

# The Great Olivier Newsletter

*Vol 1:  
Dogs | Power Snacks | Winter Real Estate*

*Welcome to the inaugural Great Olivier Newsletter. Let's try this out! No guarantees how long this will last, but I'm keen to try. This month's edition, we're talking about my new album "Dogs For Emma", a tasty snack to power your outdoor adventures, and how to expand your real estate property by building (winter snow shelters).*



## **Dogs For Emma - Out Now**

“Dogs For Emma” is now available on bandcamp and on most streaming services! It’s been a crazy trip recording this album and I’m pretty relived, satisfied and happy that it’s finally floating around the internet for anyone to listen to. Speaking about those online streaming services...

There’s been a lot of debate recently regarding spotify. Loud guy with very popular podcast (which spotify paid \$100 million for broadcasting rights) went head to head with cultural/ musical superheroes Neil Young and Joni Mitchell and after the dust settled, Neil Young and Joni Mitchell announced that they were pulling their catalogues from the service. I’ve been reading a lot of great commentary from some dear musician friends (shout out to [Laura Sauvage](#) for her great posts) and the main takeaway I would like to share is that it’s important to remember that 99.9999% of musicians on spotify don’t make any money. There’s many factors out there as to why this is (and that’s a conversation for another day), but I think we should all remember that most musicians on spotify make about \$0.003 per stream. If I ever get 10 000 plays on a song, that will translate to 30\$. Hardly sustainable....

[Here's a good article about this by Pitchfork.](#)

So, if you find yourself going back to the same artists on spotify, please consider going to their [bandcamp](#) page and paying for one of their albums. Every single purchase, no matter how small makes a HUGE difference to these musicians.

On a happier note, I've done a few interviews promoting the album, but the best just happened a few days ago on [Instant Fire Escape / CJUC FM](#) here in Whitehorse. The hosts got me to play trumpet in the background while they were talking, making it hard for listeners to hear anything. We're calling it trumpetcore and it's obnoxiously awesome.

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## **Powerballs - Adventure Fuel**

These snacks are super easy to make, and are great for any big winter adventure. When you're adventuring in the cold, you need energy to fuel your muscles, but you also need glucose/simple sugars to help your body generate heat. When you're moving lots, this usually isn't a big problem, but as soon as you stop you'll find yourself cooling off faster than you'd think and having a hard time warming up no matter how many layers you put on. Eat some of these powerballs and feel the difference!

*Best paired with a thermos of hot tea sweetened with a little honey/syrup, a puffy down jacket, and a foam butt pad to sit on.*

### **Ingredients**

- 1/2 cup rolled oats (large flake or quick oats)
- 1/3 cup coconut flakes
- 1/4 cup ground flax seed
- 1/4 cup chocolate chips
- 1/4 cup chopped dates
- 1/2 Tbsp honey
- 1/4 cup peanut butter
- 1 tsp vanilla extract

*Combine all the ingredients in a bowl, roll into 1" balls, and chill in the refrigerator for 15min. Makes 4-6 small balls. Store in the freezer or fridge and let them warm up in your pack during your adventure.*

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# Winter Real Estate - How to build a quinz(h)ee

*quin-zhee*

*/'kwinzē/*

*noun: quinzee*

*A quinzhee or quinzee is a Canadian snow shelter that is made from a large pile of loose snow which is shaped then hollowed. This is in contrast to an igloo, which is built up from blocks of hard snow, and a snow cave, constructed by digging into the snow. The word is of Athabaskan origin, and entered the English language by 1984. A quinzhee can be made for winter camping and survival purposes, or for fun.*

Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Quinzhee>

A quinzee is a super fun snow shelter that's incredibly warm, pretty easy to make, and fun as heck! Throughout many personal trips and outdoor education adventures, I've helped build dozens of quinzees and they are so awesome! Fun facts:

- They're super warm! I've slept outside in -30°C and it stayed around -1°C inside the quinzee.
- They're strong! I've had 15 teens get on the roof of a quinzee, and it took some major stomping before the roof broke.
- Everyone loves quinzees, that's a fact.

I'm going to explain how to make a quinzee Alain Dallaire style. He's teacher here in Whitehorse that showed me a unique technique that builds quinzees faster and easier than the classic method. I've yet to find any other source that describes this technique so consider this an exclusive.

PRO TIPS: I've been told that you get better snow bonds in -15 to -20°C range. Warmer/wetter snow will stick together easier, but I don't think it as structurally strong.

## STEP 1: Outline your shelter

Stomp/shovel an oval in the snow outlining your structure. For something that sleeps two, you want the width of the quinzee to be about 2.5m wide and 3-4m long. It will seem really big, but think about the space it takes for two people to sleep side by side inside a tent, then add 20-30cm thick snow walls on either side. The thicker the walls, the stronger and warmer the quinzee will be.

## STEP 2: The never ending pile

Start shovelling snow onto your outline. It's going to take a LONG time, so take lots of breaks and pace yourself. A critically important part is that every 15-30 minutes you need to go on top of the snow pile and stomp it down. This is best done with snowshoes but boots work too.

It's going to be really disheartening to see all your work get crushed to nothing, but this is key. The snow stomping is compressing all those snow layers together and making the bonds between crystals very strong.

Continue shovelling and compressing the snow until you think it's a big enough snow pile, then repeat 100x.

## STEP 3: Is it big enough? Are we done yet?

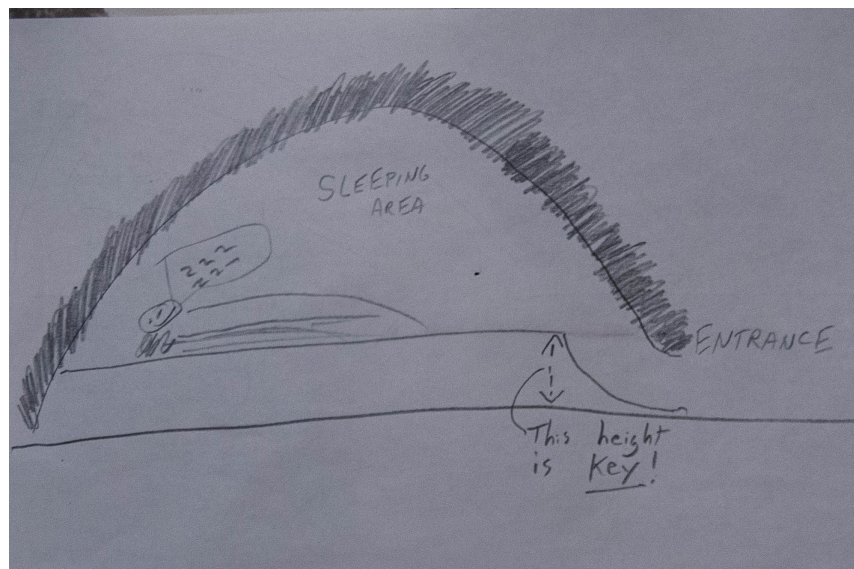
The answer is no. Keep shovelling and compressing. The bigger the snow pile, the easier it will be to carve out. Trust me on this one. You'll want your snow pile to be at least as tall as your average bro/bro-dette. I'm 5'10" and I'll make my quinzee as tall as I am.

Don't forget to keep compacting that snow!

## STEP 4: Planning the inside

The key to having a warm quinzee is to have the platform you sleep on higher than the entrance. The classic mistake people make is to have their sleeping platform level with their entrance, which lets cold air freely circulate in and out. Not good.

The easiest way to accomplish this is to dig the sleeping platform **before** digging out the entrance. Trippy right?



## STEP 5: The trench

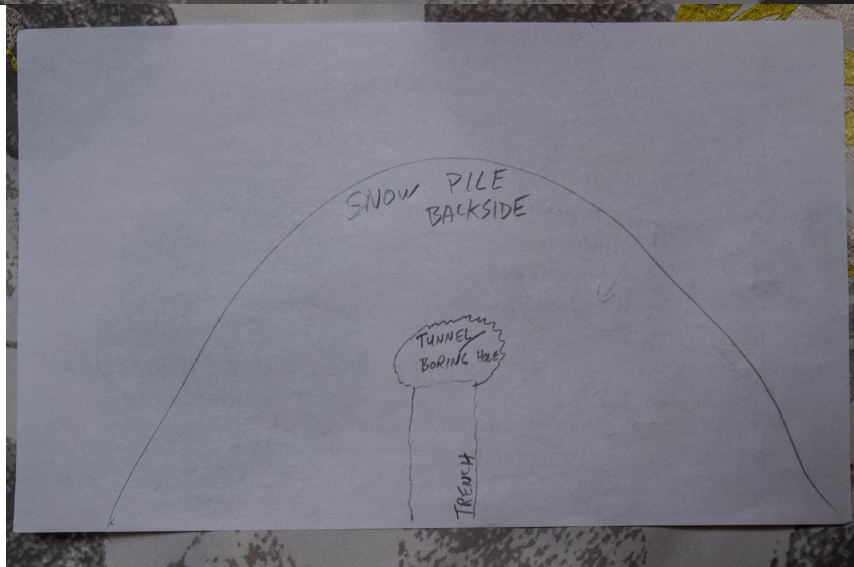
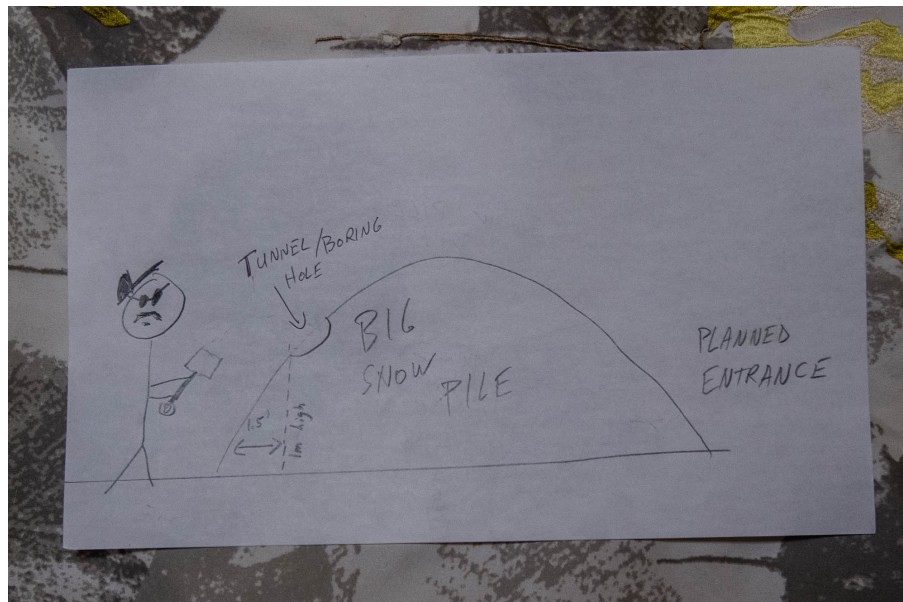
Ok, this is where the magic Alain Dallaire technique comes in. It's hard to visualize, but you gotta believe.

Find one of the long ends of your oval shaped snow pile and pick where you want to have your entrance. If it doesn't matter too much, but if your pile is on a bit of a slope, pick the end that's lower/downslope.

Now for the weird part. Go **to the opposite end of where your planned entrance will be**. You heard me, the opposite end!! Now dig a vertical trench as wide as your body (no wider), about 1.5' into the snow pile, and about 1m high. From there, start digging/boring into the quinzee. You want to be digging into a small window I'm calling the tunnel/boring hole.

By digging out the inside via this boring hole, you're able to dig out a sleeping platform very easily. If you try digging the entrance first, it's almost impossible to get a good platform height and you end up very covered in snow.

Don't worry about having a big hole on the side of your shelter. We'll be patching it up later on.

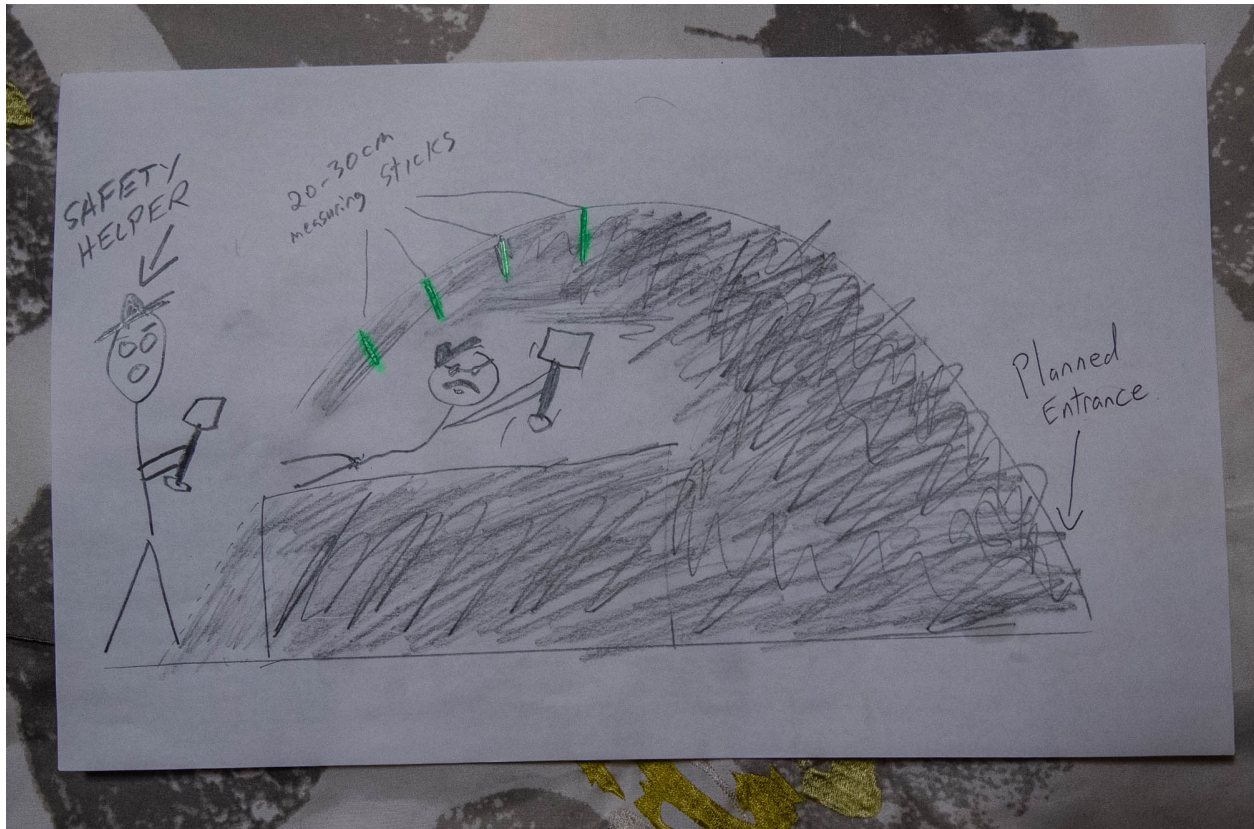


## STEP 6: Carving out the inside

The key to getting a good platform is to dig up, and never down. Resist the urge to dig down to make room as it's very easy drop the floor too low for your entrance. Dig horizontally for about a meter, then start carving out the ceiling and walls.

To ensure that you don't over dig and make your walls too thin, cut out a dozen small, 20-30cm long branches. You can also use long tent pegs if you have them. Then, push them into the quinzee walls from the outside over an area that's being worked on. When the digger reaches them inside, they'll know they've dug far enough. Once a section has been carved out, pull out your measuring sticks and rebury them further along the quinzee.

**IMPORTANT: Always have someone helping you out from the outside and make sure they have a shovel. If anything collapses they'll be able to dig you out.**

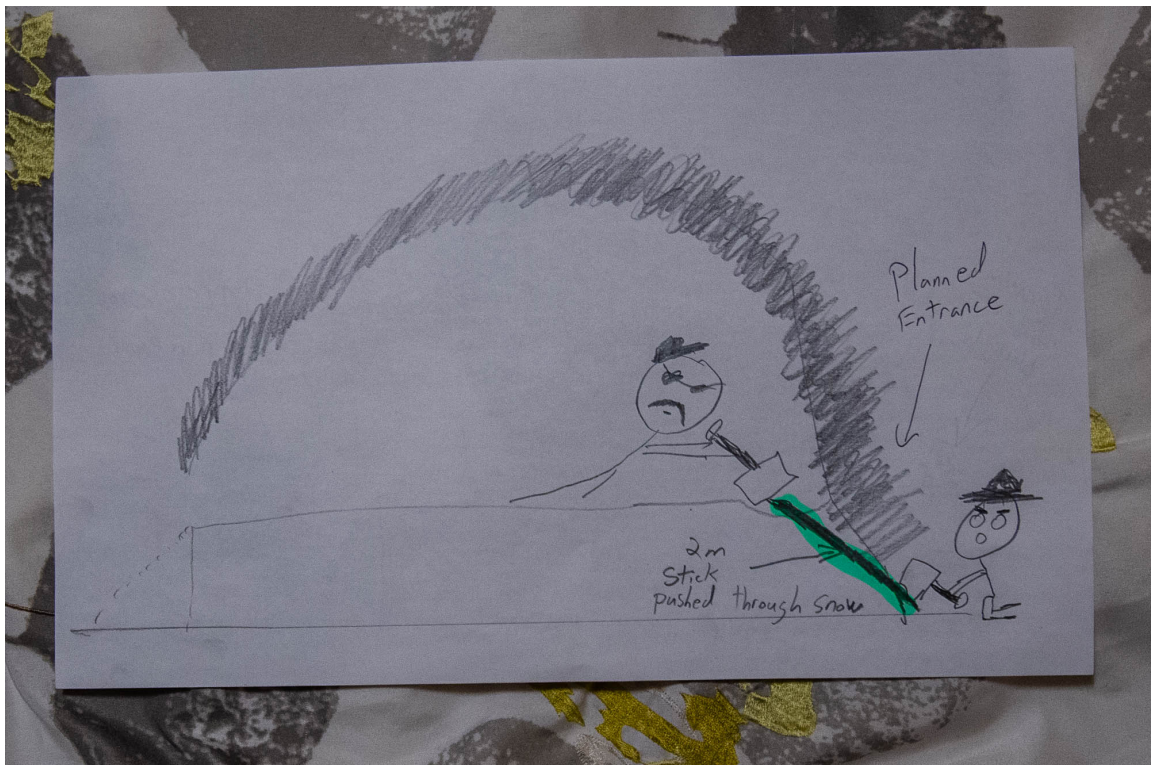


## STEP 7: The Entrance

Alright, now that you've dug out most of the inside, pat yourself on the back. You're almost done. It's smooth sailing from here on out. Crawl inside, go to the end of your quinzee, and start digging down. Have your friend start digging from the outside towards you. The satisfaction of connecting the two tunnels is the absolute greatest!

Make your tunnel only as big as necessary. The smaller and tighter the squeeze, the more warm air will stay trapped inside.

**PRO TIP:** If you've got an avy probe or a long, 2'ish meter straight stick, you can push it through the snow where you want your entrance to go. That way, both diggers have a visual guide for lining up the entrance tunnel.



## STEP 8: Finishing up

YEW! You're almost done! That entrance is sweet! All that's left to do is to block the boring/tunnelling hole. If you look through the snow that you dug out of the quinzee you can usually find some big hard blocks of compressed snow. These are great for filling in the hole. You can also fill the hole by covering it with long branches or tree boughs, then piling snow on top of the branch patch.



Take the time to carve out a nice dome shape inside the quinzee. This will add space and more importantly give lots of structural strength to the shelter. It's also not a bad idea to bore 1-2 small air holes in the ceiling, but I'm not sure that's necessary.

Congratulations! You've built the best quinzee out there! Enjoy a great sleep and some really fun times inside your snow dome :-)

