

# GROW Home, Garden & Outdoors

## Loud indoors but still neighborly

By Steve Tool

Wallowa County Chieftain

You've just arrived home with your fine vintage Fender Bassman amp and after you've plugged in your Les Paul and strike an open E chord, you note the windows rattling followed by a vision of your neighbors' faces filled with rage. Your immediate thought is of the neighbors frantically dialing 911 with a noise complaint. Enterprise does have a post-10 p.m. noise ordinance, which is why the Juniper Jam Music Festival ends before 10 p.m.

You could turn down the amp's volume, but any old salt with a guitar knows a tube amp doesn't sound right unless the volume is turned up. You can say the same about any Led Zeppelin album. So what can you do to appreciate your music properly? According to local musician and recording aficionado Bob Webb, you may not have a lot of options.

"What you have to worry about, are bass frequencies. Those are what bleed out. If you're just playing acoustic guitar, it's not bad. Amplified electric is a different story. High frequencies you can



Sound recorder and musician Bart Budwig handles a 2 x 4 foot piece of OwensCorning fiberglass baffle material, excellent for muffling sound.

seal off pretty quickly as long as there are no open sound leaks," Webb said.

Because sound decreases in an inverse proportion to the distance from the source, Webb said keeping your amp as far as possible from the neighbor's wall is a start. And again, bass frequencies travel farthest, so turning down the bass can help slightly as well.

One of the problems with bass frequencies is that they travel through just about ev-

erything, including the floor. He suggested listening to see how much sound outside your space leaks in and figure more sound will leak from your area to the outside.

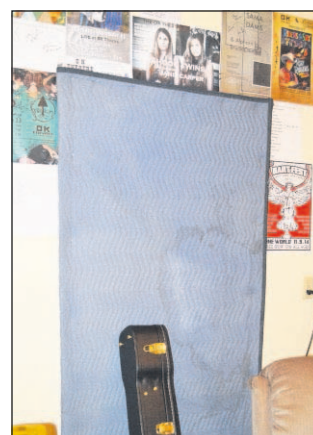
"Any air space you see, underneath a door for example, means sound will go right through that space. The door itself will transmit low frequencies depending on if it's a hollow door or a solid door. If you've got a window open, you're spreading sound out," Webb said.

People who think their exterior wall insulation is soundproofing their home are mistaken. Webb said that because both edges of the framing studs are touching opposite walls, the studs just transfer the sound from one wall to the other. "The sheetrock just acts as a vibrating membrane," Webb said. Webb suggests that real soundproofing for musicians without a basement lies in building a "room within a room."



Bart Budwig with a cotton fiber panel. Budwig recommends this material as the best soundproofing material, good for hard-to-muffle bass frequencies and keeping the police or angry neighbors from your door.

Local recording engineer and musician Bart Budwig has suggestions as well, including where to buy material to muffle or deaden sound. He also builds baffle frames which can help deaden a room for recording as well as inhibiting sound from traveling into unwanted areas. "It's really tricky. Basement is the best way to go. The big



Not pretty, but functional. This quilt at Budwig's residence is a temporary sound baffle over a door. It's rolled at the bottom to block sound from getting underneath the door and cover the air space around the door frame as well.

or sound foam to fit inside a window frame can help. "With doors, you can attach the edge of a quilt at the top of the door frame and roll the bottom to block the sound from escaping through the air space between the door and floor. Sealing the windows and doors is the best thing you can do," Budwig said.

He also suggested cutting a piece of plywood the same size as the windows and attaching insulation as thick as the window casing depth as a temporary solution. Fiberglass insulation can be bought locally and Budwig said Owens-Corning and Rockport are two popular brands. He also said bookcases, sofas and record shelves are good sound absorbers.

Cotton fiber baffle panels work even better although they are not available locally. Budwig buys it in two-by-four-foot sheets, two inches thick. "It's affordable, I got six panels for about \$100 including shipping," Budwig said. He added to cover the cotton fiber with a cloth because it has a tendency to slough off.

ATS Acoustics makes the panels, and Budwig gets them through Amazon for a slightly lower price. He added that most of the panels offered by ATS can be cut to custom sizes for different window frames, and he suggested musicians build their own frames for the material as buying pre-framed panels is expensive.

Both Webb and Budwig emphasized that filling airspace can help keep the police from knocking on your door. But Webb ended his interview with a jocular warning, "Air-tight equals sound-tight. Just don't suffocate yourself."

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## Adding a Storage Shed

Even the largest of homes needs an effective outdoor storage space. With today's

engineering advancements and focus on functional usage, outdoor sheds have advanced beyond storing tools and garden gadgets.

### Why Add a Shed?

Storage is the number one reason most people consider adding a storage shed to their property. As many homeowners with growing families understand, space is always at a premium. And the more land you own, the more storage space you need for all the equipment required to maintain it.

Sheds are easy to build and even easier to install if you use the services of a small building manufacturer. These types of companies have enjoyed recent spikes in popularity because of the options for customization by their customers. From the building materials to the interior design, you can sit down with a small building consultant to construct the perfect unit for your needs.



### Multi-Purpose

Maybe you're using your shed building for more than just tool and mower storage. Other options include a home office, hobby workshop or even a kids' playhouse.

Whatever purpose you plan on employing, it is important to ensure usage of the appropriate materials and construction techniques. Remember that if people are going to go in and out of the shed often, you will want to comply with the same safety and living standards you use in your home.

### Know the Rules

Many towns and cities have specific size limits on sheds and other outdoor units. You may, in fact, need a permit to be building one, even if you own the land.

If you live in a subdivision, you may be required to check with the homeowners association, as there may be by-law requiring prior approval. Once you pass through all the red tape, you will be on your way to building a fully functional unit to enjoy for years to come.



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