

# Trapped woman uses faith to battle blizzard



Mary Lewis recalls her thoughts during the five hours she was trapped in her car in a ditch in Canada. (Staff photos by Charlie Kidd)

Mary Lewis's dramatic ordeal during the recent blizzard has a lesson for us all.

Ms. Lewis, a resident of Kingsville, Ont., who works for BBDO advertising agency in Troy, was stranded in a rural area of Canada after she tried unsuccessfully to get to work.

As she sat in her car, which was lodged in a ditch, she entertained herself with thoughts of her friends and family.

But as the snow mounted and the treacherous winds blew, she began to get fearful. For five hours she followed the same procedure—she'd roll her car window down slightly, start up the car and warm her feet for five minutes. During that time she'd listen to the radio news, but the blizzard reports were disheartening. Isolated in the storm, she listened to news that the blizzard was expected to continue for the next 17 to 24 hours.

Although she knew that the best thing to do was stay in her car, she feared that the car would be totally buried in snow by the end of the storm. It might take days to find her, she feared.

Her strong faith kept her going and she jokingly prayed that God couldn't let her die because he promised in the 23rd Psalm to leave his children by peaceful waters. "Now, come on, this is anything but peaceful waters," she chided.

Despite her instinct to stay put, Ms. Lewis left her car at the first sign that the storm was sub-

siding. The sky became slightly brighter and she could make out a sign in the distance. As many in the same situation might reason, she decided to set out for the sign and, hopefully, find shelter in someone's home.

The rest is now history to her. The sign pointed in the same direction she had just walked from. She ended up crawling for more than an eighth of a mile from one snow bank to another until she found shelter.

Although Ms. Lewis was fortunate to find help, others weren't so lucky and several people froze to death trying to battle the blizzard on foot. Others risked asphyxiation by running their engines with the windows only slightly open.

After recovering from her experience, Ms. Lewis had words of advice for other travelers who might find themselves in similar situations—stay in your car and remember that help will come as soon as the storm breaks.

She also asks that radio announcers repeat that caution to those who might be listening for hopeful words while trapped in their cars. "I don't think the radio stations thought about people who might be trapped and listening to the reports," she said. "If they would just realize that they should tell people to stay in their cars... Snowmobilers will be there as soon as they can."

## Winter enthusiasts mix fun, safety

Winter sports can be fun but the approach to the cold season that outdoorsmen and homeowners use can be downright dangerous.

Space heaters, camping stoves and other convenience items can make the winter cold more bearable if they are used correctly according to fire officials.

Appliances with thermostats controlling the amount of heat generated through them can fail and cause house fires, according to Farmington Fire Marshal Norm Maddison.

Toasters left plugged into wall outlets can overheat and cause home fires, said Maddison.

In homes lacking an adequate source of warmth, space heaters can be a plus, but they should only be used while the homeowners are awake.

"Space heaters scare me," Maddison said. "They shouldn't be used as primary sources to heat homes."

"I'd be reluctant to plug in the things in the bedroom and go to sleep at night. It's not a wise thing to do in my opinion," Maddison said.

Another source of heat for campers is the portable stove which should be used in an open area to allow the fuel's vapors to dissipate, according to fire officials and camping enthusiasts.



NORM MADDISON

CAMPING STOVES also should be filled with fuel in an open area to prevent an accumulation of gasoline vapors that can lead to an explosion or fire, according to Farmington Fire Chief John Van De Voort.

Refilling the stoves should be done while the appliance is shut off, according to Benchmark Camping Supply owner Chuck Spriggs.

ing to Benchmark Camping Supply owner Chuck Spriggs.

When the fuel is left unused, it should be stored in securely capped, seamless containers.

Stoves used by backpackers have pressure releases and safety valves which prevent their overheating, according to Spriggs. Fuel should be packed separately from the stove.

Clothing causes yet another problem for winter campers. Cotton flannel shirts and jeans should be avoided for camping, according to Spriggs.

When cotton clothing is wet, it retains water longer than wool garments. If clothing becomes too damp, it takes away heat from the body faster than can be replenished, according to Spriggs. This condition, known as hypothermia manifests itself through dizziness, sluggishness and loss of coordination.

CAMPERS suffering from this condition should be placed in a warm area as soon as possible. If dry clothing is unavailable, hypothermia can be alleviated by putting the victim in a sleep-

ing bag with another person, says Spriggs.

Hypothermia strikes when the temperature is between 30-50 degrees because campers become lax against chills, according to Spriggs.

Stay-at-homes are faced with another winter problem—frozen water pipes. If the problem is tackled incorrectly, fire results, says Maddison.

Winter house fires can be caused by homeowners using torches to thaw frozen water pipes.

Heating tape can be effective if the frozen spot in the pipe system is known. But if the tape is plugged in and allowed to heat random parts of the pipe, it can overheat the metal and cause a fire either in the immediate area of the treatment or further down the pipeline, according to Maddison.

This problem is complicated by the placement of the pipes. In some homes, water pipes are placed in crawl spaces under the structure. The heat tape can handle dry wood or debris that has settled in the crawl space, cautioned Maddison.



Dick Young of the Benchmark demonstrates the correct procedure for lighting a camping stove. Fuel should be stored in a seamless container. The stove should be turned off while refueling. (Staff photo by Harry Mauthe)

## HUDSON'S FEBRUARY HOME SHOW AND SALE

JOHN LESLIE  
MIRROR  
SCULPTURES FOR  
YOUR WALL, NOW  
AT SAVINGS  
\$119

Regularly \$135 each, we show only three of a collection of six. Choose just one, or go dramatic by creating your own exciting design with two or more. It's a simple but exceedingly effective way to reflect your tastes at home or office. 198 units\* in the six 18x36" wall sculptures. Hudson's Contemporary Mirrors, all stores except Westland, Pontiac, Southland, Flint and Grand Rapids.

\*Total units available at Metropolitan Detroit Hudson's stores while quantities last.

**hudson's**



### NEW HOURS

Open Monday through Saturday: Northland, Eastland, Pontiac 9:30 till 6:00 p.m.; Westland, Oakland, Southland and Twelve Oaks 10 till 9; Farmington, Livonia and Ann Arbor 10 till 9:30. Downtown open 9:30 till 5:45.

### On the bill

Mr. Whodini joins another 17 acts on Feb. 17 for the New Farmington Community Band's "Big All-Sports and Variety Show" to begin at 7:30 p.m. in Harrison High School's auditorium.

Tickets are \$3 for adults, \$2 for senior citizens and students through Bill Conroy, 474-3511. The benefit will raise money to provide free concerts in the community.