

More Hints Cut-outs

Pages 607 & 608
The Leader, March 1981
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The Hand Thermometer enables you to try on your campfire, recipes which specify a cooking temperature. Of course, the secret of any campfire cooking is to try and maintain steadily glowing coals, but once you have your fire in this state, you can gauge its approximate temperature by using your hand.

Hold your bare hand over the coals and count off seconds ("1 and 2 and 3..."). Your temperature guide is the number of seconds you can stand to hold your hand over the fire.

- If you have to remove your hand between four and five seconds, you have low heat (about 150 degrees C.).
- If you remove your hand between three and four seconds, you have medium heat (about 175 degrees C.).
- If you must remove your hand before you can count to three seconds, you have high heat (200 degrees C.).

To find the temperature you want, raise or lower your hand and you will know where to set your cooking utensil. No matter what you are cooking, the results will be more consistent if you maintain an even or near-even heat. And, by using your hand thermometer, you will assure that your meal cooks at the rate which will produce the tastiest results every time.

--(Thanks to Scouting in New South Wales for this hint.)

Waxed-paper milk cartons have several lives left in them after the milk is gone.

- Make a drinking cup by cutting off the carton about three inches from the bottom.
 - Make a water scoop by cutting off the top.
 - Cut a container into slivers, wrap them in plastic and put them in your pocket for emergency kindling on a camping or hiking trip.
 - Make a leak-proof mini-garbage can by opening up the top of the container, and putting in your scraps.
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It's much easier to wash soot off the pans you use over your campfire, if you coat the outside of the pans with a thick layer of dishwashing liquid before you cook.

A discarded roll-on deodorant bottle makes an excellent insect repellent applicator because it enables you to keep 'bug dope' off your hands and out of your eyes. Snap off the plastic top or snap out the ball, rinse out the bottle and refill with your favourite liquid repellent.

Give your boys a headstart on spring. Cut off large plastic bleach or detergent bottles, fill the base with soil and use it as a starter tray for seedlings.

Small seedling trays or pots also can be fashioned from aluminum foil.

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The Leader, April 1987

Foil Hints

When you need extra plates, cups, or bowls for baking or serving, make temporary dishes from foil. An easy way to do it is to shape the foil over the bottom of suitable containers.

Cover the ice in a picnic cooler with foil to help it last longer.

Keep the water in your canteen cooler by wrapping the canteen in foil.

Use foil ring dividers for frying eggs. Put rings in the greased pan and drop an egg into each ring.

Toast sandwiches by wrapping them in a foil envelope and placing them on the embers or a hot plate for a few seconds.

Because foil-wrapped foods tend to scorch where they are in direct contact with coals, use a double wrapping of heavy duty foil and turn food frequently during cooking.

Melt chocolate without leaving a potful of mess by wrapping the chocolate in a square of foil and floating it on very hot water.

To make a sprinkler top for a vinegar or oil bottle, shape a piece of foil over the bottle opening secure with a rubber band, and punch small holes in the foil.

Save clean-up time by lining casserole, baking and frying pans with heavy duty foil before cooking in them.

When cooking over coals or a small fire, line the fire box with heavy duty foil and build the fire on the foil. It reflects the heat and distributes it more evenly for more efficient cooking. Clean-up is easy, too. Simply bundle up the ashes and drippings when you're done.

When it comes time for washing up, a crumpled ball of foil makes an excellent scouring pad for pots and pans.

Thanks to Manitoba's Beaver Tales

More Outdoors Tips

Put safety first on a night hike by highlighting clothing with reflector tape and tying a white cloth around the arm.

Feet sore after that hike? Give them a massage by rubbing your arches over a tennis ball.

You love roasted marshmallows but always burn the outside? You'll always have the perfection of a melted middle inside a golden crust if you dip the marshmallow in water before holding it over the flame.

Make waterproof firestarters by tightly rolling a newspaper to a diameter of about 38 mm. Tie string around it every 50 mm, then soak it in melted paraffin. When the wax is hard, cut the fire stick into 50 mm lengths. Package in plastic bags to carry in your pack.

Large # 10 cans, usually available free from restaurants, are great for boiling water and cooking food. Their light weight makes them ideal for backpackers, and you can stuff them with other things (stove, food, and clothing) to save space.

Distribute the weight in your pack according to the kind of ground you are covering. For walking trails and gentle terrain, pack heavy items high and close to your back so you won't have to lean too far forward to align your load over hips and legs. For climbing, skiing, and rough terrain, place heavy items in the centre of the pack close to your back. In either case, remember to pack narrow enough that your load doesn't block the natural swing of your arms.

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Pages 645 & 646

The Leader, November 1991

Be Prepared for the Weather

- Drink before you get thirsty.
- Eat before you get hungry.
- Rest before you get tired.
- Add clothing layers before you get cold.
- Don rain gear before you get wet.
- Apply sunscreen before you burn.

Winter Camp Tips

Carry candle stubs as fire starters for wet wood. A candle will burn a long time in the tinder to dry the wood.

When you dry clothing or gear by the fire, put it no closer than you can comfortably hold your hand.

Eat a high calorie snack before going to bed. Your body will burn the energy and warm you as you sleep.

Bring water bottle and boots into the tent to avoid freezing. If it's very cold, place them into a stuff sack turned inside out to keep your sleeping bag clean, and sleep with them either in or under your bag.

Fluff up the sleeping bag before getting in to add more insulating air within the fibres.

A few muscular tension exercises will warm you if you wake up cold in your bag. Push palms together tightly and hold, for example.

Finally, a couple of camping and animal hints whatever the weather. Keep a flashlight nearby when you sleep in case you hear animals in camp. And, at night, leave open backpack pockets where you've carried food. Mice can scurry in, look around, and leave. Otherwise, enticed by lingering food odours, they will gnaw through the pack.

Natural Signs

- If you've lost your bearings and your compass, it's good to know a few natural direction indicators.
 - The snow on southern slopes is usually more granular.
 - Vegetation on southern slopes usually is smaller and denser; on northern slopes, it is generally larger and more open.
 - Evergreens usually are bushier on the eastern side.
 - The tops of pines and hemlocks point east.
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A Green Christmas

Instead of tinsel and foil garlands, string chains of popcorn and cranberries for tree and room decorations.

Pack presents in reusable boxes, tins, and bags.

Make wrapping paper from coloured magazine pages, coloured comics, old posters, wall paper scraps, and the like.

Cut gift tags and other decorations from old greeting cards.

Avoid throw-away ribbon and bows.

Buy a potted living tree (available at most nurseries) that you can plant outdoors after the holidays. You can safely bring evergreens under 1.5 m tall indoors for up to two weeks without harming them.

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Pages 633 & 634

The Leader, May 1988

Fixing Fire Damage

Look around any spot that has been used as a campsite and you will usually find half a dozen fireplaces. Man seems to have a nesting instinct that requires him to make his own personal hearth before he is at home in a place.

A recent study conducted by the Sierra Club Outing Committee shows that, each time a camper uses an open fire, 1.2 square metres (4 square ft.) of ground is destroyed and 5 kg (11 lbs.) of wood consumed. We can not continue to use open fires indiscriminately.

Help fix fire damage. If you come across a site with several big or little fireplaces, you can obliterate many of them. Where fires were built on grassy spots, clear away the ashes, litter and rocks, then place a thick layer of fallen evergreen needles over the burned-over spot. Your efforts will go a long way to help restore a damaged area.

Thanks to Mike Marlow and The Grapevine, Fruitbelt District, Ont.

One Minute Boil

Save fuel, time, and the possibility of boil-over damage to your camp stove by practising the One Minute Boil. Bring food to a boil, reduce heat and boil gently for one minute, then cover the pot tightly and remove from the heat source for 10 minutes or so. The food continues to cook by its own heat and both you and your stove are free to prepare another course.

from Daymar Adventure Centre, Ont.

Save the Popcorn Pot

To avoid burning the pot when you're popping popcorn, line the bottom with foil, shiny side up.. (Daymar)

Coffee & Eggs

Save having to use another pot in the morning. After the coffee has finished brewing, put an egg in the coffee pot for five minutes. Result? A soft boiled egg, ready to eat. Good coffee, too.

Hazel Tagg, Red Deer, Alta.

Cocoa Powder Tire Trick

A puncture in your bicycle tire? When you are repairing it, pour in about a teaspoon of cocoa powder through the valve hole. The next time the tire gets a puncture while you're out riding, the air rushing out will draw the powder with it and quickly choke the hole, giving you only a slow leak. As a consequence, rather than having to push the bike home for repairs, you will be able to replace the air lost in the initial rush and ride back.

Thanks to Scouting in New South Wales, Australia.

Get the Ketchup Flowing

When you open a fresh bottle of ketchup and can't get it going, insert a drinking straw and push to the bottom. It admits enough air to start an even flow. (Hazel Tagg)

Camp Repairs

To banish paint odour when repainting the cookhouse, add two tablespoons vanilla extract to each quart of paint. A large cut onion placed in a big pan of cold water will also absorb paint odour. (Hazel Tagg)

Use a match stick to fill out a hole where a screw needs tightening. (Scouting U.K.)

Rub candle stubs along the edge of a saw to help it glide better.

Sticky drawers also respond to this treatment. (Scouting U.K.)

Hint Cut-outs

Pages 637 & 638

The Leader, June/July 1989

Mealtime Hints

Scouter C. Herbert Page, 1st Fredericton Scouts, N.B., shared our first two hints.

Activity Place mats: When our group decided that each section plus the group committee would rotate as hosts of the annual Parent & Son banquet during Scout Week, we also started using place mats printed with activities for all ages to encourage the boys and their parents to be seated when they arrived at the hall. To make such place mats for our turn, the troop prepared and photocopied an 8 ½ x 14 sheet with a quiz from the Leader as the centre focus and a Word Find and Dot-to-Dot puzzle for the younger boys.

Zip-lock Sausages: We were planning a winter camp when we saw your recipe for zip-lock bag omelette (Feb.'89), and decided to zip-lock bag sausages for breakfast. We cooked the sausages at home, packed eight to 10 in each zip-lock bag, and froze them. At camp, we simply placed the bags in boiling water and heated them for about five minutes. The result was piping hot sausage that stayed hot, with no messy griddle and stove to clean up. These features are value important on a -25 degrees C morning outdoors!

Woodsman Skills

How much time left before sundown? Hold out your hands in front of you at arms' length and, with the edge of a palm lined up at the horizon, see how many fingers you can fit between the horizon and the position of the sun in the sky. Each finger width represents about 15 minutes.

You foolishly forgot your compass, the day is cloudy, and you want to find directions. Place your knife point gently on your thumbnail. Turn the knife slowly and carefully, and you'll see a faint shadow. Keep turning until the shadow is thinnest. It points east in early morning, north at midday, and west at dusk.

This & That

For fishing days, keep a small magnet in your tackle box. It's very handy for retrieving hooks, swivels, etc., when they fall into the grass or shallow water.

Duct tape is handy for making minor repairs on tents, canoes, pants, and boots at camp. Instead of carrying a whole roll, wrap tape around a pen 10 to 15 times and carry it in your pack.

To keep score papers, announcements, etc., on a clipboard from flapping in the wind outdoors, modify the board by sawing notches in the two sides of one of the lower corners. Hook a rubber band in the notches and snap it over the corner of the papers. The elastic holds down the papers but lets you remove them easily.

The next time you want to tack up signs, posters, or pictures in an activity room, reinforce the corners to make them less likely to rip by covering them with transparent sticky tape before poking in the thumbtacks.

When Cubs collect pine cones for crafts at camp, you can open them fully and remove sap by placing them on a foil-covered cookie sheet and setting them in a 250 degree F oven for awhile.

To make an all-purpose hiking stick, try this idea. Cut 25 mm diameter plastic pipe to your preferred length. Put a plastic cap on one end and a removable curved piece or knob on the other. You can use it as you would any other walking stick, but there's a bonus. You can carry your fishing pole or important maps inside.

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Page 649 and 650

The Leader, December 1992

A Nice Warm Fire

Use hardwoods for fire-making. Softwoods catch quickly but also burn very quickly and throw off lots of sparks.

Dead branches on evergreen trees are drier than any wood on the ground. You'll find dead wood near the base of most of these trees. The twigs make great tinder; use larger sticks once the fire is burning well.

Break open dry cattails for an excellent source of tinder.

Check inside hollow logs, stumps or small caves for dry leaves you can use to get a fire started.

If worse comes to worst and you can't find dry fire-lighting materials, check your toilet kit. A stick of solid deodorant burns well.

Survival experts recommend that campers and hikers carry along two or three self-lighting emergency flares. They burn as long as 20 minutes, which means you should be able to start a fire with them under almost any conditions.

If you're out of matches, on a sunny day you might be able to ignite tinder with the reflector from your flashlight. Remove the reflector and stuff some cotton wool or paper into the bulb hole. Hold the reflector to catch as much direct sunlight as possible. Like a magnifying glass, it will concentrate the heat until the cotton or paper catches fire.

To get a fire going quickly, toss a couple of candle stubs into the kindling before lighting.

To make it less likely smoke will follow you around your fire, build a short wall of rocks behind one part of the fire ring and sit on the opposite side of the fire. The smoke will rise towards your wall and leave you alone.

Now that you've got a nice roaring fire, why not bake a cake? You don't need an oven. Put the mixed batter in a metal baking pan. Rake aside the fire coals and place the pan on the hot ground. Cover with a metal dish and rake the coals back around the pan. Your cake should be baked in 25 to 35 minutes.

And to help keep your feet warm in winter, even when you're not cozied up to the fire, make insulators from foam meat trays. Trace the shape of each foot on a tray, cut out the shapes, and insert into your boots.

Fundraisers

This winter, have Scouts plant and tend flower and vegetable seeds in flats. In spring, they can sell the bedding plants they've grown.

Hold a Dutch Auction. Solicit donations of goods and wrap every item, from comb to hairdryer, in a separate package. Advertise your auction widely, stressing that it's an afternoon or evening of fun for a very good cause. Charge admission and give people play money with which to make their bids.

Looking for something fairly simple to make and sell at a craft show? How about scented candles? Add cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, or another favourite spice to the hot melted wax before you pour it into the mold. The candles will give off a warm spicy holiday scent as they burn.

Hints Cut-outs

Craft Tips

Pages 627 & 628

The Leader, November 1986

We thank Beaver leader Jo-Anne Wood of Grandora, Sask., for these useful craft suggestions and hints.

Does your section seem to go through a lot of glue in a very big hurry? If you're simply glueing paper, you can thin down white glue with a bit of water to stretch it.

When spreading glue over a large area, use a paintbrush.

If you tear rather than cut tissue paper for collage work, you get a much more subtle blending of colours.

Beavers find threading the eye of a needle and sewing much easier if they work with embroidery needles and heavy thread.

When small children are making mobiles, use wool or heavy string to put them together. Fine thread is a source of frustration because it tangles so easily.

Save all your scraps of tissue or crepe paper for dyeing dried corn and peas. Prepare dye by pouring boiling water over the paper. Let sit until the water is the colour you want, strain out the paper, add dried corn or peas to the water and bring to a boil again. Strain veggies out of water and place on newspaper to dry. The colours are beautiful.

Don't discard those small bits of paint, either. Instead, mix them together to make new colours a good learning process for the boys.

To give a velvet finish to a paint job on a styrofoam project, add a few drops of liquid detergent to tempera paint.

Be careful when choosing paint to use on styrofoam because some types dissolve the foam. Avoid gold paint in a jar.

For finger painting, pour some liquid starch on finger painting paper and spread, then add dry tempera and let children do their thing.

To remove dried scum or hard bits from old paint, strain through a nylon stocking. Fasten the stocking to a jar or can with clothespins and let the paint drip through.

Nylon net is great for cleaning paint brushes and for taking paint off the hands without scratching. Use the net in combination with any liquid soap or detergent.

To cut styrofoam easily, use a coping saw or bread knife with a see-saw motion.

Foil or plastic cups make very good molds for plaster of paris. To keep the mess to a minimum when you're working with plaster of paris, you need one adult to manage each four or five children. Use lots of newspaper and plastic to cover the work area and floor around it.

If you use flour and water paste to make papier mache, remember to add salt to the mixture. It makes it easier to mix smoothly and helps prevent the growth of mould as the project dries.

To make little legs for a project, you can glue on wooden beads. If you don't have beads, make your own. Roll up small wads of tissue paper, saturate with glue, and attach to the bottom of the project. Paint when glue is dry.

Picking up sequins is easier if you use toothpicks. When glueing on sequins, put a bit of glue on the toothpick to hold the sequin until you attach it to the craft project.

To put shingles on your craft house roof, glue on small squares of newspaper or construction paper in overlapping rows. When glue is dry, paint.

Hints Cut-outs For the Backpacker The Leader, April 1992.

Air your tent and sleeping bag in the sun before and after your trip to freshen them up and reduce the potential for mildew growth.

Hold your flashlight switch in the "off" position with an elastic band to prevent it from accidentally switching on in your pack and draining the batteries.

Choose a clear wide-mouthed plastic water bottle. It's easier to fill, clean, and spoon contents out of. And it lets you see how much water you have left.

A nylon water-bag is handy to have at your campsite. You won't need to make repeated trips to the water source; you can use a full bag as a comfortable pillow and you can leave it in the sun to give you pleasantly warm water for washing up before bed.

Carry along some 15 cm and 30 cm lengths of scrap No.12 copper wire. Among other things, you can use it to fashion an emergency boot eyelet or lace or a replacement clevis pin for your pack.

When the bugs are bad, look for a campsite on higher ground where you can catch a breeze.

As soon as you settle into camp, remove your boots and slip into soft-soled camp shoes to minimize trampling and scarring the site.

Hang up high all cooking tools and washing-up materials (wooden spoons, scrubbers, dishcloths) as well as your food. Animals can smell the scents on them even if you've washed them and will chew them up or carry them away if you don't keep them out of reach.

Place a candle in an empty tuna tin to make an effective and stable lantern for reading at night.

Here's a good way to ensure you don't leave anything behind after a stop. When you take something from your packs leave the zipper or flap open until you replace the item. Before you hoist the pack to resume your trek, check for open pockets. They'll alert you to the fact you have to look around for whatever is missing.

Even experienced hikers on relatively short jaunts sometimes get lost. Always carry a topo map and compass, whether you're on a day trip or a week-long trek. Even if you plan to be back before the end of the day, put a flashlight and basic bivouac material into your pack. To make sure you plan your hike or trip well, prepare a route card, breaking the route into sections and recording essential details such as grid, compass bearing, distance, terrain, and estimated time it will take for each. Leave a copy of the card at home and carry one with you. The time estimations will help keep you on track and the information will be helpful to searchers if your return is over-delayed.

(with thanks to Backpacker, Outdoor Canada, and Boys' Life magazines)

Recycling Ideas

Turn an empty plastic bottle into a vase. Cut off the shaped top, weight the bottom with sand or stones, and either spray paint or cover with decorative contact paper.

By the way, save the backing from the contact paper you use in craft work. It's marked with a 25 mm grid perfect for scaling up craft patterns.

Back to those plastic containers so handy for making into other things. You can erase the print on them by putting nail polish remover on some paper towelling and rubbing gently.

It's fun to snoop around at garage or White Elephant sales. Keep your eyes open for plastic baby bathtubs. They're great for converting into toboggans for Beavers or Cubs.

At one of those sales, you might spot the perfect little table for the meeting hall or camp - perfect, except that it wobbles because one of the legs is too short. No problem. You can fix it easily by mixing wood shavings and wood glue and using the mixture to extend the length of the leg. When the glue is dry, trim and shape.

Make Life a Little Easier

Try this great idea from the South Saskatchewan Loop to make changing tails hassle free for your Beavers. Have the Beavers sew a small button on the back of their hats. When they make their tails, all they need do is cut a small button slit in the end. Whenever they change tail colours, they simply unbutton one tail and button on the new one.

To keep warm at night on a winter camp, put a blanket inside your sleeping bag. It will provide about 10 degrees insulation. Sleep with your head outside the bag (moisture from breathing will dampen the inside and lower the temperature) and wear a toque to keep your whole body warm.

It's easy to remove the sticky glue residue left on things when you pull off the labels. Mix up a paste of baking soda with a little water and rub.

Go easy on the world. You don't need to pour harsh environment-damaging chemicals down drains to keep them open and odour free. Once a week, put down the drain, in order, 125 mL baking soda, 125 mL vinegar, and a palmful of salt.

Chewing gum on the kid's clothes? If the piece of clothing is small enough, plastic-bag it and put it into the freezer. Since the gum is frozen, you can lift it right off.

Chewing gum in the kid's hair? Work it out by rubbing with peanut butter.

Oops. Someone dabbed a shirt with ballpoint ink. Nail polish remover (acetone) will remove the ink stains from clothing.

To keep cheese from going mouldy after you open the plastic wrapping, close the plastic as well as you can, then wrap the whole package in waxed brown butcher paper. (thanks to Ron Aitken, Scarborough, Ont.)

This spring, when you are storing away your winter activity gear, stuff a soda drink bottle in each of your ski boots. That way they won't feel too tight when you first put them on the next time the snow flies.

From: jim.speirs@canrem.com (Jim Speirs)

Article #R116

Article #R35

Article #R137

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