



A Buck FOR CARALYNE

BY BRIAN MONTGOMERY

What is your proudest moment? Was it when you harvested that buck of a lifetime, first deer, or when your children were born? We all can look to times in our past when we were swelled up like a struttin gobbler in spring! Those are the times that drive our passion, whatever that passion might be. I can say I've had some great experiences that I'm proud of, but one of the top occurred over Thanksgiving

weekend this year when my oldest daughter Caralyne, harvested her first deer with a compound bow. There's just something satisfying when you can pass down something your passionate about to your children and they are successful at it.

All my children (Carelyne 13, Walker 11, Bennett 8, & Sarah 6) shoot bows. When we show up at 3D archery tournaments I know other competitors are saying "here comes

the circus"! Anyone with kids can surely relate to trying to corral all those kids at an archery tournament, but that's a great time for us to spend time together. I know there are times when they don't want to go deal with the heat and ticks but they usually do and we always have fun. Up to this point all my kids except Sarah have harvested deer and turkey, Sarah is up next year on a deer and the next spring for turkey. I want them to want it and



to be successful on their own, win or lose, they will do it on their own.

Caralyne has harvested lots of animals with firearms and crossbow but this year she and I wanted her to give it a try with a compound bow. I have a lease in Kansas with Timmy Renfro, lifelong hunting buddy and we agreed to get tags for our kids this year. Everyone who hunts in Mississippi knows the difference in the challenge from here to there. The

animals are not as pressured and are much more visible. All year I had been preparing Caralyne for our hunt by encouraging her to shoot and talking about how much fun it would be. She had a glimpse of that from the previous Thanksgiving week when she sat with me and saw a great buck that I wouldn't let her shoot because she didn't have a tag. I later killed the same buck and that only put gas on her fire! She practiced throughout the summer and fall getting ready for bow season. We went several times in Mississippi and she even got a shot at a doe but just couldn't connect. She actually missed a doe twice. She told me "the first shot I was so excited I couldn't be still but the second shot I was calm, (hit a vine). She was devastated! I encouraged her and told her if it was easy, everyone would do it. We hunted several more times without a shot opportunity, but Thanksgiving was coming and I knew I could get her a good shot there.

All the kids took out of school Friday before Thanksgiving and we would drive up and be ready to start hunting on Saturday. The plan was for Walker to hunt with a crossbow and Caralyne with compound. Courtney, my wife would hunt with Walker and one of the younger kids and I would hunt with Caralyne and a younger kid. We would switch around the little ones as the week progressed but I had to be with her for her first deer with a bow. I had ground blinds up so we could all pile in and enjoy the show.

Saturday morning found us set up in our blinds an hour before light, Courtney, Walker, & Sarah in one blind and Caralyne, Bennett, and me in another blind 250 yards down. That

morning was cold and really windy. The wind made it easy to get to our sets without spooking any deer. As we set in the darkness, I could only imagine the thoughts going through the kids minds. They have all been in the woods since they were born but with the wind whipping and in a place they had never been, I bet imaginations ran wild anticipating what the morning light would bring. Setting there, I heard a stick break and look and just a couple of yards outside the blind I see a black blob. I raise my bins and see it's a small buck. I showed Bennett and Caralyne and we all strained our eyes to see him but there he was and then he was gone. After good daylight we started seeing deer filter through, another small 7 point buck came in and she decided not to shoot. Still pretty early, around 7:45 I look up and see a doe coming up the hill, she made her way toward our blind, then I see antlers coming up the hill. It was an old warrior 8 point that I had lots of pictures of. He was one of the top ones I wanted one of the kids to kill. With an old grey face and stout body he swaggered in following that doe like a teenager at their first prom dance. As he approached Caralyne's breathing got deep and fast. I whispered, "settle down, I need you to be calm down, focus on the shot". The buck came to 15 yards and just faced our blind as if he was staring through it. Finally he started to go again to our left when I told her to draw, she did and fast, the buck was about to go behind some brush and I grunted softly and he didn't hear it but Caralyne did, she let it fly! The buck jumped and looked around, not missing a hair! He didn't

really know what had happened and he went on to the south. I immediately text Courtney that a shooter buck was headed that way, not long after that we got a text that ol' Grey Face was dead! It was an unbelievable experience for my new ace guide Courtney to experience with Walker and Sarah, all by themselves, that's another story for a future article (awesome crossbow kill)! Meanwhile, Caralyne was again down, happy for her brother but still down. She struggled to be happy for him and put on a smile while the whole family assisted in the recovery but I could tell she was having a hard time with it. We are all highly competitive, doesn't mean we aren't on one another team, but we like to win. I had to explain to Caralyne in our subsequent sits that there is no competing in hunting between

hunters. There's no level playing field like competitive sports with rules and leagues to make it a true competitive sport. When one hunter is successful that doesn't mean you lose! The sport of hunting is about that excitement and learning to funnel that excitement and not let it define you. We had a few good talks about it, the kind of talks I wish someone would have had with me as a young bowhunter.

We hunted the next couple of sits and had several small buck come in and she passed on her own. I always asked, do you want to shoot that one, and she would sarcastically say “no”. The reality was that it wasn’t bigger than her brothers, COMPETITIVE STILL!

Sunday afternoon the wind shifted from the south and I planned to go to one of my best spots. I knew it was a

place we “should” see a shooter. We were settled in the blind for about an hour when Caralyne said, “I hear something”. I jokingly said “tweety birds”. She said, “no I’m serious, it’s a deer”. We looked out the back of the blind and there he was, a nice buck walking directly behind us down a small ditch. As he walked to the west, we looked and coming from the west headed east was another buck and they were on a collision course. As they passed, they both fuzzed up and swaggered past without a physical confrontation. As if to say, I’m tired of fighting, aren’t you! We were happy we had seen them and went back to watching out the front of the blind. About 15 minutes later I saw a body out 100 yards in the trees. Just about 5 minutes later, a doe popped out from the creek drain, as she





walked broadside at 25 yards I hear antlers clanking against branches. I told Caralyne to get ready a buck is coming. Almost instantly we saw the buck, he came from the same trail as the doe and walked up but he peeled off the does trail. Made his way to our left where he stood facing us at 15 yards. I asked Caralyne, you want to shoot him? All sarcasm was gone from her voice, "yes". I told her, he's going to turn back toward the doe and when he does draw you bow. He stood there for what seemed like an eternity. Finally, he started walking and like clockwork she drew, smoothly and quickly. As the buck walked I softly grunted with my voice. He stopped slightly quartering away. I said "there's your shot" and like a script in a movie pulled off perfectly, the arrow was gone and landed perfectly.

The 40 pound Hoyt compound bow sending the carbon arrow tipped with a 100 grain Ramcat broadhead had buried in the bucks chest and he was gone. As he ran away, I saw the arrow break off but I knew it was perfect! We celebrated, hugged and I must admit, I cried like a baby. At that moment I could tell she knew how important this was to me. It may never be that important to her or any of my children, but it was to me and she knew it. She was very happy too to finally experience success and make a clean ethical shot. We called everyone and shared the news. The rest of the family came out to assist in the recovery. It was an unbelievable evening spent with my whole family in the woods, nothing could be better.

Sitting here, typing the story, I struggle to communicate how proud I

am of Caralyne, and my whole family who choose to join me in the passion that I love. I've always, since my kids were born, been intentional to include them, girls and boys. My logic was that you don't have to be a boy to enjoy this, and I want them with me, not the neighbors, not their friends, or other places, not there's anything wrong with that, I just want them with me for as long as I can make it happen. I can tell you all the investment in time I've spent with them paid off for me with Caralyne's buck! I hope reading this story encourages you to take yours starting at an early age, that time spent will reap big returns!

Girls Rock!