

Once we accomplished the goal of reaching the 27 yard line, I think we may have eased-off a little and became slightly complacent. If we hope to regain the success that got us to the backfence in the first place, we'll need to reestablish that focused determination and disciplined approach required for every target every time! Though I've said it often throughout this article, I truly believe that your handicap scores will improve if you can develop a smooth, controlled, and accurate swing to the target, and with discipline, strictly follow the target breaking process from start to finish. To quote a

good friend, "There's only three things to remember in breaking targets; concentration, concentration, concentration"! After years of competition, it may appear that we've lost our focus, skill, and confidence. Maybe this is true for some... but it's my belief that if we can remain mentally and physically healthy; can still react well to the targets with focus and discipline; maintain good vision; practice often; and maintain a positive attitude... we'll continue to be competitive for many years to come.

If you have a specific question, send me an email at claybrakn@msn.com and I'll do my best to

get it answered. Please keep your questions brief and to the point.

See you at the club... Frank  
**Never express yourself more clearly than you are able to think**



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# Consign With Us

Extraordinary Firearms Auction | October 31, November 1 & 2, 2017

April Firearms Auctions in Fairfield, Maine generate almost \$17 Million. Every spring, two separate firearms companies (James D. Julia, Inc. & Poulin Auctions) conduct firearms auctions back-to-back in Fairfield, Maine. Each time these auctions occur, the results generate the largest offering and largest sales gross for a firearms auction anywhere in the world, and the combined April sales for the two companies just generated nearly \$17 million dollars. At Julia's, we do not sell the greatest number of firearms in a year but we do sell on average the greatest number of high end, rare and valuable firearms. Once again, this was the case; approximately 317 lots realized \$10,000 or more, 160 lots realized \$25,000 or more, 29 lots realized over \$50,000 or more, 11 lots topped out over \$100,000 and 4 lots generated over \$250,000 or more. Our Fall 2017 Rare Firearms Auction is already shaping up to be another spectacular sale and will include many outstanding offerings, including the most spectacular AH Fox shotgun collection ever to come to auction - The Dana Tauber Estate Collection. We are actively seeking additional consignments for this important sale. Remember, our 0% Seller's Commission on high-end, expensive items is the best published rate in the industry. Why not consider the best auction house in the world, offering the lowest terms in the world, to sell your quality goods for some of the best prices in the world? Call today! Visit our website for more exciting results from our April Auction at jamesdjulia.com

### Some of the successes for our consignors in our April auction

True Pair Ivo Fabbris Best Pinless Sidelock 20 ga Game Guns  
**Highest Price Ever Attained at Auction for a True Pair of Fabbris**  
**Sold for \$299,000**

Truly Exceptional Fabbris 28 ga Game Gun Eng. by Fracassi & Fausti (est. \$95,000-120,000)  
**Sold for \$103,500**

Superb Parker A1 Special 20 ga with Gold Inlay (est. \$125,000-200,000)  
**2nd Most Expensive Parker Ever Sold at Auction (Julia's Also Holds the World Auction Record for a Parker Shotgun at Auction - The Czar Parker Which Sold For \$287,500)**  
**Sold for \$253,000**

### Consigned to our October Auction

Spectacular Parker A-1 Special 20ga w/28" bbls. Fresh to the Market and in Superb Condition!

### The Dana J. Tauber Estate Collection The Finest Collection of A.H. Fox Shotguns To Ever Come to Auction

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## Buy The Book Chapter 15 Prairie Chickens

By John D. Taylor

The prairie chicken ranks first among the game birds of the prairies of our Middle West. It is to the prairie what the ruffed grouse is to the wooded sections of the country.

Dr. Alfred O. Gross: Life Histories of North America's Gallinaceous Birds 1932

If a creature can epitomize a landscape—as Dall sheep are emblematic of Alaska's mountains; as moose symbolize Maine; as pheasants brand South Dakota—then the prairie chicken should be an icon of prairie. No matter how you come at it, three species of this mid-continental grouse—the greater, the lesser and Attwater's prairie chickens—represent prairie's quintessential upland game birds. All are birds of landscape-scale grasslands, not farmer Joe's back-40 corn patch. Their very existence depends on wild, wide-open spaces; the general absence of human beings. Prairie, in their names, is a righteous reflection of place.

Yet when I write "prairie," what critter first pops into your mind? It's probably not the prairie chicken. This is probably so because it's easier for a Montana-bound tourist, traveling I-90, to exit the interstate for Route 240, South Dakota's Badlands National Park scenic byway, and claimed to have experienced prairie—to see buffalo, pronghorns and prairie dogs—than to get up close and personal with a prairie chicken.

There are only two ways to know prairie chickens: One method takes place with binoculars, in an Audubon Society lek-viewing blind, in the chill of an April dawn. The other happens in the midst of prairie during late September, over pointing dogs, when lemon-breasted meadowlarks sing port and starboard and dry grass crunches underfoot.

April's way is good, fascinating. Yet after a time, it grows unsatisfactory because there are always rarer birds to witness and list—chasing a list is quintessentially trophy hunting—and in the rush to know these, a lek can lose its appeal.

The finality of September's connection method is a responsibility few in this age of plastic-wrapped groceries want to experience. Yet to hold a prairie chicken in your hand, to admire the well-feathered yellowish legs; the squared, stubby tail; those drab yet wonderfully beautiful barred feathers; to heft this prize, is the most honest way to know prairie chickens. When eaten—and if you take the life offered to you in a way most holy and ancient, your obligation is to honor the gift by consuming it—this bird actually becomes you. Never again can you claim these birds to be unknown; and never again will you take a Sunday afternoon drive without knowing that even such a small indulgence might mean doom for an island of prairie chicken habitat, when their world is invaded for land to plant to

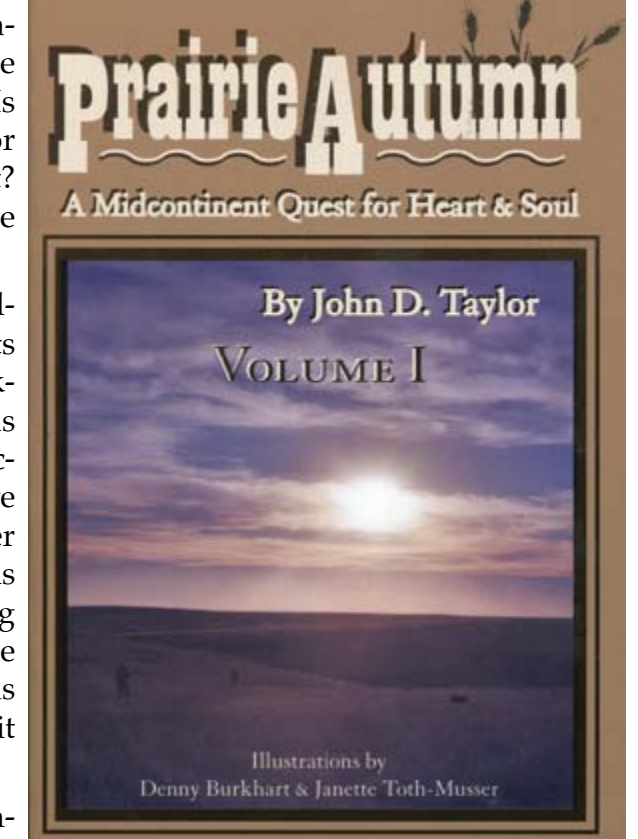
corn, to make ethanol, to replace the gas you burned. Is such a steep price for knowledge worth it? Many times, I believe so.

Re-reading Dr. Alfred Gross's thoughts on prairie chickens—including this chapter's introductory quote—more than 75 years after he set them down is its own interesting journey, because the rest of this quote is as important today as it was in 1932.

In a single sentence, Gross succinctly describes the prairie chicken's natural history, "As intensive agriculture pushed to all sections of the range of the prairie chicken and as interest in hunting increased, this fine game bird at one time seemed in grave danger of following the course taken by the heath hen, to extinction as a game bird." Prairie chickens were, Gross wrote during the late 1920s, when he was studying the birds in Wisconsin, "...holding [their] own and...increasing [their] numbers in many sections of [their] present range. Another hopeful sign is the fact that it has been expanding its range to the northwest, and today the species is well represented on the prairies of Manitoba and is gradually spreading westward through Saskatchewan and Alberta, where formerly it did not exist."

Gross entered the prairie chicken arena during an odd time in the bird's natural history.

During the early 1930s, when he was writing about prairie chickens for the Smithsonian



ian—using his experiences studying Wisconsin prairie chickens during the 1920s—he had good reason to believe the birds would reach the end of the 20th century in good shape, perhaps in even greater numbers, because his research showed this was happening. Yet during the next 90 years, prairie chicken numbers peaked, then fell precipitously, with Attwater's chicken reaching the brink of extinction. So how did this internationally-recognized ornithologist, who studied the demise of the heath hen, the prairie chicken's eastern cousin, miss the chicken's 20th century future?

The story of Gross, prairie chickens and the rapid changes faced by all grassland birds coming through the 20th century are intertwined like grapevines on an arbor. It's a story worth retelling, especially for its implications to the bird's 21st century future.

Gross grew up on an Atwood, Illinois' tallgrass farm, the youngest of nine siblings, during the 1890s. His German immigrant family did well in America. Papa (Henry) owned Atwood's mercantile and a large farm.

Young Alfred's early interests in birds and natural history were fostered by the farm and an older brother, who taught him to hunt. However, bookish Alfred didn't like farm work. So, after graduating Atwood High as the class of 1900 valedictorian, he sought higher education; and won a full scholarship to the University of Illinois Academy.

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