

Sensory Safari a Real Thrill for Students -
by Werner Schmiesing, Central Ohio Chapter

I didn't recall anything that made my first grade year memorable in Minster Elementary School when I went there, but of course that was 57 years ago and time has a way of dimming memories! But now I had a chance to make a difference in the lives of three classes of first graders. At least that's what I thought.

I was figuring on having 47 students from the first grade teachers: Mrs. Joyce Luthman, Mrs. Mary Jo Schlater and Mrs. Linda Winner. SCI's Publications Dept. had sent me a *Safari* magazine & *Safari Times* newspapers for each teacher. Dave Sheets, a supervisor with Ohio's Div. of Wildlife, brought me 47 copies of the *WILD OHIO for KIDS* magazine to pass out. Things were going as planned.

But plans change...the second & third grade teachers heard about my SENSORY SAFARI plans and wanted to be included too. So Mrs. Dianne Voskuhl, Mrs. Sue Westerheide, Mrs. Lynne Heitbrink and Mrs. Sue Falk brought their 65 second grade students as a group.

After the first two sessions, the third grade teachers, Mrs. Vicki Schwartz, Mrs. Karen Knapke, Mrs. Barb Heitkame and Mrs. Shelly Wolf brought in their 68 students. What a great time we had that morning! I had the undivided attention of 179 students and 11 teachers. A reporter, Laura Mazur, from our local paper, *The Community Post*, even stopped by to take some pictures and do a story about the program.

Laura began her article with "Lions and sharks and bears ... oh my!" She was impressed too, and had a room full of ideas for an article. It didn't hurt that I had been on the taxidermy trail for 40 years and a Life Member of Safari Club International. I had accumulated a building full of wildlife and the knowledge that goes along with it.

The things that drew the most attention were a hammerhead shark over 8-1/2 feet long, with a mouth full of sharp teeth, and a 1/2-lifesize mount of an African lion, snarling of course! I had to warn the children to be careful of the shark's teeth, because they were still sharp. The children couldn't keep their hands off a black bear open-mouth mount or the leopard rug. I had everything from duck mounts to the skin of a crocodile, North American furbearers, and African antelope. Actually there were 32 different items and we talked about each one. I know this was as enjoyable for me as it was for them.

The teachers took four rolls of film during my presentation--memories for a lifetime--but the really neat part was when all the children drew a picture of their favorite animal on a sheet of paper and wrote a nice thank you to go along with it. I treasure each one and have saved them all!

I do several SENSORY SAFARIES every year and can't think of anything else more rewarding. I would encourage each SCI member to pass along their knowledge by presenting a program like this every time they get a chance.

Wed. May 17, 2006

Items brought to the Sensory Safari for Minster Elementary School
1 st., 2 nd., and 3 rd., grade classes. 179 students, 11 teachers.

8 ft. hammerhead shark with open mouth
1/2 lifesize African lion with open mouth
Zebra rug
leopard rug from India, open mouth
1 pair mounted mergansers (ducks from Lake Erie)
Hippo tusks, upper & lower
mounted black rhino foot
zebra foot ashtray
blesbok horn
springbok horn
cape buffalo horns
black bear shoulder mount, open mouth
1 set of large Canadian moose horns
lifesize alligator mount (about 3 ft. long) plastic
mallard duck decoy (used for hunting)
picture of Werner with his cape Buffalo kill
Sportsmen Against Hunger photo (framed 8" x 10")
crocodile skin
mounted screech owl with prey (cedar waxwing)
box turtle shell (closed tight)
deer antlers, whitetail
black bear skin with head & claws
coyote skin
grey fox skin
springbok skin
blesbok skin
whitetail deer hide
beaver skin
muskrat skin
warthog shoulder mount
raccoon skin
mink skin

END.

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