

Forest fire fighting feats

By Norm Gladish
MNR Fire Prevention
Technician

It is not difficult to imagine flames of fire racing through a forest. We've all seen spectacular pictures or film footage of blazing crown fires.

How then, do you stop such a fire, raging out of control? Technically, any fire can be stopped by simply breaking the fire triangle. The fire triangle is; heat-oxygen-fuel. By removing any one of these components the fire will be extinguished. If this sounds too simple, please read on.

With water, mineral soil or fire retardant as the suppressing agent, fire can be extinguished by cooling the fuel below the point of ignition, smothering or robbing the fire of air (oxygen) or removing the supply of available fuel by making it unburnable through application of a retardant.

Direct Attack

When fire crews reach the

scene of a fire, power pumps are set-up at the nearest source of water. Hose is then laid from the pump to the fire. The fire is then extinguished by direct application of water which cools (removes heat) and smothers it (removes air). This is known as direct attack.

Great. But what happens when a fire is too hot to be approached by fire fighters or is moving too quickly?

Traditionally, fire managers have resorted to indirect attack. This is accomplished by constructing a fire break some distance from the head and smoke, but directly in the path of the fire. This is often done with bulldozers or skidders but hand tools are used when possible. The fuel in front of the approaching fire, but behind the break, can then be removed by burning out toward the fire.

A burnout fire must be lit using extreme caution. Experienced fire crews must wait for proper weather and wind conditions. Usually in late afternoon

winds die down and forest fuels are dry enough to ensure a clean burn.

The burnout fire is now ignited along the inside edge of the break using a hand-held drip-torch. It drops small amounts of burning liquid fuel onto forest fuels on the ground, as the operator walks the edge of the break.

Fires started with ping-pong balls

When large areas are involved, or if time is critical, aerial ignition may be required. One method used is a device mounted on a helicopter that ejects Ping-Pong balls!

These are actually incendiary agents containing chemicals that burst into flame after a one-minute delay. This allows time for the balls to be clear of the aircraft and safely on the ground before they ignite.

A more efficient method of ignition developed in the '80s is known as the helitorch. More will be said of this type of ignition in

a later article on Prescribed Burning.

Whatever method used for ignition, it is risky, complicated and time consuming. Burnouts also increase the amount of area destroyed by fire.

Water Bombers effective

For these reasons, water bombing has gradually assumed greater importance for initial attack of wild fire. CL-215s can drop tons of water directly on the hottest part of a fire. When used as a team, two or more of these aircrafts can drop water every few minutes, effectively cooling the flames.

The use of foam can extend the effectiveness of water by increasing its "wetness" or penetrating power and by adhering to vegetation for several hours after application.

Water bombing allows crews to quickly follow up on the ground, with water applied by

portable power pumps and hose.

Mop-up time consuming

Finally comes the time consuming, labor intensive mop-up phase. Fire fighters must now search out every puff of smoke from smoldering trees, roots or logs across the whole burn.

These "smokes" must be cut down with chain saws or dug up with shovels in order to apply water. This is usually done with a hand pumped, five-gallon (22 litre) container, carried by straps, on a person's back. These heavy, leaky pack-pumps are cherished by fire fighters, who fondly call them by various nick-names (too vulgar to be printed here!)

Only when every spark is extinguished and not a wisp of smoke can be found, is a fire safely termed OUT. Fire fighters may now return home filled with the satisfaction of having thoroughly completed a necessary job.

Travel abbreviations can be confusing

By Joe Mykietyn

Understanding travel language can be very important in a domestic or foreign county, airport, hotel, ship and even in a restaurant.

So from time to time, due to the hundreds of types of terms and abbreviations, I'll list several in every other article.

- * APEX - Advanced Purchase Excursion Fare is a discounted excursion airfare with various conditions including payment well in advance or departure.
- * ATAC - Air Transport Association of Canada
- * B - Coach Economy Discount
- * B/B - Bed and Breakfast

- * Charter - to hire the exclusive use of any aircraft, vessel, motorcoach or other vehicle; the vessel hired
- * DiT - Domestic Independent Travel is a prepaid, unescorted tour in the county of residence that is designed to the specifications of the client.
- * Knot - a unit of speed equal to one nautical mile (6,080 feet per hour)
- * Passport - A travel document issued by the county of which the traveller is a citizen. The passport is the bearers permission to leave and re-enter the country.
- * Portorage - Baggage handling service
- * Visa - A permit, usually in the form of a stamp on a passport, that allows a person to enter a country.



TRAVEL

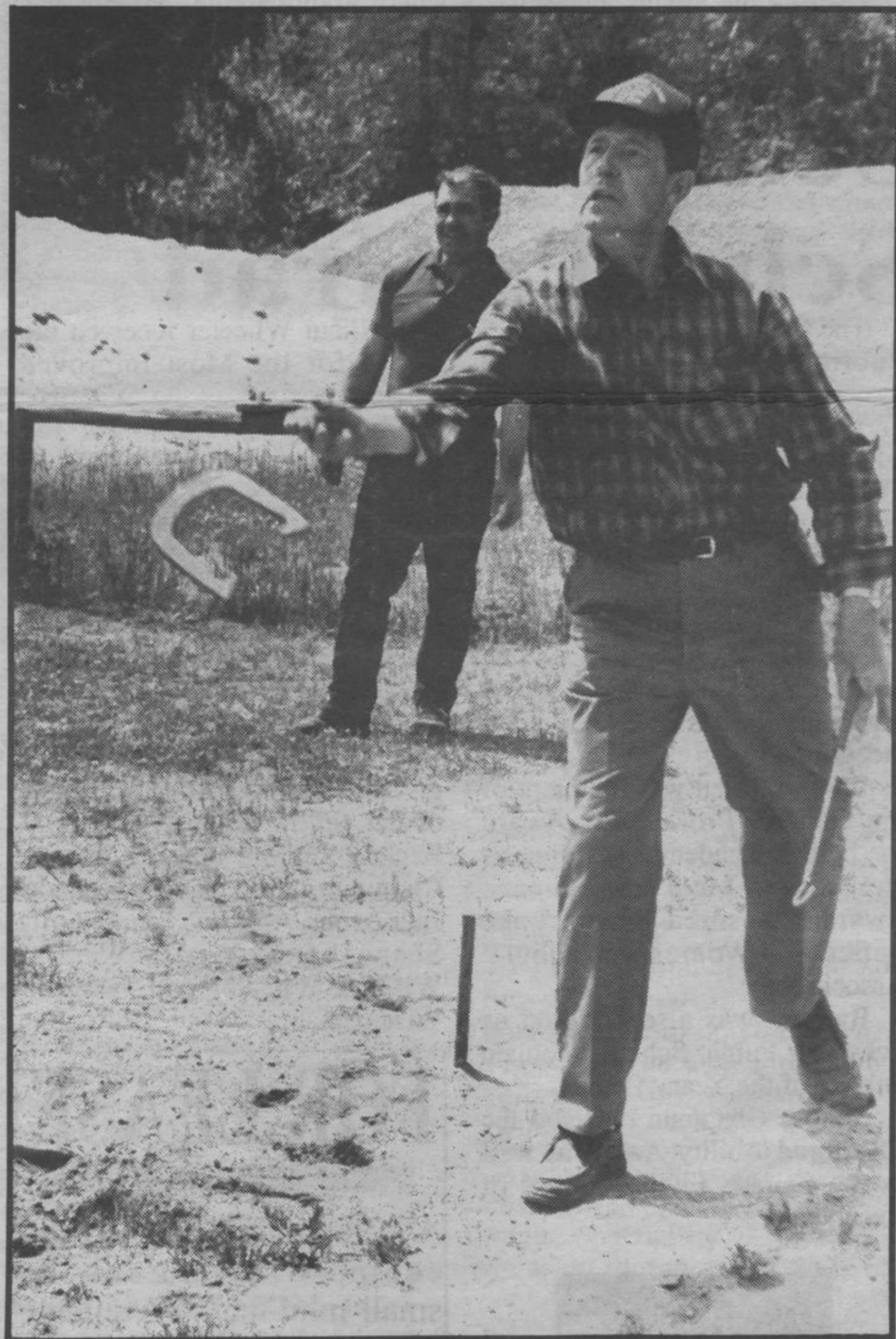
Call your only in town
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Joe Mykietyn (Agent)

824-3418





Ted Martin (Nipigon) lets a shot go during the Horseshoe tournament held at the Moose grounds during Canada Day Weekend. A total of 12 men's teams and 6 women's teams were entered in the event.
Photo by Dave Chmara

The Terrace Bay Fire Department

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