

Grouse

Continued from B1

I doubled back on our track and swung wide to the side of the firs where the grouse had come down. As I approached, the grouse darted from beneath the tree and into the channel. I was prepared for the flush, but again, its trajectory would take the bird through impenetrable cover with no shot opportunity. Then Yuba suddenly appeared, on the other side of the channel, spotted the bird on the move, and pulled a trick out of her pheasant hunting playbook.

Swinging wide and turning on the heat, Yuba dashed ahead of the bird to cut it off, causing a 180-degree switch in the ruff's direction. As if waiting in the wings for her cue, Finn darted through the middle of the channel, stopping the ruff's escape and forcing it airborne. As it lifted off, I shouldered my side-by-side with hopes of a crossing shot, but to my surprise, the bird flew directly at me. A glancing blow from the cylinder-choked bore deposited the flawless gray grouse into the grass beside my right boot as if the dogs had willed a retrieved to hand. A moment of pure serendipity.

Reaching into the grasses,



Brad Trumbo/Contributed Photo

Snowberry thickets often coincide with good grouse cover.

I gently wrapped my fingers around the warm body of the marvelous bird. The girls gathered around for a sniff and we drank in the moment. The sun peeking through the trees cast a beautiful backlight on caramel-tipped breast feathers and I admired the intricate designs and steely shades across the bird's cape.

The girls sat at my feet and Yuba whined to be released. We were just warming up and barely 15 minutes into the hunt. Still, I kept her at heel as I pondered the previous few minutes and the teamwork that led to

our success. Those cherished seconds passed quickly. I had to commit the details to memory.

Call it what you will. Divine intervention, telepathy, or dumb luck. The appearance of both dogs out of nowhere and their stealthy work are what led to a bird in the bag. I've experienced this sixth sense phenomenon consistently with these two setters in a variety of covers and it never ceases to amaze me. These dogs are "my why" behind bird hunting.

By late morning, a dozen grouse had gone up, many of which flew just a few yards be-



Brad Trumbo/Contributed Photo

Drawing a bead on a bird in cover this thick can be challenging, making every ruffed grouse that comes to hand a blessing.

fore disappearing into the brush and running to safety as I battled through briars and service-berry thickets. But a good day's gunning is measured not by a bird count in the game pouch. It's the splendor of an October morning with grouse abound, and your best dogs working

them with gusto. The fleeting glimpse of the sun streaming through a broadly-fanned tail as the bird climbs against a backdrop of the autumn palette. It's the sight of a staunch dog and the feel of an heirloom scattergun rising to shoulder. A fleeting moment worth living

a thousand lifetimes to experience just once more.

■ Brad Trumbo is a fish and wildlife biologist and outdoor writer in Waitsburg, Washington. For tips and tales of outdoor pursuits and conservation, visit www.bradtrumbo.com.



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HOROSCOPES by Stella Wilder

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2022

YOUR BIRTHDAY by Stella Wilder

Born today, you are never too cautious or sheepish to explore that which is considered to be, in the main, unconventional or even unacceptable -- and it's likely that such exploration will lead to some kind of immersion into that which has newly struck your fancy. Indeed, you follow such likes and attractions where they will lead you, come what may, to the extent that much of what you do, you do on your own because others, even your closest friends, are afraid to accompany you.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) -- The closer you look at details today, the closer you'll be to the truth, though you must at some point step back to take in the big picture.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) -- A serious challenge may appear ahead of you today. The quicker your response, the better. Don't lose time arguing with yourself.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) -- It's essential that you keep your eyes on the prize today, or you're likely to give it up even before you've won it. Stay focused.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) -- Your creativity will be put to the test today by someone who is simply having a little fun with you. Don't take this too seriously.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20) -- Someone is watching you and expecting you to make an error at precisely the wrong time -- but you're likely to avoid any such carelessness.

ARIES (March 21-April 19) -- What you say today must be precisely what you mean, or someone may misinterpret and react in a way that overcomplicates almost everything.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20) -- You've made clear your intentions and now it's time to get to work -- even if there are still those who don't know what you're up to.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20) -- The more you share with another today, the more you'll

have at your disposal when you need it. Your own generosity can save the day.

CANCER (June 21-July 22) -- Don't dismiss a basic plan because it is simple. Indeed, the more unsophisticated, the better, especially when you are dealing with new teammates.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22) -- Self-examination can yield a surprising discovery today. Be sure that you are looking closely at a point in your past where paths diverged.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) -- You're not afraid of asking questions, surely, but today one or two answers may throw a wrench into the works and slow you down for a while.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) -- Your expectations may at first be dashed today, but later on, you'll realize that this was a necessary step in your evolution.

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2022

CROSSWORD PUZZLER

ACROSS

- 1 Daisy Mae's creator
- 5 Potato skin
- 9 Get the point
- 12 Crusty cheese
- 13 Italian wine city
- 14 Shade tree
- 15 Not convinced
- 17 Ms. Shriver of tennis
- 18 Aberdeen boy
- 19 State Farm competitor
- 21 World-weariness
- 24 Immoral practice
- 26 Sand, silt and clay
- 27 Koan discipline
- 28 Razor-sharp
- 32 Galahad's title
- 33 Annapolis grad
- 34 Earlier
- 35 Coy
- 37 Wheel track
- 38 Metal fastener

DOWN

- 39 Cries of disapproval
- 41 Glues together
- 42 Synthetic fabric
- 45 Damage the finish
- 46 S&L offering
- 47 Resettle
- 53 Hasty flight
- 54 Raw metals
- 55 Responsibility
- 56 FedEx units
- 57 El — (ocean warming)
- 58 Worker's pay
- 1 ABC rival
- 2 Noah's vessel
- 3 Bakery item
- 4 Dress feature
- 5 Not owing
- 6 PC abandon key
- 7 JFK posting
- 8 Spring blossom

Answer to Previous Puzzle

G	A	P	E	W	A	D	E	A	B	S
Y	V	E	S	A	L	A	N	R	O	O
M	E	A	T	I	D	V	O	C	A	L
		E	L	L	A	O	M			
B	L	A	R	E	E	Y	E	L	I	D
R	O	C	T	R	A	M	G	O	N	E
O	D	O	R	O	H	M	A	N	T	I
O	G	R	E	D	A	Y	O	E	R	G
M	E	N	A	C	E	A	P	R	O	N
		R	E	A	C	R	E			
V	E	R	S	A	P	A	P	U	N	S
A	L	E	S	A	P	S	S	N	I	P
N	I	B	E	T	T	A	I	D	L	Y

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