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KATIE MCDOWELL

'Sopranos' binge leads to dreams of the mafia life

LAST NIGHT, SOME friends and I tracked down a group of people who were hornin' in on our illegal high school scam and taught them a pretty harsh lesson. Name-ly, don't horn in on other people's illegal high school scams.

The instruction tended mostly toward screaming in Italian and punching people hard. Though, little explanation was offered by my brain as to what exactly an illegal high school scam might entail.

The night before that, my buddies and I broke up a drug ring, in much the same style. Not because we had a problem with drugs, but because they were ruining their own drug ring and, in our businesses — as in, *The Business* — that's a big no-no.

And the night before that, well, let's just say a certain pal of mine made a drastic misstep, and my bestie Tony and I were forced to take some rather serious measures in the back offices of the Bada Bing. Like, murderous measures.

All this, while I slept.

This is the byproduct of binge watching six seasons of "The Sopranos" in a matter of about a week.

That's 86 hours of mob-related programming, folks. Seven dozen episodes packed with beatings, goomers, questionable life choices, track suits and gold chains. Not to mention a more than healthy dose of killin'.

I've been so immersed in the lives of these gangsters that, during my annual family trip to Watoga State Park, I spent most of my time missing my pretend family. Or, more aptly, Family.

In fact, the first thing I did once I was back in civilization was to fire up the Roku and pick up exactly where I'd left off before leaving town.

No shower to wash the woods off my skin. No changing into non-campfire-scented clothes. No putting away of the stuff in the cooler. No unpacking the car.

Just straight to the couch with a box of take-out pasta in my hand, to catch up with my favorite bunch of mobsters.

Do not pass go, do not collect \$200. Go directly to TV and watch them collect lots more than that, by brute force and gunfire. Yay!

I had yearned for them so while I was away.

This is how I am when I binge. Their lives become my life (which is convenient, as I obviously don't have one of my own). I dream about the characters every night. I talk about them like they're my friends. I analyze them and, in my more particularly annoying moments, copy their phrases and habits.

I'm not saying it's even remotely tolerable to be around. It's just how I roll.

Sadly, my darling Sopranos are gone now, as I wrapped up the last season on Friday. And as always happens when I finish a series, I'm feeling a bit bummed about it. After all, I spent a bunch of time with these guys. They entertained me, when I was too lazy to entertain myself.

So, like, now what?

Luckily, the second installment of Netflix's "Bloodline" has started, so I can become obsessed with the Rayburn family, without too much time left to my own leisure-activity (and real-life friends and family) devices.

That covers me for 13 hours, at least.

After which, thankfully, I only have a few days to wait to dive right in to season four of "Orange Is the New Black," and become reacquainted with my prison peeps.

I'm already looking forward to getting into all kinds of crazy jail shenanigans with Piper and the gang.

I just hope I don't have to rough anyone up right away.

My dream knuckles are still really sore.

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High-tech camping

New gadgets, equipment make it easier to rough it



MetroCreative photo

New gadgets on the market make it easier than ever to enjoy some time in the woods.

BY MADISON FLECK

The Dominion Post

Summer in wild and wonderful West Virginia means one thing: Enjoying the beauty of the outdoors.

Before heading out into the wilderness to brave the elements, preparing with up-to-date equipment can make camping more efficient and enjoyable. As new camping technologies emerge, sleeping outside doesn't have to mean roughing it.

The *Dominion Post* has composed a list of the newest, packable gadgets and equipment for camping adventures in the Mountain State.

Osprey Atmos AG and Aura AG backpack series

This backpack series for men and women has several features, making it light and comfortable for the user. Its Anti-Gravity suspension and mesh harness makes the pack lightweight and evenly distributes the weight on the user's back.

"You hardly notice it's on your back," said Andrew Walker, Pathfinder store manager. "It spreads the weight out pretty evenly. You don't feel like you have 40 pounds of weight on your back; you feel like you're just walking around in the woods."

Walker said the backpack is one of the nicest packs the store offers.

This series is available at Pathfinder located on High Street and costs \$230 for the 50L pack and \$260 for the 65L pack.

Mountain Hardware Ratio and Heratio down sleeping bags

These sleeping bags have both a men's and women's models and are insulated with down that can withstand the often damp weather in West Virginia.

Typical down sleeping bags often take time to dry when they get wet, which according to Walker, is their biggest downside. However, the Ratio and Heratio models allow the user to enjoy the comfort of down without having to worry about getting it wet.

"The biggest thing with dry down isn't so much that you can go to sleep outside without a tent and not worry about getting wet," Walker said. "The biggest reason for it is it does a better job at keeping you comfortable in a variety of different temperature ranges."

The Ratio and Heratio bags are available at Pathfinder and sell at \$230 for the regular size and \$250 for the long size.

MSR PocketRocket backpacking stove

This camping stove is one of the smallest stoves on the market, weighing just more than three ounces. The stove can boil one liter of water in less than four minutes, using butane as its power source.

Once lit, the flame is adjustable and able to heat up to boiling levels.

"It's not your full-blown recre-



Madison Fleck/The Dominion Post photos

Bill Branbow (above), an associate at Pathfinder, demonstrates the strength of the Mountain Hardware Ratio down sleeping bag series. The Osprey Atmos backpack series (at left) contains a mesh back and waist belt to help distribute weight evenly. Pathfinder, an outdoors shop on High Street, offers technology for the outdoors with its GoalZero solar chargers (below).



Pathfinder and sells for about \$100.

Sawyer Mini Water Filter

This water filter eliminates the need to tote heavy, large amounts of drinking water. This water filtration system is small, portable and removes 99.99 percent of bacteria, meaning that as long as there's a water source, drinking water is available.

"It pretty much fits right in your pocket," Schury said. "It's just as drinkable as it would be coming out of your faucet."

The system uses Carbon filters to treat the water, making it safe to drink.

The Sawyer water filter is available at Field & Stream in Washington, Pa.

ational stove," said Chuck Schury, a sales associate at Field & Stream. "They're small though, about the size of a softball."

This stove is available at Pathfinder, Dick's Sporting Goods and Field & Stream and sells for \$39.99.

Goal Zero Venture 30 recharger

For those who can't go without their phones and laptops, this charger uses solar energy or a USB port to charge itself and is then ready to charge

other devices.

"Once it's on full charge, you can throw it in your backpack and charge your laptop, you can charge your cell phone [and] you can charge your headlamp," Walker said. "Basically, you get three or four iPhone charges out of it."

Walker said this charger allows the user to use mobile devices, even when out of the service provider's range.

"I like it because I can still take pictures and listen to music," he said.

The charger is available at