



Ultimate Survival HANDBOOK

From Patriot Alliance Messenger

*Highlights From the First 50 Editions
Of the 4Patriots Newsletter*

Ultimate Survival HANDBOOK

From Patriot Alliance Messenger

*Highlights From the First 50 Editions
Of the 4Patriots Newsletter*

Legal Disclaimer

The authors and publishers both disclaim liability regarding any loss or risk incurred as a direct, or indirect, consequence of the application and usage of any of the contents within the Ultimate Survival Handbook.

Copyright

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior permission of the publisher, nor be otherwise circulated in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	1
II.	General Topics	2
III.	Frank's Rants	21
IV.	Preparedness	46
V.	Seeds and Food	89
VI.	Danielle's Recipes	103
VII.	Power	107
VIII.	Water and Air	118
IX.	Healthcare	124
X.	Alternative Medicine	137
XI.	Home and Self-Defense	144
XII.	Firearms	155
XIII.	Privacy	160
XIV.	Government Intrusions	171
XV.	Personal Finances	178
XVI.	Multipurpose Items	188
XVII.	Orrin's Corner	201
XVIII.	Stuff You Need to Know	213
XIX.	Reader Spotlights	220
XX.	Book Reviews	227
XXI.	Short & Sweet	239
XXII.	Conclusion	246

INTRODUCTION

In October 2013, 4Patriots, LLC introduced a new product.

It was very different from other products we had developed, and it would be different from others we would offer through the years.

From day one, it has been known as the *Patriot Alliance Messenger*.

It has always been a full-color, 16-page publication designed to provide our customers and readers with information they can use in their daily lives. The purpose has been mainly to inform, but also to inspire and entertain.

I launched the *Patriot Alliance Messenger* for several reasons. But if I had to pick just one, here's what I'd say. I wanted to be a voice for patriots who wish to see America return to her roots.

Authority figures and government agencies we've been told to trust – from the White House to the Department of Justice to the Internal Revenue Service to the Environmental Protection Agency to the Transportation Security Administration – have repeatedly let us down through the decades with their wrong motives, dishonesty, overreach and plain old un-American behavior.

I wanted to speak out against that. I also wanted to place usable information into your hands in a timely fashion. Information about preparedness and protecting your property, your possessions and your privacy.

And I wanted to offer realistic steps you can take to survive and thrive in the midst of government spying, privacy intrusions, a messed-up healthcare system and the shredding of the U.S. Constitution by those who have no sense of history and no respect for our Founding Fathers.

Well, we've now published more than 50 editions of the *Ultimate Survival Handbook*. In honor of that milestone, I decided to compile what I consider to be some of the most important articles we've published during these past four-plus years.

So, here it is – the ***Ultimate Survival Handbook!***

Here you'll see well over 100 articles we've published in the newsletter on a broad variety of topics over a nearly five-year span. Hope you enjoy it!

Sincerely,



GENERAL TOPICS

Most of the articles we've published in the *Patriot Alliance Messenger* fit neatly into one category or another, such as preparedness, home defense, healthcare, personal finances and much more. Some other articles are more general in nature. That's what you'll find here in this first section.

Why I Started the Patriot Alliance

FROM THE OCTOBER 2013 EDITION

I'm glad our Founding Fathers are dead and buried.

Sounds like a terrible thing to say, right? But just think about it for a moment. Can you imagine what men such as George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton and John Jay would think if they saw what the United States of America has become since the era when they risked their lives to establish the greatest country in world history?

How do you think they would react if they suddenly became aware that the precious freedoms that so many Americans have suffered and died for through the years are being trampled upon by self-centered, self-righteous politicians with about as much sense

of history as a buzzing fly born yesterday?

What do you think they would say if they realized that the U.S. government and its agencies want to take away Americans' Second Amendment rights to bear arms, or listen to Americans' phone calls and read their emails with no warrants, or illegally target conservative groups because they don't like their politics, or strip away Americans' privacy rights, one after another?

How would those heroic statesmen feel about surveillance drones flying unchecked overhead, the genetically-modified food that's being fed to millions, the Social Security system that's going broke, the vulnerable electrical grid, and the new healthcare law that figures to bankrupt individuals, businesses and even the states themselves?



WHAT HAPPENED TO THE AMERICA WE ONCE KNEW?

If our Founding Fathers saw all this going on, they would demand an answer to the same question that we want answered – What happened to the America we once knew? But because of how much they loved this country that they founded, I don't think they'd throw in the towel. Despite how bad things have gotten, I think they'd find like-minded people and start all over again.

Well, that's what I've decided to do. **That's why I've launched the Patriot Alliance!**

Of course, I can't do it alone. I need plenty of help. But I know that there are millions of

freedom-loving U.S. citizens out there who are disgusted with what our country has become and who want to take it back to the way it was. I know that with the help of people like that – people like you – we can form a group of patriotic Americans who value their independence, freedom and personal sovereignty.

That's what the Patriot Alliance is all about. It's about fulfilling the dream that was so perfectly spelled out by the Founding Fathers in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution. It's a mission to reclaim the free America that we loved and were so proud of during our youth and young adulthood. It's a quest to return government to what it was meant to be – a willing servant to the people, not a cruel and repressive taskmaster.

Simply put, the Patriot Alliance is about re-establishing America as the great nation it once was... a shining beacon of freedom and hope for the world.

Just as the late 1700's was an exciting time to be alive and be part of the formation of our country, today is an exciting time as we try to take it back. ■

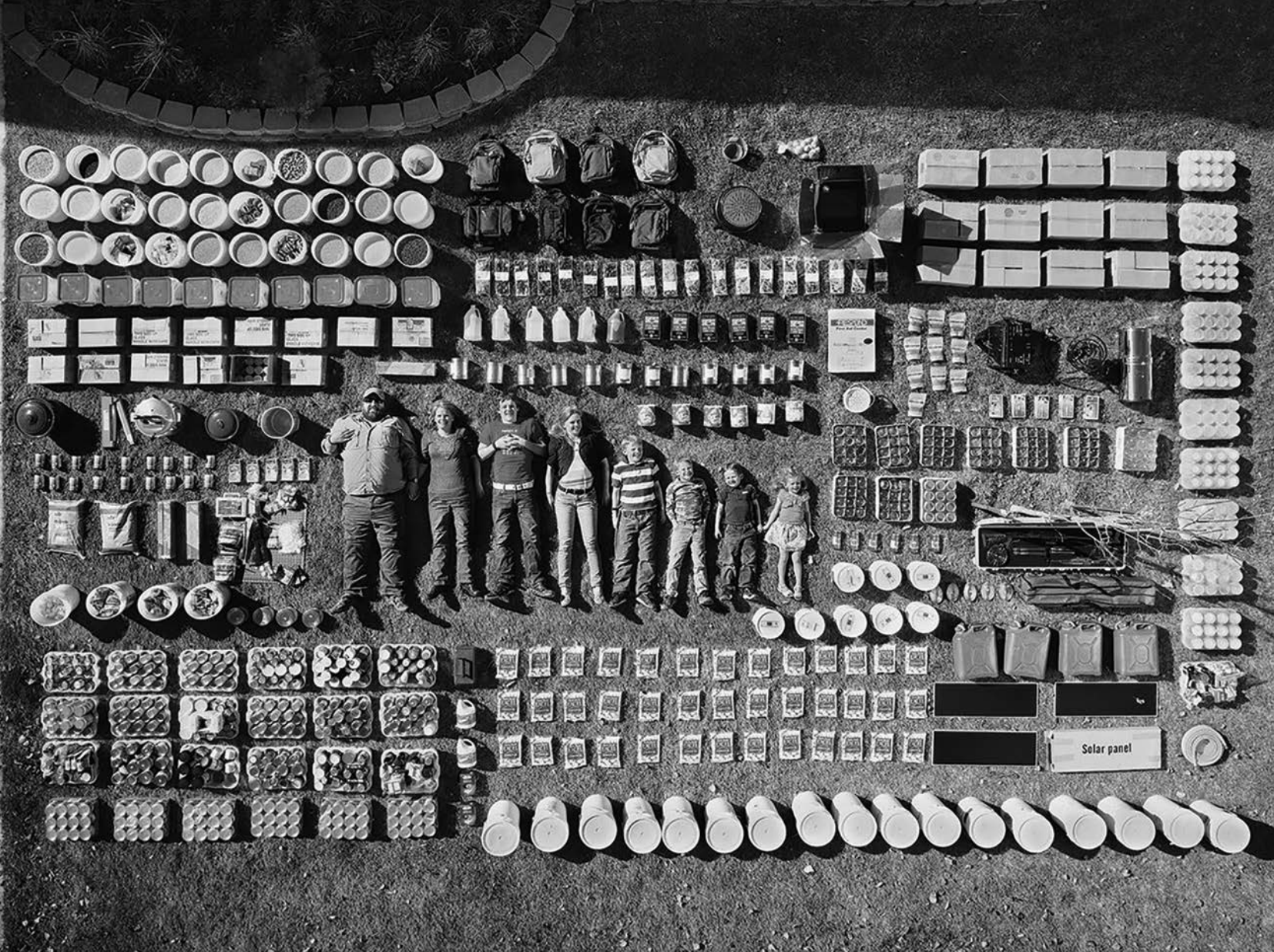
Why We're So Hated for Our Self-Reliance

FROM THE MAY 2014 EDITION

What does it mean to be self-reliant?

It means different things to different people. Some folks have spent some of their time and money stockpiling food and water for an emergency. They now know that no matter what kind of disaster they're hit with, they'll be able to feed themselves and their family and have good, clean drinking water.

Some homeowners have taken the huge step of freeing themselves from a very vulnerable U.S. electrical grid and are now generating their own electricity with solar panels and wind turbines. They feel empowered by this independence because not only does it allow them to save money, but they can also keep their homes lit and either warm or cool when power outages occur.



Other people have achieved a level of self-reliance by growing their own vegetables and fruits using open-pollinated, non-genetically modified, heirloom seeds. Growing food in the warmer months, storing some of it for colder months and re-using seeds they've harvested from last year's crops makes them feel confident that even when food prices soar or food shortages occur, they and their families will be able to enjoy good tasting, nutritious and inexpensive food.

For others, independence comes in the form of privacy. They've taken a number of important steps to keep their identities safe from thieves, their Internet browsing as free as possible from observation and their email accounts safe from hacking. They've also done their best to maintain privacy in their

consumer, medical and financial affairs. They feel confident that they are unlikely to become victims of many of the privacy intrusions that have plagued those who are less careful.

To some, self-reliance takes the form of gun ownership. These people follow the local laws regarding their weapons and gain the necessary training. They learn how to load, use and clean their guns, and they store them properly and safely, out of the reach of children and hidden from potential intruders. They choose appropriate places to keep their guns out of sight yet easily accessible in case they ever need them in a hurry.

Of course, some people generate their own electricity AND have food and water stockpiled AND grow their own food AND

secure their family's privacy AND own guns to protect themselves and their families. They're probably the most self-reliant people of all.

Think for just a moment how much self-reliant people contribute to our society. They take pressure off the overtaxed and unreliable electrical grid. They free up more food for people who can't or don't wish to stockpile it or grow their own. They reduce identity theft. They protect law-abiding citizens from lawbreakers. If the Founding Fathers were alive today, they would be handing out medals to self-reliant people because that's the spirit that made this country great.

But what's happening instead?

Self-reliant people are scorned and held up to ridicule. They're portrayed as dangerous wackos. They're mistrusted. They're watched closely by various government agencies. Why? What possible reason could anyone have to persecute people who consistently pull themselves up by their bootstraps and take care of their own needs and the needs of their families instead of sponging off society?

There's only one explanation for why law-abiding citizens who contribute so much to society are the subjects of harassment. And that reason is control. Some people just aren't happy unless they can control those who want nothing more than to live in peace. Unfortunately, those obsessed with controlling others often wind up in positions of authority, where they frequently choose to make life miserable for others, just because they can. They can't stand it when they see people who are happily making it on their own.

Consider this. When people are dependent on the electrical grid, they can be controlled by an on/off switch. When people are dependent upon food stamps, they are dependent upon the government that issues them. When people don't grow their own food, they can be controlled by those who produce and sell

food to them. When people don't protect their privacy, they can be controlled by those who spy on them. And when people don't own guns, they can be controlled by those who do, including criminals.

Self-reliant people, on the other hand, are much more difficult to control. They don't need or ask for government handouts. They don't flock to FEMA centers when their power goes out. They don't need food stamps when food prices soar. They don't back down from defending their families and property, meekly handing over their guns to criminals and those who wish to rob them of their Second Amendment rights.

There are a growing number of patriots in North America who understand that we are headed in the wrong direction as a country. We sigh in disgust as our society teaches people to rely on everyone but themselves. We cringe when we see how ill-prepared most people are to handle even the slightest of emergencies. We shake our heads in disbelief as we hear politicians claim that stricter gun control laws will save lives when we know that the exact opposite is true.

American patriots realize that the time is eventually going to come when only those who have learned to be self-reliant will survive. But that's assuming we're able to maintain our independence in the face of a society and a government that is increasingly hostile toward us. If you're not self-reliant, start working on getting there. If you're halfway there, get all the way there. If you're all the way there, help others get there.

Here's my advice. Get off the electrical grid as much as possible by generating your own power. Stockpile as much non-perishable food and water as you can afford. Grow your own food if you can. Do whatever you can to maintain your privacy. And figure out a way to protect what is yours from invaders. That's self-reliance, and that's what will carry us through when times are tough. ■

D-Day 70th Anniversary: A Grim Remembrance

FROM THE JUNE 2014 EDITION

Friday, June 6, is the 70th anniversary of one of the most significant days in United States history. The Allied forces' invasion of German-controlled Normandy on the coast of France in 1944 during World War II was a pivotal mission in which some 12,000 Allied troops were killed or wounded.

The landings occurred in two waves, with an airborne assault landing of 24,000 U.S., British and Canadian airborne troops just after midnight and then an amphibious landing of Allied infantry and armored divisions starting at about 6:30 a.m. The combination of a month-long campaign to convince Hitler that the landings would occur elsewhere and a number of decoy landings helped the Allies achieve an element of surprise.

But it was still very costly to the Allies, who took their heaviest beating at Omaha Beach. Only two of the Allies' 16 tanks survived the landing, while 5,000 of the 50,000 Americans who landed there wound up as casualties.

Ultimately, of course, the Allies were successful in liberating France.

In recent editions of the *Patriot Alliance Messenger*, I've encouraged readers to spend some vacation time this year visiting patriotic destinations. I decided to put my money where my mouth was in March by visiting the many sites Washington, D.C., offers. I can't emphasize enough how important it is for Americans to make this pilgrimage periodically.

We visited many sites, including Ford's Theatre where 16th President Abraham Lincoln was shot by John Wilkes Booth during a performance, as well as the Petersen House across the street where he died the following morning. I only got as close to the White House as the outside gates, but the view from there is stunning.

The Smithsonian museums are well worth dealing with the crowds that invariably flock



there. The Air and Space Museum, the American History Museum, American Indian Museum, the Natural History Museum, the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, the Portrait Gallery and many others provide a very enjoyable experience.

Something I would highly recommend to visitors of our nation's capital is one of the "D.C. After Dark" tours. They take you to many of the lit-up memorials that look so splendid at night, including those honoring Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Franklin D. Roosevelt, as well as the Iwo Jima and Korean War memorials and the Washington Monument. Passengers can get out and take photos at each stop during the three-hour tour.

But of all the sites I visited during my stay in Washington, D.C. – including the Capitol Building, Pentagon, World War II and Vietnam memorials, National Archives Building, Washington Monument and Supreme Court Building – the one

that affected me the most emotionally was Arlington National Cemetery. This sprawling, 624-acre resting place for some 400,000 people who have served our country commands such respect.

We solemnly watched the changing of the guard at the tomb of the unknown soldier, and saw the gravesites for John F. Kennedy and his family members. Others buried at Arlington include former President William Howard Taft, boxer Joe Louis, Supreme Court justices Oliver Wendell Holmes and Thurgood Marshall, and Army commanders George Patton, Omar Bradley and John Pershing.

At one point, I had to walk away from our party after my eyes filled with tears. The thought of so many people sacrificing so much so that people like me could enjoy freedoms was overwhelming. I'd encourage you to have your own personal moment of silence on June 6 to honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. ■

Bartering Your Goods and Services in a Post-Collapse American Society

FROM THE AUGUST 2014 EDITION

One of the reasons that some people don't bother thinking about or preparing for a disaster is because they believe they have enough money to get through it, no matter how bad it becomes. They're used to drawing upon their wealth to take care of problems, so they assume that their finances will come to the rescue once again if necessary.

But if we ever experience a total financial collapse – and some believe the signs are pointing in that direction – no amount of money in the world will help. Any number of

events could thrust North America into that horrific situation, including an EMP attack that could keep funds locked inside banks for weeks, months or possibly years.

Regardless of your financial status, it's important to remember that we may find ourselves in a scenario where money is meaningless. In a post-collapse society, it's entirely possible that the only things of value will be the goods we have stockpiled and the skills we possess, both of which we'll probably use for bartering.

START WITH THE BASICS

Backtracking for a moment, the most essential items that you can store now are food and water for yourself and your family. Start with a 72-hour supply and then, as you're able, graduate to supplies representing one month, three months, six months, a year and longer.

In addition, stockpile as many non-food items as you can. These would include a crank-operated radio, a fixed blade knife, an LED flashlight, batteries, para-cord, guns and ammo, fire starters, a first-aid kit, blankets, extra clothing, a compass, a military pup tent, ponchos, a backpack, duct tape, bandanas, Super Glue, sunglasses, lip balm, Vicks VapoRub, thick garbage bags, water purification tablets, coffee filters, aluminum foil, baking soda, etc.

Once you have those emergency items stockpiled in at least two locations, it's time to start thinking about which items you can hoard and which skills you can acquire that will be useful in a society that has reverted to the bartering system for everyday personal commerce.

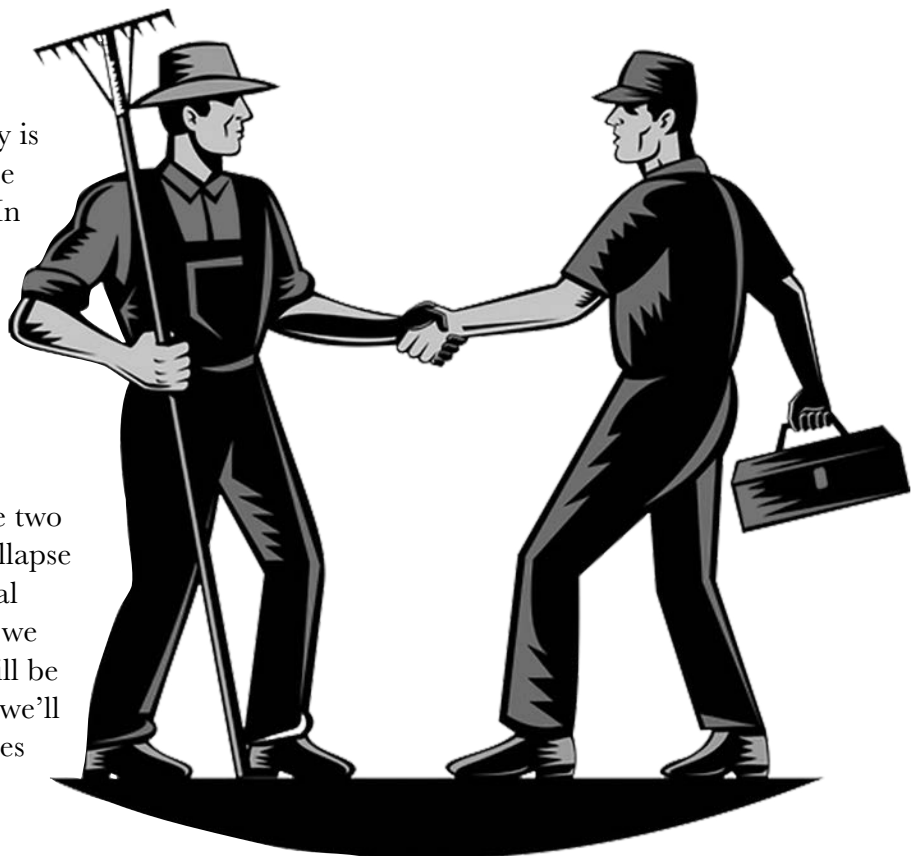
There are a countless number of items you could decide to hoard for bartering, but you'll never be able to stockpile everything. The key is to choose items that will give you the biggest return on your investment. In other words, the items for which there is the largest difference between what they cost you now and what they will bring in trade later. Another important consideration is shelf life.

Food and water will probably be the two most sought after items in a post-collapse society, but trading your "extra" vital sustenance could be a little risky, as we probably won't know how long it will be before things return to normal and we'll be able to obtain those items in stores again.

HIGH-DEMAND BARTERING SUPPLIES

For your bartering supply, you may be better off choosing items that many others don't think to stockpile, but which will be in high demand, including alcohol, cigarettes, coffee and candy. Other items include (in no particular order):

- Water filters and water purification tablets
- Fire-starting devices
- Flashlights
- Batteries
- Para-cord
- Non-GMO seeds
- Gasoline and oil
- Precious metals
- Clothing
- Medicines
- Bug repellent
- Soap
- Candles
- Toilet paper and other paper products
- Tools/nails/screws/work gloves, etc.
- Manual can opener
- Reading glasses
- Baby products
- Hygiene products



VALUABLE SKILLS FOR BARTERING

Now, think about the types of skills you may wish to learn or hone that will have at least as much value and maybe more in a post-collapse society than they do today. Among them could be:

- Small-engine repair
- Gun repair/cleaning
- Appliance repair
- Medical services
- Construction/building
- Welding
- Farming
- Hunting
- Blacksmithing
- Sewing/mending
- Protection/defense
- Psychology/counseling

TWO FINAL THINGS TO CONSIDER

Don't let those with whom you barter know the extent of your supplies. If they learn that you possess many more supplies in which they're interested, they may just use that ammo they acquired from you to come back and try to relieve you of them.

And because there will probably be a significant amount of lawlessness in a post-collapse society, don't forget to store the weapons you'll need to protect what you've stockpiled.

Senior Citizens Treated Like Second-Class Citizens

FROM THE DECEMBER 2014 EDITION

There are a number of things in life that disgust me, but few raise my ire as much as when I see senior citizens being mistreated. They should be honored for their service, admired for their legacy and consulted for their wisdom.

Instead, they're often seen as a burden by some of today's lawmakers, who are doing everything they can to shorten the duration of time that society will need to care for them.

Bioethicist Ezekiel Emmanuel, brother of former Obama adviser and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emmanuel, has written a treatise titled, "The Complete Lives System." This document states that healthcare funds should go primarily to people between the ages of

20 and 50. Why? In order to protect the productivity and taxation of that age group. It's all about the government playing God and deciding who is the most deserving of being kept healthy.

Of course, that's not far off from what ObamaCare has been doing and continues to do. Enormous spending cuts for Medicare Advantage program benefits are negatively affecting our elderly citizens.

In his book *ObamaCare Survival Guide*, author Nick Tate predicted that senior citizens would be among the groups of people who would be hurt by the healthcare legislation. He wrote, "Seniors were rightly angry about ObamaCare as it is significantly funded with

money that comes from hundreds of billions of dollars in spending cuts to Medicare over the next decade.”

Betsy McCaughey, former Lt. Governor of New York and author of *Beating ObamaCare*, said that when President Obama assures seniors that he’s not cutting their benefits but rather cutting payments to hospitals and other providers, he’s deceiving them.

She argues that it’s illogical to think that reducing what a hospital is paid to treat seniors won’t harm their care. She says that cuts will worsen the chance that an elderly patient survives a hospital stay and goes home, and that it’s reasonable to conclude that tens of thousands of seniors will die needlessly each year.

And even prior to the Affordable Care Act passing, the 2009 Stimulus Bill pretty much guaranteed that individuals’ value will be based on age as the federal government’s computers will determine whether or not you

are worth the cost of treatment and whether you will be approved to obtain treatment.

As we “progress” as a nation, we seem to “regress” in morality. We keep seeing more and more signs that senior citizens are second-class citizens. The attitude seems to be, “If they can’t be productive members of society and if they are a drain on healthcare, then let’s focus more on phasing them out than in improving the quality of their lives.”

A significant change over the past 50 years in America has been the replacement of the elderly by celebrities as role models. Even celebrities who have no interest whatsoever in being role models are idolized and imitated by the young, most of whom have no interest in being mentored by someone who is not rich or famous.

It’s a shame. Senior citizens have so much to offer in terms of wisdom and guidance, but they’re ignored by many of the people who need them most. ■



Preventing Falls in the Home Requires Awareness, Precautions and Concentration

FROM THE JANUARY 2016 EDITION

There is almost nothing that can send a senior citizen on a physical and emotional downward spiral more quickly and thoroughly than a fall. The physical damage that results and the fear of another fall can combine to keep seniors from engaging in routine activities and enjoying the twilight years of their lives.

Not surprisingly, the risk of a fall increases with age. For older adults, falls are the number one cause of fractures, hospital admissions for trauma, loss of independence and injury deaths. One of three seniors will fall during this calendar year, but fewer than half of them will tell their doctors about it.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention...

- One out of five falls for a person 65 or older causes a serious injury such as broken bones or a head injury.
- Each year, 2.5 million older people are treated in emergency departments for injuries sustained in a fall.
- More than 700,000 people are hospitalized due to a fall injury annually, most often because of a head injury or hip fracture.
- At least 250,000 older people are hospitalized for hip fractures every year.
- More than 95 percent of hip fractures are caused by falling, usually by falling sideways.

- Falls are the most common cause of traumatic brain injuries.
- The direct medical costs for fall injuries, adjusted for inflation, are \$34 billion annually. Hospital costs account for two-thirds of that total.

Regardless of whether you are a senior citizen or are nearing that stage in life, or have parents or other relatives in that age category, you should understand these facts and know how to establish a home environment where falls are less likely to occur.

COMMON CAUSES FOR FALLS

How and why do falls occur for seniors?

There are many answers, but we'll only discuss some of the most common ones. Most often, fall-related injuries are in the hip, pelvis, spine, arm, hand or ankle. Although seniors can recover from most falls, many older adults who suffer hip injuries from falls end up requiring long-term care.

Many seniors feel dizzy after standing from a sitting position, especially if they've been sitting for a while. This could mean a drop in blood pressure, which makes the individual feel as if he or she is going to pass out. It could also be due to the onset of diabetes or an issue with a medication or eyesight. That's why it's important that seniors report their falls – and near falls – to a doctor, even if they are not injured.



Sometimes a fall happens due to a loss of balance while walking or slipping on something they don't see. Lower body weakness and a Vitamin D deficiency can also be contributing factors in a fall. Of course, home hazards are often to blame, including uneven steps and clutter.

Many seniors who have seen older friends and relatives fall develop a fear of falling, despite having never fallen themselves. While it's important to be cautious, this fear can lead to avoiding the very activities that help make seniors less prone to experiencing a fall, such as walking and engaging in other social interactions. This fear can actually be debilitating for them.

REDUCING THE RISK OF FALLS

While it's true that many seniors are injured by falls, it's not an inevitable result of aging. Falls don't have to occur. Many falls suffered by seniors every year didn't have to happen. Here's how you or your loved ones can decrease the odds of falling in the home:

- Do exercises to improve balance and strengthen muscles. Tai chi is a great method for accomplishing this, but also ask your doctor for other suggestions.
- Get rid of the clutter. An organized home free of boxes, stacks of magazines and other items – especially in narrow



hallways and on staircases – is a much safer environment for a senior.

- Remove loose carpeting and slippery throw rugs, especially if they are near staircases, as they are very easy to trip on. Flatten any raised floorboards, which can also cause a fall.
- Add handrails to stairs and hallways, as well as grab bars inside and outside the tub or shower, and next to the toilet. A local handyman should be able to handle this so that you don't run into a big expense.
- In addition to those grips, make sure that mats in bathtubs and showers are non-slip.

You can also place non-slip mats in other rooms and on porches.

- Make sure there is proper lighting in every room used by a senior. Use higher-watt bulbs during waking hours, and keep a nightlight in any room a senior may frequent after waking up, including bathrooms.
- Have your eyes checked at least once a year and ask your eye doctor if you should have different eyeglasses for walking outdoors than you do for indoor activities including reading.
- Baggy clothes may be comfortable, but they can also catch on items when turning a corner or drag on the ground and be stepped on. Properly hemmed clothing is safer for seniors.
- Many people take their shoes off in the comfort of their home, but it's easier to slip when one is wearing socks. You're better off with bare feet than socks, but the first choice is shoes, which also help prevent stubbing injuries.
- Keep a small emergency survival kit in each room, featuring non-perishable snacks, a full water bottle and a first-aid kit. This could hold you over until someone is able to help you.
- Take it easy. Seniors need to remind themselves that for the most part, they don't need to be in a hurry anymore. After standing from a sitting position, take a moment to get adjusted. Then move slowly from one room to another.

CONCLUSION

Many seniors are never the same again after they've experienced a fall resulting in an injury. You owe it to yourself and older family members to do everything in your power to make sure that fall doesn't happen. ■



Freedom – Let’s Not Take It for Granted

FROM THE JULY 2017 EDITION

We exercise our God-given freedoms every day of our lives... often without thinking about them.

It’s easy for many of us to take these freedoms for granted because it’s all we’ve ever known. Yes, we’ve seen the erosions of some of these freedoms due to the influence of the Left, but overall we still enjoy the liberties granted to us by the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution.

But think about this. What if fate had dictated that you be born in Iran or North Korea instead of the Land of the Free? What if you had spent your whole life in China or Russia or any other country where criticizing the government could mean exile to a prison camp or worse?

Thankfully, there are now plenty of democracies around the globe. Many of them exist because of the model our Founding Fathers established. The fact that America stands out as a beacon of freedom and liberty is something we should be proud of and thankful for.

On July 4, we will celebrate the 241st anniversary of our country’s birth. We’ll exhibit American flags on our garages and lawns. We’ll entertain family, friends and neighbors. We’ll grill burgers and hot dogs. Then we’ll pack coolers and blankets before heading out to the local fireworks displays.

We’ll enjoy the fellowship, and that’s the way it should be. But if we don’t take some time during the day to think about what this day truly means, we’ll be cheating ourselves.

Just for the fun of it, I looked up synonyms for “freedom” in a thesaurus. They include “self-government,” “self-reliance,” “self-determination,” “self-rule” and others. Obviously, the key word here is “self.” But this doesn’t mean the “lone wolf” type of self.

It means not looking for handouts and not relying on the government to solve our problems. It means taking responsibility for our actions and families. It means deciding how we want to live as individuals and corporately, then trying to make sure the government doesn’t grow so large that we find ourselves serving it instead of the other way around.

Of course, that’s easier said than done. Especially because our lawmakers on both sides of the aisle have strayed so far from where we elected them to be.

So, let your politicians know what you expect and that they can’t count on your vote if they don’t deliver it. They’ll listen. They may not care about freedom and liberty as much as we do, but if there’s one thing they do care about, it’s getting re-elected. ■

Dealing With Empty Nest Syndrome

FROM THE AUGUST 2017 EDITION

If all your children have moved out of the house, you probably remember what it felt like when you became an empty nester.

For some of you, it's been awhile. For others, maybe it's happening this month as your youngest child heads off to college. For others, that day is coming.

Parents have different reactions to dealing with an empty nest. Some are very confident in their youngest child's maturity and are emotionally prepared to say goodbye. Others are emotionally crushed when their youngest leaves the nest.

Some parents believe they'll be able to handle it well, but don't. Others are convinced they're going to be an emotional wreck, but end up dealing with it just fine. You just never know until it happens to you.

Having gone through this myself, I have a few tips for those who will be dealing with the empty nest syndrome in upcoming years.

First, spend as much time as you can with your children now while they are living with you. Every moment you spend with them, whether it's eating at a restaurant, walking in a park or merely watching a sitcom together, is an investment certain to pay dividends for the rest of their lives.

During many of these times, you will impart some of your life experiences to them, and hopefully they will learn from them. It's also an opportunity for you to listen to them tell you what they love about life and what

frustrates them. And sometimes you'll just enjoy peace and quiet together.

Second, repeatedly tell them how much you love them. And I mean every day. They already know, based on the time and energy you devote to caring for them and supporting them. But regularly hearing it from your lips will help provide them with the confidence they'll need as they go out on their own.

Finally, fill the emptiness in your heart after they leave with the memories you shared together and stay in touch with them as much as they are comfortable with you doing. Photos of you and your children are great for reliving those memories. Phone calls, texts, social media posts and visits – especially during the first year they are gone – will help keep you close.

When they're young, it seems like they will be with you forever. Then one day you wake up and wonder how the years flew by so quickly. Love them, encourage them and support them with every fiber of your being. And then you'll never have a regret. ■



How to Keep Your Survival Supplies Under Cover

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2017 EDITION

We have no control over the government or the weather, both of which are unreliable at best. We do, however, have some say over our readiness to cope with an impending crisis created by either one. This is where home prepping comes into play. Stockpiling disaster supplies is more important now than ever.

If you are preparing for an uncertain future by consistently gathering a wide variety of survival supplies – and we certainly hope that’s how you are spending some of your time – the last thing you want is for everyone to know about them. When the stuff hits the fan, you could be a target if this is what you’re known for in your neck of the woods.

One of most common prepping mistakes is not storing your emergency supplies covertly disguised or hidden. Keeping those supplies out of view, even from friendly guests who visit your home, is a good idea.

And it’s certainly wise to keep your survival gear out of sight in case intruders ever find their way into your home, either during normal circumstances or during a crisis when the odds of a home invasion increase dramatically. Especially important to hide are disaster supplies such as cash, weapons and emergency equipment.

You’ve probably spent good money and a significant amount of time preparing for an emergency situation and securing your future. So, don’t let those preparations go to waste. Keep them protected by hiding them well.

There are creative ways you can keep your stash hidden. Some of our favorites are do-it-yourself projects you can knock out in a

matter of a day or two.

Below is a list of ideas for keeping your home survival stash as covert as possible. As you work through these secret storage spots for prep supplies, consider how long it might take for you to quickly access your items.

Keep certain ones that you might need in a hurry, such as guns, stored in areas closest to your most trafficked rooms. Other survival items, such as water, can be stored in harder to access areas of your home.

Everyone should have basic prep supplies on hand, such as food and water. More experienced folks concerned about the future will have all types of disaster supplies stockpiled, such as cash, weapons, emergency equipment, etc.

Laundry Pedestal – The laundry room isn’t usually high on a priority list during a home invasion, making it an ideal place for secret storage. You don’t want to store supplies in plain sight, so build DIY laundry pedestals with secret storage compartments. No one will think to check those for your emergency supplies.

Staircase – You can turn nearly any indoor staircase into a secret storage spot by making each step into a drawer. You can easily find step-by-step instructions on Google by simply searching for “stair drawers” and “DIY.”

Floor Boards – Add secret storage to your home with in-floor cubbies. This is another DIY project that can yield tremendous room for storing all types of valuables and emergency supplies right below your feet.



Wall Shelf – Buy or build a wall shelf with secret compartments. This small space is ideal for storing cash, handguns or any other small items you want to keep close and quickly accessible.

Window Bench – Utilize unused space beneath a large window inside your home by building a DIY storage bench. This is a perfect way to store larger items such as emergency water, food or even a generator. Add decorative pillows and do your best to hide the fact that the bench contains storage.

Toe-Kick Hideaway – There's so much unused space underneath your kitchen cabinets right behind the toe kicks. If you have basic carpentry skills and tools, this is a perfect storage project.

Air Vent/Return – Build a dummy air vent or air return to secretly store small items. Do not use working air vents and returns, which can damage supplies.

Interior Door – This is a perfect place to store cash. Drill a hole in the top of any door. Size the hole to fit a cylinder, such as a small mailing tube. Roll up cash and insert for safe storage.

Spare Bed – If you have a guest bedroom, this is a perfect place to store larger emergency supplies. Purchase a lift-up bed

frame for maximum under-bed storage space. You can also buy an inexpensive bed with storage from IKEA. This type of bed storage can be highly visible, so you'll need a long blanket to cover drawers.

Old Appliances – There typically isn't power during a disaster, so the last thing an intruder will care about is an old, outdated appliance. A large TV can be hollowed out for storage. An old washer/drier set has ample storage. Remove the insides of any old appliance and fill it with supplies. Store them away where it makes sense, such as in your garage or shed.

Backyard – You can easily bury emergency supplies in your yard. Use weatherproof containers or food-grade buckets, which are perfect for canned food and water. Just be sure to make yourself a map of where items are buried because it will be easy to forget.

This is just a small sampling of places where you can creatively and covertly keep your survival supplies out of sight. You can find plenty more online, and probably come up with some that are completely unique to you. Make it a family project to inject more creativity into the process.

Have fun and protect your survival supplies at the same time. ■

Developing the Mindset to Handle a Crisis

FROM THE DECEMBER 2017 EDITION

Hopefully you've prepped for future uncertainties by stockpiling and storing food, water, emergency supplies and a variety of self-reliance gear. You've studied first-aid books, learned to grow and preserve your own food, and even mapped out every possible escape route from your home and office. Pat yourself on the back for a job well done.

Now, it's time to move on to another crucial, yet often forgotten step of survival preparation: developing the mindset to handle a crisis. This is the perfect way to prepare yourself mentally for what's to come.

As natural disasters increase around our planet, so does research around the necessary psychology to survive disaster. Many call this resilience research. In fact, recent research is now suggesting that how you react during and after a disaster could make the most difference in your personal survival.

It makes perfect sense. After all, there's a certain mindset that goes along with survival. You see this in survivors of cancer and other long-term illnesses. These shared traits of determination, positivity and resilience are something you too can develop over time.

Start by working on these four personal development areas to help cultivate your own survivor mindset:

POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Developing a happy and positive attitude may seem daunting, but there are countless ways to get started. If you're a voracious

reader, start by consuming more personal development books or books where people find happiness in the midst of struggle. A quick Google search or trip to your local library will yield a handful of must-reads in this area.

Another method is to surround yourself with positive quotes. This may seem silly at first, but there's a reason millions of motivational quotes and memes exist online. To help aid you with positive mind training, you need to be constantly subjected to positive and happy messaging. Find quotes that speak to you on a personal level and display them in places where you will see them on a daily basis. Be sure to rotate them out often with updated quotes.

If you find this works for you, consider including small notes with positive quotes in your survival supplies. You'll certainly need a boost of happiness when a crisis occurs. Remember, think happy and be happy. If you need a push to get started, here are a few favorite quotes:

"Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time."

— Thomas Edison

"I wake up every morning literally with a smile on my face, grateful for another day I never thought I'd see."

— Dick Cheney



“If you are going through hell, keep going.”

– Winston Churchill

“If you think you can, you can. And if you think you can’t, you’re right.”

– Henry Ford

“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are.”

– Theodore Roosevelt

PURPOSE

Find your purpose in life by understanding what drives you as an individual. Is it family? A thirst for knowledge? Recognition from your peers? Look at your everyday life to determine what propels you forward, and what gives you internal strength and determination.

Understanding your purpose now will help you determine a new purpose when a crisis hits. You’ll still have the same motivations and drivers, but will need to shift priorities. For example, if you’re driven to success by the need to provide for your family financially, you’ll need to quickly adapt to providing for your family in other ways, such as providing nourishment and shelter.

Consider that your family unit may also change. Learn to expand on what you consider family now. Do you have an elderly neighbor who could use some attention? Now is the time to start practicing caring for others.

ACCEPTANCE

Learn how to accept things you cannot change. You don’t have to wait for a crisis to start working on this trait. Is there something a family member or co-worker does that drives you crazy? Instead of letting it bother you, learn how to accept it about them and move on.

In a future crisis, don't waste mental thought wishing things were different, which is detrimental to your mental health. Instead, accept your new reality, but always maintain hope that something better or easier is right around the corner.

ADAPTABILITY

Are you naturally able to adapt to any situation? If so, you're lucky. Most people aren't. Set aside any stubborn notions that life is great as is and nothing should ever change. In life, and especially during an emergency, survivors must adapt quickly to constant change. Learn to recognize what is worth working hard for, and what should be abandoned. Learning to be adaptable is a skill that will not only help you in a future crisis, but also in your everyday life. Remember, change has always been a natural part of life.

OTHER METHODS

Beyond working on the aforementioned items, there are other ways to develop a survivor mindset. For example, practice going without. This can be as simple as skipping your monthly dinner and movie date night. Instead, stay home and learn to entertain yourselves without spending money.

Another way to go without is to train your body to require less food. You can do this in the form of less protein, fewer carbohydrates and less sugar. Don't worry, your body knows how to adjust. Play around with this method and watch in amazement as your body functions and accomplishes daily tasks with less food.

And last, but certainly not least, a valuable habit to develop now is setting aside 10 minutes per day to meditate or pray. Meditation is receiving a lot of attention recently, and for good reason. There are scientific studies showing its positive influence on health. This does not have to have any connection with Eastern religions. You can meditate on anything you want, including passages in your Bible. Learn how to invest in yourself now by taking time each day to sit quietly and think.

There are numerous smartphone apps that offer free guided meditations, and most libraries have guided meditation CDs you can check out. The goal is to eventually learn to meditate without guidance and to have the skills to drown out any outside noise. Meditation reduces stress levels and alleviates anxiety, which will be incredibly helpful when dealing with any type of future crisis. ■

FRANK'S RANTS

There are many things in life that tick me off. First and foremost are people who try to sabotage the vision our Founding Fathers had when they established this great country. Hey, if you don't like freedom, liberty and self-reliance, fine. I'm sure you can find a place to live that doesn't have those things. But don't mess with my freedom and my liberty and my self-reliance, because then you have to answer to me. There are plenty more things that upset me, but if I spent 16 pages every month ranting about them, you'd probably tire easily. So, I limit myself to one Rant per month. Here are some of my favorites from the first 50 editions of the *Patriot Alliance Messenger*.

The Evidence Is In: Patriots Were Right!

FROM THE OCTOBER 2013 EDITION

We were right!

We knew all along that we were right, but when the mainstream media and the countless number of people who follow it like deaf, dumb and blind sheep kept telling us we were paranoid or crazy, perhaps some doubt crept into our minds.

Not any more. Now, even our most liberal critics have been silenced by the one thing they can't dispute – the truth. The dramatic news stories that have come out in 2013 – published by the very same mainstream media that has labeled conservatives as a lunatic fringe – have proven beyond a shadow of a doubt that everything we've been saying for years is true. The evidence is in, and it's not a pretty picture for our government.



Over the past nine months, we've learned that...

The Obama Administration's National Security Agency (NSA) has been recording every American's phone conversations.

The NSA has also been storing all of our personal emails in a huge database to read whenever they feel like it.

The Obama Administration's Internal Revenue Service has been targeting conservative groups for extra scrutiny regarding tax exempt status applications, while giving liberal groups a free pass.

The Obama Administration has been doing everything within its power – including shamelessly using family members of gun violence victims as props on television – to limit Americans' Second Amendment rights to bear arms.

The Obama Administration has given the green light to surveillance drones – before privacy laws could be put into effect – and has declared that there may be circumstances in which a drone could be used to kill an American citizen on American soil, without due process of law.

The Obama Administration's Environmental Protection Agency has been charging conservative groups fees regarding Freedom of Information Act requests, while waiving those fees for liberal groups.

The Obama Administration's Department of Homeland Security has been buying up countless numbers of bullets and armored trucks in what can only be assumed is preparation for anticipated civil unrest.

The Obama Administration's Transportation Security Administration has continued to strip away travelers' privacy rights with its humiliating searches of the elderly and children, not to mention those people in between who its agents leer at after conducting full-body scans.

The Obama Administration's Department of Justice has been looking into the personal phone records of reporters for the Associated Press.

President Obama promised that his administration would be more open and transparent than those in the past. Help me out here because I can't decide whether to laugh or cry. Openness? Transparency? Seriously? The Obama Administration is by far the most secretive and intrusive government that has ever existed in the 237-year history of the United States.

This is a government that spends billions of dollars to spy on and harass its people – the vast majority of whom are loyal, patriotic, law-abiding citizens – while miserably failing to solve the problems that are most important to Americans, including energizing a sluggish economy, ensuring Constitutional rights, properly fixing the healthcare system and protecting privacy rights.

As devastating as it's been for most people to see proof about our government's abuses of power during 2013, I'm glad that the truth has finally come out. It has proven that we patriots were right. But more importantly, I pray that these revelations will serve as a wakeup call to a nation that desperately needs to get back to its roots. Let's make sure our elected officials know that this is not the America in which we grew up, and it's not the America in which we want to grow old. ■

NSA Follows Playbook – Deny, Reassure, Lie

FROM THE NOVEMBER 2013 EDITION

Do you remember how upset President Obama was earlier this year when the public learned that the National Security Agency (NSA) was recording every American's phone conversations and storing their email communications?

That's exactly how I'd expect the Commander-in-Chief to respond to news involving a gross violation of privacy. I'd also expect any U.S. president to immediately call for an exhaustive investigation into this horrendous violation of Americans' privacy.

But the Obama Administration did not express outrage at the fact that Americans were being spied on with no just cause. Rather, they were upset that the truth of this blatant overreach of government authority had been exposed. Soon the world learned that the spying went much further, embarrassing our allies and dragging

America's international reputation further into the mud.

Conservative Americans were not the only ones upset about being spied on. A number of liberals, including high-profile celebrities, spoke out against these heinous intrusions. When the Obama Administration realized that even its backers were upset, NSA officials assured us that no one would ever actually listen to those conversations and/or read those emails unless a person was suspected of being a terrorist. They promised that their own privacy rules would prohibit any abuses.

I don't know about you, but when a government agency tells me not to worry, that's exactly when I start worrying. Those assurances may have been enough to satisfy Obama Administration supporters who will believe anything they're told, but it wasn't enough to convince us.



It didn't take long to find out that it was another in a never-ending series of lies. Recently it was revealed by the *Washington Post* that the NSA has been breaking its own privacy rules "thousands of times" every year since being given new surveillance powers by Congress in 2008. It was also learned that a secret court had rebuked the NSA in 2011 for collecting thousands of emails and other online details from Americans with no ties to terrorism.

Caught with its hands in the cookie jar once again, the NSA responded by calling these violations "mistakes."

This is straight out of the Obama Administration playbook. First, act in an unethical manner that cheats U.S. citizens out of their Constitutional rights of privacy. Second, when accused, deny it. Third, when caught in the lie, respond that any information gained will not be used improperly. Fourth, when caught in yet another lie, claim "human error."

I can pretty much guarantee you that this scandal will play out like all of the other messes that the Obama Administration has created. Soon it will be learned that many of these violations were indeed intentional and that conservatives were targeted. But that

won't matter to the administration. They'll just move on to the fifth and final step in the playbook: when no possible explanation can be considered credible, call it a "phony scandal."

Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, or three times or four times or five times, shame on me. And shame on everyone who believes that this administration has Americans' best interests at heart as it plows forward in its attempt to create a Big Brother state.

Some in Congress are trying to rein in the NSA, but in July the House of Representatives voted down an amendment by Representative Justin Amash (R-Mich.) that would have slashed funding for the NSA. The amendment sought to prevent the mass collection of records and provide for greater accountability and transparency in the implementation of the USA Patriot Act and the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

So, there you have it. Americans concerned about their privacy rights can't even count on their elected officials to protect them from the abuses of power. Looks like we need our own playbook. And our first play is to elect officials who understand the importance of the right of privacy. ■

Why Is the Internal Revenue Service Continuing to Target Conservatives?

FROM THE JANUARY 2014 EDITION

Every once in a while, our government comes up with an excuse for one of its scandals that is so absurd I actually start laughing. I always get angry after I've had more time to think about it, but for that brief moment, all I can do is laugh.

A recent example was shortly after the Internal Revenue Service got caught red-handed targeting conservative groups for extra scrutiny when it came to making decisions about their tax-exempt status applications. In addition to causing long delays in these applications and denying

a disproportionately high percentage of them, the IRS tried to strong-arm some of these groups to hand over their donor lists. Of course, the IRS first denied that it was targeting conservative groups, but after it was proven to be true, IRS officials blamed lower-level employees at a Cincinnati office and called it an isolated incident.

That statement, which was also proven to be a lie, was not what made me laugh, however. The comment from IRS officials that had me rolling on the floor in hysterics was that the targeting was not politically motivated. Conservative groups – those who are in deep disagreement with the Obama Administration over numerous issues – are targeted for harassment, but the IRS says it's not politically motivated. Right.

I've been wracking my brain to come up with a more blatant lie, and I just can't do it. And that's really saying something for an administration that makes a habit out of lying and deceiving. What else could targeting conservatives be other than politically motivated? It's the only possible motivation for something like that. Either the IRS did not think through that particular lie very well, or they think that the American public is extremely stupid. Either way, it's a huge insult to everyone, especially conservatives.

Not surprisingly, the groups that were targeted included those with "tea party" and "patriot" in their names, but they haven't been the only ones. During the ongoing investigation of this heinous crime, it has been revealed that groups that have voiced concern about government spending, our astronomical debt and ridiculously high taxes were also targeted. And get this. Any group that lobbied to "make America a better place to live" was also targeted. Imagine someone having the audacity to want to improve our country. Shame on them!

So, here's how the IRS operates. They will tell one lie over and over again until it's proven that they're lying, and then they'll move



on to the next fabrication until that one is also shown to be false. And so on. If the lies continue to pile up, eventually someone will call it a "phony scandal" in hopes that will make it go away.

Don't you get a warm, fuzzy feeling in your heart when you see that America's federal agency in charge of tracking individual and business taxes doesn't care one bit about the truth? I know I do.

You'd think that even an organization with the morals of the IRS would lay low for a little while it's being investigated, right? Nope. I have to hand it to the IRS. Even after all the bad publicity and while its people are being called to testify before Congress, the agency continues to target conservative groups.

The IRS' current favorite target is pro-life groups. At least as recently as June 2013 – well after the scandal broke – pro-life groups have been badgered about their protesting activities. The Obama Administration can pretend that it's upset about this illegal harassment, but the fact that the targeting continues speaks much louder than the verbal slap on the wrist it gives the IRS.

So, it's business as usual. We can make our voices heard – and we should – but until we vote in an administration that cares about freedom, justice and ethical behavior, we're fighting an uphill battle. ■



Who Gave the Order to Stand Down in Benghazi?

FROM THE MAY 2014 EDITION

Benghazi. It has been about 20 months since the American embassy in this Middle East hellhole was overrun and four patriotic Americans – Ambassador Chris Stevens, Sean Smith, Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty – were murdered, and what do we really know?

Well, we know for sure that the embassy's pleas for additional security in the days and months leading up to the Sept. 11 anniversary attack were repeatedly ignored by everybody in the government in a position to send any. We also know for sure that the attack was a military-style tactical assault carried out by trained terrorists and that our people on the ground knew that at the time.

We also know for sure that our president – and his secretary of state, who wants to be the next president – looked us in the face and lied to us about it and are still looking us in the face and lying to us about it. (If you don't believe that, you probably believe that T-bone steaks are made at the grocery store without harming any animals.) Sadly, we also know for sure that, after the attack began, nobody in the government, the state department, the armed forces, the CIA or the White House lifted a finger to help our people. Not a finger.

A lot of people in Congress, except, of course, for Harry Reid, Chuck Shumer and every

other loyal Democrat, are still clamoring for an explanation, but these people in Congress are really long on clamor and really short on getting to the bottom of anything. So far, they have focused all their efforts on trying to pin the lies on Obama, wasting their time and ours, because they will never succeed – and what does the exercise matter, anyway?

The Obama Administration's statements in the days following the attack were not just wrong, they were utterly false, and everybody, and I mean everybody – except for the T-bone steak people – already knows it. There is not a person in Washington on Obama's side of the fence who wouldn't pee on your shoes and tell you it's raining, and everybody with a lick of sense knows that, too. They told this particular lie merely because the truth was inconsistent with Obama's only positive re-election campaign theme: I-killed-bin Laden-and-have-al Qaida-on-the-run.

There are a lot of things, important things, we still don't know about Benghazi. What was our ambassador doing out on a limb in that awful place with a mere handful of CIA guys for protection?

One theory, advanced in the British press about a year ago, citing reliable sources, was that our state department had secretly been arming Libyan rebels contrary to Obama's announced policy. Tons of dangerous weaponry stamped "USA" had gone missing in the aftermath of Gaddafi's overthrow, and Ambassador Stevens and his small team were sent to try and get them back before anyone found out about it. Would Hillary Clinton do something like that, with or without Obama's knowledge? Hey, it worked for that Charlie Wilson guy in Afghanistan...and he got a movie and everything.

That would explain a lot, wouldn't it? Well, that story never saw the light of day on this side of the pond, and don't hold your breath waiting for Darryl Issa and his Congressional Committee to run it down on C-Span. We are probably never going to get to the bottom of Benghazi – "national security" and all that.

But there is one important thing we still don't know that someone could probably find out and tell us.

Who gave the order to stand down? I mean, was this some kind of Mission Impossible deal? If you are caught or killed, we will disavow all knowledge of your mission? Of course not. This was a United States ambassador in a United States embassy on foreign soil.

Our ambassador and our embassy come under attack, never mind by whom or their methods or motives, and the distress calls go out instantly. But no jets are scrambled, no Apaches lift off, no drones drone, no SEAL teams are assembled, no Marines lock and load...even our black ops guys on the other side of town violated direct orders to go to the ambassador's aid.

What we had in Benghazi was a coordinated LACK OF RESPONSE, and, I'm sorry, this sort of thing does not happen by accident, even in the U.S. state department, the U.S. military, or the CIA, much less all of them at once. These organizations each have a chain of command, and I guarantee you that these kinds of decisions get made at the top – not the bottom, not the middle – but at the top, usually the very top.

The great thing about chains of command is that they are made up of little dots, and if you have ever been one of these little dots, you know that the rule is never make a dicey decision you can push up the chain and always cover your butt. Congress loves these tedious connect-the-dot exercises.

So, Congress, connect these dots. Start with all the little dots and get to the big ones, because I guarantee you there is one great big dot way up the line. I want to know who decided to write our guys off and leave their bodies on the battlefield to be paraded before foreign news cameras. I want them exposed, so that we can despise them, if nothing else. You? ■

The EPA Was Not Established by Patriots

FROM THE JUNE 2014 EDITION

So, in 1787, Alexander Hamilton, James Madison and John Jay are sitting around a tavern writing what has become known as the Federalist Papers, a long series of articles intended to explain the new Constitution to the public and persuade the 13 new states to ratify it.

Hamilton, who had been there a while longer than the other two and was therefore a tad over-served, nods off but comes to his senses during a lull in the conversation.

“I’ve got an idea,” he says.

“Don’t you always?” Madison retorts.

“No, seriously,” Hamilton replies, “it’s something new we haven’t thought of, and I think we ought to talk about it.”

“Well, OK, what?” asks Jay.

Hamilton says, “On my way over here, it seemed like people were emptying their chamber pots out of every other window, stinking up the sidewalk and ruining my linen socks. The wind was blowing the smoke from the chimneys right down into the street, making my eyes water to the point where I couldn’t see where I was going, which made the chamber pot problem that much worse, if you catch my drift.

“So, I thought, as long as we are inventing this federal government thing, why don’t we create a national department of chamber pots and chimneys to deal with this sort of problem?”

“You mean, we create some national department to control people tossing the contents of their chamber pots and having smoky chimneys in New York?” Madison explodes, spitting ale all over Jay. “How’s that supposed to work?”

“No, not just in New York,” Hamilton says excitedly. “I mean everywhere. This department would make up rules about when and where you empty your chamber pot and what you burn in your fireplace and when you can burn it. And if somebody breaks the rules, the department could fine them or confiscate their chamber pots or brick up their fireplaces, or maybe put them in jail... something like that.”

“Wait a minute,” says Madison. “I asked you how that’s supposed to work. There’s nothing in this Constitution that gives the federal government the power to do anything like that. It spells out those powers in no uncertain terms, and power over peoples’ chamber pots and chimneys ain’t one of them!”

“Keep your wig on,” Hamilton replies. “Don’t you think I know that? But see, we could say that it is one of those implied power thingamabobs that sort of magically belongs to one of the three branches of government to go along with the powers actually spelled out in the Constitution.”

“Well, it sure can’t be Congress,” says Jay, continuing to discreetly dry his pants where Madison’s spray landed. “Those guys couldn’t hit the Hudson River if they fell out of a boat, so you certainly can’t depend on them to hit



the chamber pot, much less tell people what to do with one.

“Looks like I’m well on my way to becoming the first Chief Justice of the United States, and I can guarantee you the courts have bigger fish to fry than what’s in some guy’s chamber pot in Philadelphia and what he does with it. You’re going to have to hang this on the Executive Branch.”

“The Executive Branch?” asks Madison incredulously. “Are you kidding? You, Hamilton, can just hike on down to Virginia and run that one by the General yourself. I promise you it will hit him like another icebox at Valley Forge.”

“No, see,” Hamilton says, “we explain that this is a department with endless possibilities. You start out with chamber pots and chimneys, but after awhile it could be just about anything, since the Executive Branch can pretty well make things up as it goes along.

“I mean, we could outlaw just about anything we don’t like whenever we like, then enforce it against whoever we want. And if anyone

objects, we’ll make them fill out paperwork for years. This way the federal government can pretty much control everything!”

“Settle down, King George,” Jay responds. “Not going to happen. First off, these quality-of-life issues are not the province of the federal government, at least not the one created by this Constitution, and the power to address them is reserved for states or the people. Second, who gets to make these rules? Do people get to vote on them, or does your brother-in-law get to pull them out of his wig? This will never pass muster in the courts, unless my successors are crooks or idiots.”

“I agree with Jay,” says Madison, slamming his drink on the table but deftly holding his saliva in his mouth as Jay takes cover. “This idea is a non-starter. Frankly, I think you’ve had a little too much to drink. These notions are just wrong on so many levels.”

I am a little snookered, thinks Hamilton. Do I really want to make a big deal over this and try to distort this beautifully crafted and brilliantly conceived Constitution to accommodate what I realize now is a pretty repulsive idea for this... this... Environmental Protection Agency? Nah. ■

Religious Persecution on the Rise in America

FROM THE JANUARY 2015 EDITION

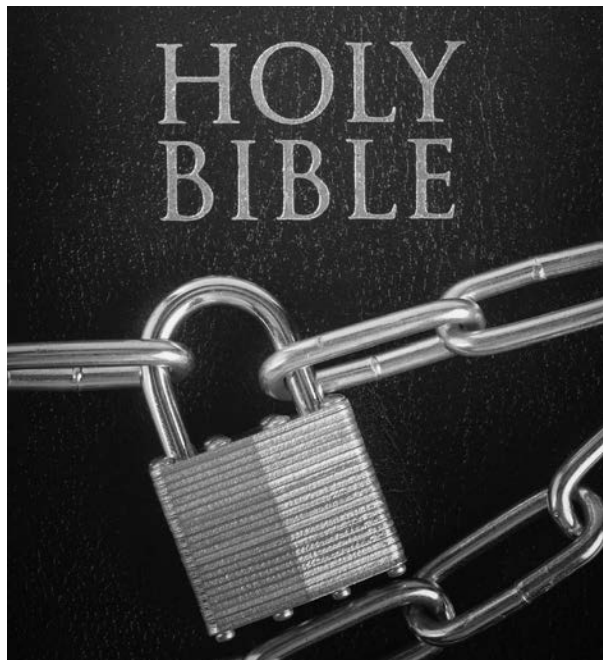
Well, now we are getting down to the nitty gritty. It is Congress and the People against Obama and the Government, and I have to tell you, folks, we are still up in the air on this one. How did we get so far down the left fork in this road?

The Government we now have in Washington, D.C., is exactly the kind of totalitarian state against which America rebelled in 1776. Think I am exaggerating? Look how far Government officials and their lackeys in the liberal media have gone to stifle dissent, silence opposition and befuddle the weak-minded to follow their lead down their path to nowhere.

The IRS attacks the Tea Party and other “conservative” organizations, the Justice Department hacks and prosecutes journalists who don’t toe the party line, and the NSA and Homeland Security have their noses in everyone’s business, monitoring our phone calls, emails and Internet browsing.

The left-wingers have taken us down so many dead-end roads, it is a challenge to list them all. But what all these roads have in common is that they all lead to a garbage heap of uniquely American principles.

Let’s take one – religious freedom. The Bill of Rights, specifically the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, provides that “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,” which the Fourteenth Amendment makes applicable to all the states and their counties, cities and towns.



Where have liberal judges gone with this over the last few decades? Although the vast majority of Americans are religious and God-fearing to one degree or another, the liberals in the judiciary and the Government, a minority, have effectively established atheism as the national religion and are out to discourage or destroy the practice of any other religion.

Did you know that cities and counties all over the country are using zoning laws in efforts to restrict church meetings and religious gatherings and are getting away with it? The good thing about this kind of government misbehavior at the local level is that the guilty parties are really close to the people who elected them and pay their salaries, so they don’t have to wait on the U.S. Supreme Court for a couple of years to maybe get their noses broken. ■

If We Don't Squash the Bug Now, It Will Come Back as a Monster

FROM THE JUNE 2015 EDITION

I am simply amazed and appalled at the apparent division in our country on the topic of Iran and how we should deal with the regime that makes it what it is today. Are we complete morons? I mean, we have seen this exact same movie before, haven't we?

Let's see, a radical faction violently overthrows the government of a country and sets up a new one. Check. This new government is driven by a male-dominated, radical ideology that claims to have its roots in ancient history. Check. This radical ideology tolerates no dissent and is imposed on the populace by brute force. Check. The goal of this radical ideology is nothing less than world domination. Check. Genocide, particularly against Jews, is part and parcel of this radical ideology. Check.

While they prepare their war machine in secret, they waltz world powers around with

propaganda and empty promises, and the world powers fall for it. Check. They plant agents and spies around the world. Check. They gain support and get their cover in the United States from some Hollywood types and a rich guy from Massachusetts. Check. A few statesmen warn the world in no uncertain terms about the threat and are completely ignored. Check.

The decadent and degenerate states that are their ultimate targets ineffectively resist and eventually and stupidly rely on lame diplomacy and appeasement. Check. The appeasers' claimed motivation is a desire to avoid war. Check. They start by gobbling up weak neighboring countries to provide a platform to invade Europe. Check. They make a huge investment in developing super weapons to attack more distant, more powerful enemies. Check.



When we saw this movie the first time, the villain was Nazi Germany, and we all know how it played out. I defy anyone to make any convincing argument that the Islamic Republic of Iran is distinguishable from Nazi Germany in any way other than the choice of headgear. There were a few leaders who advocated squashing that bug Hitler in 1939, when it had become obvious that he had no respect for the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I, and nobody listened to them – just like nobody is listening to Benjamin Netanyahu now.

American wimps need to take a lesson from history. History teaches that when the world is first confronted by a rogue nation founded on a radical ideology and bent on world domination, there are only two choices: fight them now when they are relatively weak or fight them later when they are strong. Make no mistake about it – we are going to end up fighting the Islamic Republic of Iran sooner or later. And I have to believe, based on everything I know about jihadists, the Republican Guard is going to make the SS look like a bunch of pansies.

Even our president, who makes Jimmy Carter look like Winston Churchill, knows that Iran must be prevented from having or controlling nuclear weapons because he says it all the time. The problem is that he always omits the phrase “at all costs.”

Well, folks, it’s going to cost us now or it’s going to cost us later, and I guarantee you the longer we wait the higher and more horrific the cost will be. It is no satisfaction that all the pacifists, secular humanists, feminists and moral relativists will be among the first to lose their heads, along with all the Jews, Christians and other non-Muslims, if they ever get inside the walls.

I also strongly suspect that the concept of nuclear deterrent is wasted on Iran. Do the mullahs strike you as having the slightest compunction about subjecting the world to a nuclear holocaust if they fail to rid it of the infidel by more conventional means? I don’t think they would hesitate for a minute...they have all those virgins waiting. Some people may want to give them their heads on a plate, but they are still going to have to come get mine. ■

How About a Statute of Limitations on IRS Monster?

FROM THE FEBRUARY 2016 EDITION

When is someone, anyone, going to deliver us from the Internal Revenue Service?

The federal government first collected an income tax under Abraham Lincoln during the mid-1800s, but he had a Civil War to pay for. Although the money-grubbing national government tried to make an income tax permanent in 1894, the Supreme Court promptly ruled such a tax unconstitutional. Where are those guys when we need them?

The man we actually have to thank for the mess we’re in today is 28th President Woodrow Wilson. The 16th Amendment, which authorized Congress to collect a tax on income, was ratified on his watch in 1913. We can also express our gratitude to Wilson for the Progressive Movement and the creation of a fourth (and, therefore, unconstitutional) branch of government: the Administrative State.

Before Wilson became a U.S. president, he was president of Princeton University. Being an egghead of the first order, he believed the best way to run the country was to appoint other eggheads to manage EVERYTHING, with Congress just sort of looking on.

Pay no attention to that U.S. Constitution behind the curtain. Turns out there were not enough eggheads to go around, so he started appointing whatever ordinary political hacks he could find. And so it continues to this day.

Now, Princeton students are clamoring to pull down Wilson's statues and chisel his name off various plaques because they discovered that Wilson was a big-time racist. They vilify him in ignorance of his role as the Father of the Progressive Movement, which they passionately embrace and shower with big wet smooches. Ironical, don't you think?

Today's college students seem, by and large, to be an ignorant, ungrateful lot. But Princeton seems to have attracted an inordinate number of nincompoops who are also missing the connect-the-dot gene. Who knows, maybe they screen for that. Nothing creates diversity like chaos.

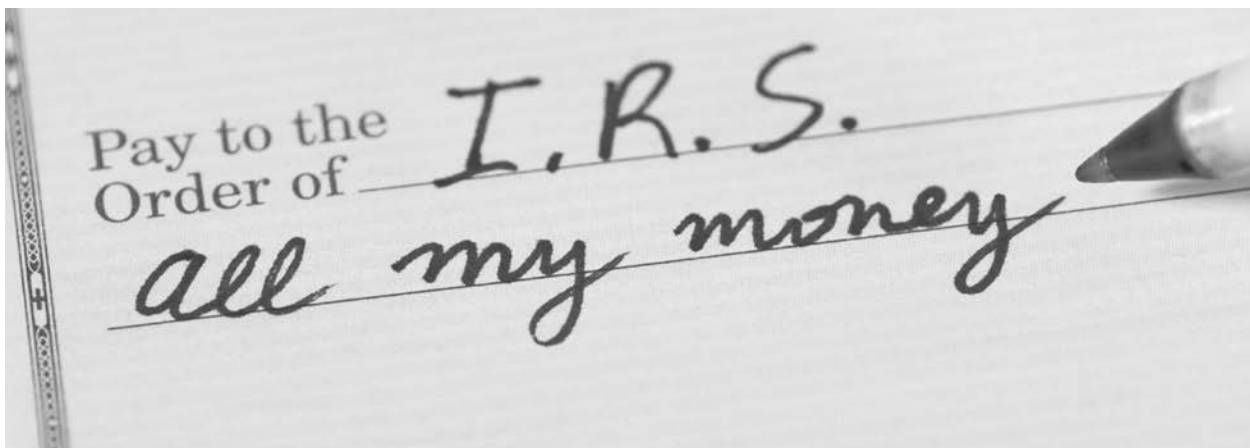
Anyway, in 1913, all but five of the then-48 states ratified the 16th Amendment, probably because they recognized that the money to perform the governmental functions that are, in fact, authorized by the U.S. Constitution, has to come from somewhere. Well, little did they know how that would play out over the long haul.

Over the last 100 years, the Income Tax – originally billed as a “fair” way to raise cash to fund necessary and proper functions of a “national” government – has evolved into an obscure mechanism for the enforcement of misguided social policies, the carrying out of mostly moronic economic policies, redistributing wealth from those who earn it to those who don't, the promotion of industries with political clout and campaign dollars to throw around, and, most recently, punishing and penalizing anyone who opposes this madness.

The instrument for all this rubbish is... drum roll, please... the IRS.

If you want a reason to deface a statue of Woodrow Wilson, the IRS is it! Move over, pigeons, let me have a go. The IRS is symbolic of the Administrative State. It is a hoard of bureaucrats who can't be fired, who are elected by and accountable to no one, and who thumb their noses at – and lie to – a Congress that pretends it has some control over it, but actually has none.

This is what happened while Americans were sleeping. We need to WAKE UP! Any presidential candidate who proposes to reduce the number of pages in the Internal Revenue Code from approximately 80,000 to three and abolish the IRS has his or her work cut out for them. I mean, they are going to put hundreds of thousands of IRS bureaucrats and completely innocent tax accountants out of work. But, hey, they get my vote, anyway. ■



Federal Government Has Grown Too Big For Its Britches

FROM THE JUNE 2016 EDITION

The Liberal/Progressive mindset is based on at least two fundamental misperceptions of reality: (1) human nature can be changed, and (2) Government can do it.

The Founding Fathers, most of whom were highly educated and thoughtful students of human nature, would call this utter foolishness. They recognized that human nature does not change and took that into account when they designed American Government the way they did.

The Federal Government was granted certain limited powers, those powers most immediately affecting the day-to-day lives of the citizens being reserved to the States (and their political subdivisions), where the citizens could better keep an eye on their representatives elected to exercise them and get their hands on them, if need be.

The Federal Government was to operate under a system of checks and balances by a separation of powers. Representatives elected by the states would, in Congress, decide what the laws and policies of the land were to be; the President, the national executive, would implement and faithfully enforce those laws and policies; and the Courts would ensure that the Congress and the President stayed within the limiting bounds of the Constitution.

The citizens might not be able to keep such a close eye on their representatives while they were away in Congress, but they could still get their hands on them when they got home. Checks and balances were necessary because

human nature is what it is. Greed and self-interest are constantly at war with duty and honor. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Over the last 100 years, the system of checks and balances has been dismantled by the very people we, ourselves, chose to preserve it. How did this happen? Human nature. Ours. Politicians haven't changed very much over the centuries. What the Founders failed to take into account was that the American Experiment would succeed so well and that the American People would be so blessed by Liberty they would forget what it looked like.

Remember when Obama promised that his administration would be the "most transparent ever?" "Transparent" means you can "see through it." Our Government – at every level – is supposed to be a government "of the people, by the people and for the people." We are entitled to know what our Government – at every level – is doing and why.

Instead, all we see is money and baloney going in one end and fertilizer coming out the other. The fertilizer is killing our roses and the only people with healthy roses are people in Government, or the people who own the people in Government.

This would come as no surprise to the Founders, but that we have let it go so far would rock them to the core. But, hey, we're lazy, trusting, spoiled by prosperity – it's just human nature. We knew we were in trouble when the Government insiders became so

bold we had to pass “Open Meetings Laws” and the “Freedom of Information Act.”

These measures don’t even make a dent, when we shrug off a President caught lying to our faces about ObamaCare and God knows what else, whose powerful agencies stonewall Congress and the Courts with impunity, and whose Secretary of State is allowed to go off the grid to run her influence peddling scam, is caught lying to the faces of survivors of the

Benghazi victims and now wants to take his place.

Ironically, our Government has become so false it has once again become “transparent.” We can see right through it. We despise what we see. But we have forgotten where we started and what it is supposed to look like, and we just can’t seem to figure out what to do about it. ■





Somebody Better Step Up and Deal With The V.A. Crisis

FROM THE DECEMBER 2016 EDITION

Well, here we are. The big question about who our next president will be has been answered. Now, I've got another one: who is going to do something – anything – about the plight of our Veterans, and when are they going to do it?

There has been much for Americans to be ashamed of during the last eight years. But nothing so much as the corruption and incompetence of the Veterans Administration, which has left American military service members to die on the sidewalk waiting to get in a V.A. hospital. Or, molder in body bags in basements when they managed to get in a hospital but could not manage to get out.

V.A. doctors are certainly not to blame. We haven't heard a single story about a Veteran who died on an operating table because his V.A. doctor was drunk, stoned or failed to

show up for the surgery because he was stuck on the back nine at the country club. And it is certainly not budgetary constraints. The V.A. budget has steadily increased to historic levels and topped \$196 BILLION in fiscal 2015.

How is it, you may ask, that we throw more and more money at the V.A., and its performance stubbornly fails to improve? Well, duh. It's the FEDERAL GOVERNMENT and its army of bureaucrats... an army over 4 million strong.

Of course, not all of them work at the V.A. There is considerable skepticism that any bureaucrats employed by the V.A. actually "work" there. Scandal after scandal – utter incompetence in management, outright corruption, theft, embezzlement, fraud – all to the detriment of those Americans to whom we owe the most.

The revelation that the Veterans Administration (and the emphasis here is on “administration”) was rotten to the core was appalling enough when the whistles started blowing almost three years ago. It is even more appalling now because nothing – NOTHING – has been done about it.

How many scoundrels have been fired at the V.A. in the last three years? Less than a handful! Well, hey, they are Civil Service, and they have all these “rights,” including the right not to get fired when they are caught using the V.A. credit card in strip joints. This is complete and utter lunacy.

Of course, nothing that comes out of Washington surprises me anymore. A U.S. Secretary of State sets up a private email server to facilitate and conceal a pay-to-play racket on an unprecedented, global scale, violating umpteen laws governing state secrets, hanging our classified information out for every hacker in the world to pick through, and she gets a pass from the FBI and the Department of Justice because she’s powerful and running for president.

This is the same FBI and Department of Justice that sent American military service

members to Leavenworth for a hell of a lot less during her term in office. So why should we expect mere incompetents, not to mention criminals, employed by the V.A. to get fired?

There is considerable force to the argument that the V.A. needs a lot more than a facelift. If you want to see what a real “single-payer healthcare program” looks like in action, simply look at the current V.A.

So, for openers, somebody is going to have to rethink the entire model upon which the Government provides guaranteed healthcare to our Veterans. Who is going to do that? Our new president? Congress? Give me a break. Fixing this mess, assuming anyone is actually interested in fixing it, is going to take the president, Congress and probably the Supreme Court to re-form the Veterans Administration.

Who is going to start? When are they going to start? If we don’t start soon, I predict we will start running short of cannon fodder, and then it’s all over for America. Maybe it already is. ■

Election Exposed Mainstream Media for The Farce That It Is

FROM THE FEBRUARY 2017 EDITION

With Donald Trump now occupying the Oval Office, I could certainly fill my allotted space this month delighting in the thrashing about, wailing and gnashing of teeth on the Left, not just here in America but around the world. I could also revel in the pathetic antics of those who having shot themselves in one foot, are now hopping around frantically, trying to get a bead on the other one.

But instead, I want to talk about something a little more sober, about which hubbub has yet to subside, and that is the First Amendment and Freedom of the Press.

The Founding Fathers thought a “free press” was essential to the preservation of the Republic and so important to the new nation that express protection should be enshrined in

the Bill of Rights. They did this to encourage all those who would “speak truth to power” and to protect them from reprisal from the powerful, who might be offended by the Truth.

At the Founding and up until about 1926, the speakers of truth to power were confined to what we now call the “print media” and the occasional soapbox in the public square. In 1926 came Radio and the first “broadcast network” of any kind, followed by Television in 1939.

Up to this point, “journalism” was still mostly about Truth, but then two scourges of humanity moved to the center of the world stage: Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin. They both admitted to 1) exerting complete control over all forms of public expression, and 2) disseminating false and misleading information in the public forum to promote Nazism and Communism, respectively. This forever after gave “propaganda” a bad name.

Wikipedia credits some egghead named Richard Alan Nelson with defining Propaganda as “a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages (which may or may not be factual) via mass and direct media channels.”

All of us having lived through 2016, we now see the “Mainstream Media” for what it has become and for exactly what it is – the Propaganda machine of the Left. We have also come to see the Democratic Party for what it has become and for exactly what it is – the party of the Left, which cares for nothing so much as power.

According to all the polls (themselves newly recognized as objects of scorn), public confidence in “The Media” is at an all-time low (as well it should be) and about one-half of Americans get their “news” on Facebook.



This is frightening, if true, but I still agree with Mark Twain, who said, “There are lies, damned lies and then there are statistics.” It would be ironic that people who no longer trust their “journalists” come to rely on Facebook and other “Social Media” for their “news” when it has been demonstrated time and again that the moguls of social media are no less Leftist propagandists than CNN and the *New York Times*.

Fortunately, everyone in the country – other than the ninnies on college campuses and the elite and the moochers in their sanctuary cities – seems to have learned to take their “news” with more than a few grains of salt, regardless of the source.

It is definitely ironic that these blatant propagandists assert the First Amendment in defense of their conduct – the antithesis of “speaking truth to power” – while making every effort to silence every “speaker of truth.”

Well, they are presently twisting and turning in the wind, and what a sight to behold – Chicken Little meets the naked Emperor. The Left is crumbling around the world – as it has throughout history – but it will not go down without a fight. And we still have too many nitwits who believe everything they read in the papers. ■

Basket of Fools Behind Sanctuary Cities

FROM THE JUNE 2017 EDITION

You know what amazes me? It amazes me that there is an issue about Sanctuary Cities... and that we are having to listen to the Basket of Fools debate it.

I do not believe a single one of these jurisdictions claiming status as a “Sanctuary for the Undocumented” is controlled by anyone other than a Democrat, and the only ones defending them are Democrats, Leftists, decrepit Marxists from the Fifties and the usual Basket of Fools who in this instance comprise only about 20 percent of the citizenry. Gee, maybe we are actually gaining on them.

Proponents of “Sanctuary Cities” can claim absolutely no legal authority for their refusal to comply with Federal Laws on immigration matters, as even Alan Dershowitz, the Left’s only real lawyer, must concede. So, they fall back on “moral authority” and lecture us about Justice while flouting the law and thumbing their noses in the face of overwhelming public sentiment.

Let’s talk about Justice for a minute. “Justice” is one of those words like “fairness,” which various thinkers at various times down through history have tried to define in various ways.

While regular people like us might have a hard time putting our finger on a complete definition, we damned well know it when we see it. And we know that the Law is supposed to produce Justice, at least to the extent that a civilized society can figure out what it is.

The Law of the Land, that is the Law of THIS Land, is specific, crystal-clear and well-settled as to what non-citizens outside this Country have to do to get in here and stay

here. If you don’t like this Law of the Land, then there are ways to change it.

Until then, every single person who has entered or remains in the Country in violation of the Law of the Land – all 11 million of them, whether you call them Illegal Aliens (which is what they are) or “Undocumented Immigrants” – are just common Lawbreakers! And Lawbreakers are entitled to no expectation other than adverse consequences. That Bush looked the other way and Obama welcomed them with open arms does absolutely nothing to change the status of these people as common Lawbreakers.



Now, whether a so-called “Dreamer” is as “bad” a Lawbreaker as the parent or parents who brought them here and deserves the same adverse consequences as, say, your average ax murderer, is another question. Dreamers, it is said, were babies and thus had no control over their Lawbreaker parents bringing them here in violation of the Law of the Land.

But it follows, “as the night the day,” that the moment they understood their status as “Dreamers,” they became Lawbreakers, too. Given a choice between sharing your society with Lawkeepers and Lawbreakers, it takes an utter Fool to choose the latter.

The Left wants to make very complicated “moral” arguments about “nice” Lawbreakers. These include not only the roofers, bricklayers, housekeepers and yardmen who are working for money to send back where they came from, but also those who are sucking up welfare payments and forcing our taxpayer-funded public schools to hire people to teach English as a second

language, simply because they are not robbing or killing people or getting drunk and running over them in their cars.

Those complicated arguments are for another day – one when I am feeling more kindly disposed to tolerate the Basket of Fools.

Sanctuary Cities are not defending or aiding the “nice” Lawbreakers, which is still a Federal Crime. They are defending and aiding DANGEROUS Lawbreakers, who have committed serious, sometimes heinous, crimes in their home countries, or who have committed a crime in this country in addition to merely being here in the first place.

“Concealing, Harboring or Shielding from Detection” even “nice” Lawbreakers is a FEDERAL CRIME. I agree with that Sherriff from Massachusetts – Rahm Emanuel, Bill de Blasio and that goober from San Francisco all need to be sharing a cell with the last killer any of them turned loose on the rest of us. ■

We Need a New Political Party... Now!

FROM THE JULY 2017 EDITION

I think it’s time for another political party – because the two we got ain’t worth the tar, feathers, lumber and effort it would take to ride them all out of Washington, D.C., on a rail.

The Democrats have crushed themselves to a festering pulp of self-destructive vitriol, and their response to the loss of power occasioned by their arrogance, not to mention their bad bets, is to double down and simply come out of the closet as the Left-wing radicals they have actually been for many years and align themselves with Communists, Socialists,

anarchists and every other kind of America hater.

Bernie Sanders is a decrepit parody of a 1950s Communist, whose main appeal is to Millennials who never heard of Karl Marx (although they may recognize his brother, Groucho) and who have no idea what communism is or what Josef Stalin and Chairman Mao made of it.

I would love to hear Chuck Shumer, Nancy Pelosi, Elizabeth “Pocahontas” Warren and Maxine Waters explain how their ridiculous



antics and vicious, unrelenting opposition to anything and everything Trump or Republican benefits the American People, much less their own constituents.

The Republicans – now there is an epic case of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. In the House of Representatives, you’ve got your stiff-necked Freedom Caucus, which at least stands on something identifiable as a principle. And you’ve got your so-called Moderate Republicans, the vast majority who stand exclusively for getting reelected, principle be damned.

In the Senate, you’ve got your lunatic Republicans, such as John McCain (whose years in that rat cage have finally caught up with him), and Lindsey Graham, who for an Air Force lawyer that never saw combat sure likes picking fights and never knows when to shut up.

You’ve also got Rand Paul, who wouldn’t even be a Republican if a Libertarian could get elected dog catcher. And finally, you’ve got your Establishment Republicans, even the ones from my home state of Tennessee, who have spent their years in the U.S. Senate perfecting the illusion that you can pick up a turd by the clean end.

Say what you want about President Trump; what you see is pretty much what you get. At least he is doing what he said he would, including appointing justices to the Supreme Court who know the difference between the U.S. Constitution and *USA Today*, as well as the difference between following the Law and making the law up as you go along.

The problem is the Congress, whose failings and self-serving depredations over the decades have transformed our national government into the Founders’ worst nightmare. Our so-called two-party system is nowhere enshrined in the Constitution, and while the Founders certainly contemplated that organized “factions” might arise, they were viewed more as a threat than a necessity to the preservation of individual liberty.

Thwarted in their long-running effort to turn America into Sweden, all the Democrats can do now is try to stymie every effort of every opponent. In the case of the Republicans, it isn’t all that hard because the Republicans can’t stand together on anything because everything is... well, just too complicated.

I propose a new party – the Washingtonian Constitutionalists. Members of this party, like George Washington, would recognize that governing the country is a duty and a service, not a career move; that it contemplates personal sacrifice, not personal gain; and that you do your bit for a few years at most, then get out of the way and go home.

Members would adhere strictly to the Constitution as plainly written and duly amended, work tirelessly to dismantle the Administrative State, respect the Rule of Law, abandon forever the “identity politics” of the past and treat everyone – EVERYONE – equally under the Law.

The First and Governing Principle of this new party would be Common Sense. I bet Trey Gowdy would jump ship and join up in a heartbeat. ■



Fake News – What It Is and Where to Find It

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2017 EDITION

So, by this time, we have all gotten so much “Fake News” we can no longer tell it from the real thing. I am going to try to help you out a little bit. What, exactly, is “Fake” News?

Well, first of all, let’s decide what “news” is. Once upon a time, “news” was simply an account, or “story,” of some event based on all the relevant facts diligently collected

by some reporter. It took the form of, “Here is everything we could find out and verify about this event, make of it what you will.”

When people who published the “news” had an opinion about what it “meant” and either wished to share that with the audience or, more important, wanted their audience to adopt their opinion, they would “editorialize” about it. They were fairly diligent in separating their “opinions” from the “news.”

“Fake” News actually began years ago when purveyors of “news” stopped doing this. It probably started right after World War II, but really ginned up in the Sixties during the Vietnam War. It started when these “news” purveyors abandoned their role as faithful “observers” and “chroniclers” of human events and, instead, became “players,” seeking to shape human events by manipulating “public opinion.”

At first, American “Media” manipulated public opinion mainly to sell stuff, but by the Sixties they were full-on political, “opposing the War in Vietnam.”

The *New York Times* was in the vanguard back then. From Vietnam on, the “news” no longer began with an “event,” but with a “viewpoint.” What appeared in the newspapers and magazines, and on television depended on the political or social “viewpoint” of the publishers and owners of the TV networks.

If some event supported or promoted that “viewpoint” in the Court of Public Opinion, it made the “News,” and vice versa. We’ve gone a lot further down the toilet since then.

Now, the “Media” make no pretense that their objective is anything other than manipulating public opinion. With

few exceptions, every time you open the newspaper, turn on the TV, surf the Internet or check your Facebook news feed, somebody is telling you what to think and probably lying to you to boot.

“Fake News” is a “story” consisting of innuendo and implication but unsupported by facts, OR a “story” supported by “selected” facts (“misinformation”). OR it’s a “story” based on FALSE statements of fact, OR a “story” that is not even a “story” at all but an account of trivial facts claimed “to mean something” when they actually mean nothing at all.

Many such “stories” are often strung together to form a “narrative,” which is nothing more than a bill of goods the purveyors are trying to sell. We’re now getting all of this 24 hours a day. And it is mainly coming from the Left. Why? Because all those draft dodgers from the Sixties now control the Media.

When I was a kid and would repeat gossip or hurtful statements to my mother, her first response was always, “consider the source.” Well, considering the source, we now know that just about anything that comes out of CNN, ABC, CBS, NBC, MSNBC, Politico, Moveon.org, the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post* is “Fake News” of one type or the other.

By now, we are all too familiar with these Leftist “narratives,” which they shamelessly sell day in and day out to the exclusion of “real” news. Regardless of the source, you should also have a healthy skepticism about any “story” promoting any viewpoints attributed to “European Leaders,” “Climate Change Scientists,” “University Professors” or any “Survey, Poll or Study.”

Remember, Mark Twain, quoting British Prime Minister Disraeli, told us, “There are three kinds of lies: lies; damned lies; and statistics.” ■

My Predictions for 2018 Include a Few Surprises

FROM THE DECEMBER 2017 EDITION

So, here we are... December 2017. And what have we got to show for it?

The Health Care Crisis is still critical, Taxes are not reformed, the Immigration Mess continues to be a mess, North Korea and Iran are still threats, and our Country is more divided than ever. Is 2018 going to be any better?

I would love to think so. It can't possibly be any worse, can it? Well, maybe it can. Here is how I size up the situation as it stands since Donald Trump was elected President. It has become apparent that there are three factions in the body politic of approximately equal horsepower vying for supremacy.

First, there is what I call the Left, which is comprised of Communists, Socialists and Liberals; University faculties and administrations; most of the Media; every group to which George Soros gives money; and a bunch of movie stars, rock stars, comedians and other organ-grinder monkeys.

Other members of this group include self-identified "victims" of everything, who get their feelings hurt looking in the mirror, plus everyone who hates Donald Trump. The Left now controls the Democratic Party, which since the election has abandoned even the pretext of doing something constructive and instead has concentrated solely on efforts to destroy President Trump.

Second, you have the Washington Establishment. This group consists of career politicians, career bureaucrats and lobbyists (and the politicians who are beholden to them); every faceless member of the "Deep

State," most of the editorial board of the *Wall Street Journal* and most of their columnists; and most Republican Members of Congress, who either think they alone know what is good for the rest of us or at least know which side their bread is buttered on.

Third, there are the rest of us, who either support Trump or believe he and his policies ought to be given a fair chance to undo the damage of the last 30 years. I am not a "Trump Right or Wrong" guy. He occasionally makes me cringe. Frankly, I would have preferred a different sort of outsider, maybe a cross between Gandalf and Michael Corleone. But Trump is what we got.

The other two factions think we are stupid and weak, and that they can jam their madness down our throats or con us into gobbling it up all by ourselves. And in this, I think they are wrong. The problem, of course, is stalemate. None of the factions are yet strong enough to prevail, and there is no longer any room for compromise.

So, what can we expect in 2018? I hope I am wrong, but I don't see much changing – at least until the 2018 elections. ObamaCare will remain with us, and the taxpayers will get it from both directions, paying to prop up ObamaCare and paying for the "fixes."

Tax Reform will degenerate into a lot of tinkering around the edges and "compromises" that undercut the underlying objective, which is to invigorate the national economy. Illegal Immigration and its attendant problems will continue, although more zealous enforcement of existing laws will abate these problems somewhat. Especially



when pending cases start hitting the Supreme Court.

So, what about the elections? Every time Congressional Republicans fail to deliver the goods, all the talking heads chortle about this being good for the Democrats. I don't think so.

Do you think that Establishment Republicans and Republicans, Independents and even Democrats who voted for Trump are going to

elect Democrats because they are exasperated with Mitch McConnell, Paul Ryan, John McCain and their ilk?

I'm thinking they are not going to elect Democrats. They are going to elect **DIFFERENT** Republicans. And if they elect enough of them, we may get somewhere. If not, it will be more of the same-old, same-old. ■

PREPAREDNESS

If I had to select one word that describes what 4Patriots is all about, this would be it. Preparedness. Pretty much everything we do, say, produce and sell is about preparing for an uncertain future. We've published more articles in the *Patriot Alliance Messenger* about preparedness than we have any other subject. So it's fitting that this section is the largest one in the book.

You Can Be Prepared for a Tornado

FROM THE DECEMBER 2013 EDITION

On the afternoon of May 20, 2013, a massive tornado struck Moore, Oklahoma, killing 25 people and injuring 377. At its peak, this incredible storm was 1.3 miles wide and included winds in excess of 200 miles per hour. With no storm shelters, the schools and their occupants were sitting ducks.

In 2012, a total of 68 people lost their lives in the U.S. due to 1,072 reported tornadoes. These vicious storms, which are violently rotating columns of air that are in contact with the earth's surface, are more than a match for pretty much everything that gets in their way, including homes and other structures, trees and power lines. While most tornadoes are approximately 250 feet across and feature wind speeds of less than 110 miles per hour, some particularly intense tornadoes stretch out across two miles and pack 300 mph or greater wind speeds.

You might be able to defend yourself from a home invader or an attacker on the street, but

it's absolutely impossible to defend yourself against a tornado. No amount of preparation will enable you to stand up to one of nature's most furious foes. Your best bet when a tornado strikes is to attempt to put yourself in the best possible position to avoid the storm.

However, you don't have to wait for an actual tornado to come roaring at you to practice dodging it. There are a variety of actions you can take now to protect yourself and your family before, during and after a tornado touches down.

First and foremost – and this applies to any potential weather-related disaster – you should make sure to have an emergency response plan in place, just in case a tornado warning is issued. Whether you are at home or at the office, everyone should be aware of exactly what to do and where to take shelter.

Tornado warning signs include rapidly darkening skies, clouds rotating in a circular



pattern, a funnel cloud being spotted and sometimes a rushing or roaring noise being heard. Of course, keeping a TV or radio tuned to a station that will provide weather updates is very important.

If conditions are right for a tornado to develop, a tornado watch will be issued and it's wise to pay very close attention to your surroundings. If a tornado warning is proclaimed, that means a tornado has been spotted in your area and you should seek shelter immediately.

As soon as possible, tune into emergency radio communicated by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Their reports will always be slightly ahead of mainstream media reports.

Offering five steps to take during a tornado is www.Ready.gov. They are:

1. If you're indoors, get to a basement, storm cellar or the lowest level of a building. Stay away from windows, doors, corners of buildings and outside walls.

2. If you're indoors but can't get to a lower level, find the smallest interior room or hallway as far from the exterior of the building as possible.
3. If you're driving, try to head to the closest structure where you can take shelter.
4. If you're driving but can't get to a shelter, get out of the car and lie face down with your hands over your head in a ditch or other lower level near the roadway but away from vehicles.
5. If you're driving and you see a tornado, don't try to outrun it. Pull over immediately and seek shelter. Avoid overpasses, bridges, tall buildings and flying debris.

Once a tornado passes, you may not be out of the woods yet. Most people who suffer post-tornado injuries get hurt while trying to clean up debris, including glass and nails. Also keep an eye out for downed power lines, ruptured gas lines and damaged structures. ■



A House Fire Could Happen – So Be Prepared

FROM THE JANUARY 2014 EDITION

There is almost nothing scarier than a house fire, regardless of whether you live in a single-family home, townhouse, duplex, high-rise apartment building or garden apartment. Even after they become aware of a fire, people can be trapped by flames and smoke. Those fortunate enough to escape may still suffer from smoke inhalation.

A staggering 47 percent of home structure fires begin with the usage of appliances, including stoves, toasters, microwave ovens,

radiators and other heating systems. Open flames from candles and fireplaces cause 32 percent of these fires.

According to the National Fire Protection Association, U.S. fire departments responded to approximately 370,000 home structure fires in 2011. These fires resulted in 13,910 civilian injuries and 2,520 civilian deaths, while causing \$6.9 billion in direct property damage.

Only 4 percent of home structure fires start in a living room, family room or den, but they cause 24 percent of home fire deaths. Fires that start in a bedroom represent 7 percent of home fires, but result in 25 percent of home fire deaths. Sixty-two percent of reported home fires deaths result from fires in homes with no working smoke alarms.

As always, you will increase the chances of survival for you and your family members if you have an emergency response plan in place. You should also keep a 72-hour survival kit and bug-out bag ready to grab, and important documents should be organized.

There's more to a house fire than scorching flames, although those are intimidating enough on their own. There's also smoke, toxic gases, the lack of oxygen and a lack of light. House fires are usually preventable, but once they start, there's often little time to react.

Following are a few things you can do now to prepare for a potential fire in your home:

- Practice an evacuation plan with your family, both by sight and feel. It's possible that the smoke will be too thick for you to see your way around. Have pre-arranged meeting places for your family members.
- Make sure that all of the doors, windows, screens and security bars can be easily opened by everyone in your home.
- Install smoke alarms and change their batteries regularly. The most reliable types of alarms are dual-sensor smoke detectors. Also, use a carbon monoxide detector.
- Have a couple of fire extinguishers handy (one for the kitchen and one in your bedroom) in order to keep small fires from spreading.

If you find yourself in a house fire that's beyond the scope of your fire extinguisher, the best thing you can do is get yourself and other family members out of the residence. Here are four actions steps to take:

- Move to the nearest exit quickly. You may have to get down low if there is smoke in the air.
- If you need to open an interior door, do it slowly. The fire on the other side of the door could be worse than on your side.
- As soon as you're out of the house, call 911. Don't try to do this until you're sure you and other family members are safe.
- Do not go back into a burning building. (I know this is the rule, but the fact is, if a family member is still in the house, I'm going back in.)

Below are four things to do following a house fire:

- Even after a house fire has been extinguished, charred beams and other items can fall. Don't go back in until you've been given the OK by the fire department.
- Contact your insurance agent and the landlord or mortgage company to report the fire.
- Assess the damage to your valuables and make a comprehensive list.
- If you're planning to leave your residence for one or more days to stay at a hotel or at a friend's residence, notify the police. Your house could become a target of thieves while you're gone. ■

Preparing for a Flood Could Save Your Life

FROM THE APRIL 2014 EDITION

Prior to the devastating Indian Ocean tsunami in 2004 that resulted in the deaths of more than 230,000 people in 14 bordering countries, many people knew very little about this phenomenon, especially in the Western Hemisphere. But tsunamis have been around for a long time, as evidenced by Greek historian Thucydides arguing in 426 B.C. that they were caused by ocean earthquakes.

A series of water waves caused by the displacement of a large volume of water, a tsunami's impact is limited to coastal areas, but the resulting flooding can have enormous destructive power. Although they have nothing to do with tides, tsunamis are more likely to look like a rising tide as they roll toward shore than they are a typical wave. Scientists still have much to learn about tsunamis, including why some smaller ocean earthquakes can cause larger tsunamis than some larger ocean earthquakes cause.

We in North America rarely encounter tsunamis, but most of us are familiar with flooding problems. Included in U.S. flooding history have been the Johnstown Flood of 1889 that killed 2,200 in Pennsylvania, the Mississippi River Flood of 1927 that resulted in 246 deaths across 10 states and the Ohio River Flood in 1937 that killed 385 in six states.

Fortunately, more recent flooding in the U.S. has resulted in far fewer deaths, but it has still caused significant damage to homes, businesses, sewage systems, roadways, bridges

and crops, and has produced widespread power outages.

Having an emergency response plan in place in the event of a tsunami or flooding is important. Your 72-hour survival kit and bug-out bags should be prepared in advance, and your important documents should be organized.

Preparation is the key. Following are four action steps you can take before flooding or a tsunami occurs in order to be better prepared:

- Visit the Federal Emergency Management Agency's flood map site to discover whether you are in a flood plain and where the nearest high ground is located.
- If you are a property owner, especially in an area prone to flooding, make sure you have sufficient flood insurance.
- Make sure you have an emergency radio that tunes into reports from the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration.
- Practice your escape plan with your family. Going through the motions now will help when the time comes for the real thing.

If flooding has already started or a tsunami seems to be on the way, here are four steps you can take to protect yourself and your family:

- Because you may need to move to higher ground on short notice, tune into emergency radio and be ready to move quickly.
- If you're driving and you see standing water ahead, stop. Six inches of water is enough to stall out most cars, and it may be deeper than it appears. Same thing if you're on foot. Fast moving water can carry people off. Stay away from streams, sewer drains and drainage canals.
- Know the difference between a flood warning and a flood watch. If the situation appears to be worsening, stop what you're doing and get to higher ground right away.
- If there is time to evacuate your home, turn off all of your valves, unplug appliances and move your most expensive items to the highest possible point of your home.

Following the flood or tsunami threat, take the following four actions, keeping in mind that the threat may only seem to be over:

- Don't walk into any standing water. There could be objects in the water that you can't see, including electrical wires.
- Continue to listen to emergency radio. You may be informed of a secondary threat of which you were not aware.
- Keep your eyes focused on potential hazards, including broken glass, downed power lines, ruptured gas lines and damaged structures. And keep in mind that standing floodwater could be contaminated by gas, oil, sewage or chemicals.
- Remain away from the area until city authorities declare it safe to return. ■



The Most Important Non-Food Items You Can Hoard for a Crisis

FROM THE MAY 2014 EDITION

Storing up non-perishable food and water for an emergency is pretty much job one when it comes to prepping. Following a disaster, you won't last very long without clean drinking water, and it won't take long until you and your family members get very hungry. But if food and water are all you have, you're going to find surviving very challenging, especially if you're forced to bug out when you thought you were going to be able to hunker down.

You could put together an endless list of non-food items to hoard for a crisis, but it's best to be realistic about what you and other family members have room to store and possibly transport. While this list is hardly comprehensive, it probably contains more items than you'd want to collect, but at the same time it can provide you with choices.

- A crank-operated radio could end up being your only link to announcements, including where aid is available, which areas to avoid and local weather alerts. Some radios can even charge your electronic devices.
- A fixed-blade knife is an important item to store. Your single-edge hunting knife with a six to eight-inch steel blade should include a comfortable handle and sturdy sheath. Add a folding lock blade knife and pocket knife to the mix.
- A strong, LED flashlight should be stored for each member of your family or party. Those flashlights might just be what gets you spotted

by rescuers. At home, they'll be a big help if the power goes out. Don't forget extra batteries.

- Parachute cord (also called ParaCord or P-Cord) is a lightweight yet strong cord with multiple uses, including binding logs and any other materials you may need to gather to start a fire. It can also be used to pull heavy objects.
- Guns and ammunition are also essential. Having a large bore handgun and a shotgun should be enough. Make sure you have some cotton patches and cleaning solvent to keep your guns clean. Store at least 500 rounds of ammo.
- Several fire starters should be among your stash, including disposable cigarette lighters. Magnesium sticks are very reliable. Also, stockpile waterproof matches, charcoal and lighter fluid. A fire could save your life.
- A first-aid kit is essential. Include gauze, bandages, medical tape, burn salve, aspirin, ibuprofen, anti-bacterial ointment, cough syrup, finger splint, ankle wrap, wrist brace, anti-diarrhea medicine, suture packs and cotton balls.
- A quality compass from a sporting goods outlet will prove very important



if you end up having to bug out. A military-style lensatic compass would certainly do the trick. In addition, store maps of the area among your gear.

- If you can't find shelter during an emergency, you'll want a military pup tent or a backpacker's tent. A lightweight tent will provide you with temporary shelter from the elements until you can find something more permanent.
- A poncho serves multiple purposes. It's good protection against rain and sun, and you can use it to keep other items dry, such as wood. And because they fold flat and don't weigh much, they're easy to pack among your gear.
- A backpack is a great way to carry gear while keeping your arms and hands free. Make sure the straps are wide so that they don't cut into your shoulders and that the bottom is reinforced. It should also be water resistant.

- Duct tape will serve you well in a variety of ways. Among its uses are repairing tears in a poncho or tent, making shoes waterproof, holding gauze on a wound, fashioning a cup to collect water and holding fishing hooks in place.
- A bandana has many practical uses in a survival situation. It's good for sun shade, a dust mask, a head wrap, a pot holder, a hand or dish towel, a pillow, an evaporation cooler, a medical sling and a signaling device.
- Super Glue also has many uses, so pack several tubes. You can use it to repair a crack in a water bottle or canteen, protect finger blisters from infection, fix a broken knife grip, secure two pieces of wood or suture wounds.
- Sunglasses are a convenience on summer days, but they're an absolute necessity in the winter to avoid snow blindness. UV/A or UV/B polarized sunglasses could save your eyes. Also, store a pair of safety goggles.

Another item with multiple uses is lip balm. Use it to heal chapped lips and when you feel a hand or foot blister coming on, and spread it on your face in the cold to avoid heat loss. It can also help to prevent rust on knife blades.

Vicks VapoRub not only relieves head, throat and chest congestion, it soothes aching muscles, increases circulation, prevents infections from cuts, and relieves headaches when rubbed on your temples. The odor wards off bugs.

Thick garbage bags will also come in handy in a survival situation. They can be used for holding gear, or as a rain poncho, sleeping bag, sun shade or emergency buoyancy device when filled with air and tied tightly.

Make sure you have plenty of water purification tablets, as a crisis could contaminate the local water supply. Drop one

tab in a water bottle, shake it vigorously, wait 15 minutes, then shake it once more before drinking.

Coffee filters can be used as paper towels, emergency toilet paper, or disposable plates or bowls, and they can form a cold compress, bandage or funnel. They can also serve as covers for food to keep insects off.

Aluminum foil is good for wrapping and preserving food that you've already cooked, as well as for wrapping vegetables, meat and fish that you're cooking over a campfire. It can also be used as a wrap to keep bandages clean.

Baking soda aids in extinguishing fires without wasting water and will deter ants and other annoying critters. It can neutralize garbage and sanitation odors, and you can sprinkle it in your shoes as a foot deodorant. ■

Prepping for Pets Now Could Save Time Later

FROM THE JUNE 2014 EDITION

The other day while I was walking my 8-month-old Golden Retriever puppy, I stopped to chat with a neighbor. Both of our families had gone through the trauma of the death of a pet recently, and we discussed that as briefly as possible so that no one would notice two grown men pretending that we had something in our eyes. One of my neighbor's comments really stuck with me.

"They say that a pet can be just like a member of the family, but forget the 'just like' part," he said. "A pet IS a member of the family."

Being a longtime animal lover and pet owner, I couldn't agree more. I think that one of

the reasons we get so attached to pets is that they are completely dependent upon us. They need us to feed and water them, provide them with shelter, take them to the vet and clean up after them. Eventually, our kids grow up and become independent of us, but pets always need us to care for them. With that loving care comes a very real bond that is impossible to break. That's why we enjoy them so much during their brief years on Earth and mourn their loss so greatly.

One of the ways that we can care for our pets – and this is something that for some reason gets overlooked often in talk about being ready for a crisis – is to make sure we have everything necessary, in advance, to meet



their needs should an emergency arise. A pet might not need its own bug-out bag, although that's not a bad idea, but at the very least you should have everything your pet could require in your bug-out bag, as well as in the places where you store food, water, medicines and other non-food items.

I've had people tell me I'm crazy for putting so much time and effort into making sure that my pets will be taken care of during a crisis. They'll say something like, "Shouldn't you be totally focused on your family if a disaster strikes?" To that well-meaning but ignorant question, I respond, "Yes, I am totally focused on my family. And my pets are part of my family."

Of course, my spouse and kids come first. But if you have pets, there's no reason why you can't make emergency preparations for them as well. If you're a pet owner, it's something that you will want to do. And if you don't have pets, well, then you're probably never

going to understand the relationships that pet owners have with their animals.

If you're a prepper, planning is probably something you enjoy and do very well. Even if you don't really consider yourself a prepper, you probably understand the benefit of having a workable plan ready to put into action. (If so, maybe you're more of a prepper than you thought you were.) The vast majority of people don't plan for a crisis, and we see the sad results playing out on our television screens every time a disaster sends victims into a panic, searching for food and water.

When it comes to taking care of your pets during an emergency, you need to have two plans. One involves staying put, with the assumption that circumstances may dictate that you will not be able to leave your home for several days or longer. The other involves getting away from your home as quickly as possible to avoid a coming disaster or escape one that has already started. ■



Don't Forget to Include the Small Stuff When Putting Together Your Bug-Out Bag

FROM THE DECEMBER 2014 EDITION

Many of us have given a great deal of thought to the major items that we need in our bug-out bags, including emergency food, water, fire-starters, a knife and cordage. And hopefully, most of us have those bags located in a place near the front door so that we can grab them and bolt out the door quickly if necessary.

But what about the numerous small items that can make a big difference? There are many of these seemingly minor items that could help you avoid a major headache if you remember to pack them. And the great thing about these smaller items is that you can fit many of them in a bug-out bag with no problem, as most are lightweight. But if you do ever have to decide between two or more small items, select the ones that have multiple purposes.

Let's take a look at a number of these smaller items and why you might need them. Not everyone's list of compact items is going to be the same. But if you can acquire the small items that make the most sense for you and

include them with the major items in your bug-out bag, you'll rest easier now and be in better shape when the day comes that you need them.

LED Flashlight – Your best choice here is a hand-crank dynamo generator light because their bulbs rarely burn out and their batteries rarely corrode. Every once in a while, crank it up to test it. Other options are a pocket LED flashlight and a tactical compact light.

Compass – Don't scrimp with this crucial item. Your first choice should be a military-style lensatic compass, which is reliable and durable. In addition to pointing you in the right direction, it could help in creating a map to find your way back to a campsite.

First-Aid Kit – Buy a pre-made kit or put one together yourself, but make sure to include this in your bag because it could save a life. In addition, get some first-aid training from a beginner or intermediate Red Cross class. A few of the items that should be

included in this kit are iodine, antibacterial ointment, Band-Aids and Ace bandages, gauze, medical tape, burn salve, ibuprofen or other pain medicine, disposable scalpels, and suture packs.

Emergency Whistle – A survival whistle sold in a sporting goods store will be louder than most, but you can probably get by with a coach's whistle or police whistle. Because you may have to access it quickly, keep it on a lanyard that you can wear around your neck.

Topographic Maps – Find regional topographic maps of your general area and learn how to read and use them BEFORE you have to bug out. They can be a huge help in finding your way around, especially if you live in a woods area.

Heavy Trash Bags – These multi-purpose bags can be used as a shelter frame to keep out the rain, a floatation device when filled with air or a small sink for capturing rainwater or washing dishes when placed in a hole in the ground.

Small Folding Shovel – Even the smallest folding shovel will take up a significant amount of space in your bug-out bag, so this is something you might want to lash to the outside. It will help for clearing a snow or dirt drift, or for digging a hole to dispose of waste.

Signal Mirror – Even a small mirror, such as what might come in a makeup compact, can reflect strong sunlight a long way. For even greater effect, get yourself a military style signal mirror, which is very durable and includes a sighting system.

Sunglasses – We tend to grab our sunglasses instinctively during the summer, which is a good idea, but they are even more important to have in the winter if there is snow cover on a bright, sunny day. Choose UV/A or UV/B glasses.

Insect Repellent – Make sure the one you choose has a high DEET content, and that it comes in a tube, not a can, which

could explode. Check the expiration date periodically and replace if necessary.

Mosquito Head Net – Your insect repellent should keep those nasty critters off most of your body, but it's still a good idea to have a head net if you're going to be outside for any length of time. It can also have other uses, including as a minnow net, a carry bag for vegetables or a dirty clothes tote bag. They're very light and they pack easily.

Spiral Note Pad – You probably won't be writing a novel while bugging out, but you may want to leave a note on an abandoned car or at an abandoned campsite. You can also use the paper as tinder for fire starting.

Orange Safety Vest – Buy an inexpensive blaze orange hunting vest that's a couple of sizes too large so that it can fit over other clothing, including a coat. It will make you more visible to rescue crews, if necessary, and could also be used as an emergency flag.

Super Glue – The makers of this substance probably had no idea how many uses it would provide. You can use it to fix a broken knife grip, plug holes in a canteen and even repair your skin after suffering a small wound or abrasion. It can actually seal wounds from infection.

Miscellaneous Items – These would include nails for building with wood, edible plant handbook, first-aid manual, toilet paper, small sewing kit, mini binoculars, small scissors, latex gloves, and game or bird calls.

Comfort Items – This will be different for everyone. Some folks may want a New Testament or playing cards, others cigarettes and still others a harmonica. The important thing is that these items should be able to comfort you during a stressful time.

The small items that you include in your bug-out bag can make or break your bug-out experience. Make sure you have a vast majority of the items listed above, as well as any others you think you might need. ■

How You Can Survive the Coming Pandemic

FROM THE JANUARY 2015 EDITION

We frequently hear the words “epidemic” and “pandemic” used in conversation and in media reports, but many people don’t know the difference between the two.

Epidemic means a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time. An epidemic is serious, but can usually be controlled and defeated by quarantines and modern medicine. A pandemic, on the other hand, is the occurrence of an infectious disease over a wide geographic area and affecting a high percentage of the population. Modern medicine is often unable to contain its spread.

With all the talk about Ebola, influenza, swine flu and countless other viruses, we need to be on the alert in case an epidemic ever turns into a pandemic in this country.

We’ve seen what happens when our leaders ignore small problems. They turn into big problems.

As always, being prepared is the answer. The single most important thing to remember about dealing with a pandemic is this: don’t depend on the government for help. It’s possible that you may be able to gain some assistance from the government, such as access to newly developed vaccines or treatment medicines, but you will be far better off if you’ve prepared for it in advance yourself.

As a Washington, D.C., bureau chief for the *Nashville Business Journal* recently wrote, “... old-fashioned government incompetence may be the biggest danger the U.S. faces when dealing with deadly diseases.”

He was referring to the results of a U.S. House of Representatives hearing that uncovered gross mismanagement of the government’s response to the Ebola epidemic in West Africa and its efforts to keep Americans from becoming infected. Here are a few of the revelations that came from a Department of Homeland Security (DHS) report:

- The Transportation Security Agency has 200,000 old respirators that have passed the usability threshold stipulated by the manufacturer.
- More than 80 percent of the bottles of hand sanitizer stockpiled for Washington, D.C., have passed their expiration date.
- A significant number of antiviral drugs were stored in buildings that are not temperature-controlled in the evenings and weekends, potentially compromising their effectiveness.

DHS Inspector General John Roth concluded that the organization spent \$9.5 million on protective equipment and \$6.7 million on antiviral drugs **BEFORE** analyzing what it would actually need in the case of a pandemic. In addition, the agency did not keep accurate records of what it spent and failed to monitor its own stockpiles.

Roth said to the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, “As a result, the department may not be able to provide pandemic preparedness supplies that are

adequate to continue operations during a pandemic...the department's own assessment is that the entire protective equipment stockpile will not be usable after 2015."

Well, that's comforting news, isn't it? The people who are paid to keep Americans safe during a pandemic have absolutely no idea what they are doing. As we've learned before, if the government is behind an initiative, it is probably severely flawed. And that's why it's so crucial for us to take steps now to be prepared for a pandemic before it strikes our shores.

Following are some of the steps you can take to lower the chances that you will be a victim of a virus in the midst of an epidemic or pandemic. Some of them may seem overly simple, but they are extremely important. Let's be thankful that avoiding a disease is pretty basic, and let's not neglect to take these steps simply because they are easy.

Wash your hands often. Transmitting a virus from your hands to your face is the most common way of getting sick.

Avoid touching your face. Easier said than done, right? This one requires discipline and a good memory.

Don't shake hands with people. It's better to seem impolite than to become infected by someone with whom you shake hands.

Isolate yourself as much as possible from infected people, especially when it comes to public transportation and events where there are large crowds. If that means temporarily pulling your children out of school and telling your boss you have to work from home, so be it. Of course, spending more time at home might mean tapping into your emergency supplies. But that's what they're there for.

Get plenty of rest and sleep. The stronger your body is, the better chance that it will successfully fight off a possible infection.

Take plenty of Vitamin C. You can accomplish this in pill or gummy form, or by eating and drinking foods and beverages that are high in Vitamin C.

Drink plenty of fluids, especially water. Make sure your water is purified. You can boil it, or drink it through a personal water filter straw. Or, use water purification tablets. And don't neglect beverages that will replace electrolytes.



Watch where you sneeze. Use the crook of your arm to sneeze into, not your hands or the air.

Wear a respirator when you have to be out in public during a pandemic. They look like pandemic masks (which only prevent the wearer from spreading germs), but they protect the wearer from inhaling germs. It's your first line of defense against viruses.

Wear gloves and goggles. If you have to be out and about during a pandemic, wear nitrile exam, latex or heavy-duty rubber gloves. All it takes is a small cut on your hand or finger to allow a virus into your body. Also, goggles will keep your eyes safe from contaminated droplets from sneezes.

Keep a portable radio handy. If a pandemic break outs and normal communication lines are disrupted, you may be dependent upon a radio for vital communications.

Prepare for a potential quarantine of three weeks or more. This means stocking up on everything you and your family could possibly need if a pandemic were to occur and going outside your home became a risky venture.

That old saying – “An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” – certainly applies here. Here's to your health. ■

Make Sure You Have a Nice Variety of Clothing Items Put Aside for a Crisis

FROM THE FEBRUARY 2015 EDITION

One of the great unknowns when it comes to preparing for an emergency is what time of the year it will occur. If we hunker down in order to deal with a crisis, this won't matter as much, although we certainly hope our furnaces or air conditioners will continue working. But if we have to bug out, the particular season of the year might matter very much.

A disaster that causes us to leave our homes may result in having to spend a significant amount of time in the great outdoors until we are able to find our way to a reliable place of shelter. Depending on what part of the country in which we live and which season of the year it is, this could be mean anything from sweltering heat to freezing cold. Per usual, the key is being prepared.

For the purpose of this article, we're going to focus on clothing items that should be packed in a bug-out bag in anticipation of cold weather. It's considerably easier to shed layers of clothing when the conditions are too warm than it is to find clothing that will keep you from freezing. And even in a desert it can get pretty cool at night, so bundling up will be the focal point here.

Let's take a look at some of the clothing items you'll want to include in your bug-out bag. You won't have room for all of them, but by keeping some of them in your bag at all times and having others in your vehicle, you should be able to stay warm while you're dealing with an immediate bug-out situation.

REGULAR CLOTHES

This might seem rather basic, but you'd be surprised how many people fail to pack in their bug-out bags extras sets of the regular clothes they wear on a day-to-day basis, including underwear, socks, jeans, t-shirts, shirts, sweatshirts and sweaters.

Regardless of the weather conditions or whether you are inside or outside, if you have to bug out quickly from your home, you're probably not going to be able to get back there right away. On the other hand, you are going to want to change underwear and other clothes, so make sure you pack them.



SOCKS

Speaking of socks, it's very important to pack thick ones for warmth, comfort and health. With thin or worn socks, you're more likely to experience cold and possibly frostbite, not to mention blisters. When it's very cold, you can double up on socks.

Because you don't know how soon you'll be able to wash them, you should have at

least four pairs of socks in your bug-out bag. Change them when they get wet from outside moisture or perspiration. If you stop anywhere as you are escaping whatever caused you to bug out, try to dry any wet socks. Finally, you can use thick socks as mittens in an emergency.

GLOVES

Of course, the best way to keep your hands warm is with gloves. Pack at least one and preferably two pairs of heavy-duty leather work gloves. One of the best types is rancher-style fleece-lined leather gloves, but it can't hurt to also have a pair of cloth gardening gloves. On really cold nights, you can wear one pair inside the other. Even if the weather is warmer, work gloves will help protect your hands from harm as you engage in various survival tasks in the outdoors.

BATTLE DRESS UNIFORM

It might not hurt to have a military-wear, camouflage set of clothes you can wear outdoors during an emergency situation. These "hunting clothes" can be purchased through Sportsman's Guide or Cheaper Than Dirt.

COAT AND JACKET

Just because you probably don't have room for a winter coat with a warm hood in your bug-out bag, don't fail to have one available for yourself. At the very least, keep one in your vehicle. It could make the difference between being miserably cold and pleasingly warm.

In addition to a winter coat, pack a windbreaker. This will be a better choice when the weather is not exceptionally cold, and it should keep your upper torso dry if you're caught out in the rain. In both cases, you might be able to use them as bedding in certain situations.

HEADWEAR

Among the hats you should pack in your bug-out bag is a ski mask, a heavy wool hat that pulls over your ears, a wide-brim hat to keep the sun off your face and a ball cap. That last one won't keep you warm, but it could help to keep the sun out of your eyes on bright days. Plus, it looks cool.

LONG UNDERWEAR

Long thermal underwear can be a lifesaver in cold-weather bug-out experiences. They are

available at all sporting outlets. Because of the flexibility of "long johns," you can shove them inside boots and other items in your bag to save space. Flannel pajamas could also work here, but they're not as form fitting.

CONCLUSION

You wouldn't forget to wear clothes when you go outside your home, so don't neglect to pack many of these clothing items in your bug-out bag or vehicle. Staying warm when you're bugging out is essential to your comfort and health. ■

How to Build a Bug-Out Bag for a Child

FROM THE FEBRUARY 2015 EDITION

Assuming you have your adult-sized bug-out bag packed and ready to go, it's time to start putting together a bag for each child or grandchild in your life.

Children come in many different shapes and sizes, but a general rule of thumb is that the bag's weight should not exceed one-quarter of the child's weight. Depending on whether you use an existing kid's backpack or purchase a new one, the two main keys are wide and cushioned shoulder straps and a reinforced bottom. Right behind in importance are a strong waist belt, outside gear straps and buckles.

Just because this bug-out bag will be customized for a kid 6 years old or older, that doesn't mean it should be filled with "kid" stuff, such as video games, toys and candy bars. This isn't a picnic or vacation you're preparing for here. It's all about survival. Once you have all of the essential survival items packed in your child's bug-out bag and

the weight isn't too much, you can squeeze in a few comfort items.

And now for what should go inside a child's bug-out bag. I've purposely included more items than you will have room for in order to give you some choices.

Emergency Whistle – This is a crucial item for anyone, but especially for a kid because it's a safety net for them. If the child is mature enough to not blow the whistle for fun, he or she can wear it on a lanyard around the neck. If children or grandchildren get separated from you while gathering wood or another activity, they can use the whistle to alert you to their position.

LED Pocket Flashlight – Kids will feel much more secure having their own flashlight, although again it's important to make sure they understand that it's not a toy. A hand-generator light is your first choice here, but a younger child may be better off with a smaller

palm-size LED. Make sure to pack extra batteries as well.

Water Bottle or Canteen – Like adults, children need to stay hydrated if they're going to maintain their strength in a survival situation. Younger kids can get by with a water bottle, while older children will appreciate a canteen.

Water Purification Tablets – Hopefully you won't run out of the water you take with you when you bug out. But if so, water purification tablets will come in very handy. A lightweight water filter straw, which can remove 99.999 percent of waterborne bacteria and parasites, would also be a great addition to a kid's backpack.

Mess Kit – Each child should have a complete mess kit in his or her bag, including a plate, cup, bowl and utensils.

Emergency Space Blanket – Because they take up so little room when folded compactly, put two of these emergency space blankets in your child's bug-out bag. It could get very cold if you have to sleep outdoors or in a car overnight.

Poncho or Raincoat – Keeping the kids' regular clothing as dry as possible is very important. A poncho or raincoat should accomplish that task. This is another lightweight item that will take up very little space in a backpack.

Bandanas – Several brightly colored bandanas will fold up nicely in a bag and will serve a wide variety of purposes, including as a signal, pot holder, sling, sun block, sweatband and washcloth, as well as for cleaning glasses and other lenses.

Extra Socks and Gloves – Pack at least two pairs of warm socks for each change of



clothing you're including in the bag, as well as at least two pairs of gloves or mittens. Your child's extremities will get cold, especially if they become wet.

Hat and Wool Knit Cap – Kids can wear a baseball hat during the day to keep the sun off their heads and a wool knit cap at night to stay warm.

Winter Coat and Windbreaker – Even in warmer climates, it can get pretty chilly at night. Make sure the jacket has a warm hood. A warm sweatshirt could also do the trick.

Footwear – In addition to the sneakers they'll probably have on when you leave the house quickly, pack a pair of hiking boots or waterproof boots in a tote within the bag.

Mosquito Net – There may be areas where you have to walk in which mosquitos or other bugs will be plentiful, and this item will keep the annoying flying creatures off the kids' faces.

Towel and Wash Cloth – Your child can use these items to wash their faces and/or wipe sweat off their brows.

Toilet Paper – Rolls of toilet paper are nice and light, but unfortunately they're bulky. Still, you don't want your child to be without this essential item, so include at least one roll per child. Wrap rolls in a plastic bag to keep moisture out.

Pocket Knife – This is an item you'll only want to include if your child is old enough and mature enough to handle a knife.

Food – As a general rule, kids should eat the same survival food you and your party are eating after bugging out. Below are some other items they might enjoy:

- **Hot Chocolate Mix** – A soothing, warm beverage may be just what they need after a time of walking. It will also provide them with the energy they need to go on.
- **Energy Food** – This could include granola bars, trail mix and hard candies. This is not the time to worry about your kids' sugar intake. They'll need the calories. You can return to healthy eating patterns later.
- **Dry Breakfast Cereal** – Single-serve cereal boxes are a handy way to get a meal into your kids. The boxes serve as "bowls" and then can be used as tinder if necessary.
- **Powdered Milk** – This is something they can use with their dry cereal, or just as a drink during meals. They're a little on the bulky side, but necessary for your kid's contentment.
- **Single-Serve Packets of Power Drink Mixes** – Kids love them and they last for years.

If your children or grandchildren are old enough to carry a backpack, they will be happy to do it. It will make them feel like a vital part of the team during a survival situation. ■

Types of Cordage You Should Have Ready

FROM THE FEBRUARY 2015 EDITION

Almost every time I see a list of recommended items for a survival kit, cordage is included. As well it should be. Most people assume that means rope, and while that is accurate and while I completely agree cordage should be included in your bug-out bag, everyone should understand exactly what it means and the various uses you can get out of it.

First of all, in terms of survival items, cordage is an umbrella term that includes everything from nylon string to metal wire to various thicknesses of rope to super strong parachute cord. I'm even going to throw duct tape into this conversation because even though it is not technically cordage, it can sometimes serve the same purpose in a pinch.

Let's take a brief look at each of these items and why they should be in your bug-out bag. Even if you are not an expert in the use of these items, somebody else who you encounter in the wild just might be, and the fact that you have these items could help you form a much-needed partnership.

METAL WIRE

There may be times when you need thin cordage that is stronger than nylon string, so carry a 20-foot coil of metal wire. Choose fine raw steel wire rather than copper or electrical plastic insulated wiring. It will wrap your food better and keep it from falling off the spit and into the campfire ashes when you're cooking it. In fact, anything that you expose to fire will be better wrapped in metal wire than in thread.

ROPE

The single most important usage for rope in the wilderness is dragging heavy items back to your campsite, including game. You could easily fit a 50-foot piece of nylon rope at the bottom of your bag and/or lash an even longer piece to the outside of your pack.

Rope will really come in handy if you have to cross a body of water that is over your head. Place all your gear in doubled or tripled trash bags, tie the rope to it, swim across while holding the rope and pull your gear across.

PARACHUTE CORD

Also called Paracord or P-Cord, this lightweight but very strong cord will pull heavier objects than rope will. A 50-foot spool with a 550-pound test strength is only about 10 inches long and three inches in diameter, and will only run you a few dollars.

It can also be used for binding logs, reeds or bamboo, as well as for constructing load-bearing items including snowshoes. When braided together, P-Cord has been known to be used to pull a car out of a snow bank.

CONCLUSION

Cordage could be key to your survival someday, so make sure to pack a variety of it in your bug-out bag. You won't regret it, even if you don't ever end up using every cordage item. ■



Cutting Tools You Need and Their Uses

FROM THE MARCH 2015 EDITION

Just about everyone knows that a survival knife is an absolute necessity for a bug-out bag. Unless you're planning to check into a luxury hotel when the SHTF, this is an item you might not be able to live without following a disaster that forces you out of your home. It could literally save your life... over and over again.

But if a survival knife is the only cutting tool in your bug-out bag, you're going to encounter a number of problems you could have avoided by adding more. Other cutting tools can go a long way toward making your outdoor experience more manageable until you're able to return to a normal lifestyle. This is especially true if an emergency situation lasts longer than expected.

First let's take a look at the types of survival knives that are best for bugging out, then we'll go over the reasons for including other cutting tools with multiple uses. You don't need every one I'll mention, but this variety will give you a few choices. As you read along, you can determine which ones you're most likely to require.

As mentioned, a quality survival knife is essential for everybody. Some people call it the most important item in a bug-out bag that you can't eat. Expect to pay at least \$40 to \$100, and don't skimp. Your survival knife should be a single-edge, fixed blade, six to eight inches long and made of quality steel. The heel of the knife should be flat.

Make sure the handle is comfortable in your hand. Comfort and ease of use are much more important than fancy designs, creative ridges and other ornamentation. This knife is for survival, not for show. The hilt – the protruding guard between the blade and the

grip – needs to be solid because it's what will prevent your hand from sliding down the blade when you're applying pressure while cutting. Finally, you should keep your knife in a leather, web or composite sheath so that you can wear it on a belt for easy access.

The types of survival knives you don't need are overly large knives that look impressive but are difficult to maneuver, and ones with double-edged blades that have no heel that you might need for splitting wood. Whatever knife you have, don't use it as a pry bar. Once the blade breaks, it will be useless.

OTHER CUTTING TOOLS

Now for some other cutting tools that will come in very handy when you're in a bug-out situation. Make sure you have a medium-size **lock blade folding knife** with a blade of 2½ to four inches with a leather holster, web belt pouch or external belt clip. This knife will be more convenient for smaller jobs, and you might be able to get a good one for \$20 or so.

Another item that should be in your bug-out bag is a **multi-tool**. You're better off spending \$40 to \$80 for this tool than \$20 because the quality of steel will be better. A model with all of its blades and tools locked will prevent them from folding back on your knuckles while you're using it.

Some of the features to look for with this item are a folding set of needle-nose pliers with wire cutters, screwdriver blades, a can opener, course-tooth file, a small saw or fish-scaling blade, ruler markings, a boring awl and a fold-out lithium LED flashlight. All models should have at least one pocket knife-sized blade, some of which are straight and others



serrated or partially serrated. Multi-tools are great devices, but don't make the mistake of thinking they can replace your main survival knife.

If you have both a quality survival knife and a multi-tool, a **pocket knife** or **pen knife** is not essential, but it doesn't hurt to include one. For about \$10 to \$15 you can get a small or medium **Swiss Army knife** to handle finer tasks, including removing splinters.

A couple of sterile-packed disposal **scalpels** should be part of your first-aid kit in case you need to perform very minor surgery on yourself or someone else.

Not everyone is going to choose to include an **ax** or **hatchet** in their bug-out bag, but if you think there is any chance you might have to construct a wilderness shelter and/or cut firewood for more than a couple days, it could come in handy and will be worth the extra weight. This one-piece item with a steel blade should be at least 12 inches long, and you can probably acquire a good one for \$25 to \$30.

There are a couple other options for axes, but they have their drawbacks. A lightweight, compact **camp ax** with a synthetic material

handle and titanium blade that won't break or corrode is easy to handle, but requires considerably more effort to get the job done properly. A modern **tactical ax** looks like a tomahawk with a pickax on the rear of the cutting head. This item tends to be expensive and can't be used as a hammer.

Regardless of your ax choice, make sure it comes with a complete head scabbard or reliable blade guard. Otherwise, it will shift around in your bag and could cut other gear or the bag itself. An option if you prefer not to carry an ax is a **folding camp saw**. Some of them look like giant lock blade knives (12-18 inches when closed). They run about \$20.

Finally, keeping your cutting tools sharp is imperative both for their usefulness and your safety, as dull blades will require you to work harder and increase your injury risk. A **pocket sharpening stone** or **sharpening steel device** can be found at sporting goods or cutlery stores.

Nobody knows how long a bug-out experience might last, so it's best to error on the side of caution and include a nice variety of cutting devices in your bag. You'll be glad you did. ■

Considerations for Your Bug-Out Location

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2015 EDITION

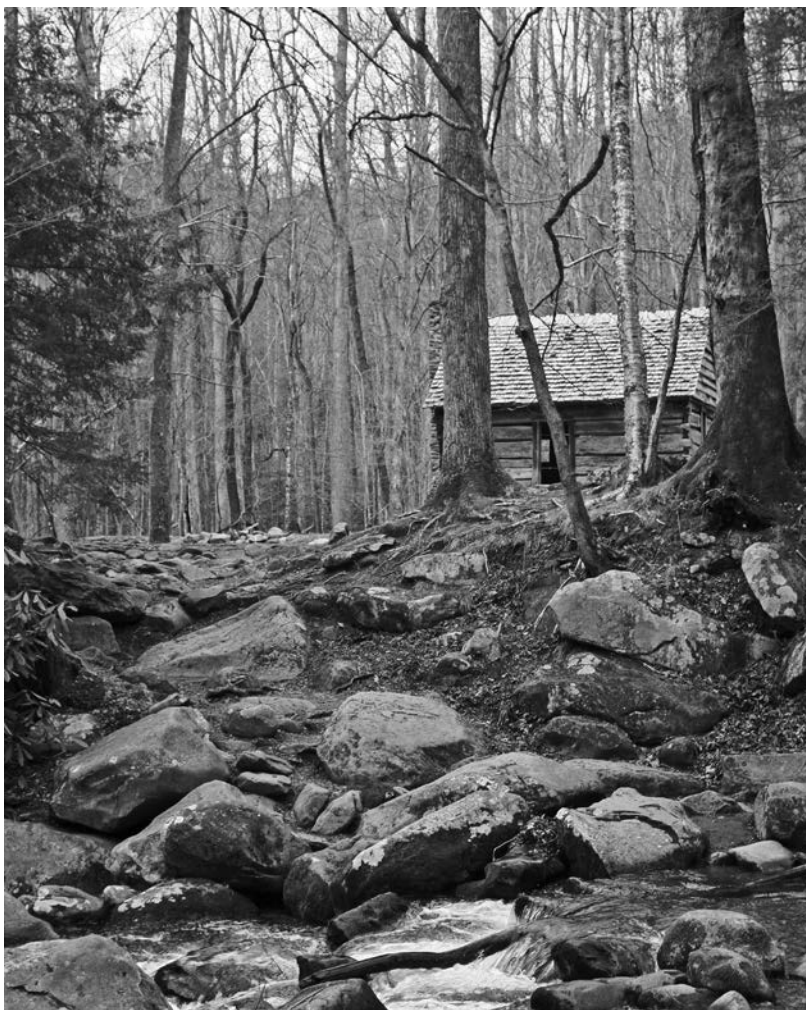
If a disaster strikes in your area, and it's pretty much inevitable that it eventually will, the hope is that it will be something you and your family can ride out at home. Hunkering down will not be fun and there will be plenty of inconveniences involved in being unable to get out and about. But if you've prepared with stockpiles of food, water and other essential items, you'll handle it much better than a vast majority of people will, including neighbors who may have joked about your focus on preparedness.

But there's no guarantee the next crisis will allow for you to safely remain in your home. You may find yourself having to bug out like everybody else. Once again, though, you'll be able to deal with an evacuation scenario much more effectively than most people around you... if you have prepared for it.

People who will be successful in surviving an emergency that causes everyone in a certain geographic area to leave their homes are the ones who have a prearranged place to go, complete with the same type of stockpiles they've accumulated in their homes. If you don't have that place picked out yet, don't worry about it. The disaster probably won't occur today. But because we never know when it might happen, it's a good idea to start working on this as soon as possible.

The first thing to consider when you start thinking about where you'd like to build or purchase a cabin or other dwelling for your bug-out is the location. It should be at least an hour's distance from your permanent residence – several hours would probably be better – because if it's too close, it's likely to be affected by the same crisis that forces you to leave home.

This is only a temporary situation, so it doesn't have to be anything huge. But we're not talking about the tiny house movement here. Plus, nobody knows how long the effects



of this disaster might linger, so keep that in mind. Ideally, it will be a place where you are already keeping your secondary stockpiles. Your bug-out dwelling should be large enough to accommodate your emergency supplies and however many people you plan to bring along with you.

Only you can decide whether you want your cabin to be isolated or within view of other occupied homes. Depending on who they are and how you get along with them, neighbors can be a huge help during a time of crisis. Or, they could present an enormous problem for you and what you're trying to accomplish.

If at all possible, you want your bug-out location to be on the site of a well so that you can draw fresh water. If not, hopefully there is a nearby lake or river. It's more difficult to stockpile clean drinking water than it is dry food with a long shelf life, so knowing how to purify contaminated water is a must.

Elevation is also important. The lower the ground is on the property, the more likely it is that your cabin will flood. On the other hand, if you're at the top of a hill, you're going to be much easier for others to spot. Somewhere in between is probably your best bet.

If alternative energy is important to you for this location, think about the space your dwelling will have on a south-facing roof and whether there is room for a wind turbine that can be situated above nearby trees.

Depending on how handy you are, it may be very important for your dwelling to be as maintenance-free as possible. If the Menard's and Lowe's of the world shut down due to a long-lasting emergency, issues including siding, windows, doors and paint might need to be considered. The quality of the building's roof is also crucial. Today's steel roofs can last about 50 years, but for an asphalt shingle, it's probably more like 30.

The location for your bug-out place should be as far away from any SHTF threats as

possible. Hopefully there are no nuclear reactors or chemical plants nearby. You also don't want to be too close to a penitentiary, which is likely to see an outpouring of desperate prisoners during a crisis.

Another factor is accessibility. If your secondary home is in the north, make sure nearby roads get plowed following snowfalls. Cold-weather areas also mean you will require a good source of heat. A wood stove will probably be needed, and make sure there are plenty of trees in the area to provide that wood for as long as you think you might be there.

How much land should your property entail? That depends on the number of people living with you and whether you have animals. A rule of thumb is one acre per person. Speaking of land, carefully check the kind of soil that exists on the property and make sure that it is conducive to whichever crops and plants you might decide to grow there.

Something that most of us would probably not think about when considering a location for our bug-out residence is what the local law enforcement situation is like. If they are strict about their rules, you may be limited in the type and number of animals you can keep on your property, including any livestock you might have in mind.

They might also have something to say about what kind of crops and plants you grow, whether or not you can have a shooting range and the types of expansions you can build on your property. Of course, this could work the other way, too. If law enforcement is notoriously weak in your area, you might find a number of discarded items in and around your property, including abandoned vehicles.

The considerations we've discussed are important, but not comprehensive. Before you select a bug-out location, go through every possible scenario in your mind to make sure it will meet all your needs and not offer any unwelcome surprises. ■

Make Sure Your Survival Team Features a Wide Variety of Much-Needed Skill Sets

FROM THE DECEMBER 2015 EDITION

This article is the first in a two-part series regarding the importance of forming survival teams. This month we'll look at different skill sets that are essential to have as part of your team. Next month we'll examine what your team will have to handle if the emergency turns into a long-term crisis.

Have you ever noticed that almost every time you see a photo representing survival or prepping, there is only one person in the image? The picture is usually that of a lone man trying to survive in the wilderness by his wits and what he packed in his bug-out bag, or a lone woman stockpiling food, water and other essential items at home.

There's just something about self-reliance and self-sufficiency that cries out, well, "self." Pulling "yourself" up by your bootstraps, taking responsibility for "yourself" and taking care of "yourself" all share the theme of personal accountability. That's often what we think about when we decide to prepare for an uncertain future in order to survive as long as possible.

Accepting personal responsibility is a wonderful trait that we have seen take a beating during the past seven years under an administration that encourages laziness and dependence on the government. But there's something that we independent individuals should remember if we're serious about surviving and thriving following a disaster: there is strength in numbers.

Finding like-minded individuals – now, before a major crisis hits – will be a huge help when

it comes to dealing with problems that will exist when the electrical grid goes down and we're thrown into a period of martial law or total lawlessness. The truth is, we're going to need each other to survive, so let's start making plans for that scenario right now.

In a perfect world, your survival group will consist of at least four able-bodied adult family members, and possibly their children and older relatives. As a general rule, family members are willing to die for each other, and that's what you want in a crisis. But if this is not an option for you, any adults will do, as long as they share the same survival philosophy you do.

You also want your adult survival group members to possess a variety of skills. If everyone in your group knows how to build the perfect shelter, but none of them know how to start a fire, you'll all die in a great looking hut. Among the skills you want at least one of your group members to possess are:

Leadership/Management – The more people who are part of your group, the more important this role becomes. It is essential for every group to have a recognized leader who each individual trusts and respects. This person doesn't necessarily have to be liked, but he or she needs to be obeyed.

Security – Being able to watch out for intruders and willing to take them down with a weapon or hand-to-hand combat is extremely important to the safety of a survival group, especially when there is civil unrest. Hopefully you'll have more than

one person who can handle guns and other weapons.

Gardener/Food Production – Someone with a green thumb will know how and which crops to plant, grow and harvest. Fruits and vegetables are key here.

Food Preparer – You don't need a world-class chef, but you do need someone who can take the food that has been grown in the garden and prepare it to the satisfaction of the group. This person should also know how to safely store leftover food for the future.

Hunter – Hopefully you will have plenty of emergency food with a long shelf life stored. But if meat is needed, someone will need to know how to take down a deer or other animal.

Income/Bartering – Even if the electrical grid is down, people are going to need to earn an income, whether it's in the form of money or goods. It will be a bonus if these people in your group are also skilled at trading what you have in abundance for what you need.

Medical Skills – The best-case scenario here is having a doctor in your group, or at least a registered nurse. If not, somebody needs to learn as much about diagnosing and treating illnesses and injuries as soon as possible.

Construction Capabilities – The amount that this skill will be needed depends on whether you hunker down in a home or have to bug out to the wilderness. Either way, having plumbing and/or carpentry skills will help.

Mechanic – If one of your vehicles needs repairing, the local garage probably won't be an option. It's crucial to keep your vehicles in running condition because you never know when you might need to gather supplies.

Child and Older Adult Care – The caregiver has a crucial role, especially if there

are multiple children and aging adults in your group. Keeping those who can't always fend for themselves fed, nurtured and quiet is an important task that should not be overlooked.

Grunt Work – In a survival situation, there is going to be plenty of work that nobody wants to do, including sanitation, cleaning and household chores. People with limited skills in other areas will be assigned to do this.

Attitude Adjuster – Every group needs someone skilled at lifting other people's spirits, especially when things look bleak. This won't be the only talent this person possesses, but it will be one of the more important ones. There's no place for negativity when you're trying to survive.

Every survival group is going to look different. Some will be larger, some smaller. Some will have a number of strong personalities, others only a couple. Some will feature several individuals with multiple talents, others will include a number of one-trick ponies.

Regardless, the key is to make sure that at least one person possesses every skill you will need to survive. And because no one knows how long each of us will last during a crisis, every person needs to teach his or her skills to at least one other individual. ■





The One Thing Your Team Needs to Survive

FROM THE JANUARY 2016 EDITION

This article is the second in a two-part series regarding the importance of forming survival teams. Last month we examined the variety of skill sets that are essential to have as part of your team. This month we'll look at what your team will be required to handle if the emergency turns into a long-term crisis.

We've heard a lot about teams in the business world over the past 10 years or so. In fact, people have written *New York Times* bestselling books on the subject. The basic idea is that a group of people can accomplish more than any single individual can, as long as each member of the group is committed to working hard and is able to bring a different set of

skills to the table than what others on the team possess.

The skill sets we identified last month that are essential for a team to possess if that group is going to have a realistic chance of surviving a major crisis are: leadership and management, security, gardening and food production, food preparation, hunting, income production and bartering, medical skills, construction capabilities, mechanical abilities, childcare and older adult care, grunt work, and attitude adjuster.

Any group that possesses a majority of those skills should be able to weather the storm during a relatively brief emergency. We're talking anything from a few days to a couple weeks. It won't be pleasant, especially if the crisis is accompanied by a power outage, but with everybody doing their part, this would be a manageable situation for most survival teams.

But what if the emergency lasts a month or more? What if lawlessness – or its opposite, martial law – prevails? What if the supply chain gets disrupted? What if there is no more clean drinking water available? What if everything you've taken for granted for your entire life is no longer in place and you are completely dependent upon your team to get through this mess? That's when we'll truly be able to say, "Only the strong will survive."

And that's the beauty of a team. Very few individuals have spent enough time and money to provide everything they will need for themselves and their families in a crisis that forces them to bug out for an extended period of time. But when that individual joins forces with like-minded people – before a crisis hits – and engages in conversations regarding what needs must be met and what skill sets must be present in the group, the odds of surviving the aftermath of a disaster go up considerably.

So, assuming you have put your team together, have stockpiled all of the emergency

food and water you will need, have collected other essential items that will help you survive and have planned who will be doing what during a crisis, what is the one thing that remains? The answer is: the will to survive.

Every human being is ingrained with a natural survival instinct. When suddenly confronted with a threatening situation, we will automatically and immediately decide whether to exercise our fight or flight response. This natural instinct has saved many peoples' lives throughout the ages. However, sometimes pain or hopelessness can diminish that instinct, and some people lose hope because they come to believe their circumstances are overwhelming.

This is where one's mindset enters the picture. More than 2,000 years ago, Plato wrote about the connection between mind and body, proving that one's physical health is related to mental and emotional wellbeing. A strong will to survive can actually bolster one's immune system, but succumbing to stress can result in physical illness and lessen one's ability to cope.

But here's something important to remember. Not everyone in the group needs to be an intense optimist. Some people are more inclined to melancholy. But if the group contains some people who are upbeat about life and who possess a strong will to survive, they can strengthen others who aren't naturally inclined that way.

The leader of the group – or perhaps the attitude adjuster – needs to remind everyone they have important reasons to live. Maybe it's their children or their grandchildren, and maybe it's things they have yet to accomplish in life. And if that positive person – or better yet, those positive people – can keep everyone upbeat when things look grim, your survival team will have a much better chance of outlasting the emergency. ■

Learning a Post-Collapse Trade Now Will Allow You to Thrive Following a Disaster While Others Try to Survive

FROM THE MARCH 2016 EDITION

Regardless of whether you are retired or are fondly anticipating your retirement years, there are certain things you do better than most people. Your skill set may include blue-collar activities such as construction or plumbing, or it may be in the white-collar realm such as accounting or human resources.

There is a very good chance that you used or are currently using those talents to earn a living and support your family. And I hope that's the case because, as they say, when you do what you love, you never work a day in your life.

But what is going to happen if our society collapses due to a natural disaster, a terrorist attack against the electrical grid or a financial meltdown? Whether or not you are retired, you will probably need to figure out a way to earn money – or, more likely, goods and services – in this post-collapse environment that may not be part of your natural skill set.

Unfortunately, nobody is going to call a timeout after a crisis so that everyone can get up to speed on what they need to learn in order to make ends meet in what will undoubtedly be a very different world from what we're used to now. The people who will not only survive but thrive in a post-disaster arena will be those who can step in immediately and provide a service that people need.

The key is to learn that post-collapse trade now so that you're ready when the SHTE. There are plenty from which to choose – probably more than what you would assume

– so get started on learning it now in order to be prepared when it happens.

GUNSMITHING

This is a word we don't hear too much these days because we live in a throwaway society. When something doesn't work right anymore, we usually toss it out and buy a new one or figure out a way to get along without it. Following a crisis, people are going to want to have their guns handy to fend off intruders, and they will need those firearms to be in the best possible shape.

There probably won't be too many places to acquire guns because gun shops will be closed and those who have pistols and rifles will wish to keep them. But people will want to keep their firearms in good working order, and that's where gunsmithing comes in. Learn how to fix weapons, especially



guns. The investment you make in the machinery necessary to do this will be well worthwhile because society will either be under martial law or in a state of lawlessness.

PRODUCING AMMUNITION

Speaking of guns, they will be useless if there is not enough ammunition for them. With the Department of Homeland Security buying up

so much ammunition in the past few years, there's not as much available as there was. And that means people will be taking fewer bullets into a post-crisis situation than they would like to.

If you can acquire the equipment you need and learn to produce ammunition now, your product will be in serious demand following a disaster. In fact, this might be the only thing you'll need to know how to do to make ends



meet when everyone is in crisis mode and needs ammunition to protect themselves.

HANDYMAN

People who have the ability to fix things in a post-collapse society will be highly regarded and will be able to barter for pretty much anything they need. Maybe you already have some handyman skills, so the key is to brush up on those skills and try to learn a few new ones that will be useful. These could include woodworking, plumbing and electrical work.

WATER

Water is the lifeblood of any society, regardless if things are running smoothly or everything is chaotic. If you have large volumes of clean drinking water stored in a place only you know about – or where you are confident you can successfully protect it against intruders – you will be able to barter for whatever needs you have.

In addition to storage, make sure you have dependable ways to purify water. Much of the water in a post-collapse society is going to get contaminated, and if you have the proper equipment to purify it, your services will be in high demand. Stockpiling water filtration equipment will be just as important

as stockpiling actual clean drinking water. As with any commodity you stockpile, you must figure out a way to protect it.

POWER

It's pretty much inevitable that the electrical grid will go down during a crisis – in fact, that's probably what will cause the crisis – but power will still be needed. Solar power will keep some things functioning semi-normally. If you have a solar power array and can charge deep-cycle batteries, people will be asking what they can do for you in exchange.

In addition, you should gather up and store as many flashlights and batteries as you can get your hands on, because they will be in high demand. Emergency radios will also be a hot commodity, so include some of them in your stash.

CONCLUSION

Society as we know it now will disappear after a major disaster. We will all have to learn how to adapt. But if you can take some necessary skills and some much needed products into that future society, you will find yourself in a much better position to take care of yourself and your family until things return to normal. ■

Helping the Elderly and Disabled Prepare for a Crisis

FROM THE MARCH 2016 EDITION

If you have ever cared for an elderly or disabled person – or perhaps you are that elderly or disabled person – you know exactly how challenging this situation can be. Every single thing that is done by an elderly or disabled individual, including the simplest of tasks, requires additional time and sometimes

much more work than it does for an able-bodied person.

Showering... getting dressed... moving from one room to another... going out to a store or restaurant... What used to be routine or pleasurable activities have now turned into

significant expenditures of time and energy for some senior citizens, as well as for those forced to cope with physical ailments that limit their movements.

When many of us think about bugging out quickly in a crisis, we picture ourselves shouting out to other family members, grabbing the fully-stocked bug-out bags we've carefully packed and set down near the front door, loading the kids and the pets into the family vehicle, and heading for our predetermined bug-out location.

That's fine if everyone in your home is in good physical shape. But if you have elderly or disabled family members living with you, things will not go nearly that smoothly. Unless... you have made preparations for this exact scenario.

Here are a few things you need to consider – in advance of a crisis – if you're going to help elderly or disabled people be fully prepared for an emergency:

Equipment – Make sure all wheelchairs, walkers, ramps, crutches, canes, prosthetic limbs, oxygen tanks, etc., are in good working order, and keep spares whenever possible. There's no telling when any of these items will be available for sale following a disaster, so you want to make sure yours are in good shape.

Prescription Medications – The disabled person should explain to his or her doctor their interest in being prepared, and ask to be allowed to stay three months ahead on their medications. As long as expiration dates do not present a problem, this should



be something a doctor is willing to do. Don't forget to rotate these medications prior to a crisis.

Batteries – A number of the important items a disabled person may need require batteries, so have plenty of fully-charged spares ready to go as well. You're going to want to store a significant number of these batteries because, again, there's no way to know where and when they might be available.

The Small Stuff – Some items the disabled person needs are small, but very important. Make sure to have extra inhalers, hearing aids and over-the-counter medications in a small bag that can be quickly added to a bug-out bag. Of course, each individual will determine which small items he or she needs, so have that dialogue with your elderly or disabled family member well in advance of any crisis.

Getting Around – If you're bugging out in an emergency, your disabled or elderly person will require more time than most to get out

of the house and into a vehicle. So, be ready to start this process immediately when an emergency arises. Other family members will not need as much time.

Generator – If there is room in your vehicle, take a generator with you when you bug out. If you can find a power source, you may need this item for the disabled person's medical equipment. Of course, a solar generator would be preferable because it's highly likely that a major disaster will take down the vulnerable electrical grid. This could be a matter of life or death.

Mental Preparation – You know your elderly or disabled family member better than anyone, so use your best judgment on this. Bugging out will be traumatic for everyone, but especially those who have reached an age when they don't like change. Do your best to mentally and emotionally prepare them for this possible scenario, and maybe do a couple run-throughs. Then, when it happens, they should be better able to cope. ■

To Survive the Future, We Have to Look To the Past

FROM THE DECEMBER 2016 EDITION

Think about a time when you got caught in a storm. What happened? You probably saw it approaching, realized there was no outrunning it, and took shelter where you could. Maybe in a store or restaurant that happened to be nearby. Time and the storm passed, and you resumed your travels.

Given our current political climate following last month's election, the analogy of hunkering down in place and riding out the storm offers us a survival strategy: take steps now to create a living space that can

withstand whatever ills befall society for the next four to eight years.

Perhaps the best defense against an uncertain future is, oddly enough, to look to the past. Go retro... pioneer retro. To a time when our society met its basic needs without dependence on luxury items and on-demand energy and convenience.

When preparing for a hunker-down scenario, we must create both short- and long-term contingency plans. We have to admit to

BASIC BETTER-HAVE-‘EM SUPPLIES

For however long we find ourselves in “hunker down” mode, there are basic tools and supplies needed to get the job done. They include:

- **Battery-powered/hand crank radio** – Stay current on developments.
- **Flashlight and extra batteries** – Look for a hand-crank version as well as a solar recharging version.
- **First-aid kit** – Don’t forget prescription medications.
- **Whistle** – Use to signal for help or communicate over distances.
- **Dust mask and duct tape** – Filter contaminated air and insulate shelter.
- **Food storage containers** – Including jars and sealable bags.
- **Blankets** – Plus large pieces of assorted fabrics.
- **Stoves** – Solar, fuel-burning camping stove and wood burning versions.
- **Collapsible water bottles** – Lightweight and reusable.
- **Hunting and fishing gear** – Living off the land can add variety and nutrition to your diet, as well as extend the life of your dry food supplies.
- **Fire starters/lighters** – A fire starter kit is the best long-term solution.
- **Survival knife/multi-tool** – Survival knives offer cutting power, while a multi-tool will fare better against screws, nuts and bolts.
- **Contractor grade trash bags** – They will serve as a poncho, ground cover, tarp, carry all or sleeping bag.

ourselves that troubled times could last longer than we expect and outlast our stored supplies. If that happens, survival may depend on embracing techniques and lifestyle changes of the past to ensure our future.

Food for Thought

Start with creating a supply of shelf-stable, non-perishable dry and canned food. Add food preservation gear such as dehydrators, canners, smokers and fermenting/pickling supplies. Gather the seeds and gardening tools to grow fresh vegetables and grains. This means shovel, rake, hoe, hand trowel and rain barrels. Stock up on starter trays to create seedlings to plant in spring.

IF THE GRID GOES DOWN...

Keep Your Wits About You

A spirit of independence and a commitment to a sustainable lifestyle are required to make a successful go of off-grid living. Prepare mentally to take a step back in time and live with rustic forms of heating and food storage. If you are braced for hard work and sacrifice, an off-grid lifestyle can be a manageable and rewarding experience.

Power Generation

Modern alternate power technology is possible, but can be expensive and require the use of large batteries for energy storage. Alternatives depend upon the geography of the lot. Running the refrigerator, water heater and stove on propane, and using wood to produce heat, will conserve electricity. A solar-powered generator is a good investment.

Creating a Water System

A drilled water well requires a pump and large storage tank. Wells used for drinking water should be regularly tested and treated, if necessary, to ensure water safety. Rain barrels can supplement water supply, especially for gardening. Depending on location, annual rainfall can provide most or all of the water for household needs, but a water purification system is a must.

Waste Disposal

Indiscriminately disposing of waste is a serious health hazard. Permissible off-grid options include septic tanks with buried leach fields and open-air lagoon pits. Composting toilets are acceptable in many regions. Personal septic systems require ongoing maintenance and inspections to perform correctly.

WHEN THE LIGHTS GO OUT...

Should the storm outlast our modern backups, we can again take a retro approach, this time in the form of a Canaanite lamp, a design that dates back as far as 1500 B.C. It is the simplest light source imaginable: a vessel that won't burn, oil and a wick. Anchor the wick to the bottom of the vessel, leave a short length emerging from the oil and light it.

Some vessels to consider are:

- Glass bottles
- Glass or porcelain bowls
- Used tuna cans or pet food cans
- Fruit peels with the pulp removed and cut in half (citrus fruits work very well)
- Hollowed-out potatoes
- Wide-mouth glass jars
- Terra cotta containers

A few ounces of olive oil or other cooking oil can burn for several hours. Olive oil in particular burns cleanly. It is much safer to use compared to candles or kerosene. Because of the oil's high flash point, it will stop burning if spilled or knocked over. Canola or corn oil may produce smoke and odor, so use care.

Alternative Wicks

One cannot have enough wicks. Stock up on this low-cost item from craft stores while you can.

Eventually, one can make wicks from cotton materials like old towels or even socks torn into strips. Some alternatives to candle wicks can be:

- Cotton string or twine
- Paper towel
- Torn pieces of cloth
- Shoelaces

Wicks can be made to burn longer by salting them. Place the wick in a bowl with a little water, then cover with table salt. Squeeze out excess moisture and let the wick dry overnight. Remember, a braided flat wick emits more light. ■



Self-Reliance Tools to Save Your Life in a Crisis

FROM THE FEBRUARY 2017 EDITION

Owning the right survival tools could make the difference between life and death. With so many survival products on the market, how do you know which self-reliance tools are a must? Let's take a look at a dozen of the most important ones.

Survival Knife – This emergency preparedness item is first on our list for good reason. A knife is a must in any life-threatening situation. This self-reliance tool is practical in many situations and will keep you alive when things turn ugly.

It should be sturdy and lightweight. Plan on spending a couple hundred dollars on this item. This is not the time to save money. A good knife will be key to your survival in more ways than you can even imagine.

Multi-Tool – A must-have in your survival supplies, but also in your emergency car survival kit. Most multi-tools will contain pliers, folding knife, small saw, metal file, hole punch, screwdriver, wood saw, wire cutter and even a scissors. They range in price from \$15 to \$130, but keep in mind that during a disaster a good multi-tool is indispensable. Make sure you are purchasing a quality tool.

Hatchet – With so many options available, make sure you pick something that's lightweight and versatile. Having an axe in your home emergency supplies

is recommended, but a hatchet is a better tool to carry if you're forced to evacuate. This is why expert campers and wilderness survival experts recommend hatchets. There's a wide range of uses and this is a highly dependable tool.

The bonus here is there's absolutely no question that a hatchet makes a formidable weapon if you need to protect and defend. Test the sharpness before adding to your emergency supplies and make sure it includes a sheath.

Fire Starter Kit – Fire is indeed a tool, and in an emergency situation you'll want the ability to quickly produce fire not just for heat but also to aid in emergency meal preparation. You can purchase an emergency fire kit or create your own. Either way, make sure it's waterproof, easy to carry and includes a light for making fire in the dark. It's critical that you've practiced your fire starting method several times so you're able to quickly build a fire during an emergency.

A basic fire kit should contain three important items: firesteel (flint) with a good striker, some petroleum-soaked cotton balls and a lighter. You can expand your kit with other items such as waterproof matches, multiple tinder options, fuel tablets and a 9-volt battery with steel wool. The more methods you have of making fire, the better.



Emergency Radio – There are two things you’ll do first in a catastrophe. Seek safety and then seek information. Don’t assume that living in a large metropolitan area will guarantee outside communication. Look at some of the more recent disasters such as Hurricane Sandy. The government had a lot to deal with in addition to trying to restore cellphone service. The point is you must have a communication back-up.

Emergency radios come in all shapes and sizes. Before you buy one there are a few things to consider. Most people will only need a radio to hear NOAA alerts and other warnings. Before you spend a lot of money on two-way or shortwave radios, consider whether or not you’ll need them.

Start with a basic emergency radio and build from there, based on your own survival needs and expectations. It’s crucial to include a list of emergency radio frequencies, and if you don’t buy a hand-crank option, be sure to include back-up batteries with your emergency supplies.

Stainless Steel Canteen – Get one with a screw-on lid, designed for hiking. It will carry water and can also be used to boil and/or purify water for drinking from questionable sources.

Signaling Equipment – Signaling devices such as flares and glow sticks are often included in first-aid kits. If not, make sure you include more than one option for signaling for help. This is another survival

item you should have in your emergency car survival kit. Including a loud whistle is also recommended, as you never know when you might end up trapped during a disaster. A high-pitched whistle is far more likely to catch someone's attention and break through background noise.

Compass – With so many options from which to choose, make sure you have a small and very durable compass and aren't planning on relying solely on GPS. The most important aspect is to possess the knowledge on how to use whichever compass you purchase. Practice is key.

Emergency Blanket – An inexpensive addition that is a must. A durable, compact and lightweight emergency survival blanket will reflect heat back to your body, but also protect you from the elements and possibly serve as shelter. Include several as they are a necessity in all types of emergency situations.

Headlamp – Not having light during an emergency can be frustrating, demoralizing and most importantly dangerous. This is exactly the reason you should have multiple light sources in your

emergency supplies. Do not, under any circumstance, place a household flashlight in your emergency supplies and think you're covered.

Hopefully you already have emergency candles, high-powered LED flashlights and a lantern in your survival supplies, but include a headlamp as well. The other light sources, while necessary, can be bulky and cumbersome to carry. Including a hands-free lighting option will prove helpful during an emergency.

Duct Tape – An inexpensive addition that will come in handy in many instances. This is the time to channel your inner MacGyver and realize just how handy duct tape can be during an emergency. You can seal doors and windows, and even safely remove glass shards from broken windows.

Knowledge – Lastly, the most important self-reliance tool we urge you to have is your own personal survival knowledge. The more you know about surviving during emergency conditions and how to properly use your survival supplies, the more likely you are to stay alive. ■

Plan Your Evacuation Routes Now Before You Need Them

FROM THE MAY 2017 EDITION

When hunkering down is no longer an option in a disaster, there is more to getting out of Dodge than having a bug-out bag packed and ready. Mass evacuation equals mass confusion, and that means those prepared beforehand with a plan will fare far better than those who improvise.

The true test of a good evacuation plan is that it offers multiple choices. Multiple rally points. Multiple destinations. Multiple routes. This approach lets travelers choose the best option at the moment in a quickly evolving situation.

RALLY POINTS

These are safe, predetermined spots where your family and group members can gather and begin the evacuation journey to safety. It can be home, a workplace or a centrally located landmark.

The best rally points are located so that everyone can reach them in about the same amount of time. But remember: during a chaotic event, travel times will increase. Keeping the rally point centrally located will help ensure that the evacuation can begin that much sooner.

Good rally points are specific. It does no good to arrive at the chosen site and then have to search the location for the rest of your party. Don't just decide to "meet at school." Select a particular room or outdoor landmark such as a fountain, statue or flagpole.

Secondary meeting points – in the event the primary location is unsafe or made unavailable by authorities – should adhere to the same criteria as much as possible.

MULTIPLE ROUTES

Plan several routes and rank them for safety. Evaluate them based on potential obstacles such as bridges that could be damaged, power lines falling across roads, potential rock or mudslides, or traffic bottlenecks such as tunnels.

Be prepared to change routes due to the presence of emergency or military personnel. Having several planned routes clearly marked on maps will help you make a crucial decision correctly during a stressful situation.

Record information about each route. Look for potential shelters, access to water, gas stations, hospitals, hotels/motels, repair shops and other assets. Check with your community and those on your routes to see if they have plans and routes for an evacuation. Have they

IMAGE IS EVERYTHING WHEN IT COMES TO POSSESSIONS

We know "a picture is worth a thousand words," but how about thousands of dollars?

Evacuating means leaving behind valuables and property. Returning to a disaster-damaged home may be followed by lengthy insurance claims. Photographs of possessions prove they exist (or existed) and help establish their value.

Take digital pictures of each room in your home and the objects in them. Open drawers, closets and storage boxes, then snap photos. Photographing any serial numbers on items will also help in case of theft. Scan or photograph important documents such as passports, driver's licenses, insurance cards, etc.

Store the photos in emails sent to yourself so that they exist "in the cloud." Then put them on thumb drives. Keep one in your bug-out bag and mail another to a trusted friend or relative well out of the area.

It's also a good idea to carry current photos of your family members and pets in your bug-out bag. In fact, this could mean the difference between your family becoming permanently separated during an emergency situation and being reunited. Have multiple small photos of each of them that you can hand to people while you search for them and write your cellphone number on the back of each photograph in hopes that someone will call you if they believe they've spotted one of your people or animals.

ever conducted an evacuation or performed a risk assessment? Ask for a copy to help you with your planning.

ALTERNATIVES TO ROADS

A major SHTF scenario may force one to look for alternatives to roads for survival travel.

Railways have offered foot transportation since they were built. Rails are usually built on level ground, connect major cities, and include bridges over water and rough terrain. They connect just about any two points in the country, making them the perfect bug-out route.

Before it was replaced by the interstate highway system, travelers relied on a network of old highways, some paved and others just dirt roads. This old system still exists and is maintained where financially possible by various counties across the country.

Much like railways, pipelines connect refineries and shipping sites across the country. The pipes run under rights of way kept clear of trees for aerial inspection, making them easily traveled paths.

Even if the grid goes down, power lines will still exist. The towers holding up power lines can have rights of way that are hundreds of feet wide and run for many miles.

Keep in mind that pipeline and power line rights of way are not designed to be mass transportation roads. There are no bridges, walkways or any other development.

MULTIPLE DESTINATIONS

The best evacuation plan has multiple destinations in different compass directions to allow best selection for the circumstances and the direction from which the threat is coming. Bug-out destinations can be a friend or family member's home, campground, national park or a vacation home. Depending on your choice, it might be possible to stockpile supplies and survival gear at your destination and lighten your travel load.

INFORMATION TO CARRY

There is no telling how long it might be before you can return home, so carrying key documents during an evacuation is important. Essential paperwork within a waterproof container in your bug-out bag would include passports, driver's license, vehicle registration, immunization records, health insurance cards, birth certificates and contact information for friends and relatives outside the emergency area.

Background about members of your travel party could be needed during an evacuation. Date of birth, special medical needs, blood type, immunizations and known allergies can help medical personnel. A good physical description (height, weight, eye and hair color, etc.), or better still a photograph, can help authorities search should you become separated.

REMEMBER

No plan covers every possibility. But a plan gives you a fighting chance to stay in control during a stressful time. Be prepared to adapt to the situation. And keep your wits about you. Remember: those who fail to plan are planning to fail. ■



Top 10 Survival Skills to Learn Now

FROM THE DECEMBER 2017 EDITION

So, here's a question as we close in on the end of the year, How did those 2017 New Year's resolutions turn out?

Perhaps it is time to consider a different approach for the coming year. Instead of the negative angle of removing something from your life, how about vowing to add something positive to your life in the form of new knowledge and skills? Perhaps skills that will prove crucial in a survival situation.

Resolve to develop or improve these top 10 key survival skills in the coming year:

GREAT GARDENING

Commit to gardening for at least the new year. Start a crop from seed. Grow seedlings in a sheltered setting. Once developed, plant them outside. Gather seeds from what you have grown and store them.

Eat, dry and properly store your crop. The most common ways to dry food are in an electric food dehydrator, a conventional oven or toaster oven, or in the sun. All drying methods share the same principle: creating the proper combination of warm temperatures, low humidity and air current.

FRESH FOOD

Learn to make a stew or soup and bread from scratch. These are great starter recipes that adapt well to whatever ingredients are on hand. Acquire the cookware needed to cook a meal over an open fire. Secondhand stores are an economical place to find a cast iron skillet and an old-fashioned hefty, deep pot with a sturdy handle.

CLOTHING REPAIR

Learn some basic sewing techniques to keep clothes in decent shape and repair canvas and other material used in shelter. Test your skills by rescuing a beat-up pair of work pants or a tattered flannel painting shirt.

SHELTER CONSTRUCTION

Using only materials already on hand, build a shelter and spend the rest of the day and night in it. Sheets of plywood, scrap lumber, tarps, etc. The idea is to simulate creating shelter on site if your home became structurally unsound in a disaster.

For extra credit, turn your auto into a shelter by rearranging the seating and using one side of the vehicle for a lean-to shelter.

THE 9 LEAST SUCCESSFUL NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS:

- Lose Weight and Get Fit
- Quit Smoking
- Eat Healthier and Diet
- Get Out of Debt and Save Money
- Spend More Time with Family
- Travel to New Places
- Be Less Stressed
- Volunteer
- Drink Less Alcohol



FIRE STARTING

Start a fire without matches or lighter and maintain the fire for a day. The goal is to learn firsthand how much wood needs to be gathered for each day. Also, to learn the value of dry grass and kindling as well as why you should have a small quantity of each stored in waterproof containers.

Arrange the campfire to accommodate cookware or build a cooking rig to prepare an evening meal.

WATER FILTERING

Build a system to collect, filter, purify and store water. Research ways to filter and chemically treat water to make it safe to drink.

If nothing else, set up rain barrels under your home's downspouts and use the water in your garden.

SIGNAL MAKING

On a sunny day, use a mirror to signal a partner from a distance. A properly aimed signal mirror can shine a beam up to 10 miles, creating a flash easily visible by aircraft, watercraft, vehicles or searchers on foot. Also good is any shiny object that will reflect the sun's rays, such as a polished canteen, mirrored glasses or a belt buckle. On a cloudy day, create a smoky signal fire.

BETTER BARTERING

This is an old social skill that will again become standard practice should the grid

go down and money becomes temporarily worthless. Trade goods or, better yet, a talent you possess to acquire training in one of the skills listed here.

ACCURATE NAVIGATION

Compass-march through a wooded area to meet a partner at a designated location not visible from the starting point. Purchase a high-quality map of your area. The U.S. Geological Survey maps are excellent. Make sure other people know what you are doing and when to expect you. Share your starting point. Take your phone. The idea is to practice for an emergency, not create one.

FIRST-AID PRACTICE

Break out your world-class first-aid kit (you have already assembled it, right?) for a practice day. Wrap a partner for sprains to the wrist and ankle. Bandage yourself for two severe cuts. Wear the bandages for a day to evaluate their effectiveness.

Compare notes with your partner, then repeat the process and look for improvement.

KNOWLEDGE ACQUISITION

Those are the assignments, so what are some of the options for acquiring the knowledge needed to succeed?

The search could begin just a few blocks from home. Start at the local public library. Broaden your search beyond “Prepper” and “Survival.” Zero in on your assignment topic

and more resources will appear, including “Sewing,” “Recipes,” “First-Aid” and “Camping Skills.” They will yield many books and videos.

Turn to the local park district or YMCA for classes on any number of related topics. If there is no class in a desired subject, ask for it to be offered. Park and recreation staff are always looking for new courses to add to the mix. Let them know you will help the effort by inviting neighbors and friends to join you.

While the reason behind developing these skills is serious, it’s OK to have fun. Gather family and friends and tackle a new skill together. Have a campfire chili cook-off. Break into teams and race to start a fire first.

Give teams the same building materials and see what different styles of shelters they build. Get silly. Have the teams pack into their shelters and use the garden hose to simulate rain. Driest team wins a prize. Everyone else gets to huddle around the campfire.

A great how-to resource is as close as your smartphone. YouTube is packed with videos demonstrating all manner of survival skills and home repairs.

Search on a description of any task (“How to purify water” or “How to start a fire”) and hundreds of videos describing different experiences, techniques and needed equipment will be at your fingertips. Select the ones that best fit your situation and give them a try. The real experience will be more valuable than time spent watching “reality” television. ■

SEEDS AND FOOD

There is nothing that says self-reliance better than being able to grow your own food, especially if you save the seeds from your plants and use them again the next year for planting. Here are several articles we've published on those subjects.

From Planting to Storing, Heirloom Seeds Are the Way to Go

FROM THE JANUARY 2014 EDITION

We all know by now that having stockpiles of food and water for an emergency is a great idea. The combination of food shortages and rising food prices is a deadly one-two punch that nobody wants to take on the chin, and at any time a weather disaster could provide the knockout blow.

But people who are serious about self-reliance are interested in more than a three-month or even a one-year supply of food and water. They want food independence in the form of open-pollinated heirloom seeds that they can both plant and store.

The food that they grow in their gardens from those seeds will be less expensive, more nutritious and better tasting than the food they're now acquiring from grocery stores and other sources.

If you think about it, seeds are amazing things. In addition to containing the DNA that a plant requires to grow, they possess a store of food that helps the plant when it's ready to grow.

After soaking up water and swelling, a seed's protective covering splits and the new plant within begins to grow by utilizing the seed's store of food. The fact that a three-foot tall tomato plant weighed down by large, juicy tomatoes developed from small seedlings helps us appreciate the power and potential of seeds.

The key to saving seeds is open-pollination. When a plant reproduces through natural means, it will adapt to local conditions and evolve reliably, especially in its own locality. Open-pollinated plants are free from pesticides, chemicals and other forms of genetic modification by humans.

When you're gathering seeds from the plants in your garden, make sure you do it properly. Time your harvest based on the individual plant's method of seed dispersal, cleaning the seeds and spreading them out to dry, storing them in packets or in glass jars or other containers, labeling the packets and containers by variety and date, and storing them in a cool or cold, dark and dry place.

Some vegetables are easier than others when it comes to collecting their seeds. The larger seeds, such as those from beans, corn, peas and squash, are easier to handle than the tiny ones that come from some other vegetables. Here are some things to note about the seeds of a select number of annual vegetable plants:

- The seeds of different types of **beans** should be planted well away from each other to avoid any chance of cross-pollination.
- If you live in a colder climate, **broccoli** growth should be started indoors in the spring because the outdoor growing season might not last long enough.
- When selecting the seeds of **corn**, closely examine both the plant and the ears of corn. Choose the best ears from the earliest-bearing plants.
- When you're preparing **cucumber** seeds for storage, cut the cucumber in half lengthwise and scrape out the seedy pulp. Put the pulp and the seeds in a bowl of water to ferment. The heavy seeds will sink to the bottom, making it easy to drain and rinse them.
- With **eggplant**, when the fruit turns from firm and glossy to dull and somewhat puckered, the seed is ready to harvest.
- A cool weather crop, **lettuce** can be eaten early but has a long season for seed saving. Lettuce seeds don't all ripen at once.
- **Melon** seeds are ripe enough to collect and store when melons are ripe enough to eat.
- Don't harvest the strongest **pea** plants for food. Instead, allow pods to hang on the plants until the seeds are ripe and then harvest them.
- Let **peppers** ripen beyond the eating stage before collecting their seeds, which will be ready when the fruit is no longer green.
- The pods of **radishes** won't split open when they mature. When the pods turn brown, remove the seeds, which can be sown as soon as the ground can be worked in the spring.
- When **spinach** leaves begin to turn yellow, the seeds are nearly mature. The leafiest plants should be chosen for seed saving.
- **Squash** seed is usually collected around the same time of the first fall frost. Allow the good seeds to dry for two weeks.
- Harvest **tomato** seeds when the fruits are fully ripe. Save the seeds from the fruits of several plants.



Following are notes about the seeds of a few biennial and perennial vegetable plants:

- When berries turn red and ferny top leaves flop over in the fall, **asparagus** seeds are ready to harvest.
- You'll get plenty of seeds from **beets**. In fact, what may look like a single seed is probably several seeds in a ball. When they turn brown, you'll know they are mature.
- **Cabbage** produces a tall stalk with yellow flowers in the second year. Seeds will be ready to harvest when the seedpods turn from brown to yellow.
- The seeds of **carrots** should be harvested when they turn brown in the early fall. Seeds in the top branches will ripen before those of the lower branches.
- **Cauliflower** seeds should be planted in the late spring or early summer. In the second year, seeds in pods will be produced

on tall stalks, and they should be harvested when the pods turn brown.

- When tiny black seeds appear, **chives** are ripe to harvest. Those seeds will ripen only gradually.
- You'll know that the seeds from **leeks** are ready to harvest when you can see them. Those seeds form inside the capsules of a ball of flowers.
- The black seeds from **onion** plants are harvested by cutting off seed heads and then drying for several weeks.
- **Parsley** plants produce an abundance of seeds. You can harvest them as you observe them maturing in the fall.

For seeds that you don't plan to touch for a while, freezing might be a good option because their DNA will stay intact for a longer period of time. It's important that seeds are dried first, however, so that they don't expand and crack. ■

Grow a Medicinal Herb Garden... It'll Be Good for Your Health

FROM THE OCTOBER 2014 EDITION

Long before there were doctors and nurses, herbs were used for medicinal purposes. In fact, herbal medicine is the oldest system for healing in the world. There is archaeological evidence of humans using plants for medicinal purposes approximately 60,000 years ago during the Paleolithic Era.

In the many centuries that have followed, people have practiced herbal medicine while continuing to find medicinal traits in more herbs than we ever knew existed. Even many doctors who used to scoff at herbal remedies now see tremendous value in them.

Herbal medicine can't replace conventional medicine – especially in life-threatening situations – but it has proven to be highly effective and affordable for dealing with the prevention and treatment of day-to-day, non-emergency health issues including headaches, colds, coughs, aches, bruises and many more ailments.

How do we know which herbs to use for certain conditions? And what is the best way to use those herbs? There have been plenty of great books written on this subject, including ones that show how to plant and harvest these

herbs in your garden. You'll probably find some of these books at your local health food store or library. In the meantime, here are 10 of my favorites.

Anise – It has been suggested to use Anise as a diuretic and/or a laxative. It has been used to treat menstrual cramps, and to prevent the formation of gas in the gastrointestinal tract. It's said to make one's breath fresher and to reduce pain. The oil from the Anise plant has been utilized as an insecticide against head lice and mites.

Chamomile – This herb is effective in controlling nervousness, insomnia, nausea, earache, asthma, headaches, fevers, arthritis and hay fever. It also works on indigestion, heartburn, gas, diarrhea, upper respiratory irritation and teething pain in babies. Chamomile can also be used as a salve for burns and skin irritation.

Lemon Balm – Effective against stress, depression and anxiety, it also serves as a decongestant to aid with colds, flu and sore throats, and as a muscle relaxer to help with menstrual cramps. Lemon Balm is used by allergy sufferers and by those who suffer from shingles. When the leaf is rubbed into the skin, it is a natural insect repellent.

Borage – This herb is credited with treating ailments such as respiratory viruses, colds, flu, dry cough, sore throat, bronchitis, asthma, stress and menopausal symptoms. It is reported to help with arthritis, rheumatism, joint pain and bowel diseases. Borage is also good for skin problems and aids with depression while reducing blood pressure and cholesterol.

Catnip – Used in capsules, teas and tinctures, this herb has been found to be a remedy for diarrhea, upset stomach, gas, nausea, hiccups, stomach cramps and indigestion. Catnip leaves contain antioxidant vitamins, making it helpful for treating colds. It can be used in a compress for tonsillitis and

toothache, and topically for skin sores and hemorrhoids.

Cayenne Pepper – This herb is a circulatory stimulant to strengthen heart and blood vessels while lowering cholesterol. It is said to aid in weight loss; regulate blood sugar; reduce colds, fevers, flus and sore throats; dull pain; and serve as a laxative. As a topical cream, Cayenne Pepper can help with arthritis, bursitis, muscle and joint pain, and shingles.

Echinacea – Studies suggest this herb sparks the immune system, relieves pain, reduces inflammation, and has hormonal, antiviral and antioxidant effects. It's recommended to treat urinary tract infections, vaginal yeast infections, athlete's foot, hay fever, boils, burns and ulcers. Echinacea has been called an important immune-enhancing herb.

Hyssop – This herb is used for upper respiratory ailments and infections. It's brewed into a tea to help fight colds, sinusitis, bronchitis, asthma, influenza, laryngitis, tonsillitis and coughs. Users report that it helps with shortness of breath and wheezing. Hyssop has a regulating effect on blood pressure, raising it if it's too low and lowering it if it's too high.

Nettle – Containing antihistamines and anti-inflammatories, Nettle opens bronchial and nasal passages. It's been used to deal with asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia. It's also been effective in reducing blood pressure; aiding swollen prostate glands; helping maintain kidney and liver function; and topically treating wounds, stings, bites and rashes.

Yarrow – This herb is reported to stop bleeding when you chew the leaves, or crush the leaves and flowers and press them against the wound. It's said to be helpful for poor circulation, congestion, asthma and depression. Topically, Yarrow can be used for wounds, scrapes, rashes, nosebleeds,



hemorrhoids, poison ivy, varicose veins and toothaches.

7 BENEFITS OF MEDICINAL HERBS

There are many benefits to using medicinal herbs, as we've described above. Following is a concise summary of those benefits:

They're safe. On rare occasions, an herb will produce a negative side effect for a particular person, usually involving an allergic reaction. But overall, side effects are much less common than they are with pharmaceutical drugs.

They're inexpensive. Pharmaceutical drugs almost always cost considerably more than herbal supplements. Savings become significantly greater when you grow and harvest your own herbs and then create your own infusions, decoctions, salves and tinctures.

They're tasty. Many of the medicinal herb teas that can be made from plants are so delicious that people drink them purely for their taste. The fact that these teas have healing properties is an added benefit.

They're easy to grow. It's not necessary to earn a degree in botany or horticulture to successfully grow and harvest plants that provide health benefits when blended into teas or used in salves or tinctures. Anyone with an interest and space for a garden can do it.

They promote self-reliance. Rather than wait until we get sick and then visit a doctor, herbs give us the opportunity to practice effective preventive medicine and then treat minor ailments and injuries without visiting physicians.

They help you help others. The more you learn about herbal remedies and experience first-hand how they're helping you, the more information you'll be able to provide to family members, friends, neighbors and co-workers.

They work. Herbal remedies have proven effective for as long as humans have existed. The fact that many of today's pharmaceutical drugs have their roots in plants shows that people who have been using them for their healing properties have been on the right path all along. ■

Composting Can Be a Very Smelly Job But Somebody Has to Do It for a Great Garden

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2015 EDITION

Periodically when I'm walking around in a neighborhood, I'll see a large pile of mulch in someone's driveway. Probably delivered by a nearby nursery, it will soon be shoveled into wheelbarrows, carted to the backyard garden and spread on top of the soil to help keep a fairly steady temperature and moisture level, while also hopefully blocking out some weeds.

Mulch is great stuff and I highly recommend it for the soil surrounding trees, bushes and shrubs. But there is something I like a lot better for my garden: compost. Yes, I know it can sometimes smell to high heaven – especially as you're collecting it and before it's been broken down – but it can be a miracle worker when it's mixed into the first several inches of your garden's top soil.

What's so good about it? Well, first let's take a look at what's not so bad about it. Most importantly, it's not made up of harmful chemicals. You can see some definite results in your garden if you're willing to use chemicals, but at what price? In addition to being very pricey, chemical fertilizers are unhealthy for any children, grandchildren and pets that might be playing in the area. Not to mention the fact that chemicals pollute the groundwater.

Compost, on the other hand, will provide important nutrients your plants need, help retain enough water and be a positive influence on the soil's drainage. Let's take a look at what it is and what you need to make your own compost, and then we'll explain

why it's crucial to break everything down properly before you mix it into your garden's soil.

What is compost? It's a combination of greens that provide nitrogen and browns that provide carbon, and you can keep it in good condition by monitoring the water, air and temperature that interact with it. Designate an area for your compost pile and start piling it up.

Depending on the temperature of your pile – and we'll get to that shortly – your compost could be used effectively in your garden within a few weeks, or it might not be ready for about a year.

GREENS VS. BROWNS

For your greens, you can include lawn clippings, plant prunings, houseplants, fruit peels, vegetable scraps, feathers or hair, bone meal, coffee grounds, hay or alfalfa meal, and others. Your browns can consist of chipped wood, shredded paper, coffee filters, dry leaves, newspaper, sawdust, pine needles, cardboard egg cartons, aged hay or straw, and more. Try to have approximately twice as many greens as browns.

MOISTURE

Depending on where you live, you may not have to add any water to your compost pile. Occasional rains should keep it damp enough. But if you get a lot of rain, cover the

pile with a tarp. And if you get very little rain, you're going to have to water it regularly. The best way to monitor the moisture level is by grabbing a handful and squeezing. If a few drops of water come out, great. If more than that, it's too wet; if less, it's too dry.

AIR

It's very important that air circulate in your compost pile. Place large sticks at the bottom of the pile in order to ensure an airflow from below, then add a brown layer followed by a green layer followed by a brown layer and so forth. They'll get mixed up when you use a pitchfork to regularly turn the compost and create air pockets where things have become clogged, but in the meantime it's a good way to ensure that you're getting enough of both. If it still seems like you're having a problem with proper air circulation, you can purchase and use some composting aerators.

TEMPERATURE

Even if you don't need an aerator, make sure to buy yourself a composting thermometer. It should have a stem of about two feet in length to reach well into the pile. If the temperature is between 80 and 100 degrees, your pile needs a pitchfork. If it's between 100 and 130 degrees, your material is being broken down pretty well. If it's between 130 and 160 degrees, your pile is performing admirably and is even killing the seeds that could eventually produce weeds in your garden. The hotter your temperature, the sooner you can effectively use your compost.

MANAGING YOUR COMPOST

How do you know if your pile is the right size? Like everything else with composting, it's not an exact science and different people have various preferences. But with piles that are too small, it's slow going because there's not



enough material to create high temperatures. On the other hand, if your pile is too large, you might struggle with turning it. Through experimentation, you'll know when it's the right size because it will start shrinking as the materials get broken down and it will start turning more brown.

If your pile is the right size and you don't want to add to it yet, don't throw away additional composting material. Instead, create a separate area where you can keep it until you want to add it to the shrinking compost pile you are monitoring. You can even have a separate area for your final product if you're not quite ready to mix it into your garden's soil. Good airflow is important for each phase.

BREAK IT DOWN

As promised earlier, here's why it's essential that everything in your compost pile be broken down completely before you add it to your soil. If compost has not been broken down all the way when it enters the soil, it will steal the available nitrogen from your plants to break itself down. Without some of that much-needed nitrogen, your plants will not prosper as they should.

Collecting, monitoring and working your compost into the soil will not always be pleasant, but when you see your garden flourishing, you'll know it was all worthwhile. ■

Start a Backyard Garden From Scratch

FROM THE MARCH 2017 EDITION

Planting a backyard vegetable garden is an activity fully in keeping with the prepper spirit. It is a step toward self-sufficiency and independence. It's economical, healthy and best of all, a fun family activity.

Don't decide beforehand that the work will be too difficult or claim that you never had a "green thumb." Growing food is a process that can be learned by anyone and adapted to fit the individual and available land.

By starting small and learning from experience instead of letting goals define your success, you can become a fine gardener over the course of only a few growing seasons. Let's break it down into manageable chunks.

THE SITE

Pick a sunny location. Most vegetables need at least six hours of direct sunlight daily. The more sunlight, the better the harvest and flavor. Protect your crops from wind damage by placing the garden in the shelter of a nearby building or fence. Make sure there is a convenient water supply, but rain must neither pool nor run off too quickly to soak into the soil.

A good-size beginner vegetable garden is about 16 by 10 feet and should yield enough vegetables to keep a family of four from buying produce for a summer. In a good year, there will be extra for canning, freezing and sharing with neighbors.

TIPS & TRICKS...

Slick, No-Stick Shovel

Spray a silicone or Teflon lubricant on your shovel to make soil slip off and make the job go faster with less effort.

Lighten Loads

Cut the weight of large planters and pots by filling the pot one-third to one-half full with packing peanuts. Cover the packing material with a piece of landscape fabric, then fill with potting soil. Cut weight further by mixing the potting soil with vermiculite and peat moss.

Transporting Transplants

Before heading off to the local nursery to buy plants, line the back of your vehicle with a plastic tarp and place a small stepladder on top of the tarp. The space between the rungs provides small compartments to pack with your purchased plants and keeps them from tipping over on the drive home.

Root of the Problem

A common issue with buying starter plants in pots or flats is they are often root-bound. That means the roots have run out of space to grow and have formed a tight ball within their container. For these plants to thrive in your garden, the roots must be able to spread underground. To do this, gently pull the ball apart with your fingers.

Wheelbarrow Worksite

Wheelbarrows are an invaluable tool in gardening for transporting mulch, soil, yard waste and plants. Clamp a piece of plywood across the backside of the opening to create a flat work surface that is perfect for potting and is adjacent to your soil.

Raised garden beds are a great option for starting small and with fresh soil and mulch. Large plant pots are a fine way to start herbs outdoors and bring them into an indoor window garden for winter.

THE SEEDS

Buy good seeds. A few extra dollars spent in spring will be more than recovered when seeds germinate well and yield a greater harvest. Avoid genetically-modified seeds. Growing food is what the earth naturally does, so high-tech interference isn't needed.

THE SOIL

Plant roots need soft soil. The earth must be broken up and tilled weeks before planting. Mix in untreated lawn clippings and leaves for compost. Mix the soil again before planting to blend in the biodegradables. This softens the earth and adds nutrients. Rent a rototiller for the best results, although a little muscle and a garden spade and steel rake can also do the job.

Soil that is ready is easily shoveled and crumbles nicely in your hand. If there is too much clay, it may be necessary to create a new top layer of soil, mulch and compost to the depth of the mature plant's roots.

Consider testing the pH level of the soil. Home kits are available at building centers, or you can send a sample to your local cooperative extension service. They are also a great free resource for identifying crops that will grow well at your soil's pH level. The professionals at your local garden center are another great resource for finding plants that will do well in your area.

SELECTING CROPS

Research the crops you are considering to make sure they are suited to your climate and growing season. The *Farmer's Almanac*, gardening books and plant guides will help, and can be found free at your local library.

A list of popular plants that perform well for new gardeners includes tomatoes, zucchini, peppers, cabbage, green beans, carrots, radishes, beets and cucumbers.

When planning your garden layout, think about the size of the plants when fully grown.

Place the tallest plants at the back of the garden, descending in size to the front, to keep taller plants from blocking the sun on smaller plants. Don't overcrowd. Plant so that your crop grows into the available space. If planting in rows, allow enough space to keep plants away from your footpath.



TOOL TALK

Garden magazines and websites are filled with wonderful-looking, latest-and-greatest specialty tools. In time, you might find one that you can't live without. But for those gardeners just starting out, let's stick to the basics. Focus first on the core tools that will get the gardening job done.

Gloves

Gardening means thorns, splinters, scratches and blisters from digging. Get a durable pair that fits well and allows mobility and dexterity. Brush them off and dry them properly before storing and they will last the whole season.

Hand Trowel

The "go-to" tool for planting, shaping holes and eliminating weeds. Stainless steel is the best if your budget permits.

Spade

These short-handled, square shovels are great for digging holes and moving mounds of dirt. Look for a strong steel head and a thick fiberglass handle. A good one will last forever.

Rakes

A steel rake is great for breaking lumps of soil and sifting out rocks and bits of stick. A fan rake whisks away leaves and plucked weeds to keep your garden tidy and attractive.

Hoe

Great for breaking up soil, turning it and creating rows ready for planting.

Hose and Adjustable Nozzle

Your hose must be able to reach every part of the garden. An adjustable nozzle or rain wand lets you control the reach and pressure of the water stream to avoid battering plants.

Loppers

These are the perfect tool for pruning bushes and tree branches up to two inches in diameter. Great for shaping these plants and keeping them from shading the garden.

Wheelbarrow

Simply the best tool for moving hundreds of pounds of material such as soil, mulch and stone without strain. Handy for transporting trays of new plants and tools. A good wheelbarrow will last a lifetime.

MAINTENANCE

Consistent maintenance is just as important to a garden's success as the planning and planting. Water often, with a good soaking at least once a week. You're watering the roots, not just wetting leaves. Water more during hot spells, particularly early in the day before the sun heats things up, as watering in the evening promotes fungus. Keep weeds in check and use mulch to keep soil moist.

Keep an eye out for infestations so they can be handled before they become

destructive. When harvest season arrives, pick ripened product frequently to keep plants producing. Preserve your crop by freezing, canning and dehydrating.

PATIENCE

Gardening is not about instant gratification. Don't over-fuss in the garden to rush results. Harvest comes in its own time. There are off years and there are great years. It's worth investing the time to experience both. ■

A Guide to Self-Sufficiency... One Garden Seed at a Time

FROM THE AUGUST 2017 EDITION

Over the next couple of months, many of you will be harvesting the vegetable and fruit plants you've grown in your garden all summer. Preserving some of the seeds from those plants to use next year will help you become even more self-sufficient while you're saving money and time.

Below is the process for retaining and storing garden seeds – customized by individual plants because all seeds need to be harvested a little differently.

PEPPER SEEDS

Pepper seeds are so simple to harvest; you'll never want to buy them again. Allow some of the peppers to stay on the plants until they start to wrinkle. Cut each pepper open and brush the seeds from the stem. You don't even need to rinse pepper seeds, just spread them out to dry.

TOMATO AND CUCUMBER SEEDS

Harvesting tomatoes and cucumbers takes a little more time, as the seeds are coated with gel. Allow fruits to ripen fully, then scoop out the seeds and the gel that surrounds them. Put the seeds and accompanying gel in a glass jar of water, with water approximately equal to the volume of the seed mass.

Place the jar in a warm spot, but not in direct sunlight. Swirl the mixture twice

a day for several days. The mixture will ferment and the seeds will sink to the bottom within five days. Once this occurs, rinse the seeds in clean water several times, then spread them out to dry. Please note, while the harvest process is the same, be sure to harvest tomatoes and cucumber seeds separately to avoid labeling and storage confusion.

SQUASH AND PUMPKIN SEEDS

To harvest these particular seeds, let the squash or pumpkin ripen well past the tender, edible stage. When you aren't able to dent it with your fingernail, it's ready. Cut open and gently scrape all the seeds out. Retain the larger seeds, which will have a better chance of germinating. Carefully wash the seeds using a colander to avoid damaging seeds. You'll need to remove all stringy material and membrane. Once the seeds are clean, lay them out to dry.

MELON SEEDS

Melon seeds can be saved as you open a melon to eat. Collect seeds and rinse them under running water to remove any traces of debris. Watermelon seeds will rinse easily, but cantaloupe and other melon varieties tend to have more fiber and membrane.

Once all debris is removed, put seeds in a container of water. The usable seeds will



sink to the bottom. Remove what floats to the top of the water, then give the seeds a final rinse to remove any remaining fruit sugar. After they are rinsed, set them out to dry.

PEA AND BEAN SEEDS

Leave the pods on the plant until they start turning brown. Keep in mind, this

could be up to a month after a normal harvest. Give the pod a shake and if you can hear the seeds rattle, they are ready to harvest. Strip pods from the plant and keep intact to dry. Once the pods are fully dry, go ahead and shell them. Some people skip the shelling process and store whole pods, which is fine, but it does require larger storage containers and more storage space.

SUNFLOWER SEEDS

Allow sunflower heads to completely dry on the plant before harvesting. Remove whole heads and hang upside down to complete drying. Seeds are easy to remove with a quick shake of the sunflower head or a vigorous rubbing. Store seeds in their kernels for protection.

SEED DRYING AND STORAGE

For seed drying, screens are easier to work with, but if you're trying to save money you can simply use plates and paper towels. The drying process can take a few weeks, so make sure you have enough room to lay seeds out without overcrowding them.

Knowing when your seeds are dry is crucial. If seeds aren't dry enough when you store them, you'll run into mold and mildew problems. Feel the seeds to see if they are soft and spongy. If so, keep drying them. Once you think the seeds are

properly dried, test the dryness by taking a couple of seeds from each batch and hitting them with a hammer. If the seed is completely dry, it will shatter. If it crushes but does not shatter, you'll need to let the seeds dry longer.

Once your garden seeds are completely dry, they should be stored in a cool, dry area far from insects and rodents. You can purchase glass storage containers, or save your money and use storage containers found around your house. Envelopes are perfect and easy to label. You can also use recycled items such as snack food canisters for larger seeds and clean pill bottles for smaller seeds. Be sure to properly label seed containers with names, variety and collection date.

The ideal temperature for seed storage is between 32 and 41 degrees Fahrenheit. You can extend life by freezing seeds, especially if you have a zero-degree freezer. Keep in mind, the older the seed, the lower the germination and vigor. ■

DANIELLE'S RECIPES

Danielle has been treating readers to many dozens of delicious recipes through the years, many of which she has created herself. We could fill an entire book with her recipes, but we only have room for a few here. Enjoy.

Zucchini Casserole

FROM THE NOVEMBER 2014 EDITION

Yes, this is a simple version of that stuffing zucchini casserole that ends up at every picnic and funeral in the summertime. I love the little bites of sweet corn that the Farmer's Market Corn Chowder brings to this one. My husband can't stand cooked carrots and my kids complain about onions, so I leave them out... but more vegetables are always better in my opinion.

INGREDIENTS:

- 3/4 cup Farmer's Market Corn Chowder mix
- 4 cups fresh zucchini, sliced or cubed
- optional: 1/2 cup shredded carrot and 1 diced onion
- 1/2 cup sour cream
- 2 cups Herb Stuffing Mix (I like Pepperidge Farm brand)
- 1/3 cup butter or margarine, melted



DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Precook 1/2 recipe Farmer's Market Corn Chowder by microwaving 1/2 package mix with 3/4 cup water and microwaving for eight minutes. (Can be done ahead.)
3. In a small bowl, combine stuffing and butter.
4. In a separate bowl, combine zucchini, carrots and onion (if using), soup and sour cream.
5. Spread half the stuffing mixture into a casserole dish. Spread zucchini mix over stuffing base and sprinkle the remaining stuffing on top. The size of the casserole dish is surprisingly flexible. A 9 x 12 rectangular pan is great, but any pan that will hold all of the zucchini and stuffing will do. I like the appeal of an oval dish.
6. Cover the dish with aluminum foil and bake in preheated oven for 60 minutes.

Crispy Mashed Potato Pancakes

FROM THE APRIL 2016 EDITION

My grandmother's people were Swiss immigrants to West Virginia, and she could cook potatoes in a hundred different ways. These mashed potato pancakes are a perfect tribute to one of my favorites from her kitchen. They're crispy buttery on the outside and soft fluffy on the inside.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 package 4Patriots Survival Food Classic Potato Soup
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- Approx. 1/2 cup dried bread crumbs
- Oil for frying

DIRECTIONS:

1. The night before, cook the Potato Soup on the stovetop using 3 cups of water, rather than the package amount. Cover and place in the refrigerator for at least 12 hours.
2. To your completed cooled and thickened "soup," stir in the 1/2 cup of flour.

3. Divide your dough into eight equal parts and place bread crumbs in a small bowl.
4. Taking one portion of dough, add it to the breadcrumbs and gently turn it over to coat the outside in crumbs. Form it into a patty 3-4 inches across, flipping it over to make sure it is well coated.
5. In a frying pan, add about 1/4 inch of frying oil. Gently set patties into the oil and fry until the bottom is a golden brown, 2-3 minutes. Carefully flip the patties and brown the other side.



S'mores Bars

FROM THE JUNE 2016 EDITION

The 4Patriots Survival Food pudding in the brownie layer of these delicious bars transforms a basic brownie into a rich fudgy layer that goes perfectly between the marshmallow and graham cracker. Kids love to help make these.

INGREDIENTS:

- Graham crackers, about 9 rectangles
- 1 2/3 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup cocoa
- 1 1/3 cup flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 package 4Patriots Survival Food Old Fashioned Chocolate Pudding
- 2 eggs
- 6 tablespoons water
- 1 cup butter or margarine, melted
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 1 bag miniature marshmallows

DIRECTIONS:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Set graham crackers in bottom of pan to cover bottom completely (you'll probably need to break some).
3. Mix sugar, cocoa, flour, salt and pudding mix in a large mixing bowl.
4. To the dry mix, add the eggs, water, butter and vanilla. Stir until no dry parts remain.
5. Cover graham crackers with brownie batter. Because the batter is so thick, it is



easiest to place spoonfuls all over the crackers and then press lightly with your fingers to evenly spread the batter.

6. Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 20 minutes. A toothpick will come out with crumbs, not goo, and the edges of the brownie will start to look dry and puffed.
7. Sprinkle the bag of marshmallows over the hot brownies.
8. Place bars back into the oven under the broiler until marshmallows just begin to brown, about 1-2 minutes. Watch carefully the whole time; they go from gold to blackened in an instant.
9. Allow bars to cool completely and cut with a sharp, wet knife. Rinse the knife after every 6-8 inches of cutting to get a clean-cut edge.
10. Store in an airtight container. A little nonstick spray on the lid keeps the marshmallows from sticking.

Lemon Blueberry Cake

FROM THE JUNE 2018 EDITION

Summertime means reunions, weddings and showers – all great reasons to bring an easy, beautiful and delicious cake. Our 4Patriots Survival Food Freeze-Dried Blueberries take this cake from fine to fabulous in an instant.

INGREDIENTS:

- 1 box Lemon Cake Mix
- 3 eggs
- 1/3 cup oil (or butter, as specified on cake mix)
- 6 cups powdered sugar
- 3-5 tablespoons water
- 1 cup 4Patriots Survival Food Freeze-Dried Blueberries
- 1 1/2 sticks (12 tablespoons) unsalted butter, softened
- 3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice

DIRECTIONS:

1. Make cake mix as per package directions with eggs, water and oil.
2. Pour into 2 greased and floured 8 or 9-inch
3. In a food processor or mortar, finely crush the blueberries into a powder.
4. With a mixer, gradually beat the powdered sugar, blueberry powder, lemon juice and softened butter together until fluffy.
5. Gradually add a tablespoon or two of water when the mixture seems too dry or stiff. Beat until fluffy and spreadable.
6. Split cake layers into two even layers, for four total.
7. Frost cake with your blueberry icing.



pans and bake as per package directions. Allow to cool on a rack.

POWER

At 4Patriots, we've been into power for a long time. In fact, our flagship product was Power4Patriots, a series of videos and manuals describing how to build solar panels, wind turbines, water heaters and solar heaters. Getting off the vulnerable electrical grid as much as possible is a great way to achieve self-sufficiency. Here are some articles about bringing more power into your life.

Weather Is Most Likely Cause of Blackouts

FROM THE OCTOBER 2014 EDITION

In the past we've taken a look at what would happen if an electromagnetic pulse caused by a massive solar flare or a terrorist attack caused a long-term blackout. This type of threat has been gaining considerable attention, especially after it was recently revealed that extremely powerful flares from the sun narrowly missed the Earth in 2012.

Blackouts caused by violent weather are much more likely occurrences, and probably all of us have experienced them through the years. According to the Edison Electric Institute, 70 percent of power outages in the U.S. are caused by the weather. Fortunately, most of these power outages last a few hours or less and are more of an inconvenience than a tragedy.

However, sometimes the storms producing them – including everything from thunderstorms to tornadoes to hurricanes –

are so severe that our aging and vulnerable electrical grid is unable to handle them. Some storms have been known to cause blackouts lasting days and even weeks.

In 1977, a lightning-sparked outage left 9 million New Yorkers without power. Extreme heat that caused high-voltage lines to stretch and sag onto overgrown tree branches in northern Ohio in 2003 resulted in the worst blackout in North American history. Eleven deaths and \$6 billion in damages were blamed on the accident that shut down 100 power plants.

Ice storms cut power to more than 1 million homes and businesses in Oklahoma, Kansas and Nebraska in 2007. A line of thunderstorms caused a blackout for more than 3.8 million in 10 states and Washington, D.C., in 2012. An historic storm named “Nemo” struck the Northeast U.S. and

Canada in early 2013, resulting in record snow amounts, hurricane-force wind gusts, and approximately 700,000 homes and businesses losing power.

Those are just a few of the thousands of storms that have disrupted power to homes and businesses in the U.S. through the years. And it's not just storms causing this damage. Extreme heat is a serious weather factor causing blackouts. In fact, heat is the worst culprit when it comes to overloading a power system because air conditioners run much longer than normal during heat waves, causing power lines to lose some efficiency and transformers to fail.

During those brief blackouts, we frequently find ourselves looking at our cable TV boxes to see what time it is, only to be reminded that the power is out. Or we'll enter the bathroom and flip the switch, only to remain in the dark. Or we'll try to turn on the radio or TV or stereo, or any of a number of kitchen appliances, once again to be reminded that pretty much nothing is working.

That proves how dependent we have become on electricity. We use electrical devices and appliances numerous times every day, and we assume they are going to work just fine when we turn them on. During blackouts, we are given harsh reminders of exactly how much we depend on electricity.



PHYSICAL ATTACKS

While extreme weather is the main cause of blackouts, physical and cyber sabotage against the electrical grid are increasing at alarming rates. In April 2013 near San Jose, California, there was an attack on a power transmission substation. Shortly after telephone cables were cut, multiple snipers fired shots on the Pacific Gas & Electric Corporation's Metcalf substation. It took nearly a month for workers to make the repairs and bring the substation back to life.

To this day, no one has been arrested in connection with the sabotage and we still don't know whether this was an isolated incident conducted by vandals or a dress rehearsal by terrorists. Either way, it demonstrated that a coordinated attack on substations in major cities across the country could plunge much of the country into the dark, possibly for an extended period of time.

Jon Wellenhoff, former chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, said that the attack was "the most significant incident of domestic terrorism involving the grid that has ever occurred" in the U.S. Other critical electrical grid sites remain just as unprotected as this one was.

Coordinated attacks in each of the three nation's electrical systems could cause the entire power network to collapse, according to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Losing key substations would be devastating. They use large power transformers to boost the voltage of electricity so that it can move great distances before reducing the voltage to a usable level as that electricity gets closer to businesses and homes.

CYBER ATTACKS

Physical attacks against the U.S. electrical grid may be more dramatic than cyber attacks, but

cyber attacks are much more frequent. In fact, one power company reported that it receives approximately 10,000 attempted cyber attacks per month. Many other electrical utilities are reporting either daily or frequent cyber attacks, including probes on their networks that are searching for vulnerabilities.

According to the (Colorado Springs) *Gazette*, thousands of cyber attacks strike power grids in the U.S. every day. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Mike Rogers said at a recent Reuters summit on cyber terrorism that the only thing holding terrorists back from launching a massive cyber attack on U.S. infrastructure is that they don't have the ability. If a terrorist group finds out how to do it, Rogers said, "it's a game changer. My concern is it's just a matter of time."

A recent National Academy of Sciences report stated that, "If they could gain access, hackers could manipulate (control and data) systems to disrupt the flow of electricity... block the flow of vital information, or disable protective systems." The report added that a successful attack could "entail costs of hundreds of billions of dollars" and could render entire swaths of the country helpless to extreme weather. A *Wall Street Journal* article shook readers merely by its headline – "Hacking the Grid is Very Easy."

Everybody is busy these days, but don't allow your busyness to keep you from preparing for the coming blackout, because it could be a long one. If you only have time to do three things to get ready, make it these three: stockpile and properly store food and water; gather together essential non-food items including flashlights and batteries; and protect your home against intruders.

Those activities will give you a leg up on the vast majority of people when it comes time to surviving an emergency that knocks out the electrical grid. ■

How to Go Solar Without Breaking the Budget

FROM THE MAY 2016 EDITION

This is the first in a series of three articles regarding how to start using the sun to power your home at discounted prices.

Most of us would agree that solar is the way to go when it comes to powering our homes, even if we haven't yet taken the steps to do that. The savings are significant, with a recent article in the *Boston Globe* revealing that a Massachusetts family saw its winter power bill drop from about \$500 to \$110 per month due to the addition of solar panels.

But some of us shy away from going solar because of the start-up costs. Even if you know how to do the installation, pre-made solar panels, wind turbines, solar air heaters and solar water heaters can be expensive.

Following are some tips for those who have decided to go solar but who want to do it at discounted prices. Today I'll focus on purchasing a manufactured solar panel system from a solar dealer. In future articles, we'll get into buying your components wholesale and having a contractor install them, as well as buying your system wholesale and installing it yourself.

BUYING A MANUFACTURED SYSTEM

When you hire a reputable solar dealer, the main advantage is that they will do all the work. Of course, this will cost you more than the DIY route, but it may end up providing you with the most professionally installed system with some good guarantees.

First of all, it's very important to interview several solar dealers in your area. The first one you speak with may seem great, but by interviewing four or five, you might find one you like better. The more dealers you speak with, the more you'll learn about the solar industry, which will help in your eventual decision making.

Resources for finding a solar dealer include:

- solar-estimate.org
- nabcep.org/installer-locator

Make sure that your solar dealer has earned an Installer Certification from the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners. This challenging exam requires both considerable knowledge and field experience to pass.

On-site consultations usually last an hour or less, and some dealers with larger firms may say they'd prefer to handle it over the phone. Don't get turned off by a dealer who wants to do a phone-only interview the first time, as they will probably be looking at Google images of your house while talking with you and may be able to provide a lower price due to their volume of business.

You may learn something valuable during these interviews, most important of which is whether your house is even suitable for solar installation. Most are, but if your house is shaded much of the year, it might not be right for solar panels.

Among the things you should look for when communicating with a solar dealer and his



staff are their professionalism and what kind of experience they have in your city or county.

The best dealers usually have the most knowledgeable sales staffs. If they seem like they either can't or don't want to answer your questions, move on to the next one. Experienced dealers will know, for example, that certain inverters match up better with certain PV panels, which may match better with your roof layout. They'll know which solar panels perform better with low light than others do, or in hotter temperatures.

Because each city and county has its own unique set of codes and permit requirements, a solar dealer who has already done work in your area will be able to get through the process faster than one who hasn't. You don't want to be part of their learning curve.

You can also check out a solar dealer with your local Better Business Bureau, and ask him for references from previous clients.

It's OK if a dealer has a couple of "resolved complaints," as nobody is perfect. But if there are numerous negative reports or "unresolved complaints" about a dealer, you should probably look elsewhere.

The recommendation here is to call at least two of the references you're given by each dealer. Ask them detailed questions, including "Was the installation on time?" "Were there any unexpected delays in the process?" "Did you have any complaints and were they dealt with properly?" Because you will probably only be given the names of satisfied customers, spend a few hours driving around town looking for the company's signs in yards

and then ring a few doorbells to learn what their experience was with that company.

Follow up your dealer interviews by asking two or three of them to prepare a bid for you. Don't just automatically take the lowest bid. You might not always be comparing apples to apples, and a careful examination of the bids might reveal some inconsistencies in pricing, installation and warranties. Request a "not to exceed" proposal that will protect you from extra costs should they run into installation problems.

When you're closing in on your final decision, use these negotiating tips to maximize your discounts:

- If your roof is easily accessible from a second story window, you may be able to save on installation time and costs.

- If you can get a neighbor to work with the same dealer, there may be some savings due to reduced travel time for the dealer.
- If you are flexible with your installation time, a dealer may reduce the price to do it a few weeks down the line if he's busy, rather than right away.
- If you like a particular dealer but want him to come down a little on price, show him a lower bid from a competitor.
- Ask the dealer if he offers referral fees. If so, let friends, family and neighbors know about your system and the savings you're anticipating.

Regarding warranties, try for 10 years and settle for five if necessary. And make sure you run your contract by a lawyer.

Going solar is the way to go, but be a smart shopper along the way. ■

More Solar Discount Secrets for Your Consideration... 'Buy Wholesale/ Contractor Install' Option on the Table

FROM THE JUNE 2016 EDITION

This is the second in a series of three articles regarding how to start using the sun to power your home at discounted prices.

Last month I provided tips for homeowners who have decided to go solar but who want to do it at discounted prices. The focus was on purchasing a manufactured solar panel system from a solar dealer. This month we're looking into buying your solar components wholesale and having a contractor install them. Next month we'll concentrate on buying your system wholesale and installing it yourself.

Following are four steps you'll need to take to source your wholesale solar components for the best price.

OVERVIEW OF OPTIONS

One challenge that you may run into as you're looking for the best prices on solar panels is that some solar dealers who have been around for a while have good relationships with distributors and possibly even with manufacturers. Because they buy in bulk, they can get better prices than the public can.

Compounding this issue for people who want to buy their own panels and hire someone to install them is the fact that some solar panel manufacturers will sell products to solar dealers but not to distributors. On the plus side, the prices for solar panels have dropped dramatically over the past decade, so your price might be comparable to what a solar dealer would charge you, due to his mark-up.

Still, it doesn't make sense to buy panels yourself for roughly the same price that you would pay your solar installer for them. The keys are to make sure a solar dealer tells you exactly how their charges break down between materials and installation, and if possible to find a distributor who will sell solar panels to you directly at a better price than you can get from a solar dealer.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

The good news is that there are always online distributors slashing their prices on their overstocked inventory. Because solar panels are becoming more and more efficient, distributors will frequently scramble to clear out their "old" panels to make room for new, highly anticipated lines of more efficient solar panels coming from the manufacturers.

Here's a list of a few online dealers who can offer discounted solar panels:

- Solar-sphere.com
- Wholesalesolar.com
- Solarelectricsupply.com
- Affordable-solar.com
- Mrsolar.com

NEGOTIATION TIPS WITH SOLAR DEALERS

Before you inform your solar dealer that you are considering supplying the panels and inverters yourself, wait for him to give you a full bid. That way, he will be pretty much locked into the installation costs that they've quoted you. If you tell them about your plans up front, they may load up the installation side of their charges and lower the materials cost so that they can make a better profit off of you.

Once you've told a solar dealer that you may be supplying panels and inverters yourself for him to install, he will probably tell you that he can obtain those items for less money. He



may be correct, but if you've found a deal for panels that are less expensive than the ones he is offering, tell him that if he won't install them for you, you'll find someone else who will.

Another way that a dealer might try to persuade you to buy panels and inverters from him is through a guarantee scare. He'll guarantee the wiring and installation of the panels, but he might tell you that his warranty won't cover any problems with the panels themselves. If you've acquired reliable panels, that shouldn't be a problem for you.

FIND COMPONENTS ONLINE

If you are fortunate enough to have a solar retailer within driving distance, go there in person and talk to one of the floor sales reps. They should be knowledgeable about the pros and cons of the various panels they sell, and should be able to point you in the right direction to find a solar dealer to install the system for you.

Otherwise, you will probably have to do some Internet searching if you're choosing to buy the balance of system (BOS) components yourself. There are numerous online solar BOS retailers available, but check them out thoroughly through the Better Business Bureau and through customer reviews to find the most reputable ones. If you're paying for new panels, make sure you're not getting used ones.

Warranties and power tolerances are also very important. A common guarantee is 90 percent of the rated power for 10 years and 80 percent of the power for 25 years. A 200-watt solar panel with a power tolerance of plus or minus 10 percent means that the panel may produce 10 percent less than its nameplate rating of 200 watts.

An inverter is another component where you may be able to realize big savings. Larger inverters are more readily available now than previously, so most residential systems will require only one central string inverter. Most grid-tied inverters fail between years 10 and 15, so try to find the longest warranty possible. Don't forget to keep shipping charges in mind.

If you're confused about anything in a manufacturer's offering, call them. They want your business and should be willing to do whatever it takes to get it, including answering all of your questions.

A few top-selling solar PV panel manufacturers are:

- Sharp Solar
- Sanyo
- Kyocera
- SunPower
- Canadian Solar
- Suntech

A few top-selling solar PV inverter manufacturers are:

- SMA America
- Fronius International
- PV Powered
- Xantrex
- Enphase Energy
- Sollectria

Assuming you're willing to put in the time to find deals on solar panels and inverters, the "Buy Components Wholesale/Contractor Install" strategy might be the best way for you to save money on your solar project. ■



Your Solar Discount Secrets Include the DIY Method

FROM THE JULY 2016 EDITION

This is the last in a series of three articles regarding how to start using the sun to power your home at discounted prices.

In the first two articles of this series on “My Solar Discount Secrets,” I provided tips for homeowners who have decided to go solar but who want to do it at discounted prices. The focus in the first article was on purchasing a manufactured solar panel system from a solar dealer. The second article was about buying your components wholesale and having a contractor install them. This article focuses on buying your system wholesale and installing it yourself.

This third option is similar to the second in that you need to shop for the best prices in solar components. But there is more work involved in learning how to install the solar system yourself.

The easiest way to accomplish this option is to purchase a “turn-key solar system,” acquiring all the components necessary to successfully install a fully functional solar system from one vendor. There are several places you can find turn-key systems that already have inverters and other components that match the power produced from the solar panels, but it is your responsibility to ensure that your system meets local building codes.

DANGERS

For adventurous and handy homeowners, the complete do-it-yourself option is very appealing. Keep in mind that wiring solar panels on a roof requires heavy lifting of panels up a tall ladder, laboring in an environment that can be hot and working for sustained periods in elevated spaces.

There is always risk when doing work on a roof, but with a solar PV system you add the extra element of dealing with high voltages. You must be aware of the potential risks when choosing to install your solar system.

That said, there are some substantial savings that you can realize by installing a system yourself, assuming you do it correctly. While you may not be able to save much on the rail and the various hardware pieces needed to fasten panels to the roof's substrate, you will save on labor costs.

Due to the inherent dangers of installing a solar system, the insurance is quite high for a solar dealer. Couple this with the fact that solar system installation is demanding work. For a full day's work with three installers, you can expect to be billed at least \$500 a day for labor alone. Assuming that the solar installation will take a crew of three installers three days, you are looking at \$1,500 in labor costs that you may be able to avoid by installing the system yourself.

When attempting to do the installation yourself, you should adhere to these four steps: get educated, check your local rebates, check your local codes and examine your roof.

GET EDUCATED

There are several sources you can tap into to receive proper training to install your solar system. Sources such as Power4Patriots (www.Power4Patriots.com) that offer detailed, step-by-step instructions are key. In addition, more and more community colleges and universities are offering courses designed

around renewable energy systems. By enrolling, you can gain valuable insight into your solar system and save time during the self-installation.

CHECK YOUR LOCAL REBATES

Some of the various rebate programs nationwide require you to select a solar dealer from their list of approved dealers. The savings seen by installing a system yourself in some cases are wiped away by the loss of rebates.

Also, a federal tax credit of 30 percent is currently available for U.S. filers who have recently installed a solar system. This is referred to as the federal investment tax credit, or ITC. The 30 percent credit is applied to the total cost of the system, installation included. That means that whatever you are quoted by your solar dealer for the installation, you will get 30 percent of that back when you do your taxes (in addition to 30 percent of everything else). For example, if you are charged \$10,000 for the installation, your net cost is only \$7,000 after the federal ITC.

CHECK YOUR LOCAL CODES

One of the more popular options for the complete do-it-yourselfer is to purchase a full "turn-key" solar system, which can be bought with all of the various components needed, right down to the nuts and bolts. All you need to do is determine what size system you desire based upon your electrical usage. They will bundle everything together for you, including the panels, inverters, rail, wire, etc. This is typically a little more expensive than buying all of the components separately, but it can save you time by simplifying the process.

One thing these turn-key kits can't account for, however, is the local codes that must be addressed. Some jurisdictions are stricter than others and may require more disconnect switches, thicker gauged wire, etc. Checking

with your local inspectors is a great way to ensure that you will have everything up to code when they are called. If you are planning to tie into the local power grid, even if you are very knowledgeable regarding electricity, most jurisdictions require you to retain the service of a master electrician when dealing with the AC distribution panel.

EXAMINE ROOF

If you plan on doing the installation yourself, you shouldn't have any problems climbing onto your roof to check the shape of the shingles and roof. A visual inspection from the inside of the attic is a good idea, if possible. Check for the structural integrity of the rafters or trusses, as these will be your support for dead weight and uplift from the panels.

CONCLUSION

When deciding which of the three options to pursue when going solar, the first thing you should do is check local rebates. If they require that you work with an approved dealer, you may want to avoid climbing on your roof. If no strings are attached to rebates, invite solar dealers to your home to begin the bidding process. Even if you choose to do everything yourself, their expertise could help save you time and money.

The great news is, regardless how you go about doing it, going solar will save you money. How much money you save will be determined by how much you personally want to get involved in the project. ■

WATER AND AIR

In recent years, 4Patriots has greatly expanded its product offerings. That expansion has included both water and air purification systems. Why? Because what you can't see can kill you. Here are some articles on these subjects, including information about unseen water and air contaminants.

Why Do We Need 8 Glasses of Water a Day?

FROM THE DECEMBER 2014 EDITION

How much water should we drink each day? For as long as I can remember, the answer has been eight glasses per day. But is it really necessary to drink that much? On the other hand, are eight glasses a day enough?

The definitive answer from the world-famous Mayo Clinic is...it all depends. How much water you need each day to stay healthy depends on a variety of factors including your current health condition, how active you are and where you live.

We all lose water every day through urine, bowel movements, perspiration and even our breath. Drinking water is the primary way to replace what we've lost, although we can also accomplish the task by eating foods containing water. An average of 20 percent of the fluids we take in each day come from food. When we don't replace the water we've lost, our bodies don't function as well as they should.



Most of us probably don't drink eight glasses of water per day, and even fewer of us count the glasses we drink. Generally speaking, most of us drink water when we're thirsty. Many beverages contain water, including milk, juice and coffee, so we might get more water than we think. But as we age, we have a diminished sense of thirst, so maybe we don't always get what we need.

Understanding the science behind why it's important to drink plenty of water each day might influence us to drink more. Here are some things to consider:

- The water inside you, making up about 60 percent of your body, helps your circulation, creates saliva, helps digest your food, helps maintain body temperature and moves nutrients to where they should be. Drinking plenty of water maintains the proper balance of fluids your body needs.
- Drinking water can lower your calorie intake and reduce your weight. This occurs when you're thirsty (drinking water instead of beverages with calories) and when you're hungry (drinking more water than usual and eating less food, or eating food with high water content).
- Drinking water can energize your muscles. Your cells need a good balance of fluids and electrolytes. When they don't get it, you experience muscle fatigue. It's especially important to drink plenty of water before and during exercise.
- Drinking water helps your skin look better. When people start to get dehydrated, you can see it in their skin, which appears dry and wrinkled. Your skin absorbs the water you drink and acts as a barrier to fluid loss.
- Drinking water helps your kidneys function properly. Your kidneys do a great job of getting rid of toxins in your body if enough water is flowing through them. Help your kidneys do their job by drinking plenty of fluids.
- Drinking water helps your bowels function normally. Without enough fluids, constipation will occur. The combination of fiber in your diet and plenty of fluids should keep your bowels functioning properly.

So, the bottom line is drink more water. Your muscles, skin, kidneys and bowels will thank you. ■

You're Drinking Dangerously Contaminated Tap Water Every Day; Here's What You Can Do to Save Your Health

FROM THE APRIL 2016 EDITION

For the past several years, we've been hearing about the lack of clean drinking water in California. Every year it gets worse, with more and more communities rationing water. Some are even resorting to establishing special phone numbers homeowners can use

to report others for watering their lawns too often or for too long.

The Southwest has also been a drought victim in recent years. Lengthy dry spells and intense heat in states such as Texas, Arizona, New

Mexico and others have people starting to wonder how long their clean water is going to hold out.

But the West and Southwest are hardly the only places in the United States where accessing clean drinking water is becoming a serious problem. While precipitation in the Midwest and Northeast has remained fairly constant and sufficient, other issues have raised their ugly heads. Chief among them has been water contamination.

The levels of lead found in cities such as Flint, Michigan, are dangerously high and have resulted in outcries from understandably upset parents of children who are now likely to suffer long-term effects from drinking it over the past year or so. Sebring, Ohio, is another town where lead levels in the water are too high, and many people think that these two cities are just the tips of the iceberg. We're bound to hear about many more cases of dangerous lead levels in the near future.

Some of the most recent concerns about water contamination are emanating from New Jersey and New York, where perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA) is being discovered at higher levels than ever before in drinking water. This man-made chemical, used in the manufacture of non-stick cooking pans, waterproof clothing, stain-resistant carpets and other products, has been found everywhere from the fish in the Delaware River to polar bears in the Arctic.

Considered "likely" to cause cancer, PFOA has been found in numerous drinking water systems in New Jersey and New York at levels high enough to cause potential health problems. Among those who are upset about this situation is the deputy director of the Delaware Riverkeeper Network, Tracy Carluccio.

"This stuff (PFOA) doesn't belong in our water," Carluccio said. "Chemical companies put it there, scientists and health experts say it



has bad health effects, including cancer, and it is especially dangerous for the unborn and children.”

PFOA has been linked to kidney and testicular cancer, as well as high cholesterol, ulcerative colitis, thyroid disease, pregnancy-induced hypertension and other illnesses. There are also probable links to low birth weight and decreased immune responses. Incredibly, PFOA is among the many contaminants that are not regulated by federal and state governments.

OTHER CONTAMINATION CAUSES

And, of course, there are the accidental spills that have contaminated water in places such as West Virginia and Colorado. Even the Environmental Protection Agency, which is quick to jump all over people and companies when they contaminate water, was the cause of a massive contamination of the Animas River in Colorado last year.

The EPA allowed an estimated 1 million gallons of wastewater to spill out of an abandoned gold mine in the southern part of Colorado, releasing amounts of heavy metals such as iron, zinc and copper that were so high they turned the river yellow.

Here’s the biggest problem with water in America. Everybody hears about the high-profile cases in Flint, West Virginia and Colorado, but then they think, “Sure glad I don’t live there.” But guess what? It’s just a matter of time before your city or your state becomes a high-profile case.

And even if it never does, it’s very likely you already have high levels of dangerous contaminants in the water system that serves your town. Just because the EPA decides that it’s OK to have certain “acceptable” levels of contaminants in your tap water doesn’t mean

that’s it’s really OK. It doesn’t mean that you and your family are going to remain healthy in the long run by drinking the water that comes out of your faucets.

Here’s a perfect example. The EPA tells us that 0.04 parts per billion of perfluorooctanoic acid are safe for you to drink. But researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health and the University of Massachusetts-Lowell tell us something very different.

They claim in a recent scientific journal that the drinking water standard should be as low as 0.001 parts per billion of perfluorooctanoic acid. That’s 40 times lower than the New Jersey standard and 400 times lower than the current federal advisory standard. That’s a huge difference, folks.

And if that’s the case for perfluorooctanoic acid, it’s probably the case for many other contaminants that have infiltrated our drinking water throughout the United States. As bad as it is to learn you’re drinking contaminated water, as people in Flint and elsewhere have learned, it’s even more dangerous to be drinking contaminated water and not know it because you’ll just continue to drink it until you suffer serious health consequences.

With all that’s been learned about contaminants in our drinking water in this country, I think it’s safe – not to mention smart – to assume that your tap water contains dangerous contaminants. It’s time to start purifying every single drop of water that you drink or use for cooking.

CONCLUSION

The water that comes out of your taps at home is contaminated in some form or another. The government might tell you that the levels of contamination are safe, but do you trust everything the government tells you? Take action now before it’s too late. ■

Which Contaminants Are Lurking in Your Home's Air?

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2017 EDITION

How is the air quality in your neck of the woods? Obviously it's better in some areas of the U.S. than in others. Generally speaking, air is safer and easier to breathe the farther away one is from a metropolitan area.

Regardless of where you live, a more important question is, how is the air quality inside your home? After all, that's where Americans spend 90 percent of their time, on average.



AIR POLLUTION WORSE INDOORS THAN OUTDOORS

A recent report cited by KCWY-TV in Casper, Wyoming claims that some air pollutants can be five times higher indoors than outdoors. A large portion of those pollutants comes from cleaning supplies, which contain volatile organic compounds. Other common indoor pollutants include commercial paints, mold and stoves, which give off nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide and formaldehyde.

These invisible toxins in the air inside homes and offices can cause a wide variety of problems for people, including cold symptoms, chest tightness, wheezing, coughing, headaches, fatigue, anxiety, depression, insomnia, allergies and more.

Unfortunately, the “more” includes black mold spores that can cause fungal lung infections; antibiotic-resistant viruses, including H1N1 influenza, SARS and tuberculosis; bacteria that weakens the immune system; asbestos, known to cause an aggressive form of lung cancer; chemicals including formaldehyde; and fecal bacteria.

MAKE SURE YOUR HOUSE CAN ‘BREATHE’

Just as cold air permeates dwellings during the winter and hot air during the summer – causing furnaces and air conditioners to get to work – air pollution penetrates indoors. Joseph Allen, professor of exposure

assessment science at Harvard University, says the majority of pollution exposure occurs inside schools, homes and workplaces.

Exposure to air pollution has been linked to a wide variety of serious health concerns. According to the latest findings from the American Lung Association, 40 percent of Americans live in states that have unhealthy levels of air pollution. The World Health Organization estimates that 4.3 million people lost their lives due to indoor air pollution in 2012.

A significant trend in home building in recent years has been to make houses as energy efficient as possible. That means, in part, keeping cold air out to reduce the amount of time a furnace needs to run, and keeping hot air out to reduce the amount of time an air conditioner needs to run.

That's all well and good for lowering one's utility bills, but when a house can't "breathe," it's bad for indoor air quality. With energy efficient houses, indoor toxins can't escape as easily. Expect to see some changes in green houses in coming years that will allow them to breathe without sacrificing much in the way of insulation.

AIR QUALITY AFFECTS LEARNING

Connecticut state officials have encouraged school districts to actively promote healthy

environments in their schools, including implementing indoor air quality programs for the health of students, faculty and administration members, according to a recent article in the *Connecticut Post*.

Because indoor air quality affects people's health and children's ability to think and learn – something that homeschoolers should think about – it's good to see schools in Connecticut taking this subject seriously and taking action to improve the air quality in their buildings.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Regardless of whether your dwelling is new, old or somewhere in between, there is a very good chance that the quality of the air you breathe on a regular basis is not what it should be. It might not be noticeable, but it is probably affecting your health.

Investing in an air purification system is a good idea that will probably improve your overall health. There are a number of products on the market for this, but make sure the one you purchase can remove 99-plus percent of dangerous airborne contaminants, including allergens, dander, bacteria, viruses and odors. It should also remove embedded odors from carpet, upholstery and drapery.

Make sure it's quiet and lightweight, is reasonably priced and comes with a great guarantee. Then you will definitely breathe easier. ■

HEALTHCARE

Even before the first person signed up for the Affordable Care Act, we were one of the voices declaring that it was going to turn into a nightmare. Sure enough, it did. Yes, more people have health insurance than previously, but at what cost? We were told that ObamaCare would reduce health insurance costs for the average family of four by about \$2,500 annually. That was just one of the lies that was told to help get the legislation passed, but it's one that still sticks in our minds today.

“Train Wreck” a Nice Way to Refer to ObamaCare

FROM THE DECEMBER 2013 EDITION

I have a relative who doesn't like the taste of fish. She won't eat any kind of fish. Ever. Occasionally one of her family members or friends will try to convince her to taste salmon or mahi mahi with a comment such as, “Come on, try it. It doesn't taste like fish.”

To which my relative will reply, “If the very best thing you can say about a piece of fish is that it doesn't taste like fish, what does that tell you about the taste of fish?”

Even if you like the taste of fish, you have to admit she makes a good point.

I feel the same way about ObamaCare. If the very best thing anyone can say about ObamaCare is that it will eventually get better, what does that tell you about ObamaCare? This healthcare legislation has frequently been compared to a train wreck. I

wish that were true because train wrecks can eventually be cleaned up. Despite what we've been told, ObamaCare will never get better. In fact, it will get worse. Much worse.

The negative effects of ObamaCare are just beginning to be felt and already they are disastrous. Every day there's another headline in the news about the outrageous costs associated with ObamaCare. Businesses and employees are already suffering from ObamaCare and its ridiculous, unrealistic demands, and state budgets are not far behind.

And this is just the tip of the iceberg, friends. Businesses will continue to downgrade employees from fulltime to part-time status or fire them altogether because they won't be able to afford to pay for their employees' health insurance coverage. (By the way, this



is exactly what Obama wants to happen, but more on that later.)

Unemployment will go up due to these changes, and the overall economy will suffer, right at a time when we need it to improve more than ever. Eventually, the states that allow themselves to become dependent upon federal government assistance for Medicaid will find that help dwindling. They'll have no choice but to declare bankruptcy.

And here's a question that I have not yet heard answered properly. If ObamaCare is so great, why are federal government employees and those in Congress tripping over each other to exempt themselves from it? If it's so wonderful, why wouldn't they want it for themselves?

The answer is obvious. ObamaCare isn't so great. It isn't wonderful. It's a nightmare and anyone with an ounce of common sense realizes that this travesty is going to ruin businesses and working families. In fact, if I wanted to try to destroy America and Americans financially, ObamaCare might be a good place to start.

Back to my comment about Obama and his strategy. This man is not stupid. He has repeatedly proven that he wants government

to control everything, and a big part of his plan involves making it impossible for employers to offer insurance to their employees. That way, those employees will be forced to purchase their insurance from government-controlled sources. Soon the U.S. will reach Obama's goal of socialized medicine.

It has been proven over and over again that socialism in any form does not work. Not only does it not work, it rips apart the fabric of a nation. Winston Churchill summed it up very well when he said, "Socialism is a philosophy of failure, the creed of ignorance, and the gospel of envy, its inherent virtue is the equal sharing of misery." But that's what Obama wants for America, as he has displayed with his "redistribution of wealth" initiatives.

When Obama and his people proposed ObamaCare, they promised two things. One was that more people would have health insurance coverage. The other was that costs would go down. There's no doubt that transitioning to socialized medicine will ensure that more people have insurance. It's estimated that the implementation of ObamaCare will eventually result in the percentage of Americans having health insurance rising from about 84 percent to approximately 95 percent.

But the second promise – that costs will go down because people will be able to pick and choose plans from competitive, state-sponsored exchanges – is nothing short of a blatant lie. Providing approximately 15 million people with insurance that they did not previously have means that more money has to be spent. Nothing could be more obvious. This is the biggest “Duh” statement of all time.

It’s estimated that about \$400 billion in new taxes and fees will be required to pay for ObamaCare over the next 10 years. Does that sound like the fulfillment of Obama’s 2008 campaign promise that his healthcare legislation would save the average American family \$2,500 per year? Of course not. But it does sound like another one of his lies.

And Obama and his minions can’t sit back and claim that they didn’t realize that costs would rise. Prior to the passage of ObamaCare, we had the perfect prototype for ObamaCare in the Massachusetts Health Connector (MHC). Overseen by then-Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, MHC resulted in both a significant rise in the number of people who were able to gain health insurance AND a significant rise in costs.

In fact, Massachusetts has experienced a rise in health insurance costs of more than \$4 billion since the MHC was instituted in 2006. A total of 20,000 jobs were lost thanks to the establishment of the MHC, and the average Massachusetts family of four now pays the highest health insurance premiums in the nation. The template was right there, plain as day, for everyone to see. But Congress ignored it.

Do you remember a statement that presidential candidate Obama made in 2008 during the beginning of his war on coal? He correctly stated that if he were elected president, electricity costs would soar because of the environmental laws he would sign restricting the use of coal as an energy source.

It was not a popular statement with many people in this country, but at least he was honest about his intentions.

Obama should also have been honest from the beginning about his healthcare legislation. He should have said something along the lines of, “As a moral society, we cannot have people suffering from illnesses and injuries because they can’t afford health insurance. We all have to step up and pay for healthcare for those who can’t afford it. It will cost each family more than what they’re currently paying for health insurance, but that’s what we need to do. It’s the right thing to do.”

Had Obama said something like that, I might not have agreed with him, but at least I would have respected him for honestly spelling out what he was trying to accomplish. I guess he learned from his statement about soaring electricity costs that honesty doesn’t pay. He knew that if he were forthright about the effects of his healthcare legislation, ObamaCare would not have passed. So, instead he lied about it and claimed that costs would go down. And the most remarkable thing about it is that Congress and the Supreme Court apparently believed him. Simply mindboggling.

How severe is the disagreement in Congress about ObamaCare? Well, it was the primary decisive issue in the partial government shutdown that lasted 16 days in October. The Republican-led House of Representatives kept putting language into the Continuing Appropriations Resolution of 2014 that would have delayed or defunded ObamaCare, while the Democrat-led Senate kept taking it out. The impasse led to the shutdown.

If ObamaCare remains the law of the land and wreaks the havoc with businesses and employees that I think it will, the Congressional elections of November 2014 could be very interesting. Voters are going to remember who supported ObamaCare and who wanted to get rid of it. ■

You and Your Family Need a Medical Preparation Plan

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2016 EDITION

One of the scariest aspects of a post-disaster scenario is the lack of medical care we may be able to access. Clinics and hospitals might not be functional if the electrical grid goes down, and even if they are, they will be short staffed and overloaded with patients.

If we're suddenly cast into crisis mode, we're going to wish we had kept up with all our doctor's and dentist's appointments. We're also going to lament the fact that any medicines we take on a regular basis will run out all too soon. And if we haven't put together an extensive first-aid kit, we're going to wish we had a lot more medical supplies than we do.

Fortunately, the stuff has not yet hit the fan. There is still time to prepare for this possibility, but that time is now. You and your family need a medical preparation strategy to go along with all your planning for emergency food, water, clothes and other essential items.

Here are some of the steps you can take to be as prepared as possible:

Ask your doctor for "advances" on your medications.

Explain to him or her your interest in preparedness

and your desire to have at least three months' worth of medications in hand. Assuming none of those meds have expiration dates shorter than that, there's no reason why you could not do this with most medications. There's no telling how long a crisis will last, but entering that situation with three months' worth of medications sure beats three weeks' worth.

Build a substantial first-aid kit. Think about all the pills and treatments you and your family members use on occasion now, and stock up on each. This can range from acetaminophen, ibuprofen and aspirin to cold and allergy meds, antacids, anti-diarrheal pills and vitamins. Don't forget to include bandages, gauze, medical tape, burn ointment, splints and cotton balls.

Store them the right way. With items such as bandages, how you store them is not particularly important, although you should keep moisture away from them. But medications are different, and if they are exposed to too much air, extreme temperatures and sunlight, it's possible they could lose some of their potency. When possible, keep them in sturdy storage boxes to protect them from the elements.

Plan to keep it cool.

Do you or any



of your family members take medications that require refrigeration? That could be a big problem if the grid goes down and an even bigger problem if you have to bug out rather than hunker down at home. Insulin is an example of a med that needs to be kept between 36-46 degrees Fahrenheit. But some newer types don't require that, and may be worth looking into. Either way you should own a solar-powered generator.

Practice basic first-aid techniques.

There's a good chance medical help might be unavailable during a crisis, so the more you can do for yourself or your family members, the better. Maybe you can't perform surgery, but by taking a first-aid training course, you'll be able to do a lot more than you might think. It will be worth your time, even if a major crisis never occurs.

Keep comprehensive paperwork. Your bug-out bag should include documentation for every family member's health history and current medications. Even if you have

everything memorized, you might not be around when someone needs to access that information to help one of your family members, so be sure to include it.

Learn local disaster plans. The more self-sufficient you are, the greater the chances that you won't need any relief from government agencies. But it's better to know what they offer and not need it than it is to not know what they offer and then need it. Find out where emergency shelters are located and what they plan to offer in terms of medical assistance in case of a disaster.

Plan to help others. You and your family members are your top priority when it comes to dealing with a crisis. But if you have neighbors who are unlikely to be able to help themselves in that type of situation, you might want to include them in your plans. Find out in advance what they might require in terms of medical help in an emergency. ■

Reducing Sodium Intake Might Just Save Your Life

FROM THE NOVEMBER 2016 EDITION

A whopping 90 percent of Americans consume too much sodium, a leading cause of high blood pressure and a short step to heart disease and stroke. Putting away your saltshaker forever will likely do little to help.

That's because most of the sodium in our diets comes not from the saltshaker, but from processed and prepared foods. Sodium is added to almost all processed foods for a variety of reasons. It is used to control microbial growth, which causes food to spoil

and make us ill. Sodium is also used for flavor, texture, leavening and fermentation.

We know by their taste that certain processed foods add significantly to our sodium intake – pizza, sandwiches, deli meats, pasta dishes, snacks, breads and rolls, for example. However, there are also processed foods that don't taste salty but are high in sodium. Cake mixes, bagels, cereals and ketchup can be surprisingly high in sodium.



WHAT'S IN A NAME?

By the way, there is a difference between salt and sodium, even though we might use the words interchangeably in casual conversation.

The salt we sprinkle on a meal is a crystal compound that is 60 percent chloride and 40 percent sodium. Sodium is a mineral found in salt. Salt is how sodium is most often consumed. Between personal consumption and the salt added to processed food, about 95 percent of the sodium in our diets comes in the form of salt.

Sodium can occur naturally in foods, including celery, beets and milk. As a food ingredient, sodium – whether from salt or other sodium-containing ingredients – has many uses, such as a thickening agent, flavor enhancer or preservative.

HOW BAD IS IT FOR YOU?

Americans consume on average 3,400 milligrams (mg) of sodium daily – almost 50 percent more than the 2,300 mg limit

recommended by federal guidelines. The problem starts early. Most children and adolescents eat more than is recommended, ranging from 2,900 mg per day for children ages 6 to 10 to 3,700 mg per day for kids ages 14 to 18. High blood pressure affects one in 10 children.

Too much sodium can raise blood pressure, a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke. One in three American adults has high blood pressure, a number that increases to almost one in two for African-American adults. We are more likely to develop high blood pressure as we get older.

The science supporting the relationship between sodium reduction and health is clear. When sodium intake increases, blood pressure increases, and high blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart disease and stroke – two leading causes of death in the U.S. In some studies, researchers have estimated that lowering U.S. sodium intake by about 40 percent over the next decade could save 500,000 lives and nearly \$100 billion in healthcare costs.

WE'RE NOT ALONE

The United States is not alone in this effort. There are 75 countries working to reduce sodium intake, and 39 have set sodium target levels for one or more processed foods. The World Health Organization has recommended a global reduction in sodium intake that is similar to U.S. levels.

The U.S. food industry has already responded with no-sodium versions of certain products aimed at health-conscious consumers. The goal of the FDA guidelines is lower sodium versions across the board. As for flavor, it is believed most people don't notice a 10 to 15 percent reduction in sodium. Manufacturers can compensate with different blends of herbs and spices.

When it comes to reducing sodium and the health risks, there are steps we can take immediately at the supermarket:

1. Buy fresh vegetables or frozen versions without sauce. When buying canned vegetables, look for versions with no salt added.
2. Use fresh poultry, fish, pork and lean meat, rather than canned or processed meats. Check the packaging to see if saline or a salt solution has been added.
3. Look for low sodium, lower sodium, reduced sodium or no salt added versions of products.
4. Limit your use of sauces, mixes and "instant" products, including flavored rice and ready-made pasta.
5. Compare the Nutrition Facts labels on food packages for Percent Daily Value or amount of sodium in milligrams.

To reduce your sodium when you are eating out at a restaurant:

1. Check online for nutritional information

A CHEMICAL TRIFECTA

Disodium Inosinate, Disodium Guanylate and Monosodium Glutamate (MSG) are the savory threesome of processed food ingredients. All three chemicals are considered flavor enhancers. That is, they boost flavors already present in food without imparting their own separate flavor.

Disodium Inosinate and Disodium Guanylate are ineffective without the presence of glutamic acid, a component of MSG. If Disodium Inosinate or Disodium Guanylate is listed as an ingredient and MSG is not, it is possible that glutamic acid is provided as part of another ingredient or is naturally occurring in another ingredient such as tomatoes, parmesan cheese or yeast extract.

All three are naturally occurring and also can be manufactured. Disodium Inosinate is found in beef, pork, chicken and fish. It can also be manufactured from tapioca starch. Disodium Guanylate is found in pork, chicken, fish and mushrooms. MSG, first created in 1908 from seaweed, also occurs naturally in yeast and hydrolyzed vegetable protein. It is created through the fermentation of starch, sugar beets, sugar cane or molasses in a process similar to that used to make yogurt, vinegar and wine.

before you go if you are eating at a chain restaurant or fast-food outlet. Some independent restaurants also post this on their websites.

2. Ask the server for information about the amount of sodium in a dish. Some menus include this information.
3. Ask that no salt be added to your food.
4. Sauces and dressings can be hidden sodium sources. Ask for these toppings on the side and use them sparingly. ■



Ignore These Eight First-Aid Myths *What to Put in Your First-Aid Kit Instead*

FROM THE JANUARY 2017 EDITION

In times of major crises, it's every man for himself. It could take hours, even days, for professional medical help to arrive if you're physically harmed. Therefore, it's key that you know how to attend to your own medical needs.

For starters, let's fact check eight widely believed first-aid myths. Not only are they unhelpful, some are downright harmful. Here's what NOT to do:

1. Use Butter or Ice for a Burn –

Absolutely not. Mark this down as an old wives' tale. The butter will make it difficult

for doctors to treat the burn later, and ice will only make the damage worse. Be sure to pour cool water over the burn and check in with your doctor.

2. Booze Will Prevent Hypothermia –

This might seem to work for the actors in the movies, but it's completely false. Alcohol does nothing to the temperature of your body. Because it impairs your judgment, you can become so inebriated that you no longer feel the cold. But that's about it. If you're looking to fight the cold, consider drinking something hot.

3. Pee on a Jellyfish Sting – Instead of easing the pain of a sting, urine can do quite the opposite - making the sting much worse. Experts say you should remove the stinger. Then rinse the area with saltwater and apply vinegar or a baking soda paste (with sea water) for about 20 minutes. Then take a hot shower. To relieve the pain, you can apply calamine lotion or a mild hydrocortisone to the affected area. Some also use oral antihistamine for relief.

4. Use Peroxide and Let It Breathe – How often have you been told to put peroxide on a cut and then just let it “air out?” Studies show this isn’t the wisest action to take. Some experts say peroxide does more harm than good. There are cells in your body that fend off germs and bacteria trying to enter the wound. But some authorities say peroxide kills these cells. Stick to soap and water to clean the wound. Then add antibiotic ointment and bandage the affected area. The quicker you protect the wound, the less likely dirt can infect it. Be sure to change the bandage twice a day.

5. If Something Is in Your Eye, Just Rub It – Some people have the idea that if you rub your eyes, tears will wash out anything that’s in your eyes. What they’re forgetting is that the rubbing can cause irritation or a serious scratch. It’s always best to rinse the eye out with water.

6. Use Home Remedies for Allergic Reactions to Bee Stings – No, no, no. If someone is having an allergic reaction to a bee sting, the longer you play doctor, the longer his or her life is at risk. Take him or her to the physician immediately. If you notice breathing complications, call 911.

7. A Raw Steak on a Bruised Eye – Save your steaks for a nice dinner. You’d be better off grabbing any bag of frozen vegetables. The goal is to put something cold on a bruised eye, while also making sure it’s clean. Raw meat can carry E. coli.

16 ITEMS FOR YOUR FIRST-AID KIT

Now that you know which myths to steer clear from, let’s take a quick glance at what you can do. For starters, make sure you have the right supplies nearby so you can face emergencies head on. Here’s a list of 16 must-haves to include in your first-aid kit:

1. Sterile gauze pads
2. First-aid manual
3. Soap
4. Antiseptic wipes
5. Tweezers
6. Safety pins
7. Antibiotic ointment
8. Instant cold packs (disposable)
9. Adhesive tape
10. Calamine lotion
11. Flashlight
12. A list of emergency numbers
13. Plastic gloves (non-latex)
14. A bottle of water
15. Band-Aids
16. Sharp scissors

The last thing you want with your black eye is an eye infection.

8. Head Injury? By All Means Stay Awake – And last but not least... Many are told to stay awake if they have an injury to their head. But this does absolutely nothing to treat the injury. It is, however, important that someone keeps an eye on the injured person. ■

Hiking for Basic Health Benefits and Survival

FROM THE MAY 2017 EDITION

Who would be most physically and mentally prepared for a crisis... the person who stays fit and constantly challenges his cognitive abilities or the person who sits on the couch and does nothing?

With that same logic, you can see why hiking is great preparation for surviving a crisis. But aside from being in better physical shape, there are many other reasons why hiking will give you a slight edge should you find yourself in a life-threatening situation.

The next time you go on a hike, consider it your “survival boot camp.” Be sure to pay attention to these seven key things:

1. Identifying Plants. There are two sides to nature. Just because something is natural doesn’t mean it’s good for you. It’s essential to know the difference between poison ivy and a four-leaf clover. Even more important, it’s key that you identify which plants are edible – such as berries. You might need some if you’re stranded in a crisis. Some berries can be deadly, so



being able to accurately identify plants is vital. And a hiking trip is a perfect time to exercise this discernment.

2. Learn How to Tip-Toe. A great thing to practice while hiking is running quietly. Why? For one, if you see a threatening animal, you won't want to alert it to your movement. Also, another very real possibility is that you might be in an "every man for himself" situation. In other words, you might be ducking other humans if you find yourself in an end-of-the-world crisis. This is something you can easily practice with your buddies during a hiking trip. The key to running quietly is to not run on your heels.

3. What to Wear (and Not Wear). There's a reason soldiers wear camouflage. It helps to hide them from enemies. This will also work to your benefit with dangerous animals and threatening people. Use wisdom. Depending on the season, you may want to do the exact opposite. For example, if it's hunting season, you probably don't want to blend in with a deer. During this season, wear very bright and noticeable colors.

4. Know Your Limits. There's nothing like trying to perform without having any preparation. No one performs excellently on "game day" without first practicing. Think of hiking as your practice... your fire drill. You need to know your limits. In the case of an emergency, you're going to carry a pack filled with things you'll need for safety and endurance, so have that pack with you on your hiking trip.

5. I Spy Animal Footprints. The average person is probably not overly sensitive to animal prints while taking a casual stroll. Be very cautious and aware of things like that. There could be anything from a deer to a bear around the corner. Observing animal footprints might be equally important if you find yourself forced to hunt for food.

6. Carry Protection. Whenever you're on a hike, keep protection on you. We don't necessarily mean a gun, but bear spray could work. Unless you are superhuman, you're probably not going to win a wrestling match with a bear. Keep your wits about you. And while you're at it, practice using some of your bag's survival gear.

7. See Something, Say Something. If you see a threatening animal such as a snake, say something so others will know, then avoid it. Unless you've become a snake breed expert, it's best to steer clear. Keep in mind that sometimes there's only a slight difference in appearance between a harmless snake and a poisonous one. Also, just because a snake isn't poisonous, doesn't mean it doesn't bite or can't kill by crushing someone. ■

5 ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN YOUR HIKING TRAVEL PACK

1. Compass. Practice using a compass during your hike. It'll come in handy when you're facing a real-life emergency.

2. Map. In the event your compass breaks, a tried-and-true map is the way to go.

3. Binoculars. Use these to scope out areas from afar.

4. Whistle. If you are with a group of people and get split up, use a whistle. There will likely be no cellphone signal in the middle of nowhere.

5. First-Aid Kit. In a crisis, there's no such thing as "sitting this one out." If you get hurt, you have to keep going. There's no option to go home and rest.

Exercises to Help You Stay Fit After 60

FROM THE AUGUST 2017 EDITION

No matter your age, fitness is important. And it becomes even more important as the years go by. Fitness keeps the mind alert and sharp, strengthens the immune system and leads to longer life. So, what do you do when your body starts to slow down a bit?

You keep moving and find exercises catered to your condition. When hitting your 60s, the body is more prone to getting injured. But exercise helps to stop injury before it happens.

Think of your body as a car. If you don't keep up with the maintenance of your vehicle, it is bound to fall apart. Even worse, you run the risk of getting into an accident. That's how the body reacts when you lack proper exercise, especially in your senior years.

You'll notice that senior citizens who are vibrant and healthy also exercise. The perfect combo includes cardio, muscle training, stretching and balance.

Here are five exercises to cover all four of those bases:

Exercise #1: Ballroom/Salsa/Line Dancing. Dancing makes for great exercise. You can find all types of dance classes in your area by searching online. The best thing about these classes is that they are group activities. Since you'll be meeting with a group of people, everyone can serve as accountability partners. Even better, dancing is fun. Some of the most popular dance classes include ballroom, salsa and line dancing.

Exercise #2: Muscle Training. Work those muscles. Start light. Strong muscles are less inclined to injury, and they heal quicker. There are many exercises you can do right in the comfort of your home. Consider doing

back leg raises. Grab the back of your chair and get your balance. Then kick one leg straight back as you breathe in. Hold the position for just one second. As you lower your leg, exhale slowly. Repeat the exercise nine more times with that leg (a total of 10). Then switch legs and repeat. As a total, do about two sets of 10 reps on each leg. If you want to increase the difficulty of your training, put on leg weights.

Exercise #3: Yoga. Here's a 3-in-1. Yoga covers stretching, balance and muscle training. The best place to start is with the Warrior 2 pose. Stand up straight with your legs separated wider than shoulder length. Turn one foot outward by 90 degrees as the other foot continues to point forward. Create a T formation with your arms, leaving your hands in blades. Turn your head in the direction of your 90-degree pointed foot. Then shift the weight of your body into your pointed leg until your knee is bent and your leg is at a 90-degree angle. Keep your back leg straight and your knee locked.



Exercise #4: Chair Yoga. If you are unable to get out of a chair, no problem. Try chair yoga. Here's one exercise. As you sit in a chair, keep your feet flat on the floor and your knees together. Breathe in. Then slowly bend over toward your knees with your arms dangling to your sides as you start to exhale. Keep your shoulders rounded. Hold this yoga pose for up to three breaths.

Exercise #5: Light Jog/Brisk Walk. Outside or on the treadmill? Take your pick. If you take a slow jog or even a quick walk around the lake, it will help you twofold. You'll get the cardio you need, not to mention the fresh air and sunlight, which is good for your energy levels and mood. Just make sure you keep a bottle of water on hand.

Disclaimer: Consult with your physician before trying new exercises. Everyone's health conditions are different. So while some exercises might be good for some, they may not be the best idea for others. ■

QUICK MORNING STRETCH ROUTINE

Stretch #1: Sky Reach. Stand up straight and reach your hands toward the sky. Clasp your hands together as you extend your arms and torso.

Stretch #2: Mix It Up. Stand straight up with your feet apart. Let your arms hang loosely. Move your head and torso from left to right. Your arms will naturally swing from side to side as you rotate your body from side to side.

Stretch #3: Toe Reach. Find a comfortable space on the floor. Sit on your bottom upright with your legs together out in front of you. Reach your hands as close to your feet as you can. Do not strain yourself.

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

A popular subject among our readers – especially those who are sick and tired of paying outrageous doctor and hospital bills – is alternative medicine. Following are a few articles on this topic.

Colloidal Silver – Benefits Versus Risks

FROM THE FEBRUARY 2015 EDITION

By this time, there is a good chance you've heard about the reported health benefits of colloidal silver. Maybe you use it regularly as a supplement, or perhaps once in a while to treat a specific condition. You've probably also heard about the potential side effects of using colloidal silver, some of which are rather scary.

So, who should we believe? Should we take the word of people who want to sell this product to us, or should we trust the medical community that wants to protect itself from liability by saying that everything is bad for you? Are there actual health benefits to colloidal silver, and if so, do they outweigh the possible dangers?

First, let's take a look at what colloidal silver is. Then we can examine both sides of this subject.

WHAT IT IS

Colloidal silver products are made of tiny silver particles suspended in a liquid such as water or some gelatinous goo – the same type of precious metal that is used in jewelry, dental fillings, silverware and other consumer

goods. They are usually marketed as dietary supplements that are taken by mouth.

These products also come in forms to be injected or applied to the skin. Colloidal silver is indeed silver – or at least a silver residue. A colloid is a particle of some substance, broken down and mixed into or suspended in liquid.

HIGH RISKS?

The medical community – including the Mayo Clinic and WebMD.com – has a number of things to say about colloidal silver, and none of them are very complimentary. Among them are:

- It is not an essential mineral supplement.
- It has no known function in the body.
- Its products that are marketed for medical purposes are now considered “misbranded” under the law.
- It is not considered safe or effective for any of the health claims that manufacturers make.



- No sound scientific studies to evaluate health claims made about it have been published in reputable medical journals.
- The Food and Drug Administration has taken action against some manufacturers of colloidal silver products for making unproven health claims.
- It can build up in your body's tissues over months or years. Most commonly, this results in argyria, a blue-gray discoloration of skin, eyes, internal organs, nails and gums.
- Excessive doses of colloidal silver can cause possibly irreversible serious health problems, including kidney damage and neurological problems such as seizures.
- When taken orally, colloidal silver can also wreak havoc on proteins and make other medicines less effective. For pregnant women, colloidal silver poses risks to the unborn child, as fetal abnormalities may develop due to its use.

Now, those are strong accusations against a product that many other people say has wonderful beneficial properties. Let's flip this coin over and take a look at some of the positive things people are saying about colloidal silver, as well as how they go about using it.

HIGH REWARDS?

Back in 1915, Dr. G.L. Rohdenburg published an article on the benefits of colloidal silver in treating tumors. Now, colloidal silver is used by some as a dietary supplement, decongestant and a treatment for all kinds of ailments and illnesses.

Here are some of the things that colloidal silver is used for:

- Infections due to yeast.
- Bacteria, such as tuberculosis, Lyme disease, bubonic plague, pneumonia, leprosy, gonorrhea, syphilis, scarlet fever, stomach ulcers and cholera.
- Parasites, including ringworm and malaria.
- Viruses, such as HIV/AIDS, pneumonia, herpes, shingles and warts.
- Lung conditions, including emphysema and bronchitis.
- Skin conditions, such as rosacea, cradle cap (atopic dermatitis), eczema, impetigo and psoriasis.
- Inflammation of the bladder (cystitis), prostate (prostatitis), colon (colitis), nose (rhinitis), stomach (gastritis), tonsils (tonsillitis), appendix (appendicitis), and sinuses (sinusitis).
- Treatment of cancer, diabetes, arthritis, lupus, chronic fatigue syndrome, leukemia, hay fever and other allergies, trench foot and gum disease.
- Prevention of flu, H1N1 (swine) flu and the common cold.
- It also has a very powerful potential when used to kill disease, viruses and other harmful bacteria. Specifically, many people claim that when they take colloidal silver,

it helps to improve their immune system's ability to fight against colds and flu viruses.

- It is purported to be easily digestible and therefore easily absorbed into the internal organs that need it most. This ease of absorption helps the benefits of colloidal silver work fast.

Here are six reported ways to use colloidal silver:

- Spray it onto burns to prevent infections and promote faster healing without scarring.
- Spray or dab it onto ringworm, boils, herpes sores, and warts for faster healing.
- Put some colloidal silver in a nebulizer and breathe it into your bronchial area and lungs directly if you have bronchial problems or walking pneumonia.
- Use drops for ear infections without any harmful side effects. Some use it for eye and nasal infections as well.

- Apply topically for vaginal yeast infections. Could also be useful for chronic jock itch.
- Take it early with the onset of a cold, flu or bronchitis to get over it quickly without harming beneficial bacteria. Antibiotics kill good and bad bacteria.

CONCLUSION

Taking colloidal silver in small doses as a supplement probably isn't going to hurt you and might benefit you. Taking it in larger doses over a longer period of time is probably not a good idea. Of course, ingesting antibiotics over a long period of time probably isn't going to help you, either.

Obviously the jury is still out on colloidal silver as a supplement. I'd love to hear from you about this issue if you've ever used colloidal silver products. Such as, what have you used them for? Have you found them to be effective at treating illnesses and ailments? Have you experienced any of the reported negative side effects? I'm looking forward to receiving your feedback. ■

Unorthodox Home Remedies for Seven Common Conditions

FROM THE JUNE 2016 EDITION

We all deal with physical ailments such as stomach upset and joint pain at one time or another. As we age, these types of nuisances certainly seem to crop up more frequently.

And while you should always consult a doctor about your serious health issues, you don't always need expensive pills to gain relief. Let's take a look at some surprising remedies for seven common physical conditions.

1. Dry Eyes

Several everyday foods can help stimulate natural tear production. These include:

- **Omega-rich foods** such as salmon, seeds, nuts and eggs.
- **Caffeine.** Studies show getting your daily dose of caffeine can solve dry eye problems.

- **Chamomile tea.** Drinking chamomile tea can help naturally increase tear production.

2. Hair Loss

Hair loss is largely hereditary, but you can minimize premature hair loss without expensive medications or surgery. Instead, try eating sulfur-rich foods such as onions and garlic, as well as massaging your scalp weekly with olive oil, fish oil or coconut oil.

3. Digestive Upset

Digestive problems are a way of life for many of us. Fortunately, natural foods provide an alternative to ingesting all those chalky elixirs and pills.

These remedies include:

- **Ginger.** Ginger reduces nausea, bloating and gas. Instead of sugary soda, try a cup of ginger tea with lemon.
- **Lemon.** Many people drink hot lemon water every morning to stimulate

metabolism and reduce bloating and constipation.

- **Fiber-rich fruits and vegetables.**

Prunes, pears and apples all aid digestion and reduce constipation. Including more veggies and fiber-rich beans in your diet can also help.

4. Arthritis

Anti-inflammatory meds can cause stomach problems and stress the liver over time. If you're trying to limit your intake of pain relievers, try one of these instead:

- **Green tea.** Green tea has anti-inflammatory flavonoids that can also reduce cancer risk.
- **Olive oil.** Adding more olive oil to your diet increases blood flow and reduces production of arthritis-causing enzymes.
- **Ginger.** Ginger's anti-inflammatory properties act in the same way as ibuprofen and arthritis drugs, and may even be more effective.



5. Toothache

Waiting hours or days for a dental appointment with a toothache can be agony. In addition to traditional remedies such as rinsing with salt water, try applying a little baking soda, vanilla extract or tea tree oil directly to the tooth.

6. Bug Bites

Insects such as mosquitoes and chiggers are a huge nuisance in the warm months, and some of us are magnets for the nasty critters. Instead of commercial anti-itch creams, try a bit of rubbing alcohol, aloe or fresh basil rubbed on your bites to reduce itch. The basil may also help repel mosquitoes.

7. Common Cold

Any doctor will tell you antibiotics don't work for the common cold, and you just have to let the virus run its course. To deal with the symptoms without pills, you can try these alternative home remedies:

- **Herbal tea.** Ginger and Echinacea tea with honey can both alleviate cold

symptoms, and the steam will open up your sinuses.

- **Apple cider vinegar.** Fans of apple cider vinegar say it has many uses, including fighting cold symptoms. Drink two tablespoons with warm water daily until your illness passes.
- **Vitamin supplements.** Zinc supplements reduce the severity and duration of colds, and research shows vitamin D3 is also effective for symptom relief.

Most of us naturally run to the pharmacy to deal with common issues like arthritis, colds and stomach upset. Drug companies actively encourage this, preferring to keep us in the dark about alternative remedies that have been used for generations. Only a doctor can diagnose serious medical problems, but using natural cures for common conditions can mean spending less on medication and putting fewer chemicals in your body. ■

More Unorthodox Remedies for Your Common Conditions

FROM THE AUGUST 2016 EDITION

Walk the aisles of your local drugstore and you'll see endless pills and creams promising everything from improved memory to whiter teeth.

You could spend a fortune on these treatments – and, in fact, that's exactly what big businesses want you to do. But the truth is, old-fashioned remedies may be equally effective for dealing with many everyday conditions.

In this installment in our series on unorthodox remedies, we'll give you more practical tips on how to address nuisance health issues with items that are probably already in your pantry.

1. Memory Loss

Staying mentally sharp can help improve your short-term and long-term memory as you grow older. You'll want to focus on two things here: diet and lifestyle.

As for diet, look for foods rich in omega-3 fatty acids, which doctors believe help break down the substances that cause Alzheimer's. Foods high in omega-3 include oily fish (such as salmon and tuna), beans, walnuts and flaxseed.

You also need to keep your brain active. Crossword puzzles, learning to play a musical instrument and socializing all engage your mind and strengthen connections within the brain.

2. Dark Under-Eye Circles

Everyone's heard of putting cucumber slices on the eyes, but you can also try remedies such as:

- **Cold milk or lemon juice.** Dab a soaked cotton ball under your eyes a few times weekly. Let it dry, and rinse after 10 minutes.
- **Tea bags.** Try placing two cold tea bags over your eyes for 10 minutes daily before rinsing.

- **Potatoes.** Grate a raw potato and soak two cotton balls in the juice. Put the cotton balls over your eyes for 10 minutes daily before rinsing with cold water. You can also use potato slices.

3. Body Odor

Smelling bad is a fast way to repel others, but it can be difficult to detect your own smell (the same reason why some people wear too much perfume or cologne).

If you're concerned about the health risks of traditional antiperspirants, there are several natural remedies you can try at home:

- **Vinegar.** Wipe vinegar under your arms after a shower on unbroken skin (and not if you've just shaved your underarms). Test on a small area first for any reaction.
- **Witch hazel.** Witch hazel is a natural anti-bacterial substance. It costs just a couple of bucks for a big bottle, and you can use it the same way as vinegar.
- **Baking soda and cornstarch.** Mix equal parts cornstarch and baking soda and apply to clean, dry underarms. The baking soda neutralizes odor, while cornstarch absorbs excess moisture.

4. Sinus Congestion

Many of us deal with congested sinuses daily, which can cause problems like ear infection and headache. Over-the-counter medicines don't always work, and often have unpleasant side effects.



Next time you're congested, try one of these unorthodox remedies:

- **Water.** It sounds simple, but drinking eight glasses daily can loosen mucus.
- **Herbal tea.** A hot cup of tea combines the power of steam with the anti-inflammatory properties of herbs (try ginger or cinnamon). Make sure to inhale steam between sips.
- **Spicy foods.** Ever notice how your nose runs when you eat something really spicy? Fans of spicy foods will be glad to know that eating more of hot foods like peppers can help relieve sinus congestion.

5. Sciatica

Sciatica causes lower back pain from pressure on the sciatic nerve, affecting more than 3 million people in the U.S. The pain often

radiates down the legs, also causing numbness and/or a tingling, burning sensation.

Instead of taking anti-inflammatories or opiate painkillers, you can try one of these natural remedies:

- **Stretching.** To relieve sciatic nerve pressure, try pulling a knee to your chest while lying on your back. You can also bend forward to touch your toes while sitting or standing.
- **Exercise.** Working out your core muscles like your stomach and back can relieve sciatica pain.
- **Turmeric.** This spice is a natural anti-inflammatory that you can easily sprinkle on foods like soup, salad and eggs. You can make a drink with one teaspoon dissolved in milk heated over the stove, adding a bit of honey to sweeten it. ■

HOME AND SELF-DEFENSE

If we lived in a perfect world, we wouldn't have to worry about locks or keys, self-defense tactics or weapons, and looking over our shoulders when we're out on the streets. But we're not in Heaven yet, so unfortunately those things are necessities. Protecting your family, your belongings and yourself is crucial, and these articles are designed to give you ideas on how to do it.

How Would You Handle a Home Intruder? With Lethal Force or With Non-Lethal Ammo?

FROM THE APRIL 2014 EDITION

To kill or not to kill. That is the question. You may be perfectly within your legal and ethical rights to end the life of a home intruder, but is that what you want to do? That's what you have to ask yourself, and I'd recommend that you do it before it happens, not afterward.

If I wake up to an uninvited person in my home at 3 in the morning, there is only one assumption that I can make – that he is there to rob me and very possibly to rape, kill or kidnap my wife and/or my children. If I assume anything less than that, I'm a fool.

So, I already feel that I have the right to protect myself in any fashion that I choose, including shooting to kill if that's the option that seems best in order to accomplish my

goal of keeping my family members safe. By breaking into my home, this intruder has forfeited his rights to a friendly, sit-down chat, and if he ends up dying under my roof, well, better him than one of us who lives there.

But let's look at the other side of the coin for a moment, because there are repercussions to everything that we do in life. If I end the life of a home intruder, there's no bringing him back. Regardless of how he got in and what his intentions were, he's gone forever.

What if I find out after the fact that I shot a mentally handicapped person who was too confused to know where he was and didn't even have a weapon? Or what if he was an unarmed teenager who was trying to "prove

himself” to his friends? I’m not saying that I would not be within my rights to use lethal force, I’m just saying that if I ever ended up regretting my decision to shoot the intruder dead, those regrets would go unresolved.

And, of course, there is also the possibility that I could harm my spouse or one of my children or grandchildren if I use live ammo to try to kill a home intruder. One or more of my family members could be near the intruder when I shoot without me seeing them in the dark. Or what if one of my bullets passes through a wall and strikes my child or wife?

I strongly believe that I am within my rights to shoot and kill a home intruder. But that doesn’t mean that doing it is necessarily the right response for everyone. Another option for possibly taking down a home intruder without ending his life is non-lethal ammo. If you choose this route, here are five types you may want to consider:

- **Rubber bullets** – They won’t penetrate the skin, but will leave serious welts that will require medical attention.
- **Wax bullets** – These could penetrate the skin at close range or if they strike a sensitive body part.
- **Plastic bullets** – These are used by police for riot control. They’re also used for target practice.
- **Electric bullets** – These are metal or rubber bullets that release an electrical charge when they hit a target, much like a Taser or other shock weapon.
- **Bean bag rounds** – These are designed to incapacitate the target and leave large welts, but not penetrate the skin.

The biggest concern that some people have with non-lethal ammo is that it might result in only slowing down some intruders – including particularly large men – and not stopping

them. They say that non-lethal ammo could end up infuriating the home intruder and making the situation even worse for you and your family. And if you end up in a gun fight with a home intruder, it’s very likely that he will be using live ammo.

So, if you use live ammo to try to stop a home intruder, you’re within your rights to do so. But if you can’t bring yourself to do that for whatever reason, there are alternatives including non-lethal ammo. Only you can make the decision that’s right for you and your family. The most important thing is to make this decision in advance and then be as prepared as possible should that nightmare situation ever present itself. ■



Anything Could Be a Useful Weapon... If You Need It for Self-Protection

FROM THE JULY 2014 EDITION

I enjoy reading lists of people's greatest fears. Dying is right up there near the top, of course, but so are public speaking, being trapped in a small place and exposure to germs. Then there are the fears of flying and falling, heights and depths, being alone and being in a crowd. And my personal favorite: a fear of clowns.

Those of us who have been victims of a home invasion probably agree that it's a lot more frightening than speaking to a group of people, experiencing claustrophobia or looking at a guy with a big red nose and face paint. There's almost nothing more terrifying than suddenly realizing there's an intruder in your home.

If someone breaks into your home while you're there, your window of opportunity for reacting effectively to protect yourself and your family will probably be very small. You have to make every second count, and you will only be able to accomplish this if you are fully prepared.

If you have a gun and can access it quickly, that's obviously the best response to discovering a home intruder. If you don't own a gun or are unable to get to it swiftly enough, you will need an improvised weapon.

GET OUT OF DODGE

Even if you had 50 improvised weapons at your disposal when you realized someone who didn't belong in your home was there, it's possible that your four best self-defense weapons would be your legs and hands.

If there is an escape route, take it. Don't stop to think about it or hesitate for any reason. Just get out. Use your legs to run toward the nearest exit and use your hands to knock things over behind you to slow down the intruder.

Of course, if you have people in your home you need to protect, you're not going to run away. But if you're alone, escaping might be the most prudent thing to do. That's not being a coward; it's being smart.



STAY ALIVE IN YOUR LIVING ROOM

If you're sitting in a living room or dining area when an intruder enters, there should be a number of items you can grab and use as a club or spear, including tall vases, candleholders, statuettes, large bowls or ashtrays, or fireplace pokers.

With a dining room chair in your hands, you can go on the offensive by charging your attacker. Make sure to hold the chair so that the legs are facing him in a diamond shape rather than a square. A wine bottle could be used to strike him, or you might want to throw it toward his face.

If you're alone in the house when an intruder enters, immediately yell something toward the upstairs such as, "Honey, call 911, NOW!" It's unlikely that the intruder will know for sure whether you are alone, and if you're lucky, he may respond by quickly leaving the house.

IF HE CAN'T TAKE THE HEAT, STAY IN THE KITCHEN

Nobody wants to face a home invader, but if it had to happen, the kitchen would probably be the best room in which to defend yourself. Talk about an arsenal! Your first choice would be to grab two sharp knives and start swinging them in the direction of your assailant.

Aim for the spots that will debilitate him quickly, including the face and groin. If you can jab an object such as a knife into the underside of his chin in an upward motion, you might be able to floor him. Remember to hang on tightly to knives as you're swinging them.

Other options while in the kitchen are frying pans or rolling pins for bashing, a butcher's block for smashing, scissors or broken glassware for gouging, a meat cleaver for chopping, and an ice pick for stabbing.

Doing your best Nolan Ryan imitation, throw items at an intruder such as canned goods, plates, coffee cups, a cordless phone or a nice, thick tumbler. A mop or broom handle could also do the job, especially a broken one with a jagged edge.

BATHROOM BRAWLING

The bathroom would seem like a bad place to be confronted by an intruder, especially if you're "occupied" or he's bigger than you are. But at least you'll have a locked door to slow him down while you're getting ready to defend yourself.

Among your options for self-defense here are a shower curtain rod, a towel rack or a toilet plunger, which you can use as spears. Or grab some hairspray and spray it in his eyes. If he's screaming and holding his eyes, this would be a good time to grab your ceramic toilet tank lid and bash him over the head with it. Even something small like a nail file could be a good puncture weapon.

OTHER WEAPONS

There are probably plenty of other items in various rooms of your house that could be used as weapons, including...

- **Fire extinguisher.** Spray him with the white stuff and clunk him with the red thing.
- **Flashlight.** This makes for a nice bully club-type of weapon. If you incapacitate him with it, you can shine the light on his head to see what kind of damage you inflicted.
- **Golf club.** Pretend like you're trying to drive the green on a par 4.
- **Baseball bat.** We're looking for the long ball here, not a bunt. Your first shot should be to a kneecap. If you land a solid blow there, he may be unable to run toward you.

- **Tools.** The sharp edge of a hammer, the point of a screwdriver or a heavy wrench might be enough to make this tool think twice about breaking into your house again.
- **Belt.** If you have nothing else to grab, quickly remove your belt and try to catch him in the face with the buckle as you whip it toward him. And whip it good.

SHIELDS

In a confrontation with a home invader, you may have to go on the defensive first. Among

the items you could use to fend off attacks until you're able to take an offensive position are a metal cookie sheet, chopping board, backpack, trashcan lid or briefcase.

If you're able to at least temporarily stop an attack with a shield but don't yet have an opportunity to grab an offensive weapon, you may be able to charge the assailant with your shield and push him back.

Regardless of what method you use to thwart an attacker, the key is to slow him down long enough for you and your family members to get out of the house. Then call 911. ■

Home Defense Always Starts at the Front and Back Doors

FROM THE APRIL 2016 EDITION

If you've ever looked through stock images of burglars breaking into homes, you know they almost always depict a dark-clothed individual squeezing through a window. Regardless where the window is located or how risky the climb was to get to it, that's where they are trying to enter the home.

And while it's true that sometimes home invaders use windows as their point of entry into a house, the much more likely place for a burglar to infiltrate a home is the front or back door. That might not make for a very interesting visual image, but a door is the most common entry point for a person bent on robbing a homeowner. That's because he or she wants to get in and out of your home as quickly and discreetly as possible, and a door is a better option than a window.

That's why your home defense plan needs to start at the front door. If you can secure your front and back doors, you will greatly decrease your odds of being robbed. A would-

be burglar is more likely to try a different house on your block after failing to get in through one of your doors than he is to try to enter through a window.

So, what are the best ways to secure a door? I've listed a number of them below. And don't worry, I'll get to windows eventually.

- **Buy the right kind of doors.** Solid wood, fiberglass and metal doors are very difficult to kick in, but hollow doors are easy. Choose doors that do not have windows on them or next to them. If you have a sliding glass door in the back, make sure it's covered on the outside by a security grate or grille, or is secured on the inside by an unbreakable polycarbonate panel.
- **Always keep your doors locked.** This seems like a no-brainer, but many of us forget to do it, especially when we're home. A doorknob lock is not enough. Install

Grade 1 or Grade 2 deadbolt locks with bolts that are at least one inch in length. You can place a thick, wooden dowel in the bottom track of your sliding door to keep it from being opened.

- In order to reinforce your entryway, **install cylinder guards** around the lock cylinders, replacing flimsy strike plates, securing exposed hinges and fortifying your door frame.
- **Make sure your doors have peep holes** at eye level. A wide-angle view is very important.
- **Install a storm door.** Not only will this door give you an extra level of protection, but it will help keep cold air out during the winter and hot air out during the summer.

As mentioned, sometimes a burglar will choose a window, especially if he can't get past a front or back door. So, it's important to fortify your windows as well, which can also be helpful against strong winds and hail, not to mention golf balls and baseballs.

Your glass windows are probably brittle, but window film will provide armor for them. This armor can protect against projectiles – with some even being strong enough to keep bullets from breaking through – and can also shield against UV rays.

Chances are, you will not need window film strong enough to protect against a hurricane, bullets or explosives. Most likely, Standard Safety Window Film will be good enough to protect you from burglars who choose to try to enter your home through a window.

You have a lot to lose. Don't lose it because you didn't take basic precautions against burglars. ■



Proven Self-Defense Tactics for Anyone 55 and Older

FROM THE MAY 2016 EDITION

More than 90 percent of crimes against seniors are property crimes, such as burglary and auto theft, with robbery accounting for one in four violent crimes against seniors.

Because so many criminals see older Americans as potential targets, many seniors find themselves living their lives in fear. Two-thirds of seniors believe they will be crime victims at some point, with nearly half of those 75 and older afraid to even leave home after dark.

To break free from these fears, seniors must take action to safeguard against becoming crime victims. In this article, we'll look at critical strategies for reducing the chances of you or an older loved one being targeted, as well as how to be ready if trouble does find you.



TAKE BASIC PRECAUTIONS

Many problems can be avoided with commonsense precautions that reduce your vulnerability to criminals. When you're out and about, this means:

- Be alert to what's around you and walk with a purpose.
- Park in well-lit areas and have your keys ready in hand.
- Don't load yourself down with packages.
- Carry a whistle to alert others for help.

When you're at home, steps include:

- Always lock your doors and windows.
- Never open your door for strangers.
- Monitor and report suspicious neighborhood activity.
- Call 911 if there's trouble.

These simple steps can reduce your likelihood of becoming a victim, but they only work if you commit to following them at all times.

IMPROVE YOUR PHYSICAL FITNESS

Many older Americans are afraid of being victimized because they aren't as strong as they once were. One way to address this is to take a self-defense course for seniors, which can give you proven techniques for avoiding

injury during a confrontation. These classes are often available for free at your local YMCA or through your local government.

Improving your physical health also makes you less vulnerable to criminals. Eating healthy, getting your daily vitamins, taking regular walks and engaging in low-impact strength training all help you become stronger, so you're less likely to be hurt and better able to fend off an attack.

ARM YOURSELF

While some experts warn against seniors using weapons for self-defense, they are appropriate for some individuals and situations.

For example, just the sound of cocking a shotgun can be enough to scare off a burglar, though it's important to consider whether you can actually fire it if necessary. A handgun is easier to fire, but more difficult to aim. Guns and knives can be turned against you, so you'll want to think carefully before relying on these weapons.

Pepper spray is a popular, non-lethal weapon for stopping criminals in their tracks, and it can be used both at home and when you're out. The key is to have easy access to spray, such as carrying it on a keychain and having it in your hand while you walk to your car.

USE YOUR WITS

Ultimately, one of your best defenses is your own mind, both in terms of preventing an incident as well as responding to an attack. Examples include:

- Carry a fake wallet to give potential robbers, and keep cards and cash in a travel wallet or pocket.
- Take anti-burglary measures at home, such as using auto-timed lights when you're away or a security bar so criminals can't kick in your door.
- Use what you have nearby as a weapon, whether that's a cane or even a set of keys.
- Participate in efforts such as the Watch Your Car program, which allows cops to pull over your vehicle during hours when you don't normally drive it.

Many seniors say their fear of becoming crime victims makes them feel both lonely and isolated from the outside world. This means the criminals have won, even if these people never end up being victimized directly.

The only way to eliminate fear is through action. A good place to start is with the steps outlined here, using a combination of commonsense and proven physical protection methods to keep yourself safe from those who want to harm you. ■

How to Avoid Becoming a Crime Victim

FROM THE OCTOBER 2017 EDITION

When the topic turns to being a crime victim, we all tend to think it won't happen to us. And if it does, we tell ourselves that we know a thing or two about "handling ourselves."

But with a little preparation and "handling" things beforehand, we can stop a victim scenario from playing out. Consider these checklists.

HANDLING VALUABLES

Keep valuables and boxes or bags that may be perceived as containing valuables out of view in your car and from the front windows of your home.

Have regular income, such as payroll checks and monthly pension or Social Security payments, sent to the bank for direct deposit. When visiting the bank, vary the time and day of the week.

Carry wallet, cash or credit cards in an inside jacket pocket instead of a back pocket. Avoid carrying large amounts of cash.

HANDLING YOUR CAR

Always lock all car doors immediately upon entering the vehicle. As the driver, if you are seated and waiting for passengers to enter, lock the driver's door.

When fueling your car, manually unlock your driver side door to keep the other doors locked. Many cars unlock all doors when you exit the vehicle, leaving purse, packages and other valuables ripe for the picking by criminals ready to sneak into an unlocked passenger side door.

Choose a parking spot that will be well lit when you return. Move tempting items from the passenger compartment to the trunk. When returning to your car, watch for anyone hiding behind nearby cars. Look at the back seat and floor before entering your vehicle.

HANDLING YOUR HOME

When entering your home, always lock the door behind you. Thousands of crimes could have been prevented had this simple rule been followed.

Consider investing in home security. Look to your insurance company's minimum security requirements. Some companies make

suggestions to clients based on losses in their area. The best outfitted home will make the neighbors' home seem more attractive to an opportunistic criminal.

Keep dangerous objects that an intruder might use against you, such as firearms, out of sight and locked away. Look through the peephole or a window before opening your door. Ask strangers for identification before you open the door.

Get to know your neighbors and join a Neighborhood Watch program. When going out, lock all entry points. Leave on outside lights or set timers. Leave on a radio or television and a few room lights.

HANDLING YOUR PHONE

Never share personal information with a person you did not call. It can start with your identity. If a caller asks, "To whom am I speaking," the secure response is to ask whom they are trying to reach.

Games and apps are fun when commuting on a bus or train. But when you are completely focused on a phone, you are not aware of your environment. Also, the device is just resting in your hands, waiting for someone to snatch it and run off the train just before the doors close.

Staring into a phone while walking down the street is just as bad. Assuming you don't trip over anything, a person walking past you from the opposite direction can snatch your phone and be 10 feet away at a full run before you can figure out what happened.

HANDLING DOCUMENTS

If a document has your name, address or an account number on it, shred it. Don't just toss it in the trash. Identity theft begins with these valuable pieces of information. Also shred any junk mail that includes an application for credit in your name.



HANDLING TRAVEL

When visiting entertainment districts and other tourist spots, dress down. Flashy clothes and jewelry attract attention from street predators.

Park in an attended garage. When returning to your car, have the keys ready and in hand. Digging for keys at the door makes you a still target. Look inside the car at the back seat and floor before getting in.

Keep your head on a swivel. Watch your surroundings. Notice people. Make brief eye contact without staring. Look confident and walk with purpose. If you need directions, ask a store clerk or restaurant worker. Stay in well-lit areas.

Don't flash money even when inside a store. Some robbers linger in stores to spot victims carrying lots of cash.

Use public transportation wisely. On buses, sit in the front near the driver but not too near the door. Ask the driver, not other passengers, for directions. On trains, choose a car with other passengers rather than an empty car.

HANDLING ENCOUNTERS

When answering the door, do not open it for someone you don't know. Consider installing a telescopic peephole that lets you stand back from the door yet clearly see the caller.

Don't consider a uniform proof of identity. It is a simple matter to find wardrobe resembling a utility company worker, overnight delivery driver or even police officer.

Street predators favor those who appear oblivious to their surroundings or helpless. Walk with your head up and look around.

Never walk and text or talk on the phone. Some think the phone signals a way to quickly call for help, but it really labels you as distracted and vulnerable.

Don't have the look of a victim. Let your walk project confidence through organized movement and flowing motion.

HANDLING AWARENESS

Vary your travel pattern. Come and go at different times. Change routes when taking walks or running errands. Bad guys casing your home will look for predictable times you won't be there.

Look for patterns in your surroundings. Is that a different car parked on the street? Are those guys the regulars who always hang out on that corner? How long has that person been behind you? If you cross the street, do they follow? Get into a busy public place like a coffee shop or eatery. If they stop too, consider calling the police. The worst thing to

do is continue walking until you are in a less populated area.

HANDLING FRAUD

You can say no immediately to any telephone sales pitch or hang up at any time. That is not being rude, it is protecting yourself.

Never give bank account or credit card numbers to people you did not call. Do not share it online unless you started the exchange.

Do not do business with repair people who come to the door unsolicited. Always get referrals from family, friends and neighbors who have had repairs done. Never pay for the whole job in advance.

When shopping online, use only trusted merchants. Keep your computer virus protection software current and consider installing a firewall to prevent unsolicited contact. ■

FIREARMS

At 4Patriots, we believe very strongly in Second Amendment rights. We also believe very strongly in making sure that firearms do not get into the wrong hands, including those of children and home intruders. Here are a couple of articles about finding the right gun for you, as well as how to keep your firearms from being found by anyone else.

How and Where to Hide Your Guns and Other Valuables

FROM THE OCTOBER 2013 EDITION

Would you want a child finding a gun in your home? How about a home invader? What about authority figures who decided that the Second Amendment no longer applies in this country?

I'm going to assume that your answer to each of those questions is a resounding "No!" If we can agree that you don't want anyone among these three groups of people finding a gun in your home – or any other valuables that you treasure including cash, jewelry, electronics, important documents and other personal items – we can start looking at the best places to hide them.

But first, let me make one comment to be sure we're on the same page. You may agree that it's wise to keep guns away from children and that you wouldn't want a home invader to find one of your guns. But perhaps you think that the idea of an authority figure coming to confiscate your guns is a far-fetched idea. Well, it isn't. In fact, that exact thing happened in door-to-door searches in New

Orleans during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

As you are very much aware, the people who want to make it more and more difficult for law-abiding citizens like you to obtain guns and ammunition are using the recent tragic killings such as the ones that occurred at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, as their rallying cry. This shameless exploitation of innocent children and adults who were killed and injured by madmen, for the purpose of promoting their un-American agenda, is despicable.

Unfortunately, they are making progress. Several states have passed stricter gun control laws during 2013 and many others are considering them. They're trying to make some types of guns off limits to U.S. citizens. They're attempting to make background checks more extensive. They're trying to add ridiculously high taxes to the purchases of firearms and ammunition. And while all this is going on, the Department of Homeland

Security is buying billions of bullets to take ammunition off the shelves. Regardless of what they say, it's all part of an agenda to disarm citizens.

They just can't seem to get it through their heads that in nearly every case of a madman shooting up a school or theater or mall, a good guy with a gun could have stopped the bad guy with a gun, and at the very least saved some lives.

OK, back to our topic of hiding guns and other valuables. First, the easy part. If you have any guns that you don't want to lose but you also don't think you're going to need to touch for a while, just hide them as deeply as you can. Hide them in places where they are very unlikely to be found, such as the back portion of a crawl space or buried on your property. Same thing with cash, jewelry and other valuables that you aren't planning to access in the near future.

When you hide guns that you want to be easily accessible in case you have to deal with an intruder, hide them in the rooms where you spend the most time. You need easily accessible places that would not be looked at twice by someone who was trying to find a gun or other valuables.

Following are 10 of those hiding places. Many more can be found in the Patriot Alliance Report titled, "How to Hide Your Guns and Other Valuables," which is offered free to Patriot Alliance Members. Please keep in mind that some of these hiding places may not be appropriate if you have young children living in your home.

- Inside an empty cereal box.
 - Behind a non-locking hideaway picture frame.
 - Inside a false bottom end table or nightstand drawer.
 - Behind a fake electrical outlet.
 - Inside a large pizza box wedged between the trash bin and the wall.
 - Hanging on a hook on the back of a bedroom door, underneath a robe.
 - Inside a hollowed-out water heater with pipes that disappear into the wall.
 - Inside a diaper pail.
 - Inside a dummy electrical box on the outside of the house.
 - Inside an upholstery seam on the rear of the passenger seat toward the driver.
- When hiding other valuables besides guns, you'll sometimes have a little more flexibility. The key, as with guns, is to hide cash, jewelry and other valuables in places where you believe a burglar will not look. Hide it in places where even if the intruder is looking directly at the container in which it's located, he won't even consider trying to find it there.
- Following are five suggestions. Again, many more can be found in the aforementioned Report.
- In a can of soup. Open the can from the bottom, rinse it out thoroughly, put your items in the can, replace the can bottom and place the can at the bottom of a stack of other canned goods.
 - In a picture frame. Sandwich your cash or other thin valuable between two pieces of cardboard backing within a difficult-to-reach picture frame.
 - In a laundry detergent box.
 - In the hollow legs of an ironing board.
 - In a water-tight plastic bottle under a toilet tank lid.
- By having most of your guns and valuables well hidden, and by keeping a few guns hidden within your reach but out of the

reach of children, you should be able to protect yourself regardless of whether you are confronted by home invaders or authority figures trying to take away your Second Amendment rights.

An armed citizenry is the only hope against burglars, rapists, murderers and tyrants. Unarmed individuals, on the other hand, are sitting ducks waiting to be terrorized and unable to come to the assistance of others being assaulted. Don't lose your guns! ■



Selecting the Right Gun(s) for You

FROM THE APRIL 2015 EDITION

One of my favorite expressions is, “Don’t bring a knife to a gun fight.” Survival knives are fine, and everyone should have one in a bug-out bag. Packing a couple other knives including a multi-tool and a Swiss Army knife is also a good idea. But when it comes to defending your home, there is nothing as effective as a gun. And in most cases, guns.

The single biggest advantage a gun has over a knife is that to use a knife effectively you must be very close to your assailant. With a gun,

you can keep him at a safe distance and then drop him before he attacks, kidnaps, rapes or whatever else he has in mind when he breaks into the home where you live with other family members.

Some people are morally opposed to guns and claim they would never allow one in their home. OK, I can respect that. But if they or their families ever become victims of home invaders, they might regret their decision...if they live through it.



Unfortunately, violence is sometimes necessary to stop violent people. If someone else starts the fight, you have the right to finish it. Guns were designed to help people defend themselves and protect their loved ones and families. Most people can use them solely for those purposes and sleep with a good conscience.

When selecting a gun to defend yourself and your home, the basic choices are handguns, rifles, assault rifles and shotguns. If you're preparing for a post-disaster situation, you should definitely have more than one gun. In fact, some suggest a pistol and a longer gun for each member of the family or team who would be using one. Let's look at handguns first.

HANDGUNS

There are two types of handguns: semi-automatic and revolver. Depending on the model, semi-automatic handguns can hold as much as 17 rounds, which are contained

in a replaceable magazine. This means less frequent reloading. Handguns are more complicated than revolvers and a little more expensive, but the simplicity of a revolver can be overshadowed by the fact that it is limited to six bullets before needing to be reloaded.

Handguns range from .22 to .50 caliber. This is a reference to the diameter of the bullet in hundredths of an inch. A .45 caliber bullet is twice the diameter of a .22 caliber bullet, but weighs six times as much. The larger the bullet, the more damage will be done when it strikes the target.

A big advantage to a handgun is its portability. It can be easily carried and if you have to use it within your home, it's easy to maneuver when you're turning corners in doorways. A downside is their limited range, but that's not usually an issue within the confines of a house or apartment. If you're dealing with more than one person charging at your home during a post-disaster situation, a larger weapon would be helpful.

RIFLES

Rifles, which have a wide variety of calibers and are used for both hunting and defense, can shoot accurately at a much longer range than pistols can and will accomplish a higher degree of penetration into the target. Great for hunting or for defending yourself out in the country, they might not always be particularly useful in a home defense situation.

ASSAULT RIFLES

Designed for military use, assault rifles have a fully automatic firing capability, much like a machine gun. An example is the AK-47, and unless you have a mob of zombies on your front yard coming toward your front door, you probably won't need this type of weapon to defend yourself.

SHOTGUNS

Spraying a number of pellets in a circular pattern, shotguns were originally developed for hunting wild fowl. The idea is that you increase your odds of hitting a moving target with a variety of pellets. This eliminates the need for highly accurate aiming and is what makes it a good second choice – after the handgun – for defending your home. A shotgun's range can't compete with a rifle, but it can be lethal up to 100 feet.

AMMUNITION

You could have the most beautiful collection of guns in the world, but without ammunition they'd be useless except for their craftsmanship. How much ammunition should you stockpile? That's something only you can decide, but some experts suggest at least 1,000 rounds of each caliber. Wouldn't you rather have too much than too little?

PRACTICE MAKES (NEARLY) PERFECT

Whether it's a musical instrument, a sport or a tool, almost everything that is important to learn how to do requires a dirty eight-letter word called "practice." Not practicing your French horn or your free throws probably won't get you killed, but failing to learn how to properly use your guns just might.

Like most things, shooting a gun accurately is a skill that takes time to develop. In fact, it might require considerably more hours than most endeavors because when it comes time to use it in a life-and-death situation, adrenaline and nerves will try to take over. You absolutely must put in the time to learn how to do this correctly. Your family is depending on you to put yourself in the right position to defend them. And that means lots of practice.

It's similar to golf. If you've ever tried to become proficient at this sport, you know how challenging it is. Every tiny nuance of your golf swing is crucial on every shot. If anything is off just a hair, it can make a huge difference in terms of where the ball ends up going. Golfers talk about "muscle memory," which basically means that when you've practiced your shot hundreds or thousands of times, your muscles seem to take over and know what to do. It's like you've put it on autopilot.

Shooting a gun is similar. Once you attain that muscle memory, you will shoot much more accurately on a consistent basis. But it won't happen without going to the range over and over again to practice. Police and military forces know this, which explains why they spend so much time practicing.

So, find the gun that's right for you, load up on ammunition and practice, practice, practice. Someday you will be very glad you did. ■

PRIVACY

I'm going to tell you something you already know, even if you don't think about it too often. Your privacy is pretty much non-existent. So is mine. The advance of technology and the prying eyes of the government and a wide variety of public and private companies has made privacy a thing of the past. However, there are still some things you can do to maintain at least a semblance of privacy. These articles spell out those activities.

Protecting Your Consumer Privacy in an Age of Increasing Intrusions

FROM THE NOVEMBER 2013 EDITION

Remember privacy? I do. I recall the days when bank officers and financial advisors took pride in keeping their clients' business confidential. Of course, that was before price tags were attached to consumers' personal information. Now, businesses try to gain as much personal information about us as they can in order to either build more targeted lists of potential customers or sell it to other businesses.

Why is this blatant use of your personal information allowed? Why should the personal information you divulge to a business become a source of income for them and why should you now be bombarded by junk mail, spam emails and unwanted phone calls from the businesses that purchase your information?

Fortunately, the Federal Trade Commission has started moving into this arena more

forcefully recently and Congress is beginning to insist that businesses behave in a responsible fashion. But you can be your own best friend – or worst enemy – when it comes to your privacy, merely by how you protect it.

A BULL'S EYE ON YOUR BACK

Recently I visited amazon.com, looking closely at a couple of books that I was considering buying. The next time I went to that site, those very books were being singled out, trying to lure me in for a purchase. Creepy, right? Anytime we let someone know that we're interested in a subject, such as through a purchase or a subscription to a magazine or online, some business is certain to pick up on that and target us with a related offer.

In addition to wanting to know about our habits, diets and entertainment choices, many



businesses are interested in our financial lives, including where we work, how much we earn, whether we pay our bills on time, how much debt we're carrying and a lot more. Those spies include companies that extend credit, employers and landlords, and they'll use that information to make decisions regarding loans, hiring and renting.

Following are a few steps you can take to protect your privacy. More are available in the free Report titled Protecting Your Consumer Privacy, which is included free of charge with your membership to the Patriot Alliance.

- Just say "no." When you are asked for your Social Security number, just say "no" unless divulging your number is the only way you'll be considered for a job or loan. Ask why they need it and if they're going to keep it confidential.
- Use a post office box number instead of your street address when you want someone to mail something to you.
- Pay for products and services in cash as often as possible. Using credit and debit cards leaves a paper trail.

CREDIT REPORTS

Credit ratings are often the determining factors in whether we're able to purchase certain insurance policies, whether we can obtain a particular mortgage and at what rate, and whether our applications for apartments will be accepted. Following are the top three factors that determine your credit score:

- Payment history. Making consistent on-time payments is the most important thing you can do to earn and maintain a high credit score.
- Outstanding debt. Balances should be under 35 percent of your credit limit. Higher balances will lower your score.
- Credit account history. An established credit history will make you a less risky borrower. If you're about to submit a loan application, don't close out any old accounts.

Monitoring your credit report on a regular basis can help keep you safe from fraud. It will allow you to see if any accounts have

been opened by someone else in your name. Catching identify theft early is crucial to limiting the damage. Every American is entitled to one free credit report per year from each of the three main bureaus:

- Equifax, P.O. Box 740241, Atlanta, GA 30374 (800-685-1111), www.equifax.com.
- Experian, P.O. Box 2002, Allen TX 75013 (888-EXPERIAN), www.experian.com.
- TransUnion, P.O. Box 1000, Chester, PA 19022 (800-888-4213), tranunion.com.

When you dispute something on your credit report, you should create a substantial paper trail. Mail a letter (rather than sending an email or making a phone call) to the bureau and obtain a proof of receipt. Clearly explain what the error is on your report and request that it be corrected as soon as possible. Your letter needs to include your date of birth and Social Security number. Make sure that you keep copies of your letter, as well as any correspondence from the bureau regarding the matter.

IT'S IN THE MAIL

Tons of junk mail fills the mailboxes of Americans every day. What's the big deal if you just throw it all away, right? But it can be a very big deal for a variety of reasons, not

the least of which is that you can build up a lot of debt without even knowing it and then have to haggle with the credit card issuer and possibly various businesses to make sure you're not responsible for it. So....

- Don't just throw junk mail away. Shred it. If you toss pre-approved credit card offers into the garbage without shredding them, an identity thief can find them, open up accounts in your name with a change of address, and build up quite a bit of debt for you.
- Tell magazines to which you have subscriptions that you don't want them giving your name and address to any marketers. They will sell your information by default if you don't ask them not to.
- Opt out of marketing lists by filing a request with the Direct Marketing Association (dmachoice.org; P.O. Box 643, Carmel, NY 10512).

Consumer privacy is a very elusive commodity. It slipped away quickly before we realized that it was even happening, and now it seems almost impossible to get it back. But by doing everything we can to maintain our individual privacy, and by encouraging lawmakers to make this issue a priority, we should be able to make some significant strides in the future. ■

Your Medical Privacy Is on Life Support

FROM THE JANUARY 2014 EDITION

Do you remember the phrase, "confidential doctor-patient relationship?" You may think this concept still exists, but for the most part, it doesn't. As the government becomes increasingly involved in the regulating of our medical needs, not only are costs soaring, but

it becomes nearly impossible to maintain any confidentiality.

We are heading toward a national healthcare crisis, and ObamaCare is already doing its part to drive us off the cliff. We're free falling



toward government-instituted socialized medicine, a system that has been a failure everywhere it's been tried and which leads to doctor shortages, drug rationing, lengthy waiting periods for services and the complete elimination of medical privacy.

The Obama Administration has a goal of making every American's health record digital by sometime in 2014, and while they argue that this will lead to greater efficiency, it will most certainly result in a stunning lack of privacy. People are learning every day that doctors' offices and hospitals are much more interested in profiting from patients' medical data than they are in protecting it, thanks to the medical profession sharing this information with insurance companies, researchers and marketers.

And, once the government has all of your medical information, it's just a matter of time before it begins making important decisions regarding who will receive which treatments and when. And how will it make those types of decisions? By favoring the people who have the potential to give the most back to society in terms of productivity and tax dollars.

RESPECT FOR MEDICAL PRIVACY?

Of all the information that's out there about us, medical records are perhaps the most personal and the ones we would like to keep the most private. Not that long ago, it appeared that Congress had respect for individuals' medical privacy. That was at least part of what the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 was about.

But Health and Human Services Department amendments took away Americans' rights to control who had access to their medical records. The Patient Privacy Rights Foundation says that there are now potentially hundreds of thousands of businesses that can "see and use our medical records without our knowledge, permission and even against our objections" for the purpose of marketing products to us or selling the information to institutions or federal agencies.

You may be thinking, "I trust my doctors. They would never sell my medical information." But the fact, is, your doctors

may not have a choice in the matter. Doctors may be forced to do just that by their employers in order to avoid losing their jobs.

The key is to only tell your doctors what they absolutely need to know in order to treat your conditions, and then hope for the best. If you don't want information to get out there about infertility, sexual behavior, sexually transmitted diseases, substance abuse, family history tendencies toward physical or mental illnesses, or your personal history of diseases and illnesses, you might want to keep some of that information to yourself.

Your physical and emotional conditions could be the determining factors in a wide variety of decision-making processes made by insurance companies, potential employers or bank officers when it comes time to determining if you qualify for an insurance policy, a job, or a loan, as well as what rates you will pay.

PROTECTING MEDICAL INFORMATION

The current and projected state of medical privacy in the U.S. is definitely gloomy, but there are some steps you can take to try to preserve it as much as possible. USA.gov lists the following:

- Talk with your doctor about confidentiality concerns. Discuss the uses of your health information and what is required for insurance purposes.
- Read the fine print. Most authorization forms contain clauses allowing information to be released. You may be able to restrict some disclosures by revising the form. Hint: Be sure to initial and date your revisions.
- Request a copy of your medical records so you know what's in them.
- Register your objections to disclosures

that you consider inappropriate. Contact the specific entity involved, state office, or the Department of Health and Human Services.

- Be cautious when providing personal information for surveys, health screenings, sweepstakes or health websites. Be sure to check their privacy policies, ask how the information will be used and who will have access to it.

Medical identity theft occurs when someone steals your personal medical information. As with traditional identity theft, medical ID theft can affect your health as well as your finances. Below are a few ways that you might detect medical ID theft, according to USA.gov:

- You get a bill for medical services you did not receive.
- A debt collector contacts you about a medical debt you don't owe.
- You find medical collection notices that you don't recognize on your credit report.
- Your health plan says you've reached your limit on benefits when you know you haven't.
- You are denied insurance because your medical records show a condition you don't have.

The single biggest problem with medical privacy in this country right now is that the rush to set up databases of everyone's electronic health records is outpacing patients' privacy rights. The only way to slow down the pace of medical privacy violations is to make sure your voice is heard against them, and take some of the steps listed above. Lawmakers need to know that medical privacy rights are important to us, and they need to know now. ■

Don't Bank on Your Financial Privacy

FROM THE MAY 2014 EDITION

Not too long ago, a Rhode Island couple decided to pay off a credit card bill of approximately \$6,500 in one lump sum. Wise move if you can afford it, right? But something unusual occurred when the payment was received. Instead of cashing the check, the credit card company notified the government that this couple was making a payment that was much larger than their normal payments.

Why would the company do that? Because this particular financial institution, and almost every other one, had been ordered to report incidents such as these, even when there is absolutely no reason to suspect any illegal activity. Before those funds could be used to pay off a debt, the government wanted to know how the couple came to be in possession of that much money.

Even more recently, in Lima, Ohio, a man lost more than \$400,000 in cash from his safe following a home break-in. The money was recovered by the police and then forwarded to the FBI, which took its sweet time returning the money to its owner because the agency wanted to know why he had that much money.

That's what it has come to in this country. It used to be that people got in trouble financially because they had too much debt. You know, sort of like our country. Now, if you do the right thing by saving money and using it to get out of debt, you become a federal suspect. And it used to be that Americans were allowed to keep as much of their cash in their homes as they wanted to, but now you are suspected of drug dealing or terrorism if you save money and stash it at home.

But what else can we expect from a government that has made no secret about the fact that it is extremely interested in learning the financial details of everyone's lives? And when government officials decided it was vitally important that they know every possible financial aspect of every single U.S. citizen's life, they did not devise a plan that would involve gathering that information themselves. No, they used the age-old strategy of delegating authority.

By broadly defining the term "financial institution" to include not only the obvious ones such as banks and credit card companies but also entities including pawn shops and casinos, the government set the stage for

a wide ranging network of businesses that would be required to spill information about its customers whenever the government made a request.

And to make sure that these financial institutions complied with its demands, the government established significant punishments



for non-compliance that threatened those businesses' very existence. From time to time, congressional acts such as the Right to Financial Privacy Act of 1978 and the Financial Services Modernization Act of 1999 have been passed to protect the financial privacy of individuals. But the USA Patriot Act of 2001 has stripped those acts of some of their strength "in the interests of national security."

What does the government do with the myriad of information that it collects? It hands that data over to an organization known as FinCEN (Financial Crimes Enforcement Network). This data collection group, which receives information from agencies including the IRS, FBI, DEA, Secret Service, U.S. Customs and the Postal Service, probably knows about every financial transaction you've ever made.

I wish that I could give you a long list of things you could do to avoid being a target of those who wish to rob you of your financial privacy. Unfortunately, the laws that should protect us are toothless against the government's intrusions. But, there are a few ways in which you can lessen the impact and protect yourself. They include:

- Keep as much of your money as possible in IRAs, 401(k)'s and other IRS-approved

retirement accounts, as lawsuit judgments should not be able to touch them.

- Open an account with a non-national bank in a different state.
- Put some assets in offshore accounts.
- Place holding assets in trusts and/or business entities.
- Invest in precious metals including gold and silver coins.

One of the many things that makes America great is its judicial system. "Innocent until proven guilty" has been demonstrated as the most civilized way to live and govern through the centuries. But in the all-encompassing name of "national security," the government is turning the tables on U.S. citizens and businesses. It's now becoming "Guilty until proven innocent," with the burden of proof being placed on those who are suspected of wrongdoing with absolutely no evidence pointing toward their involvement in any crime.

This is not how Americans are supposed to live, and the time and money being spent by the government on investigating law-abiding citizens in blatant disregard of the U.S. Constitution is appalling. ■

RFID – The New Wave of Privacy Invasion

FROM THE JUNE 2015 EDITION

If you've been around a while, you remember the days when people would stand at checkout counters of grocery stores and other establishments and dig through their wallets and purses, trying to come up with the right

number of greenbacks and coins to pay for their items.

It still happens, of course, but you don't see it as often as before. A vast majority of people

these days are swiping debit and credit cards to make their purchases. Now, sometimes it pays to use cash, especially when trying to adhere to a budget, but most people simply hand cards to cashiers when it's time to check out or swipe them at gas stations and many other places.

Most of us don't have a big problem with using cards for purchases, but we are concerned about the next logical step in the process. It's called radio-frequency identification (RFID) chips that are about the size of a piece of rice. Some of us probably have one or more of our pets chipped so that if they get lost and someone takes them to a veterinarian or a shelter, we can be called to retrieve them.

Some people would like to see an RFID chip implanted in every baby before they leave the hospital so he or she can be tracked their entire lives. Of course, the idea is presented in a manner that makes it seem like the government is trying to protect us in case we're ever abducted or just go missing.

But we all know the real reason they want us micro-chipped is so they can keep tabs on us and learn where we are at a moment's notice, should that become necessary. Like everything else, it's all about control. RFID is not some 1984 nightmare of the future. It's already started.

A company in Sweden is micro-chipping all its willing employees, who now only have to wave their hand in front of a scanner in order to open locked doors, make the

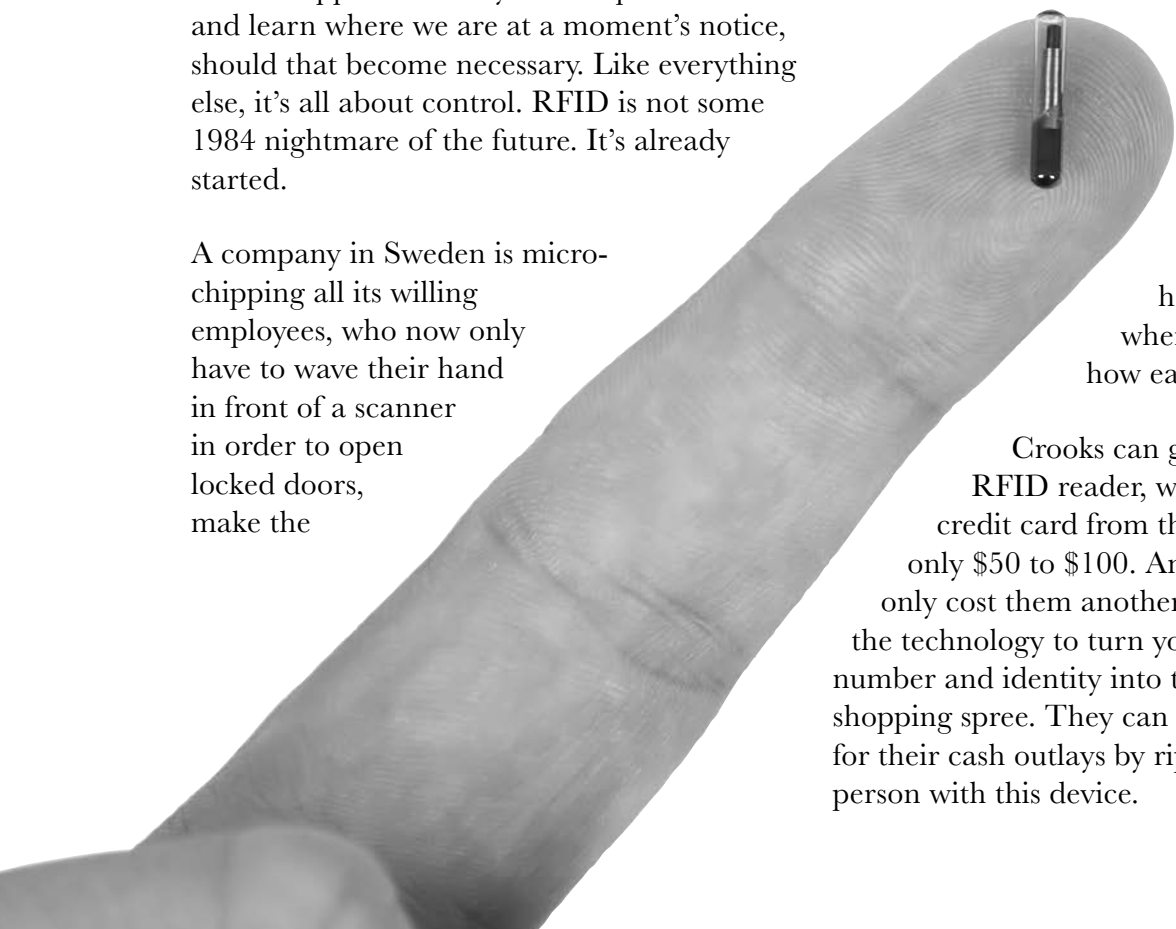
photocopier work, etc. One of the higher-ups at the company actually has his entire business card embedded into his chip. He believes this is the wave of the future. Pretty soon all paper money, coins, debit and credit cards, keys, and even pin codes could be relics of the past.

If offered the "opportunity" to get chipped, you will probably decline due to privacy issues. But you will probably have a much more difficult time avoiding other ways to be tracked. Many new car and truck tires, for example, come automatically chipped with RFID devices. So, when your tires roll over toll road devices or other monitoring stations, they can figure out where you are. Many cars contain RFID chips, as do televisions, monitors and other items. You could have five or six RFID chips in items you own and not even know it.

In addition to figuring out where you are and what you're doing, RFID chips can present other problems for you. If someone is holding an RFID scanner near you and waves it over your wallet, they might be able to scan your credit and debit cards to determine the numbers

on them. Credit card companies are quick to claim their cards are not easily read, but wireless pickpocketing is a hot topic at hacker's conferences, where they demonstrate how easy it is to do.

Crooks can get ahold of an RFID reader, which can scan a credit card from three feet away, for only \$50 to \$100. And it will probably only cost them another \$200 to \$300 for the technology to turn your name, card number and identity into their own personal shopping spree. They can more than pay for their cash outlays by ripping off just one person with this device.



RFID is here to stay and there's nothing we can do about that. But there are some actions we can take to avoid becoming victims:

- Say “no” to anyone suggesting you get chipped. It's something that is going to become more and more common over time.
- When you purchase a car, television, stereo, etc., ask if it contains an RFID chip. If it does and you can find something comparable that doesn't, choose the latter item. If enough people start doing that, manufacturers will think twice about using chips in their products.
- Determine whether your credit and debit cards are vulnerable. Here's how to do that. Take them out of your wallet and flip them over. If the back of your MasterCard says “PayPass” or your Discover Card says “Zip” or your American Express Card says “Express Pay,” you are vulnerable. There are currently more than 100 million of these contactless cards in circulation.
- Purchase and use an RFID-blocking wallet. They cost only \$15 to \$50, which is a steal (pardon the pun) compared to the price

you might have to pay if your information is stolen by a thief with an RFID reader. These wallets come in all shapes and sizes with places for credit cards, passports and identity cards. They're made out of various materials, including leather, special fabrics, metal or other blocking materials.

- Watch for new technology that will help thwart thieves who are constantly looking for new ways to rip people off. For example, there is an RFID signal jammer product in development that actually glows when it detects an RFID reader near you. It blocks that signal of course, but even goes beyond that by jamming the signal of the reader.

CONCLUSION

It's unfortunate that we live in a society where we constantly have to watch out for thieves, and it's even worse when we feel we also need to protect ourselves from a government that chooses to spy on us. But that's the way it is, so let's take the precautions we need to in order to avoid both scenarios. We won't be 100 percent successful, but we'll be able to protect ourselves enough to make it very difficult to turn us into victims. ■

Weak Passwords Could Mess up Your Life

FROM THE OCTOBER 2015 EDITION

There are many mistakes you can make online that could cost you everything from your bank account to your job to your reputation to your relationships.

You could fall for a sob story from a guy who needs \$500 for a heart transplant and promises to give you \$5,000 when he gets better. You could accidentally use your work

email account to apply for another job, learning later that your boss saw it.

You could email an embarrassing image or video of yourself to a friend, then discover it was posted to the Internet for the world to see. You could tell a friend what you think of your spouse, only to find that your “friend” forwarded your comment to your spouse.



The possibilities are endless. But perhaps the three biggest errors you could commit online might be failing to create strong passwords, failing to use different passwords for different accounts and failing to regularly change those passwords.

Why are those three transgressions so potentially damaging? Because if you make it easy for someone to hack into your accounts, they can do to you everything discussed above and a whole lot more. When the bad guys infiltrate your accounts, they can rob you, harass you and destroy your reputation with your employer, family and friends.

You owe it to yourself and your family to do everything within your power to make sure no hackers get into your accounts. And the easiest way to discourage such efforts is by creating strong passwords, using different passwords for different accounts and changing your passwords regularly.

CREATE STRONG PASSWORDS

Hackers love the fact that strong passwords are difficult to remember. They know the majority of people will take the easy way out

and create simple passwords that are easy to recall. Yes, it's annoying to create and remember strong passwords, but do you want to give hackers easy access to your accounts or do you want to make it difficult for them? That's really what it comes down to. So, here are some suggestions to make the process as painless as possible.

Do you use any of the following passwords: "123456", "123456789" or "password"? If so, you might as well send out a press release announcing your passwords to the world. Those are the first passwords hackers guess when they try to get into someone's account. Your password might be something just a little trickier, such as your first name, last name or first and last names, followed by "123". It will take hackers an additional 30 seconds to figure those out.

Even passwords you might think are strong might not be. The U.S. Defense Department's research agency discovered that three of the most common password patterns are one uppercase letter, followed by three to six lowercase letters, followed by two to five digits. If those letters spell out part or all of your name, hackers will need no more than about five minutes to infiltrate your account.

The strongest passwords are the ones that follow three simple rules:

- They must include a random collection of uppercase and lowercase letters.
- They must include several numbers and symbols.
- They must be at least eight characters in length (the more the better).

Let's say I gave you the following password for one of your accounts: "Yan#BaH7Dca&TT9." Your first thought would probably be, "I'll never remember something that long and complicated." But if your favorite song lyric were "You ain't nothin' but a hound dog, cryin' all the time," you'd have no problem remembering the order of the letters. And if "#" and "&" were the symbols you use the most often and "7" and "9" were your favorite numbers, you'd remember them as well.

Create your own passwords using seemingly random letters, numbers and symbols that you can remember but which hackers would never guess in a million years.

DON'T USE THE SAME PASSWORDS

Once you've created a very strong password, make a few more so that you can have a different password for each of your accounts. If a hacker somehow figures out the password to one of your accounts, he will find some of your other accounts and use that same password to see if he can get into them. If you decide you only want three or four passwords and need to double up, at least make sure you have unique passwords for your bank and credit card accounts.

Now, I'm not going to pretend that it's easy to remember five, six, seven or eight strong

passwords. It isn't. And I would not suggest writing them down on a piece of paper that you carry around in your wallet because if your wallet is lost or stolen, all your accounts could be hacked even easier than if a hacker were trying to figure out your passwords.

Fortunately, there's help. Check out <https://keepass.info> and www.dashlane.com. You can keep all your passwords in a very secure, encrypted place online and access them with just one single password – for free.

CHANGE YOUR PASSWORDS PERIODICALLY

This is one place where the phrase, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" doesn't apply. If you're a creature of habit like I am, you probably don't like to change things such as passwords, especially when they appear to be working fine. But some hackers go to great lengths to figure out passwords, including using computer programs that spend days, weeks and even months trying to capture passwords... one letter, number and symbol at a time.

So, change your passwords – even the strongest ones – every three months or so, just to keep those %*!@&^!\$ hackers frustrated.

One last thing. You could have the strongest passwords in the world and still get hacked if your financial institution suffers a security breach. Many of those accounts are still not accessible to hackers unless they guess your security question answers. So, make those as difficult to figure out as your passwords. For your mother's maiden name, use something like "The Star Spangled Banner." For your pet's name, use something like "Eastern Europe." And for your favorite car, use something like "Perry Mason."

Staying smart online could protect your money, job, reputation and relationships. ■

GOVERNMENT INTRUSIONS

If you feel like you're being watched, you probably are. And if you believe you're not being watched... well, you're probably still being watched. That's the way it is these days and it's just going to keep getting worse due to the increasing sophistication of surveillance tools. But there are a few things you can do to limit your visibility to Big Brother.

Every Move You Make Is Being Watched

FROM THE JUNE 2014 EDITION

The following article is the first in a three-part series regarding government spying.

September 11, 2001, will always be remembered as a national tragedy in which nearly 3,000 lives were lost due to terrorist attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., as well as another potential attack thwarted over the skies of southwestern Pennsylvania. It will be recalled as a day when first responders, firefighters, law enforcement officials and countless private citizens made enormous sacrifices that saved many lives and helped give hope to millions of grieving Americans.

September 11, 2001, will also be remembered as the launch point for a new era of dramatically increased government surveillance of Americans. Under the all-encompassing banner of "national security," spying on the activities of law-abiding citizens

in all kinds of ways has risen significantly since 9/11 and continues to expand as new technologies emerge.

Many people are rightfully worried that the U.S. government is giving itself the power to gather intelligence on every American that could be used in future prosecutions that don't have anything to do with terrorism. Former National Security Agency (NSA) senior official Thomas Drake was quoted as saying that there was a "key decision made shortly after 9/11 which began to rapidly turn the United States of America into the equivalent of a foreign nation for dragnet blanket electronic surveillance."

Former NSA Technical Director William Binney added, "...the government is accumulating (significant amounts) of information about every individual person and it's a very dangerous process."

The American Civil Liberties Union has stated that the fear of terrorism is what has led to this new era of overzealous police intelligence activity directed mainly against political activists, racial and religious minorities, and immigrants, but also against ordinary people with no police records.

Compounding the problem of the growth of government's surveillance powers through advanced technology has been the weakening of previous legal restrictions on those powers. And with much of the surveillance being done in secret, privacy and free speech rights of all Americans have been placed at risk.

Americans are the most spied-upon nation of people in the history of the world...more so than the Russians of Stalin's era or the Germans of Hitler's time. Of course, the Internet, smart phones, electronic medical records and digital credit card transactions have much to do with the advanced abilities of those who spy.

Quite frankly, spying has become so rampant, so technologically advanced and so difficult to prove that it's impossible to stay completely under the radar. But there are some ways to minimize the odds that you'll be an open book to anyone who wants to find out where you are, what you're saying and with whom you're associating. We'll take a look at those ways in future editions of the newsletter.

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE FOURTH AMENDMENT?

The Fourth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution states, "The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no Warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by Oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the person or things to be seized."



Let's take a look at how our two most recent presidents (George W. Bush and Barack Obama) and Congress have justified violating the privacy rights of Americans.

Once it was learned that President Richard Nixon had approved spying on Americans and foreigners living in the U.S., complaints led to the passage of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) in 1978. This act required that all domestic surveillance be subject to the search warrant requirement written into the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution, except for spying on foreign agents operating in the U.S.

But the Patriot Act of 2001 permitted federal agents to write their own search warrants, which in effect did away with the FISA-issued

search warrant requirement when the foreign person was outside the U.S. So, if you or any other American sends an email or makes a phone call to anyone outside the U.S, federal agents may be reading or listening, despite not having a warrant and despite having no suspicions or any evidence of wrongdoing by you or the person with whom you are communicating.

It seems very clear that this is a direct violation of the Fourth Amendment, and yet in late 2012, Congress voted to extend FISA by another five years and Obama signed it into law. There's no other way to express this. The president and Congress have violated the Fourth Amendment to the Constitution, again under the all-encompassing umbrella of "national security." ■

Surveillance Tools Now More Sophisticated

FROM THE JULY 2014 EDITION

The following article is the second in a three-part series regarding government spying.

During 2013, we learned what we long suspected...that the government listens to our phone calls and reads our emails. We used to be called paranoid for voicing those suspicions, but now everyone knows the truth and many Democrats are just as upset about it as Republicans and Libertarians are.

The National Security Administration is just one of the agencies that is prying into what used to be our private lives. The establishment of the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and a variety of other security agencies following 9/11 was for the purpose of keeping Americans safe from

future terrorist attacks. But the government is now granting itself surveillance powers well beyond what most Americans believe is necessary.

The U.S. government has been collecting and storing phone calls, purchases, emails, text messages, Internet searches, social media communications, health information, employment history, the travel and student records of Americans, and much more for over 10 years.

The government has also been accused of using facial recognition software and surveillance cameras to track where everyone is going. Of course, cell phones and their makers can do a great job of that themselves. In 2011, major cell phone carriers including Verizon and AT&T responded to at least

1.3 million requests from law enforcement officials for cell phone locations and other data.

Information about a typical American is collected in more than 20 different ways during everyday activities, according to a recent *Wall Street Journal* analysis. Fifteen years ago, more than half of these types of surveillance tools were unavailable or at least not in widespread use, says a professor of electrical engineering at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point who studies tracking.

Former NSA Technical Director William Binney said that the American government is collecting approximately 100 billion 1,000-character emails per day and 20 trillion communications of all types every year. Add to this onslaught of surveillance domestic drones, wire taps, smart meters, street cameras and programs that reward neighbors and co-workers for turning in law breakers and others guilty of “suspicious” behavior, and you have a “Big Brother” society that our Founding Fathers would not have dreamed possible.

And if all of that were not enough, it has now become possible for one security agency to share information with other agencies with the click of a button. Simply put, there’s no place to hide. Privacy and individual rights go hand in hand, and it’s no coincidence that in the most despicable totalitarian societies, privacy is the first thing to be taken away.

Quite frankly, spying has become so rampant, so technologically advanced and so difficult to prove that it’s impossible to stay completely under the radar. But there are some ways to minimize the odds that you’ll be an open book to anyone who wants to find out where you are, what you’re saying and with whom you’re associating.

CELL PHONE TRACKING

Is Big Brother coming after our cell phones? Actually, he’s coming after us *through* our

cell phones. The government seems to be increasingly interested in our calls, movements and purchases, and a warrant is no longer necessary to seize our records.

In 2012, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit ruled that using the GPS feature of a suspect’s cell phone is permissible – without a warrant – to track that suspect’s whereabouts. Earlier in the year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that law enforcement agencies must obtain a warrant in order to place a GPS tracking device on a vehicle. But because utilizing a cell phone’s built-in GPS does not involve the physical interaction of law enforcement, the appeals court said it did not require a warrant.

Organizations such as the American Civil Liberties Union, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and the Center for Democracy and Technology have argued that the Fourth Amendment implies a warrant is required for cell phone tracking. But suspects will get no help in this area from the Obama Administration, which has said that Americans have no “reasonable expectation of privacy” when it comes to their cell phones’ whereabouts.

You probably have your credit locked (or at least you should). You have locks on your car and your house. You lock and encrypt your bank accounts and investments. But what is the one thing that has access to all of these items and knows where you are and what you are saying at all times?

That’s right, your cell phone is rapidly becoming the little spy in your pocket. Here’s how you can secure it today:

Password protect. This will prevent most casual thieves from stealing your info, but 95 percent of people don’t do it. Plus, if a police officer asks for your phone, you are not obligated to provide the password. For smart phones, apps such as Lookout can be programmed to back up your data and help you find a lost phone.

I'M WATCHING YOU



Encrypt your data. GadgetTrak offers a service that will encrypt your data and back it up in the cloud. There are ways around encryption, but this will stop 99 percent of hackers.

Wipe it remotely. What if someone steals your phone and goes to work hacking into it and obtaining your passwords, financial information and recent whereabouts? Just use GadgetTrak, SeekDroid or Webroot to remotely wipe your phone's data. This can be done from your home computer.

These days, we have to remember that the more access we have to our information, the more access everyone else has to it. And companies such as Apple, Amazon, Google and Microsoft are making sure that all of their devices are connected seamlessly. Hackers could access one service and use its features to hack into our other services to steal our information or completely wipe out our data.

Keep your various devices and services separated as much as possible to limit the damage one lost item can do to you and your family. ■

How Do I Spy on Thee? Let Me Count The Ways

FROM THE AUGUST 2014 EDITION

The following article is the last in a three-part series regarding government spying.

Listening to our phone calls and reading our emails are just two of the ways the U.S. government keeps tabs on its citizens. There are plenty more, so let's take a look at a few of them.

LICENSE PLATES

As the sophistication of surveillance technologies grows, the government and law enforcement officials are adopting them to keep track of where you are and what you're doing, even if you are not suspected of any crime. For example, police in some cities are

routinely tracking vehicles through the use of cameras mounted on patrol cars that record the license plate number and the time and location of the vehicle when the photo was taken.

In recent years, the Department of Homeland Security has distributed more than \$50 million in federal grants to law enforcement agencies for automated license plate recognition systems. An estimated 37 percent of large U.S. police agencies use automated plate reading systems, as revealed in a 2010 study.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the Riverside County Sheriff's Department in California captured approximately 6 million license plate scans, including 2 million unique plates, during a two-year period ending in the summer of 2012.

DOMESTIC DRONES

The U.S. uses unmanned aircraft to hunt for terrorists in Pakistan and elsewhere, and similar drones are already appearing in the skies above the U.S. Now that the U.S. Congress has passed the Federal Aviation Administration Modernization and Reform Act, thousands more unmanned drones are slated to appear in American skies by 2015.

A Brookings Institution fellow argues that there is much about which to be alarmed with this new program, including determining who is eligible to fly the drones and where. Safety is a concern, as at least two drones crashed in the U.S. in 2012 – a Navy drone in Maryland and a county police department drone in Texas – and there have already been cases of drones being hijacked remotely.

Of course, privacy concerns are already being voiced about the situation. Drone technology should be used to catch terrorists, spy on foreign enemies, protect our soldiers and keep U.S. citizens safe, not to spy on, scare or entrap people. We need to let our lawmakers know how we feel about this.

SMART METERS

One of the many important reasons to get off the electrical grid is the “smart meter.” Some people call it the “dumb meter,” but power companies will think they’re smart for coming up with it if it can save them money.

These electrical meters record consumption of electric energy and communicate that information back to the utility for monitoring and billing purposes. Advanced metering infrastructure devices can also be used for measuring water and natural gas consumption. On the surface, they don’t sound too bad. They measure consumption in real time (or close to it), they notify the utility of a power outage and they communicate the quality of the power being consumed.

But there are plenty of reasons to be concerned about these smart meters, including reasons connected with security and privacy. Most security concerns focus on the relative ease with which wireless technology can be hacked, as well as the remote control “kill switch” that has been incorporated into smart meters. Agencies have been accused of sweeping smart meter plans under the carpet to avoid public input and obtain approval by using the term “smart grid.”

ENVIRONMENTAL SPYING

Have you ever been driving along a rural road and seen a small plane flying over a field of cattle? Seems like a beautiful, pastoral scene, right? It might be. Or it could be that the inhabitants of the plane are members of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) shooting photos and video in search of environmental violations.

In 2012, Midwest cattle farmers complained about the spying, but the EPA defended the flights as necessary to enforce the law setting standards for how cattle feedlots are to dispose of manure to avoid water pollution. Cattle farmers stated that photos taken

from high in the air could result in faulty assumptions.

WHAT'S NEXT?

As technology continues to advance by leaps and bounds, there's no telling what form government spying will take five years from now. If the government has its way, perhaps we'll all be hypnotized into turning ourselves in for every minor infraction imaginable. In the meantime, here's a quick look at a few emerging technologies being used to keep an eye on us:

- **Digital Human Tracking Tags.** So far, human tracking implants have been used mainly for medical purposes, but would it surprise you if soon every child born in the U.S. is implanted with a microchip so that they can always be located?
- **Laser Listeners.** This eavesdropping device uses a beam of laser light that can be aimed at the window of a house. When it bounces off an object in a room, it can be read by an optical receiver, reproducing the conversation in that room.
- **Compliance Software.** Using intimidating strategies such as warning companies that penalties could be severe for non-compliance with the Patriot Act, high-tech firms are selling compliance software to private companies, which then identify and report "suspicious" purchases made by their customers.

CONCLUSION

Former Supreme Court Justice Louis Brandeis once wrote, "Freedom to think as you will and to speak as you think are means indispensable to the discovery and spread of political truth."

The government is supposed to work for us, not intimidate and control us. The threat of constant spying has the effect of making many of us tone down our rhetoric, or perhaps avoid contentious dialog altogether. When people don't speak out with dissenting opinions, the government will assume those opinions don't exist. To have any chance of fulfilling the American dream, Americans need to be free to express their opinions without fear of government reprisal.

Washington Post reporter Robert O'Harrow, Jr., wrote in his book titled, *No Place to Hide*, "Surveillance comes with a price. It dulls the edge of public debate, imposes a sense of conformity and introduces the uneasy feeling of being watched. It chills culture and stifles dissent."

Amen to that. ■



PERSONAL FINANCES

At the end of the day, it's not about how much money you make. And it's not about how much money you spend. It's really only about the gap between those two numbers. So while trying to earn as much money as you can is very important, equally essential is figuring out how to spend as little as possible. Helping you with those strategies is what these articles are all about.

How to Spend Less Money at the Supermarket While Eating Well

FROM THE DECEMBER 2013 EDITION

Everyone reading this article probably has at least two things in common. You need to eat in order to survive and you want your money to go as far as it can.

In most years, there is enough food produced globally to ensure that everyone has more than enough calories to remain sufficiently nourished. The number one problem, however, is distribution, which can be negatively affected by economics, the mismanagement of resources and severe weather.

In recent years, the world has seen unprecedented food shortages and rising food prices that have proved catastrophic for people in many countries. Food riots broke out in more than 25 countries in 2008 and there were additional food riots in Tunisia and Egypt in 2011. Global conditions are shaping up for a possible repeat in 2014.



Grain reserves are currently so dangerously low that severe weather in the United States or other food-exporting nations could trigger a major hunger crisis, and that warning comes directly from the United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organization.

In addition to shortages, food prices are also villains. The smaller the supply of food, the higher the price. An increasing number of people around the world – including in the U.S. – are finding themselves unable to put as much food on the table as they used to. In fact, food prices are at their highest levels ever recorded, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that they will rise by 3 to 4 percent in the U.S. this year.

Fortunately, there are some things you can do about food shortages and rising food prices that will help you and your family both survive and thrive.

SUPERMARKET STRATEGIES

One of the best ways to determine whether you are being negatively affected by rising food prices is to look at what percentage of your income goes toward food compared to how it used to be. In the countries that have experienced food riots, people are spending up to 50 percent of their income on food. Here in the U.S., the average is probably between 15 and 20 percent, but that's definitely more than it was 10 years ago and it's heading up.

In order to deal with rising food costs, Americans are using a variety of tactics, including working a second job if they can get one, cutting some meat out of their diets, dipping into their savings, and adding more debt.

But there's a much easier and less painful way to slash the amount of money we spend at the supermarket. In fact, by employing a variety of very basic strategies, it's possible to cut our grocery bills in half. The savings are out there, just waiting for you to take advantage

of them. The great thing is that anyone, at any income level, can put these strategies into practice. And you don't have to sacrifice taste or nutrition while making these changes.

SALE PRICES & BULK BUYS

The idea here is to figure out what the lowest price is for an item at the supermarket over the course of six to eight weeks, and then buy it in bulk when it's at that price. Let's say that a box of spaghetti noodles normally costs around \$2.49, but you are able to determine that every six weeks or so it goes on sale for \$1.99. By buying six weeks' worth of spaghetti noodles at the sales price, you'll save \$27 over the course of a year.

That's just one item. By using that same method for purchasing chicken breasts, you could save about \$54 a year. And you might save another \$50 a year on cereal and \$25 a year on soup. If you factor in all of the savings that you can realize for all of your non-perishables, the savings could easily amount to \$3,000 or more per year.

COUPONS

Manufacturers and stores reported that American shoppers redeemed approximately \$4.6 billion worth of coupons in 2011. Coupons can help you save a significant amount of money, if you only use them for items you would have bought anyway. If you use them for items you don't need, you're wasting your money.

There are a variety of ways you can get a hold of coupons, including the Sunday newspaper. Other places are manufacturers' websites and sites such as www.coupons.com. Some stores will allow you to double your coupons, using one from the manufacturer and one from the store on the same purchase. www.couponmom.com will help you learn how to gather coupons in the most time efficient manner. Another site is www.mycoupons.com, where visitors can redeem coupons for online purchases.

OTHER TACTICS

Sam's Club, Costco and other warehouse clubs can give you savings on bulk items.

- Look for in-store flyers and use them to get an even better price than what you figured to get through a sale.
- You'll usually save money by purchasing a store brand over a name brand, and it will probably have the same nutritional value.
- If your store has a frequent shopper program – also called a customer loyalty program – join it.

HOME STRATEGIES

Of course, it's one thing to recommend that someone "buy in bulk" and it's another for the buyer to make sure he or she has enough room at home for that bulk. Depending on the size of your residence, your pantry space, closet space, etc., you may have to get a little creative.

The first thing you should do is to go through your kitchen pantry and get rid of anything that's expired or that you know you'll never use, and organize the stuff you've decided to keep. You'll probably need more space than what your kitchen pantry can provide, so do

the same thing with your other closets. Some people also store food in their basement and garage.

The other thing you'll want to do if you don't already have one is to buy an extra freezer. The more meat and other frozen goods you're able to keep in the freezer, the more money you're going to be able to save, assuming you buy these goods at their optimal sales price.

LEFTOVERS

Leftovers is a dirty word for some people who want a fresh meal every day for lunch and every night for dinner. All I can ask is, do you want to save money or don't you? If you do, you'll figure out a way to eat leftovers, at least for lunch two or three days a week. People who eat leftovers have something else "left over" at the end of the month. It's called cash.

Your mortgage is probably pretty much set at a certain level. Same with your car payments and health insurance. There's probably not much you can do to save money in those areas. But groceries are different. There's considerable flexibility here, and if you take advantage of it, you can save yourself a lot of money. ■

The 37 Best Ways to Significantly Lower Your Home's Power Bills

FROM THE JUNE 2014 EDITION

After this past winter, which in certain areas of the country was the coldest since they began recording temperatures, many people are looking for ways to slash their power bills. The amount of money that many of us shelled out to our local utilities last winter in order to

keep the heat going was enough to sabotage any budget.

One of the best ways to cut utility bills is by getting off the vulnerable electrical grid as much as possible. Four ways to do that are by

installing solar panels, a wind turbine, a solar water heater and a solar cooker at your home. Regardless of whether you are able to do that, there are many additional activities you can conduct to cut your power costs. Following are 37 of them:

- Use natural lighting as often as possible by keeping shades, curtains and window treatments above the windows open during the day.
- Regardless of whether you're using standard light bulbs or energy-efficient bulbs, keep in mind that using one high-wattage bulb is less expensive than several low-wattage bulbs.
- Turn lights off when they're not being used, even if it's just for a short time.
- Adjust light levels to what is needed. Lights frequently don't need to be as bright as they are in a room.
- Incandescent light bulbs have lower price tags compared to other bulbs, but they



are actually more expensive to use. LED's use 10 times less energy and last 50 times longer than incandescent lights.

- Laptop computers use less energy than desktop models. Turn them off overnight, as well as your printers and monitors.
- Unplug your battery chargers when your devices are fully charged. Chargers continue to draw power when they're plugged in, even if they're not connected to a device.
- Installing aerating, low-flow faucets and showerheads is a great way to reduce water consumption. The shower is the biggest user of hot water in a household.
- Shortening your shower times will cut hot water usage and use up less energy from your hot water heater.
- Cover bare floors with carpeting or throw rugs, which will aid with heat retention. Wear layers at home in winter so you can keep the thermostat lower.
- Conduct a room-by-room vent inventory and make sure that each one is clean and not covered by furniture, drapes, articles of clothing or other objects.
- Replace air filters regularly, including ones for furnaces, exhaust hoods, humidifiers and vacuums. Sometimes less expensive filters are better for airflow than more expensive brands.
- Whenever possible, run full loads of laundry rather than partial loads. An average family can save 3,400 gallons of water per year by running full loads.
- Wash your clothes in cold water, which will allow the hot water heater to take a break and will save on energy and money. Nearly 90 percent of the energy consumed by a washing machine goes to heating water.
- Next time a new dryer is needed, purchase one that includes an electronic sensor that shuts off the dryer when clothes are dry.

- Clean the lint filter in the dryer after every load. A clean filter allows the dryer to work more efficiently.
- Use your dishwasher's air-dry setting. If it doesn't have one, you can turn the dishwasher off after the rinse cycle, open the unit's door and allow the dishes to air dry.
- Set the refrigerator temperature to between 36 and 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Keep meats and fish lower in the refrigerator, and fruits and vegetables higher. The freezer should be set between -10 and 0 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Clean the refrigerator and freezer units once or twice a year, including removing dust from condenser coils, fins, evaporator pans and motors.
- When it comes time to replace a refrigerator, freezer, dishwasher, clothes washer or dryer, and other electrical appliances, choose energy-efficient models.
- As much as possible, use small appliances, including toaster ovens, slow cookers and electric skillets, which use less energy than larger appliances.
- Use cold water when operating the garbage disposal. Grease can be solidified much easier in cold water than in hot water, moving it efficiently through the disposal and pipes.
- If possible, use natural gas for heating. It's less expensive than other heating fuels.
- Use portable electrical space heaters when the entire house does not need to be heated.
- Limit the use of fireplaces, which can let more heat out of a house than they produce within the house.
- Set the home thermostat to 68 to 70 degrees during cold days and 65 to 68 at night. In the summer, set it to 78 degrees.
- In the winter, leave drapes, blinds and window shades open during the day to enable the sun to heat the home. During the summer, close them to keep the heat out.
- Get a tune-up for your heating, ventilating and air conditioning system once a year. Never stack anything against it or drape anything over it.
- Ceiling fans, which use no more electricity than a standard light bulb, can be used in various rooms instead of an air conditioner. They should turn in a counter-clockwise direction in the summer and clockwise in the winter.
- Make sure that all ductwork is properly sealed. Even a small leak can be a big energy waster.
- Plant trees on the sunny side of your house to keep it shaded during the hotter months. They can also help block winds during the winter.
- Put outdoor dusk-to-dawn lights on an automatic timer. Or, consider using motion sensor lighting only.
- Grill meat and other food outside whenever possible in order to avoid using the oven.
- Insulate your attic, which will allow for less energy usage to keep the house warm.
- Insulate around windows and doors by weather stripping and caulking areas where there are air leaks.
- When installing new windows, select double-paned, thermal windows.
- Conduct an energy audit on your home to determine where the house is losing energy. ■



RETIREMENT

3 Sure-Fire Ways to Deal With Retirement Regardless of Your Age or Income Level

FROM THE JULY 2015 EDITION

Much like many readers of the *Patriot Alliance Messenger*, Sun City, Arizona, is aging gracefully. Located about a 30-minute drive from Phoenix, it is the oldest, active-adult, age-restricted community in the country. It includes 40,000 residents, seven swimming pools, eight golf courses and very few children. Each of the 27,000 houses in the village has at least one resident 55 years of age or older, and the average age is over 70.

When the community opened in 1960, developers weren't trying to sell houses so much as they were an active lifestyle among retirees. They were pitching the idea that instead of sitting alone and waiting to die, retirees should be swimming, playing golf, bowling, making jewelry or any number of activities.

Today, the community is still going strong at age 55. In fact, it's receiving a facelift with the

installation of solar panels and a new pickle ball facility. Grandchildren of the original residents are moving to Sun City upon their retirement.

In the U.S., we now have the largest generation of retirees in American history. You may be one of them or you may be preparing for retirement, regardless of your age. What does retirement look like for you? Whether you plan to move to a retirement village or just stay put, there are plenty of things to think about in order to make your retirement as pleasant as possible.

For many of us, thinking about retirement can be frightening. Something we should look forward to becomes uncomfortable to consider because we haven't had the opportunity to prepare for it properly or the recent recession stole some of our savings or ObamaCare has taken too big of a bite out of our healthcare budgets. Retirement years should be a time when we do things we never had time for before, but a lack of funds might cause us to delay that season of life.

Regardless of where we are financially, we can all try to follow a simple three-part plan. First, try to make as much money as you can. Second, secure what you've managed to save. Third, chop expenses as much as possible.

MAKING MONEY

It goes without saying that the more cash someone has when entering retirement, the more likely the person will have a sufficient amount to live on throughout his or her retirement years. Among ways to generate cash now are:

- **Make money from your hobbies.** If your favorite hobbies are making things, people might be willing to buy them. The only thing better than making money is having fun while you're doing it.
- **Rent your space.** Do you have a room in your home that you could rent? Or

perhaps space in a basement or garage that someone could use for storage? There are people out there who could use either or both.

- **Take advantage of Social Security.** You can increase the amount of money you receive from Social Security by waiting as long as possible to receive checks. I know it's tempting to take that money now, but if you can wait, you'll be glad you did.
- **Sell your stuff.** If you're like most people, you probably have a bunch of perfectly usable stuff that you don't need anymore. Instead of letting it clutter your basement or garage, sell it at a garage sale or on eBay or Craigslist. This could include everything from clothes and dishes to books and records.
- **Work part-time.** Regardless of whether you have a fulltime job or are already retired, you might want to take on part-time work in the 10 to 20 hours per week range. Use your talents to bring in extra cash that will help considerably down the road.

SECURING MONEY

The Obama Administration can talk all day about how the unemployment rate is lower and the economy is improving, but tell that to the millions of unemployed and underemployed, as well as those who have given up looking for jobs. If the "improvement" is built on faulty statistics, we might be facing another recession or depression.

Forbes magazine has recommended diversifying portfolios so they are at 50 percent stocks and 50 percent bonds. If safety is your goal, go for 20 percent stocks and 80 percent bonds, but if you're more of a risk taker, flip flop those two. If you want to get more specific, one recommendation from *Forbes* is: 30 percent U.S. stocks, 30 percent foreign stocks, 10 percent high-grade bonds, 10 percent high-yield bonds, 10 percent

Inflation Adjusted Treasuries, 5 percent Precious Metals and 5 percent Real Estate Investment Trusts.

Regardless of how you secure what you've saved, think about how much you've saved so far, how much more you'll need for retirement, your spending habits, inflation, expenses that will go away with retirement and others that will start, the cost of your healthcare, and all of your sources of income, including Social Security.

TRIMMING EXPENSES

There's something that is just as important as earning money and that's limiting what you spend. Cutting back is easier said than done, but following are a few suggestions:

- **Grab those senior discounts.** If you're a senior, take advantage of the discounts you can receive at various businesses, including restaurants and hotels.
- **Stop making impulse buys.** Only purchase items you intend to buy when you

enter the store, unless it's a great deal on something you were planning to buy in the near future.

- **Sell a vehicle.** Do you have an extra car that rarely gets driven? I know it's nice to have a safety net, but with registration fees, insurance, maintenance and repairs, keeping it can be expensive.
- **Move to a smaller home.** Your home probably holds sentimental value to you, but if you can handle the separation anxiety, a move to a condominium or smaller house could save money every month.
- **Save on travel.** When you need to travel, look for deals. Sometimes traveling on certain days of the week can make a difference.

Sun City, Arizona, may not be your final destination, but a comfortable retirement should be. Help yourself get there through wise decisions. ■

How Can I Prepare for the Next Great Depression?

FROM THE OCTOBER 2017 EDITION

Since President Donald Trump took office, the United States financial markets have been on the rise. Many are confident the economy will continue this upward trajectory. But what if it doesn't? The fact is, everything could change overnight due to outside factors such as the North Korea threat, race riots, a crumbling infrastructure and an increasingly vulnerable electrical grid.

Today's economic climate is strangely reminiscent of another time in history, serving as a reminder that nothing lasts forever. At the end of the 1920s, the U.S. was happily enjoying the most robust economy in the world. Due to World War I destruction, Europeans struggled while Americans thrived. Then nearly overnight, everything fell apart.



The stock market crash of 1929 plunged us into the longest, deepest economic crisis in history. Kicking off what is still known as The Great Depression, a global economic depression lasting an entire decade negatively affected nearly everyone in its wake.

Personal income, tax revenue, profits and prices dropped, while international trade plunged by more than 50 percent. Unemployment in the U.S. rose to a shocking 25 percent, and in some countries as high as 33 percent. Cities worldwide were hit hard, especially those dependent on heavy industry. Construction was virtually halted and farm communities suffered a great loss as crop prices fell roughly 60 percent. Eventually, in 1939, the economy started to recover, thus proving that a comeback is always possible. But until it materializes, survival is grim.

So, what can we do to prepare for the next depression? Here are some key lessons from The Great Depression that we can use to start preparing immediately.

GROW AND STORE FOOD

The ability to grow and store your own food is key to surviving during any emergency. During depression times, it was rare not to have a garden and food storage. In today's world of convenience, this isn't as common.

Many people only plan meals the day of, with multiple stops to grocery stores just hours prior. Would you survive if you didn't have the convenience of a fully-stocked grocery store?

BECOME MORE SELF-RELIANT

If you're reading this, you're likely well on your way to a life of self-reliance. Take a moment and write down some additional goals in this area and map out how to accomplish them. For example, are you able to survive without power or do you need to purchase a generator?

USE CASH, NOT CREDIT

Avoid debt at all costs. It's understandable that most people can't buy homes with cash, but you should do everything in your power to eliminate current debt and avoid accumulating any new debt. Prioritize the debt you have to pay it off faster, and always make sure you have savings. Stop using credit to make purchases, and start using monthly, weekly and daily budgets.

PRACTICE FRUGALITY

Learn to go without if you need to. In today's culture, frugality is seen as a negative trait, where in depression times it was considered positive. Frugality takes planning, critical

thinking and lots of creativity, all of which are important life skills to possess. Remember, it's not about being cheap; it's about using what you have.

ENJOY SIMPLICITY

Learn how to enjoy the simple, small pleasures in life. Spend family time together without spending money on entertainment. Families during depression times still enjoyed themselves in spite of difficult times. Use your imagination and ingenuity to entertain your family without modern conveniences. You can hike or play sports or board games together. Not only will you learn to entertain your family without spending money, you'll also see that you can stay fit without a pricey gym membership.

NURTURE COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS

These are the people you'll be closest to in trying times. You likely won't be able to count on the government for help, so find people you can count on.

BECOME A DEAL-WATCHER

It's not reasonable to skip spending money altogether, but are you ensuring you're getting the biggest bang for your buck? Are you clipping coupons to grocery shop? What about tracking double-sale day at the grocery store? When you opt to spend money, spend wisely.

LEARN RESILIENCE

For unknown trying times ahead, the ability to be resilient will be critical. Depending on how your particular city would fair during a depression/recession, you may need to move, change jobs, etc. There are many cases in which being a more resilient person will prepare you for the worst.

DO IT YOURSELF

Know how to do as much as possible yourself. When money is short, you won't have a choice. You either do things yourself or go without. Learn how to fix and maintain your home. Learn how to service your car with oil changes, tire rotation, etc. Nearly all household cleaning supplies and detergents can be made at home. Learn how to sew your own clothes and wash them by hand.

EAT REAL FOOD

Find ways to incorporate more fruits, vegetables and whole grains into your diet. Less packaged and processed foods will save you money immediately, and will also save healthcare costs in the long run.

LEARN NATURAL REMEDIES

Visiting a doctor each time you have signs of an illness is costly and unnecessary. Modern medicine, while important, isn't needed to treat simple illness such as common colds. Learn how to treat illness at home with herbs and natural antibiotics. In times of trouble, you won't have the resources to visit a healthcare professional for every ache and pain.

LEARN TO LIVE OFF THE POWER GRID

Relying on government to provide power is something we take for granted. Our grid system is growing increasingly vulnerable and it's only a matter of time before it collapses entirely. Be prepared and know how to live without electricity. During the depression era, very few rural homes had electricity, and they managed to survive.

We all hope and pray that America will never experience another Great Depression. But it could be looming out there. As with pretty much everything else in life, it's best to be prepared. ■

MULTIPURPOSE ITEMS

One of the great benefits of focusing on survival issues is learning how common, ordinary objects can be used for a wide variety of purposes. Multipurpose items are especially important in survival settings because there may be a limited amount of room to store or carry different items. If one item has several uses and another only has one, that first item is likely the one you're going to want to pack in your bug-out bag.

19 Ways Duct Tape Can Save Your Life... Or at Least Make It a Lot Easier to Fix Problems

FROM THE MAY 2015 EDITION

Over the last few years, duct tape has been mentioned in a variety of my blogs, newsletter articles and product bonus reports as a great multi-purpose item to keep handy at home and to include in a bug-out bag. On more than one occasion I've added a comment such as, "Duct tape has many other usages as well, but that's a subject for another day." Well, guess what? Today is that day.

This article provides 19 ways you can use duct tape for everything from simple tasks to more complex activities to life-saving efforts in a survival situation. Some of these ideas you have undoubtedly already used, while others you've heard or thought about. And for others, you may find yourself saying, "I've

never considered that." Regardless how many of these ideas for the usage of duct tape fall into which category, I hope you can learn and/or be reminded of different ways to use this simple but valuable item.

BACKGROUND

First, a little history on duct tape. Johnson & Johnson first developed this versatile item in the 1940s at the request of the U.S. military. Its initial intended purpose was to seal boxes of ammunition in order to keep moisture out. Following that successful debut, duct tape has taken on many forms and functions, and is now found in homes and supply kits, as well as camping, fishing and hunting bags.



DUCT TAPE USES

- Clothing – If you're in the wilderness and an item of clothing such as sandals, visors, gloves or footwear has worn out, you can layer and form duct tape to fashion a temporary version of one of them.
- Blister care – When doing an unusual amount of walking in the wild, you're probably going to get blisters. Duct tape is perfect for holding a cotton ball or sterile cloth over an infected area to help it heal faster.
- Leak fixer – For small leaks in boats or buckets, duct tape could do the job. I wouldn't count on it to help you cross the Atlantic, but it might assist in reaching the other side of a pond or small lake.
- Enemy binder – Temporarily restraining someone trying to assault or rob you in the great outdoors may become necessary, in which case duct tape will hold him fast for a while.
- Clothesline – Wet clothes in the wilderness are not just an inconvenience. They can

be a death sentence. Use duct tape to form a clothesline where wet clothes can be suspended over a fire to benefit from the wind and rising heat.

- Trail marker – Bread crumbs may have worked for Hansel and Gretel, but if you're trying to find your way out of the woods, leaving patches of duct tape on trees and rocks is more likely to save your life.
- Vehicle repair – Duct tape has been known to serve as a great short-term fix-it for a leaky hose, a broken fan belt and rusted-out muffler, or to keep a loose window in place.
- Medical usage – You're much more likely to roll an ankle or sprain a wrist on the uneven terrain of the wild than in your neighborhood, so have duct tape available for tightly wrapping a joint or attaching a split to a broken bone. You can also use duct tape to form a sling for an arm injury.
- Glass protector – If the wind is strong and a window is weak, use duct tape in a crisscross pattern to hold it in place and lessen the chances of breakage. Even if the window breaks, the tape could keep dangerous shards of glass from falling.
- Wound waterproofer – If a wound is already dressed, one of the best ways to keep the gauze or cloth from getting wet is by wrapping the whole thing in duct tape. It could also keep debris and germs from causing an infection.
- Frostbite protection – In the severe cold, it doesn't take long for exposed skin to suffer frostbite. If necessary, use it directly on your face. You'd rather lose a little dead skin and some hairs than get frostbite.
- Cordage – Hopefully you have plenty of cordage with you in the wild, but if not or you run out, duct tape will come to the rescue. Simply twist and weave it into a strong and durable makeshift rope.
- Bottle patcher – Water could be your best friend in a bug-out situation, so don't let a leaky water bottle spell your doom. Duct tape will stop the leaking.
- Insulation – Even with boots your feet can get cold in the outdoors, especially when walking through snow. Insulate them, especially in areas where they are ventilated or cracked, to keep your feet warmer.
- Pole repair – Wooden poles can break, especially in tough survival situations, so use duct tape to splint a broken or cracked tent pole or fishing pole.
- Harness maker – You may find yourself in a situation where you have to climb or repel in order to avoid an obstacle in your path. Use duct tape to create a safety harness. You could even form a stretcher from duct tape if you need to.
- Sleeping bag patch – There are many reasons why you don't want holes in your sleeping bag, including the elements and bugs such as life-threatening ticks. Duct tape can patch holes in sleeping bags, as well as in the tent providing your shelter.
- Snowshoe maker – If you're entering an area of deeper snow than what you've prepared for and you don't have snowshoes, you can fashion a pair using flexible saplings and some duct tape.
- Object finder – If you've dropped a valuable item into an unreachable crevasse, attach a wad of duct tape to the end of a stick and use the adhesive to pull it back up.

CONCLUSION

With more space on these pages, I'm guessing I could have doubled this number of duct tape uses easily. If you'd like to let me know some of the ways you've used this valuable item, please use the form on page 16. I'd love to hear from you. ■

11 Very Simple Ways to Use Baking Soda Inside Your Home

FROM THE MARCH 2016 EDITION

When it comes to items that have multiple purposes, it's tough to beat duct tape. Entire books have been written about the many different ways duct tape can be utilized, both at home and in the wild during a survival situation.

Of course, there are plenty of common household items that can be used in a variety of manners. One of them is baking soda. You probably have some in your refrigerator, and if not, you're going to want to grab some at the store after reading this article.

Baking soda is a white, crystalline compound, chemically known as bicarbonate of soda. It's used in the making of effervescent salts and beverages, artificial mineral water, pharmaceuticals, and fire extinguishers.

Let's take a look at some of the uses you can get out of this inexpensive item:

- **Brush your teeth.** People say it's more effective for cleaning and whitening teeth than toothpaste, and you don't get the negative side effect of fluoride.
- **Unclog a drain.** Pour a cup of baking soda into your clogged drain, then add one cup of vinegar. Wait a few minutes, then pour a quart of boiling water down the drain.
- **Resist sweets.** If you can't stop eating sweets, try this when you have a craving: dissolve one teaspoon of baking soda in a glass of warm water. Rinse your mouth with it and then spit it out.
- **Eliminate smells.** Unpleasant odors will disappear when you sprinkle baking soda on the bottom of your toaster oven, rubber gloves and other items.
- **Pain relief.** Soothe the discomfort from an insect bite or burn by making a paste with baking soda and water, then applying it to the spot. You can also add it to your bathwater to relive sunburned or itchy skin.
- **Stain removal.** That same paste can be used to tackle tough stains from clothing, china and plastic.
- **Gain traction.** Sprinkling baking soda on your porch and front steps in cold weather can help melt ice that might form. It won't damage cement or shoes.
- **Bug repellent.** Sprinkle baking soda at the bottom of basement windows in order to keep bugs from making themselves at home in your house.
- **Food washer.** If your fruits and vegetables could have pesticides or dirt on them, wash them in a bowl of cool water containing several tablespoons of baking soda.
- **Clean your toothbrush.** Wash the bristles by allowing your toothbrush to sit overnight in a mixture of baking soda and warm water.
- **Clean your refrigerator.** Add one teaspoon of baking soda to a quart of warm or hot water and use the resulting solution as a cleaning agent. ■



A Variety of Uses for Lemon in and Around the Home

FROM THE JULY 2016 EDITION

In recent years it's become popular to add a wedge of lemon to a glass of water, especially in restaurants. Some folks stick a slice of lemon in their bottle of beer, turn it upside down to allow the lemon to "rise" to the bottom of the bottle, then turn it right side up again. Other people mix lemon with water to drink or gargle in order to soothe an irritated throat.

As with other multipurpose items that we've mentioned in recent editions of the *Messenger* – duct tape, baby powder, vinegar, baking soda, rubber bands and rubber gloves – lemon can serve us in a wide variety of ways. It's a good idea to keep a bottle of lemon juice handy, as well as plenty of whole lemons you can grab at a moment's notice.

Let's take a look at some of those uses.

- Baking soda isn't the only thing that can remove bad smells in your refrigerator. Pouring some lemon juice on a sponge and leaving it in the fridge overnight can also do the trick.
- Cut a lemon in half and use the cut side to rub on your cutting board. It will help rid your board of smells from onions, garlic and whatever else you've cut on it, and can also clean the board.
- Bugs don't like the smell of lemon, which is good for us. Squirt a small amount on windowsills, doorways, cracks and anywhere else you think ants, roaches or other bugs might be getting in.



LEMON CONSUMPTION AND APPLICATION

Lemon can do so much more than clean and deodorize. It's also good for your personal use – both external and internal. Following are some ways you can use it to improve your appearance and health.

- Lemon helps control high blood pressure because of its potassium content. It can also help reduce asthma, dizziness and nausea. It's also said to pick us up when we need a mood elevation.
- Because lemon is a diuretic, it aids in the production of urine, which can help us avoid kidney stones. This process also aids in flushing out bacteria and toxins, which reduces inflammation, which in turn can provide relief from arthritis and rheumatism.
- The everyday cuts and scrapes we suffer can be treated with lemon juice. Just apply a few drops of the juice directly on the minor injury and the natural healing process will begin.
- Some people like to use lemon for digestive issues. Mix it with warm water and drink it. It will also help to purify your blood.
- Apply lemon juice directly on liver spots, freckles and blackheads, let it sit for 20 minutes or so, then rinse it clean.

- Lemon juice can also be an effective stain remover, whether it's a surface in your home or your hands. It has proven effective against stains caused by berries and tomato-based products.
- Clothes that have been packed away for a while can be stained with mildew. Apply a paste composed of lemon juice and salt, then rub it on the affected area. Dry those clothes in the sunlight and repeat if necessary.
- Some vegetables tend to turn brown when you're cooking them, including cauliflower. In order to keep them white or whatever their natural color is, squeeze a teaspoon of lemon juice on them before heating.
- Even fruit that looks good might have some invisible, nasty stuff on it, including pesticides. Mix a tablespoon of lemon juice into a water spray bottle and use this natural disinfectant to clean that fruit.
- If your laundry detergent needs a bit of a boost, pour one cup of lemon juice into your washer during the wash cycle. Not only will it treat tough stains, but will leave your clothes smelling fresher.
- If you have any old brass or chrome items that have seen better days, don't give up on their appearance. Apply a lemon juice and salt paste to a tarnished area, scrub it and rinse. Dry the area with a soft cloth.
- Are bad odors coming from your fireplace? Next time it happens, toss a few lemon peels into the fire. ■

Read All About It – Multiple Uses for Newspaper

FROM THE AUGUST 2016 EDITION

Recycling newspapers is a great idea. It's a very easy thing to do and it helps the environment.

But there are other productive things you can do with newspapers instead of or before recycling them, all of which will save you time and money. I'll get to some of them in a moment, but first a brief anecdote that you may have heard me mention before.

One summer when I was standing on a neighbor's front lawn with a few friends, enjoying the host's outdoor party, a kid from the neighborhood walked up to me and said, "There's an old man sitting on your front lawn."

After looking down the street toward my house, I asked, "How do you know he's old?"

"Because he's reading a newspaper."

That was really cold. Of course, there are plenty of other ways to acquire your news these days without getting ink on your fingers. But one of the things I like about newspapers is that you can get so many other uses out of them once you're finished reading them.

Here are seven of those uses that you might want to consider:

- **Packing fragile items.** Newspaper pages are great for wrapping dishware and other breakables prior to storage or moving. Newspaper protects these fragile items when they bump up against each other, as well as against the container in which you place them.



NEWSPAPERS IN THE NEWS!

Did you know...

- During the early days of U.S. newspapers, Gazette was the most common name. It was closely followed by Advertiser. Other popular early newspaper names included Herald, Journal, Intelligencer, Register and Sentinel.
- The *Chicago Daily Tribune* was the newspaper responsible for the infamous “Dewey Defeats Truman” headline on November 3, 1948. In fact, Harry S. Truman defeated Thomas E. Dewey in that year’s presidential election.
- The 1941 Orson Welles film *Citizen Kane* was based in part on the life of newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst. The movie won one of the nine Academy Awards for which it was nominated.
- One of the first-ever U.S. newspapers, *The New England Courant*, was launched by James Franklin, older brother of Founding Father Benjamin Franklin.
- Third U.S. President Thomas Jefferson once said, “Were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter.”

- Removing smudges. It seems strange to use something for cleaning that leaves ink on your hands, but it really does work on cleaning glass such as mirrors and windows. You’d think it would leave the same kind of smudges it does on your hands, but it really doesn’t.
- Drying shoe and boot bottoms. When you enter your home with wet shoes or boots, remove them and place them on newspapers, which will absorb the moisture. A mat could also absorb the wetness, but it’s not cost effective to continually buy new mats.
- Ripen tomatoes. Wrap each tomato individually in a newspaper page and leave them on a counter, where they will ripen nicely. They seem to prefer being wrapped in newspaper rather than being exposed to the elements, either indoors or out.
- Deodorize containers. Sealed food containers do a good job of keeping food fresh for a while, but they often retain the smell of whatever was in them. In order to deodorize food containers, wad up a few newspaper pages and place them in a sealed container overnight.
- Dry the vegetable crisper. Refrigerator drawers have a nasty habit of collecting moisture and beginning to smell. Lining them with newspaper pages can solve this problem. Just remember to periodically replace those newspaper pages with new ones, or even they will start to smell eventually.
- Add to the compost pile. Newspapers make for good composting material, but don’t just toss them in the pile. Unless you shred them first, it will be very difficult for oxygen to flow through them, which is crucial for a great composting pile.

And next time you see an old man sitting on your front lawn reading a newspaper, ask him if you can have the paper when he’s finished with it. ■

Multiple Uses for Garbage Bags

FROM THE MAY 2017 EDITION

When is a trash bag not a trash bag? When we look at it as a raw material, one that can be reshaped, repurposed and reimagined.

After that, a trash bag is the solution to a problem around the house, in the great outdoors and in preparations made today to survive the uncertainties of tomorrow.

The main distinction between types and makes of trash bags is the thickness of the material. Trash bag thickness is measured in mils. Cheaper bags will have walls only 1 mil thick or thinner.

That's fine for getting to the garbage can, but not much more. For a better raw material, look for a minimum of 2 mil. The best plastic material is 3 mils thick. These trash bags are often marketed as contractor bags. They can stand up to heavy workloads, resist punctures and last far longer.

Here are a variety of uses for garbage bags when you're outdoors, both now and during an emergency situation:

Mark a trail. Simply cut a trash bag into strips and tie them onto tree branches or bushes at eye level. This creates a simple way for you to navigate your way back through thick vegetation. White bags work best. Remember, leave no trace behind. Remove your markers on the way out.

Clean clothes. When camping, wash clothes in a garbage bag filled with water. Add soap, agitate, empty and add clean water to rinse.

Contain spills. Line your backpack with a trash bag to keep contents waterproof and contain spills.

Take a shower. Fill a black trash bag with water and hang it in the sunlight for a few hours. Once the water is warm, poke holes in the bottom of the bag and enjoy a warm shower.

Shoe covers. Open a trash bag, step inside and tie or secure it with duct tape to keep rain and snow at bay. Great when crossing a shallow stream or marshy ground.

Following are a couple of uses for garbage bags when you're indoors:

Control closet clutter. Attach a small garbage bag to a hanger to create storage for small, loose items such as socks or gloves. Group clothes that are out of season on hangers, then bag them from underneath.

Garment guard. Garbage bags can quickly be turned into garment bags with a well-



placed hole at the center of the bottom seam for the top of a hanger to emerge. A great way to get a dance recital costume safely home in the rain.

Below are some uses for garbage bags when you're in survival mode:

Rain gear. Garbage bags make great, improvised rain gear. Cut holes for your head and arms so you can continue to work. If you are hunkering down to shelter from the elements, the fewer holes the better.

Water collector. Use a trash bag to collect condensed water. Hang your bag in a bush, tree or a stand you create from debris to use as a water catch basin for rain or snow. You can also gather water from a river or lake to haul to a separate location. You can then boil, douse a fire or use the water you collected to clean game. Place a clear bag over green vegetation, and water will evaporate from the green material and collect in the bag.

Bug out. In an urban survival situation, trash bags make a great bug-out bag for clothes,

food and supplies. In the wild, it's a great carrier for wild edibles, harvested game and fire-starting materials. A clear bag lets you easily see and find what you need.

Warm and dry. Use a bag to separate your body or gear from the moisture and debris on the ground. Upgrade by filling the garbage bag with leaves, cattail heads or other soft debris for more insulation and cushioning. Body heat will be captured in the forest debris, within the bag. If it is not raining, poke some holes in the bag for moisture to escape. Otherwise, the condensation will remain in the bag and all the contents, including you, will get wet. If temperatures are low, tape trash bags around your legs, arms and torso for makeshift thermal underwear that will help retain your body heat.

And don't forget, regardless of whether you are indoors or outdoors, garbage bags are also good for their original purpose – garbage collection. ■

Super Glue a Must for Your Bug-Out Bag

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2017 EDITION

As World War II raged in 1942, scientists in the United States were attempting to develop materials with which to create clear plastic gun sights. The accidental results were cyanoacrylates (the chemical name for the glue that eventually became known as Super Glue).

Partly because this substance was not what they were trying to develop, and also because this glue stuck to everything and therefore was not practical to use, they set it aside and continued their research. Nine years later,

these cyanoacrylates were “rediscovered” by researchers at the Eastman Chemical Company, who figured out how to turn them into a practical – and very powerful – glue product.

Word started to get around in the early Sixties about a variety of “magical adhesives” that were being developed, and a radio station decided to create a promotion to test them. The makers of these glues were challenged to hold a car in the air from a crane, using their products.

Capturing first place was Eastman with its Eastman 910 product, now known as Super Glue. To this day, the Super Glue Corporation's official logo features an image of a hanging car.

In recent years, people interested in preparing for an uncertain future – as well as others – have discovered a variety of uses for Super Glue that were never intended by the original developers.

Below are a number of those uses for this inexpensive item. Hope some of them come in handy for you now or during a crisis.

- Fix a broken knife grip.
- Seal cracks in a water bottle or canteen. Allow the container to dry out as much as possible before pouring water back into it.
- Seal a rip in a shoe. You can also reconnect a loose sole to the base of your shoe or boot.
- Seal a tear in a tent, fishing equipment or clothing.
- Repair skin after suffering a small, open wound. First, clean and close the wound, using stitches or a bandage. Then seal it with the glue. Avoid pouring the glue directly into a wound.
- Protect finger blisters or other abrasions from infection. Whenever you use this product on any part of your body, be careful not to touch your eyes or mouth until you have washed your hands.
- Seal mosquito, tick and other bug bites.
- Construct a weapon. After gluing a spearhead to a pole or feathers to an arrow, you've got yourself a homemade weapon that might come in handy.
- Secure two pieces of wood or connect rock to wood.
- Repair a broken strap on your bug-out bag or backpack.
- Tighten loose mirrors. If you're fortunate enough to have a working vehicle following a disaster, indoor and outdoor mirrors are bound to loosen over time. It can also work on taillights.
- Strengthen cordage. Paracord and other cordage could fray eventually, but Super Glue will keep them together longer.
- Fortify your shelter. Gluing bark, twigs and branches together could help keep moisture out of your temporary home. It also works on cracked tent poles.
- Repair eyeglasses. It's certainly more visually appealing than tape.

Of course, Super Glue is also good for its intended purpose of forming bonds on clean breaks of non-porous material such as plastic, rubber and metal. Once exposed to air, it bonds instantly and sets in seconds. It's available in 3-gram tubes that you can keep stored in a bathroom cabinet, kitchen drawer or glove compartment, as well as in "One-Drop-at-a-Time" tubes that can be kept in a purse or small bag.

Because Super Glue has so many uses, pack several tubes among your survival stash. Unlike survival food, this product does not have an exceptionally long shelf life. Once a tube is open, you should probably use it all within a month or two. ■





Multiple Uses for Lip Balm

FROM THE NOVEMBER 2017 EDITION

There's something very soothing about applying lip balm such as Chap Stick or Burt's Bees to your lips. No matter the time of year or the weather, the moisture it adds and the protection it provides make people feel better all over.

Now, lip balm would be a strongly recommended item to include in your bug-out bag even if your lips were the only things that would benefit from it. After all, it takes up such a small amount of space.

But the biggest advantage you'll have in making sure you have several tubes of lip balm among your survival stash is the numerous uses you can get out of them in a survival situation.

Yes, even though it's such a tiny item, it can serve a multitude of purposes following a crisis. And as we all know, the more multi-purpose items you include in your bag, the

better off you will be when stores are either closed or have bare shelves.

Below is a list of some of those uses. I'm guessing you probably have a few more up your sleeve. Let's get the obvious one out of the way first:

Healing chapped lips. Protecting your lips will be even more important when you're spending more time outdoors, which is very likely during a survival event. Lips can get dry, chapped, cracked and very uncomfortable. This moisturizer provides a great relief when they do.

What lip balm can do for your lips, it can also do for your hands, especially during a time when they may be exposed to the elements more than normal. Lip balm will soothe and help heal minor scrapes on your hands that are sure to come when your manual labor increases.

Soothing hand and foot blisters. Lip balm is especially effective for this when you catch the blister before it has had a chance to develop. As soon as you feel one coming on – on a hand, foot or other area – apply lip balm every few hours.

Spread it on your face in the cold to avoid heat loss. You don't want to turn your face into a mask, but a thin layer on your cheeks and forehead when you're out in the cold can help retain what will be much-appreciated heat in the outdoors. It could also help you stave off frostbite.

On the other hand, if it's sun exposure you're concerned about, regardless of the temperature, lip balm can also act as a sunscreen. Keep it away from your eyes, however.

Prevent rust on knife blades. Like you, your survival knives will be spending more time outdoors if you're escaping a disaster. Exposure to the elements, especially moisture, will hasten rust. But lip balm will keep your blade from getting rusty.

Clean your glasses. Use lip balm liberally on the lenses of your glasses – regular and

sunglasses – then use a cloth to polish them. Not only will it help keep your glasses clean, it will reduce fogging.

Starting a fire. Wait, how is that possible? Well, if you rub lip balm on something you're using as tinder for a fire, including Q-Tips, cotton balls or cloth, it will help it catch fire more easily.

Some people consider zippers the bane of society. That might be a bit of an exaggeration, but zippers can be a hassle when they get stuck. You really don't want that happening when you're forced outside in a survival event. Use lip balm on those zippers to lubricate them.

Waterproof leather. Leather items don't like rain or snow, but if you're outside during a bug-out experience, they're bound to get hit with one or the other. Rub lip balm on your leather items to protect them from moisture.

There you have it. If you don't already have it among your survival items, add a bunch of tubes of the stuff as soon as possible before you forget. ■

ORRIN'S CORNER

Orrin M. Knutson has been a great friend of 4Patriots for several years now. And he's contributed so much to the *Patriot Alliance Messenger* and our Patriot Headquarters blog. His knowledge of the outdoors and survival situations is incredible. Here are five of his articles.

Honk If You Have Survival Transportation

FROM THE JUNE 2015 EDITION

Aside from all your cars, motorcycles, SUV's, RV's, ATV's, UTV's – assuming you have a lot of V's – what good are they going to be when all roads are compromised and there is no gas available to purchase? That's the scenario that could very well exist when an emergency strikes.

Whenever possible, if you can load up and bug out in your car in advance of a pending major disaster, do it. But don't count on cars being helpful for transportation in a crisis.

ROOF-TOP CARRIERS

Even if you only drive a tiny, gas-efficient, eco-friendly, “pregnant roller skate”-sized car while living the urban life, we strongly suggest you purchase a roof-top carrier and straps. You may rarely (if ever) use such a device when vacationing, but you still want to have one handy if you must evacuate your home or city.

MOTORHOMES, TRUCK CAMPERS, CAMP TRAILERS

When you have an RV you can live in, you are ahead of the game. That is, as long as it remains serviceable during a disaster. Even if there is no road left, you'll still have shelter.



UTILITY OR BOX TRAILERS

When you have a small utility tow or box trailer, it can be swiftly converted to an emergency shelter. Utility trailers can also haul lots of your survival food, gear and valuables.

Warning: Keep in mind that once a major disaster strikes, the streets, roads and highways often become blocked and impassable for the average motor vehicle.

ALTERNATIVE EMERGENCY VEHICLES

When thrown into a bug-out situation and none of your vehicles survive, you'll want to be able to transport as much of your survival supplies as possible. The question is, how? Well, here are our suggestions.

FOLDING HUNTER'S GAME CART

Hunting game carts come in many different designs and sizes. You basically pull a game cart as you would a rickshaw. They can pack between 300 and 600 pounds and they fold flat for storage. They can also be hitched behind an ATV, motorcycle or bicycle. Just don't plan on running full throttle when towing a hunting cart.

We suggest you have one for every teen and adult who can walk, assuming you have a great deal of valuable supplies and resources. This would allow you to move massive amounts of food, water, gear and supplies with relative ease over long distances as you hike to a place of safety.

BICYCLES

Many people have bikes for everyone in the family. Use your snappy mountain

bikes for pleasant exercise excursions, but think of them as an optional emergency transportation. When roads are impossible for cars, trucks or RV's, your family bikes are the answer for a speedier bug-out vehicle than just plain old shoe leather.

HEAVY DUTY GARDEN FOUR-WHEEL UTILITY WAGONS

Most suburbanites with a yard have a garden wagon. It will haul a couple hundred pounds of necessities in a pinch.

RIDING LAWN MOWER

A riding lawn mower is a gas-guzzler, but in a crisis it might help you haul your emergency gear. You may already have a matching trailer to go with it.

WHEELBARROW

Some survivalists recommend grabbing the traditional one-wheel wheelbarrow leaned up against the back of the garage to transport gear. As far as we are concerned, it should be a last resort as a long-distance transportation device.

KEEP YOUR CAR PREPARED AT ALL TIMES

We are all guilty of taking our vehicles for granted. We are in and out of them every day. We get in, turn the key and go take care of whichever busy stuff is next on our list of things to do. However, when you plan to venture off into a remote or rural area, no matter what time of year, you should make like a pilot and complete a "pre-flight inspection" of your craft. ■



Finding Food in the Wild Is a Challenge

FROM THE JULY 2015 EDITION

Fishing, hunting and gathering are skills buried deep in the omnivorous animal DNA of human beings. We've simply become lazy, thanks to modern technologies. We no longer have to scrounge for what we eat because it has become too easy.

But, have you ever thought what you'd do for food if you were lost, stranded or caught in a major natural disaster? I hope this article will provide you with some valuable tips.

FISHING

If you are stranded or lost in a place where there are natural or even manmade waters, fishing is likely to be your most productive

food harvesting method. You can live on only fish for a very long time.

There are no poisonous freshwater fish in the United States. However, there are several in our ocean waters. Some fish taste better than others, but big or small, pretty or ugly, they are a food source that you can survive on almost indefinitely.

There are primitive methods of fishing such as by hand, with a gigging spear or woven fish traps. However, having a stash of modern fishing gear in your bug-out bag is more productive. Once you learn to tie two basic fishing knots (the loop and the blood knot), the rest is simply a mixture of commonsense, a little luck and lots of patience. Then, just add water.

All that is really needed for survival fishing are a handful of basic terminal types of tackle as listed here:

- A 100-foot spindle of 8 to 20-pound test monofilament line
- A couple dozen assorted bait hooks in different sizes
- A couple dozen split-shot and weight sinkers
- A half-dozen fishing flies
- A half-dozen plastic baits and lead-head jigs
- All this fishing stuff will fit into a small, hard, plastic box not much bigger than a bar of soap.

HUNTING

We know that game harvesting is a very divisive issue for some people. Still, we are talking about exigent survival, not political correctness.

Firearms. Yes, having a firearm just about guarantees you are going to eat even if only by making a dumb lucky shot. However, this is a very hard choice for many reasons. You make your own decision.

Pneumatic rifles. Air guns are not firearms, but they are great short-range weapons for taking small game or birds and are not as legally restricted as are firearms. So, what do we recommend as a modern option to guns?

Slingshot. Almost every survivalist instructor suggests making a slingshot from scratch like Tom Sawyer. But why?

A modern slingshot is an ideal, inexpensive and fun harvesting tool. A slingshot will knock down small game and birds out to 20 yards. Using a straightened stick with makeshift

fletching, your “shooter” can effectively be used like a bow and arrow to take down bigger animals like deer at close range.

Blowgun. Using a blowgun as a small game and bird getter may sound silly in this modern age. But many people do so very successfully. Modern blowguns are very inexpensive. Just be sure to have lots of darts to go with them and practice your aim at home, often just for fun.

Primitive hunting. You can go Neanderthal by throwing rocks or sticks. Or you can go Cro-Magnon making spears or bows and arrows from scratch. But these methods require sharp hunting skills and lots of practice.

Learn to make snares. We recommend that you learn to set snares made from string or wire for small game and paracord or rope for larger critters.

GATHERING WILD PLANT EDIBLES

Most native edible plants tend to be very regional within different environments. What is good in the mountains cannot necessarily be found in the desert. What grows in the plains may not be found in forests. Very few plants are outright deadly, but there are a few. We recommend that you carry a pocket field manual and practice identification often.

RULES OF HARVESTING WILD PLANTS

The commonsense rule of thumb for eating wild vegetation safely is, “If in doubt, kick it out.” Know what you are going to eat before popping it in your mouth.

Never over-eat unfamiliar plants all at once. Suddenly switching your diet can give your body a shock. Even if you find tasty vegetation

that is plentiful but you've never eaten it before, don't stuff your gut until you've been enjoying the plant in small quantities for a few days.

When it comes to wild mushrooms, pause. Although many fungi are yummy, unless you are super experienced at identification, harvesting and preparation, the rule is "Never eat wild 'shrooms."

HOW TO TEST A PLANT FOR EDIBILITY

First, crush up some leaves, stems, seeds, roots and flowers of one plant, all separately. Lightly touch the juices of each part with your tongue. If any part burns, stings, itches, causes numbness or results in other negative

reactions in your mouth or on your lips, don't eat it.

If a plant part is bitter, it may still be good to eat once boiled in two or more changes of water. But try one more test first. Smear a spot about the size of a quarter with the sap or juices on naked skin, for instance the inside of your forearm. Then wait 30 minutes. If your skin begins to itch, becomes inflamed or welts up, don't eat it.

Here are a few of the best wild plants: dandelion, cattails, reeds, arrow root, fiddlehead fern, wild onion, wild asparagus, hard-stem and greater bulrush, yucca blossoms, pepper grass, lambs quarters, wild strawberries, pine nuts, wild rose hips and prickly pear cactus. Our personal favorites' list goes on and on, but you get the idea. ■

How to Cannibalize Your Disabled Vehicles

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2015 EDITION

During any survival event, once all the cars, trucks, SUVs, RVs, motorcycles and ATVs become junk, they are just fancy pieces of "road-kill" or "yard art."

In the backcountry, people's rides run out of gas, get smashed up or maybe just break down. During a major urban disaster, many vehicles get vandalized, ruined by flooding, crushed by flying debris or abandoned along blocked roads.

As a society, we are so in love with our vehicles that few think to cannibalize them for survival. I want you to start thinking outside the box here. Here are some of the many supplies people leave behind when they abandon a disabled vehicle.

PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

A motor vehicle is loaded with flammable fluids other than gasoline for use in fire starting, especially when things are damp or soaking wet. They include:

- Motor oil
- Power steering fluid
- Axle grease
- Brake fluid
- Rear end oil
- Transmission fluid

Grease and oil can be used as a water repellent treatment for boots and other items, while pouring motor oil on a fire sends a black smoke signal to searchers. This is especially good when you are under cover and air searchers come into the area.

MIRRORS

- Mirrors can be used as signaling devices when the sun is out.
- At night, strategically placed mirrors magnify ambient light from your campfire or flashlight.
- A shard of strong tempered auto mirror glass can be turned into an extremely sharp knife or spear point.

SEAT BELTS

- A seat belt can be used for an improvised backpack strap.

- It can also serve as a strong adjustable waist belt.
- A tree stand safety or repelling harness
- Quick release bindings and more.

WIRING

There are hundreds of yards of wiring in an automobile, all of which can become cordage and other tools.

- Stripped of its insulation, electric wiring can be fashioned into snares, fish lures and even hooks.
- Wire can be used to bind a cooking grill together without burning away.
- Secure wrap for mounting spear, arrow or gig points
- Twist ties for shelter skeleton building
- Weaving of fish nets or traps
- Webbing for snowshoes.



INTERIOR CLOTH AND/OR LEATHER

Cut from seats, headliners and carpeting, this can be used for:

- Bedding
- Clothing
- Backpack or bags
- Leg wrap in snake country
- Rainproof and snow-proof shelter roofing.

PADDING FROM INSIDE SEATS

- Pull shaped/curved foam padding from arm rests for use as insulated makeshift snow boots.
- Pack shredded foam into trash bags for a mattress pad and/or blanketing.
- Foam tucked inside light clothing can turn a windbreaker and thin pants into a parka/snowsuit.

COLORED PLASTIC FROM LIGHTS AND INTERIOR

- Pieces of red brake lights, amber turn signals and interior parts can be fashioned into flashy fishing lures.
- Larger flat pieces of heavy plastic bumpers or the interior can be made into spear and arrow points.
- Extra-large pieces from the interior can be used for waterproof roofing on a shelter or firewood pile cover.
- Large flat pieces can be made into a small sled for pulling gear.
- Melted plastic can be used as glue.

LIFT JACK, TIRE IRON OR TWIST RODS

All your vehicles have a jack...or at least they should.

- The jack provides a powerful lifting device for multiple tasks.
- The tire iron can be used as a heavy pry bar, weapon, camp tool, etc.
- The long twist handle for a scissor jack can be made into a heavy spear or used for a turning spit over a campfire and other things.

WINDSHIELD WASHER FLUID OR RADIATOR OVERFLOW TANKS

These need to be cleaned and rinsed if you intend to use them to hold potable water.

- Once clean, tanks can be used to store drinking water as a canteen.
- Done carefully, you can boil questionable water in them to make it safe to drink.
- These tanks can also be used to carry oil, gas, etc., if you must bug out.

SMALL RUBBER TUBING

- Once cleaned, it can be used to suck water from deep holes.
- Using the right sized steel rods and tubing, you can make yourself a slingshot.
- Tubing can be used as a tourniquet to slow serious bleeding.
- Cordage.

TIRES, TUBES AND RUBBER HOSES

- Improvised sandals or shoes, if you've lost yours
- Tossed on a fire, rubber produces thick black smoke that is visible for miles.
- Inner tubes can be cut up and used for water carriers, bindings, slingshot rubbers and a dozen other items.

HUBCAPS

Few modern vehicles have real hubcaps anymore, rather sporting fancy mag-wheels with plastic hub covers, etc. But, even see-through wheel covers can be used.

- Improvised snow or dirt shovels
- Older solid steel hubcaps can be used as cooking pots.

BATTERY

- Use to power existing vehicles lights.
- Hot sparker to ignite fire
- Although heavy, together with a headlight it can be manufactured into a portable high-intensity light.

HOOD

When you have an emergency tool set in the car, you can remove the hood.

- A strong snow sled or travois to pull, carrying supplies, children or an injured companion
- A hard roof for a shelter
- A safe campfire pit.

Anyway, you get the general idea, so let your creativity go wild on your broken vehicle. ■

Build Yourself a Substantial Get-Back-Home Bag Today

FROM THE JUNE 2016 EDITION

When in the urban environment, you can tote your regular bug-out bag, and it will have some of the things you will need and use. But not everything useful in the boonies will be ideal to slay 21st century urban dragons you will encounter trying to get from work to home safely.

THE PACK

Just like building your personal bug-out bag, start with picking the right backpack and carriers for your workplace Get-Back-Home escape kit.

Pick a high-grade backpack that has wide, strong, padded shoulder straps, a load-bearing waist belt, and a reinforced bottom. The pack should be waterproof if heavy rains and flooding are a risk in your area. A full-sized, large mountaineering pack is best when you live and work where sub-zero winter weather is a possibility.

PACK MAINTENANCE

The pack itself won't need much maintenance and will serve you well for decades, if not abused. But knowing "Murphy's Law" as well



WORKPLACE GEAR AND TOOLS

The bag and gear you select for your Get-Home-Bag will likely be somewhat different from your standard emergency pack, but most of the same basic life tools and supplies work both in the wild and in the city.

You can purchase an array of pre-packed

as I do, the first time you don't have your workplace Get-Home-Bag in good shape, fully stocked and tucked under your desk, that's when a tornado, flash flood or hurricane will slam you at work.

Urban Survival Kits, but I don't recommend it. Building your own will make you a lot more secure and happy when things around you go down the tubes and you must navigate through the asphalt jungle, instead of the boondocks.

LADIES, DUMP YOUR PURSE

When you ladies get hung up at work and need to go mobile to get home, you will automatically plan to carry your purse. But don't.

Most purses are designed to be fashionable, not rugged, and it will be an open visual invitation to any prowling outlaw who sees you with a purse hanging on your arm. Move your I.D. and absolute essentials to your Get-Home-Bag or "roughing-it clothes" pockets.

ADDITIONAL CARRY BAGS

Aside from a backpack, you may need additional tote bags for your change of clothes, HAZMAT wear, breakout tools and other gear. My preference for extra carry purposes are the heavy duty, waterproof bags used by canoe and kayak adventurers.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTED URBAN ITEMS

Here are items I suggest you add or switch out with unneeded outdoor survival items. Keep in mind that most of this stuff will not fit into your actual backpack, but should be kept in additional storage or carry bags.

- Current city, county and state road maps (work to home)
- A half-dozen painter dust masks
- A pair of heavy-duty eye protection dust goggles
- A half-dozen (or more) pairs of surgical gloves. During an urban disaster, almost anything you touch can be contaminated. When helping others, you want to avoid any possible human blood-borne pathogens.

- A construction hard hat or an old motorcycle helmet. The risk of falling glass and debris is serious in high-rise, urban, industrial areas and inside damaged commercial structures.
- An extra set of keys for work and home
- A heavy-duty crowbar, a fire ax and maybe a sledgehammer. With a lot of security-locked doors and exits in your building, you may have to bust out or dig your way out of rubble.
- Folding shovel or even a full long handle shovel
- Chemical/bio gas mask and a disposable HAZMAT suit (if needed)
- At least a week's worth of any required prescription medications
- Keep a healthy stash of cash hidden in your gear. When disasters hit population areas, you are not likely to be able to use your credit cards due to power outages.
- When you have personal space available at work, it is wise to store 5-15 days of survival food and a single burner propane camp stove with fuel.

GUNS AND SELF-DEFENSE WEAPONS

I am not going to touch the subject of arming yourself by packing heat in the city, be it a handgun, a shotgun or rifle.

The choice to carry a firearm or any other deadly weapon is one only you can make, based on a million and one variables we cannot anticipate in your personal situation.

A set of cheap throwing knives ain't bad to have, but they are not for throwing. They make ideal spear points for thrusting at vicious dogs (or attackers) once you are on foot and working your way home.

I strongly recommend you pack a slingshot for bagging urban food like pigeons, cats and rats. You could also use it for self-defense by making yourself some arrows.

Finally, you can add anything you choose to your Get-Home-Bag. There are surely things specific to your personal situation and needs. But hey, I'm not clairvoyant, so that is all up to you. ■

Pemmican – Old-Fashioned Survival Food

FROM THE APRIL 2017 EDITION

Modern commercially-made pemmican is expensive... about \$50 a pound. Homemade only costs about \$3 per pound.

Early American frontiersmen, mountain men and pioneers did not have MRE's (meals ready to eat) as we do today. What they did

have was a marvelous gift learned from Native Americans: the recipe for pemmican.

Early explorers, mountain men, pioneers, soldiers and cowboys learned to comfortably survive on just a handful of pemmican a day, while on the move or unable to make cooking fires.

Here are a few good reasons to get with the program and make your own pemmican as an emergency survival food.

- Pemmican does not spoil. There is almost zero risk of spoilage or bacteria infecting your stash of pemmican.
- Pemmican lasts for decades. With pemmican, you won't have to worry about expiration dates. Pemmican does not have to be refrigerated, although you may elect to freeze some.
- Pemmican is a healthy high-protein and calorie-rich food. Perhaps you did not know it, but your body, organs and brain must have natural fats to work properly and for you to remain healthy.
- Pemmican can be eaten on the move. It was the primary trail food for Native Americans, explorers, mountain men, pioneers and cowboys. Early colonial, French and British troops also adopted pemmican as a field ration.
- Pemmican tastes good. Because pemmican is made of mostly jerky, it has a pleasant flavor. It can be made with a variety of additional flavors and seasonings by incorporating dried fruits, nuts and veggies, too.

In the old days, pemmican was packaged in fist or softball-sized balls, and wrapped in cheesecloth and buckskin.

Here are the preferred ingredients for our “modern day pioneer” pemmican.

- Ten pounds extra lean meat. Made into extra dry jerky, it will only weigh less than half of that. Crush into a fine powder. (I use a meat grinder and food processor.)
- Six cups of 100 percent pure lard, heated to a liquid; do not boil.
- Mix the super dry jerky crumbles into the liquid.

- Thoroughly mix the following other dry ingredients in a separate bowl: two tablespoons of non-iodized salt, one tablespoon of pepper or other seasonings, two cups of finely crushed freeze-dried berries or fruit, and two cups of crushed extra dry roasted nuts of your choosing.
- I also mix in a double shot glass of pure wild honey for flavor and as a preservative. You can add more if you have a sweet tooth. Some people prefer to sweeten and preserve the mix using natural maple syrup or molasses. NOTE: Do not sweeten with processed sugar, artificial maple syrup or sugar substitutes. That stuff can cause spoilage rather than preservation.
- You may have to add more fat a little at a time if the mixture is too dry and will not form into manageable balls without crumbling.



- Also, if your product is too fluid, you need to add more dried meat, nuts or fruit. I prefer using good old cornmeal a little at a time, when our product is a little too moist.
- The goal is to have a product about the consistency of modeling clay.
- Now you've got to mix, mix and mix some more.
- Use the same recipe as above.
- Press the product into baking pans or on cookie tins, about one inch deep. Chill 24 hours or so in the refrigerator. Then you can cut the block into candy bar-sized pieces.
- Wrap them and toss several in your bug-out bag, tackle box and fanny pack. You can also store your wrapped bars in air-tight canning jars in your pantry.

PEMMICAN TRAIL BARS

This is my favored way to process our finished pemmican, as it is a lot easier to handle than a mountain man softball-sized chunk.

These yummy whole food source bars will keep for years. Vacuum sealed and kept in your freezer, they will last a long time. That is, if you don't eat it all first. ■

STUFF YOU NEED TO KNOW

With a monthly publication, it's tough to stay timely. We try to do our best, however, with the Stuff You Need to Know page, which includes commentary on recent news events. Here are a few blasts from the past.

Stuff You Need to Know

FROM THE MAY 2014 EDITION

We know that our electrical grid is vulnerable to extreme weather and cyber attacks.

Recently, a story about a physical attack against the grid became public. In April 2013 near San Jose, California, telephone cables were cut and multiple snipers fired shots on a nearby Pacific Gas & Electric Corporation transmission substation. No one has been arrested in connection with the sabotage.

Was this a dress rehearsal by terrorists? U.S. Navy SEALs said they would have conducted such an attack in a similar fashion. The incident demonstrated that a coordinated attack on substations in major cities across the country could be effective in plunging much of the country into the dark.

The attack was called “the most significant incident of domestic terrorism involving the grid that has ever occurred” in the U.S. by Jon Wellinghoff, former chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT NEGATES CONVICTION

What a tangled web we weave when...well, you know the rest. A Florida man convicted of sexual battery and theft was recently able to get the decision tossed out and a new trial scheduled because of the way police obtained information to find him.



Here's how it went down. Tallahassee police used a device – likely a “Stingray” – to determine the location of the victim's cell phone. They did not wish to obtain a warrant because they had promised the company that provided them with the device that they would not reveal information about the technology used to track the phone, not even to a judge. So, they forcibly entered the residence where the phone was and arrested the man possessing it.

On appeal, the man's lawyers successfully argued that the information linking their client to the crime was obtained illegally, and the court agreed. I prefer stories where the good guy defeats the bad guy. Looks like everybody's the bad guy here.

LERNER'S SILENCE SPEAKS VOLUMES

In a recent interview with Fox's Bill O'Reilly, President Barack Obama said that there was “not even a smidgeon of corruption” in the IRS's actions that targeted conservative

groups for extra scrutiny when it came to their tax-exempt status applications.

Amazingly, he said it with a straight face. He's really getting good at this. But hold on a minute. This is something the IRS has already admitted doing, after having lied numerous times about it. How can blatantly targeting political enemies of the president NOT be corrupt? Obama explained it away as “boneheaded decisions,” denying they were made for political purposes.

If there is not even a smidgeon of corruption involved in this, why did former IRS official Lois Lerner take the Fifth Amendment – again – to avoid testifying about the situation in front of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee?

Who is she trying to protect? Herself? Higher-ups at the IRS? Someone in the Obama Administration who was fully aware all along that this was going on and perhaps even encouraged or ordered it in the first place? Unfortunately, we may never know. But we certainly know how bad this smells. ■

Stuff You Need to Know

FROM THE APRIL 2015 EDITION

U.S. Navy veteran Andrew Clyde served in Iraq and opened a firearms store in Athens, Georgia in the 1990s. How does the IRS reward such loyalty to country and pursuit of the American Dream? By seizing close to \$1 million from Clyde's company bank account.

A law under the Bank Secrecy Act allows the IRS to seize assets suspected of being tied to criminal activity, even without proof. Clyde's “crime” was making a series of bank deposits from his company's profits of under \$10,000 each to avoid scrutiny from the tax agency,



which receives notifications about large deposits from banks.

The IRS commissioner has apologized to companies such as Clyde's for this practice, but the law remains on the books. Here's an idea, fellas. Let's seize the assets of terrorists instead of law-abiding citizens. Clyde summed it up best while testifying before Congress: "I did not serve three combat tours in Iraq only to come home and be extorted (by the government)."

CHOOSING ALTERNATIVE MEDICINE

I don't like 90 percent of what I read, see and hear in the news, but occasionally a story catches my eye that makes me smile. One such article carried a headline reading: "A Third of Americans Use Alternative Medicine." I wish that percentage were higher, but considering how the medical community pushes never-ending drug prescriptions and needless operations, it's a wonder 33 percent of us can see through that ploy to generate money for doctors and hospitals.

Now, if I'm lying in a ditch with a broken leg, I don't want someone offering me parsley,

sage, rosemary and thyme (no offense to Simon & Garfunkel). I want a ride to the hospital in a gas-guzzling ambulance and a surgeon standing by to set my leg. But for the prevention and treatment of day-to-day health issues including headaches, coughs, colds, rashes, bruises, asthma and many more, I'll take alternative medicine any day of the week.

EPA PUTS GRID AT RISK

We all know the Environmental Protection Agency has created unrealistic pollution standards that are destroying the coal industry, putting many people out of work and ruining entire communities. Some people don't realize these regulations keep getting stricter and are making our already vulnerable electrical grid even less reliable.

Despite all the power plant shutdowns, the coal industry is still responsible for generating nearly 40 percent of America's electricity. The EPA is placing millions of people in jeopardy who depend on the grid to power their homes with life-saving heat during the winter and cool air during the summer. Even the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission agrees the power grid has reached its limit, but the EPA doesn't seem to care. ■

Stuff You Need to Know

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2016 EDITION

GMO LABELING COMING; BUT WILL IT BE ENOUGH?

Genetically modified foods are animals or plants for which genes have been copied from other plants or animals and inserted into their DNA. For centuries, farmers have been selectively breeding plants. But this

manipulation is done in a lab, speeding up the process by transferring a gene from one plant or animal to another. This engineering creates certain traits, including resistance to herbicides.

Consumers who for some time have been wanting to know if the food they buy in stores

has been genetically modified may soon have their wishes come true. Congress has sent a bill to President Obama requiring most food packages to carry a text label, a symbol or an electronic code readable by a smartphone that indicates whether the food contains genetically modified ingredients.

But will this be enough to protect Americans trying to avoid GMOs? Among those who don't think so are Vermont politicians – including Senator Bernie Sanders – who believe this measure falls short. They want foods with GMOs to be labeled more clearly, as in “Produced with genetic engineering.”

“If there is an acknowledgment about the right of a consumer to have access to information, why not give them the information in plain and simple English?” asked Vermont Representative Peter Welch.

STILL THE SAME OLD IRAN A YEAR AFTER NUKE DEAL

Remember when President Barack Obama gave away the store in the nuclear deal with Iran a little over a year ago? The agreement between Iran and six world powers led by the United States gave Iran billions of dollars to put their nuclear ambitions on hold. Can you imagine John F. Kennedy or Ronald Reagan offering a deal like that rather than demanding the program's halt?

Well, not surprisingly, one year later Iran has not changed its behavior, according to Army General Joseph Votel, who leads U.S. Central Command. While he was visiting the Persian Gulf recently, five Iranian patrol boats shadowed a U.S. Navy warship. And earlier this year, 10 U.S. Navy sailors were held at gunpoint when their vessels drifted into Iranian territorial waters.

The *Wall Street Journal* reported that Iran illegally tried to obtain nuclear

equipment in the months after the agreement was reached last year. And yet the following month, the U.S. and the European Union lifted some sanctions on Iran as part of the deal.

TAXPAYERS FOOTING BILL FOR NEW BATHROOM ADS

We all understand the need to pay taxes. Without taxes, how would our police forces and fire departments function? What we get rightfully upset about is how high those taxes have become and the way they are used.

Here's an example. New York City officials recently spent \$265,000 of taxpayer money on a campaign informing people that they have the right to choose whichever bathroom they want. I don't think I could make this stuff up even if I wanted to.

The ad campaign's theme is “Look past pink and blue,” and it tells people to use the restroom “consistent with who you are.” The ads feature transgender models and are targeted for subway cars, bus shelters, phone booths, newspapers digital ads and social media promotions.

The existing city law already permits this public bathroom choice. But New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio believes that the campaign is a good use of taxpayer dollars so that everyone will know it's permissible. ■



Stuff You Need to Know

FROM THE FEBRUARY 2017 EDITION

IRS AGENTS RACK UP HUGE TRAVEL BILLS

During former President Obama's last 30 days in office, a report came out of the U.S. Senate revealing that his Internal Revenue Service spent more than \$1.4 million on travel for 27 employees during fiscal 2015. Included in their excesses were luxury apartment and hotel stays, as well as high-end car service.

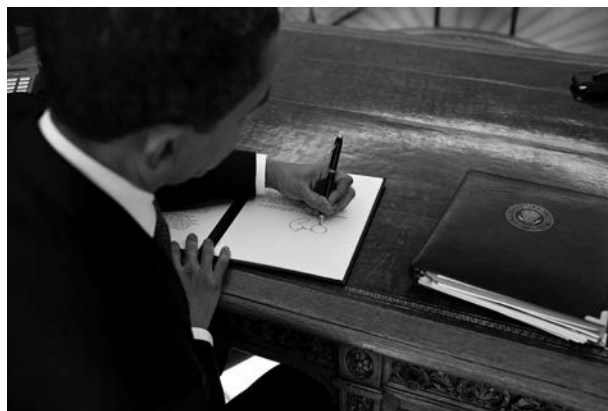
If any group should be fiscally conservative, it's the IRS, which is in the business of handling taxes paid by individuals and businesses. Then again, should we expect anything different from people who stooped so low as to target conservative groups for extra scrutiny when it came to their tax-exempt status?

"The IRS made woefully insufficient efforts to reduce expenses in ways that would still allow employees to travel comfortably."

– Orrin Hatch
Senate Finance Committee Chairman

These guys can't even follow their own guidelines, which call for IRS agents to exercise the same care in incurring expenses as a "prudent person" traveling on personal business. The report from the Senate Finance Committee showed that 27 IRS employees who traveled 125 business days or more during fiscal 2015 spent an average of over \$52,000.

One IRS employee felt the need to spend more than five months at the Grand Hyatt in



Washington, D.C., where he ran up a tab of nearly \$39,000, while another's bill was more than \$72,000 following a lengthy stay at the Ritz Carlton in northern Virginia.

With the Obama Administration it always came down to the same thing. If you think you're above the law, you won't assume responsibility for your actions. And, as always, taxpayers have to pay the bills.

PENTAGON COVERS UP REPORT ON ITS WASTE

Speaking of waste, senior defense officials at the Pentagon were exposed for suppressing a study that documented \$125 billion worth of administrative waste. Why did they cover it up? Because they were concerned that if it became news, Congress would cut the defense budget.

A report from the Defense Business Board showed that the Defense Department was paying more than 1 million contractors, civilian employees and uniformed personnel to do back-office jobs. The report also made recommendations regarding how the Pentagon could save significant amounts of money.

Some Pentagon officials had been complaining about their budget, which led them to try to quash the report. They knew it wouldn't look good to be accused of wasting money while they were trying to gain more. So, they imposed security restrictions on information used in the study and even yanked a summary report from a Pentagon website.

DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO

In the 2014 midterm election, Republicans managed to take away the Senate majority from the Democrats, giving them majorities in both houses. Then-President Obama knew he would have a difficult time getting anything passed at that point, so he started increasing the amount of his executive actions.

At the time he said, “I’ve got a pen and I’ve got a phone,” indicating what he was planning to do to thwart Republican opposition to his policies. So it was quite ironic when, in December, Obama advised then President-Elect Donald Trump to seek policy changes through Congress rather than through executive orders.

During his campaign, Trump promised to cancel every “unconstitutional executive action, memorandum and order issued by President Obama.” With majorities in both houses – at least for his first two years in office – Trump may not need to resort to executive orders. But he knows he’ll have that option during his entire term, despite Obama’s advice. ■

Stuff You Need to Know

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2017 EDITION

EVEN IRS COMMISSIONER SAYS TAX CODE IS A “MESS”

For many years now, taxpayers have been complaining about how complicated it is to fill out tax forms. You pretty much have to have a law degree from Yale University to figure it out.

But wait. Someone who has precisely that degree – a law degree from Yale – still can’t figure it out. And guess what? He’s the commissioner of the Internal Revenue Service, John Koskinen. I’m not making this up.

Koskinen recently admitted that the current U.S. tax code is such a “mess” that even he has problems filling out his federal tax returns. He said his agency fully supports tax reform.

“Nobody’s more supportive of tax simplification than the IRS... The tax code is a mess. It is difficult for the IRS commissioner to fill out his tax returns.”

Koskinen added that last year he began asking his employees for suggestions on how to simplify the tax code, and that he has told the Trump Administration the IRS is not opposed to major tax reform.



President Trump promised tax reform during his election campaign. His treasury secretary, Steve Mnuchin, recently said the tax code would be simplified to the extent that “the average American should be able to do his taxes on a large postcard.”

Trump is said to want to double the standard deduction for most Americans and lower the number of tax brackets from seven to three.

HACKERS TARGETING U.S. NUCLEAR FACILITIES

Technology is a wonderful thing, right?

The Internet puts endless amounts of information at our fingertips, often within seconds of requesting it. We’re able to send ships to Mars to determine the chances of establishing a colony there. We can even set timers to start our coffee machines before we get out of bed in the morning.

But there is also a major downside to technology. All your best-laid plans can be hacked by the bad guys, who can then create a crisis that never would have occurred prior to the technology being available.

A case in point is what’s going on with our nuclear facilities right now. According to a recent Fox News report, hackers are targeting the computer networks of U.S. companies operating nuclear power stations and energy facilities.

These cyber attacks are suspected of coming from state-sponsored governments, according to former CIA officer Mike Baker. Because our business management systems and

physical controls are on separate systems, Baker calls the chances of hackers gaining control of facility operations unlikely. But he doesn’t rule out the possibility.

Just about everyone realizes that the next major war could be fought in cyberspace, and that might result in the playing field being leveled.

AMERICANS SAY TRUMP MORE TRUSTWORTHY THAN MEDIA

With all the negative talk about Trump from the Left and all the negative talk about the mainstream media from the Right, you have to wonder which is considered more trustworthy.

Well, now we know. A recent survey conducted by National Public Radio and other entities revealed that more Americans trust the Trump Administration (37 percent) than trust the media (30 percent). More than one-half of Democrats trust the media, while only 9 percent of Republicans do.

The media doesn’t have to feel too bad about this news, however, because there’s one group considered even less trustworthy than they are, according to the survey. And that’s Congress, which checks in with a 29 percent trustworthy rating. ■

“It could be state-sponsored actors, could be Russia, could be China, could be Iran, could be North Korea...”

– **Mike Baker**
Former CIA Officer

READER SPOTLIGHTS

Many of our readers have fascinating, real-life stories about self-reliance that are an inspiration to others. Here are a few from folks who were kind enough to share their stories with us through the years.

Patriot Alliance Member Spotlight – Margaret of Arizona

FROM THE NOVEMBER 2013 EDITION

Sometimes it feels like I'm swimming upstream as I pursue a self-sufficient life. But then one of you reminds me of what's possible if I just stick with it. I want you to meet Margaret, a Patriot Alliance member who has used ingenuity and hard work to create a thriving garden in the western Arizona desert, one of the toughest environments our great country has to offer.

When one speaks of gardening in the high desert, one speaks of challenges. These challenges are not insurmountable, but they do require a great deal of effort, persistence and patience. When we moved here in September 2005, our two acres were barren. All we had on our land was our house, goatheads and some other problematic plant growth. All of the cactus and agaves had been rustled by people in the area.

We get summer temps of 120-125 degrees. By 9 a.m., it can already be up to 100 degrees, therefore, our days start early. I am normally

up around 4:30 a.m. and out the door as soon as there is enough light to see and work. The work continues until around 11 a.m. when I go indoors until around 3-3:30 p.m. Then it's back outside. Rain does not come often. When we get it, we pray for gentle, feminine, Earth-nurturing rain, not "gully washers."

SOIL PREPARATION

The ground here is like rock. To prepare a garden/growing area, one must first break up the soil. I found that the easiest way to do this is to map out your chosen area and clear all native, unwanted plant material. Soak the ground thoroughly and cover it with 6mm black construction-grade plastic sheeting. Let it stand for about four days and then roll back the sheeting, soak thoroughly again and recover.

Once the ground has been turned initially, I wet it again thoroughly and recover it. I then let it stand for three to four days, then uncover it and start adding amend (Kellogg's Amend).



This is an organic blend, which includes gypsum to aid in retaining moisture so that your plantings will thrive, not die off in hard-baked soil. At this point, I also start adding manure, blood meal, bone meal and compost.

CREATURES LARGE AND SMALL

These are definitely a challenge. I personally hate to injure or kill any critter, but they do have to be kept out of the garden. As for snakes, we have rattlers and Mohave Greens (a very nasty type of rattler with an extremely dangerous neurotoxic venom), so caution has to be practiced to prevent any incidents. There are many others that we wouldn't want to kill – Gopher and King snakes, for example – as they hunt and eat the ground squirrels, jackrabbits and so forth. The lizards consume the bugs.

The ground squirrels and lizards, as well as the birds, are another situation to deal with. Our gardens are fenced and protected with galvanized hardware cloth, poultry netting and bird netting. The perimeter posts are Yard Guard 1¾-inch by 3½-inch by eight feet. We use steel “T” posts, except in the gate area where the support posts are four-inch by four-inch Redwood posts. All the posts are buried in the ground two feet deep. A one-foot deep trench is dug around the perimeter and the galvanized wire is buried against the post extending up three feet above ground to prevent the ground squirrels from burrowing in.

WATERING

Out here, we are in a constant conservation situation when it comes to water, and it's one we do not take lightly. Drought is the norm, so ensuring that the gardens/landscaping get what they need without waste is mandatory. All of our landscaping and gardens are maintained by drip line watering. We installed and ran waterlines to various watering

stations around the property to ensure that we were not wasting water.

The main lines from the watering stations are buried underground and the drip tubing is run from them to each plant in the landscaped areas. The vegetable gardens have three-quarters-inch drip line running above ground along the planting rows with a shutoff valve where each is attached to the main line.

GARDEN PLANTING

I have always used the hill method of planting. After tilling the ground, I rake the soil into hill planting rows, then spread and secure black plastic over the entire area. The plastic is slit across the top of the rows, folded under and secured with u-shaped metal stakes to expose the planting area. Then planting gets underway. Drip lines are then laid along the planted rows to ensure that there is a water supply to everything.

During the growing season, additional composted material is worked in around the plants to ensure that they have the needed nutrition. I do not use chemical fertilizers ever. Kellogg's does make some excellent Organic Fertilizers and I do use them on my fruit trees. Remember also that rotation of crop planting is necessary; design a planting layout each year and make sure you're not planting the same thing time and again in the same spot.

COMPOSTING

Our household composts everything we possibly can. At the end of the growing season or as plants no longer produce, we chop them up and add them to the composter. The exception to that rule is the tomato and potato plants; we do not compost them. We also do not compost newspapers, magazines, etc., nor do we use these items as mulch, because of the dyes in the inks.

THE GARDENING SEASON

Out here, we are really lucky as we have two growing seasons. We can actually start planting in late February and then a new crop of certain things can go into the ground in August. I have had many plants started in February that are still producing in early December. This means I have lots of food to process either by drying, freezing or canning. It also means I have seeds to start/plant for the new growing season.

My kitchen garden (lettuce, mesclun, chives, spinach, parsley, onions, basil, etc.) is right outside the back patio door and produces year 'round. This past fall, I let it go fallow and this spring I am changing it to raised beds (which will be easier on my aging back).

CLOSING THE GARDEN

In the fall when the plants have blessed us with their final gifts, we take up the water lines, clean out the spent plantings and take

up the black plastic from the current season. The planting hills are spread down once again and the area turned gently. The entire area is once again watered thoroughly, and after a month, watered again. Then black plastic goes on again, perforated to allow water through and left to sleep for the winter.

I have been exceedingly successful in growing both landscape plants and food crops here. We have Agaves, Cactus (several types), Red Yucca, Oleanders, Jasmine, Texas Sage, Sacred White Plains Sage, Australian Bottle Brush, Pomegranates, Palo Verde Trees, Fruitless Mulberry Trees, Grapes, Peaches, Plums, Nectarines, Apricots, Beets, Carrots, Jalapeno and Bell Peppers, Tomatoes, Zucchini, Eggplant (two varieties), Peas, Snap Beans, Acorn and Lakota Squash, Asparagus, Strawberries and Iris. I just planted four Pistachios last year, and my orange and lime trees have yet to produce.

So you see, growing is possible even in the high desert, if you are willing to work at it! ■

Patriot Alliance Member Spotlight – Kriss of Colorado

FROM THE DECEMBER 2013 EDITION

Kriss is a solar system designer who sells solar panel kits to homeowners and contractors. In his own words, Kriss lets us know about his baptism by fire in solar.

OFF-GRID OR OFF OUR ROCKER?

A few years back, we grew tired of the city and noise and hassle that came with it. We decided that the life we wanted was in the mountains. We fell in love with an area that

had phenomenal views and a lake nearby, and was close to a skiing community. One problem: no power. Not only was there no power, but there was no water, sewer or high speed Internet. In fact, the only real utility that existed was phone lines, and those are soooo 1996, right?

But there were other houses in the neighborhood running on solar and small wind generators and we naively thought, “How hard could it be?” With the help of friends, family and a builder who had built in the neighborhood, we felt we had the

perfect house for us. We are not rich folks by any means, but we felt we had a comfortable home that we could grow into a little. We had 16 batteries, 1,300 watts of solar, 300 sunny Colorado days per year and a propane generator backup. This would be easy right? Just wash the clothes on sunny days! Piece of cake.

OH, YOU MEAN WE NEED SUNSHINE?

We chose to move into our home in December 2007. And that just happened to be the winter that our little hamlet would break the record for snowfall in one year. We figured out in a hurry that our panels didn't run on snowflakes. Go figure. We had three solid months of snow, 6-12 inches every day. Even the toothless old-timers with the long beards had never seen anything like it.

And worse, our builder had suggested a forced air electric furnace for our modular home to save money. Big mistake. Since there was no sunshine, and since we decided we like the pigment of our skin to be decidedly un-blue, we were running off the generator. When it wasn't breaking down, freezing up or getting overcome with snow, it was burning through \$1,800 worth of propane per month. Did I mention we're not wealthy people?

The worst part was that when we ran out of propane, which was about every 15 days, the propane truck couldn't get to us. Being isolated and at the end of the road, which seemed so attractive just a few months ago, the snowplows couldn't get to us until late afternoon. And as soon as they did plow, we'd promptly get 12 more inches of snow, sealing off our isolated little home from the propane man and his apparently not-snow-ready truck.

ALTITUDE ADJUSTMENT

So, this is the part of our life where we got used to setting the thermostat to 50 degrees, warming up by shoveling endless amounts of

snow and sleeping under enough blankets to cover a jumbo jet. Good times. And actually, they were good times. My wife and I grew closer, learned a ton about our new home and became conscious of every watt that flowed out of the system.

We learned that everything needs to be on power strips. Even the garage door openers. When the sun did shine, we learned to milk every drop of heat from it to help heat the home by opening shades. And when there was no sun, we shut the blinds tightly and hunkered down. We opened and closed the shades so often the neighbors probably thought we were sending Morse code. If we had known Morse code we would have said "Bring soup!"

We learned that since we had a well pump drawing power out of our system, that wasting water meant wasting power. We eventually got a wood-burning stove and took advantage of the acres of already-dead trees not far from our home. We learned that there is a major



difference in power used in different light bulbs. And we learned that we really didn't need to watch as much TV as we thought.

FINALLY: BLISS

So, with some painful lessons, a little cash and a lot of patience, we live very comfortably now. We consume approximately 150 kw-hours per month of electricity, compared to

the typical American household that uses more than 1,000. We use about 500 gallons of water per month, whereas some families use that in a day. I don't say these things to brag or toot my own horn, I say these things as a reformed waster who is trying to help others change their habits and become conscious of their energy consumption. And the best part is I get to help people do just that every day! ■

Patriot Alliance Member Spotlight – Clifford of California

FROM THE NOVEMBER 2014 EDITION

So, you planned for that rainy day and suddenly you find yourself and your family sitting at home during a natural or manmade emergency. You set aside extra batteries and candles should the power go down. You have enough fresh food for four to 10 days. But after that, what? This is where the rubber meets the road. Survivalists, or preppers as they are now called, will have had the forethought to store extra provisions to last a month or longer.

There are people who will say that if the power goes down, your freezer and refrigerator will be useless because all the food will spoil. Some will say that they would cook all the food that can be cooked and saved to be eaten later. (I'll talk about this later.)

Well, if you are a survivalist/prepper, you would not only store extra frozen foods but you would can some of this food as well. If you ask anyone, they will tell you that frozen food is the next best thing to fresh. Canned food will last longer in an emergency.

I have employed all three methods. I buy fresh and eat fresh when it is at all possible. I freeze

a lot of items that I use on a week-to-week basis when it is on sale. Then I can my own items so that I will have those extra special treats that I enjoy.

Here is a list of the items that I freeze: extra turkeys, extra hams (some in cans, others shanks), beef, pork, chicken and lamb. The beef that I freeze is tri-tip, steaks, hamburger and roasts. The pork is pork chops, roasts, bacon (apple wood), and ribs (both pork and beef).

I also freeze corn on the cob (husk and all), peas, carrots, broccoli and other assorted vegetables, plus plums, tangerines, oranges, apples, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries and kiwis. I also freeze breads, pizza dough, bread dough, cookie dough, pancakes and waffles, as well as fresh herbs such as mint, basil, thyme, sage, chives and rosemary. Finally, I freeze butter, which is very big in my house. It is almost to the point where it might be cheaper to buy the cow instead.

The beef that I have frozen includes uncooked hamburger. I have some that I have made into meatloaf and meatballs and some



that's loose for sloppy joes and meat sauces like spaghetti. The cornhusks are used for enchiladas and those Mexican dishes my wife and daughter-in-law cook so well.

What I am saying is this: by freezing, you get to feast on those great dishes year 'round versus only on those special occasions when the food is on sale. When a sale pops up, you can restock your freezer and make your stores last a year or so. It's fun to have on hand that which is needed versus having to pay through the nose for the now.

For those of you who would say that if the power goes out, I would have a freezer full of spoiled food, I went out and bought a solar generator. With the three back-up batteries and solar panels, I can run my refrigerator, freezer and a few other appliances all day long. I am running the power of my home through solar panels on my roof – thanks to Frank Bates' Power4Patriots' Off-Grid Living DVD.

Just a note: I paid \$1 to my power company for the month of June. This was for taxes only. Never in my wildest dreams did I see this coming. One dollar! One stinking dollar to the power company. Thanks, Frank. I owe you big time.

I realize that I can write a book on freezing, canning, growing my own vegetables, etc. But when you combine everything together, you start to look pretty good. Things start to get easier because you made the right decisions and you worked your way towards your goal.

I don't expect that there will be a national emergency, natural or manmade. But I am now prepared to outlast most emergencies than the federal government is. I am working for the long-term survival. How about you? Are you ready? Then listen to what Frank Bates has to say. Docendo Discimus (We learn by teaching.). ■

BOOK REVIEWS

There are countless great books out there, but few of us have time to read as many as we would like. For the last several years, we've been providing reviews of books – both old and new – that we believe you might be interested in. Here's a sampling of those reviews.

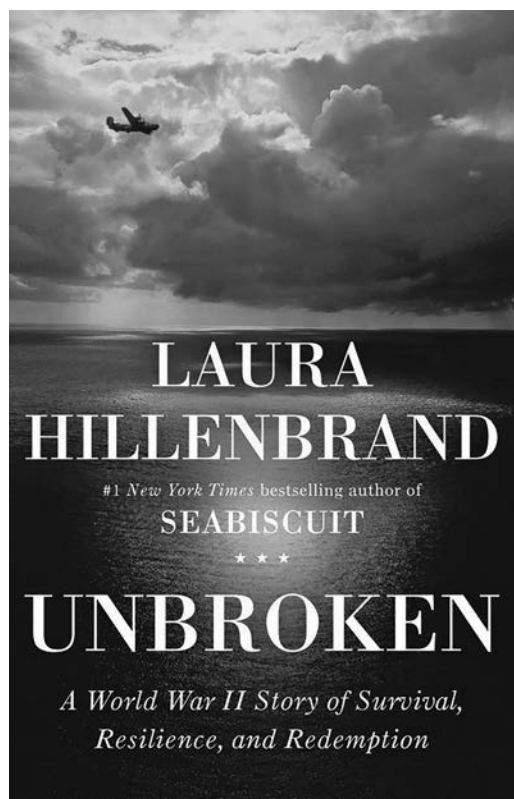
Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption **by Laura Hillenbrand**

FROM THE NOVEMBER 2015 EDITION

It seems these days when we hear the word “survival,” we think of being able to stay alive, healthy and safe following a potential disaster that could change the world as we know it. Our thoughts immediately turn to emergency food and water supplies, generating power to keep the lights on, and possibly building a temporary shelter and starting a fire.

But people have been “surviving” difficult situations since the dawn of mankind, and it's important to occasionally relive their stories in order to gain insight into how they did it, as well as inspiration from what kept them alive during their intense, personal crisis.

One example of survival against all odds was Lieutenant Louis Zamperini, a United States Army Air Force bomber pilot during World War II. In May of 1943, he and his crew crashed into the Pacific Ocean and disappeared, leaving only some debris from their plane, oil, gasoline and blood.



But Zamperini poked his head above the surface, found a life raft and climbed aboard it. Two injured crewmen were able to do the same.

Unbroken: A World War II Story of Survival, Resilience, and Redemption is Laura Hillenbrand's spellbinding story about the bombardier's quest to survive. A wonderful writer, she also published *Seabiscuit: An American Legend*, about the horse who in 1938 received more media coverage than Franklin D. Roosevelt, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini.

As you may know or will learn if you pick up a copy of *Unbroken* from your local bookstore or library, Zamperini was no ordinary American even before his survival experience. As a teenager, he put his childhood delinquency behind him and focused on running. The effort paid off and carried him to the 1936 Berlin Olympics. As he trained for the 1940 Olympics, many expected him to be the first runner to break the four-minute mile barrier.

Two years later, he was in the race of his life – against time. Ahead of him lay thousands of miles of open ocean, sharks, exposure, hunger and thirst, not to mention an even greater trial as a tortured prisoner of war in Japanese camps.

During 47 days at sea while drifting more than 1,000 miles, Zamperini and his crew members were burned by the sun, their bodies withering to skeletons from lack of nourishment. Suffering from painful salt sores and lips that were severely swollen, they tried to keep themselves sane by singing well-known songs including *White Christmas*. As they suspected and learned later, everyone they knew had long since given them up for dead.

Somehow the trio survived a machine gun attack from a Japanese bomber, sharks that leaped onto their raft and tried to drag them off, and a typhoon with waves some 40 feet high. Finally, they reached an island, only to be immediately captured and imprisoned by the Japanese. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born in 1967 in Fairfax, Virginia, Laura Hillenbrand frequently rode horses as a child. She attended Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, but left after contracting chronic fatigue syndrome, a disease that plagues her to this day. Her book, *Seabiscuit*, won the William Hill Sports Book of the Year award and was adapted to an Academy Award-nominated movie. Together, *Unbroken* and *Seabiscuit* have sold more than 10 million copies. Hillenbrand's essays have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *American Heritage* and many other

publications. Her article on *Seabiscuit*, for *American Heritage*, won the Eclipse Award for Magazine Writing. She and actor Gary Sinise are the co-founders of Operation International Children, a charity that provides school supplies to children through American troops. Hillenbrand lives in Washington, D.C.

Unbroken was made into a film by the same name, directed by Angelina Jolie and starring Jack O'Connell, in 2014. Media raved about the book when it was published in 2010. Their reviews included the following:

"Extraordinarily moving...a powerfully drawn survival epic...a master class in narrative storytelling."

– **Wall Street Journal**

"Thrilling...stirring and triumphant...a nearly continuous flow of suspense."

– **Los Angeles Times**

"Ambitious and powerful...gripping in an almost cinematic way."

– **New York Times Book Review**

"A beautifully written account of an extraordinary life."

– **Washington Post**

"(This) one-in-a-billion story...amazing, unforgettable, gripping, harrowing, chilling and inspiring."

– **New York Magazine**

"Monumental...mesmerizing...you don't dare take your eyes off the page."

– **People Magazine**

"Marvelous...Unbroken is a wonderful twice over, for the tale it tells and for the way it's told."

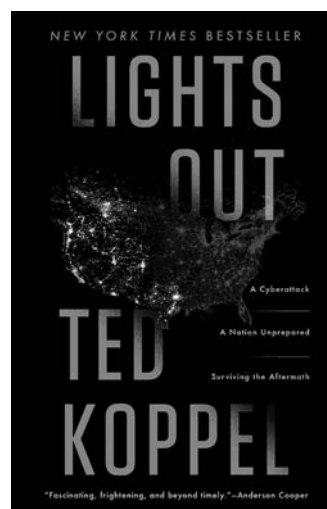
– **Newsweek**

Lights Out: A Cyberattack, a Nation Unprepared, Surviving the Aftermath **by Ted Koppel**

FROM THE JANUARY 2016 EDITION

We all know that an effective cyber attack against the vulnerable U.S. electrical grids is a possibility. In fact, there are unsuccessful cyber attacks against the three main grids occurring on a daily basis. Thus far, terrorists have not been successful with an attack that cripples the grids for a significant length of time.

But former *Nightline* anchor Ted Koppel believes that an effective cyber attack against our grids is not just a possibility but a probability. He also states that it will be a devastating attack and that the U.S. is woefully unprepared to deal with it. None of this surprises us, but it's refreshing to hear it from a former mainstream media icon.



In his new book, *Lights Out: A Cyberattack, a Nation Unprepared, Surviving the Aftermath*, Koppel says that the coming attack will plunge America into darkness not just for hours or even days, but rather weeks and months.

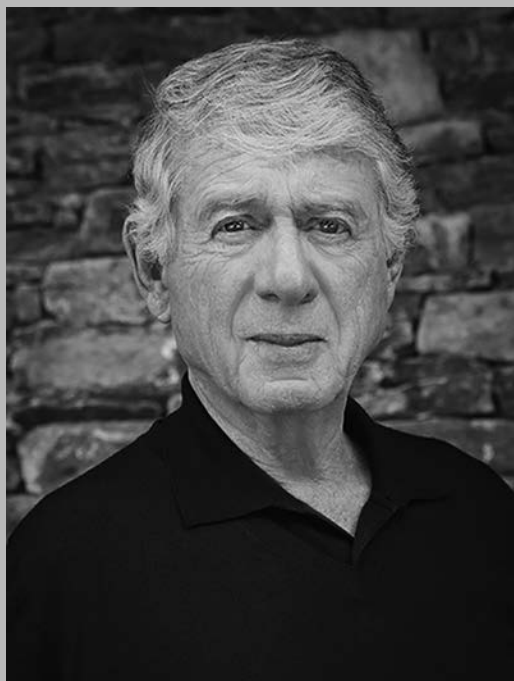
Depending on which of the three grids is rendered useless, tens of millions of people will find themselves without running water, sewage disposal, refrigeration or light for an extended period of time. Food and medical supplies will be cut off. Previously clean water will become contaminated. Banks will cease to function. And as soon as martial law breaks down, lawlessness featuring marauding gangs will rule.

If two or all three of the grids go down, the entire country will be thrown back into the 1800s. Except, it will be far worse than it was in the prairie days because people back then knew how to live without electricity and we don't. It will be nothing short of chaos, and only those who have fully prepared will have even a chance of surviving.

This coming attack on America, which will cripple our infrastructure and reduce us to the status of a third-world nation, will not require an army, fighter jets, bullets or bombs. It will only require inside information and a laptop to produce a disastrous blackout.

Koppel, currently a senior news analyst for National Public Radio and contributing analyst to BBC World News America, believes that several nations hostile to the U.S. are capable of delivering such a blow, including China and Russia, which have already penetrated the grid. A cyber security advisor to President Obama believes that independent actors also have the capability. As CENTCOM Commander General Lloyd Austin said "It's not a question of if, it's a question of when."

The author reveals that while the government has all sorts of plans laid out to deal with natural disasters caused by extreme weather events, it has no plan for the aftermath of an attack on the power grid. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ted Koppel was born in 1940 in Nelson, Lancashire, England, after his German Jewish parents fled Nazi Germany. He earned a bachelor of science degree from Syracuse University and a master's in mass communications research and political science. He has also received honorary degrees from Duke University and the University of Southern California. Koppel's first journalism job was at WMCA Radio in New York City, and in 1963 he became the youngest correspondent ever hired by ABC Radio News. He covered the Vietnam War and the Richard Nixon presidential campaign for ABC Television before becoming a Hong Kong bureau chief and a U.S. State Department correspondent. He

was a *Nightline* anchor for 25 years. Koppel also wrote *Nightline: History in the Making and the Making of Television* (1996) and *Off Camera: Private Thoughts Made Public* (2001).

Koppel introduces readers to several of the estimated 3 million preppers in the U.S., including a Wyoming homesteader who crafted all of the adobe bricks in his home by hand and an individual whose doomsday retreat includes a newly excavated three-acre lake stocked with fish.

He also uses the Mormon Church as an example of wise preparedness, with its large storehouses, high-tech dairies, orchards and trucking company, and gives readers advice on ways to prepare for a catastrophe. ■

Here are some remarks about *Lights Out* from high-profile individuals:

“Try to imagine what a malevolent government, armed with the latest computer sophistication, could do to another nation’s complex and entirely digital-dependent economy and social infrastructure... We have been warned.”

– **George F. Will**

Pulitzer Prize-winning newspaper columnist and political commentator

“When the lights go out after the cyber attack, this is the book everyone will read.”

– **Richard A. Clarke**

Former National Coordinator for Security, Infrastructure Protection, and Counter-Terrorism

“A bold enumeration of the challenges posed by the digital age; an appeal to safeguard new instruments of human flourishing by studying the ways in which they could be exploited.”

– **Henry Kissinger**

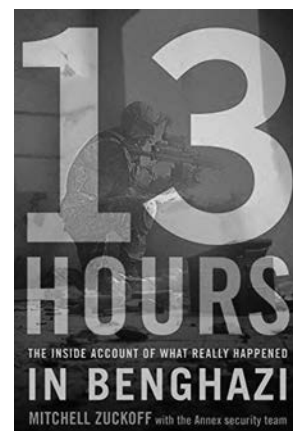
Former U.S. Secretary of State and National Security Advisor

13 Hours: The Inside Account of What Really Happened in Benghazi **by Mitchell Zuckoff**

FROM THE APRIL 2016 EDITION

On September 11, 2012 – the 11th anniversary of 9/11 – terrorists attacked the U.S. State Department Special Mission Compound and a nearby CIA station called the Annex in Benghazi, Libya. By the time the carnage had concluded, four Americans were killed while valiantly trying to defend their nation’s interests.

There has been considerable speculation since that tragic evening regarding why America allowed this to happen to people who had repeatedly requested greater security in a very volatile country.



There has also been much finger pointing toward the U.S. government for insisting that the attack was linked to the recent release of a controversial anti-Muslim video, despite the fact that it became quickly obvious that the premeditated and well-executed attacks were timed to coincide with the 9/11 anniversary.

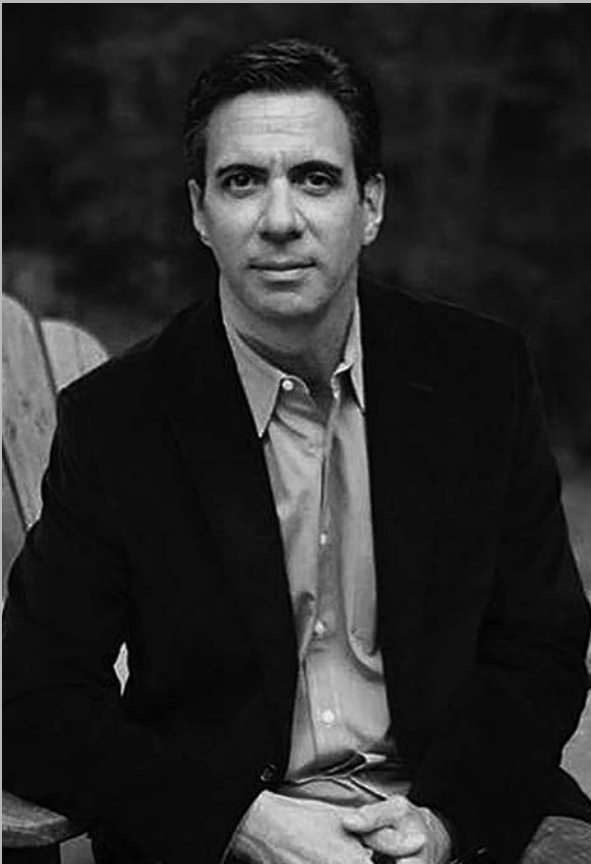
Many have placed the blame on former U.S. Secretary of State and current presidential candidate Hillary Clinton, who tried her best to deflect blame without making it look like she was selling out her bosses. Others have blamed the Obama Administration for failing to protect Americans in Libya and then covering up its slow response.

It's very likely the complete truth will never be learned regarding who is responsible and why more wasn't done to protect American personnel in advance. There are too many reputations at stake and too many people who have learned to lie very well to protect their own interests.

But at least now we can discover exactly what happened that night, thanks to a new book from Mitchell Zuckoff and the Annex Security Team. *13 Hours: The Inside Account of What Really Happened in Benghazi* sets the record straight on the events that occurred during a night that has remained shrouded in mystery and controversy.

The book tells the harrowing story of how six American security operators fought to repel the attackers and protect the Americans stationed there. They went well beyond the call of duty, performing extraordinary acts of courage and heroism to avert tragedy on a much larger scale.

13 Hours is their book – uncensored by those who would rather you not know the true story of what happened during those 13 horrifying hours. The brave Americans who gave their lives that night to help protect our freedoms were: U.S. Ambassador J. Christopher



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mitchell Zuckoff is the Sumner M. Redstone Professor of Narrative Studies at Boston University and a No. 1 *New York Times* bestselling author. Previously he was a reporter and writing coach for the *Boston Globe*, where he was a finalist for a Pulitzer Prize in investigative reporting. His honors include the PEN/Winship Award for Nonfiction, the Distinguished Writing Award from the American Society of Newspaper Editors, the Livingston Award for International Reporting and the Heywood Broun Award. He received a master's degree from the University of Missouri and was a Batten Fellow at the University of Virginia. He lives outside Boston, Massachusetts.

Stevens, U.S. Foreign Service Information Management Officer Sean Smith, and CIA contractors Tyrone Woods and Glen Doherty.

If you're looking for a book about Benghazi that delves into all the politics surrounding the event and places blame on various individuals

and governments, *13 Hours* is not it. This riveting book, which reads like an action novel, focuses purely on the events of that fatal evening. It's an eye-opening account that will make you sad and angry, but also proud to be an American. ■

Here are snippets from several media reviews of *13 Hours*:

"A crisply written, gripping narrative of the events of the battle in Benghazi that adds considerable detail to the public record of what happened there... an authoritative account."

– **Wall Street Journal**

"13 Hours provides a moving reminder of the sacrifice made by these men who had voluntarily put themselves in harm's way, and who believed in their work and their country."

– **Boston Globe**

"13 Hours... sets the record straight for historians to ponder."

– **Buffalo News**

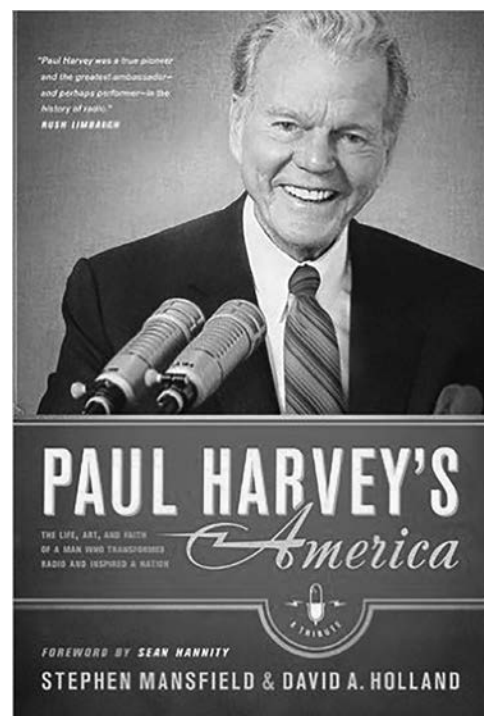
Remembering Broadcaster Paul Harvey In an Era of Biased Media Coverage

FROM THE FEBRUARY 2017 EDITION

During the 2016 presidential election, there was a renewed focus on how slanted media coverage is toward liberal candidates. Donald Trump received huge amounts of negative coverage from mainstream media, who fell over themselves praising Hillary Clinton. It was nothing short of nauseating.

But it wasn't the least bit surprising. An overwhelming percentage of mainstream media self-identify as left of center. To be fair, some liberal media do their best to put aside personal biases when they report the news, but the majority either can't or choose not to.

This was especially true in 2016 when many mainstream media felt they had a moral obligation to do everything possible to convince people that Trump was too dangerous to be president. Even the ones who had a difficult time saying anything positive about Clinton had plenty of negativity for Trump.



There was a time in America when media reported the news without interjecting their personal feelings. One of those people was a radio host respected by conservatives, moderates and liberals alike. Paul Harvey worked for ABC Radio Networks from the 1950s through the 1990s, reaching 24 million people per week.

Paul Harvey News was carried on 1,200 radio stations, 400 Armed Forces Network stations and 300 newspapers. His “The Rest of the Story” segments were particularly popular. When he passed away in 2009 at the age of 90, his son, Paul Harvey Jr., said, “Millions have lost a friend.”

People can now “revisit” that old friend by reading *Paul Harvey’s America: The Life, Art, and Faith of a Man Who Transformed Radio and Inspired a Nation*. Including a Foreword from *FOX News* host Sean Hannity, this book was written by *New York Times* bestselling author Stephen Mansfield and David Holland.

Paul Harvey’s America presents a fascinating look at the country’s most popular radio host.

This deeply principled man was trusted by millions who looked forward everyday to hearing his voice and soaking in his words. He was truly an American institution.

In this quick read (208 pages), readers will learn how the brutal murder of his father shaped Harvey’s life; how a high school teacher helped launch his radio career; the truth behind his brief and controversial career in the U.S. Air Force; why he was arrested for breaking into a secure research laboratory during the Cold War; why he proposed to his wife, “Angel,” on their first date; the important role of faith in his life; and how his immeasurable contributions to broadcast history transformed American culture.

Readers will also be reminded of some of Harvey’s standard lines that endeared him to the public. They included his opener: “Hello, Americans. This is Paul Harvey. Stand by for news!” as well as his closer: “Paul Harvey... Good day!”

Paul Harvey’s America is a candid look back at a great man who knew how to keep us informed and entertained at the same time. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stephen Mansfield is the author of *Lincoln’s Battle with God: A President’s Struggle With Faith and What It Meant for America*; *The Search for God and Guinness: A Biography of the Beer That Changed the World*; and *Never Give In: The Extraordinary Character of Winston Churchill*. He lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with his wife, Beverly.

David Holland is the author of *Vietnam, A Memoir: Saigon Cop and Dashboards*.

Sean Hannity is a radio and television host whose books include *Deliver Us from Evil: Defeating Terrorism, Despotism, and Liberalism* and *Let Freedom Ring: Winning the War of Liberty Over Liberalism*.

“Deplorables” Get Their Playbook... After Winning the Game

FROM THE APRIL 2017 EDITION

When 2016 Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton used the term “deplorables” to describe half of the people who supported Donald Trump, she assumed she was firing off a criticism that would resonate with her base and make those who were undecided think twice about casting their lot with Trump and his troops.

But the move backfired. Big time. Her base – which turned out to be smaller than many thought – already detested Trump and his followers, so she really had nothing to gain there.

The insult did serve to invigorate Trump’s base, however. More important for the future

president, it resulted in sympathy for that base, so much so that a significant number of undecideds moved into the Trump camp.

And what is really interesting is that Clinton’s attempt at a disparaging remark actually turned into a rallying cry for people who are sick and tired of the Washington elites and wanted a major change from the status quo.

Read what some folks are saying about this book and its author:

“The Deplorables’ Guide to Making American Great Again *should be required reading for every high school student and every patriot in America. Page after page, Todd reminds us that every generation has a responsibility to defend our freedom.*”

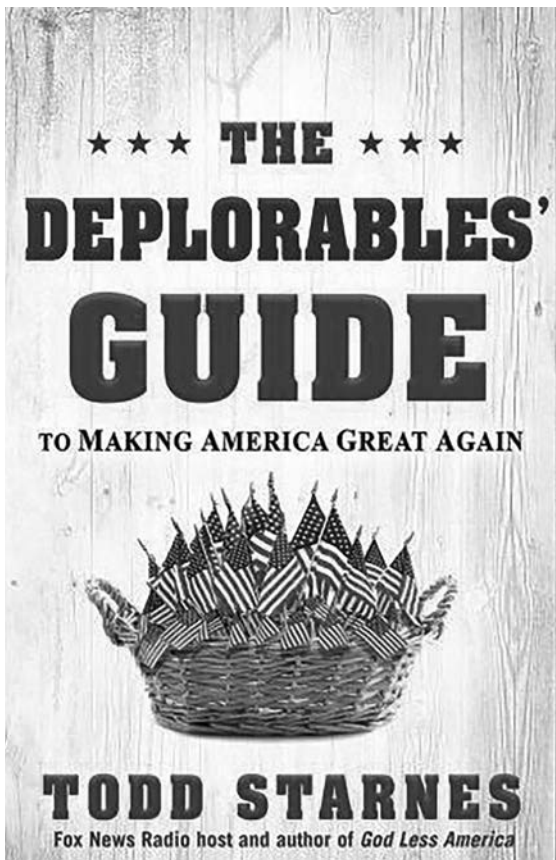
– **Mike Huckabee**
Former Arkansas Governor

“If you want to know why the Left thinks you are a ‘Deplorable’ and what to do about it, read The Deplorables’ Guide to Making America Great Again.”

– **Jerry Johnson**
President of the National Religious Broadcasters

“Todd Starnes has a pulse on today’s culture and shines a discerning light on political correctness that has indoctrinated the minds of people from every walk of life.”

– **Franklin Graham**
Preacher and son of Billy Graham



Before long, Trump supporters were proudly calling themselves “deplorables.” The word – suddenly appearing on t-shirts and banners – began serving as a rallying cry. And Trump’s team didn’t even have to come up with the idea because Clinton handed this public relations gift to them on a silver platter.

Well, it didn’t take long for an intelligent writer to tap into the popularity of this term. In fact, he molded it into a manifesto for those who viewed Clinton as yet another step toward America turning into a godless, socialistic country.

Todd Starnes’ new book, *The Deplorables’ Guide to Making America Great Again*, sums up what Trump will try to accomplish over the next four to eight years and shows readers how they can become part of this essential process.

If you visit the Fox News website regularly, you may be familiar with Starnes, who writes about religious freedom. He is the host of *Fox News and Commentary*, which is heard daily on the Fox News Radio Network, and he makes frequent appearances on *Hannity’s America* and *Fox and Friends*.

In *The Deplorables’ Guide*, the author reports from the front lines of the culture war in America and provides insights into what you can do to bring about real and lasting change in our nation.

Deplorables have been ridiculed by the Left, by Hollywood, by academics, by the media and by gender revolutionaries. But now they have their spokesperson in Donald Trump... and it’s the Left that is squirming. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A frequent speaker at churches, Christian conferences and Christian universities, Starnes has delivered messages at the Ronald Reagan Ranch, the Billy Graham Training Center and the Family Research Council’s Values Voter Summit. He is the recipient of an Associated Press Mark Twain Award for Storytelling and the National Religious Broadcasters Board of Directors Award. His

four books include *God Less America*, a collection of essays documenting the war on religious liberty, and *Dispatches From Bitter America*. In his spare time, he is active in his church and plays golf.

Wait a Minute... Who's Calling Whom a Fascist?

FROM THE OCTOBER 2017 EDITION

The American Left – you know, those folks who constantly speak out against fascism yet act in a more fascist manner than the people and policies they oppose – has one purpose in life. And that's to destroy the America established by our Founding Fathers.

They will seize every opportunity to fight against all that's good and decent in this country. They do it in classrooms and courtrooms. They do it in the streets and the halls of Congress. They do it in the traditional media and in social media.

They seek to undermine, unravel and rip apart the very fabric of a nation whose ideals they despise. What is most interesting about the American Left is their recent identification with anti-fascism, or Antifa, as they call it. Because every decent person on Earth abhors Nazism, they believe they can gain sympathy for their cause by coming off as anti-Nazi.

But that's a lie. And thankfully, some influential people have the guts to pull back the curtain and show them for what they really are.

Author, scholar and filmmaker Dinesh D'Souza describes this situation best in his revealing new book, *The Big Lie: Exposing the Nazi Roots of the American Left*. In this 256-

page volume, D'Souza demonstrates how the Left is trying to turn the tables by labeling conservatives as fascists.

As syndicated radio host Rush Limbaugh said, "Of course, everything (D'Souza) says here is accurate... But it's not going to sit well with people on the American Left who, of course, are portraying themselves as the exact opposite of all of this."



This is hardly the first time D'Souza has stood up to the forces that wish to destroy this country from the inside out. He is the author of the No. 1 *New York Times* bestsellers *Hillary's America: The Secret History of the Democratic Party*; *America: Imagine a World Without Her*; and *Obama's America: Unmaking the American Dream*.

The "Big Lie" of the Left is that President Donald Trump and conservatives are fascists. One of the Left's talking props, MSNBC's

Rachel Maddow, refers to the Trump era as reminiscent of "what it was like when Hitler first became chancellor" of Germany.

As D'Souza so convincingly expresses, in truth it's the Left that shares an ideology with fascism and utilizes intimidation and other tactics that the Nazis used so effectively during World War II.

D'Souza exposes how:

- The racist and genocidal acts of early Democrats inspired Adolf Hitler's campaign of death.
- Fascist philosophers influenced the great 20th century lions of the American Left.
- Today's anti-free speech, anti-capitalist, anti-religious liberty, pro-violence Left is frighteningly similar to that of the Nazi Party.

D'Souza points out how ironic it is that the Left calls Trump a fascist. They endlessly criticize him in the media, on comedy shows and in street protests. But a fascist leader would never allow something like that to happen. He would crush dissent. And he would also deploy some of the methods that the Obama Administration used, such as turning the IRS, EPA, NSA, FBI and other government agencies against his political enemies. Now, that's fascism. ■



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dinesh D'Souza was born in Bombay, India, in 1961 and came to the United States as an exchange student and graduated from Dartmouth College with a bachelor of arts degree in English in 1983. He served as a policy adviser to President Ronald Reagan in 1987 and 1988. From 2010-12, he was president of The King's College, a small Christian school in New York City. He has also written *Life After Death: The Evidence* (with Rick Warren); *What's So Great About Christianity*; *Ronald Reagan: How an Ordinary Man Became an Extraordinary Leader*; and *The End of Racism: Principles for a Multiracial Society*.

SHORT & SWEET

In every edition of the *Patriot Alliance Messenger*, we like to include something that's short and to the point. Sometimes it's useful information, sometimes it's more trivial, and sometimes it's a combination. Regardless, we hope you get something out of it. Here are some examples.

13 Awesome Survival Knives

FROM THE APRIL 2014 EDITION

There is much debate regarding which and how many items should be included in a survival kit, but there is one item upon which everyone agrees – the knife. With so many uses – trapping, skinning and wood cutting, to name just a few – the survival knife is a vital component of a kit that one would carry in a wilderness environment or in an emergency situation.

A good knife can make the difference between surviving and not surviving. While every survivalist agrees that a knife is essential, there are many opinions about which is the best one for the variety of purposes that it may be called upon to serve. One knife might be right for a person with one set of skills, while another knife would be preferable for someone with different strengths.

Folding knives are convenient, and it's not a bad idea to carry one, but they are not as durable and cannot perform as many tasks as a four- to six-inch fixed blade. Make sure your blade is a full tang design, with the steel continuing all the way to the end of the

handle, which should be comfortable with a good grip. A compound grind blade can be sharpened easily when you're on the move.



Below I've listed 13 of my favorite survival knives. As with any list, there will be the inevitable disagreements. Feel free to voice yours.

KA-BAR USMC Utility Knife – 7-inch blade on a nearly 12-inch long knife; a stacked leather handle and large finger guard

Tom Brown Tracker – a true survival tool with its mini-saw blade on the back; short blade is good for chopping

SOG SEAL Team Knife – 7-inch blade features a wide variety of uses including chopping and prying; partial serration on the edge

Cold Steel SRK – versatile knife with a 6-inch blade (3/16-inch thick) stands up to any test; heavily checkered grip

Fallkniven A1 – Swedish survival knife with a 6.3-inch blade; checkered Kraton handle includes a lanyard hole

ESEE RC-5 – carbon steel blade; a saber grind keeps the blade thickness all the way to the point

Schrade SCHF9 – large handle; great grip, even in wet conditions

Ontario RAT-5 – easy to handle for small bush craft tasks; ideal for carving

Gerber LMF II ASEK – all-purpose blade; positive response from U.S. soldiers

Morakniv Companion MG Carbon Steel – perfect for hunting, fishing and camping

Columbia River Knife and Tool's 2013

Razel SS7 – can split a log and also cut rope, straps, wire and more

PATRIOTIC DESTINATIONS

If you are trying to come up with a place to visit with the family or by yourself this summer, why not focus on a patriotic site or two? There is something inspiring about being in the same places where many of the greatest Americans made their mark on our country. Here's a list of six suggestions.

- **Independence National Historical Park** – Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
- **Lincoln Memorial** – Washington, D.C.
- **Mount Rushmore National Memorial** – Keystone, South Dakota
- **Colonial Williamsburg** – Williamsburg, Virginia
- **Plimoth Plantation** – Plymouth, Massachusetts
- **Arlington National Cemetery** – Arlington, Virginia

Hawke's Hellion – a nine-inch blade that does the work of a folding knife, a sheath knife and a hatchet

Buck Hoodlum – light, 10-inch blade can handle big tasks and small. ■

6 Tips to Getting Elected Officials to Listen to You

FROM THE JUNE 2014 EDITION

Do you ever wonder why some of our elected officials are able to get away with ignoring what we say to them? Do they forget that they work for us and that we are in control of whether or not they keep their jobs come election time? Some of them start thinking that they're no longer answerable to hard-working taxpayers like us.

Just once I'd love to hear an elected official say, "I'm all ears" instead of "I'm in a meeting." What do you suppose it is about "You work for me" that they don't understand?

Most of the times that we get ignored by elected officials are when we let them know about a problem that needs to be dealt with. It might be a noisy neighbor or a big pothole or a dangerous intersection. Whatever it is, we expect and deserve a timely response because they are in office to serve us.

Below are six tips to follow when trying to get government officials to listen to you:

- Don't rant and rave. That will only irritate them and put you at the back of the line. Be professional and even-keeled. You'll have a much better chance of accomplishing your goal.
- Deal with the appropriate level. Depending on the issue you would like addressed, it could be a city, county or state matter.
- Communicate with the right person. Often the mayor is not the best person to contact about your problem. Try to determine who is and connect with them.

- Get a face-to-face. If your emails and phone calls aren't accomplishing anything, try to arrange for a face-to-face meeting with the right official.

MORE PATRIOTIC DESTINATIONS

Here are more suggestions for patriotic places you might wish to visit this summer. All are connected to World War II because this month marks the 70th anniversary of D-Day. Many of our readers either served or have loved ones who served in World War II, so these destinations will have a great deal of meaning to them.

- **National World War II Museum** – New Orleans, Louisiana
- **National D-Day Memorial** – Bedford, Virginia
- **USS Arizona Memorial** – Honolulu, Hawaii
- **National Iwo Jima Memorial** – Britain/Newington, Connecticut
- **World War II Valor in the Pacific National Monument** – California, Alaska, Hawaii
- **West Coast Memorial to the Missing of World War II** – San Francisco, California

- Organize your neighbors. If you have a problem with something in your neighborhood, others probably do, too. The more people you have onboard, the greater chance an official will make time for you.
- Create a paper trail. Document all of your communications with government officials and keep copies of theirs. It will come in handy when demonstrating to a higher-up that the official you've been trying to contact hasn't been responsive. ■



8 Things You Didn't Know About Sixties TV Comedies

FROM THE SEPTEMBER 2017 EDITION

Many of us have fond memories of watching our favorite television shows during the 1960s. We still remember the names of the shows, the main characters and even some of the episodes that we enjoyed so much. But there are a few things about some of these shows that you may have forgotten or perhaps never knew. Here are eight of them:

- In ***Bewitched*** (1964-72), the first choice to play the leading female role of Cassandra (later changed to Samantha) was Tammy Grimes. She didn't care for the part, so Elizabeth Montgomery was selected. Montgomery was pregnant during early filming of the first season.
- Several characters in ***The Andy Griffith Show*** (1960-68) received their names from towns in North Carolina. They included Andy Taylor (Taylorsville), Floyd Lawson (Lawsonville), Ellie Walker (Walkertown) and Helen Crump (Crumpler).
- Talk show legend Johnny Carson did not make many television appearances outside of his nightly show, but he appeared in two



episodes of ***Get Smart*** (1965-70), once as a train conductor and another time as a king's herald.

- One of the reasons Donna Douglas was chosen among 500 actresses to play Elly May Clampett in ***The Beverly Hillbillies*** (1962-71) is because she successfully milked a goat during an audition. She had milked cows while growing up in rural Louisiana.
- Close friends in real life, Morey Amsterdam (Buddy Sorrell) and Richard Deacon (Mel Cooley) were bitter enemies

on ***The Dick Van Dyke Show*** (1961-66). Some of Buddy's best insults for Mel were created when the pair was having drinks after filming.

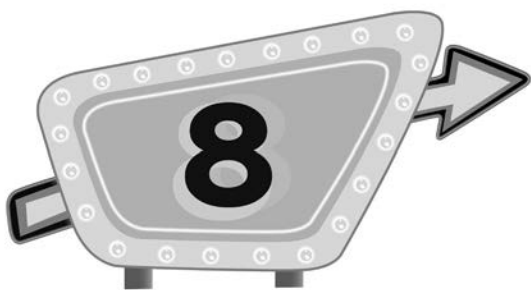
- The ship on which the ***Gilligan's Island*** (1964-67) crew took a "three-hour tour" was called the S.S. Minnow. It was not named for the fish as commonly thought, but rather for Federal Communications Commission President Newton Minow.
- Barbara Billingsley, who played June Cleaver in ***Leave It to Beaver*** (1957-63), almost always wore heels and a pearl necklace, but not to convey a prim and proper image. The heels kept her taller than the growing boys (Wally and Beaver), while the necklace covered a surgical scar on her neck.
- ***Green Acres*** (1965-71) was one of President Dwight Eisenhower's favorite TV shows. In fact, he loved it so much that he called his valet's pet pig "Arnold" and allowed it to roam freely in the family's house, even letting it sit on slip-covered chairs that his grandchildren were not allowed to sit on. ■

8 Things You Didn't Know About Sixties Movies

FROM THE OCTOBER 2017 EDITION

If you spent part of your youth watching what are now considered classic movies, you are probably familiar with the eight films listed below, as well as many others. But there are probably a few things about these flicks that you have forgotten or never knew. Take a look below and find out.

- The infamous shower scene in ***Psycho*** (1960) featured 77 different camera angles and required seven days to shoot. The Bates Motel used in the film is still standing at Universal Studios in Los Angeles.
- In ***The Hustler*** (1961), many of the extras were not real actors. In order to



give the pool hall scenes more realism, director Robert Rossen brought thugs in off the street to hang around. They were impressed that Jackie Gleason was able to perform all of his own trick shots.

- Sean Connery, who played James Bond in ***Goldfinger*** (1964), never traveled to America during filming. All of his scenes set in the U.S. were filmed at Pinewood Studios outside London. One telltale sign of this was when he flipped a light switch down to light up a room.
- In ***The Sound of Music*** (1965), based on a true story, the von Trapp family escapes the Nazis by crossing over the Austrian mountains into Switzerland. The real von Trapp family escaped via train to Italy. Had they crossed the Austrian mountains, they would have wound up in Germany near Hitler's retreat.
- A song in ***The Graduate*** (1967) – Simon and Garfunkel's *Mrs. Robinson* – was not written for the movie. Paul Simon had already started writing this song, originally titled "Mrs. Roosevelt," before his involvement in the film. It was written about former First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt.
- NFL star Jim Brown, who plays Robert Jefferson in ***The Dirty Dozen*** (1967), was warned by the league not to be late for training camp as production for the film ran long. Brown, who didn't enjoy being threatened, called a press conference to announce his retirement from football, despite still being one of the game's greats.
- For the ***2001: A Space Odyssey*** (1968) scene in which an astronaut runs around the circumference of the cylindrical *Discovery* fuselage, a 30-ton, \$750,000 rotating "Ferris wheel" was built. The device made it appear that the astronaut was running upside down at times.
- Dennis Hopper and Peter Fonda never actually wrote a full script for ***Easy Rider*** (1969). They made much of it up as they went along. And instead of hiring a professional film crew, they picked up hippies as they traversed the country and had them hold the cameras. ■

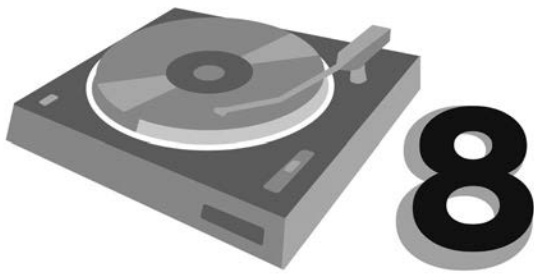
8 Things You Didn't Know About Sixties Songs

FROM THE DECEMBER 2017 EDITION

Music was a huge part of the Sixties. From love songs early in the decade to upbeat pop songs in the middle to protest songs later, music swept over the decade like a cascading wave. You may be familiar with a number of the songs listed below, but perhaps there are

some things you have forgotten or never knew about them. Check them out.

- ***The Twist*** (1960) by Chubby Checker was written in 1959 by influential R&B musician Hank Ballard. He got the idea for the song by watching his group, the



Midnighters, dancing on stage “like they were trying to put a cigarette out.” Their “twisting” inspired the name of the song, but it was Chubby Checker’s version that started the American dance craze.

- Elvis Presley’s most famous “love song,” ***Can’t Help Falling in Love*** (1961), was not sung to his love interest in the movie *Blue Hawaii*, but rather to his grandmother on her birthday. In the film, his gift to her was a music box, which played the song when she opened it. “The King” sang along with the recording.
- The Beatles’ first big hit in America was ***I Want to Hold Your Hand*** (1964), following the popularity of other hits in England, including *She Loves You*. John Lennon and Paul McCartney wrote the song in the basement of actress Jane Asher, who was McCartney’s first high-profile girlfriend.
- One of the many No. 1 hits by the Supremes, ***You Can’t Hurry Love*** (1966), was based on a gospel song titled *You Can’t Hurry God*, sung by Dorothy Love Coates and the Gospel Harmonettes. But the working title for the Supremes’ song was *This Is Where I Came In*. Phil Collins covered the song in 1982 as “a tribute to Motown.”
- ***Good Vibrations*** (1966) by the Beach Boys was so technically complicated and involved so many different studio musicians that it took two months and a then-record \$50,000 to produce. Brian Wilson, who referred to the song as a “Pocket Symphony,” worked on it obsessively, even while the rest of the band toured.
- Alan Gordon, the drummer for a Boston-area group called the Magicians, came up with the melody for ***Happy Together*** (1967) – which became a huge hit for the Turtles – by listening to his band’s lead guitarist tuning his instrument. Gordon teamed up with his bass player, Gary Bonner, to write the song.
- Neil Diamond wrote ***I’m a Believer*** (1967) and included it on his album titled *Just For You*. But it was the Monkees who turned it into a monster hit. Monkees producer Jeff Barry banned guitarist Michael Nesmith from the studio while drummer Micky Dolenz recorded the lead vocals because Nesmith didn’t like the song and said it would never be a hit.
- ***Born to Be Wild*** (1968) by Steppenwolf was the first song to include the phrase “heavy metal.” Because the song was used in the film *Easy Rider*, it is often associated with motorcycles. *Born to Be Wild* was written by Dennis Edmonton (stage name, Mars Bonfire), who was the brother of Steppenwolf’s drummer. ■

CONCLUSION

I hope you enjoyed reading the *Ultimate Survival Handbook*.

We included a wide variety of the articles that have been published in our newsletter over the past four to five years, so hopefully you found some you were looking for.

Perhaps you recalled reading a number of them previously, but I'm sure you found some to be new to you.

Now you have them altogether in one place, and can reference them any time you'd like.

Feel free to shoot me an email (help@4patriots.com) with any questions about what you've read in this book or with recommendations for future articles in the *Handbook*.

In the meantime, stay self-reliant. It's the only way to really live!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Frank Bates". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a horizontal line above the first few letters.

Frank Bates



4Patriots LLC, 1204 Elmwood Ave., Nashville, Tennessee 37212
800.304.4202 | www.4Patriots.com