

THE SACRAMENTO BEE



sacbee.com

Outdoor gear: How to stuff an outdoor stocking

By Mark Yuasa
Seattle Times

Published: Thursday, Dec. 11, 2008 - 12:00 am | Page 3D

Only a couple weeks remain before Christmas, and for those who have an outdoor lover on their list, here are some gifts worth putting under the tree or getting as a stocking stuffer:

THE JET BOIL PERSONAL COOKING SYSTEM

(\$79.90-\$99.95) is an innovative and backpack-friendly cooking system. Unlike heavy vacuum bottles and clunky stoves, Jetboil's key lies in coupling heat-transfer technology with a design that's easy to use. Plus, it boils two cups of water in a couple of minutes.

The compact design (15-ounce weight with 32-ounce capacity) makes for easy storage. Each Jetpower Fuel canister provides ample energy to boil 100 cups of water. Details: www.amazon.com.

THE TIE BOSS BRAND INSTANT LOCK-AND- RELEASE ROPE SYSTEM

makes raising or tying down loads quick, simple and safe. The design easily allows campers to keep food and other items up and away from critters on the ground; hunters can easily hang their big game from a tree; and bikers can raise their bicycles from the clutter of the garage.

The bolt-through design increases strength and prevents the unit from failing during heavy lifting. Other uses include tarp and vehicle tie-downs, hauling, and boating and sailing.

The 1/4-inch Tie Boss costs \$14.99; the 3/8-inch unit is \$19.99; and the 3/8-inch tie-down with the block-and tackle-assembly goes for \$49.99. Details: 877-900-2677 or www.tieboss.com.

Scuba divers can increase their kick with the

AQUA LUNG'S SLINGSHOT FINS

(\$219). Unlike any other fin on the market, these offer increased power and propulsion as well as comfort and custom-fit settings. These fins propel a diver with little effort, saving energy and lengthening your time underwater. Details: www.aqualung.com. Sacramento-area stores listed as dealers include Sport Chalet and Dolphin Swim and Scuba Center.

Caught a big fish and want to know how much it weighs? The

BERKLEY DIGITAL FISH SCALE

(\$17.96) can get the job done. The extremely accurate, water-resistant functions include a 10-weight memory, average and combined weight feature. An auto-off switch maximizes battery life. It weighs fish up to 50 pounds. Details: www.amazon.com. Look for them at some Wal-Mart stores and at the Bass Pro Shop in Manteca.

The easy-to-carry

THERMAREST TRAIL LITE

(\$49.95) insulation pad is the perfect creature comfort to put under the sleeping bag for a restful night in the woods. The compact size (weighs 1 pound, 15 ounces; 20 by 60 inches) makes it easy to bring along on a campout. Details: www.amazon.com.

One of the 10 essentials to take on a backpacking adventure is a signal mirror, and

COGHLAN'S SIGHT-GRID SIGNAL MIRROR

(\$12.99) is great for backpacking light, traveling to remote locations and signaling rescue planes. The shatter-resistant mirror can signal up to 25 miles on a clear day. Plus, it floats. To find a retailer, go to www.coghlan.com/search/index.php.

Chatting around a campfire is a timeless tradition on camping trips, and

FUNKY COLORED FLAMES

(\$5.88) by Winlow Products adds a new twist that puts on an impressive colorful light show. The easy to use packet of crystals are environmentally friendly, and are poured over the top of a campfire. They then start to burn, creating a show of colors that will radiate the fire for about 30 minutes. The small packet is also easier than carrying a Duraflame log on a campout. The product is available at Target or Wal-Mart or online at www.campingworld.com.