

PRAY HARD, PLAY HARD... 19 YEARS LATER

By Lynette Whorley
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When Gary Arthur, a family friend, told me in 1988 that the buck I had shot that November day might be the buck of a lifetime and not to expect to do that again, I looked at him like he had lost his mind. After all, it was my second hunt and I figured it must be pretty easy because that was my second harvest. I was barely 20 years old and it seems to be effortless at the time. Both hunts were fun and successful and seemed to be the highlights of my life. My Dad and I took a small buck when I was 12 and 8 years later I took a nice buck on my future husband's land. So what was all the talk about hunting being something that you had to learn patients and skills?

Last year I ran into Gary and he said "taken anymore big bucks lately" I immediately turned to my husband and said: "Oh my Gosh, I have the Gary Arthur curse" After all these years I had that speech ringing in my ears that I may never do that again, he said to enjoy it and it may never happen in my lifetime again. I told Gary I had harvested many deer but no wall hanger in nearly 20 years. We laughed and I told him about the "curse" (I call it that in fun only).

And he began to put his hand on my shoulder and said "I hereby remove all previous words...and may you, my friend harvest yourself a dandy buck one day" or something very close to those words, curse be gone.... and we laughed like no one else was around. It was just Gary, and me and I prayed that as silly as all this was, it be true!

Well on November 6th 2007, the "GAC" (Gary Arthur curse) was lifted! PRAISE THE LORD!!! This was just my day. It was as if all the prayers and dreams had filled heaven and my day was indeed granted. I hunted especially hard this past fall during Bow because I wanted to harvest a nice buck with my bow. When that did not happen, I figured it might be a muzzleloader buck.

I was frustrated after the opening Saturday and Monday came and went. I was down to my last few hunting (vacation) days. On Tuesday the 6th, I had a rotten attitude and decided to go late morning in the woods. I was like a kid that was bound and determined to get my way. I was stomping through the woods, flopped down, cracked open a pop-tart, and just acted ridiculous.

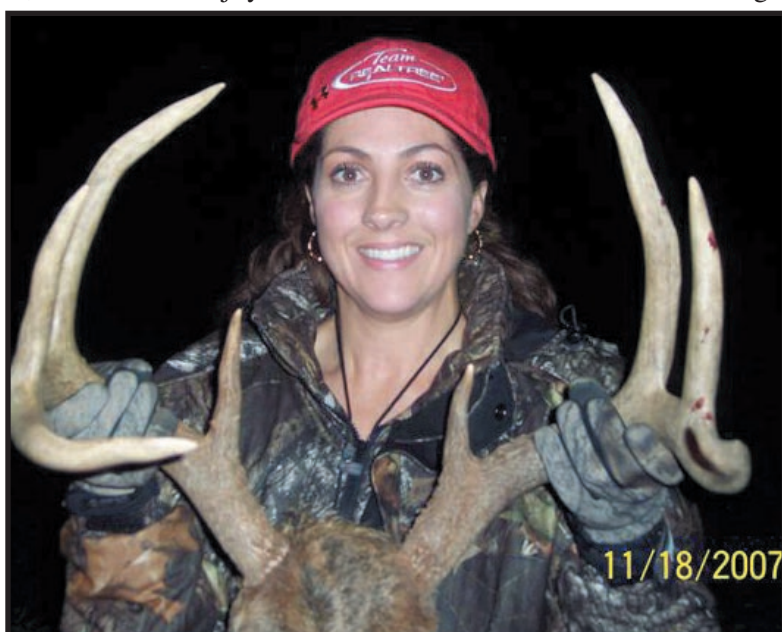
I was going against all the right things to do. I decided to move 20 yards to another spot, then another 15 yards to another spot. I decided to see if I could act like a hunter for a while. Even though I was frustrated, I was determined. I had no longer sat down when I turned to hand up my horns I was going to rattle with and I reached in my pocket and pulled out "the can." I turned it aggressively still in anger, and before I knew it a doe came busting into the woods off a field about a 100 yards away, I got a look at her when I saw this huge

deer behind her and antlers down, I knew what was going on and it was my 15 seconds of fame or shame.

I immediately felt my heartbeat race and my blood pressure was thumping in my ears and temple. I had the shakes come over me and I prayed "Lord please help me to hold on and squeeze." They were about 45 yards away and moving briskly. Like a flash, I saw the brown sweet spot on the buck through my scope and pulled the trigger. Smoke filled the air and I moved over to see the buck and he kicked up his back legs and did a circle and his vitals were exposed low.

That's powder, it hits hard and we must wait for the results to take place. It is that feeling that only a hunter feels when you know the shot was good versus wondering if you hit your target and playing it in your mind over and over. I felt confident so I just thought about waiting to track it and concentrated more on calling my husband and to go over to the initial contact spot. After I collected myself, we were talking and walking around the hot spot, of course saw blood and pieces of vitals, but it stopped. We walked for 3 hours and found nothing. I can't tell you how disap-

Cont'd. on pg. 100



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Your friend, Dick Turpin

www.turpincalls.com

LATER...

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pointing this was. Way beyond belief.

I was a changed person at that time and did not think I was going to snap out of it. I played it over and over in my mind, the shot, the reaction, seeing his vitals exposed and hanging down, how could this buck be alive, there is not good reason to any of this. Well, the day passed, one week passed and I was existing but not functioning properly. I even got a ticket for not coming to a complete stop and I started to tell the officer I had more important things on my mind, like finding my buck, and then I thought I might show signs of hostility and they would lock me up.

I constantly had to tell myself, "let it go." The next week I tried to hunt some, but it was miserable. I went to work and tried not to sit and think about it, but it became a second thought automatically.

Tuesday November 20th exactly

two weeks later, it was a normal day at work until I got a call from my husband. It was 1:43 p.m. I remember so well, he said "I've got your deer", I put the phone down and ran out. I never even thought about getting in trouble, or driving carefully, or anything responsible. I got home to find my horns sticking out of the back of an old pick up truck that we use on the farm, the tailgate down, I said, "yep, that's him", as hard as it would have been, I could not have claimed a deer that was not mine, but I knew he was.

He had a perfect 8-point rack with thick dark tines, whiter towards the end of his rack. I explained the details of his rack over and over and it was no question, he had come home to me. The funny thing is, this buck was about 500 yards to the right of my stand down in an old creek bed. This spot was so thick with weeds and brush that my husband had stopped going through it because he said it was ridiculous. He had a feeling and looked over an edge and the buck was right there. We know now what had happened, he went about 100 yards back the way he came in and then turned right and practically circled around me and then headed hard right down to the river bottom. We knew he was down and I think that is why my husband and Dad said it will show, don't worry.

The thing I want everyone to know is God is always in control. Yes, that is easy to say when the outcome is so good but looking back I must tell you, I really see a lesson. I prayed before the hunt,

during the hunt and after the hunt. I always take my camera, either to video the hunt or have a digital camera with me. That particular day, I had neither. I had so many folks tell me from work friends to hunting buddies in many different states, that I will have my day, keep my chin up, they are praying for me. At the time, I would just say sure. I really struggled with the "Lord's perfect timing."

When I walked in Church folks would ask me if I found him yet. It was that second Sunday that I can tell you I laughed at Church with some folks when talking about him getting away and I really had a change come over me. I started to tell the Lord thanks for the freedom to hunt, the ability to hunt, the time to hunt and the safety of the hunt. I really smiled and kept the "hunt" close to me, for some will never experience what I did. That Monday I returned to work, I felt that I was getting back to my old self again. I know the Lord had his perfect plan all along and he allowed me to have my dream come true in his timing.

The funny thing was the day I received the call, I had my camera in the car, folks were around and we took pictures. Then it hit me all of a sudden, this was the perfect day to be reunited with my buck, my family was here and my Dad was coming down to hunt with me and my camera was charged, so it was definitely the best timing.

Never give up. A special thanks to my husband for finding my deer, he is the reason I can write this story today.

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