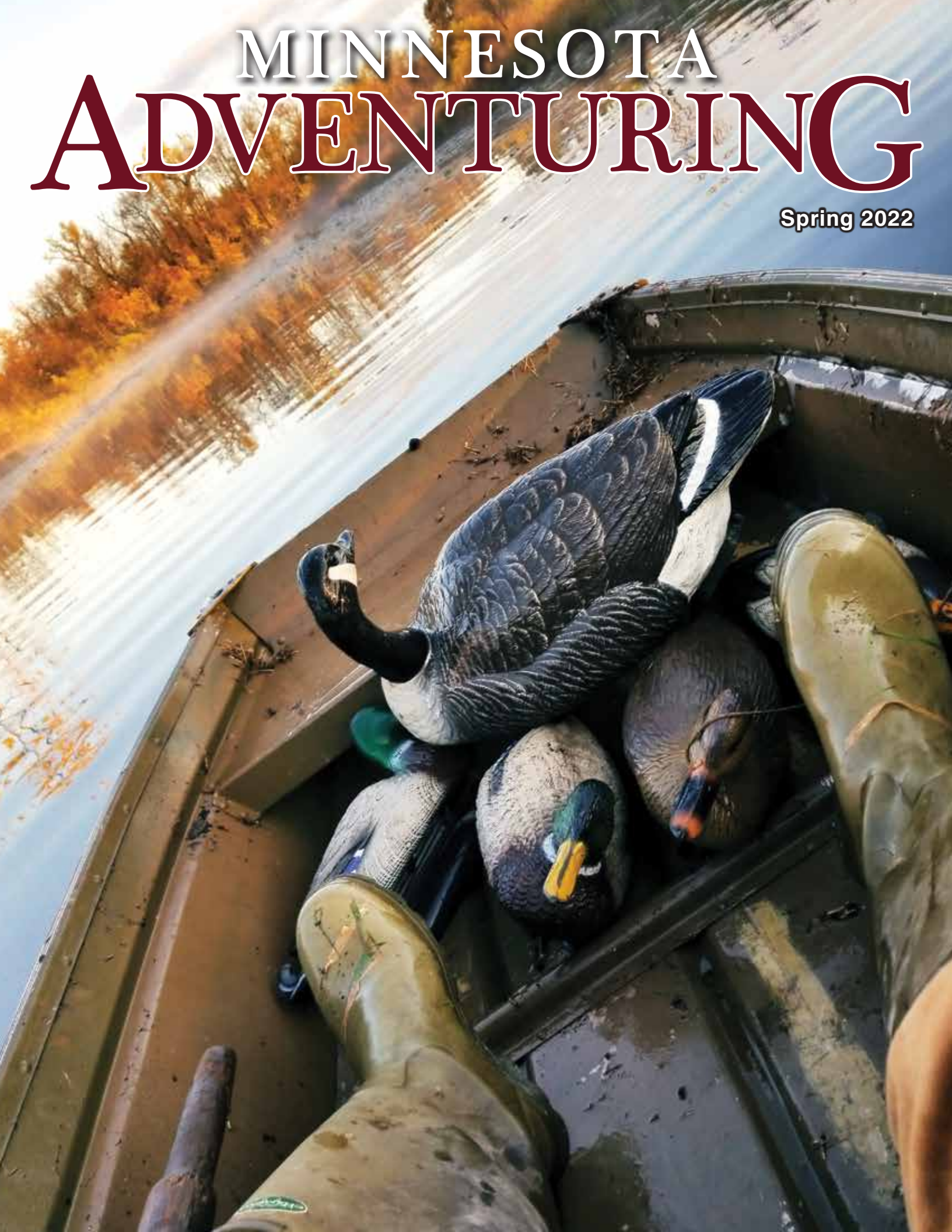


# MINNESOTA ADVENTURING

Spring 2022





# ▽ Editor's Letter

Hello MN SCI membership. The Expo is complete and what an Expo it was! I hope many of you were able to swing out for a visit. What may have appeared to be a smaller show resulted in a whole lot of people excited to be out with each other and donating to great causes, buying hunts, visiting our vendors, and participating. All key reasons we are part of SCI. We even had some outdoor celebrities visit. Thanks, Pat and Nicole from DrivenTV. I hope that the Traeger grill is working great that you got in the silent auction.



As an SCI member, you are part of an outdoor/hunting advocacy group. I love going to shows and banquets for various groups such as Pope & Young, etc. My question to you is, how invested are you in our future as outdoors people? The amount of money raised at these events is amazing. The money goes right back into game conservation, helping local trap teams, funding our DNR canine units, veterans, handicap hunts, and giving back to other needs that may arise. These groups also advocate at the legislative levels for our rights as hunters and outdoors people. They need all of us to help make sure we all have a voice. I am guilty of taking that for granted at times so a reminder never hurts.

A person who is truly passionate about his or her cause will show it on their calendars and in their wallets. I can't afford the hunts that sold at the Wild Sheep Foundation a few weeks ago at well over \$100K each, but I sure am glad someone can. I can, however, bid on the silent auction items or put money towards the raffles and purchase some hunts as my wife did recently. There are ways to give a little and a little goes a long way. All the SCI events have something for everyone.

At the Superior Chapter SCI event a few weeks ago, the speaker was the president of Hunt the Vote (Huntthevote.org). Did you know that only 50% of hunters vote? Shockingly it was worse than that not too many years ago. We all talk a big game, but do we vote, or do we fall back on the excuse our vote doesn't count? We hunters and outdoors enthusiasts are loud and proud often, but we are not voting. We must do better.

I have been reading a lot of news lately on how close places like California and Alaska, of all places, sup the reduction of hunting permits and taking public lands away. This is just another step closer to ending it all. As breaking news from

the Safari Club International FaceBook page stated recently:

"8-unelected bureaucrats on Alaska's Federal Subsistence Board have unanimously taken action to close large tracts of public land to caribou and moose hunting by non-federally qualified users for the next two seasons. SCI is working with our partners to determine the next steps."

In closing, I want to thank all the vendors, attendees, board members, other

volunteers, and anyone I did not capture for attending the MN SCI World Hunting Expo. You will hear more in future meetings but as a plug for next year's Expo, you will not want to miss it. We are going to blow the doors off that place!

Always looking for stories and content. Never fear dropping me a note or text. Razr1500@gmail.com or 651-214-8300.

**Tony Roettger, Editor**

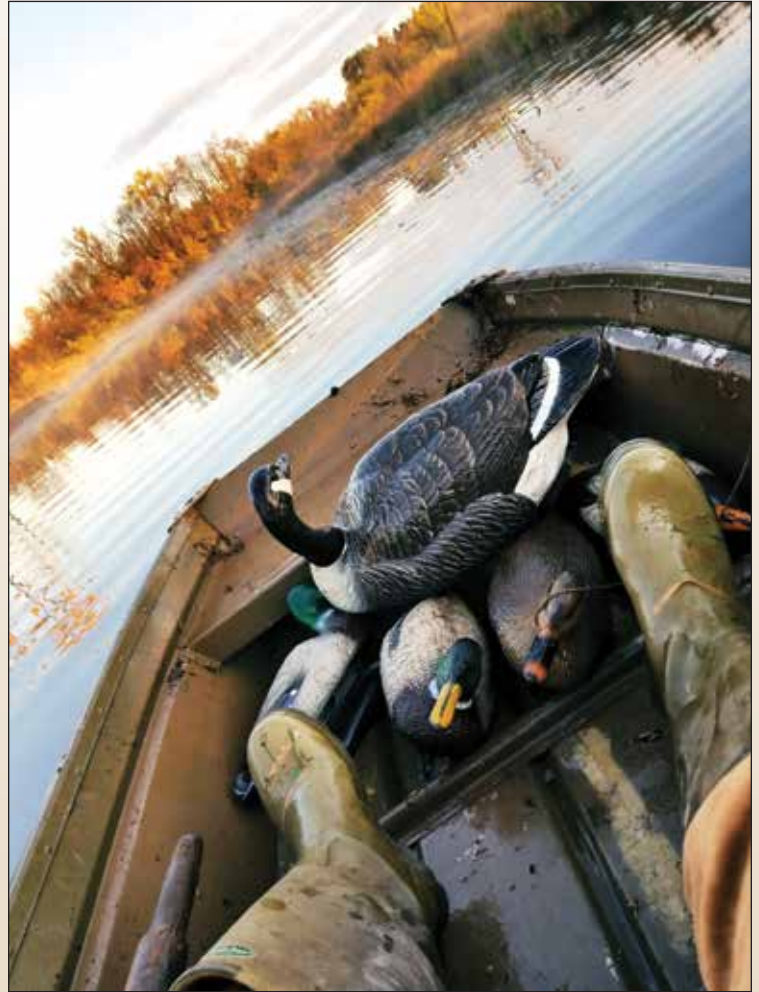


# MINNESOTA ADVENTURING

**MINNESOTA**  
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Cover photo credit: Tony Roettger.

### Capture a Moment on Film.

*Minnesota Adventuring* is looking for cover photos. You are invited to submit your hunting or wild animal photos. Cover photos need to be portrait or vertical orientation. Email your photos with descriptions to [editor@minnesotasci.com](mailto:editor@minnesotasci.com).

*Are you an avid outdoorsman?  
Do you love to hang out with other outdoorsmen?*

## COME JOIN SCI

We have an incredible calendar of events in store for 2022 and would love to welcome you to our chapter.

If you have interest in helping out... we also have room on our board for you to get involved as a board member.

**Private message Travis Senenfelder for details.**



# MINNESOTA ADVENTURING

## Editor

Tony Roettger  
651-214-8300 razr1500@gmail.com

## Printing

Warren Kapsner  
Rapid Graphics & Mailing  
763-781-6931 rgm4016warren@comcast.net

## Graphic Design

Robin Pursley  
Clearwater Communications  
701-355-4458 rpursley@clearwatercommunications.net

MINNESOTA ADVENTURING welcomes advertisements, articles, hunt reports, and photos from Members of the Minnesota SCI. Submissions should include Member's name, address, and daytime phone number and be sent to editor@minnesotasci.com. Submissions may be edited for length and clarity.

*No attempt is made to verify the accuracy of hunt reports. Advertisements in the Minnesota Adventuring are not to be considered endorsements by the Minnesota SCI.*

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# ▽ President's Message

Well, this is it. My last letter. My term as President of MN SCI is over. With Covid it has been quite a ride. I want to thank the Board, the members and all the exhibitors we've had, for your help and support since 2019.

We've actually had a significant number of accomplishments and I'd like to share them. These are things that we accomplished as a Board:

- We reversed a 10-year downtrend in membership
- We had one of the highest grossing Expos in history (1st or 2nd) in 2020
- We had the highest grossing silent auction in history in 2022
- We had the 2 highest grossing raffles and games in history -2020 and 2022
- We had the largest Friday attendance in Club history in 2020
- As of YTD 2022, for the first time over half our members are either new 3-year members or lifetime members. This should allow us to concentrate on new member acquisition vs member renewal for the next several years. Membership was driven by our new incentive program at the Expo.
- We negotiated a series of new contracts with the Marriot that are significantly more favorable to the Club and for our members and gives us a home for the next 5 years.
- We launched the first completely on-line auction for the Chapter and the first on-line raffle. .
- We modified our marketing program to incentivize earlier sign-ups for the Expo. It drove both early sign-up and overall attendance.
- The 2022 Expo was a challenge. Going in we thought we'd be lucky to breakeven, but we made decent money in spite of reduced attendance for both exhibitors and attendees.
- We had two wild game dinners in 2021. We postponed the December 2020 dinner until April because of Covid and then had our normal one in December. Thanks to all who have contributed the game to make these a must attend event and to Scott Clinton who generously serves as the drop-off point



Special thanks to the board members who have been here the whole time: Nate Albrecht, Dean Birkland, Brent Nelson and Travis Senenfelder. I couldn't have done it without them. I also want to thank Monique Navarrette, our chapter liaison, for her help and support. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Brian Smith. I succeeded Brian as president and he was generous with his time and knowledge, as well as doing the live auction. Whatever successes we have had as a Board and Club these are the people who are most responsible and who deserve your thanks. They certainly have my thanks and gratitude.

Travis will be succeeding me as President. I wish him well and ask that you give him your support.

Be safe! Hunt hard! Tell the people who are important to you that you love them. And thank God that you have been given the opportunity that you have.

**Don Lynch, President**

# ▽ President-Elect's Message

2022 is an election year on many fronts and across many Boards. At Minnesota SCI, as you know, the gavel has been passed and before I go any further, I would like to say, "thank you".

First, I would like to one last time thank Don Lynch for his time on the Board and for these last few years as President. Thank you, Don from all of us here at SCI.

Second, I would like to thank Nate Albrecht. Nate, who many of you know and some of you don't, has spent many years both on our Board and also as our Chapter Treasurer. He has done an outstanding job reporting chapter financials monthly, implementing chapter expense saving strategies, coming up with creative income producing/fundraising ideas, and filing year-end chapter reports. He does all of this for us tirelessly during his most busy time of year, tax season. Nate, as many of you know is a CPA and we ask a lot of him during fiscal year-end leading up to our expo as well as during filing season just after our expo. Nate has always stepped up, produced, and been there for us when we needed him. Thank you, Nate, for all your efforts over these past years and we would love to continue seeing you at our chapter events in the future as member, who is there to enjoy their time rather than work : )

Third, I would like to once again say, "thank you" to the Chapter for giving me an opportunity to represent us. I am so very excited to hit the ground running with new growth ideas to further our Chapters' generosity in supporting youth, our veterans, women who have an interest in the sport, and men who wish to take their hunting experiences to the next level adventure.

I am also so very excited to continue our work with National SCI here on the local level regarding conservation efforts, education, and legislative advocacy. The path is not straight and uphill... but I am committed to putting one foot in front of the other and making the trek alongside other Minnesota outdoor conservation organizations.

The vision for this is clear.

It starts at the Board. As a Board we are taking steps to increase the size and strength of our Board. Our Board these past few years has ranged from 5-8 members. That number has not been enough. Too many board members are wearing too many hats, and other committees have not been able to be formed due to no board members able available to head up the committee. The Chapter has grown, but not at the momentum in which is possible. Our by-laws have allowed us to have as many as 15. We as a Board have voted to increase the allotted board member roster size to 21. We have sought out and voted in 4 new board members and have applicants from another 6 individuals who will be discussed and possibly voted in during the next Board meeting in May. This would put our Board total at 16 with room to add a few more throughout the year, if the need arises. The new Board members bios will be available soon (next issue for sure) They are all great individuals who are eager to roll up their sleeves, and begin working on this Chapters' vision moving forward. With the expanded leadership team and better dispersed workload, we

will do great things in these coming years. In a future magazine and at the annual meeting I will speak to which Board members are chairing which committees and what the goals of those committees will be for the coming year.

With the spearheaded leadership of our Membership Chair Dean, we had a record number of members renew and new members join, many of which signed on for 3 more years during this year's expo. This membership momentum is just what we needed to take this chapter to the next level. Currently our membership is roughly 270 members. My goal as President is to increase membership to 500 by this time next year. The Board is "on board", we have been in discussion with our friends of the Lake Superior Chapter, amongst others, and in our May newsletter we will share details with respect to the campaigns we will be rolling out to obtain that goal. Look for that later this month.

We as a Chapter Board understand that this Chapter wishes to participate heavily in both educating current and future outdoorsmen/women, as well as give back to organizations who share our same passions. We have begun discussions regarding which organizations throughout the state we as a Chapter want to sponsor/donate to, with an emphasis on supporting youth, legislative advocacy, conservation, military veterans, women, law enforcement. Currently we are in the process of compiling a large list of possible organizations to support. Once we have generated the list, we will then discuss possible partnerships, sponsorships, expectations, and allocation of funds. Midsummer, I will share with you, the members, the groups in which we chose to support, and allocation amounts to each.

In closing... the energy of this Board is high. The ears of this Board are open. We have taken many notes the last few years. We have begun reversing the downward trend in membership. We have recognized some changes needed. We have outlined a plan to implement those changes ... all in all with the mission of the next few years that of making this Chapter even more fun, even more generous with our donations, even more profitable and providing our members with even more value.

Further updates will be coming out monthly in a newsletter so look for those there. The website is in the process of a complete overhaul. We have added Instagram as a social media platform we will be posting to. New branded merchandise is being created and will be available to members. A Veteran's brunch and Women's event will be added to this next year's expo calendar. Additional trophy room tours will be added to our events calendar in 2023. The live auction, gun raffles/games and silent auction will continue to be refined and adjustments will be made to further make these offerings even more fun and appealing to expo attendees.

Want to chat? Let's connect! I look forward to seeing you at the member meeting.

**Travis Senenfelder, President**



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# 2022 World Hunting Expo

At our annual meeting in May, you will hear how much money was generated during the 2022 World Hunting Expo. For now, we can say it was a VERY good year, all things considered in this post-COVID world.

After attending other similar events, it seems the expo may be lighter in vendor attendance, which can be due to many reasons (i.e. travel is hard still). North American outfitters did well as people weren't traveling abroad and may not participate in events as they once did. African outfitters are on limited time and budget since they were closed for a full year; New Zealand outfitters are just opening up after years of being shut down; and the reasons go on and on. What is clear is that people are generous! People are excited to be back out in public! Events like Minnesota SCI Chapter's World Hunting Expo are back, and we are back to stay!

With plans for next year's expo in the works, we all hope you are marking your calendars and preparing to attend what we are expecting to be one of our biggest events. One note about next year's World Hunting Expo, our normal dates overlapped with a change in SCI's National Convention in Nashville, Tennessee. This has led us to hold our event a week earlier. Dates can be found in our upcoming events section.

A big THANK YOU to all vendors, trap teams, attendees, visitors, MN SCI board members, and everyone else for making this a GREAT event!





















# How I Cured Covid-19

By Ted Shogren

I was recently into day seven of my 2<sup>nd</sup> bout with Covid-19. I came to the realization that my mortality was not to be in the .0086% of the population of Minnesota \*, so I decided it was safe to get in my car and drive to a delicatessen in Minnetonka. Chicken ramen packets from Cub Foods just wouldn't get me to a full recovery, nor erase the Netflix ennui that I was experiencing. Today's menu and prescription for health and vitality, would require a credit card.

Upon arrival at the deli was your usual array of irritated staff and clientele who all looked and dressed like volunteers for Public Television. They like me, had embraced the agoraphobia that has gripped the country since March of 2020. None of them wanted chicken Ramen either.

I was pondering over "gourmet" root beer and large individually packed bags of bulk red licorice which had without doubt, been bought from a bulk gourmet food supplier in Chicago.

Why do Midwestern delis always have individual bags of red licorice with the same weight/price labels used at the butcher?

Everyone who was dressed like volunteers for PBS all had a winter-weary looks on their faces, but seemed perfectly willing to pay \$9.50 US for a quart of homemade deli Matzo Ball soup. Jewish penicillin it must be. Prescription strength.

I asked the older man in front of me if he had ever had their soup before. Yes he said, "its the best!"

"What makes it the best", I asked?

"Most of you roast your chicken first, use the meat and then make stock for their soup. Then add the meat later when they think its done. We take a whole raw chicken and make stock out of it. Its different," he replied. " How do you make your soup?"

He implied that he came from a place that had superior chicken soup and I was not about to be out-cultured. At that very moment we both noticed that we were wearing the same style tweed hat. His confidant retort in how his soup was done, made me search for how we make soup.

My honor as a man, Midwesterner and cook was on the line. My cultural antennae was raised. I was not to be outdone by this disciple of public television!

My unfiltered reply was, " I like to shoot pheasants in the fall and usually have more than I know what to do with."

So you're a good shot?

I hunt a lot. Usually one trip annually to South Dakota.

Then I explained that, "I use my pheasants to make stock with



celery, carrots and onions. French style and in the crock pot. Slow simmer. Cool my stock, render a bit of fat, which can vary in taste depending on what the pheasants were eating in October and November. I don't use leg meat, only thighs as leg meat is too strong tasting. American modern chicken is commercially raised on cement and processed feeds. You don't get the complex flavor that you that you get from wild game. You can taste everything that the wild bird eats throughout the year. It's all natural and has a complex flavor."

As I as was exclaiming about the wild elixir that I distill every fall from several brace of gallinaceous birds, I could fee my posture straighten. My chest was puffing out and I noticed that I was indeed a bit taller than this man I was talking to.

Before I could continue my sermon on the virtues of wild game, he slowly blinked as a subtle sign of impending boredom and asked, " I suppose you roast these pheasants first, before you make stock?"

Did he just imply that I wasn't circumcised?

The air slightly left my lungs and my posture decreased by 5%. I diverted my eyes and picked up a bag of the bulk packaged and labeled red licorice, that I had no intention of buying.

"Number 42. Next!" echoed from the speaker.

We, both mid-western natives, shuffled through the cold slushy parking lot of the deli and he nodded to me with a smile. We both saluted each other with identical bags containing \$20.42 of matzo ball soup.

I got home, removed my camouflaged baseball cap and changed back into my Tony Soprano style track suit. I sat in front of the TV and devoured my deli made matzo ball soup. It was divine. Completely different broth than I had ever had. Full of flavor.

I turned the television to channel 2 and contemplated how I was going to use the remaining six pheasants in my freezer. I could probably cure cancer with a new deli-style pheasant matzo-ball soup.

*\* MN Dept of Health statistic 2/6/2022.*

# Venison or Game Meat Fajitas

I was always intimidated by making fajitas. Never really understood how to do it even though the reality is it is quite simple. The best things tend to be. My wife, Kate, one day made fajitas with chicken her way and I loved it! I think that maybe the only time she has made them since as I seem to have taken over the fajita making. Might be I made some tweaks that we both enjoy a bit better. One was using venison.

*Enjoy, Tony Roettger*

- 1 lb or so of game meat  
*(steaks, backstrap, you choose)*
- Siracha sauce
- Green peppers
- Yellow Peppers
- Red Peppers
- Half of a good-size onion
- Kosher salt  
*Just a dash for your meat before putting into the pan.*
- Iron skillet  
*My preference, any fry pan will do*
- Olive oil  
*I prefer avocado oil as it can take more heat.  
Medium rare venison is best cooked very fast and hot.*
- Tortillas
- Sour cream
- Cheese
- Salsa and/or guacamole if you like

Slice your veggies lengthwise and the thickness you prefer for easy tong-use to put on your tortilla. Slice your meat into thin strips with the silver skin removed. Put a dash of kosher or sea salt on the sliced meat. Don't over salt, just a little for flavor.

Get your pan hot and cook your peppers and onions until they start to soften. Add some Siracha, do this to your preference. The more you put in, the hotter it gets. Cook veggies in the Siracha a bit more then move to the side of the pan and add the sliced meat. You may want to add a little bit of avocado oil as needed. Fry the meat fast as you do not want to over cook it. Add more Siracha to the meat and remove from heat.

Serve with tongs on a warmed tortilla with cheese and fixings how you like!







# Classic “Shots”

Why do we take photos? The memories of course! I love going back and looking at old albums that speak to past adventures. A smile crosses my face as I remember my little brother shooting the biggest in this camp but also was his first buck on the last day. He shot it at 300ish yards with a 30/30 (true story). He walked all the way out to my stand so I could help him field dress and drag it back to camp three miles away.

To this day I remember how I didn't believe a single word he said until we walked out through the swamp and across the clear cut to a small grove of pines where that buck laid, stone dead. I was not thrilled with him as we drug that deer back to camp on the last morning. My brother saying the entire time, “Let's just go get dad.” (As I write this I am smiling).

We did not go back and get dad. We just kept dragging. When we popped out onto that logging road where dad was waiting for us as he packed up the camp. Dad could probably see the sweat running down our faces as well as smell two teenage boys stink from a week in the woods. It is those memories of events such as this one is why we take photos. One snapshot is all it takes to have a memory of an event; a memory you will love looking at one day. It is amazing how the feelings come back as if it was yesterday.

I was able to scrounge up a few photos from membership and other people for this section. I would love to keep it going with little stories of each if you all would like! Please send me your one or two paragraph story and the classic shot! Email Tony at [razr1500@gmail.com](mailto:razr1500@gmail.com).













# APPLICATION DATES



## MINNESOTA BEAR LOTTERY

*Due Date*

**Friday, May 6**

- Winner notification – May 20
- Licenses go on sale June 1.  
Need to be purchased by August 1

## ELK HUNTING LOTTERY

*Due Date*

**Friday, June 17**

## MINNESOTA YOUTH DEER HUNT APPLICATION

*Deadline*

**Friday, August 19**

- Season for Youth Deer is  
10/20/2022 – 10/23/2022

## SEASON OPENERS

Bear	9/1/2022
Archery Deer	9/17/2022
Ruffed Grouse	9/18/2022
Youth Waterfowl	9/10/2022 9/11/2022
Waterfowl	9/24/2022
Pheasant	10/15/2022
Firearms Deer	11/5/2022
Muzzleloader Deer	11/26/2022



# WAYZATA ACTIVITIES



One of the fun things we at the Minnesota chapter of Safari Club International support are local trap teams. This month we want to thank all our trap teams that help us, Roseville and Wayzata! Both groups come and help at events during the year but the big one is of course the Expo! Wayzata was a huge help at the Expo and we want to thank them VERY much!

The advisor is Michelle Jacklitch. She was wonderful at getting everyone organized at the event as well as trained in for when the live auction begins!

**DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY:** The Clay Target Team is a competitive Club Sports Team which competes in the shotgun clay target shooting disciplines of American trap, American skeet and sporting clays. WHS considers Clay Target to be a spring activity; athletes may participate in one spring sport only.

**LENGTH OF SEASON:** The season runs for 12 weeks, the 1st week of April through late June. Participants in National Championship Tournaments will compete into July. Team meetings, gun fitting sessions and POI testing will be held January – March.

*Good luck this year Wayzata!! We look forward to seeing you at future events!*





# TROPHY ROOM TOUR AND BARBEQUE

Thursday, August 25, 2022  
4:00 pm

**Greg & Maureen Grazzini**  
1251 Hesse Farm Circle  
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COST: **\$75**/person

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# Memories From Heritage Outfitters

By Randy Jahnke

The dark stillness of the morning was filled with anticipation of the first morning hunt. Our outfitter, Heritage Outfitters, led us into the blinds near roost trees. It was only a few minutes before that stillness was broken by the first yelps and gobbles. The birds were incessant as it seemed they were urging the flock into fly down. Though I could not see this fly down, it was easily heard. The earlier anticipation on the walk in was nothing compared to the anticipation of the flock dispersing and coming near my blind.

It was early fall of 2021; my mind was already looking toward spring turkey season for 2022. My first thought was for Kansas season. That said, I was looking at other options that were a days drive from where I live in Southwest Kansas. I had looked several times at Heritage Outfitters in Nebraska and had corresponded with Brady Thomas. So, I finally pulled the trigger and booked the hunt with Heritage Outfitters Nebraska in for the first week of the Nebraska archery turkey season.

I was familiar with this area, having lived in the Panhandle of Nebraska for 8 years and driving back and forth to family functions as my wife's family is from Wichita, Kansas. I was more than excited for the March 28<sup>th</sup> date to arrive for my turkey hunt. It was super exciting to be hunting in the land that I loved and was familiar with.

I arrived in Curtis, NE which is also known as the Easter City of Nebraska. I drove to the place that we would gather every day for a sumptuous breakfast after fly down and after the afternoon/evening hunt. The lodging that I had chosen was the Valley View Inn. Upon arrival, the staff was super helpful to guide me towards my room for the next several days. The accommodations were wonderful though the furnishings were a bit outdated. The staff cleaned the room every day, though I was not expecting it. For a small town this is a super place to stay. On a side note, with permission the staff allowed me to make sure that my bow was tuned in from the trip to Nebraska from Kansas by shooting in the parking lot.

Brady picked several of us up to head to the "Guide Shack"



for dinner and to enjoy the evening prior to the first day's hunt. Introductions were made and the hunters from Indiana, Virginia, and Kansas took it from there to create relationships while sharing experiences of turkey hunts past. The dining area was filled with a variety of European mounts of mule deer and elk along with full body mounts of several turkeys including a full body mount of a bearded hen, and a giant full body mount of a mountain lion. The food for the morning breakfasts (more like late morning brunch) and evening meals were expertly homemade. Beef tips in gravy from locally raised/fed cattle with rustic mashed potatoes (as I would make at home) with steamed vegetables at this first evening meal were deeply savored and readied the body for a deep and restful sleep for the first morning's hunt.

The birds were down! The cacophony of yelps and gobbles continued to my delight. Though I was a small distance from that specific area, the drumming of the gobblers could be heard. I had an arrow nocked and at the advice of Brady had taken a practice draw in the blind to where he expected some of the birds to trail by. I was highly energized because I had helped set this blind up the afternoon prior and it was in the midst of turkey feathers! They had to be coming soon! Not long into the hunt, one of the gentlemen from Virginia took his shot! As it would turn out, the birds did not disperse. Rather, they ran all as one and appeared some 50 to 60 yards from where my blind location was situated. The birds kept coming and coming "heading for the hills" to the south. A good 60 or so birds ran uphill toward perceived safety for their daily turkey routine. Brady hit the call and expertly turned one gobbler from that hill back toward the blind. My legs shook in

a combination of "turkey fever" and being a bit chillier than I had dressed for. The arrow was still nocked while hoping for an opportunity. Eventually the call of the flock was more desired by that gobbler than a single hen left behind. Lunch and the fellowship of experiences of the morning were enjoyed until it was time to once again head out for the rest of the day hunt.

I was delighted to be taken to what I call a "small meadow" to a blind that we had set up the evening prior. It is surrounded by a creek to the west and trees lining that creek and cedars and hills to the east behind the blind. It was located some 60 to 70 yards from a roost tree. I would sit that blind on my final morning hunt. This spot was so peaceful and would turn to be my favorite. The afternoon had a hen giving me some yelps and a Tom responding now and again. It would seem that this bird, according to my outfitter was heading to the roost tree from the north. I only heard the birds and had no sightings. Still a very beautiful and peaceful place to sit and do what I do on stand (dream, contemplate, and pray).

The first day came to an end with no opportunity for a shot by me, but an entirely successful day of hunting in this land of beauty. I was picked up and taken to the motel and be picked up for the evening meal and fellowship once again. All too soon, the day was night, and it was time to prepare for day two with hopes anew!

Before the alarm went off, this hunter was awake and ready to go. I travel with my own coffee and maker. Soon, I was enjoying coffee in preparation to be picked up at 6 AM and head to the morning sit. This would be the day that I would have opportunity, though I did not know it at that time. It was only a prayer and hope at that moment.





I was taken into the sight which the outfitter calls “The Tree of Life.” For this country preacher, I liked it! In darkness I set up my decoys and go situated in the blind. Soon, the yelps and gobbles broke the darkness! It did not seem as many as the previous day, but the wind was also gusting at 51 mph according to the local weather. Whitetail does were a distraction as they headed to the cut corn from the woods and meadows. I could hear the hens and gobbles getting closer as the morning matured. Finally! Two hens appear and seemed a bit unnerved that there were already turkeys ahead of them. I had set out a DSD 3/4 strut jake with a feeding hen and a leading hen. The hens skirted wide of the blind and decoy set. Soon, as they often do, the gobbler made his appearance. At first, it seemed he would follow the same path of the hens. A soft purr from the pot call was all it took to convince this Tom to fan and strut in. I was on! It took some time, but the gobbler finally made his way in.

The moment of opportunity had arrived that I had dreamt of and planned for since last fall! I practice this moment several times a day and was confident. I drew as the bird was slightly quartered away with attention on the jake decoy. I took aim and released. Feathers flew, the gobbler walked, and I arrowed my decoy. I can only surmise one of three or a combination of things took place: 1) I whiffed the shot, 2) my arrow deflected on some waist high weeds that I did not see in the darkness while setting up, 3) the bird moved enough in that moment of truth that my aim was not true. I am “man enough” to own option one - I whiffed the shot.

Another fantastic late morning brunch ensued. We all had sightings but no shots except for myself. Some good-natured ribbing of sticking my DSD jake decoy had us all in laughter as we readied ourselves for the afternoon sit.

The afternoon experience was still very heavy winds that eventually was accompanied by snow. I sat a travel route back to the roost area of the first morning. The decoys were set and all avenues were ranged. I was ready. Then it happened! My string slipped the cams of my Mathews Vertex. Thankfully, I travel with a backup and Brady was so kind with my permission to go into my room at the Valley View and bring my SKB case containing my backup. In the meantime, I was on the phone with a local shop who was Mathews Authorized and made arrangements for repair. Soon, I was in the blind with my backup bow, a very nice Mathews Z7. As the afternoon took to evening, I had hens on the way. Unfortunately, no gobblers. But watching the hens forage and interact was a blessing. For me, while I wish to harvest with my bow, the experience is the thing. This experience will live in my memory!

Another home cooked meal was served that evening. I went to retrieve my Vertex and pay the technician who graciously gave up some of his evening to help me out.





There was still a bit of light left. So out of the motel I went with my bow and block target to check it out again, yes it was still snowing. The bow sent the arrow true to the target and off to dinner and fellowship I went. Thankfully, the chef saved me some chili that turned out to be the last bowl. Apparently, the wind, the cold, and the snow took its toll on our bodies! Off to another night of sleep and dreams of another opportunity!

There was no alarm needed as I was awake and the coffee maker got to do its business. Morning coffee over, it was time to meet Brady at 6 AM. There was snow on the ground and cold, but I was dressed for it this morning! To my joy, I went to that beautiful "small meadow." A short walk into the Barronette OX5 blind under the chorus of yelps and gobbles with the sight of birds in the roost filled me with great hope. Soon the fly down would begin and I began counting birds coming to the ground. At the end of fly down I had counted 50 birds. Soon birds began making their way toward my blind. The mature gobblers were all grouped at the base of the roost tree making noise and trying to impress one another. Jakes and hens were feeding. Soon, Jakes began their posturing which

moved the mature gobblers to put them "in their place." The hens kept moving my way. I was sure this was the day! As the morning wore on, the flock split in two groups moving to the west of my blind and to the northwest of my blind. At that time, at the advice of my outfitter I placed by decoys and began calling. Soon, I had birds running from the west to my decoys. All hens. Disappointment gave way to appreciation as these six hens purred, preened, and fed not five yards from my blind.

Still hopeful, I dedicated myself to remain in this location all day. I cannot believe how fast that day went! The hours are always the same, but how they are perceived can change. It was the fastest day of blind sitting that I have ever experienced.

It was time to leave before the birds came in and I spoiled the roost. Was I let down? I cannot say that. The experience of having seen so many birds, albeit many/most from quite a distance was still special. I had opportunity and after all, that is what hunting is all about. Peacefulness, renewal, and connecting to creation and individuals. I enjoyed it all and I will be back to Curtis, NE, the Easter City, for some of that renewal and peace once again!





# LIFE LESSONS of the Bear Woods

By Tony Roettger

I started bear hunting years ago. When I say “started” I attempted to do it alone. I had this great idea to apply for a bear tag that would have me hunting in the International Falls area of Minnesota. As luck would have it on my first application, I got a tag! Now the issue was finding a location, acquiring bait, then actually baiting. I had no idea what I was doing. I also lived all the way down by the Twin Cities so the logistics of the time and driving were a bit much to take on.





As luck would have it, my partner was just supportive enough to help me. However, she was not keen on the idea of bears, big woods, hauling candy, and burnt honey on her back into the woods two times per week. She hated it when we had bears start hitting the bait site and we had to walk back in there. We made the adventure fun with stops to eat at different places up north and visits to areas we may not normally see.

As that year turned out, much in life changed. I did not get to hunt as much as I had hoped considering the effort put forth, time and gas put into this little adventure. I learned that life is precious, things can change fast and unexpectedly despite how young a person is. But memories are the simple things like that one stop at Pizza Hut in Cloquet with a pitcher of soda and a pizza. As that fall shaped up, I lost my partner that next February following a real quick battle with cancer. It would be years later until I hunted bears again but no doubt, I was going to do it again.

Two years later I got another bear tag and decided to hire help which was way more efficient, cost-effective and productive. I had learned that baiting is a lot of work and there is an art to bear hunting. Bears are also very smart, and I won't let anyone tell me that bear hunting is easy. Stacy Houglum, who I also call the "Bear Commander", had become a friend of mine over the years and he always said, "Tone, why don't you just come hunt with me?" To which I finally agreed. I am so glad I did.

Stacy is one of these non-assuming people, but he can read people quickly, and he has a ton of knowledge in life and

even more with bears. His bear stories will raise the hair on the back of your neck and make you think twice about what you are about to do. His philosophy was getting you up close and personal with the bears. None of this sit back 100 yards and shoot them, he wanted you within 15 yards or less. His opening line in camp was, "Tone if you ain't a little bit scared, you should be! These are bears, and they can kill ya!" Another thing he would say,

"Tone, you know these bears are smart. Can they teach a deer to ride a bike? Nope! But can a bear ride a bike? Yep! These bears live amongst us, see us, watch us, and we never see them. Think about that. When I have a bait station active there might be 10 bears just sitting there within 100 yards; watching, smelling and listening. You will only see some of them because they know you are there. You gotta fool them into thinking you are not there. So, sit quiet, just move your eyes and fight the urge to itch or twitch."

In my first year of hunting with Stacy, I saw a ton of bears. I messed up on a nice bear (the bear is fine, trust me). I was bowhunting and that arrow went right where I sent it; into the shoulder. Don't shoot bears in the shoulder, especially with an arrow. That bear let out a growl, reached around with his mouth and pulled that arrow out, stood up, growled again, and ran away with a flesh wound. The arrow barely penetrated. A little bit of fat was on the arrow and hardly any blood. Just one mad bear. I never took another shot that year.

The next adventure brought a whole new renewal of life. Things had changed in three years; re-married to another





adventurous partner with a hatchling born 8-weeks too early and freshly home from the hospital. Thank God for an understanding partner, Kate, for letting me go bear hunting right away. After all, I drew a tag, I had to go (please sense my tongue in cheek and cower). Little did I know on this trip how much a part of bear hunting my new little girl, Evie, was going to take to bear hunting and bear camp.

I am not sure how many days I hunted, but I think it was only one or two before I harvested my first bear ever with my bow. It was not a huge bear by any means, but it was a boar, it was legal, and it was not a cub. A nice Minnesota black bear with my friend Stacy the Bear Commander. I harvested early enough to get home and help Kate with Evie and everyone was happy.

I had some friends start taking interest in bear camp. Being that it would be four or so years until we get tags, the planning began. My friends, Randy and Dan from Kansas, and my friend Mike from Minnesota, began applying for points and four years later we got tags. This is where bear hunting became a family activity. I not only had Evie but my son, Zane was born. Bear camp was now family vacation camp!

Early morning September 1, my family, Mike's family and the Kansas guys were heading to Grand Marais for my third bear hunt and their first. Evie was just four, Zane was just shy of two and Mike's son was three. We all stayed in the same motel and began making memories right away when we got to Stacy's place. We saw an apple tree that had just been torn down in the backyard with apples strewn all about. Of course, we wanted to know what happened. The answer was a bear had been there early in the day and helped himself to the whole tree.

Stacy drew our stands locations out of a hat so he remained non-biased to all hunters in camp. Randy drew the hill behind the house with what turned out to be a big old boar, 11 years old. A story in itself for Randy to tell in a future Minnesota Adventuring issue. As a teaser, it was a super aggressive bear and Randy's story is great. The bear got harvested on day two. See the image of Evie and the bear as she was adamant each day to be in bear camp to talk to the hunters and have her picture taken with any and all bears harvested.

The rest of us took a little longer to get bears. I saw nine different bears that year on one bait site. One was a very large bear and also smarter than I was. He would crawl in and reach out with his paw to grab a few pieces of popcorn. Then belly crawl backwards out to nibble. One night he was eating well past dark. As the guys were walking down the trail to get me off the stand, the bear continued to eat, then when they got close, he slowly backed out and hid behind a tree. The one kid said, "I can smell a bear!" I was like, "ya, he is standing behind that tree watching us," so we walked out quickly. I remained

hopeful each day, but I ended up taking an average bear but I was happy.

Each night in camp Evie was there, checking stuff out. She wanted me to get a little bear as that was what she could relate to, I guess. Mike ended up harvesting a bear the same night as I did and his was a little smaller so with tears coming down her face, she convinced Mike to let us take the smaller bear and he would take my bigger bear. Well....that's what we let her believe to ease her need for a little bear.

Bear hunting became a family vacation. We would be a family during the day and bear hunt the afternoon into the evening. What a great way to get kids in camp, hang with family and friends, and have a little something for everyone. This was how I convinced my friend, Ben, to join us on the next adventure of bear hunting. Randy also got his son-in-law, Carlos, to come. Of course, we would have to wait another four or five years. But that time came





and off we went again. Some of the same crew and some new. Ben and Carlos and their families were now part of the bear hunting family!

This time Evie was very much into bear camp. This trip had us going through a different outfitter. The state of Minnesota cut bear tag numbers dramatically. This resulted in the loss of bear outfitters because they can't get enough clients to make any sort of living. Jimmy Wallner of Fall River Outfitters became our new outfitter. After some convincing, Jimmy agreed to take us as he was full because he was one of, or maybe the only one left in the Grand Marais area. As the tradition has started, September 1 arrived and we were off to the north shore.

We found ourselves at the same motel outside of Grand Marais. Kate, Evie and Zane knew the drill. They knew where the peanuts were to feed the chipmunks, the park to swing on, the trails to walk in and the lake to splash in. For the last four years, Evie and Zane would often ask when we would get back to bear camp? When their memories from a young age are bear camp, it must mean the last adventure was a good one.

The time came for us older "boys" to head out to the woods. Kisses and hugs to the families and off we went. Excitement of what is to come, adrenaline coursing through the veins and of course a little fear, after all, "If you ain't a little scared, you should be."

I was the first one dropped off at my stand. A bait station that used to be Stacy's but now Jimmy acquired and thought I would like to hunt it as a little tribute. I loved the idea! I got up into the ladder stand, Jimmy was nine or so yards away at the bait site putting his magic mix on the site. He said, "Good luck" and I gave a thumbs up and got comfortable for what I was planning on being a long afternoon of being still and quiet. As I settled in, the birds began to chirp again, and the squirrels began to make their way to the fresh bait but I quickly hear it. I can hear the tone of a bears feet walking (people think I am weird but that is ok). I knew what it was immediately. And out of my right eye, there he was! A big old black bear.

He walked out like he owned the place less than two yards from my ladder stand, looked right up at me, curled his lip and wheezed. I thought for sure he was going to run off from smelling me. He didn't. He looked through me, then walked to the bait and started eating. Then he relaxed even more and all I could think was, "that is for sure a Pope and Young bear standing broadside. I better take that one." So, I did. I drew back, I was so relaxed, as was the bear....the Rage™ tip flew right through his chest. The bear never made a sound. It ran 30 or 40 yards, I heard one breath and a heap hitting the leaves. It was over. 12 or so minutes into my hunt. I texted Jimmy and then Kate. Jimmy was going to be a while because he had not even dropped off the second hunter yet. The afternoon was beautiful, I enjoyed sitting in nature watching the woods once again become still. Evie and Zane were ready to come to see the bear even though they had not even fully settled into the motel.



Within the following days, everyone harvested nice bears. My other favorite of that trip was Ben getting his first bear. I was relaxing with all the families, watching Lake Superior, I may have even cracked a Coors Light when the call came in from Jimmy. "Ben called, he has a huge bear down, can you help?" Of course, I would, and I brought the kids. Zane and Hank (Ben's son) were quick to hop on the car to what was to become quite a fun ride. The two boys were so excited and chatted the entire way out to Ben's bear, note: it was a 40-minute drive. They bantered back and forth on if it was a big bear or a small bear and what would they do and what if, we need a light, we should do this or that, and on and on. Memories I will never forget.

We found the bear; the boys and everyone. The boys were so excited and helped drag it up the hill. They were brave in the darkness of the big northern Minnesota woods with just Zane's little lantern that he chose to bring (glad he did, I forgot my light) even though their instincts said they should not be there, they persevered through. A great lesson in life. As life can and will be hard, it can and will be scary, things are going to happen, but keep going, be smart, but don't let fear stop you from having a great life. If you can walk in the woods at night with the bears, you can do anything I think.



# ▽ CALENDAR OF EVENTS

## **Trophy Room Tour and Barbeque**

**Thursday, August 25, 2022**

Greg & Maureen Grazzini  
1251 Hesse Farm Circle  
Chanhausen, MN 55318

## **Fall Pheasant Shoot/Sporting Clays and Lunch**

**Saturday, October 1, 2022**

Wings North  
1 9379 Homestead Road  
Pine City, MN 55063

## **Christmas Party and Wild Game Dinner**

**Monday, December 12, 2022**

Mendakota Country Club  
2075 Mendakota Drive  
Mendota Heights, MN 55120

## **47th Annual Minnesota SCI Expo**

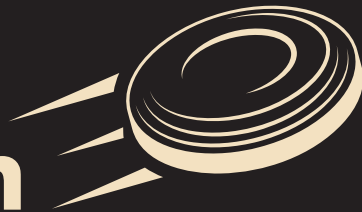
**Friday – Saturday, February 24 – 25, 2023**

Minneapolis Marriott Northwest  
7025 Northland Drive North  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55428

**Details on each event will be emailed and posted on [www.minnesotasci.com](http://www.minnesotasci.com).**



# Fall Pheasant Shoot/ Sporting Clays AND Lunch



**Saturday, October 1, 2022**

**1:00 pm**

**Wings North** Pine City, MN

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**COST:** \$200/person      \$800/4-person team

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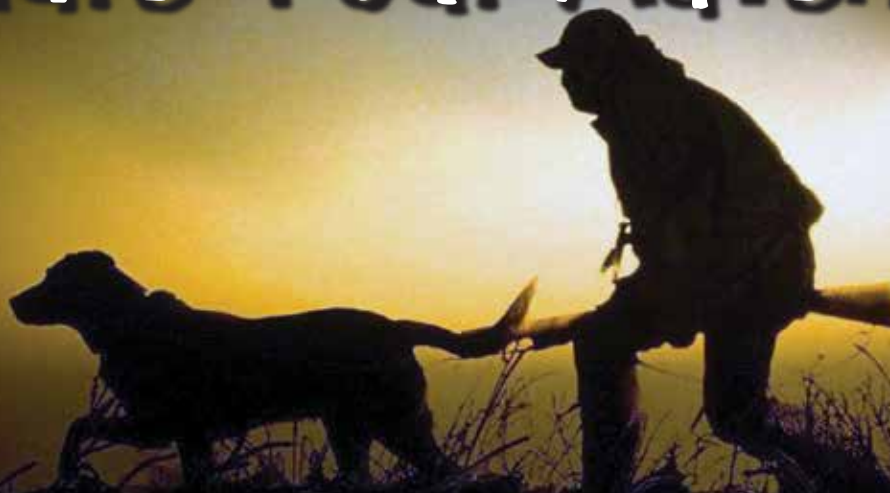
This event will be a fun day of shooting pheasants and sporting clays followed by lunch, raffles and a silent auction.



19379 Homestead Road, Pine City, MN

For information [www.minnesotasci.com](http://www.minnesotasci.com)

## Share Your Adventures!



Learning about new hunting opportunities is one of the great benefits of being a Minnesota SCI member. All of the content in this magazine comes from members just like you. If you've been on a trip recently and would like to share your experience with us, we'd be happy to help you put together a hunt report. You don't have to be a great writer and it doesn't take a lot of time.

Contact Tony Roettger at [razr1500@gmail.com](mailto:razr1500@gmail.com) for more details.



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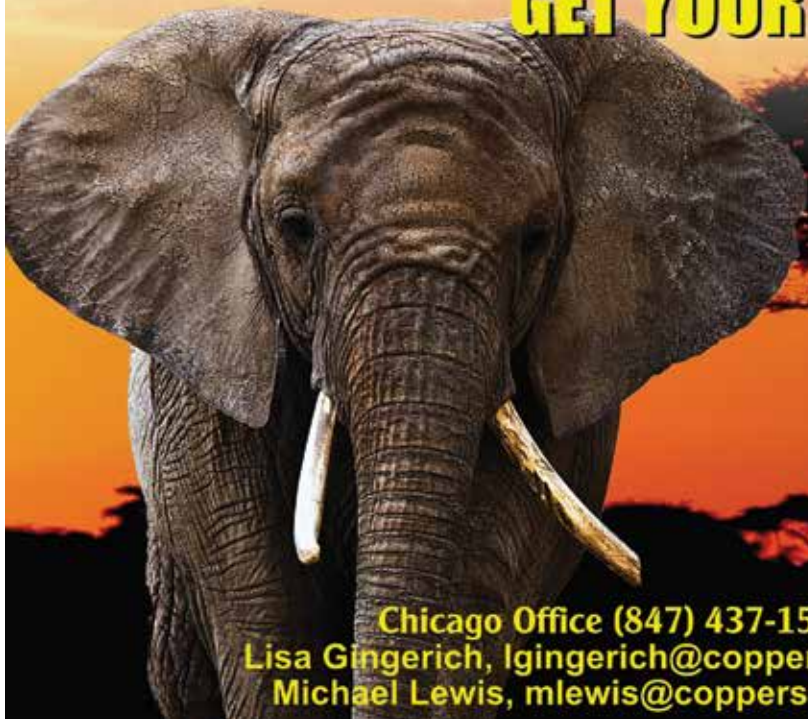
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