

John Tyler Brings Home "Piper"

By Anita Bugg, Ballard Weekly

It is kind of hard to top off killing a bear at the age of eleven but when you wait another eleven months to see the outcome of your kill, it kind of puts the icing on the top of the cake. John Tyler Dike experienced exactly that when he traveled with his mom, Shannon, and family friend, Donna Weaver to Lexington this past weekend.

The three were the guests of the Kentucky State Taxidermy Association at their annual Dinner on Saturday night along with the United Special Sportsmen's Alliance. USSA was the organizations responsible for making John Tyler's bear hunt a reality thanks to the hard work of founder Brigid O'Donoghue and other volunteers. The Wisconsin based charity grants wishes to critically ill and disabled youth who have a desire to participate in outdoor activities.

John Tyler was introduced to the Association members and guests as the story of his hunt was told. John Tyler was present under the guise that he was to receive a trophy and ribbon for his bear kill in Wisconsin last September. His mother, Shannon, had known for about two weeks the purpose of the trip but had kept the secret from him. It wasn't until he was called upon stage did John Tyler learn his reason for



bring in Lexington. He was to receive his long awaited "Piper", the bear he had killed in September of 2009 which had been transformed into a rug for his room. John Tyler and his mother named the bear Piper after Shannon's grandfather, James Nolan Piper, a hunter.

Since returning home, John Tyler and Piper are inseparable. He glows with pride each time he looks at the rug and is happy to show it to visitors. "I really missed my Piper," he says as he strokes the bear's head. Dike and his mother are awaiting the results of testing that determines the bear's actual age, however, they do know that

she is an adult female that has given birth.

Shannon and John Tyler would once again like to say thanks to Brigid O'Donoghue and the United Special Sportsmen's Alliance, Kentucky State Taxidermy Association, Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife, Wisconsin Department of Fish and Wildlife, Ricky Waldon and Ronnie Giles and all those that made John Tyler's wish of being a real bear hunter come true. "Sniper" Dike is still on the hunt and ready for his next adventure - so get ready guys - who knows what's next on his big game list....