

TPS HOW TO USE IT

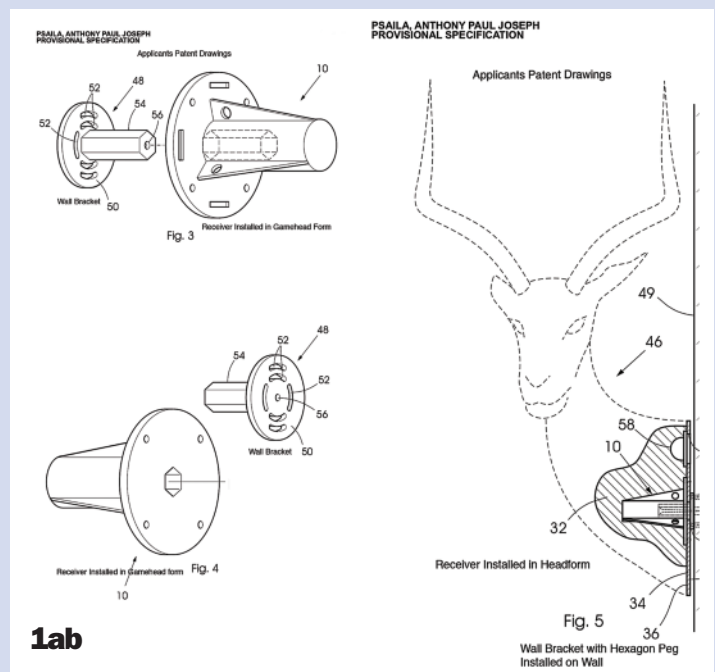
Taxidermy Positioning System

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY **Larry Blomquist**
PROCEDURE BY **Tony Psaila**

IN A PREVIOUS “INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS” REVIEW, I mentioned a more detailed article would be coming on how to use and install the Taxidermy Positioning System products developed by Tony Psaila (*SAY-la*), a well known taxidermist and inventor from South Africa. As we have all learned in our practice of taxidermy, there are many directions we can take to achieve our finished products.

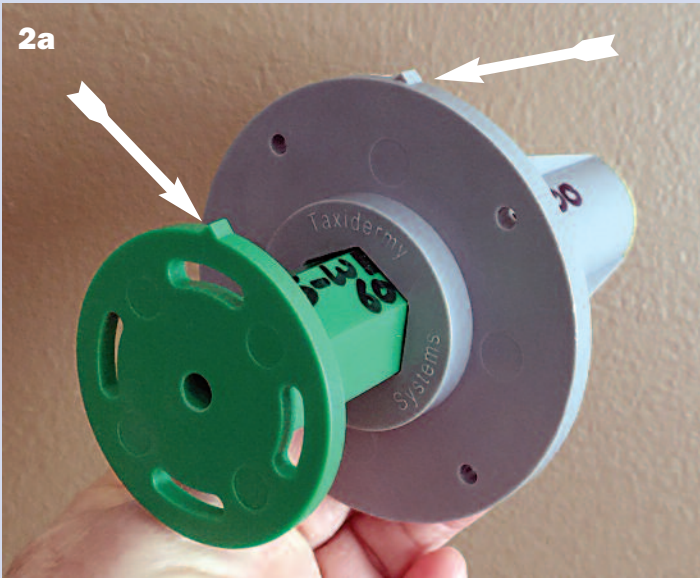
In this instructional article I will show you how the inventor of the TPS products suggests installing them for the best results. There are currently two useful systems, the Wall Bracket system for gameheads and the Pedestal Support brackets.

First, I would like to tell you a little about the development and history of the Taxidermy Positioning System introduced to the taxidermy profession in early 2019. Tony's original intent was to develop a system that would be preinstalled in gamehead forms, making them ready to attach to a stand and/or hang on a wall straight out of the shipping box. A gamehead form would be ready to go onto mounting stands (using a metal hexagonal adaptor), then onto a wall for drying (using the an inexpensive peg bracket). After finishing a mount, it offered your customer a sure way to hang his trophy correctly positioned on a trophy room wall. In other words, TPS is a 3-use system preinstalled in an urethane form, eliminating the need for adding mounting stand attachments and hangers. The brackets sets are made from ridged injection-grade plastic, which is extremely strong.



1ab

1. This drawing used for Tony's patent applications show the original design and intent of the wall hanging system brackets.



2a. A few important modifications were made to the design after these drawings were done, such as a pointed tip at the top of both the receiver and peg brackets was added for alignment reference. Also, a slight 2-degrees upward angle of the peg was also added for gravity holding leverage.

Tony's idea of having the ridged plastic receiver bracket preinstalled would be a great timesaver as well as a complete system for hanging gameheads, but after his first supply of parts were received, an issue was discovered concerning the installation of the receiver. Installing the receiver bracket to the plywood used in the back of a form was quick and simple, but the heat produced by the catalyzed expanding urethane foam caused enough distortion in the shape of the receiver to affect the precision fit the system offered.

Tony quickly found a solution by placing a short, stainless hexagon rod in the receiver during the curing process of form production, which eliminated the distortion. Because of this added process and the cost of stainless steel rods, it is possible this has caused hesitation by supply companies to preinstall the TPS receiving brackets in their form production. Over time, I still feel we will see vendors add this system and its advantages to their form production in part or whole. I personally felt Tony's product and idea was a "breakthrough" improvement in form production and



usage. Once one form company offers it, I think other companies will follow. Until then, it is still a very valuable system for taxidermists to use to their advantage in many areas of our work.

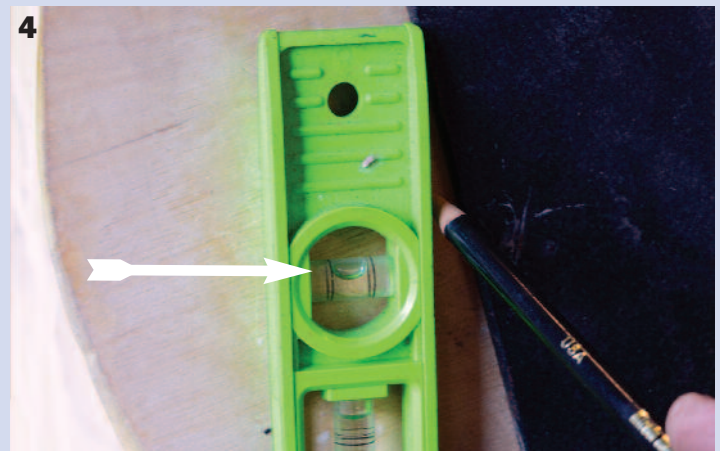
This article will show you three ways of using the Wall Bracket system and how to install the Pedestal Support brackets. Both the Wall Bracket and Pedestal Support systems employ a hexagonal receiver and peg bracket to completely stop all turning once engaged.

Installing the Lock-in-Position Wall Bracket Set

2b. There are three sizes of wall hanging brackets available at this time. The product numbers and suggested use for various size gameheads can be seen in the chart at the end of this article. They will fit any gamehead from the size of a fox to a large whitetail deer to medium-size African game. (A heavy-duty peg bracket will be available soon for use with the TPS-200 for very large gameheads like moose, large elk, and kudu-size animals.)



3. This TPS-100 will be installed in a wall pedestal whitetail form. First, attach the form to a mounting stand and level the form for the correct hanging position.



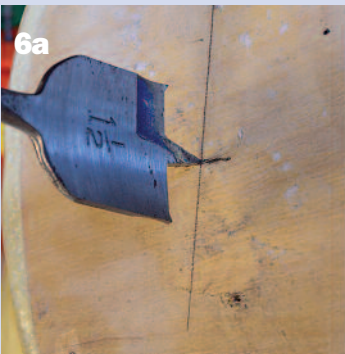
4. Once the form is level, go to the back plywood board and draw a straight vertical line near the center of the form using a level. (See the level bubble centered.) With the head level and this line vertically plumb, the key to the method is established.

5ab. A quick measurement will show the center of the vertical line. A mark is made at that point or slightly higher. Because this is a lock-in-position hanging system, you do not need to be concerned with hoping to find a weight balance point. Anywhere near the center will work fine.





10. A dark pencil line is now drawn at the point of each stabilization wing.



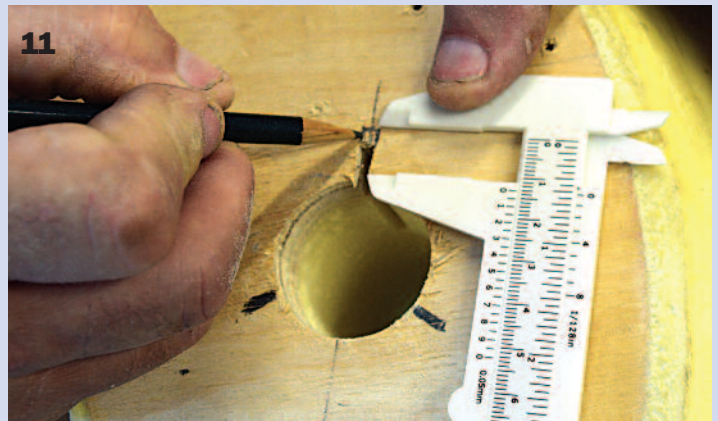
6ab. A 1½-inch spade bit is used to drill an insert hole in the plywood.



7. Continue drilling straight into the foam to a depth of 4 inches.
8. The length of the TPS-100 receiver is 4 inches.



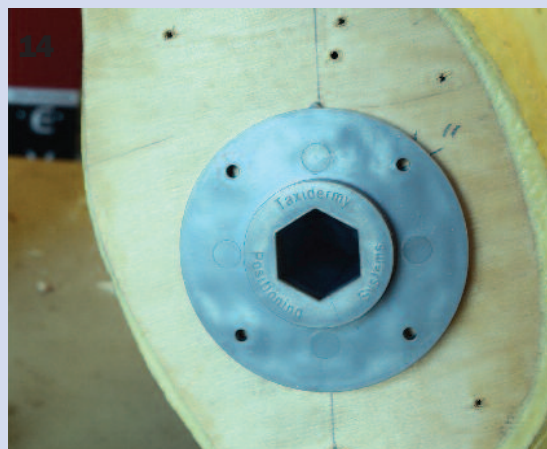
9. Push the receiver into the hole until the three side-wings fit tightly. The parts have a pre-established alignment system. Note that the arrow tip located on the top of the receiver is in alignment with the wing that you need to also align with the line drawn on the plywood.



11. These lines should be drawn out to a length of ½ inch.

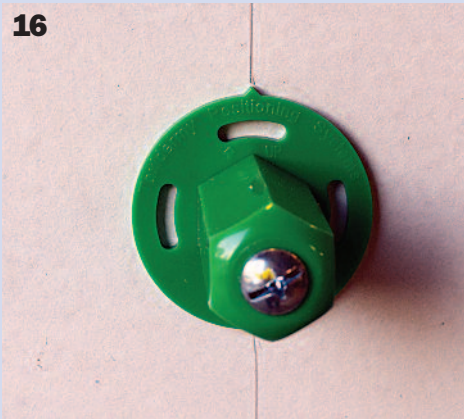


12. A jigsaw is used to cut out the drawn wing lines.
13. The receiver hole is ready to insert the receiver.



14. The receiver should fit snugly into the receiver hole. Note how the receiver alignment arrow seats on the vertical line and meets the lower part of the line perfectly centered.

15. Tony

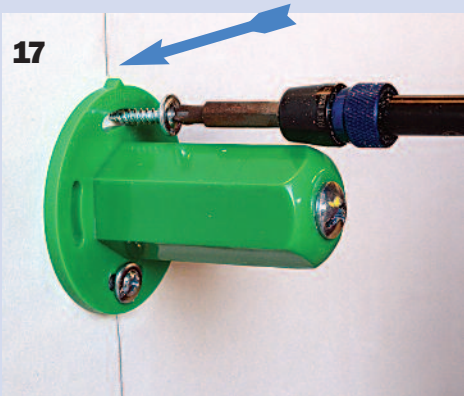


recommends 3/4- to 1-inch lath screws for the final attachment of the receiver.

16. The final step in this lock-in-place positioning system is attaching the peg bracket to the wall. It is always recommended to find a wall stud for hanging gameheads. If the wall is cement, mortar, or brick, drill a

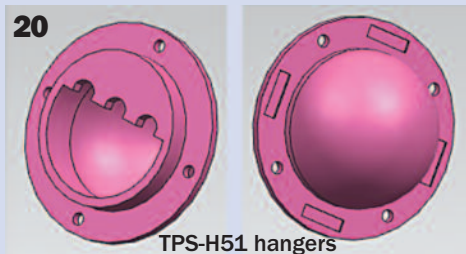
hole and use an appropriate insert for screwing in the center screw.

First, draw a short vertical line using a level to make a perfectly vertical line. Note the alignment of the top arrow on the drawn line and how it runs through the lower center of the bracket. The peg bracket is 2 1/4 inches in length, so a 3 1/2- or 4-inch screw is recommended, going through the hole in the middle of the peg. The peg has a 2-degree tilt upward, so hold the bracket flat against the wall in position and allow the screw to go into the wall with this slight upward angle.



18. This photo shows the 2-degree upward angle of the peg that adds weight leverage to the hanging system.

TPS INSTRUCTIONS FROM ISSUE #136



that have an offset balance because of the horn/antler weight or form attitude. For small and medium size gameheads, Tony offered another option. This is a drawing of the TPS-H51 hanger for small- and medium-large gamehead that hang with a center balance or only slight offset balance. Tony designed this TPS-H51 Reversible Hanger which can also be attached to a manufactured form, or pre-installed during the making of the form.

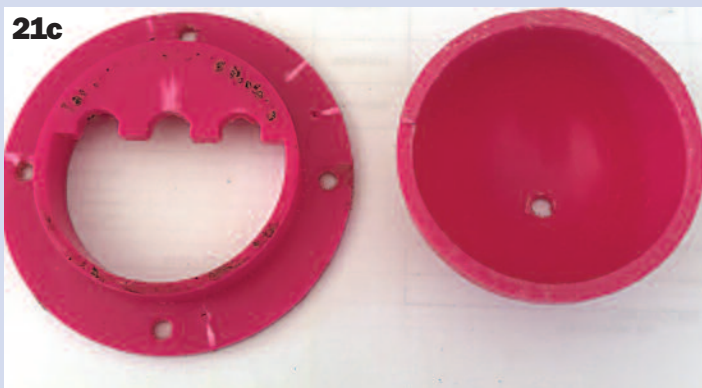


21a. These photos show three options of how this hanger can be used.

Photo 21a shows the hanger installed into a 2-inch drilled hole at the upper center portion of a form.



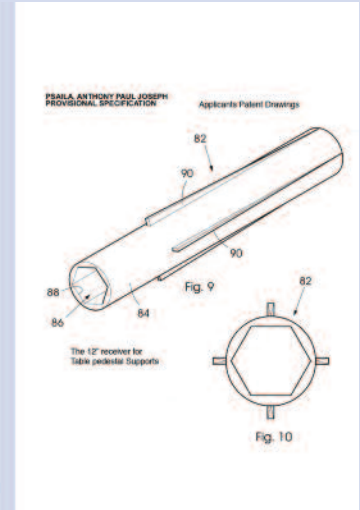
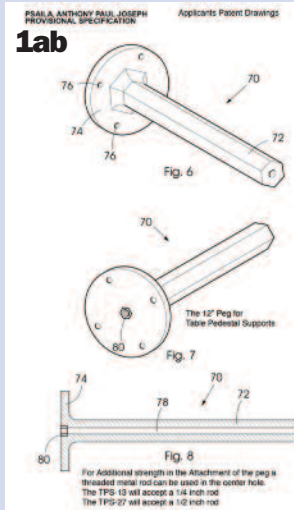
21b. Photo 21b shows the hanger and red (TPS-50) Wall Bracket preinstalled in a coyote gamehead form produced at Flynn's Taxidermy Supply in Loranger, LA.



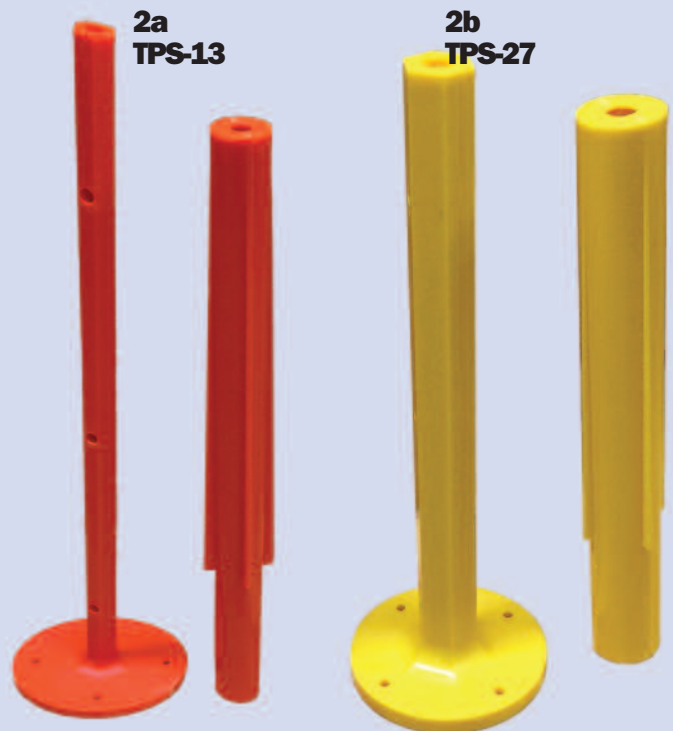
21c. Photo 21c shows the hanger with the dome back cut off so that the hanger portion can be mounted flush to a form's backboard.

Installing the Pedestal Support Sets

1ab. These drawings give good insight into how the pedestal support system is designed. This pedestal support system design is very similar to the wall bracket with a much longer receiver and peg parts. The hexagon receiver and peg locks whatever you are using it for in position with no turning or wobble. As you will see, they are designed to accept steel threaded rods when extra strength is needed, but they are extremely strong without any additional support. Also, they can easily be cut and shortened to

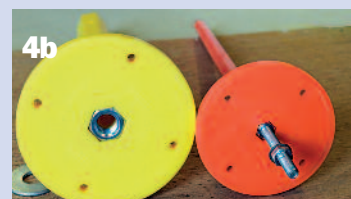
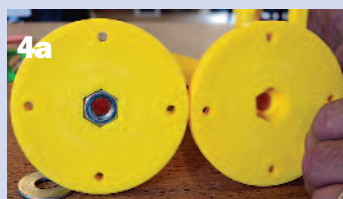


any desired length. It is also important to note that the wall brackets can also be used as pedestal support when you do not find it necessary to have the additional support of the longer pedestal sets. As you will see at the end of this instruction, a TPS-50 will be used to support a second gamehead on the upper shoulder for a double mount presentation.



2ab. There are multiple uses for the two-size pedestal support sets that are available in both taxidermy and habitat developments. Shown here are the TPS-13 (orange), recommended for small- and medium-size pedestals mounts, and the TPS-27 (yellow) that can be used for gameheads up to the size of elk. When using for gameheads like large elks, it is recommended to use a 5/8-inch threaded rod for added support. This will be discussed more in the procedure.

3abc. Brush Country Taxidermy in Cypress, Texas, is using them extensively in building transportable habitats and lifesize attachments, as can be seen in these photos. These products have also been used and tested and endorsed on Facebook by World Champion Jerry Huffaker of Abilene, Texas.



4ab. Three features are part of the unique design for the lock-in-place pedestal sets. First, is the hexagonal shape of the peg and receiver, offering 6 positions once installed. The second is the recession in the base of both pedestal peg bases for a nut. Third are the holes in the base for a secure attachment to your habitat base, which prevents rotation of the base.

5. The hole going through the hexagonal peg of the yellow TPS-27 is



made to accept a 1/2-inch threaded rod for added strength (if needed) and is snug. Tony uses a drill to run the threaded rod through the hole. A nut is then added to the base and secured in the recession slot in the base. He leaves a small length of the rod at the top to thread on a nut. The nut on the top is tightened securing the rod in the peg.

For large pedestal gamehead mounts, Tony recommends using a 3/8-inch threaded rod. In order to use this larger rod, you will need to drill out the hole of the peg with a long 5/8-inch drill bit. You can then put the 5/8-inch rod in the drill and thread it through the larger hole.

6. The rod is then run through a 1/2-inch hole in the wood base and tightened down with a washer and nut from the bottom.





7a



7b

7ab. In this example, the receiver portion of the pedestal set will be installed into the lower portion of the brisket. Other connection locations are done in the same way depending on the composition you have in mine. The width of the yellow TPS-27 receiver at its base is $1\frac{5}{16}$ inch. The widest width at the wings is $1\frac{3}{4}$ inch. If you are drilling through only foam (with no wood block installed in the brisket), a $1\frac{1}{4}$ -inch (or larger) spade bit could be used to drill the hole. If there is wood, you will need at least a $1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch spade bit. If you use a $1\frac{3}{4}$ -inch bit you will need to use Bondo to secure the receiver in place. Tony recommends the wider hole and using Bondo to anchor the receiver in place. To maintain the correct angle and attitude of the head of the form, the drilled hole must be drilled as straight as possible in the form.



8

8. After the hole is drilled into the form, remove the receiver and shake out any loose foam. Make sure the hole in the end of the receiver is closed with tape to prevent any Bondo from entering the peg tube. Mix the amount of Bondo you estimate is needed and pour it into the hole. Push

the receiver into the hole until it is flush with the brisket. As soon as the Bondo begins to gel, cut off any excess Bondo.



9

9. Use heavy grit sandpaper to level the Bondo with the receiver base.



10



11

10. The peg bracket can be secured to the wood base in two ways. If you are not using a center threaded rod, secure the base down with lath screws.

11. If you have the center steel rod in place and the peg base bolted to the wood base, now is the time to set any exact rotation angle you might prefer.

Tip: If you need to tilt the angle of the form, it can be done by placing wedges under the base at needed locations and securing it back down with screws. Also, the very lower part of the peg can also bent slightly by using a heated blower, holding the position until it cool. This is a bit tricky, especially if a rod is in place, but possible.



12a



12b

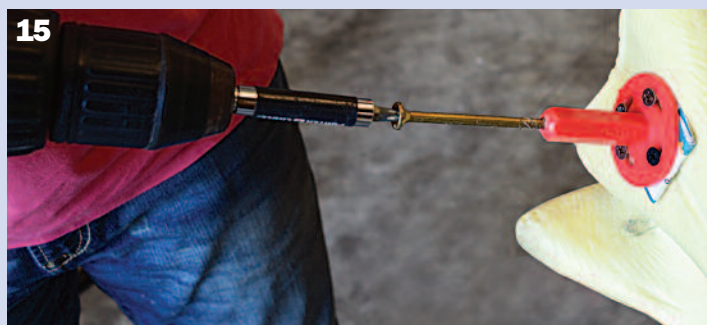
12ab. Put the headform on the peg; since the base is not screwed down yet you can adjust it to any angle by rotating. You may need to slightly loosen the lower nut.

13. Once you have the exact angle you want, remove the form and screw the base to the plywood. You now have an exact position that cannot be changed by accident. Of course, the rotation can be changed by lifting



the mount off and replacing it at another angle using the hexagonal design.

14. If you want to add/stack another gamehead to your pedestal design, that can easily be accomplished using one of the TPS bracket sets. Tony selected the TPS-50 for this procedure. It is the smallest of the wall brackets but has plenty of strength if anchored properly. The receiver bracket was the first part installed. Make sure the hole at the end of the receiver is taped over to prevent Bondo from entering. (You will notice that a smiley face is over most of the holes where needed.) Tony used the 2-inch spade bit to drill a 5-inch deep hole into the top of the shoulder. Tony put a small amount of catalyzed Bondo into the hole and pressed in a 2x2-inch block of wood, 2½ inches in length to the bottom of the predrilled hole. Enough Bondo was filled in over the block of wood allowing enough room for the receiver. The receiver was pushed into place and a small level used to make sure the receiver was level until the Bondo set. Once the Bondo set, a 2½-inch screw was screwed into the block of wood through the receiver. Four shorter screws were drilled into the Bondo around the receiver base.



15. The form used for the top mount was a pedestal form that already had a block of wood in the brisket, so it was a simple matter to attach the peg bracket to the base of the brisket.

16. The top form could be placed at any angle offered by the hexagonal design of the bracket set.

Where can you purchase the TPS products?

Right now, until Tony establishes distributors for his products, the wall and pedestal bracket sets can be purchased from our Breakthrough magazine office by calling 1-800-783-7266 or through our website at www.breakthroughmagazine.com. See the ad and list of products on page 47. These are products that I think will soon be preinstalled in many of your favorite forms and sold as products of taxidermy supply companies product lines.

What is in the future for TPS?

There are many areas of taxidermy other than those shown in this article where both the wall and pedestal brackets can be used. Just a few are

TPS INSTRUCTIONS FROM ISSUE #136



the attachments of fish mounts with adjustable angles on a wall; supports for flying bird mounts away from the wall (Apoxie Sculpt around the plastic can be used make an artificial branch); habitat attachments in many ways; attachments for the feet/hoooves of lifesize mounts to a base; detachment/attachments of antlers and horns; and attachment of European skull mounts to panels or the wall, which will be my subject for an article next issue.

Whenever new products hit our market, there will be hesitation and even skepticism before trying them. This is human nature and I am a prime example of those two sentiments. When Tony first contacted me about what he invented and envisioned, I could only understand a small part and benefit of what he had conceived, but when I finally saw his diagrams and purpose, I knew he was onto something that could very possibly make a big impact in many areas of the taxidermy process.

Only time will tell, but if supply companies do implement Tony's original intent of having the receiver installed in forms they produce, there will be added sales opportunities for their companies. Taxidermists will be buying the hanging pegs from those suppliers in bulk for their workrooms and showroom walls and to give or sell to their customers. The wall and pedestal brackets are products that I think will soon be preinstalled in forms and added as products to most of the taxidermy supply companies product line.

Other products from TPS that will be available soon are a hexagonal stainless steel rod that can be attached to your mounting stand that fits into the TPS wall bracket receiver.

17. Tony has also developed motorized mounting stands that rise and lower with the touch of a button. In addition, he developed a swivel head attachment that can be attached to your current stand and is a permanent part of his motorized stands. All of these stand parts will be available later this year or early 2021. ■



I first met TONY PSALIA in 2004 in Pretoria, South Africa, when Kathy and I attended the Taxidermist Association of South African annual convention where I was a judge

and gave a full-day seminar. While there we hunted with the TASA president and professional hunter Dennis Pickard, and vacationed with Dennis and his wife Jennifer who was the secretary of TASA. In addition to the hunting we traveled through much of South Africa, ending with a 3-day stay at Kruger National Park. That was just the beginning of some very special relationships that we will always cherish. Tony prepared and shipped all of my hunting trophies back to the USA in excellent condition and he and the Pickards attended World Shows in the years that followed. Tony and his wife Liezl stayed with us for two weeks in 2019, helping us prepare for the 2019 World Show and assisted us with all of the unloading on our return home. This past Thanksgiving Tony was back in the USA, and he and I took time to photograph these articles and spend some time at my hunting club and camp in the piney woods of Tangipahoa Parish. I was lucky to not only see, but take a nice mature trophy buck while Tony was visiting.



1985 World Show in Lawrence, Kansas

A Short History of Pedestal Gamehead Forms

The pedestal forms for many species of small and big game first started showing up in competition in the early '80s. Before then, when the new renaissance of taxidermy competitions started in the '70s, close to 100 percent of the gamehead entries were mounted for hanging on a wall. A few started showing up as table displays by 1980, but most were still mounted flush to a panel or post.

In the early '80s taxidermists started altering wall hanging forms to gain advantage by employing originality in competition. Gradually more table pedestals and floor pedestal became the norm, and by 1990 at least 50 percent of gamehead entries were pedestal mounts. I wrote an article in Issue 46 in 1996 titled, "The Pedestal Revolution" documenting this artistic trend that was engulfing taxidermy in both competitions and commercial taxidermy.

Today, there are thousands of form selections labeled as pedestals for most species taxidermists receive. Gifted sculptors have filled this void of the mid 20th century with pedestal forms displaying every attitude imaginable. These table and floor pedestal sculptures have also evolved into what the supply industry labeled as "wall pedestals," displaying the classic strong offset shoulder and upper leg movement. In large major competitions today, the percentage is closer to 90 percent pedestal and 10 percent wall displays.

Methods to support, suspend, and display the fashionably named pedestal presentations are many and varied. Taxidermist Joe Coombs, a supply company owner and the first winner of a World Title for whitetail shoulder mounts, even patented his method many years ago.

Most methods today utilize utilitarian products like medal rods of various sizes and/or steel square tubing. The TPS System was developed and manufactured as a system specific for pedestal support. It offers a strong union with the base and no rotation with a lock-in-place design. This system can be manufactured permanently into pedestal forms or installed by taxidermists. Supply companies are welcome to contact Tony for information on distribution and usage of his products. You can email any request of Tony to info@breakthroughmagazine.com and we will forward the email to him.



2013 World Show in Springfield, Illinois