

**Build “Wild Goose”
A Sturdy Overnight Trailer**
by Vic Goortzen

Popular Mechanics
April 1953

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BUILD "WILD GOOSE"

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By Vic Goertzen

OVERNIGHT CAMPERS, hunters, fishermen and vacationers with limited time can appreciate the convenience, comfort and ready roadability of "Wild Goose." Hung low to the ground, yet with ample road clearance for the back trails, it tows anywhere your car will go. Keep it packed with the necessary bedding, also canned and dried foods and you can get away for a week-end trip in only a few minutes' time. When you arrive at the destination, Wild Goose sets up into a neat outdoor "kitchenette" in less time than it takes to put up a tent.

Looking over the details on the following pages you will note that the construction of this streamlined job differs somewhat from ordinary trailer construction. Where adaptations must be made only a few general dimensions have been given. Because the unit has been designed for road speeds up to 60 m.p.h. care must

be taken when assembling the welded chassis frame. When notching the channel-steel side frames to form the first bend, cut the notches accurately so the meeting edges fit snugly before welding. The gusset plates should be at least 12 in. long, and at the forward end of the drawbar where the reverse bends open the cuts made in the channel webs it's a good idea to weld in

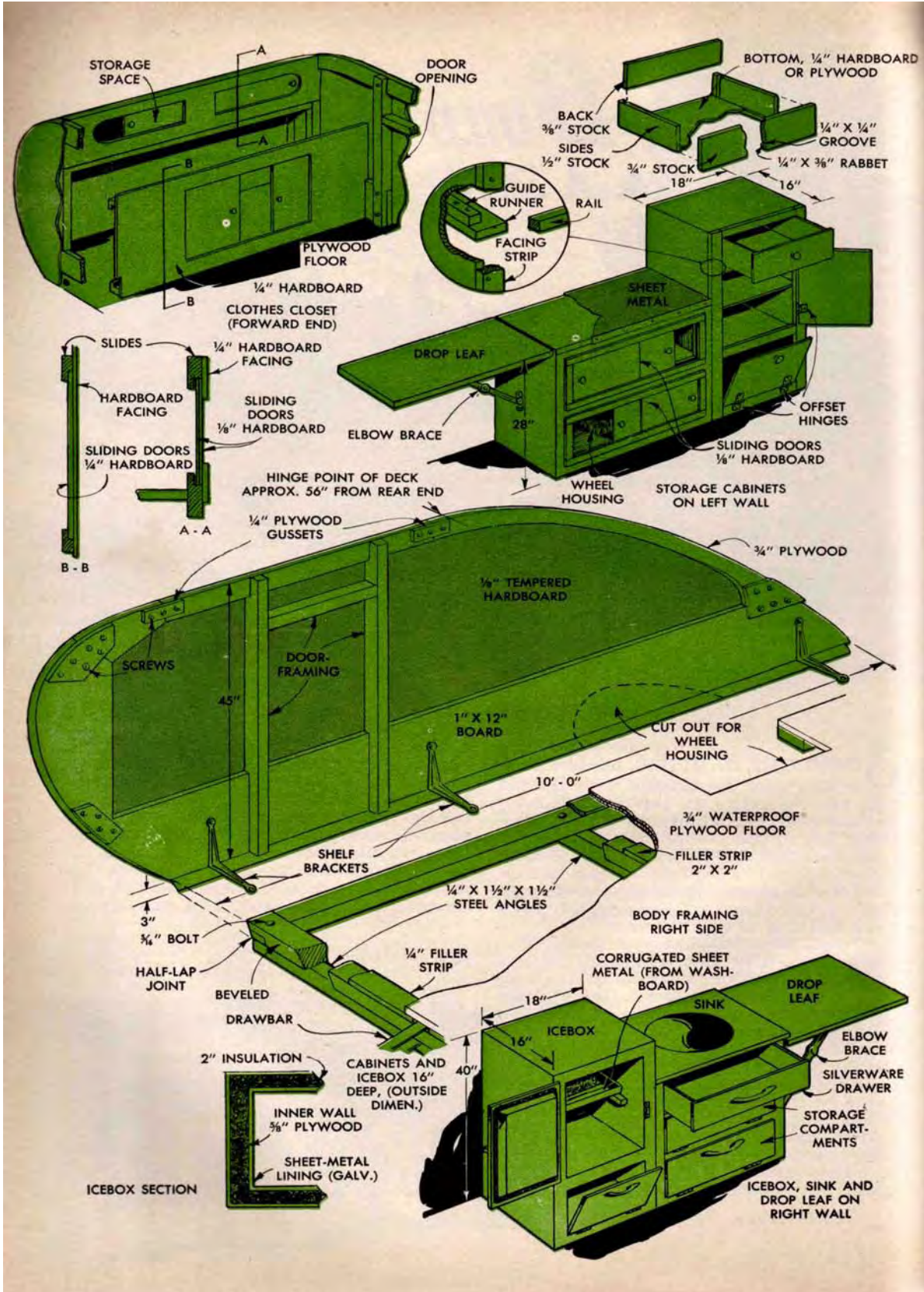


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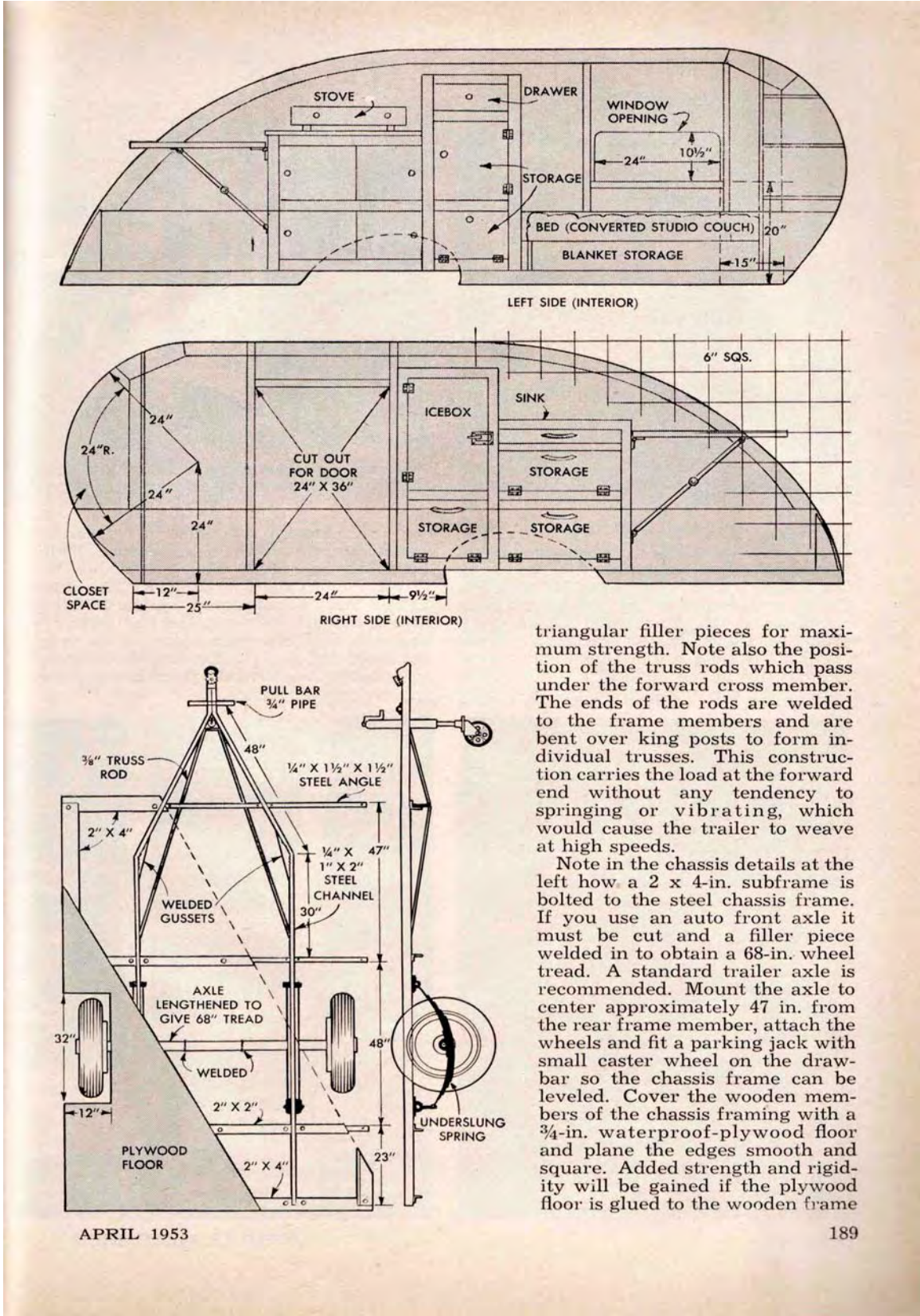


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triangular filler pieces for maximum strength. Note also the position of the truss rods which pass under the forward cross member. The ends of the rods are welded to the frame members and are bent over king posts to form individual trusses. This construction carries the load at the forward end without any tendency to springing or vibrating, which would cause the trailer to weave at high speeds.

Note in the chassis details at the left how a 2 x 4-in. subframe is bolted to the steel chassis frame. If you use an auto front axle it must be cut and a filler piece welded in to obtain a 68-in. wheel tread. A standard trailer axle is recommended. Mount the axle to center approximately 47 in. from the rear frame member, attach the wheels and fit a parking jack with small caster wheel on the drawbar so the chassis frame can be leveled. Cover the wooden members of the chassis framing with a 3/4-in. waterproof-plywood floor and plane the edges smooth and square. Added strength and rigidity will be gained if the plywood floor is glued to the wooden frame

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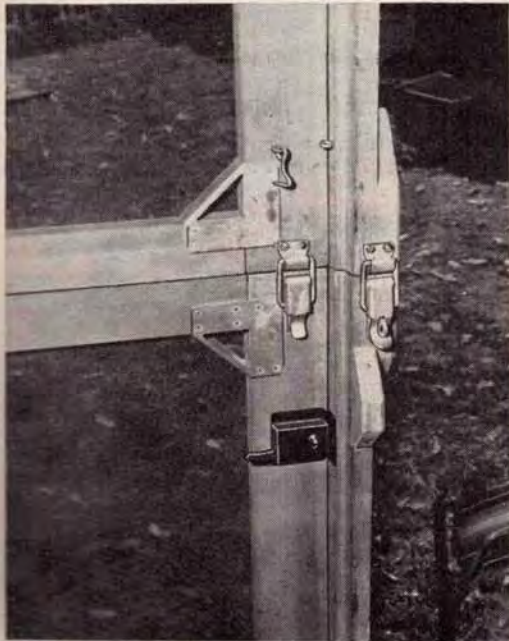
Fabric walls enclosing kitchen area are attached with grommets and turn buttons. Use heavy awning cloth



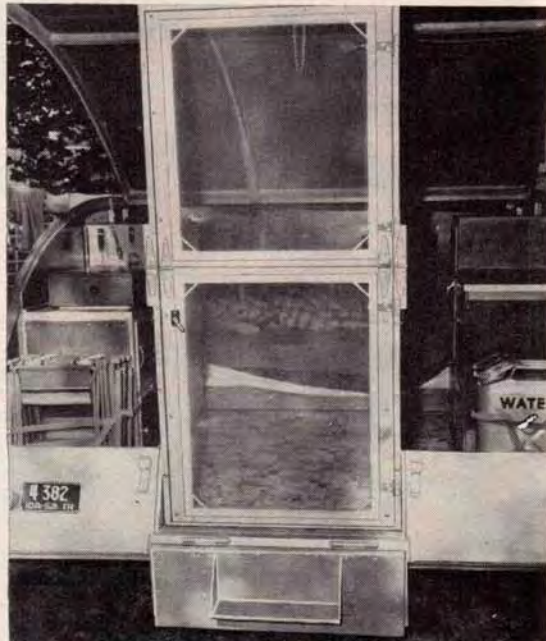
All set up at vacation, hunting or fishing camp, with cooking and sleeping accommodations for two persons

members with a waterproof glue and fastened with 1½-in. F.H. screws spaced about 4 in. apart. Next, assemble the sides as in the detail drawings on pages 188 and 189. These are assembled separately and then attached to the floor with heavy shelf brackets. Cross ribs, or "rafters," are put in after the sides are attached and braced temporarily in the vertical position. Now note in the center detail on the preceding

page, showing the right side, that the cross-hatched portion of the side measures 66 in. from the rear end. This establishes the hinge point of the curved deck. The latter raises and is supported on the folding screen-door frame as in the photos above and below. This gives standing room at the sink and stove. The area is enclosed with fabric walls made from heavy awning material as shown.



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Probably the best method of making the sides is to lay out the profiles full-size on a single sheet of heavy wrapping paper made by taping together several widths to get the required size. Then cut the side panels from $\frac{1}{8}$ -in. hardboard. Assemble the frame members on the panel as detailed, cut them to fit, then glue and screw each piece to the panel. Note that the joints are strengthened with plywood gussets attached with glue and screws. Locate the openings for the door and window and cut away the panel. Add the top and bottom frame members for the window and the top member over the door opening. Then attach with shelf brackets to the plywood floor and brace temporarily in the upright position. Be sure that the sides are braced perpendicular to the bottom.

Locate and mark the hinge point of the curved deck on both sides. Some builders may wish to place the hinge point farther forward to gain more headroom at the refrigerator and sink. If you purchase sink, refrigerator and cabinets ready-made this may be advisable. In any case the center rib is located with its back face at the hinge point. Openings for the wheel housings can be cut into the side panels and the metal housings fitted in place. The housings are raised into position and the lips screwed to the floor. It's a good idea to coat edges of the plywood with a waterproof mastic before placing the housings. At this point cut four $\frac{3}{4}$ -in. plywood ribs for the deck. Cut the ribs 2 in. wide and about 2 in. longer than the measurement and to the same contour as the curved rear half of the sides. Some handwork will be necessary to assure a true fit at the front and rear where the sides join the floor. Keep in mind that waterproof glue is used in all joints in addition to screws.

The first forward rib is located approximately 15 in. from the floor. Now, before you go further, measure and cut the two covering pieces from $\frac{1}{8}$ -in. tempered hardboard, using 4 x 8-ft. panels. After cutting to the required width, allowing $1\frac{1}{8}$ -in. overhang on both sides and a 2-in. overlap at the joint, place the parts in position and locate the rib under the overlap. Glue and screw the rib in position. Two other ribs are installed equidistant between the three already in place. Now install the covering pieces, beginning with the front piece. Pre-fit this piece at the front edge, notching over the drawbar members and trimming the edge flush. Then spread glue, clamp in place and drive screws at the lower edge first. An exceptionally neat job of attaching the covering can be had by using oval-headed screws turned in over finishing washers. Otherwise use roundheaded screws spaced about 2 in. apart.

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Space under studio couch provides for storage of a spare tire and also clothing and sporting equipment



Above, there's ample space on the metal-topped cabinet for a camp stove. Below, refrigerator and sink cabinet with drop leaf occupy right wall of trailer

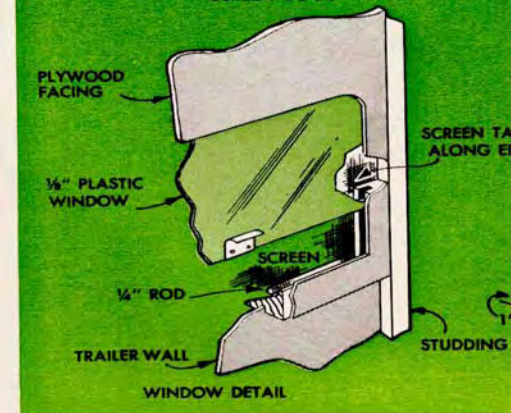
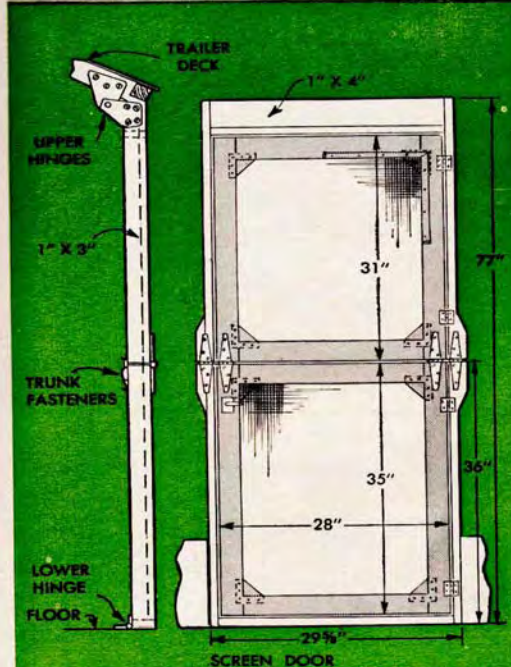


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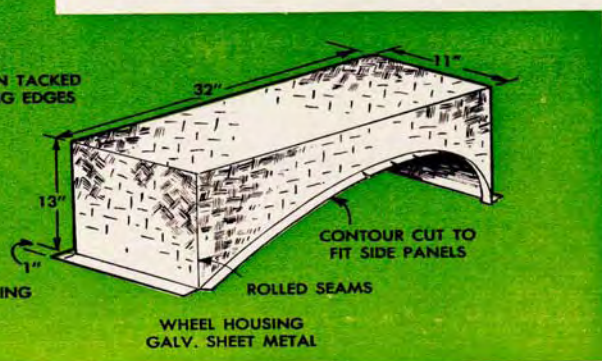
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Now note in the upper and lower right-hand photos on page 190 the folding step and the fixed panels on each side. The side panels are approximately 11½ in. high and are screwed and glued to 2 x 4-in. posts bandsawed to the contour of the trailer sides and screwed and glued to the bottom with the outer edges ⅞ in. from the trailing edge of the floor. Space between the inner posts should be 29⅝ in., which is the width of the doorframe. Fit ¾ x 12-in. plywood panels over the posts and attach with screws and glue. Cover the wooden panels with ⅛-in.-hardboard panels cut to extend down over the rear edge of the floor and floor supports. The step panel is cut from ¾-in. plywood to fit between the posts and is hinged to the rear chassis member. The outer face of the hinged panel is covered with ⅛-in. hardboard extending ½ in. at the top and ends. The original step was made by cutting, bending and welding ⅝-in. steel to form the unit pictured. It is attached to the hinged panel with screws.

At this stage the curved deck can be made and fitted in place. The ribs, which have already been cut, can now be fitted individually. Cross ribs are butt-joined to the outer curved ribs but are half-lapped over the center ribs. Join all ribs to a 2 x 2-in. cross member at the ends. Before covering with ⅛-in. hardboard, check the fit of the deck frame in the opening. It should fit snugly without binding at any point. Now attach the covering pieces, beginning at the forward end of the frame, in the same manner as those on the front of the trailer. Slide the edge of the second piece under the edge of the first one to form an overlap directly over the center cross rib. When driving the screws make sure that the hardboard does not buckle and that the overhang on each side is the same. Hinge the completed deck in place, using four butt hinges equally spaced across the width. Cover the joint with two thicknesses of waterproof canvas cut into 4-in. strips and tacked or screwed over the



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joint. Spread calking compound under the first strip and fold the edges of both strips as they are tacked. Do not use glue as it may be necessary to renew the canvas covering after several seasons of service.

Details on page 188 show the clothes closet built into the forward end of the trailer body, also the storage cabinets on the right and left walls. The closet is of simple construction, and there can be some variation in the position of the parts. Sections A-A and B-B show how the sliding doors are fitted. Dimension and position the parts according to the space occupied by the studio couch you use for a bed. Cabinets are made from plywood with facing strips of solid stock. The design of the cabinets can be altered to suit the builder's requirements. Only a portion of the lower compartments can be used for storage, as the cabinets are built over the wheel housings. Ready-made unpainted cabinets can be adapted by removing the lower drawer, cutting away a portion of the back and fitting a hinged door over the drawer opening. Small iceboxes also are available.

Although a method of constructing a window with a plastic pane is detailed on the opposite page, it is recommended that a ready-made unit be purchased. The door in the right side of the trailer is framed with 1 x 2-in. stock and covered with 1/8-in. hardboard. The door is weather-stripped with felt and is made watertight with an aluminum T-molding and metal drip trough.

The two-piece screen door, detailed on the opposite page, supports the deck when in the upright position and is hinged to fold inward as the deck is lowered. When in the raised, or open, position the door opens as a single unit. The upper door-frame hinges, shown in the side view, are made from 1/16-in. flat-steel plates riveted together loosely for free movement and drilled for screws. Considerable hand fitting of the assembly will be required in order to assure free movement of the door and its folding frame. The door swings outward on four butt hinges as shown in the detail. The fabric walls enclosing the kitchen area when the deck is raised are cut to fit and are provided with equally spaced grommets for attachment to the deck and body as in the upper photos on page 190. If desired, an awning also can be provided as in one of the photos.

To finish, apply an undercoater and two coats of outdoor enamel. Joints in the body covering are concealed with aluminum moldings applied after finishing. Wire the trailer for a 110-volt lighting circuit for convenience in trailer courts. Use 6-volt screw-base bulbs for car-battery operation of lights. Provide clearance reflectors, tail-light and license-plate holder. ★ ★ ★

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Pipe Used as Sanding Block For Scrollwork

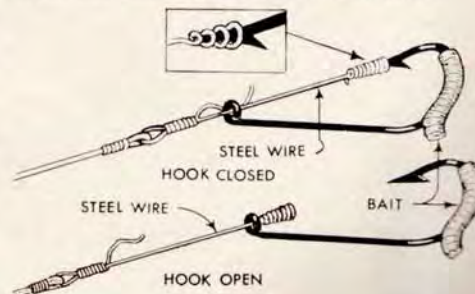


When sanding the edge of an inside curve or circle, the work goes much faster and easier if the sandpaper is wrapped around a piece of pipe about 6 in. long. The diameter of the pipe will depend on the radius of the curve to be sanded. Using the pipe also helps to keep the sandpaper square with the work.

Robert A. Hicks, Garden City, N. Y.

Fishhook Has Sliding Wire Guard To Prevent Snagging on Weeds

A short length of thin, spring-steel wire is all you will need to convert a common fishhook into a weedless type. After bending the eye of the fishhook slightly inward, secure one end of the wire to the fishline, pass the other end through the eye and coil to fit over the point as shown. When finished, the wire should be just long enough to allow the leftover strand where connected to the line to be slipped through the eye and bent up as shown to hold the coil over the point. In use, a quick yank on the line as soon as any tugging is felt overcomes the wire catch and pulls the coil from the point inside the fish's mouth.



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