The beauty of the Buck Moon

*Back Home by Chris Hardie*

A beautiful thing about life are the serendipitous moments that brighten our journey.

That thought was not on my mind as I was bending down to pull on my shoes at 5 a.m. on July 14. It was responding to the call of nature from our elderly dog Nessie that had our aching joints heading out the door.

My aches and pains were quickly forgotten as I looked to the western horizon. Just above the tree-lined hill a beautiful orange and yellow orb glowed on the freshly minted azure sky outlined with purple and lavender clouds.

I went back inside the house to grab my camera to capture the last few moments of the Buck Moon going to bed before slipping below the horizon.

The Buck Moon was the largest supermoon of 2022 and the second of three straight. Supermoons appear larger than the average full moon and shine about 16% brighter because they reach full phase near perigee – the closest point to earth. The final supermoon of 2022 will be Aug. 11.

Every month has a moon name. July is called the Buck Moon, but also goes by other Native American and cultural names such as Thunder Moon, Hay Moon, Berry Moon or Salmon Moon, among others.

Buck Moon comes from the Native American Algonquin culture, referring to the time of the year when new antlers are rapidly growing on male deer. The deer lose their antlers in the late winter or early spring but grow them back to full size by mid-summer.

A few minutes after taking the moon photos, I was sipping coffee inside the house. I looked out our dining room window and as if on cue, there were two bucks nibbling on the vegetation in our recently mown hay field.

I see deer on nearly a daily basis on our farm, especially does and fawns this time of year. It is the season of plenty for deer who find the apple trees and plants in our yard a delicacy to be enjoyed. But it’s been a while since I’ve seen a buck.

It’s also been a challenging stretch personally, riding the ups and downs of the month that my father died two years ago and dealing with other family and health issues.

For many cultures the deer is a symbol of spiritual authority. Deer are messengers and represent sensitivity, intuition and gentleness. Bucks symbolize speed, stamina and leadership. They have antlers that grow closer to the sky and when the antlers fall off and grow again, it is a symbol of regeneration.

Not wanting to disturb the two bucks that were less than a 100 yards away, I quietly crept out to our front porch for a closer view. Light fog was lifting as the deer enjoyed their herbaceous breakfast, frequently lifting their majestic heads to look around.

I watched for a few minutes before one buck, then the other, walked up our driveway, through our yard and disappeared into the woods.

The night of the Buck Moon was over.

I felt regenerated.

Cutlines

Buck moon Davis: The Buck Moon on the night of July 13 as seen in eastern Iowa County. Photo courtesy of Jerry Davis.

Buck moon morning and buck moon morning 2: The Buck Moon as it sets on the western horizon on Chris Hardie's farm the morning of July 14.

Two bucks: These two bucks appeared in the field below Chris Hadie's house a few minutes after the Buck moon set.