Outdoor Truths

BY GARY MILLER

The opening day of deer season was always a special day for me. I can remember counting down the days and even being unable to sleep the night before. I can remember hunting in a downpour and in the hottest of days. It seemed no matter how uncertain the circumstances were, I was willing to get up early and make my way to a tree stand because that fourth Saturday of September was opening day, no matter if the weather cooperated or not. And while I could not predict any other thing with confidence, I could mark my calendar around this certainty.

Years ago, I took a big step of faith. I left a position I had held for many years. I had finally reached a place where I was living on a decent salary with good benefits. But I felt the need to move to a new position where I would have neither. I would have to trust God for everything. I can remember many days, especially early on, where the circumstances around my life on one day were great and, on another day, seemed hopeless. As a result, I begin to live on an emotional roller coaster. When things looked good, I was happy and when things looked bad, I fretted, worried, and complained. I can remember the day God exposed my problem. In a not-so-gentle way, he showed me where I was putting my trust. And it wasn't in him. And in so many unspoken words, he reminded me the reason I was on an emotional roller coaster was because I was putting my trust in things that constantly change. And if I continue to ride that roller coaster, I will stay emotionally sick at my stomach. He reminded me that my eyes were to focus on the One who is not only as consistent as opening day, but who holds every circumstance and situation in his hands. I can put my trust in the changing winds and waves, or I can put my trust in the unchanging anchor of my soul.

The times we are living in right now are fluid. They are changing. Many of the circumstances we are in are not of our doing. Many of the situations we have been forced to endure are making many of us fret, worry, and complain. We think if we could just change our circumstances, our problems would be solved – we would be happy. We think if we could just manipulate the conditions of our country, our problems would be solved – and we would be happy. So, as a result, we ride an emotional roller coaster. When the circumstances are good, we are. When they are not, we are not. I know you want things to change. You should. I know you want to work to help rectify the situation. You should. But if all these things are causing you to go from mood to mood, it's a good sign you are putting your trust in changing circumstances and not in an unchangeable God.

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Conservation Corner

by James Cummins
Executive Director
of Wildlife Mississippi

October is National Fire Prevention Month with National Fire Prevention Week being observed October 4-10, 2020. This year's theme "Serve Up Fire Safety in the Kitchen!™" works to educate everyone about the simple but important actions they can take to keep themselves, and those around them, safe in the kitchen. Cooking is the #1 cause of home fires and home fire injuries. Unattended cooking is the leading cause of fires in the kitchen. In a fire, seconds count. This can mean the difference between residents of our community escaping safely from a fire or having their lives end in tragedy.

This yearly observance was established to remember the Great Chicago Fire, which occurred in 1871. It killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures, and burned more than 2,000 acres. The fire began on October 8, but continued into and did most of its damage on October 9, 1871.

While the Great Chicago Fire was the best-known blaze to erupt during this fiery 2-day period, it wasn't the largest. That distinction goes to the Peshtigo Fire, the most destructive forest fire in American history. The fire, which also occurred on October 9, 1871, roared through Northeast Wisconsin, burning down 16 towns, killing 1,152 people, and scorching 1.2 million acres before it was done.

The Peshtigo Fire began when several railroad workers clearing land for much needed tracks unintentionally started a brush fire. Soon the fast moving flames were raging across the land. It was the small town of Peshtigo, Wisconsin that suffered the worst damage. Within an hour, the entire town had been destroyed.

People start most wildfires, but some are attributed to lightning from electrical storms. These fires can spread quickly, igniting brush, trees, and even homes. We need to be especially careful when using campfires or bonfires.

Without proper precautions, campfires are potentially dangerous. You need to know how to property build one, how to keep it going, and how to properly extinguish it. Most of these fires burn out of control in one of two basic ways: on the ground or in the trees. Dead leaves or pine needles on the ground may ignite from direct contact or airborne embers or sparks may ignite overhanging branches.

No fire should be lit near trees, tents, or other fire hazards. Never leave a fire unattended. You should always have sand and/or water on hand to smother the fire if it does get out of control. Water is more efficient and effective in extinguishing a fire. The water should be poured until all hissing noises stop. Then you need to stir the ashes with a stick to make sure the water has penetrated all layers.

If water is unavailable, sand may be used to smother the fire. Once the fire has been covered thoroughly with sand, you will then need to stir the ashes with a stick to make sure it has been fully extinguished.

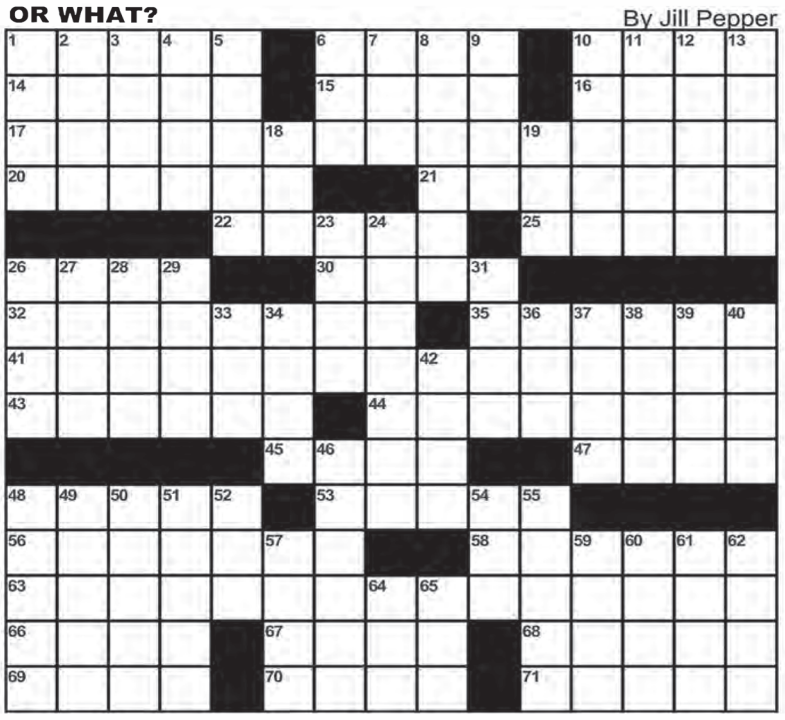
James L. Cummins is executive director of Wildlife Mississippi, a non-profit, conservation organization founded to conserve, restore and enhance fish, wildlife and plant resources throughout Mississippi. Their web site is www.wildlifemiss.org.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

ACROSS

1) Trash, as a project
6) Jessica of Hollywood
10) Agrees quietly
14) Hawaiian welcome
15) Cleo's wooer
16) Way out
17) No matter what
20) Flower part
21) More strange
22) Mustard choice
25) Soft, nappy leather
26) Sound effect
30) Eye part
32) LP part
35) Fasteners
41) Accept or reject
43) "King of Queens" character
44) Scatter, as a mob
45) Stake-driving hammer
47) Harvest
48) Desert transport
53) Brief quarrel
56) Rhododendron's relatives
58) Becomes less intense
63) Law of the jungle
66) Great Lakes city
67) Atlantic bird
68) High point for Moses
69) Bodies of saltwater
70) Part of a wine glass
71) Really enjoy

DOWN

1) Some bunts, for short
2) "Colt" anagram
3) "Arrivederci" city
4) "Don't forget about me"
5) Used a vegetable peeler
6) "Where ___?"
7) Computer network acronym
8) "Hagar the Horrible" creator Dik
9) Farm measure
10) Jacket named for a Hindu leader
11) Nitrous ___ (laughing gas)
12) Had an evening meal
13) Cubic meter
18) "The Phantom Menace" boy
19) A sibling, for short
23) Japanese martial art
24) Fine word for libraries?
26) Young newts
27) Applaud
28) Part of a camping trip, often
29) Ready for customers
31) "Bullets," to a poker player
33) "___ 'em, Fido!"
34) Thing on an agenda
36) Track unit
37) Swear to be true
38) Like a desert
39) Leaning Tower city
40) Bit of choreography
42) Carousel music, e.g.
46) Declare with confidence
48) Projects for lawyers
49) A shade of blue
50) Journalist Shriver
51) Diminutive beings
52) Hawaiian gift
54) Dance noisily
55) Morbidly fat
57) Birds, collectively
59) Opera showstopper
60) Add a little color to
61) Biblical twin
62) Liner
64) Easy number to add
65) Dream state, for short

OR WHAT? By Jill Pepper