



# MINNESOTA PRAIRIE CHICKEN SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Volume 46. No. 2, Spring, 2020

As you know the MPCS 47<sup>th</sup> annual meeting was canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The board wanted you all to know that we are still here, and the chickens are still booming. Dedicated volunteers are doing their best to complete the annual spring census as always, and the planning for planting more grassland is continuing. The Prairie Grouse may notice the air is a little cleaner, the sky a little quieter, but booming will still fill the spring prairie landscape.



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## Aria Kapsner MPCS Scholarship Recipient

The Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society is pleased to announce that Aria Kapsner, a student at the U of M Crookston, has earned a \$500 scholarship for college expenses.

Ms. Kapsner is majoring in Natural Resources Management. She especially wants to work on habitat as that can help more animals survive and prosper. Her immediate goal is to secure a position with the Natural Resources Conservation Services so she can do more field work.

Ms. Kapsner keeps very busy by volunteering with activities ranging from Meals on Wheels, worship services at church, peer health counseling, freshman orientations, helping with farm chores for the elderly, and more including singing the National Anthem at school sporting events.

Career wise Ms. Kapsner has done work with the MN DNR, US Fish and Wildlife, Rydell National Wildlife Refuge and the MN Sharp-tail Grouse Society. doing habitat work, She has experience banding geese and checking waterfowl bag checks.

Her hobbies include singing, playing the piano, hunting, fishing, riding horses, shooting trap, planting trees, gardening, photography and soccer.

Ms. Kapsner is a very busy woman and has successfully maintained a 3.9+ grade point average in her school work.

We look forward to having her work with Minnesota's natural resources and making Minnesota a better place to live, work and visit.



"I would like to extend a note of appreciation to the scholarship selection committee for choosing me as their 2020 MPCS scholarship recipient. I am truly blessed to have received the help for my schooling from this scholarship as I am expected to pay my own way through school. Not only was I awarded with a scholarship, but I was also awarded with something that will benefit me for years to come: networking opportunities."

If this is too long, feel free to cut anything out to make it your desired length. Let me know if there is anything else you need from me!

Thanks,

~Aria Kapsner

## First Prairie Chicken

Rob Baden

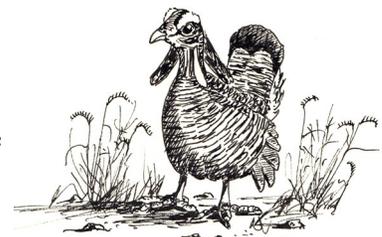
My 2019 MN prairie chicken hunt was nothing short of amazing. Opening morning we drove up to Prairie Dunes WMA to begin our hunt. I choose the WMA because it was the first parcel ever acquired by the MN Prairie Chicken Society. Since its acquisition in 2017, I have had a hand in restoring the wetlands and prairie on the parcel. The hunt was a family affair with my 7 year old son, Ethan, and wife/camerawoman, Tammy, tagging along as observers. Copper, our 5 month old chocolate lab was also along hoping to get on his first prairie chickens. The newly restored prairie grasses and flowers had a thick morning dew, leaving our pants legs dripping with water as we began our hunt. The number of grasshoppers in the new seeding seemed endless. I remember telling Ethan that any prairie chickens we found would probably be too fat from eating so many grasshoppers to fly. It didn't take us too long to see our first prairie chickens; the birds, 10 in all were drying themselves out on one of the restored wetland dikes. I went into stealth mode, but the birds proved to be too smart and flushed wild. I marked a couple of the birds down, but after 30 minutes of working the area, Copper and I came up empty handed. We worked west to the WMA boundary, and then circled back along a large wetland. The thirty sandhill cranes roosting on the wetland took offense to Copper wanting a drink and squawked their displeasure as they flew away.

Copper proved to be the center of attention a short while later; he started getting curious of something in the grass, and then I saw that unmistakable black and white. Before I could get the "no, no" out of my mouth, the skunk unleashed its fury!! Copper came running back to me, coughing and gagging. Hopefully, his first experience with a skunk will be his last. Back to the wetland we went for water, Ethan laughing the whole way. After drinks and washing Copper off as best we could, we continued on. Copper seemed to



Photo Credit Tammy Baden

shrug the ordeal off like only a puppy can, and was back to frolicking around in no time. We were just entering an area with short vegetation when it happened. Two prairie chickens flushed at 20 yards. I was so surprised. I missed my first two shots, but my third dropped the trailing bird. I marked the bird down, and Copper and I dived into the sweetclover looking for the downed bird. Copper's nose led him to the bird, and soon I was holding my first prairie chicken. As Ethan, Tammy, Copper and I admired the hatch year male prairie chicken, I felt extremely blessed to be sharing this experience with my family. I couldn't think of a more special parcel to harvest my first prairie chicken on.





## The Evolution of the Sharpie Shack

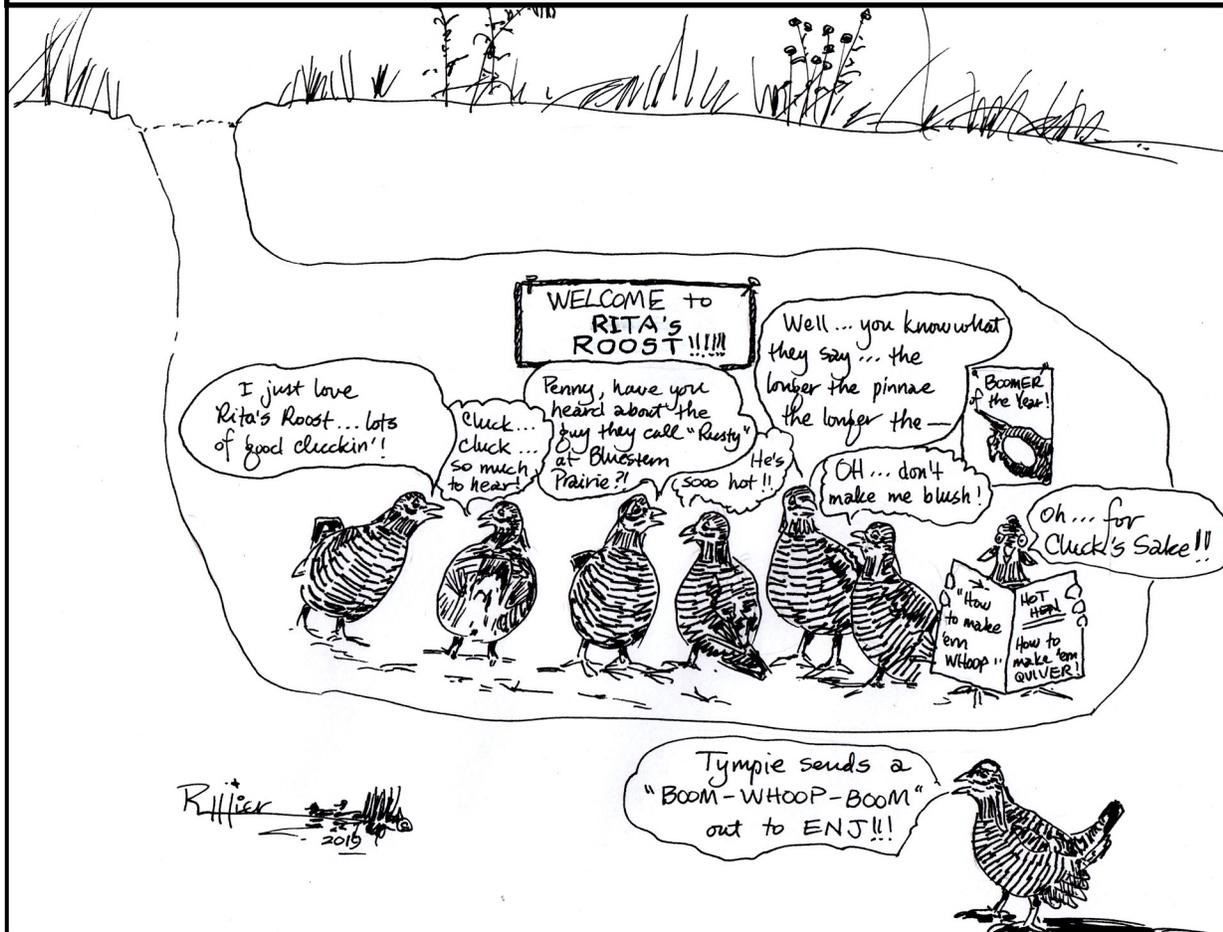
Here's the story: Grandboy Ariston, a 12-year old city kid who loves hands-on stuff came to visit for a week of spring break recently. Grandpa Dan always has projects waiting in the wings, and I had this junk trailer in the grove that kept calling out to me. While reading *The Sharptailer*, I noted that they don't have a featured sharptail blind in northwest Minnesota! Heck, I can fix that! Ariston and I set to work gathering materials from the barn. Being a shameless "Dumpster Diver", and scrap-saver, things accumulate. The Sharptailed Grouse Society kicked in a few bucks for lumber, used tires, and miscellaneous supplies, and together with Svedarsky resources, the shack is ready to roll onto the dancing ground.

To note a few origins: the rubber roofing used to be on a building before replacement, pretty dang good 16 inch tires were in inventory at a local tire shop, the door came from the local dump 45 years ago when you could take stuff (and maybe even find a thing or two), old mailbox is mine that got rusty (good place to keep prairie grouse brochures where the mice can't get to them), inside door handle is an elk antler piece, and there is a meadow lark perch ("deer skull") over the door, galvanized barn tin from a remodel job in my pole barn, and finally the carpet scrap on the door used to be on the front entry steps to my home. I figure the cumulative age of material is about 176 years old, but I don't think the sharpies will notice.

Thanks,  
Dan



# THE ADVENTURES OF TYMPIE NUCHUS By ROSS HIER



The Prairie Sportsman season premiere episode that features prairie grouse is now available online:

This will show you the 6 minute clip "Remembering Mr. Grouse":

<https://video.pioneer.org/video/remembering-mr-grouse-lg2i7t/>

This will show you the entire 27 minute episode:

<https://video.pioneer.org/video/birds-of-the-prairie-mbbeg2/>

"Bret Amundson hunts Minnesota's only native prairie grouse, the sharptail, in east central Minnesota where wildlife biologists are working to save the bird's declining population, and White Earth Nation dancers pay tribute to "Mr. Grouse" John Toepfer, a long-time prairie grouse researcher."

# Calling All Kids!

The Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society is sponsoring a youth art contest. Any visual or written art form is welcome. Get those creative juices flowing and share your prairie-inspired art!



Prizes will be awarded to a winning entry in each of three age categories: 6 and under, 7-12, and 13-18. Entries **must** be received by May 14, 2020. Contact Sara Vacek (saravacek5@gmail.com or 320-297-0386) to learn how to submit your masterpiece.

Please complete and include the form below with your art submission. Please do not put the artist's name on the front of the artwork.



The Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society is a non-profit wildlife conservation organization devoted to promoting and supporting through public education the preservation, management, and restoration of native prairie and open landscape habitats that are key to the survival of this endemic North American prairie grouse.

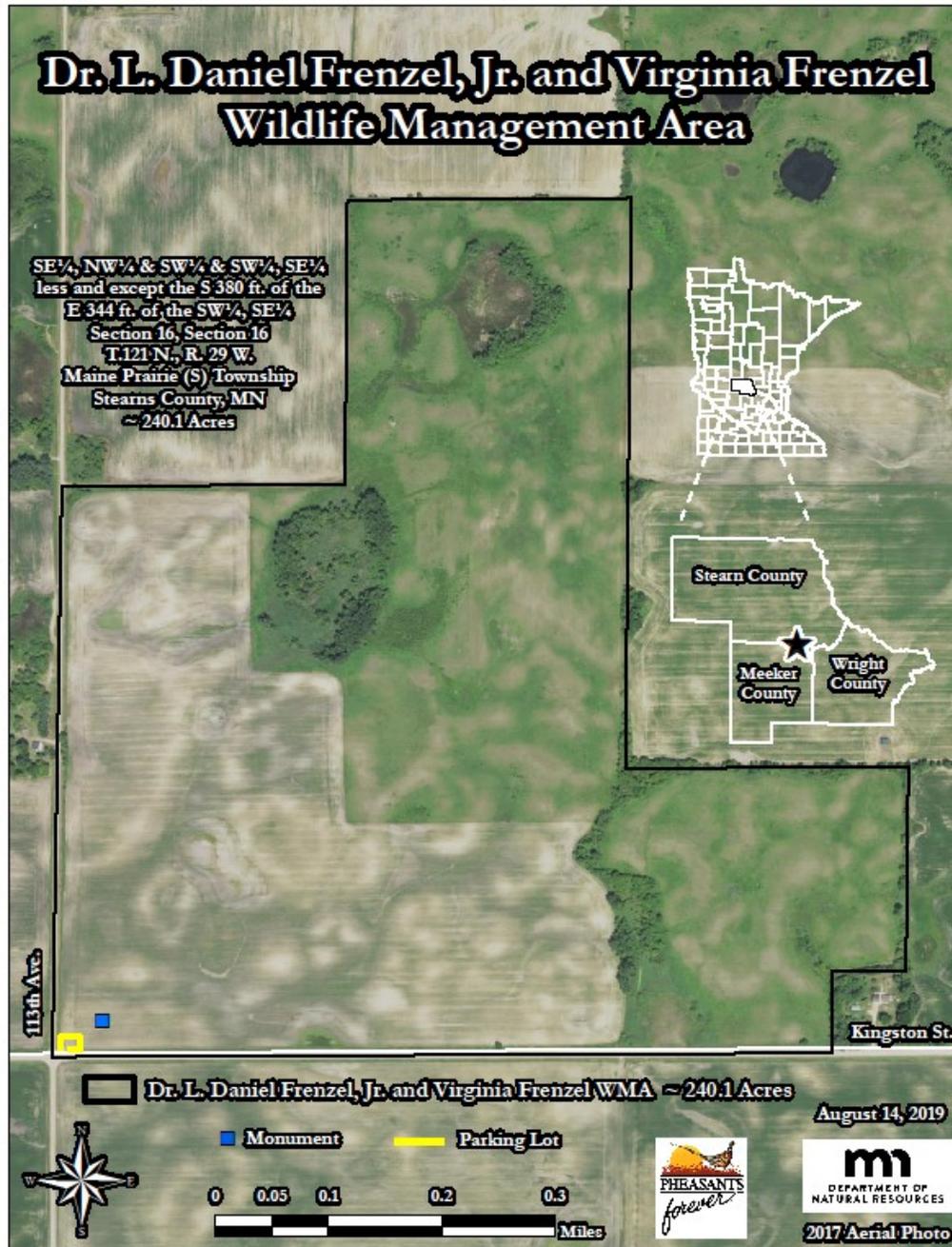
Artist Name \_\_\_\_\_

Artist Age \_\_\_\_\_ Artist Grade \_\_\_\_\_ Artist School \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Do you want the original artwork returned?  Yes  No



Dan and Virginia Frenzel worked as a team to inspire many students to realize their career dreams in Natural Resource Management both at Macalester College and the University of Minnesota from 1950 - 1984. Dan met and married Virginia during WW II. Dan served as a Navy corpsman in the Pacific Theater. Dan completed his early college education at North Texas State Teacher's College in 1947, and received his PhD in Fish and Wildlife Management from the University of Minnesota in 1957. Virginia became a licensed nurse during the war. Many of Dan's students moved on to leadership positions with various state and federal conservation agencies, universities and medical facilities around the United States. In the 1970's and 1980's when Bald Eagle's were listed as endangered species, the research of Dr. Frenzel and his students helped in their recovery. Dan and Virginia's humility and kindness to others will always be remembered. The Frenzel's cherished wild places. This Wildlife Management Area stands as a lasting tribute to their contributions to natural resource conservation in Minnesota and to our nation.

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(updated 03/05/2020)

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## Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society Membership

Your gift membership will help! Any tax deductible contribution or donation will bring you the MPCS Newsletter and supports the Society's efforts to save Minnesota's prairie chickens and their habitats. Renew your membership today!

The Minnesota Prairie Chicken Society is a non-profit wildlife conservation organization exempt from Federal Income tax as described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions made to the Society are deductible by donors as provided in Section 170 of the Code. The Society's Federal Identification number is #41-1327954.

- I would like to make a membership contribution.  
 I would like to contribute to Prairie Chicken Habitat Improvement.  
 I would like to renew my membership.

Or RENEW ONLINE with PayPal at: <https://www.prairiechickens.org/donate>

Name:

Address/City/State/Zip:

Email:

## MPCS Newsletters Now Electronic

After a slow transition period from direct mailing to electronic newsletters, the board has decided to post all newsletters on the newly updated website. Newsletters will now be posted as a .pdf file and be in full color. We recognize that some members may still want to receive direct mailings so please contact Travis for direct mailing. The newsletters posted on the website will allow members to read past newsletters and share them with family, colleagues, educational institutions, or other conservation partners.

Take a look.

[www.prairiechickens.org](http://www.prairiechickens.org)

