



# Perspective

By JAMIE BUCKINGHAM

SOMEWHERE IN THE EVERGLADES—Here we are deep in the jungle on a romantic family camping trip. We arrived last evening and already I'm a great mass of whelps and scratches. "It's too early for mosquitos," I told my wife. "Besides we don't have room for that mosquito spray anyway." Ten thousand times those words came to my mind last night as eight of us tried to crowd into our borrowed nine by nine tent. We tried everything, even the power of positive singing, to make the night go faster. "Sing and smile and pray," we sang loudly at 1:00 a.m., "the bugs will go away." But they didn't.

We unrolled our borrowed sleeping bags and found they were filled with mildew. It didn't make any difference because in a nine by nine tent the only way eight people can sleep is standing up.

"Let's find some primeval plot in the wilderness," I suggested, and get alone with God and nature while the children are out of school." It was a terrific idea, only so far we've had multitudinous experiences with nature and very little communion with God. Maybe that will come today after the sun has dried out the matches (oh yes, it rained last night too) and Jackie drives back into town to get some insect repellent and poison ivy medicine. Strange, how these things hamper our ability to worship.

We did have a few romantic moments last night as we cooked around the campfire. I had already tried to light our borrowed gas camp stove and burned my eyebrows off in a terrific explosion. So we cooked over the campfire. "The rugged woodsmen cook pork and beans, I told my excited children, "but putting the can right down in the fire." All of which was very fine until we discovered the fire melted the solder around the bottom and when I picked up the can with the pliers, the beans stayed in the fire.

We finally roasted hotdogs on palmetto sticks. Not bad, considering the buns were a little soggy from having fallen in the lake.

Everything looks better in the daylight, although last night I did have forebodings that the darkness, rain and mosquitos were going to last forever.

Early this morning I sneaked off, like Thoreau, to do some creative writing in the woods. Despite the fact I smelled like a smokehouse and had somehow or another managed to get a melted marshmallow in my hair during the night, I looked forward to those few moments of quiet communion. However, the log I chose to sit on was filled with fire ants and I came screaming back into camp, tearing at my clothes and heading for the lake. I doubt seriously if I get much done during these days of family togetherness and harmony with nature.

If the thrashing about I hear in the underbrush isn't a bear or a panther, I'll try to jot down some spiritual profundities and share them with you next week. Right now I'm not in much of a mood to do anything except go home.