

**Wanderings
from the
Woods
& Water**
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Whitetail Deer, Pink Fingernails, Ponytails and Prayer

didn't take long; it felt like I was carrying twice my body weight. We had food, extra clothes, chairs, and the gun. We got to the brush blind where my brother-in-law had been consistently seeing deer. We got settled and ready for any deer coming our way.

Once settled, it was time for some food, some extra clothes, and the grunt call. We sat for a couple hours and...no deer. She was getting a little annoyed, but wanted to keep hunting. So, we decided to load up and move to a different spot.

As we started walking back to the car, it hit me like a ton of bricks. My little girl is 7! It seems like yesterday when she was born! As we walked across the ridge, I soaked in every detail and a tear flowed down my cheek. How she was looking for deer sign, the curly hair hanging out from under the orange hat, the hunter orange vest that was too big for her kept falling off. In the blink of an eye, my baby was 7 years old and this was our day!

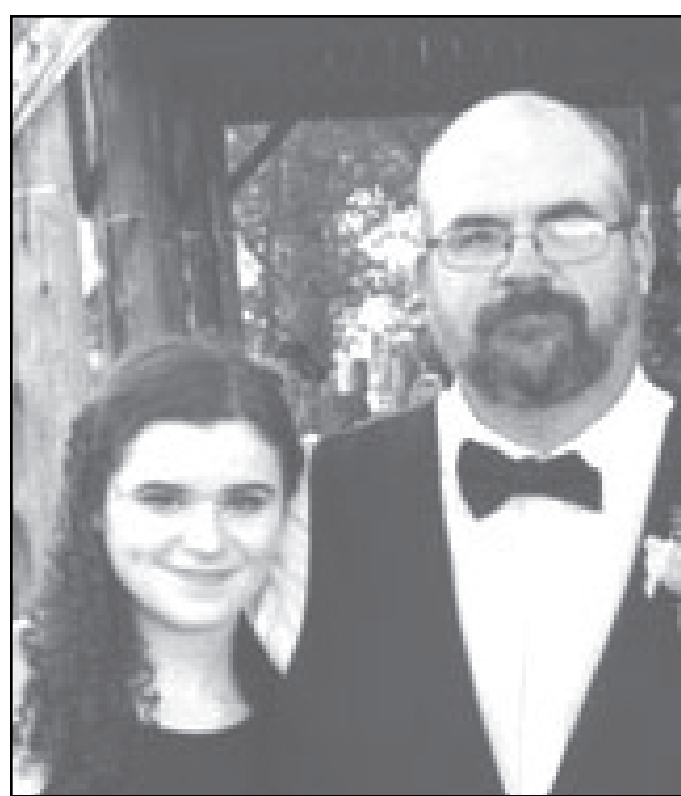
We got the car loaded and were going to check a couple of other spots. We went to the watermelon patch...no deer. So we decided to go home and check out the farm behind our house. This is where the power of prayer comes in.

We had been seeing a few deer on the edge of the field behind our house on occasion. We started our short walk from the

car to the top of the hill. As we walked, I was praying, "Lord, please let there be a deer in the field. Lord, please let there be a deer in the field." As we got to the top, where you could see the whole field, there stood an answered prayer. At 100 yards, in the middle of the wide open field at 10:00 a.m., stood a big doe. I have been to that spot a million times and never ever seen a deer in the middle of that field!

Since it was unaware of our presence, I tried to get Bailey a good rest, but I was shaking pretty bad. She, on the other hand, was as cool as a cucumber. We got settled in and the gun rested on the tongue of a wagon. I sat behind her helping her hold the rifle steady. She got the deer in the scope and went to pull the trigger. Then she looked back at me and said, "the trigger is stuck." I looked down and she barely had her small finger with pink fingernails on the trigger. I told her to put her finger more into the trigger. She put her head down on the rifle and...BAM! Fearing that she had missed because of how quickly she shot, I looked up and the doe was dead in her tracks. The whooping and hollering began. It was our day!

We went to get the deer and she wasn't ready yet to do the field dressing. So I did the cutting while she watched intently. We loaded the deer on the Kawasaki mule and headed to the house. Then she



Bailey and Dad

looked at me and said, "Daddy, you know, I put meat in the freezer before you!" We made it to the house and the parade began. We showed Mom and then drove up and down the road showing the neighbors. Thank the Lord for awesome neighbors. They were out congratulating her and taking pictures. Then the grandparents came over to check it out. Her aunt and cousin came over. With a 2 year old brother and a newborn brother who are time demanding, this was her day to shine!

She told me that she wants to shoot a buck next year. I am not sure if she likes to hunt or be with Dad, or maybe both. Either way, this is mine and her story: a happy, proud Daddy, a little curly-headed girl, and God spending time together. I know

without a doubt, God gave me her and He put that deer in the perfect spot.

I ended up shooting the biggest buck of my deer hunting career this year, but nothing since I have been hunting compares to the doe my little girl shot. It was our day, our memory. I read Tammy Terry's story about Russell Stover and her daddy. Those memories are important to us Dads. I hope that 30 years from now Bailey tells the story of when she and Daddy went on their first deer hunt. I did not understand the statement, "They grow up so fast," until I had my own kids. So my advice is to get out and make memories with your kids because they grow up too fast, and thank the Lord for them everyday.

Until next week, get out and enjoy God's creation!

This is the very first column I ever wrote! Its about a very special girl, my oldest daughter. My little girl just turned 16. It seems like yesterday we brought her home from the hospital. Happy Birthday!

Alarm clock goes off at 5AM, it's Saturday, October 10th, youth deer season. It's a day that me and my daughter have been waiting and planning on for a while. She is 7 and wants to shoot a deer. Oh yeah, by the way, she is a Daddy's Girl.

I got out of bed, got ready and, at 5:30, went to wake her up. It's funny how a bomb going off beside her ear won't wake her up for school, but me

whispering, "Get up, it's time to go deer hunting" makes her leap to attention. She got dressed in RECORD time. Oh no! We forgot to check last year's boots. The boots don't fit. We scrambled all over the house looking for shoes. Those shoes don't fit; school shoes; church shoes. Finally, settling on an old pair of tennis shoes with Mom's blessing, we were ready to start our adventure.

We pulled into the driveway of the farm we planned on hunting. We were both filled with excitement! I am pretty sure we had enough gear and provisions to last around a week. I am glad the walk



Bailey with first deer and little brother Jake

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Benefiting the Marcum & Wallace Hospital Foundation

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Estill County Golf Club

11 a.m. — Golf Scramble
6 p.m. — Paradise Luau Dinner

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