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Survival Information for the New American

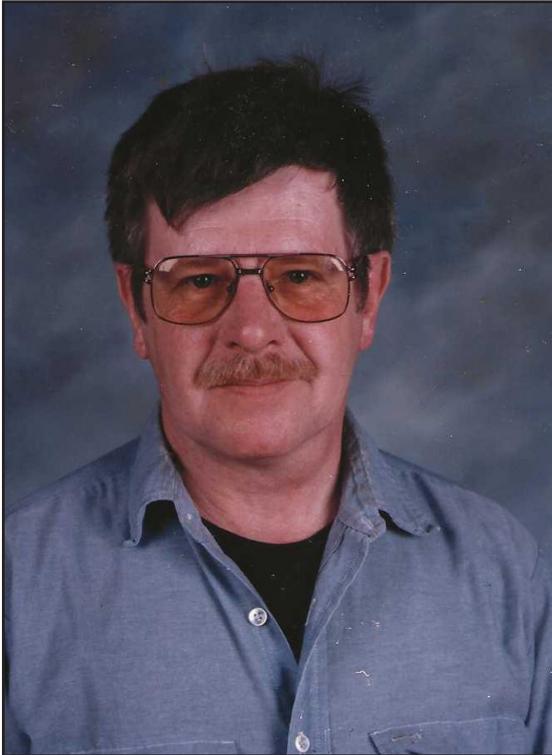


Sept-Oct 2023

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Remembering Jerry Buis

By James C. Jones



Jerry Buis passed away at his home in Snyder Indian on July 8, 2023. Jerry was one of the four original camping club kids that founded the Ticonderoga Sports Club, which later evolved into Live Free USA. Jerry was a Live Free officer for decades, and was a first aid instructor who headed the Survival Medics group through the 80's and 90's. He was an avid hunter and fisherman. Jerry also worked as a Red Cross volunteer at disasters throughout the United States. He shared many campfires and adventures with Live Free members throughout the years and was a key factor in developing Camp Independence in the late 1960s. He will be sorely missed by us all. Jerry Buis is survived by his wife, Pat, and daughter, Patricia, who are also active with Live Free.

Note: This is the second founder to pass away in the past twelve months, and the sixth core group member lost within the past three years.

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Directions

Thoughts from the Editors

Watching Rome Burn

Survivalist and Preppers talk a lot about survival scenarios and The End of the World as we Know It. In fact American Survivor publishes a threat matrix in its pages every year. I have been watching world events, politics, and the social structure of the world for a long time now and I think there is a serious problem that is not being paid enough attention to. I call it Rome burning... again.

The Roman Republic fell into dictatorship and became the Roman Empire not because of outside forces, but because the people stopped paying attention. Rome had become rich enough that life was no longer a daily struggle for survival for its citizens and freemen. They had time for leisure and entertainment, which is great. The Empire fell because it became the focus.

The Roman government used gladiator games and other entertainment as well as food handouts as a way to calm the masses, giving rise to the phrase "Bread and Circuses". Over time the people, and eventually Roman society, became complacent. The result was invasion, the eventual fall of the Western Empire, and what we today call the Dark Ages. There is more to it, but I am not trying to discuss it in depth.

While survivalists are vigilant by nature, we should recognize that we, too, can become complacent. Government and society are using "Bread and Circuses" to placate people and division to keep us from trusting one another. All too often, we allow it. We come home from our jobs and sit in front of our TVs, play video games, eat unhealthy foods, and build echo chambers that cause us to hate those outside of it. More and more we thrive on conflict and controversy. We care too much about the lives of famous people. We require those around us to think and act exactly like us. We hate and distrust those that don't.

One of the immutable laws of the universe is that everything ends. This inevitable decline could mean the end of humanity unless we're ready to start the next thing. When it comes to American society, if we want to stave off that end, we need to think about not only changing our outlook but setting an example for those around us. Accept people for who they are, allow for differences, and be willing to work with others who have similar goals.

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Bug-in: Warmth

By Ric Hubbard

When you drill down to the very basics, survival is keeping your body temperature at 98.6 degrees. We gather food, clothing, shelter, and gear to keep our body temperature where it should be. When and if the world goes south, you will have basically two choices in response: bug in, or bug out. In this article, we will look at some choices to produce heat for warmth and cooking in either situation.

Bugging in

The first choice in an emergency is to bug in—to bunker down at home and ride out the proverbial storm. You should expect to be without power for at least part of the time. This will necessitate an alternative source of warmth to keep your body temperature up.

Safety

Before we discuss ideas for equipment, we should address safety concerns. Every non-electric space heater burns some kind of fuel. When you burn fuel, you run the risk of carbon monoxide build up. You will

need to ensure that you have proper ventilation to remove excess CO and CO₂ from your living space. Outside windows should be cracked, and you should make sure air is flowing in and out of your living space.

You should also have a CO detector in each room. These devices will warn the user if carbon monoxide levels raise to a dangerous level, which gives you a chance to ventilate and evacuate before risking carbon monoxide poisoning. Excessive carbon dioxide is a danger as well. A CO₂ detector should be considered a necessity for each room.

Any emergency heating device will be a fire hazard. Simple planning will reduce the hazard, but the most important thing is to maintain awareness. Make sure you understand how the device works, and follow the instructions for safe use. Keep flammable materials away from the device, and monitor it to make sure it won't start a fire and destroy your refuge. Most fire alarms are battery-powered, or have a battery back-up. Maintain the batteries in your fire alarms so they will be operational

when needed.

The last consideration is the fuel to run your heating system. You must store your fuel in a safe place where it will not be exposed to excessive heat, sparks, or an open flame. This is the single most dangerous aspect of emergency heating.

Fuels

Wood.

At one time wood was the most common fuel for cooking and heating. Even today, it is still commonly used in fireplaces and wood-burning stoves. It has a certain romance to it, but is not as commonly used as it once was. Using wood has its pros and cons.

On the pro side: wood is easy to find in most parts of the US—and, indeed, the world. The energy that it produces is pretty well known, and charts can be found that show you which woods are desirable and which to avoid. In areas of abundance, wood is not very expensive; you can sometimes get wood for free just for hauling it off when someone is clearing land.

The drawback is that you need to have a proper fireplace or wood burning stove to use wood inside a dwelling. This is necessary to properly vent smoke out of the living space, through the chimney or stove pipe. These will require regular cleaning to prevent soot or creosote from building up and becoming a dangerous fire hazard.

Coal

Coal is a fossil fuel that has been used for thousands of years, but its use was limited until the industrial revolution. It is the result of plant matter, decayed to peat and then

exposed to high heat and pressure. Over the years, its use has become less common in the US, with only about 130,000 homes still heating with it.

Coal requires a proper coal burning stove to use safely. It is one of the dirtiest fuels and poses a serious CO risk. It is a greenhouse gas producer and is being phased out of use because of this. Coal would be a poor choice for fuel.

Kerosene

Kerosene is a petroleum derivative used as jet fuel and heating oil. It is still common in many places in the world, including the Northern US. It is burned in space heaters that use a fiberglass or cotton wick and are designed to “gasify” for more complete combustion.

The expense related to kerosene is similar to gasoline and diesel fuel. It is subject to shortages, just like these other fuels, and there are some dangers to storing kerosene that you must understand. On the other hand, kerosene space heaters do not have the same ventilation requirements as wood does.

You must ventilate the room in case the space heater does leak dangerous gases, but in most cases, you do not need a stove pipe—just an open window. There is also a risk of people and pets sustaining burns from a space heater, so you must be aware and keep them away from it.

On the plus side, if you get an appropriately-sized heater, you can heat most of a small house. The surface of some designs are flat enough to heat water on in a pinch. If you are building a retreat or refitting your home to comfortably shelter in place you can find kerosene fired stoves that will allow you to cook and heat.

Propane

Propane is a byproduct of petroleum refinement and production that has many uses, but at question now is it's use as a heating fuel. In its natural state, it is a gas, but it can be easily compressed into a liquid for easier and safer transportation.

For survival purposes, propane is more often used for cooking stoves and barbecue grills. There are options for heating as well. For use in the home, you need to seek out heating units that are designed for indoor use. The models meant for use in the outdoors or well-ventilated tents suffer from the same danger of CO production, which is denser than air and may accumulate, causing asphyxiation. The cost of propane is lower than kerosene, and it is fairly safe if stored properly. Otherwise, there is a great hazard of fire and

explosion.

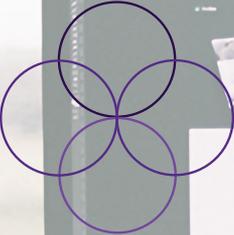
There are other fuels to consider, but those are some of the most commonly available.

Stoves & Heaters

There are a variety of choices available for each of these fuels. The price range varies depending on the model, but you should always do your research and remember that you get what you pay for. With the dangers inherent in using fossil fuels, you should pick the best-reviewed models that fit your budget. My opinion is that kerosene and wood are your best choices, but do your own research and pick what is best for you.

In the next article in this series, I will look at staying warm when you bug out: what tools are available, and what choices I am making for my family and myself.



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Carbon Monoxide

James C. Jones EMT, CHCM

As an EMT I was trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of carbon monoxide exposure as a medical emergency. As an industrial safety professional, it was my job to constantly monitor for even low levels of carbon monoxide to prevent it from affecting employees. **Under emergency conditions where various generators, heaters, and stoves may be in use, CO poisoning is particularly high risk.**

Carbon monoxide is generated as a byproduct of combustion from a fire, or an internal combustion engine. It can also be generated from the use of kerosene, propane, or gasoline heaters and stoves in an enclosed space. Charcoal is a particularly hazardous generator of this gas and should never be used indoors.

Generators should be operated outdoors, well away from vents and intakes. Use only devices specifically designed for indoor use, and always have ventilation and a working CO detector operating. Poorly vented fireplaces and stoves can also generate this lethal gas. **Even closely-sealed tents can and have killed occupants using gas lanterns, stoves, or heaters.** This gas is odorless, invisible and often does not generate recognizable symptoms until it is too late for victims to react and escape. Carbon monoxide attaches itself to the cells where oxygen would normally attach. This prevents oxygenation of the cells and results in death.

One reliable sign of carbon monoxide poisoning is when multiple occupants of the same enclosure

develop headaches, nausea, or drowsiness. If these symptoms are relieved by going outside, you probably have a carbon monoxide leak in your home. **Call the EMS and do not reenter the home. The Fire Department will test for CO.** Re-entering could render you unconscious in just a few minutes. Get everyone out and stay out! Be aware that even low-level, non-life-threatening levels of CO may cause mild headaches, cold-like symptoms, or sleepiness. Consider CO as a potential cause if the symptoms only appear while indoors. Common symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include headache, drowsiness, weakness, dizziness, nausea, shortness of breath, confusion, and blurred vision. Late symptoms can include loss of muscle control and loss of consciousness. Typically, those exposed to CO will exhibit red skin coloration.

Carbon Monoxide exposure is a medical emergency. While getting victims to fresh air is vital, the CO will remain in the way of oxidation for an extended time. **High-flow oxygen is an absolute must,** and in severe cases victims are placed in a hyperbaric chamber where high-pressure, pure oxygen is used to drive the CO from the body. In all cases of CO exposure and smoke inhalation, **prompt access to professional medical care is essential.**

“Prepared: A Manual for Surviving Worst-Case Scenarios” by Mike Glover

By Ric Hubbard

There are a number of books on preparedness. The worst of them are a book-sized list of stuff that you need to get to be ready. The best of them cover not only gear, but skills and mindset as well. “Prepared: A Manual for Surviving Worst-Case Scenarios” fits in the latter category.

In this book, Mike Glover teaches readers how to be ready for whatever comes their way. Drawing on his most dire experiences in combat and in the real world, this book shows you how almost no disaster is more powerful than one who is truly prepared.

Mike Glover is the owner and founder of Fieldcraft Survival, a preparedness and training company in Utah. He is a retired Green Beret and CIA contractor, and a proponent of preparedness for citizens. He offers training in a growing range of valuable topics. He is also a prolific presence on YouTube, producing videos and podcasts with useful information.

I knew this book would be an important read when I found out it was on the way; but, as with any writer who owns a business selling related products, I worried that the book would be a sales driver for his products. I was wrong. He refrains from specific suggestions. The few times he does mention a product of his own, he does so to demonstrate

a thought process rather than as a sales pitch.

The real beauty of this book is its emphasis on critical thinking. Each chapter begins with a rundown of his thought process concerning the issue at hand. While he never explicitly says this, it seems clear to me

that he holds creative thinking in high regard. If you can think critically, you can solve most problems; if you can add a creative element to the process, you can innovate.

The first four chapters of this book are about thinking and planning. Glover has done his research, too. “Prepared” starts with the biological and mental processes that people

go through in a crisis. He goes on to share examples of how people reacted in crisis, and what the results of their decisions were. By this point of the book he has shared some foundational events in his life, and he uses this self-knowledge to describe the events.

The following three chapters apply these ideas to planning, situational awareness, and—possibly most importantly—decision points. One of the hardest parts of planning is knowing when to put your plans into motion. When facing a hurricane, this is an easy decision—but what about greater threats? I feel that the bigger



the decision in a crisis, and the more “out there” the issue, the harder it is to make the move. These three chapters are helping me to build a better plan.

The last three chapters are more in-line with what one would expect from a preparedness book. He discusses a layered system of preparedness in the areas of everyday carry, mobility, and preparing the homestead – or as I like to call it, bugging in. While he does talk about a few brands he likes, Glover approaches this section by applying the critical thinking skills from the first half of the book.

I believe this is an important book for preparedness. Mike Glover leans on real world experience and real research to teach the reader how to get ready. He is more interested in getting readers to think critically about equipment decisions than he is in selling products. If you need suggestions about gear, tune in to his social media presence; if you want to understand the thought process and planning behind it all, read his book. You won't be sorry.

This article also appears on Ready Magazine, <https://readymagazine.com/>

Critical Thinking

By Ric Hubbard

Reading survival-related books is a large part of my planning regimen. I just finished Mike Glover's "Prepared". Mr. Glover is the founder of Fieldcraft Survival and its related companies, a retired US Special Forces operator, and a survival & firearms instructor. With a history like this, it is worth listening to his ideas on preparedness.

The book is not exactly what I

thought it was going to be, and my review of the book will be coming in the near future, but what makes it a bit different is worth talking about. In the first part of the book, he stresses creativity, and, most importantly, critical thinking.

Last month I was at Camp Independence and the people I spent time with did not seem to have an issue with this, but looking at the world today, I see a worsening lack of critical thinking skills. It has been many years since I had kids young enough to be in school, but it does not look like critical thinking is being taught or encouraged in the public school system. It might be too much to say that it is being actively discouraged, but I don't see a lot of evidence that it is part of the instruction.

Here are some examples: I was a non-traditional university student, meaning I was in my late 30s when I started. I remember sitting in a classroom, waiting for one of my favorite classes, Early American Lit, when I overheard the girl behind me say "I hate this class, he makes me think!" Even more upsetting was the amount of agreement that she received.

Another example is how people today don't read the signs around them. On the front door of the hotel where I work is a sign, at eye level, that instructs the reader to use the other door. I'm surprised by the number of times someone will walk up to the door, look directly at the sign, then push their way through.

We can all do our small parts to change this trend. By improving our creative and critical thinking skills, and encouraging this in those around us, we can help to change the course of this trend. Creative, critical thinking is one of the most important basic survival skills.

CAMP INDEPENDENCE 2024



Camp Independence 2024 is all set for May 10-12, 2024. Founding members will be joined by new members, and second and third generation members in this rebirth of Live Free USA event.

This kind of face-to-face, boots on the ground program is needed more than ever to unify and energize the survival and self-reliance monument.

Cabins and camp sites are going fast. We will also welcome guest speakers, sponsors and contributions to the “survival stuff” raffle. Lets make this the best event in the 55 year history of Camp Independence.

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First Look: PSA Dagger Compact 9mm Pistol.

By Ric Hubbard

Is there a survival tool that is as much of an argument starter as a firearm? I don't mean the heat and vitriol that exists between anti-gunners and 2nd Amendment Civil Rights Activists. I am talking about the comparative arguments that we can learn from. No? I agree.

For years one of the Kings of the conversation has been Glock. Since coming on the scene in 1982, Glock has ascended to the top of the heap in the handgun world, to the point where the late, great firearms trainer James Yeager once said that "All pistols should be G-19s". Similar sentiments are shared by many professionals.

The only real problem with Glock pistols is cost. They are not exorbitantly expensive, but you should expect to pay north of \$550 for a new, base Glock. Worth the money if

you can run to it, but it is not always practical for all shooters. And just like with AR-15s, a clone market is growing.

Some of these are expensive custom builds based on Glocks and the rich aftermarket. But for the rest of us a selection of more modestly priced clones has appeared since the patent on the third generation of Glocks ended, and this is making quality pistols available for great prices.

The subject of our First Look is one of these. A few years ago at SHOT Show Palmetto State Armory out of North Carolina announced that they would be bringing a G-19 clone to market. Most people I know kind of went "Meh", that is until they announced the price. The basic model was announced at \$299.00.

What they were promising was a G-19 clone that was every bit as



good as a Glock for just \$299.00. they would also have a "Tactical" model with a threaded barrel, suppressor height sights, and cut for a RMR footprint red dot sight with a \$50.00 premium. That's right, a tactical themed pistol that was good to go for \$350.00 out the door. I was intrigued.

2023 rolls around and I decided that I wanted a new pistol for my birthday and a Dagger filled the bill. I purchased a Dagger 9mm with a threaded barrel, RMR cut in the FDE finish. But wait, there was more in the deal. Palmetto State runs specials pretty much all the time. I not only got the pistol, but a very well-made nylon case and 10 Magpul Glock P-mags. All of this shipped to my FFL for \$379.00. Tax was \$31.61 and 2nd day shipping was \$17.00. I am very happy with the service at Palmetto State Armory and I will have more to say about them in future, but lets talk about the pistol.

The PSA Dagger is a 9mm recoil operated semi-automatic pistol that fires from a locked breech. It has a 4.5-inch barrel that is threaded 1/2x28, has a 1:10 rifling twist and features a DLC coating. It is a striker fired pistol based on the 3rd generation Glock pistols.

The flat-faced trigger is more like the Smith & Wesson M&P pistols than a Glock. Despite this, you can customize the pistol with most aftermarket models

designed for Third-Gen Glock 19s. Based on dry fire testing alone I think that the trigger will function well for most users. It has a long take-up before you hit the wall, but it has a

crisp break and a short reset. Striker fired pistols have always seemed to have triggers that feel a little toy like when you dry fire them and the Dagger is no exception. I expect that when I get the gun on the range it will feel much different, much as my Springfield XD-40 does. In fact, while there is room for improvement, it is a better trigger on my 15-year-old XD.

Glocks have always felt a little blocky to me, a

situation somewhat improved on my XD. PSA has done great work on the dagger. The grip is much better contoured with a comfortable palm swell that fits my hand quite well. There is

a single finger groove on the front of the grip and a nice recess at the back of the trigger guard. I can take or leave the finger groove, but I quite like the fit all and all. I hope it stays the same when I get it on the range.

The grip texture is something to talk about. It is aggressive, without being too much so. It is found on the sides of course, but the same texture is found on the back and front of the grip. The grip also has a slight beaver

tail to help prevent slide bites.

The magazine release is pretty much standard for auto pistols. If you



have large hands and long fingers you should be able to operate it with no trouble. My medium size hands require a slight shift of my grip to reliably work the release. This is one aspect of the pistol that I will almost certainly customize is the magazine release.

The same can be said for the slide release. It is a standard slide release that is functional and not obtrusive. Just like the magazine release, I have to make a slight change of grip to activate it, but since I tend to sling-shot the slide when reloading I don't foresee the need to change it. I do like the ridge in the frame that surrounds it. It helps to properly index the gun in the hand and protects the slide release.

Just to the front of the trigger guard there is an accessory mount for lights or laser site mounts. It is Glock style and not a picatinny mount. This kind of mount has become standard on handguns as mounted lights have become more common for civilian and professional shooters.

The sights are Ameriglow lower 1/3rd Co-Witness height and are black with no dots and no tritium.

The higher sights are necessary if you are shooting suppressed and are very handy if you are running a Red Dot Sight. Speaking of an RDS, the pistol comes with a slide cut for the RMR footprint. It includes a cover for the mount if you have not mounted an optic yet.

The slide itself has some important differences from the Glock third generation guns. There are serrations in front of and to the rear of the ejection port to make chambering and press checks easier. The slide is also not as blocky as the original Glock. The Dagger's slide

is contoured to make holstering and drawing smoother and faster.

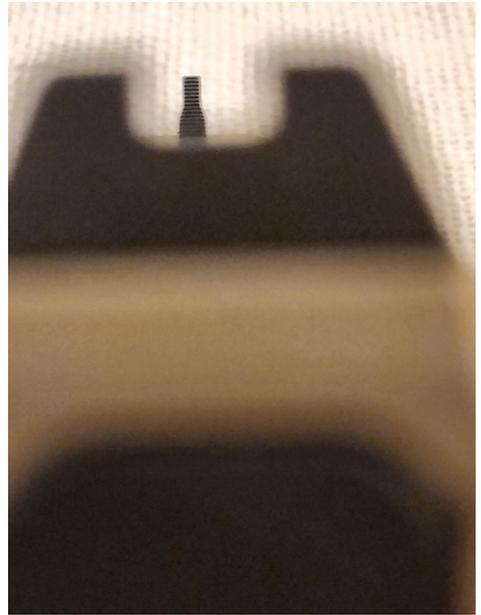
In closing, this Dagger has not been on the range yet as of this writing. I am pleased with the construction and design, but it is on the range that a firearm really proves itself. For the time being my Springfield XD-40 will continue to be my primary, but if the accuracy and reliability matches the construction, the Dagger will be my EDC pistol going forward.

This article also appears on Ready Magazine, <https://readymagazine.com/>





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By Ric Hubbard

I write a lot about gear in my various channels, but all the gear in the world will not save you if you do not have the skills to go with it. You will find numerous sources in the form of books, articles, web pages, and videos that will set you on the path to developing skills. One of my favorite authors on the subject is Creek Stewart.

His Pocket Field Guide series is one of my favorites. Each of these little books concentrates on a single skill that can help the reader in a survival situation. I have talked about one of these in the past, but today I am going to discuss two that will teach you shelter skills.

The first is "Pocket Field Guide: Survival Knots Vol 1". Cordage is one of the underappreciated survival tools that we tend to overlook while talking about our knives, guns, and storage

foods. The fact of the matter is that cordage can be used to build tools that will make our lives easier when camping or in a survival situation. Using it always involves knots.

This is where Stewart steps up. His "Survival Knots Vol. 1" starts by teaching the reader the language of cordage and knots to help us to understand the instruction that follows. I have several books on knots, but Stewart's propensity towards the concise is why I like his Field Guides so much.

This book cuts out the fat and delivers a total of 19 of the most important knots for field and survival use in just 52 pages. The reasons for knowing knot tying are manifold and there are knots for most of them in the book.

The knots taught in the book will allow those that know how to properly

use them to build shelters and construct various camp accoutrements that will make life easier and more comfortable. It is always true that the more you know, the less you have to carry and with a knife and some cordage, you are a long way towards being ready.

If you have ever watched a YouTube video of a Bushcrafter building a camp in the woods with only what is in their packs, these are some of the knots that they used to accomplish the cool things that they do. Since this book fits in a small pocket you can take it with you and practice the skills it contains, which is one of the aspects that I love about the series.

So, what do you do with these skills? You can start with the next Field Guide, "Survival Tarp Shelters". With some paracord and a 9x9 tarp you can build a shelter that will help protect you from the weather.

I am often amazed at the variety of shelters that can be built with a simple square tarp. This Field Guide covers 9 of the easiest to build survival shelters. Whether we are talking about keeping warm or staying out of the Sun, there is a shelter that will take care of the user.

It starts with a quick rundown of some knots that are most useful for shelter building, but since you have read the first book, you are ready for this part of the process. The meat of the book is the second part, which teaches the reader nine different shelters, all built from a square tarp.

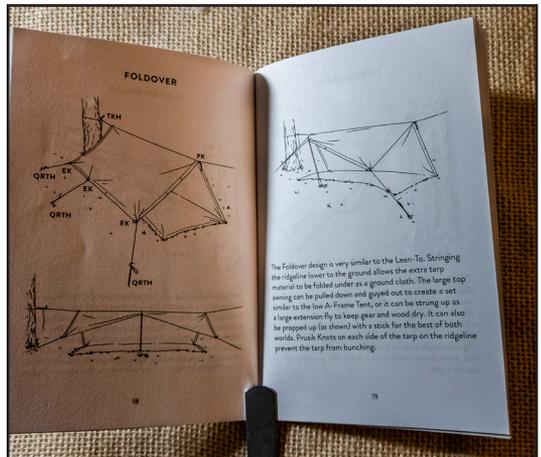
You get shelters for warm weather, such as a simple Lean-To design which will allow you to stay cooler and out of the sun when it is hot out. You get designs for cooler weather, such as the Baker shelter, that will catch more heat

from the campfire.

Knowing how to build these shelters means you can, if you so desire, carry a tarp instead of a heavier tent. I will always value a tent for comfort and the sense of security that it provides, but I have in the past and probably will in the future sleep under a tarp and enjoy it. I find it comforting that I can grab a tarp or a piece of plastic sheeting and have something to sleep under.

The book ends with a short section that imparts 6 tips to make building a shelter go smoother. 6 little tricks that make improvising shelter easier and require you to carry fewer tools to complete the task. The hacks in question here allow the attachment of cordage to the fabric in use using improvised methods and tools.

These two books will teach a set of skills that will allow the reader to use the gear they carry in a bug-out-bag to build useful shelter. It can reduce the weight of the kit and provide a greater sense of confidence in oneself. In 85 pages, it opens up many possibilities.



An Example of the Shelters in the Book

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Ruminations from Rudi: When is a Weapon Not a Weapon?

During the pandemic, many live events were shut down; thus, my only entertainment was YouTube. After the pandemic lifted, many venues required proof of vaccination, which I refused to get. Recently, I went to the website of a theater that features live music, to see what concerts were scheduled. I found this new policy posted:

Weapons Policy

The (name of theater) is committed to creating a safe and enjoyable environment for all. Weapons of any kind, including concealed firearms, are prohibited (Name of state) statute 571.107-15). Guests found in possession of a weapon will be asked to remove it from the building.

Fortunately, one of the foremost self-defense attorneys in the state is also the president of the NRA-state affiliate, so I emailed the policy to him. Here is his response: OC is not a weapon. A baton may be a weapon. An ordinary pocketknife with a blade of 4 inches or less is not a weapon. Please note that our local zoo has the exact same policy.

As a sheepdog, I am going to protect myself, my family, my friends, and even strangers. I always carry four weapon systems: a pistol, OC, a knife, and a keychain baton. So, what to do? Unless the venue has airport-type screening, I will continue to carry at least OC, a knife, and the keychain baton (see photo). Since I belong to the USCCA, 24/7 legal assistance is always available. In my state, the worst that can happen is that they ask me to leave the premises. PLEASE CHECK WITH AN ATTORNEY REGARDING THE LAWS IN YOUR STATE!

[NOTE: Rudi is a Life Member of Live Free USA and has authored many articles for the newsletter in the past. He has recently come out of hibernation and plans to be contributing articles on a regular basis.]

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Indiana Jim's Survival Stuff

By James C. Jones

Saving Your Fingers and Toes

Back when we Live Free members were into rock-climbing and mountaineering, we read a lot about mountain climbers. In one story a climber high on Annapurna, a mountain in the Himalayas lost his gloves in the wind at temperatures far below zero. His oxygen deprived and hypothermia affected brain did not remind him that he had a pair of wool socks under his shirt. The end results was the loss of all of his fingers to frostbite. Since reading that, I always carry an extra pair of wool socks under my shirt when outdoors in winter. I trust that my well oxygenated brain will remember that they are there if I need them. Wet or frozen feet, or frozen fingers can be fatal under winter survival conditions. Sock can replace wet socks, or replace lost gloves in an emergency.

A Flame Beats a Spark

Starting a fire with flint and steel is an iconic survival skill, but also a last resort. I have started a lot of fires with a spark from flint and steel or with a magnesium rod, and it's nice to know how do that, but when you need a fire fast, a flame always trumps a spark. Waterproof "camp matches, or butane lighters should always be the first choice. A flame can warm and ignite damp material when a spark will not. I always have at least two methods of starting a fire in my kits, packs, and even in most of

my every-day-carry. I usually do have a magnesium fire starter, but only as a backup for matches or a lighter.

Life Saving Trash Bags

Way back in the 1960's there were no compact Mylar™ survival blankets or sleeping bags. Tyvek suits were not available to the public either. Survivalists had to improvise to meet a lot of survival needs. Part of every "poor man's survival kit" was one or more large plastic trash bags. Even now that we have plenty of purpose made survival gear, I always keep these big trash bags handy because they have multiple survival applications. You can make an improvised rain and wind protective suit by cutting head, and arm holes in a 40 or 50 gallon bag. If you have two bags you can cut open the closed end of one and tuck it into your belt to for a waterproof skirt. It won't be very stylish but you will have significant protection against rain, snow, and wind. With the addition of an N95 dust/mist mask they can protect against exposure to nuclear fallout in an emergency. Partially inflated and tied-off trash bags can be used as a flotation device for yourself and your gear. In a flood or to cross streams and rivers in an emergency. The bags can be used to catch rain water or carry water or other materials. Cut open, one or two bags can be used to create an improvised shelter.

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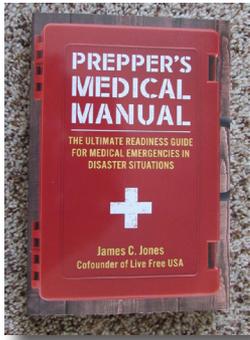
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