

Bill Gardner's Honorable Mention Entry

Lets see if I have this scenario somewhat down pat.

We're a "city slicker, a flat-lander", (the woods are full of them) who calls themself an experienced snow mobiler. After giving no thought to anything else we might need on an approximately 3 hour or more excursion deep into a heavily forested mountain, alone, and knowing that a storm is going to cross our path at some point on this trip, we start out anyway, and a late departure as well. No basic survival gear, no map, no compass, no shelter, no means of making a shelter, no means of communication, nor extra clothing to add, to maintain warmth or change into should our presently worn clothes become wet, and no means of protection. No itinerary left for the Park Ranger or note left on the inside windshield of our truck. We did tell Mom where we were going in detail. But she never seems to be listening to us anyway. Ahhh! But we didn't forget the Scotch. OK. I would guess that this would be a good time for you to calm down and relax, just a little, and let me take over. We're in this together, and **I** can get you out of this. Let me show you what **We** can do together. For **I Am** your subconscious, and **I** remember what you forgot. We're going to be fine. Trust me. Just follow my lead.

Are you ready? All right. We're here and alive. We're human. We make (nice huh?) mistakes. A higher authority will forgive. The "Rescuers" ... well, that's another story. Let's see if I can keep us alive long enough for them to find us. This is going to take some effort on your part, so work with me. I won't let you down. OK?

Fortunately, you were traveling at a reasonably slow speed when you crashed the vehicle. It seems to me that the only damage to the machine is the runner and some body damage, and possibly the steering mechanism. We're lucky the

engine still functions, as well as not to have sustained any debilitating injuries. So now that we have the time to think about what we neglected to bring, based on the above, I would say our adventure has just begun.

The storm is increasing in its intensity, and we have **no** options at this time. Snow is building fast. **Sweating** is our number one priority for now. **Shelter** is number two. Open our jacket some, to stay a little on the cool side while we perform the other things we need to do before nightfall. We must stop and do a few of what at first seem to be irrelevant tasks. First, drink water as you eat at least half of one protein bar. This will give you enough energy to complete the few quick tasks that need to be done before the storm reaches its full intensity, and delivers too much snow to comfortably move around in. Place the balance of the water inside our jacket so it won't freeze. Pay attention. **RELAX**. You're an adult. Treat this as an unplanned vacation in your mind. If you treat it as such, and not as a life-and-death scenario you will stay calmer, and be able to plan your moves, instead of panicking and faltering. Panic leads to mistakes. We have read, Boy Scouts have survived in worse predicaments than this, and they have come out on their own, SINGING! You can too. Also, we will have one helluva story to tell our friends.

Take your Leatherman, open the **small knife** of the tool and be sure it is securely LOCKED in the extended position. Use your gloves while we do the following, because the steel knife could freeze to your hand in the right temperature and also, a slip while cutting will be less dangerous than without them on. Use it to cut the bottom of the entire seat cushion all the way around. Tear this up and away as well as the foam underneath. Secure your Leatherman in a zipped or lockable pocket, preferably on the inside of our jacket. Each time you use the Leatherman, we have to open our jacket, and that is another chance to expel any sweat that we have accumulated while working. Leave the key in the ignition for use tomorrow. It won't get lost where it is. Be sure there isn't any leather or plastic on the key ring for any animals to chew on and

possibly run off with our keys. Be sure that there aren't any lights or any other equipment left on overnight. Cover the engine with its hood. This will keep the engine dry and ready for use tomorrow. Do not pull or cut any wires on your snowmobile. Grab our helmet and a long screwdriver out of the toolkit, for a weapon that we could use as a defense against any roaming predators at night (possible, but highly unlikely). Take your seat cover and the foam underneath, the

snowmobile cover and any bungee cords, rope or string that may be in the tool kit, and look for an evergreen tree nearby, with plenty of low branches, where we can duck under and prepare a dugout sleeping quarters for the night, with our back against the tree. The lower the branches the warmer it will be there. Dig out a trench a little wider than our frame to the trunk of the tree, and place the seat cover and foam in it, to insulate us from cold ground. Use our helmet to keep our head warmer at night and securely cover our-self with the machine cover. Keep the long screw driver handy for our defense if necessary. If by any stroke of misfortune you do not see any trees like I've mentioned, then go and dig our-self a trench right next to the machine on the leeward side. That's the side that the wind is NOT blowing from. Go around to the windy side and quickly kick snow up and around the snow mobiles side, to eliminate any wind coming through it. Eat the other half of our protein bar and drink with it. Our body needs water to digest food properly. We're going to need the energy through the night. Now pack the water bottle to the top with fresh snow. Pack it in solid. Then replace it inside our jacket. It will melt from our body heat during the night and give us a replenished supply by morning. Cover as much of our body as you can with the snow mobile's cover, especially around the neck. Leave just enough room for our face to be fully exposed, so we can breathe easily. Put our back to the machine and hunker down for the night. It's going to be windy and we're going to be covered in deep snow. We will wake several times or more during the night, if we get to sleep at all. Just brush the snow away from our head, and leave the rest where it fell. It will insulate us from the wind and cold like a quilt

cover. Believe or not, snow has always been an excellent insulator from blowing wind and cold temps. It will be morning before we know it. Sleep well. We're doing fine. We're going to survive.

Good morning sunshine. Still snowing I see. Looks like it has slowed down considerably. Remember we love snow and this is just an unexpected vacation. Relax. By now the Parks Ranger has found our truck and is probably back tracing our identity and itinerary before sounding an alarm. We are not be the first to be in this position and we won't be the last. If our friend was smarter than us (sorry, calls them as I see them), he didn't go out looking for us in the height of the storm last night. His chances of finding us at that time were zero. He would now be in our position at the other end of the trail. He MAY have already called the Ranger station and or the local SAR (Search and Rescue) team. Then again, maybe he doesn't know what to do or has no idea of our whereabouts. Remember reading about Rescuers. Their best advice for anyone lost or stranded was to "STOP and Drop." Get it out of your head that we are going to walk out of this with out any preparation whatsoever, or that staying with this broken machine is a bad idea. This machine, even without a survival kit, will keep us alive and warm for some time. It will lead the rescuers to us from a great distance. Like we are expected to do in a fire we are going to do in this instance. Regardless of your "get home itis", that's what pilots call it, (a very real case of our wanting to escape this scenario at any and all costs), our most intelligent move right now is to stay put.

We must take the time now, to reinforce our position by making it more comfortable, and getting it ready to announce to the rescuers, **HERE I AM!** We will also have to find some food to maintain energy levels consistent with the work involved in surviving this unplanned adventure.

We must keep our core temperature (the temperature of our major organs of our body, Heart, Lungs, Kidneys and the Brain) up to normal. Getting weak and

hypothermic at this point would be a disaster and possibly the end of any more adventures. We would be in deep “dodo.” Hypothermia is when our body starts to lose more of its heat than it can produce. The major organs (the core), would now be the primary recipient of the last of the warm oxygenated blood, as the rest of the body (arms, hands, fingers, legs and toes, and all other parts), begin to shut down, not receiving their fair share. So we grow colder and cease to function in our extremities. Our Brain at the top of our body, where most of our body heat is expended, gets the blood last, and cools the fastest, so we end up lethargic in our thinking as well. We become immobile. This is a deadly scene, but, it's a self preservation thing, left over from our prehistoric past. I believe it's also called the “Mammalian reflex.” One of the best ways to not sweat while working is to work with just enough clothes on to keep warm. We must not work up a sweat. We **will** start to shiver at the first sign of hypothermia, however. Be aware of it. Don't even think about drinking that scotch to keep warm. That's a fallacy, and that St. Bernard dog that we seem to remember seeing in so many commercials and cartoons, is a bad joke. We will lose the ability to think rationally, and like sweating, it too will begin to lower our resistance to the cold, resulting in hypothermia that we won't come out of. We'll probably go to sleep and freeze to death with our belly and brain full of alcohol, and never again regain consciousness. I don't want to go that way. Do you? So, open our jacket again to allow any perspiration to escape without soaking into our clothes, or just remove one layer of clothes to stay relatively cool while we work.

We need to prepare a fire to cook and to maintain warmth as we work and sleep. All around us are pine trees of sorts. Their sap, bark, and branches are our salvation. They are loaded with pitch. It burns extremely hot, and there is plenty of it. From ground level to as high as we can reach, look all around the tree trunks and branches for their sap. Walk around and gather up a large handful. Put it into a pocket of our jacket. This pitch has, amongst a few of its versatile properties, the quality of being waterproof and anti-bacterially “sterile.” It's also

edible. It can be used for holding a wound closed, as well as covering it from contamination, until we get back to an aid station. While doing all of this, note that the entire lower branches of these trees consist of all we will need to start a roaring bonfire. They are normally dead and super dry, filled with pitch, and easily snap under the smallest amount of pressure. Just be sure that we turn away when we pull the larger branches off, so as not to get a face full of wood as they break.

Now, what we need to find are various sizes of small to tiny pieces of DRY branches, bird nest, squirrel nest, or anything hanging off the **LOWER** branches of the surrounding trees, usually within the last couple of feet of those branch tips. **We don't climb trees.** As much as we can stuff into our open jacket will be enough for now. Pack it in full. Next, gather small to larger sticks and stockpile them nearby the fire in large quantities to feed the fire. Our fire needs to be started at ground level. About 8 feet straight out from the sleeping side of the snow mobile. **But, not on snow.** Scrape the snow to bare ground and 4 feet in a circle at this point. If we don't, the fire will melt the snow and put our fire out, or at the least, burn less intensely and, leave a mess of water to wade or sleep in. Build a 2 foot wall of snow around the fire pit as a barrier against the wind, leaving an opening facing your snow mobile. Lay down about a dozen larger sticks side by side as a bed in this circle for our "log cabin tower" and a base for our main fire. Now build a small replica of a log cabin, without a roof, in the center of the logs, about 10 inches square and 8 inches high. Be sure it's built sturdy. We don't need it to collapse. Now stuff the interior with large handfuls of dry "angel hair" (those little clumps of fuzzy stuff we found at the end of those very dry lower branches on the pines), and mix in lots of those smaller sticks, to fill up the cabin area to capacity. Pack it in tight. At the very top place a large handful of the pitch we picked off the tree trunks. Spread it around. Now progressively place all around this structure, (leaning on this "cabin" like a tepee), small to larger sticks until you feel, that once the fire gets going, that we will have a good base

to build on. We should now take the time to stock even more firewood to maintain this fire throughout the night and into morning. We can never have too much. Large and/or long branches can be dragged to the fire to burn a little at a time, without having to break or chop them up. Bring them in from the four compass points of the fire. Top, bottom, left and right. More work done by the fire, less work done by you. Like I said before, if you don't think you have enough, forage for more. Hunt for supplies during daylight, not at night. While we are at this, keep our eyes open for 5 strong, fairly straight-looking sticks or small trees, about an inch or slightly larger in diameter, and about 6 feet long for 4 of them and about 10 feet long (about twice our height), for the 5th. Use our Leatherman's saw blade to cut them off or down. **Don't chop.** If at any time you start thinking about the legal laws of the Park Service, and believe that cutting down a tree in the Park would be illegal, or by building an open fire would also break the rules, forget it. The rules are suspended for a true case of survival of a life. We will come back later to plant some new seedlings for the loss of what we cut.

All right. For now, that stack looks plentiful. On our machine find a small piece of metal or plastic that is not related to the motor that was damaged in the crash that can be removed without strain. We are going to use this to carry a small fire from the machine to our fire pit. We are going to need a spark from the snow mobile's battery system to ignite the small bundle of tinder we have prepared on it. Find any fairly thick RED wire (normally red), in the engine compartment. Be sure before you cut it with the base of our Leatherman's cutting pliers, (right down at the bottom of the jaw intersection when opened, those two flat blade like pieces of metal), that we can stretch the cut portion some, without any damage elsewhere. We need to be able to reach the engine body, which is electric ground (short circuit) to this circuit. Later, we must twist these two together again to repair them. Placing our small bundle of tinder right at the spot where we intend to strike a spark, put about a tablespoon of our Scotch onto the tinder and then quickly strike the end of the wire to a clean spot on the engine, until it ignites the

alcohol. The spark won't hurt us. Carefully walk the burning tinder over to our pit and place it under all the tinder and stacked wood. Catches fast, doesn't it? Look at that pitch burn. Warmth is coming at last. A fire improves our chances of survival as well as our mental attitude. Remember, keep a **small** fire going and sit closer to get its warmth. An old Native Indian, Stalking Wolf, once said, "Indian build small fire and sit close to keep warm. Burn little wood. White man build big fire, and sit back. Burn forest to keep warm." Get the message?

The fire has been built, wood stocked and now we are hungry and thirsty. OK. Drink all the water we want from our water bottle. Don't save it. We should have a full bottle of water by now, having melted all that snow under our jacket during the night. There will be plenty from now on, so DRINK and keep drinking. Don't wait until we are thirsty. Drink hourly when not working, and half hourly when working, regardless of whether we feel thirsty or not. Eat half of the remaining protein bar. Repack the bottle with fresh snow and place it near the fire, but not close enough to melt the bottle. About one foot should do it, or as close to the fire that you can feel the warmth without melting the bottle. We've done, good girl. I'm proud of myself. Self praise does feels good.

Now let's go to the snow mobile and use the Leatherman's **small knife** to cut off some of the rubber track tread. Be sure we're wearing our gloves. Cut off as much as we can without too much strain. Then, by placing it on a trunk of a tree or a fallen log, we want to **slice** the tread into fairly thin 4" to 6" strips. We are not looking for perfection here, so do the best that we can. Take your time. If you rush it, you could sustain an injury that could be devastating to us at this time. Take notice of the basic knife rules for cutting. Never cut towards our body, never ever cut anything by laying it on our leg to cut, protected or not, and never place any part of our body in the path of our cut. A dozen or so will do just fine. The thinner the better. Place 6 of these strips on a dry platform of small wood very near the fire. Close enough to really get hot, but not start burning. Preheated they

will start to burn much quicker. The ability to make smoke quickly means a better chance of our going home sooner. When we are not doing any cooking of food, however, burn two or three strips of rubber throughout the day, repeatedly for signaling purposes. It wouldn't hurt a bit to throw a large amount of green needled branches on this fire once an hour, to raise some smoke. Maybe a lone Ranger (pun intended) lookout tower, might just spot our lone smoke across his vast station.

Now we are going to be little redundant and build another fire pit, but this time instead of building it near the snow mobile, we're going to build it out in the most open area we can find within about 50 feet or so from our present fire and sleeping quarters and away from any trees or bushes that may catch on fire from our blaze. The height of this fire may reach 15-20 feet when fully going, so look up as well as around for anything that might catch on fire from it. We don't want to start a forest fire. That law still applies to us. Bring our Scotch bottle to the new site and place it within reach of this new pit. Build it exactly like the first for the tinder portion, and don't forget the large handful of pitch at the top. Then do the same as we did before, but add more wood; we're going to need more hot coals this time. This fire must build in intensity quickly, and also produce a large amount of smoke in an extremely short time. We must build a hot enough bed of coals to continue the ignition of the pine boughs that will be placed on this tower, and not smother it. This will give us enough time to add more wood and boughs as necessary. Now, find many branches of **GREEN** needles and build. Pack about 2 feet or more of the greenest needles you can find and layer them on heavily. Balance the tower of branches and wood. We don't want it to fall down but, we do want it to be able to get plenty of air. Plenty. More air, more smoke. Be sure we have left an opening to our tinder to start this going when the time comes. Once the lower portion of our fire is burning well, it will ignite the green branches, and cause much smoke to be seen from the air and maybe even ground personnel some distance away. Now that everything seems set, go find a

lot more green branches to keep by the second fire pit for backup. These will burn in minutes. They will burn hot and fast once started. We need to have plenty on hand. About ten minutes of intense burning will be needed. Try not to have to climb trees to gather them. Remember, an injury now would decrease our ability to perform the basic survival tasks without great pain. We might not be able to orchestrate our rescue preparations.

The following will be our procedure for igniting this signal fire. Wherever we are when we hear a small aircraft or helicopter in the area, get to our first fire and with our gloves on, grab a burning stick (with a flame on it preferably, otherwise a small log of hot cinders will do nicely), and **walk** it quickly to our second fire pit and lay the stick down in a cleaned spot off to the side of the tower. Now open the bottle of Scotch and (nooo, don't drink it), stick the neck of the bottle into the bottom of the tinder and splash some onto the dry tinder. Reseal the bottle and place it to the side. Then take the burning branch, stick or log, and stick it into the tinder. Be sure it ignites the tinder. Blow on it at ground level to help get it started quicker if necessary. Not hard. Just give it more air to start with. Now stand back. Once it starts burning fiercely with lots of smoke, place more green tree limbs on the fire quickly to **keep** the dense smoke rising above the tall pole pines all around us. This is the most important part of this whole unplanned adventure if we really want to be rescued. Don't let the smoke diminish or stop. That's why I told you to have plenty of branches for backup. They burn very quickly. This is vital to our rescue.

OK, we have been drinking water at least every half hour or so, and refilling with snow and replacing it back by the fire to melt again. We can go about two weeks without food but only two days without water. If our urine isn't fairly clear, (it's a great indication of our body's hydration), we need to be drinking more water fast. Keep drinking. There's plenty. And by the way, it would be a good idea, if when we urinated, that we did so right near the fire, so we can burn, evaporate and

neutralize the smell of it from the air and ground by rolling some hot coals over it. This will not be found in any survival manuals that we have read but, we do remember hearing about some attacks of women at Yosemite and Denali parks on the news one evening. So, if you keep your mind open to what I am implying, you will agree with me that, being a women and all, safety first in the woods? Now take the last half of the protein bar and eat it.

Now, go back to the snow mobile and strip both ends of the wire we cut to get a spark, twist them together securely and place them back where they were. Make sure they are not going to touch any metal parts when we restart the engine, or move the headlight around later. Take our toolbox and find a tool to take the muffler off the exhaust. Whatever it takes to get it off. Damage to the exhaust system at this point is OK and preferable. Remove it and throw it to the side. Start the machine and allow it to warm up. It is going to be loud. That's the whole idea. The noise will carry a great distance. Turn on our headlight. Does it work? It does? This is a great moment for us, for with it, we will be able to signal at night to any LOW flying aircraft, and they will be able to pinpoint our location. It's also a great deal of comfort, even with a fire going. If it hadn't worked, we could have used our cell phones back lighting system to hand wave it at low flying aircraft at night, when any were seen or heard. Carefully remove the headlight assembly out of its mounting bracket, without cutting any wires or breaking anything. We want mobility of the headlight for signaling. Done? Daytime signaling and nighttime signaling have been taken care of. This is a good thing.

Now it's time to make our sleeping quarters a lot more comfortable. Gather (Yep, you guessed it) a great bunch of green branches (yes, I know, and they will grow back) to layer on top of our seat cushion as well as make (don't ya just love it) a shelter. Clear out an area between the machine, on the side you have your sleep trench, and the fire. Clear all the snow away from the snow mobile to our fire pit. Take our large knife and cut a 12" strip of that foam for a pillow. Layer about 6 to

8 inches of those nice green pine boughs on our cushion, our full body length, and about one yard wide. Make it comfortable to lay down on. We can use the saw blade of our Leatherman (magnificent tool it is) to saw off the heavier uncomfortable (for a bed) parts of the branch stem. Throw them in the fire. Test the bed until it feels comfortable. Now take that **extra long** pole we cut and lay the larger trunk of it on the top of the seat between the seat and engine compartment. It's best in a secure spot on the machine where it will not roll off in any wind and be kept from moving. Throw some snow on top of it to be sure. Pack it down. Don't cover the instrument panel. We're going to need it. The top of the pole should now be facing the fire and be able to be pushed aside a little until we tie the cross sticks together to keep it up. Don't want to burn it. It will be going right over the center of it (ideal position), where it will then be held up and away from the fire about 4 feet high or so, by those 2 extra poles we cut down. They then will be crossed to form an X, and secured with the suspenders from our pants. Place it about 6 feet out from the snow mobile. Make it tight and steady, (pack some snow at the base of the two poles), then lay the top pole in the crotch of the X and wrap the rest of our suspenders around it to keep it in place. That pole should be rock steady now. Go around to the other side of the snow mobile and kick some snow up and onto the machines open areas. Pack it tight right up and onto the machine. We're trying to kill any drafts that will come through. Now what we need, are the rest of the long twigs that you thought were for burning at the fire and lean them up against the pole. Pull the bottom of the twigs out at the base, to the end of your pine bough bedding, both sides, right out to the end of the poles that are crossed. Place these sticks about 1 foot apart from the snow machine out. You can pack some snow around the base of them to keep them in position. We're constructing an "A" frame shelter. Very quick to make (ahem), and very warm when completed. You now must take those extra green branches and start layering them up the sticks on both sides of this frame, stem end pointing down. Cut the first base layers' stem off, as short as possible, to keep the "fan" of green needles as low as possible. If you can "weave" them tight

between the other sticks for the first row up, do so. This will ensure that the base of our bed will be kept free of drafts. After you have done both sides the same, start over and put them on heavier, but this time stem side facing up and starting from the bottom. Interlock and overlap them to the best of your abilities. Repeat and reverse the layering for the last time. Three layers should be enough. The frame should now look like a green, fully enclosed tent, with very little gaps in the green. Now, with your gloves on, (if you can find a piece of flat plastic or metal about a shovel head size or larger, you can use it as a hand shovel and increase your speed and efficiency, with much less work) build up a layer of snow about 2-3 inches thick all over those pine boughs that we just put up, including the top of the pole. You don't need to bury it. We're just going to seal any drafts out completely. Done? You're now looking at an "A" frame tent, almost as comfortable as your bed at home. I said almost. And, the best part is that the opening is only 2 feet or less to our warm fire. Take and cover the first 6" of the entrance to our shelter (over the pine boughs) with about 2" of snow clear across the face of it. Prevents any possibility of the bedding catching fire during the night, while we sleep. I see some extra large sticks (about 2 feet long) over there that could be used for a nice reflector behind the fire. Use the branch "notches" (where the smaller branches grew off) as a hook for bracing a larger stick held at a slight angle to the fire, like a lean-to, (you will need 2 base poles). Place them about 1 foot from the fire. Then just lay one stick lengthwise upon the other, to about 1 1/2 feet high to reflect the heat from the fire into your sleeping quarters, like building a log cabin. If you did that all away around the fire, leaving only one opening towards your shelter for the heat to go (you would need more wood and a little more time), you would be very, very toasty. How did I remember that? The top pole of our shelter now hanging over our fire can be used to dry out our clothes and hold anything over the fire to cook. Just be sure the clothes don't get close enough to extreme heat to burn. Move them back down the pole to our shelter until they won't, but still will dry. Hang some off the face of our shelter.

OK. A quick run through of tasks done. Wood stocked for the night, very near the fire (helps to dry it during the day and night). Many green branches also stocked nearby for daylight signaling, hourly. Rubber strips keeping hot and ready for their turn on the fire. Second fire pit and scotch ready for ignition when they are needed. Headlight ready for signaling. Key left in the ignition to prevent loss. Knife back in our zippered inside jacket pocket. Water bottle refilled with snow and placed near the fire to melt. Pine boughs layered on our seat cushion and our pillow made from a slice of the foam ready for our tired head. A warm shelter made. Gloves placed on a couple of sticks near the fire to dry out, or on one of the crossed poles at the top of the shelter's "X" frame. A fire reflector made. A snow wall built around the fire pit. A nice one too. The fire by your bedding is close enough to you to give you plenty of warmth, but not close enough to ignite it while you sleep. If your socks or boots are damp or wet, they will need to be removed and dried by the fire with your gloves, before putting them back on for bedtime. If you want to turn our-self around for a while and have our feet closer to the fire to warm them, do it while your boots and socks dry out. This will really feel good and pick up our spirits. Yoda says, "Cozy it will be." Remember! You **cannot** go to sleep in any damp or wet clothes. None! So strip them off and get them close to the fire to dry, and you as well, keep warm while they dry, get closer. It's OK to build the fire a little bigger for this. The clothes need to dry thoroughly before you replace them. They will also make (oops) you feel so much better.

Oh look. It's getting very dark now, and no sign or sounds of rescue yet, but, clothes are dry, and now it's time to restart the snow mobile, and run it in neutral at about half throttle, and give full throttle in short burst for about 5 minuets. Make a lot of racket. Turn our light on and wave it around the forest so as to be seen by anyone looking for us. You never know. You want to do this hourly or so during the day, (no light) but not at night unless you're trying to frighten off some animals or we hear what could be some rescuers, on the ground or in the air (use

the headlight). Be prepared to run the machine at idle for about ten minutes if we see some low clouds above us during the night. We are going to turn the headlight on and shine it at the base and light it up like a WWII search spotlight to attract attention to ourself. Play with the cloud base. Move the light around. Believe me when I say, they wouldn't expect any lights coming from the forest. They will most likely presume it to be us and come looking. The international distress call is "Mayday" when flying, and SOS everywhere else. As we're on the ground, then SOS is the appropriate signal to use. The "S" is composed of three quick dots and the "O" is three long dashes. (... --- ...)Dot dot dot, dash dash dash, dot dot dot. It's easy. We could switch the headlight on and off at the base of the clouds, to repeat the SOS several times for about ten minuets. Make (I did it again) the dots about 1 second long and the dashes 3 seconds long. If there aren't any clouds, don't waste our time with lights in the air. Having fun. No? Well, you have come a long way baby and we're almost through. Keep that Positive attitude. Smile. We have done remarkably well for an ill equipped "flat-lander".

I know we're tired, but take a minute and look around and see if there is anything that we might have missed before tucking our-self in for the night. We have burned off our waste products as well as the protein bar wrappers. We don't want to leave any scent for the animals to home in on. Oh. We did forget something important, didn't we? The two sticks that you cut and have left over. Alright, lets get to them.

Now we are going to sharpen these to a very sharp point, tapering from about 6 inches from the end. You could if you want, sharpen both ends the same. You would have a very versatile weapon in your hands. Think of yourself as a female Bruce Lee, with a deadly double sided spear. Use the **long blade** of your Leatherman for this chore. Sit by the fire and take our time, as this needs to be done carefully. Lay the pole behind you and across you lap and start "Slicing" **little** strips at a time until we have a nice long very sharp point on it. Always slice

away from our body and make doubly sure we are not cutting towards our leg as you slice. Remember? OK. OK. When satisfied, take the sticks point, and shove the first foot of it **under** the coals of our fire. Bury it. We are doing this to dry out and harden the end. The tip will become much more dangerous for defense and last longer, when done. About ten minuets should do, depending on the intensity of our hot coals. Withdraw it from the fire and with the large blade, scrape the flame and burned portion away to the hard surface underneath. Scrape it to a fine point. Cool it in the snow. Lean one against the front of our shelter for easy access, and the other lay across the front of the shelter on the ground , in front of our head. OK. Now we have two sharp weapons if needed. Put our knife back in our zippered pocket. We don't need to lose our tools in this snow, do we? A knife is a tool to make (here I go again) most every other tool we may need. It is not expendable. The tools we make (ouch, sorry) with it, are.

I hear him, but he sounds way off in the distance. A wolfs howl adds a nice touch to this night, doesn't it? He might have caught a whiff of our scent and could come calling later to have a look at the new intruder to his territory. They have an awesome sense of smell. Under most conditions, wolves do not attack humans. They are curious though. Beautiful animal. If he does show, grab a spear, stand our ground behind the fire and "Talk" to him, That's what I said. Talk to him softly. Don't yell or move quickly. Stay calm. What else can we do? It will calm him, and us. He eventually will leave us when he determines we are no threat to him or his pack. Look around for any of his pack. They don't normally travel alone. If things don't seem to be working in our favor, don't forget the snow mobile. Slowly, walk to it, keeping a watch on the animal. Now start it and gun the motor. Shine the headlight on him and around the area to ward off any other threats. Keep it going for a few minuets, occasionally as before, gunning the motor. Now shut it off and listen, and be alert. He most likely won't be back tonight. We tend to scare off his food source. Not us as a food source, but smaller game.

Alright, it is as good a time as any to bed down. Place a fair amount of wood on the fire (lay it on like a log cabin would be built) and place more near it and both sides, to dry for night time use. Snuggle down to our pillow. Cover our-self with the snow mobile cover. Will our-self awake at different times during the night, to replace the wood on the fire, and check our perimeter each time. We don't want our fire to go out, nor do we want to be sneaked up on while we sleep. That is extremely important. We need to wake up with a fire going well. I heard it too. It's just an owl. We won't ever hear these sounds in the city. Remember them. We can tell our friends how comforting and good they made us feel while drifting off to sleep. OK. Lie! Only you and I will know the truth.

What sound? I didn't hear anything. My ears are still ringing from the snow mobile. I **am** listening! Well I'll be. It sounds like, there it is again. There is someone out there. Yelling. I hear the sounds of yelling and snow mobiles. Go start our snow mobile, quick. Gun it a few times and then let it idle and take the light and shine it towards the sounds, until you see some lights. Like those off to our right. Start yelling. Over here! Over here! That a girl!

Will you look at this? I see five fast moving lights coming this way, and they are all on snow mobiles. What a sight. Chin up. No sign of tears. Just be our-self. We're going home.

A couple of the rescue squad are looking over our accommodations and preparations as they are putting out our fire. They seem to be smiling. I believe that's a good thing. That's it. Tell them that we are truly happy to see them and consider our-self lucky to have been found so soon. They are asking if we had any injuries or have any other belongings to pick up before we all start back. One of the team is pulling us aside and asking where we got our training to set the camp up the way it was. He seems to be impressed. He was under the impression that they were hauling out some "slicker" who should have stayed at

home in the city. Turns out he said, that our friends' cell phone works at the cabin, and that he called the Ranger station this morning creating such a fuss that they started the search as soon they could muster up personnel. He became very persuasive, and said that he new for sure that we were in trouble. They decided to push the search hard today because, there is another severe storm coming through the area tomorrow, and it will drop at least another 4 to 6 feet of fresh snow, and drop the temperature down to well below zero by nightfall.. This may last for a few days as well. It could have been a week before search efforts could have even started. He also said, they just called my position in, and my friend will be notified. All I could say was, thank you, from the bottom of my heart. Thank you all. What else did they say? My ears are still ringing from the engine noise. They said what? Oh! They said they were on a peak of a hill just south of here and saw your fire and some light waving around and also heard the loud engine. Like I said girl, you did good. Look around and say goodbye, for now. And look, that nice young man has a candy bar for us. He's saying I'll be back at the Ranger station in a couple of hours or so., and to just climb aboard and hang on. I know that this is not the time to fall asleep, and I don't want to fall off this thing, but I am very tired. Wow! Have we got a story to tell, and a friend to thank for his vigil and tenacity. I really didn't want to stay out here this night, especially after hearing that lonesome wolf call. For now, "bye owl". Hey. What's he saying? I can't hear him over the engine noise. His voice is fading. Don't shut me out. Don't go to sleep nowww. Wake up. Come-on. I got you through this, didn't I? Talk to me. WAKE UUUUP!

The scenario is not over yet, but typical. For new laws are now being considered to fine people who go "off road" without the proper equipment as well as survival gear, and put the rescuers at extreme risks for their carelessness. Leaving no itinerary, and a list of survival gear taken, with the proper authorities, is like failing to file a flight plan and taking off without authority. You're an adult. You should act like one. Boy Scouts prepare. You should too. And to make (no pun intended)

it even more costly for your gross errors, you may be charged for this rescue, to its full extent. Gasoline, personnel and any and all expenditures. That includes sending in a team and or helicopter to lift or drag out your snow mobile, and all its parts and dismantling your campsite to leave no trace of you being there. You didn't think they were going to leave it in the Forrest, did you? I bet, right about now that bottle of scotch looks mighty good, doesn't it. But you're alive. And you will learn from this, won't you? Don't forget to send a card on this date every year, to these Volunteers that risk it all, to save as many as just one, as well as the Parks, lone Ranger (naw), and your best friend, that wouldn't let you down. Make (there I goes again) it a thankful habit.

8.12.2010

NCRattler

Thanks. I enjoyed that.

Because any pictures or drawings that I would add to this would be inadequate, and have to be "ripped" from someone else's site unfairly, because at my age I can't draw worth a nickel, and superfluous as well, the following will be a greater means of getting my points and ideas' across to you all:

A **small** list of sites to view others' perspectives, designs and ideas:

On Psychology of survival..... <http://www.wilderness-survival.net/chp2.php>

On Hypothermia.....<http://comingbackalive.com/winterhypothermia.html>

On Feminine hygiene.....<http://comingbackalive.com/animalbears.html>

On Fire craft.....<http://www.wilderness-survival.net/fire-4.php>

.....<http://www.wildwoodsurvival.com/survival/fire/index.html>

On Fire making field supplies.....<http://www.wilderness-survival.net/cold-8.php>

On Signaling.....<http://www.wilderness-survival.net/chp19.php>

On

Pitch.....<http://www.wildwoods survival.com/survival/pitchandglue/rbpitch/index.html>

On Leatherman tools.....<http://www.leatherman.com/>

On YOUR Snowmobile.....Learn your specific machines engine from your dealer's mechanic. Get a hard copy of the manual and throw it in a zip lock baggie and leave it in the carrier along with a good survival manual from Amazon.com. Even if you don't use the engine manual in an emergency, you could always use it as tinder for starting a fire.

Anything and everything can be found on the Internets' vast resources. Just Google it. Hundreds and hundreds of different sites and thousands upon thousands of views and topics on Wilderness survival. Most all, FREE for the learning, and a different perspective by each.