

Conservation Corner

by James Cummins
Executive Director
of Wildlife Mississippi

Many Mississippians are concerned about wildlife and will do what they can to protect and conserve them.

Wildlife Mississippi has received calls from concerned citizens who want someone to come get a deer fawn, baby duck, baby bird, or baby rabbit they’ve found, only to become upset when they’re told the young animal is probably okay and should be left alone.

Most people wouldn’t go over to a table in a restaurant and pick up a child, take it home, and then call the sheriff. The child’s mother or father is probably in the buffet line or not too far away. But many people will pick up a deer fawn. The fawn’s mother is usually feeding close by.

This problem is not new to Mississippi or the Southeast. Every time late spring and early summer roll around, we get a new crop of fawns and other wildlife. The urge by many well-intentioned people is to pick these animals up and take them home to raise and care for them. Thinking the fawn has been abandoned by its mother, some individuals take the fawn home with them to bottle feed and raise. They often end up calling the conservation officer or biologist for guidance about caring for the animal.

In addition to it being illegal to handle most native wildlife except during legal hunting seasons, newborn wild animals are almost

never abandoned and should be left where they are found. It is perfectly normal for the doe deer to leave her young fawn while she is off feeding nearby. The doe returns occasionally to check on the fawn and allows it to nurse. Because of the fawn’s natural instinct to lie still at this early age, people are able to walk right up to fawns. I have walked up on fawns in the woods and fields on our farms in Monroe, Montgomery, and Webster counties. Handling fawns is a problem. Anywhere you have deer, you’ll have this problem. All wildlife should be left in their natural environment. Attempting to treat wildlife as pets inevitably results in unfavorable consequences for the animal in question.

Wildlife that loses its fear of humans oftentimes poses a threat to people, as we have seen with alligators on the Ross Barnett Reservoir and even in the City of Jackson. It is illegal to keep wild animals in confinement except under special permitting procedures. It is best for all concerned to leave them in the wild. This is better for the animal in question and will help keep our wildlife “wild.”

James L. Cummins is executive director of Wildlife Mississippi, a non-profit, conservation organization founded to conserve, restore and enhance fish, wildlife and plant resources throughout Mississippi. Their web site is www.wildlifemiss.org.



Animal Crackers

I have always loved children and animals. I married a man who loves animals and is very tender hearted toward them. Since his Mama passed away over 15 months ago, he has been caring for her cat and dog she left behind. The last thing she asked him was to please care for her pets. He told her not to worry and has faithfully tended to them every single day. Since we moved into her home this summer, they are now living with us. We treat our pets as members of our family. Our own two cats are strays that we have rescued. We never go out looking for cats, they come to us.

The phrase politically correct is a noun that is defined as a method of controlling and dictating public speech and thought. When used as an adjective, it becomes political correctness and is defined as exhibiting or failing to exhibit political correctness. I am all about being kind to everyone, not saying or doing things to hurt other people, and just generally trying to do and say the right thing. I once heard a preacher say that you should never say or do anything you wouldn’t say or do if the Lord was standing right there beside you. I have always remembered that and tried to live that way as well.

Now I tell you those two things to tell you this. Just

when you think you have heard it all – you haven’t. After pressure from several different groups, the Nabisco company has decided to change the picture on the box of animal crackers – the iconic box that has been around since 1923. Some people were upset that the animals were caged, and wanted them to be free in the wild. So, after much pressure, the box has been revamped and the animals are coming out of a savannah and seem to be leaping from the box.

I’m all about change for the better, but it’s just a box of animal crackers. The ones I remember my little sister eating in the grocery cart when Mama took us to the grocery store. The ones I remember my son eating and hanging on to that string as he enjoyed his snack. Now I am all about the safety and care of all of God’s creatures. I never want to see any of God’s creatures mistreated, but I sure am going to miss those happy animals riding along on the circus wagon.

I hope you will give today’s recipes a try. Thanks for reading.

INSTANT SLOPPY JOES

- 1 ½ lb. ground beef
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 (8 oz.) can tomato sauce
- ½ cup BBQ sauce
- 1 Tbsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tbsp. cider vinegar
- 1 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1 tsp. chili powder
- 1 tsp. onion powder
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 1 Tbsp. hot water

Brown and drain ground beef. Mix with next 9 ingredients in a large skillet. Cook for about 30 minutes or un-

til bubbles. Mix cornstarch and hot water and blend in with skillet mixture. Cook for about 10 minutes more or until thick.

BEEFY KING RANCH CASSEROLE

- 1 lb. ground beef
 - 1 pkg. taco seasoning mix
 - 2/3 cup water
 - 1 Can Cream of Chicken Soup
 - 1 can diced Ro-Tel tomatoes
 - ½ tsp. garlic powder
 - ½ tsp. onion powder
 - 1 (8 oz.) Velveeta cheese, cubed
 - 1 (12 oz.) can Pillsbury Grands Jr. Biscuit (10 count)
- Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Spray a 9 x 13 inch baking dish with cooking spray; set aside. In a large skillet, cook ground beef; drain fat and return meat to skillet. Add taco seasoning mix and water; simmer for 5 minutes. Stir in soup, tomatoes, and spices; add cheese, cooking until melted. Remove from heat. Cut biscuit into quarters; stir into skillet mixture and pour into prepared dish. Bake for 30 minutes; you may top with your favorite taco toppings if desired.

PULLED PORK CORNBREAD CASSEROLE

- 1 (8.5 oz.) pkg. box corn muffin mix
- 1 (14 oz.) can creamed corn
- 2 eggs

- ½ cup milk
 - 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided
 - 1 lb. pulled pork
 - 1 ¼ cups BBQ sauce
- Preheat oven to 400 degrees; coat a 13 x 9 x 2 inch baking dish with cooking spray. In a large bowl, combine muffin mix, corn, eggs, milk, and 1 cup of the cheese. Pour into baking dish and bake for 20 minutes. Toss pulled pork in BBQ sauce and spread over the top of the cornbread; then top with remaining cheese. Bake for an additional 20 minutes. Allow to cool for 10 minutes and cut into squares.

Lee Ann Fleming is a Holmes County native, food columnist and has garnered fame for her recipes featured in the film, **The Help. Fleming can be reached at lafkitchen@hughes.net.*

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Central Holmes dedicates new SuccessMaker computer lab



Central Holmes Christian School recently held a ribbon cutting on Wednesday, August 29, to officially commemorate the addition of a new SuccessMaker Computer Lab. CHCS administrators secured a grant in recent months in order to implement the new computer lab on the Lexington campus. The lab is complete with 24 desktop computers fully equipped with SuccessMaker software by Pearson Education, Inc. SuccessMaker is an adaptive and prescriptive scheduling intervention program delivering both reading and math curriculums. SuccessMaker software continuously adjusts the pace and path of instruction based on each learner’s performance. CHCS administrators worked in cooperation with Jay Hatfield of New York, chairman and founder of Tutoring America, in establishing the lab for CHCS students and staff. The lab is aimed to provide opportunities to enhance student learning through instructional technology and give them equal access to technology and knowledge. “This wonderful addition greatly enhances our school campus while allowing our students to benefit and continue to move forward,” said CHCS Headmaster Tony Banks. On hand for the ribbon cutting were (pictured above from left): Lib Clark, Jean Hughes, Leslie Burden, Jenny Clare Christopher, Dr. Jim Haffey (CHCS Board Member), Christi Morgan (CHCS Counselor), Neil Marshall, Tony Banks (CHCS Headmaster), David Dillon (CHCS Board Member), Shirley Jobe, Emily Cheatham (Lab Facilitator), Renee Wynne, Debbie McLemore, Cathy Murtagh, Misty McBride, Andi Frank and Marie Thomas. (Photo submitted)

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