MEMO:
Date: October 23
From: Allen Stevens
To: The Shawnee River Mussel Investigation Committee
Re: Weekly Update

Thank you again for all of your help. Your hard work continues to be an inspiration to everyone in this community. I am pleased to see that many of you are focusing on the importance of asking questions.

Of course, at some point, we all must make connections among all of the things we have learned from our questioning. As you have been making those connections, I’m sure you have developed a plausible theory of what has happened to the mussels in the Shawnee River. There is only one week left until you are to make your presentation to the Department of Streams and Wildlife. Therefore, I will be talking with you later today, and I will expect you to be able to share your theory, along with two or more pieces of evidence to support that theory.

I’m sure you realize that knowing the problem is only the first step. Understanding the problem is not enough. We also must understand what (if anything) can be done to correct the problem. Nobody likes to hear that nothing can be done to fix a bad situation, so I also will expect you to begin to develop a plan of action to correct this problem. Remember, you only have a week to develop your plan of action, so you should be focusing your efforts on that plan and on your presentation.

Al Stevens
DSW Community Liaison
Illuminate Your Mind
(It Makes Sense, If You Use Yours)

You are alone. No one will come to help you.
You are in the basement of a house with no way of seeing into the attic. In the basement are three light switches. Each switch turns one light bulb in the attic on and off. There is no way to trace the wires from a switch to its light bulb.
While in the basement, you may turn switches on and/or off in any order or in any way you want.
After leaving the basement to go to the attic, you may not return to the basement.
You go to the attic one time. Tell how (while in the attic) you can know for sure which switch in the basement is responsible for turning which light in the attic on and off.
To help you determine how this can be done, you may ask your teacher any question, as long as the question can be answered with either “yes” or “no.”
Remember, every time you get an answer to one question, that answer should cause you to wonder about something else, and should help lead you to your next question.
Camel Jockeys
(Words Mean Things)

Far away, in a land of sand, lived a wise and wealthy merchant. This merchant had made his fortune by working long and hard, guiding his camel caravans to lands even farther away. But alas, his two sons wanted to do nothing more than raise and race camels for fun. Each son bragged that his camel was the fastest in all the land.

The time came when the wise and wealthy merchant knew that his fortune would soon go to someone else. The custom of the land required that he give his entire fortune to only one of his sons; but to which one should he give it? He wanted to give his fortune not just to someone who could make his camel go fast, but to the one who really understood camels—to someone who could control any camel and eventually control an entire caravan and make his own fortune.

The father sent messages to his two sons, telling each to get his fastest camel and to come to his father. When the sons arrived at their father’s tent, the father said, “My sons, the time has come for me to give everything I own to one of you. Because I can only give what I own to one of you, here is how I will decide between you. I see you have each brought your fastest camel. I want you to race the camels to the oasis that is 50 miles south of here, and back again. You must begin now, and you must keep your camels moving. You may only stop when you get to the oasis, and then you may rest and water your camels. However, you must begin the race back to my tent within one day of the time you arrive at the oasis. The one of you whose camel gets back here last will inherit everything I own.”

The sons got on their camels, and began toward the oasis as slowly as possible. In fact, they walked the camels so slowly that both they and the camels almost died of thirst before they arrived. After watering their camels and drinking all of the water they wanted, the brothers sat down to rest and discuss their problem. If they did the same thing on the way home they would surely die. Yet, neither was willing to let his brother win the contest and inherit their father’s fortune. They knew that the custom of the land would not allow the winning brother to share the fortune with the loser.

Just as it was about time to leave, they noticed (on the other side of the oasis) a very small tent of an old wise man. The brothers greeted the wise man respectfully and told him of their dilemma. They then humbly asked the wise man for his advice. The wise man thought for a moment and then gave them his advice.

Immediately the brothers ran to the camels, jumped on, and raced for home as fast as possible.

What advice did the wise old man give the brothers?