Customers bring in animals primarily from August to December — the hunting season. During the other half of the year, they concentrate on preparing the trophies.

When Erickson receives the hides from the tannery, he molds, shapes, stretches, cuts and patches them back into their original form.

Mounting an animal is a talent

and a craft best learned as an apprentice, Erickson says. Taxidermists who excel introduce a personal touch into the work. In his work, Erickson says he seeks to create a striking, lifelike figure.

It takes almost a year to properly mount a deer head, he says. Such a mounting costs between \$175 and \$185, while a life-size mounting of a bison would cost \$3,500.

Trophies are not cheap, Erickson notes, because his family wants to give customers trophies they'll be happy with for a long time. Rotted, tattered or thinly haired animals make poor trophies, so the Ericksons rejected them.

Most customers praise the work. "It's that one guy in a hundred who says 'I don't like it that you remember,'" Erickson says.

The insides of the animals are entirely replaced in the taxidermist's process, and the flesh has been either frozen or discarded before Erickson receives the animal. Instead of skeletal structures, taxidermists use standard forms to mount the animals, much as a clothier uses a mannequin.

After stretching and shaping the hide over the form, Erickson does the detail work around the mouth and eyes with putty, clay and fiberglass. The teeth are fake, and even the skull is discarded.

"Real teeth rot and break," Erickson explains.

Along with their trophy work, the Ericksons have hides tanned as rugs and have deer-skin made into purses, gloves and belts.

Erickson requires legal proof of government sanction before he'll work on the hides of some animals, especially endangered species.

"Even if it died of natural causes, I need to see a government tag," he says.

## 'Fire Brooks' wins cash prize for editor

An Emerald editorial demanding the firing of University football coach Rich Brooks won fifth place in the William Randolph Hearst Foundation national editorial writing contest.

Emerald Editor Ken Sands, who wrote the unsigned opinion, will receive \$300. The journalism school also will receive \$300.

The Oct. 1 editorial said the University should "begin the excavation of a morally bankrupt foundation" of college athletics by firing Brooks.

Brooks and other University coaches were fined last year for their involvement in the phony-credit and plane-ticket scandals.

"If legality or morality were to be considered, Brooks would have been fired long ago," the editorial said. "Whether or not he is guilty of any wrongdoing, he is responsible for the actions of his team, if only indirectly."

## Corrections

A headline and an attribution in Wednesday's Emerald were inaccurate.

The headline, which appeared on page 3A, said that a broken window latch in the room of a Walton-Adams' dormitory resident who was raped Jan. 10 was never reported. The headline contradicted the article, which said a University study found that the broken latch was reported in September.

University Acting Pres. Paul

Olum said the study found that the reported window had been repaired in September, but was broken again and not reported — and thus not repaired — a second time.

In an article on page 8B, a quote referring to Associate Athletic Director Ed Swartz's standing at the University was erroneously attributed to Olum. What was inadvertently attributed to Olum was a passage from an article in Tuesday's Oregonian.

## Minority workshop opens

Minority students with questions about careers may find answers at the Minority Affairs Consortium workshop, "Preparing to Enter the Helping Professions."

The workshop, beginning today at 11 a.m., will focus on work available in the helping professions, including counseling, clinical psychology, community service and public affairs, and social work.

The psychology department's minority issues committee organized the workshop after recognizing the lack of minority applicants to the various

majors, says Linda Gonzales, a graduate student in clinical psychology.

"We need to make ethnic minority members aware of the job opportunities before they get down to the nitty-gritty of applying to graduate schools," Gonzales says.

The workshop is designed for both students considering graduate school and undergraduates who plan to enter the job market, she says.

The workshop will focus on how fields differ from one another, types of training required for various careers and resume writing.

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