

Tips On Snow & Cold Camping!

They could save your life in a survival situation!

Tom McDowell, Lowry Nature Center's winter camping specialist, "I like camping in winter," he said. "One of the bigger benefits is no bugs. The second point is that if you dress properly, you can be comfortable." How do you dress "properly"? "More than anything else, this means staying dry," McDowell said. "Go with as much wool as possible. That includes the layer next to the skin." There are petroleum-derived synthetic fibers, he added, that can be as "great" as wool for "wicking out" moisture from the skin, but not in all circumstances.

"In my experience synthetic fibers are great stuff if you're aking, backpacking, working up a sweat," McDowell said. "But if you're spending the night—have some long wool underwear to sleep in. Wool is best under pressure—when you're lying on it."

On the other hand, once cotton gets wet, "you can't really dry it out," he said.

"When camping, try to minimize the time that you work up a sweat," he continued, "and when you go to bed, have a second set of woolies to put on."

McDowell has dried out wet boot liners by taking them into the sleeping bag overnight.

The bag is usually lined with taffeta or nylon encasing fiberfill or down.

"The age-old argument is that down has a greater insulating capacity but loses its lock when it's wet. Then it doesn't insulate. Nor does it dry out fast, while fiberfill does."

"But then you hear this one: 'Anybody who lets his down get wet deserves to freeze to death.' That's a little extreme. You can only take so many precautions."

"I personally feel that fiberfill does an adequate job. And you don't have to keep it so dry."

McDowell said that wet clothes generally lose heat 240 times faster than dry clothes and that wool is the optimum fabric, losing heat much more slowly than that.

What about tents?

"In most of our winter campouts, we sleep in snow shelters," McDowell said. "In 'quint-zones.' That's an Indian word from central Canada that means a pile of snow that's been hollowed

out. The only trick involved is to allow the snow to 'sinter' (bring about agglomeration)."

"This takes place when snows of different temperatures have been mixed together." The snow that's next to the ground is usually warmer, he explained, and when it is mixed with colder surface snow, it congeals into a mass in 1 1/2 to 2 hours.

To scrape up snow, winter campers use aluminum backpacking shovels, about 10 inches wide and a foot long. Once sintered, the snowpile can be hollowed out.

A winter camping stove should have a pump on it to keep pressure on the fuel. Some stoves have pressurized butane or propane canisters, but as the temperature drops, said McDowell, so does the pressure, until possibly the canister won't function.

In another type of stove, you prime it yourself by pouring a little fuel on the outside to light it. That's better than a propane canister but still not the best. The best has a little pump to pump up the pressure."

I had a Kestrel pack—probably carried 45 pounds. They usually say carry a fourth to a third of your weight. I weigh 140. However, McDowell advised: "Don't depend on fires or stoves for warmth. It's nice to have the stove and the know-how, but it's more important to dress properly and feel confident that you're going to stay comfortable without the fire."

"And don't feel that you're going to starve to death in a survival situation. You can go for weeks without food, if you have to. You do need water. They usually say you can go three days without water and about three weeks without food."

"It's important to take a lot of fluids, especially when winter camping. The body tends to dehydrate. In winter you're less likely than in summer to be aware of dehydration."

"When backpacking, you might want to drink cocoa instead of coffee, which is a stronger diuretic, makes you lose fluids quicker and speeds up the dehydration process. I usually take cocoa and tea on trips."

Head covering—Wear some. "I usually wear a stocking cap. I've seen a lot of figures—anywhere from 25 to 40 percent of your body heat loss is through your head."

Pocket food—Carry some. "Good old raisins and peanuts—Gorp. Glo-

ried in the last few years by adding M&Ms, coconut, other things. We package everything in plastic, usually double layers."

Oatmeal—Reinforce it. "I find I end up putting gorp in oatmeal to spice it up and add calories. Take a lot of peanuts, raisins, lots of fat and oil in peanuts, and in butter, too. And/or margarine. Both high in fat. Will keep for days, frozen."

Be aware of your condition—"If you're backpacking and notice that you're getting overheated, take off a parka or unzip to lose body heat faster. If you're sleeping and find yourself cold, your sleeping bag may have shifted off the insulating pad or perhaps your long underwear is damp from hiking all day. So adapt. Putting on dry clothes may be enough. If that doesn't work, you may be forced to get up and make a fire. Hot cocoa. Something like that."

Survival know-how—"It's a good feeling to know the ABCs—Keep a cool head. If lost, check out all the known facts and come up with a course of action. Know how to construct a shelter, build a fire. Have some essential equipment so you can do those things. Matches, candle, for fire-lighting. Map, compass, know how to use them."

Water bottle—"Winter camping is a bit different. You might want an aluminum container instead of plastic. If contents are frozen, plastic melts on the stove. It's a fairly common practice to take the bottle in the sleeping bag with you."

Waking up—"Something to munch on, like a Granola bar, kind of works off that grogginess and gets your system cranked up before climbing out."

WHERE TO GET EMERGENCY "SPACE" BLANKET

The advertisement says: "The original U.S.-made Emergency Blanket developed for the NASA Space Program. 3-ounce blanket opens to a full size of 56x84 inches. 100% guaranteed. Approved for use by the Boy Scouts & many other rescue organizations. Backed by our guarantee—full refund. Price: \$3.95 plus 80¢ postage within N. America). Two blankets for \$6.95 & \$1.00 postage. Address: Carole Martin, 49 Westmore Drive, Rexdale, Ontario, Canada M9V4M3."

ROGUES GALLERY

This is to re-confirm the excommunication of Bart Squeeze (Bart Lujan). (See Mag 21, pgs. 85 & 86). He does have many good qualities, but he also has some besetting sins, such as a very evil worldly wheeling-dealing rip-off spirit, a drinking problem which caused some unguarded moment situations, & a bad habit of distorting the truth which has sown seeds of dissension & discord in the lives of various brethren around here. Also a problem of handling finances, leaving huge bills. Many people get a bad sample of the Family from him, too. Although we do love him & have

many times extended love & mercy to him, we feel that his actions cannot be tolerated in the Family & it would be better to cut him off from family fellowship than to permit these reproaches to the work to continue. Love, Michael & Maria for the Alberta DAF. (From now on all "Rogues" & "excomms" notices must bear the names & addresses & signatures of at least 3 sheps & your mates & specify your positions & time in Family, plus the signatures of your VS, NAS, GAS, or DAS. Thanks—M&M.)

Van bench/bed

clears away for cargo

By IRA GLICKSTEIN

Here's an ingenious bench-bed unit you can build for your van. In its bed mode, it's a comfortable queen-size—80 inches wide and 76 inches long. As a bench, it provides seating space for four adults or five kids, with ample storage beneath. Best of all, the unit won't interfere with your cargo hauling. As a bench, it sits along the left side of the van, leaving enough space for most loads. When you're carrying really wide objects, you can fold the unit flat against the van's side. For even more room, you can remove the whole thing by popping out four hinge pins.

The dimensions of my design are

based on two standard-size foam-rubber cushions, each 76 inches long, 30 inches wide, and four inches thick. (I ordered mine from the Sears catalog.) I sliced one cushion down the middle and mounted the halves on two plywood panels, which I then hinged together. When folded this unit forms the back of the bench. The uncush cushion (mounted on an unhinged panel) forms the seat. To use the unit as a bed, you just unfold the hinged cushion and lay it beside the uncush one.

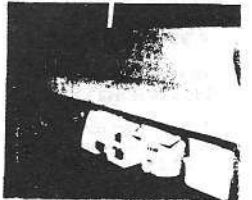
The box that supports the cushions is hinged at all corners so that you can fold it flat or remove it. The open doors of the box are used to support the second cushion when

the unit is used as a bed. The back-board of the box is connected to the wheel well of the van with two carriage bolts. Assembly and disassembly are easy, and the resulting bed and bench are sturdy and comfortable.

The following instructions are keyed to the construction drawings on the facing page.

1) Mark and cut the two pieces of 3/4" plywood as shown. Sand and paint (or varnish) pieces A, B, C, D, E, H, and J. Round all corners of pieces I, L, and M, and sand very smooth so corners won't wear the upholstery.

2) Join pieces B and C, and pieces D and E, with hinges. (For extra strength at critical joints—as in-



Comfortable bench results when hinged half-size cushions are folded and used as backrest on full-size cushion. There's lots of storage space—even room for a portable toilet—under bench.

Queen-size bed—for two adults or three kids (left)—is formed when two half-size foam cushions, supported by open doors of base, are placed beside full-size cushion. Hooks and eyes stabilize setup.

A Constant-Use Self-Charging Battery

TIPS ON THE BEST CARAVAN BATTERY; SETTING UP A CHEAPER CHARGING SYSTEM!

WHEN PURCHASING A BATTERY

FOR YOUR CARAVAN To run any 12-volt lights or appliances, you'd like to suggest that you buy a deep-cycle continuous-use battery, as opposed to the regular auto or RV-marine battery. Many battery companies sell the RV-marine battery under the assumption that this battery is equipped to handle your caravan needs, but this is not so unless they are very minimal.

ON THE OTHER HAND, THE DEEP-CYCLE BATTERY is specifically designed to be continuously drained (even flat) & then recharged over & over again. It is built to take this kind of punishment, & some companies even claim that they can be drained completely & recharged up to 1000 times before harming them. This is possible due to the thickness of the plates used in the battery construction. So although the deep-cycle battery is a little more expensive, it is a wise investment in the long run. So for your vehicle get an auto battery, & for your caravan get the deep-cycle continuous-use type battery.

HERE'S A GOOD WAY TO SET UP A CHARGING SYSTEM for your caravan battery that will work simultaneously with your vehicle charging system, if your caravan doesn't already have one.

The initial investment is much cheaper than a power converter & works just as well provided you travel with your caravan frequently. The system is called a "battery isolator" or "devi-charge" system.

IT HOOKS INTO THE ALTERNATOR SYSTEM OF YOUR VEHICLE & will charge your caravan battery as well as your vehicle battery as you drive. There is no danger of overworking your alternator as this system will only charge one of the batteries at a time (lowest battery first), & then it switches to charge the other. This system also prevents your caravan from draining your car battery while you're camped & using your 12-volt system, as it allows you to only draw from your caravan battery. Here is a diagram of how it works; it is a very popular idea among caravanners.

SIMPLY MOUNT THE DIVI-CHARGE IN THE ENGINE COMPARTMENT OF YOUR VEHICLE as close to the alternator & battery as possible; then follow these steps:

1. Find on your alternator the pole marked "battery". 2. Take the wire that runs from this pole to the battery of your vehicle & re-route it so that it runs from your alternator to the centre pole of your devi-charge.

3. Run a new wire from one of the other poles on the divi-charge to the positive pole on the vehicle battery. 4. Run a new wire from the remaining pole on the divi-charge to the positive pole on the caravan battery. (Usually this is run thru the light hook-up on your vehicle.)

5. On this last run of wire be sure to place a 50 amp circuit breaker in-line to prevent the alternator from over-charging your caravan battery.

NOW YOU ARE ALL SET. And as you drive pulling your caravan by day, your battery will be fully charged for the night. A word of caution—working on the electrical system of your vehicle can be dangerous, so if you are not familiar with this or do not have someone working on it with you who is, it may be wise to have this system installed by a professional. Usually your hitch-man will do this for you at a very low cost. However, if you are familiar with auto electrical systems & have the faith for it, this can be a very simple task to accomplish yourself. GBYAKYCFJ!

(Editor: Thanks for this helpful tip. We don't know who you are because you failed to sign your name. WLY! KGFG!) (AMEN!—D.)

dictated in diagram. I used 1/4" flat-head bolts and nuts instead of the wood screws that came with the hinges.) Fasten the barrel-bolt set to the doors (pieces C and D).

3) Join pieces A and B, and pieces E and H, with hinges.

4) Using spacers (3) as shown, fasten A and H to the backboard (piece J) with hinges. Use hinges with removable pins. Before drilling in both the folded and unfolded positions to make sure that pieces C and D meet in both positions.

5) Place the unit in the van against the left rear wheel well. (Carefully drill two 1/2" or 5/8" holes depending on size of bolts.) File the wheel-well holes square for carriage bolts. Bolt piece J to the wheel well and fasten with washers, lockwashers, and nuts on the inside of your van.

6) Prepare the cushions: To slice one piece of foam in half the long way, use a serrated knife. Cut the fabric (1 used denim) to fit the three pieces of foam (one 30" wide, two 18" wide). Leave plenty of fabric for stapling to the plywood undersides.

7) Cover the cushions: Lay out one piece of fabric, right side down. Place cushion on it. Spread contact cement on top of cushion near edges. Top this sandwich with plywood (pieces I, L, or M). Stretch fabric over all sides of cushion and staple to the ply. Fold neatly at corners. Repeat for other two foam pieces.

8) Hinge 18" cushions together



For hauling cargo, cushions detach and base folds (photo at left); all joints are hinged. If you want to take cushions along for bench or bed setup, store with hooks (sketch above).



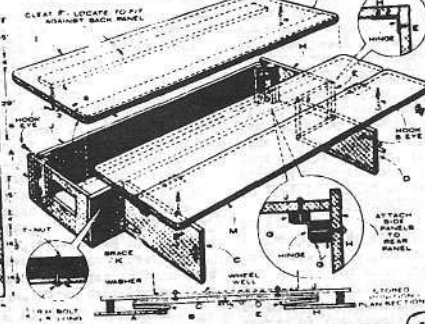
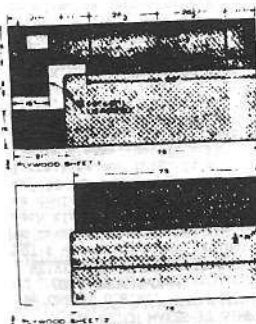
To remove unit (except back panel), your van take out four hinge pins. Nearly full width of van is restored. (Cutout in base gives access to storage while unit is set up as bench or bed.)

MATERIALS NEEDED

2 sheets 4' x 8' x 1/2" plywood
76" x 30" x 4" foam cushion (firm)
Bolt hinges (two pairs with removable pins)
3 pairs 5/8" x 1/2" carriage bolts, nuts, washers, lockwashers
1 set 1/4" x 1/2" x 1" barrel-bolt set
2 sets 1/4" x 1/2" x 1" barrel-bolt set
6 yards Fabric (45" wide)
1/4" flat-head bolts, various lengths, to replace hinges screws; nuts, washers, 1" nuts and bolts (2 sets), misc. nails, staples for fabric, glue, hooks, eyes, etc.

by attaching two hinges to the back of their plywood panels.

9) Place 30" cushion atop the base unit in your van and push it against the van's side wall. Mark where plywood underside of cushion touches base unit, front and back. Nail cleats (pieces F and K) to the plywood underside at the marked positions. Two T-nuts with removable bolts through the front of the base and into cleat K fasten the 30" cushion to the base unit.



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