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## In the open: Artist offers skull paintings to raise funds for homeless

BY JULI PROBASCO-SOWERS • REGISTER STAFF WRITER • MARCH 2, 2008

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Larry Zach has a special mission this week: figure out how to transform a buffalo skull and an elk skull into artwork.

Both painted skulls will be auctioned at a fundraising banquet March 15 for the Iowa Chapter of Safari Club International. Hundreds of other items will be available for auction and sale as part of the group's humanitarian and conservation efforts.

This is the first time Zach has painted on a skull. He is better known for paintings and prints of common birds, lions and famous Iowa whitetail bucks,

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He doesn't know how much money the skulls will receive at auction.

"The buffalo is a little easier to work with and visualize because it is broader," the wildlife artist said as he sized up the buffalo skull. "I would think there would be buffalo in the painting."

Zach, whose art galley is located in Ankeny, said he used his ideas to create a digital image before he started committing paint to bone.

That was Wednesday morning. By Friday morning, Zach had his detailed painting of a buffalo well under way on the broadest area of the skull.

The elk skull will be more challenging, he noted, because it is elongated. But that lends itself to longer images, such as a tall pine tree, which would be in keeping with an elk's natural habitat,

he said.

He also has less time to create the images because they have to be ready for auction.

"Normally I only do two or three paintings a year," he said. "I'm such a perfectionist. I look at things like how the light looks, the grass, what kind of vegetation. I keep changing things, and by the time I'm done, the painting is much different than the image I start with."

The painted skulls have a connection to active members of the Safari Club. Both skulls are from animals purchased by the Iowa Chapter for donation to homeless shelters in the Des Moines area. Most of this year's 1,000 pounds of ground buffalo and elk meat went to Bethel Mission in Des Moines the day before Thanksgiving, said A. Jay Winter, board member of Safari's Iowa chapter.

Money raised from the auction of the Zach skull originals will help increase the number of animals that can be purchased for the meat donation program called "The Great Buffalo Giveaway."

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JULI PROBASCO-SOWERS/THE REGISTER

Wildlife artist Larry Zach shows off his canvas — a buffalo skull. He will also paint on an elk skull, and his artwork will be auctioned off at the Safari Club's fundraiser.



JULI PROBASCO-SOWERS

Artist Larry Zach with the buffalo's skull.

### SKULLS WILL BE AUCTIONED AT FUNDRAISER

**WHAT:** Fundraiser and banquet for Iowa Chapter, Safari Club International

**WHEN:** March 15

**WHERE:** Sheraton in West Des Moines

**WHO:** Anyone interested in conservation, humanitarian assistance and hunting. People do not have to be Safari Club members to attend.

**HOURS:** Social hour begins at 5 p.m., followed by dinner and the speaker at 6:30 p.m., then the auction.

**SPEAKER:** Richard Leopold, director of the Iowa Department of Natural Resources.

**COST:** \$75 for a couple, \$50 for one person in advance. Tickets can be purchased at the door but will cost \$10 more.

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**LARRY ZACH ARTWORK:** Two original Larry Zach paintings, one on a buffalo skull and one on an elk skull, will be auctioned. For a sample of Zach's art work, visit his Web site at [www.zachwildlifeart.com](http://www.zachwildlifeart.com)

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