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SURVIVAL CANNIBALISM
by James M Dakin
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Cannibalism is not the nicest activity humans engage in, and it ranks right there in between infanticide and genocide. This is quite understandable, as in a crises we can expect some to help us and others to try to harm us, but rarely do we expect to be eaten. Being thought of as dinner throws the whole equation into disruption. You can accept someone's help, and you can fight off attempts to kill you, but being consumed for supper is just plain gross. Even if you aren't religious, there's that little nagging voice telling you that it does matter what happens to your body after death. Burial is preferred, cremation is cool in a Viking warrior sort of way. Cannibal consumption of your carcass is strictly off limits. Your remains will be defecated out, and that is as bad as it gets for desecrating a body.

Now, having said that the concept of cannibalism in general is distasteful, I must also state that in certain survival situations you and I might have no other choice than to eat up on some of that long pork. Sure, it's gross. So is ramming a bayonet into someone's gut and twisting it about. I have done neither, but will do either if the situation demands it. Face it, the most foresighted of us can't see or plan for all situations that can arise. If you must feed yourself, and there is only one source of food, you eat that food. You could have five years worth of wheat stored up, but a fire, a visit by bandits, pests or other situations could wipe it out. Farm land can be invaded by pests or persons, fire can burn your crop, or a blight can strike. Too much can happen to rely on one food source.

Water and food are your most important necessities in life followed by shelter. Most of us are spoiled rotten in our affluent lifestyle. We are conditioned by running water pipes and a food system that feeds us at the slightest rumblings of our bloated belly. Seeing as how at least half of our nation is arid, and seeing as how our food system is only workable in a well running economy, it seems prudent to assume that disaster can easily strike us where

we are most vulnerable. Water can be stored in drums, we can have a solar powered well, and we can always migrate to water. Food can be stored in the form of wheat for least cost/maximum caloric count, we can grow an extensive garden/hunt, and the third source of food will have to be cannibalism.

Consider the advantages of cannibalism if you are practicing mobile survivalism. There is no need to carry food stores, not even a pan if you cook over a fire using skewers. With one bullet you get a spare firearm with its ammunition, nifty equipment you need and at least a week or two of grub. This of course assumes a total breakdown of society. If you are just lost for a week in the woods, don't go killing Ranger Rick for his 9mm and a few tasty meals. Society will frown on this.

This is pure and simple common sense. You can't store all that much food, it can be lost for whatever reason, and farming is precarious under even ideal conditions. And, you need to eat. I do not suggest you consume the fresh of diseased corpses, or kill innocents just to avoid some hunger pains. Cannibalism is only for emergencies under conditions where the entire fabric of society is violently torn asunder. Sure, there are exceptions. Such as plane crashes in the mountains or if your leaders are attempting to control the populace with deliberate starvation. But just to make it plain, what I am talking about is life after doomsday. After civilization ends. Mad Max scenarios. When the stuff really truly hits the fan.

Reasons why cannibalism is okay if you really, really have to.1) Sure, it's disgusting. So is eating monkey brains, escargot, insects or even oysters. To me, meat should be an expectable creature such as cows and pigs, fowl and fish. Hell, even snake or alligator. Also, it should be a muscle meat. The only place guts or organ meat have on my plate is in a sausage, and a well seasoned one at that. If you are forced to eat human, at least it is mammal and has muscle meat. At least it isn't slimy mucus looking snail. 2) you will not be hunted like a dog or outcast. If the situation is this dire, you will not be alone. The only cannibalism that should be condoned is that of an unnecessary nature. If there are crops or game available, the remnants of society should not allow the practice. Otherwise, you'll have plenty of company and more than likely it will be a subject not brought up at a cocktail party. 3) You will not catch diseases if you take simple precautions. Avoid the spinal cord or brain and you avoid catching Kuru or Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease, the turning of your brain to mush as you laugh uncontrollably in intense pain. Not the way to go. However, this is very rare unless you consume the aforementioned parts or the blood of a multi-generational cannibal. If you take care to avoid blood while butchering (mainly infecting a cut you already have- a precaution you practice now) and just eat muscle meat, you should be okay.

Ancient bone findings indicate cannibalism. Enlargement of the brain/spinal socket might suggest brain consumption. Lengthwise splits in bones suggest bone marrow removal. Stone marks (not animal tooth marks) on bones say that the flesh was scrapped off and eaten. When you are lucky to make thirty, life can't be all that great. Predators a lot bigger than today roamed around. Disease was a sure killer. Starvation was not

uncommon. So, sure, cannibalism was almost a sure thing. Life that brutal suggests brutal tactics to be fed.

More recently there was the Donner Party. An untried trail was used, the party was stuck in the Sierras during winter, and after everything possible was consumed, the dead were eaten. Your typical story. What must be mentioned is that were it not for the protein, none would have had the strength to venture out and summon help. Without cannibalism the entire party would have died, among them many children.

As Fat Bastard said, it is the other, other white meat.

END

CONSEQUENCES

by James M Dakin
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The terrorist attack on our country on September 11, 2001 was a predictable event. It was tragic in the human suffering, no question. The problem is that it may not be the end of our suffering. I do not make light of the casualties inflicted, but I fear it is only the beginning.

We have known for some time that terrorists would strike again. Yet, the difference in knowing something will happen and experiencing them is great. I know sex can produce a child, but finding out the old lady is pregnant is a life altering event. Knowing that siding with Israel will cheese off many Arabs is not the same as finding out they actually have retaliated. All the idiots out there that reelected Clinton knew he was a sleazy scum sucking pig. Yet when he sent cruise missiles over to Afghanistan to divert attention away from his affair with Monica, he may have sent into motion this weeks attack.

Small actions have large consequences. Nixon getting caught with his hand in the cookie jar was a small thing that changed the political landscape forever. The microchip caused the downfall of the Soviet Union (think Stinger missiles). The stirrup made possible knights and all the political and economic baggage that came along. And if small actions produce large consequences, imagine the impact of something as large as Tuesdays attack on our country.

The Oklahoma City bombing was the act of an individual striking back at our out of control Federal government. The victims were Federal employees and their dependants or those seeking a hand out. I do not condone their death, but the truth must be faced that these people were part of the problem. The World Trade Center was a pure civilian target. The people employed there were by and large employed by the private sector, and thus a threat to no one and their freedoms. Of course this is not the reason most people are so shook up over this event. Tim we could catch and kill quickly. Thus, the problem was fixable. Here, we can only be afraid, be very afraid of faceless mad bombers. A suicide bomber is always much more frightening than a regular soldier fighting back.

Domestic terrorism is also an event people can relate to and understand. Not many can understand why our support for Israel caused this to happen, or that it was further complicated by our playing off one faction against the other for the oil supply. If we were isolationists we would have none of these terrorists problems.

Now, tally up our problems from this event. Our financial center was struck. This could be a 1929 kind of problem or only a 1987 kind of problem. Our very heart of the defense system in this country was assaulted. At the least this gives a picture off vulnerability on par with the Soviets losing in Afghanistan. That eventually led to their demise. A bully only last as long as his perceived power holds. This could lead to our eventual demise as the worlds policeman. We are adding to the problems by immediately spending great amounts of money on this problem, crippling the airline industry, disrupting communities by a reserve call up and throwing liquidity into the system.

I think to say that the only response to this will be a recession and a small war is silly. This will change the very fabric of our society. At worse this could lead to a severe recession that might feel like a depression before it is over, a reduced standing in the world and even a serious treat of nuclear terrorism or actual invasion. You laugh as if I were mad. Think of Great Britain 90 years ago. She was Queen of the mountain and was the worlds policeman and had the worlds soundest currency. Then came along a small event in which a minor noble was assassinated. It took some time and some wars, but soon the greatest Empire on earth was a tiny little island with no future. Today she is a pathetic has been in the affairs of the globe. Her economy is on par with Portugal or Greece. I do not mean to belittle that country or her people, as I am a great admirer of theirs, but it is sad to see such a great nation slip into ruin. I hate to say it but this could be the beginning of our turn into end of empire.

Do not think I am callus to the suffering. I am merely looking long term with an impartial view. In history there is always human tragedy. I am overlooking it only as a way of showing that we need to look long term. And long term, I think we may be screwed. I pray I am wrong.

END

EMERGENCY RELOADING

by James M Dakin
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In any survivalist situation we can contemplate, there will be a disruption in the supply chain. Natural disaster, civil war, nuclear war, dictatorship or economic collapse will all bring the supply of goods to market to a halt. It is all well and good to stockpile a supply of ammunition and food and supplies, but plans must be made for when those supplies run out. Those works of fiction that devastate 99% of the population leaving all the supplies to the survivors make for a lazy way to write but hardly mirror reality.

The worst recorded disaster in history is probably the Black Plague of the Middle Ages, and that only wiped out one quarter to one half of the population. Imagine if our country lost one half its population. There would still be 130 million people fighting for the remainder of supplies. Even in a nuclear war with 90% of the population gone we would still have tens of millions of people to contend with. There is no such scenario where you are left with a pick of supplies. The worst offender after Steven Kings book "The Stand" would be the "Survivalist" pulp series where our hero literally finds his guns and ammo just lying around ready to be picked up. For "realism" he has a nasty sort pop up from time to time to fight for the booty, but he is quickly foiled in his armature try.

If you would like a lesson in combat for scarce goods, just try buying something that has been drastically reduced in price. Items that are competitive in price day to day, not those that are priced high to begin with so they can have their prices slashed and the store still makes 25% profit. I'm talking about things like a $100 computer scanner that is suddenly marked down to $39 (below cost it is assumed). The sales ads come out in the paper at 8 am and when the store opens the first three people in line buy the whole supply. These things are sold almost before they are advertised. Now think of a pawn shop or a sporting goods store about five minutes after disaster strikes.

When a disaster threatens there is widespread buying. I can think of very few instances where there is no warning of things to come. Even a nuclear war is sure to have mounting tensions prior to hostilities. Even if bombs suddenly start falling without warning, any area not directly under an explosion will have many people running about stealing supplies as quick as possible before the fallout arrives. Afterwards there should be about zero pickings for the survivors. Our market system is highly efficient, even with the heavy burden of government trying to strangle it. There is a constant resupply of goods to replace purchases, but few stockpiles. Most business owners regard a large inventory as a sign of failure to plan and to graph past purchasing patterns. Your size in pants might be delivered every week, but the store actually only has two pairs in stock at any time.

Please do not for a second assume that there will be supplies that you can find and use. You will need to rely on three sources of supply. One is your own stockpiles. Two is buying or stealing another's supplies. Three is building your own from raw or semi-processed materials. Stockpiling your supplies is straightforward and quite simple. This is what most survivalist books teach. Stock up on such and such and you will live happily ever after. To a certain extent they are correct. Our modern capitalist society (again, even after massive government interference) is so efficient that we produce an ungodly amount of goods and even the low wage earners have enough left over from living expenses to have plenty of hobbies and leisure activities. With all this extra capitol it is easy to stockpile goods for future calamities. It is a shame that so many people squander their excess on eating out, going to entertainment and going on vacations rather than putting aside a small amount of cash to prepare for a rainy day. However, as you are reading this you clearly see a need to do so and thus you already see how easy it is to prepare. For the price of three ounces of gold, about $1,000 in turn of the century greenbacks, you can store enough wheat to feed ten people for a year plus arm five of them with WWII Mausers and ammunition. Or, for one ounce you can have enough food for yourself for four years, a rifle and ammunition.

Assuming that you only make minimum wage you should bring home at least $600 a month full time. If you live in a small trailer in a park, after utilities you still only spend about $250 for rent, food is $100 eating meat every night, and even if you smoke you can roll your own for $10 a week at one pack a day. Transportation is a second hand bicycle. That means your monthly living expenses are only $400, leaving $200 a month for preparations. After only six months you could have enough basics stored up to feed and arm five people. Or, just yourself at five years food with several back up weapons and a whole bunch of ammo along with some back up lighting and cold weather gear. Even the most economically challenged worker bee can prepare him/herself for any coming emergency.

Next up we have trade and or theft as methods of goods procurement. Speaking as one who has been screwed over continually financially speaking, I find it necessary to preach on the advisability of not taking what is not yours. Don't get me wrong, my parents did a fine job of raising me to be hard working and honest. However, being on the receiving end does sharpen ones displeasure at being robbed. Don't steal from others what doesn't

belong to you. I'm not talking about a pen from work here, I'm talking about stealing from others the means by which they live. If you owe someone $100 that is the same as asking them to starve for a month with no groceries. If you take 25% of someone's income it is the same as denying them one quarter of their time. If you work forty hours a week, a twenty five percent tax is the same as taking away ten hours of their life. Over the course of working forty years that amounts to robbing them of a full two and a half years of life. You could be shot almost three years before you died a natural death and the effect would be the same. Or, to put it another way, at 25% taxes, you could take one of your days off each week and be a slave for someone else for almost half that day. This is what institutionalized theft (government) accomplishes.

Having said that, however, there are instances where it is okay to steal. Yes, there are plenty of grey areas in life. If the owner of a store is killed by another, you could shoot the murderer and take what he had on him, plus the owners goods. As long as you didn't stand by and let it happen and as long as this was a end of society type scenario. The owner is dead, what does he care? Or if you shot another in self defense you could take what was his. If you happened on to an abandoned home, why not take what was available? There is no one to harm by your actions. Now, say that you killed a bandit. His wife and child were innocent but were with him when he tried to kill you. Should you take all that was his and starve the wife and child? I would say you inherited them as dependants along with the bandits goods, but failing that it would be doing the right thing to allow them to leave with all their processions. It would be a cruel thing to send a starving child out to die. But, then, there will be plenty of those around and you can't take them all in. Plus, you actually deprived them of their "bread-winner" by killing the bandit, so they might starve after their meager supplies run out anyway. Just try to do the right thing as long as it doesn't harm others who depend on you. It is a dilemma that has no easy answers.

What other situations legitimize theft? Perhaps you and a small group were starting to rebuild, replant, etc. If a criminal was caught or a prisoner of war was captured, would you not be in your right to make use of their free labor? Of course you would. As long as the war was defensive and the crime was not victimless. If you started a war for free slaves, that would be wrong. If you outlawed certain crimes that hurt no one, such as drug use and prostitution, then using involuntary servitude would be wrong as a punishment.

Last up we have building your own supplies from raw or semi-processed materials. Farming for new food is an obvious answer, as is using broken down cars for material for blacksmithing. Other ways would be to process raw materials to manufacture chemicals, primitive mining, turning crop waste to chicken/fish feed or fuel alcohol. Anything you can think to stockpile you should try to think of a way to also manufacture. Some will be easy such as grain crops and domestic animals to replace food stores. Leather to replace clothing as well as shoes. Candles or wood alcohol lamps to replace light bulbs. Primitive Bell jar batteries to replace your deep cycle batteries. Solar heating of water when your propane runs out. Some items will be next to impossible to make on your own, such as

plastics, computer parts, or reloading components for your ammunition.

And that is what this pamphlet is all about. How does one keep reloading when the supplies have run out? When all your primers and powder and jacketed bullets are gone, what are you going to do? You can always go back to black powder arms with flints, which would be the same as traveling back to the 1830's and trying to conduct a military campaign with what was at hand. Remember, the introduction of the percussion cap revolutionized war in as far as combat could now be conducted year round in any weather. Before, flints were rendered less effective by foul weather. And of course the advantages of smokeless powder over black powder are obvious. By eliminating smoke you hide the shooter, and by improving the chemistry of the powder you increase the effective range of the weapons while at the same time making it easier to use. This makes for even greater numbers of marginally trained troops to be able to fight. Then the obvious advantage of cartridges over loose components. The introduction of the industrial age made for great advances in rifles and firearms, and it would be a shame to regress to a condition equal to those arms before that event.

Remember that the modern bolt action rifle and machine gun were both introduced one hundred years ago. As long as you have access to persons with a certain knowledge of machine shops, chemistry and engineering you should be able to produce on a more primitive and more labor intense but still modern level a post collapse arms industry. Here we concentrate on the individual and his need to reload after his supplies run out, but keep in mind that it is critical that you develop that arms industry as soon as possible. Without it you will be back to fighting with flintlocks and black powder.

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I give this warning not only to avoid the unwelcome company of lawyers, but also because this is sound advice I myself plan on following. I have not tried out these procedures, nor do I plan to unless the only alternative is to die from lack of self protection. Reloading can be dangerous as it is with professionally manufactured modern components. You try using jerry-rigged supplies and you could kill yourself, or worse maim yourself and then I might have to look at your ugly crippled face. Please take this warning seriously.

CASES

Don’t think you are going to be able to manufacture your own cases. These puppies are exact in dimension and any deviation could result in a case that sticks in the chamber or propels a bullet on an erratic course, or blows up. You are going to have to reuse your

cases time and again. This is not to say that it is impossible to manufacture cases, just not on an individual bases with minimal skills. One item to think seriously on is what type of rifle you wish to get and how it relates to reloading. A semi-auto that spits out a case at high velocity will loose that case and also ding it up. Also, perhaps that guns rounds are only cheap when steel cases are used, as seems to be the case with the SKS/AK round, the 7.62X39. Try reloading that, even without a Berdan primer. Because I feel that my survival plans should center on a civilization collapse and not just a dictatorship threat, I tend to think more along the lines of ammo scarcity instead of what is the best combat gun. That is why I only use war surplus bolt actions.

Bolt actions are a great way of saving ammo, while the best way to waste rounds is to have a semi-auto. I don't care if the bastard has a ten round clip or a thirty, you will still pray and spray. With a bolt action you will use about 10% of the ammo or less and the action of recycling a round will not throw the case into the bush ten yards away. With a bolt, you can collect the brass at your feet. And, no, you don't want to use a brass catcher. It is difficult to skulk about in the woods with all that noise. Your only choice should be war surplus, as they will handle heat build up much better and be much sturdier than commercial hunting models. The exception of course is if you are already proficient in another long arm. Then, stick with that one no matter what. Skill is twenty times as useful as equipment.

Also, if you choose to go with a portable Lee loader (paperback book size, all equipment included, $20 reloader) they will only neck size a case, and so are perfect with bolt actions. The reason most shy away from these is that because of the neck sizing only feature, you can't use them in autoloaders and pumps. It is claimed that this is a more accurate round when reloaded with this tool.

If you invest in a stationary loading press, and have a variety of dies for it, you could use this as a means of post collapse commerce, as not many shooters reload. Also with this you will be able to de-prime live primers to use, but more on that in its own section. If you do go with the other more conventional press, then you will have plenty of practice with case sizing and trimming and other such details you will need to learn unless you go with a bolt action and a Lee Loader. This is my choice, since it limits my learning curve and my cash outlay, but it also limits what I can do about reloading in the future. One day I will go the full route and then feel comfortable writing in detail about it.

With cases, it is quite simple. Until you get some bright boy that gets your post-collapse arms industry off the ground, you will need to save all your brass and coon and cuddle them so as you may use and reuse them over and over again. With a Mauser action your brass will not be much abused and I see no reason why they couldn't be used over and over again as long as there were no slits in the metal. With an Enfield action, your brass will take much more of a beating, and I believe that by carefully husbanding them you might get one half to a dozen uses from them. The difference between the two is that Enfields can take a lot of dirt and grit in their actions and still function wonderfully, where Mausers are temperamental about dirt. The exact same characteristics of the AK47 and

M16. My choice is lower case life verses combat situations were my weapon jams. Most others choose to have their brass last a lot longer. Truthfully, neither choice is the right or wrong one.

There might be several rounds that the case can be resized to turn it into another caliber. This is a subject matter I've not followed in years and can't recall a whole lot, but I'm sure it was mostly for wildcats, and not applicable to standard military arms. The best way to ensure a case supply is to make sure you save all you use, treat them well, and not wasting ammo with careless shooting practices such as warning shots, shooting at noises instead of people or spay and pray. Treat each round as if it were your last and your case supply should last a long time.

One more word on round conservation. If you are truly worried about a future were ammunition could run out and leave you unarmed, were civilization totally ceases to exist, were what you stockpile is going to be pretty much all you have until you die, consider the following. H&R Handi rifle is a $200 rifle (or less if you get a dealer instead of a retailer) that is a break-open single shot in .223 caliber. Put a good scope on this thing and for about $500 you have a 1/4 or with lesser ammo ½ inch 100 yard groups. You will undoubtedly NOT waste ammunition with this rifle, it serves nicely as a medium range sniper rifle, it is not overly expensive and best of all it uses the M16 ammo. I had their $90 shotgun and would not hesitate to buy this rifle. In fact, I have considered this a time or two, but as is my way I will procrastinate on it long and hard.

BULLETS

Bullets will more than likely prove to be your least problematic component. With a bullet mold you can use salvaged metal, pulled bullets from other rounds, even improvised material. If you can build a camp fire, you can cast bullets. Source for lead can be ingots, wheel weights, or salvaged shooting range lead. If you have no excess stock on hand, you can pull the bullets off other rounds (they have a tool for this). The best would be .22 since they are lead without a jacket. Even so, if you must, use whatever bullet you can scavenge. If nothing else you can use the lead inside the jacket. Just beware of the following: Shiny wheel weights contain zinc, avoid these. When melting lead, provide ventilation. Inhale lead fumes and it can screw you up. Do not attempt to salvage lead from batteries. They are too toxic and not the lead you need. A single Lee mold is $20 but try to get a double mold, to cut the work in half. Other than that, I can't think of any problems with casting bullets. Easy as pie.

PRIMERS

Primers are the most technologically advanced component in reloading. Smokeless powder was introduced before the turn of the century but it took thirty more years before a primer was introduced that was not damaging to a guns metal. It was not until around the middle of the twentieth century that we got today's benign primer. These things were tricky to perfect, but remember that a primitive primer was introduced in the 1840s using mercury fulminate. I'm sure any high school chemistry student will be able to produce a primer with this material. The downside is that your brass will become brittle with this

method. Potassium chlorate is better and the only side effect is corrosion of the gun if not cleaned soon after cleaning. This is dealt with by black powder shooters and those using old military surplus ammo using corrosive primers. Use soap and water or ammonia, as outlined in Surplus Arms and Ammo, the gist of it is to swab with a wet but not dripping patch with store bought ammonia at half strength. Then clean as usual. This negates the corrosive effects.

You can reload a primer by peeling back the sides of the cup and putting primer material back in. Please forget about using the white part of strike anywhere matches, as was previously recommended. They are getting near impossible to find because of government restrictions on shipping, and some feel that they are even reduced in strength. Of course, this might be the ravings of conspiracy nuts, but it might be true given the fears of litigation today. You can use the material from toy gun caps at about 1/4 the cost of store bought primers, but I would only use as a last resort. Of course you will want to stock up on primers at only $25 per thousand. I imagine even those seriously screwed financially can get a few boxes. None-the-less, this is about making do without.

You can pry apart other size primers and take out the primer material using a little rubbing alcohol, then while wet place in the proper size primer, and allow to dry. With the toy gun caps use the same method, but be sure to test before using a whole packet. Some brands are very weak. Keep in mind with salvaged primers that you have several sizes, none interchangeable. Small pistol, large pistol, small rifle, large rifle, shotgun. Usually if you are reloading military rifle ammo you will only run across large rifle and thus are saved the trouble of dissecting and operating on primers to get the material. To get a live primer from another round, do the following:

After pulling the bullet and draining the powder (we will discuss if powder is useable later) you can take the case and extract the primer with a tool made for this chore. A Universal Depriming Die. This assumes you have a press and not a Lee Loader. Just for this feature alone however, it should be worth your while to get at least a beginner loader, around the $30-$50 range. Of course wear leather gloves and eye protection, as well as get as much distance as possible but really it is quite simple to extract a live primer. Use slow steady pressure. The chance of detonation occurs when you strike the primer suddenly with force. If you slam the punch down hard then it's possible to explode the primer, but with easy steady pressure this will happen rarely. So, if you have a 303 you can take "captured" 223 rounds, extract the primers and have bullet material and a primer (although a 223 uses a small rifle primer so you would need to change over the compound to the other primer cup), with perhaps even the powder. The only thing you will need to provide is your own brass.

Keep in mind that although I mention the 223 I would not recommend that you equip yourself with an AR15 just so you can steal soldiers ammunition. The M16 weapons system is in my opinion a piece of crap. Although it shoots quite accurate, it is light to carry, has almost no recoil and has a million after market accessories, plus can have supplies refurnished from military and police stocks, the fact of the matter is that in

combat conditions a gun that can easily be rendered inoperable by normal dirt and excessive use is not what you want to risk your life on. An AK47 may have a problem of inaccuracy, but you can literally pour dirt into the innards and it will still work. More importantly for our discussion here is that theft is only one of your options, not the sole one. Theft, improvised material, and stockpiling all play a role, as does conservation of ammunition so you need fewer reloading supplies in the first place. Assuming you can steal all your needed ammo is dangerous.

So, for primers you haven several options. Your own stockpile. Purchasing or stealing more. Depriming from other rounds. Rearming with toy gun cap chemicals. Rearming with older less technically advanced chemicals. Taken together these should see you through an ammo drought until you can establish your own arms industry, as long as you conserve your ammo. I imagine that it would not be an insurmountable problem to have a modest cottage industry turn out steel cased ammo using primitive primers (mercury fulminate) and smokeless powder. If worse came to worse, use black powder. This posses a significant tactical drawback, but is better than resorting to swords and arrows. Again, if you have a competent chemist, making a smokeless powder is possible, if dangerous. The first of its type was guncotton, or nitrocellulose. I mention the primitive forms of primers and smokeless powder not to imply they are your best option, but to point out that if someone without an advanced education could manufacture these in the early to mid 1800s, I'm sure you can find someone with enough education in the field to duplicate the results.

POWDER

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Again, this warning. This is serious stuff, people. The section on powder is were you are going to run into the most problems. Explode a primer reloading and at most get a minor injury. Screw up on powder and your gun explodes and takes you with it. Powder jerry rigging is dangerous, pure and simple. Use common sense and take every precaution. This is only to be used in an emergency.

To get a round of one caliber and use its powder in another is generally safe if you follow the three guidelines:

1) if cases are generally the same size
2) if the "new" bullet you are firing is the same weight or LIGHTER
3) if you go from a smaller bore to a larger bore

So, you could use the powder interchangeably in 30-40 Krag/303/7.62x54R/308/8mm/7.65x54/ 30-06/ 223. A 223 bore is smaller than a 303, which is good, but a 22 has a much smaller bullet so you could not use the powder from a 22 in a 303.

Another guideline is fast/slow powder burn. A 50 BMG has slow powder and could be used in just about anything simply because you couldn't stuff enough powder into another case to be dangerous. However, powder from a 223 is fast burning and if you filled that 50 cal case with it it would blow up on you. Based on this, I would avoid using pistol ammo powder in rifles since the case size is different, and avoid shotgun powder since you are going to a smaller bore. Avoid putting 9mm in a 45 since the bullet weight is greater in the 45. Just remember the three guidelines and you should be okay. But remember, the general consensus is that substituting powders is a stupid thing to do. You will only want to do this if it is your only option.

Another idea is to use black powder although I would be uncertain which is the better idea. Using a substitute smokeless power might blow you up, using black powder will get you spotted and killed by the enemy. If you do use black powder which should be simpler to make than guncotton, keep in mind that it will corrode your firearm if you don't clean it a few hours after use. You can use black powder in a smokeless powder gun, but not vise versa.

Use another rounds powder, make your own primitive powder, or use black powder. These are your options to reload after civilization crumples. As is the rest of life, all choices involve sacrifice to some degree. I would say it's not fair, but fair is where you go to sell your pig.

END

TRAVEL LIGHT

by James M Dakin
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Back in the good old days when we had a purpose as a nation and were fighting the Evil Empire, I had joined the Army. In general it was pure hell going through basic training, but the two activities that stand out in my mind as the worse and most vile were running around in the Alabama summer in full MOPP gear and lugging a full pack all day on a nature hike.

It will more than likely never be necessary to duplicate the chemical suit experience, thank all the Gods, but there is still the fear that one day I might be forced to yet again put on a fifty pound pack and walk twenty miles. The very act stills scars my soul to this day.

So, as you can imagine, I have never been a huge fan of packing up all my gear and retreating into the woods. Now, please keep in mind that once long ago I was in the best shape of my life. I went from five push-ups to fifty in two months, and from running across the parking lot to over seven miles at a time. Today, after fifteen years of smoking (I quite two years ago) I can still peddle ten to twenty miles a day, plus move heavy boxes around all day at work. I am still in decent shape for one who looks at sports as activities others engage in. I am not fat, balding or falling apart. Yet, I still know better than attempt to put on a backpack and go running around the woods.

There are those idiots who strut about with puffed out chests, extruding testosterone and wildly proclaiming that they are quite capable of carrying half their body weight all day long. Great, go for it. Me, I'm not sure I could carry more than a rifle and ten or at an extreme twenty pounds extra. To be safe, I figure ten pounds which is ammo and all gear. Any more and I wear myself out quickly, and lets face it, if this happens I'm on the run and it is more appropriate to run in fear like a rabbit than to stagger around like a pack mule.

In a SHTF scenario, I am going to flee quickly. I am not going on an extended camping trip, nor am I going to be inserted into a hot zone and assassinate evil leader XYZ thus requiring a weeks worth of gear. I am not a twenty year old hot shot Ranger who can lug 75 pounds of gear. Frankly, I feel that even when you are in great shape and young it is stupid to load you down with gear and send you in fighting. A heavy pack becomes a burden that takes your mind off paying attention to the activities of the enemy, be they booby traps or troops. It seems a tradition in modern regular armies to weigh down the troopers with as much as humanly possible. Do they have studies were a maximum weight was discovered? I wonder, as it seems each new generation is required to carry more and more.

Of course, a case could be made for each and every piece of equipment carried. Each and every item is a potential life saver. I grant that point. However, at what point does all that vital equipment actually pose a danger by its very weight and bulk? I feel that the modern military passed that point years ago.
Now, several days ago I read an interesting article in the paper. The article was a general overview of Afghanistan, its history, culture, and fighters. It was only a one sentence statement, but the gist of it was that the Moslem fighters that were graduates of the Soviet invasion were light infantry. Very light. They carried only two clips of ammo, their rifle and some bread. It was not stated, but I assume water was also carried. Now that is a light traveling soldier.

This gave me an idea. Why can't this apply to your typical, old, fat desk bound survivalist? In a disaster/SHTF/dictatorship scenario, it would make sense to emulate the Afghan resistance fighters and gear down. A rifle, thirty to fifty rounds of ammo, a knife, some food and water, and a blanket. This would keep you alive two to five days, enough to get to another stash. The support system you set up before hand can be supporters feeding you or buried goods to dig up, or both.

You need to get rid of all that superficial gear. Pistol, pistol clips, flare gun, walkie-talkie, sleeping bag, tent, backpack, first-aid kit, extra clothes, cook stove, lantern, sleeping pad, cold weather gear, extra ammo and magazines, laser range finder, reloading gear, binoculars, extra change of cloths, pots and pans, flashlight, shovel, rope, book and notebook, and any other crap that will not directly be substituted by other gear or done without. You need a rifle to fight, a minimal amount of ammo to ambush the enemy but not directly engage him in combat, a knife to defend yourself and do needed chores/tasks, whole wheat bread to give you complex carbs and energy even if it leaves you feeling hungry, water to keep you alive, and a reflector/space blanket to keep you from freezing. You can do away with everything else while on the move, and keep it all in stationary positions.

Yes, you need cleaning supplies and reloading supplies. That can wait a few days, as long as you picked the correct firearm that didn't need to be coddled and babied and needed to be cleaned after every magazine or it would jam (hint, hint, the M16/AR15). Sure, medical supplies are needed, but what good will it do to have much more than a pack of

sanitary cloth and tape? That and perhaps some duct tape weigh almost nothing and can fix a lot. Put that in a pocket and forget the fancy kits. For night, forget about artificial light and stay in the dark, it is safer. If you feel an emergency might arise were you need light, pack a candle stub and some matches. It will do. Your food is already cooked, no need for any food preparation items. If you need to crap, scoop out a hole with a rock or stick, no need for an entrenching tool. You need that for a foxhole? Just run away, why stay and fight?

With only your cloths, a rifle and minimal gear you can walk quickly all day long, jump and roll and dodge, frolic with the water fairies at a babbling brook, and in general be in much better shape to fight the enemy. It is much better to avoid equipment and fight light.
END

URBAN SURVIVAL

by James M Dakin
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I think it would be safe to say that the majority of practicing survivalists are urban dwellers. First off, not many of us are doctors or computer programmers and so the opportunities to make a living in the boonies are minimal. Small, medium or large, cities are were the jobs are. If you need a paycheck most likely you need to live in the city. Secondly, even if one had a job out in the country, the cost of living is higher simply because of location. There is lack of competition and lack of economics of scale. All in all, it is better to live in the city, economically speaking. We put up with the crime and noise and pollution because we have little choice. So it would follow that since survivalists live in the city, it would be prudent to plan to survive in the city.

It seems that once upon a midnight dreary, a few survivalist that actually made a living by writing on their trade lived out in the sticks. Thus, the myth that all good little survivalists should live there also. Some writers, such as Pournelle, made no bones about their preference to live in the cultured urban environment, but even then their planning was flawed by their plans to relocate. We need to face the fact that we are not a Saxon or a Tappan and are not privileged to dwell outside of the rat race. We are little cogs in big machines and we were ordained to live in our cages. Magazines such as Backwoods Home may sell well to urban dreamers, but I imagine it is few who need them if they are already in the woods.

There was a time when I lived out in the middle of nowhere in small towns. I loved these times, but it was a precarious living. When there are only two dozen businesses in town, it is hard when you loose a job. Let me share a story about one of these times. Happy Camp, California (I kid you not about the name-look it up) is a very small town half way

between the coast and the interstate midway through the state in the mountains. Its on the Klammath River in the Siskiyou Park. One road east to west, one road to the north. This was ideal survival country. The climate was moderate, the rainfall generous, surrounded by wilderness. Then the wild fires of 87 ate up a lot of land in the region. We were safe, being the local staging area for the fire crews, but a curious side effect of these fires was the eradication of the local marijuana crop. We all knew about growers, but until the fires we didn't know how dependant the local economy was on them. The town lumber mill was nothing compared to the illegal crop. After the fires (with money pumped into the economy by the state and Feds) the local economy was hurting big time, and I eventually lost my job. With few pickings, I headed on out. This is the pitfall of living in a small town in the middle of nowhere. In a small city it would have been much easier to get another job, even in an economic downturn.

I have lived in satellite cities. Not suburbs, but separate small towns near enough to a city to attract the higher paid and provide cheap shopping. These provide the benefits of small towns and have none of the drawbacks of living in the city. The price to pay is in increased housing costs, as the yuppie scum propping the town up economically also raise real estate prices. So, you might live in a crappy mobile home but pay $250 in lot rent because of escalating land prices. On the flip side you can make trips into the city and buy cheap groceries and other supplies.
I have lived in larger cities, but never huge metropolitan areas. To me, that is totally unnecessary and dangerous. Any city over a certain size is too dangerous, both for crime and terrorist potential. Far before the attacks of 9-11, I avoided big cities like the plague because of one simple truth- it could get me killed. If some crack head didn't bash my skull in for the one lone five dollar bill I had in my wallet, a nuclear strike from the Soviet Union would. Big cities are were the nukes were, and are, targeted. Before we had to worry about some vodka swilling idiot pushing the button on an ICBM and turning us into glow in the dark refugees. After the collapse of the Soviets we had to worry about any raghead or drug kingpin driving in a suitcase bomb purchased on the Russian black market and blowing up the place. Now we have to worry about the Holy Warriors terrorizing the cities. The message is clear to me. Live in the city to work, stay out of the big city to stay alive.

Crime is a problem everywhere now. I realize this. You can get killed in Dog breath, Wyoming if you happen to be a fag. The town I grew up in through Jr/Sr High has a population of only 30,000 and is almost one hundred miles from a big city. Yet, years ago they started having problems with the Bloods and Crips gangs. I understand crime can and will happen anywhere. The key is economics and not really location. When the economy is doing good, crime goes down and visa versa. However, in the big cities the crime problem is more pronounced if only because the concentration of people in a small area. The same percentage of the population may be involved in crime, but they are all within walking distance of were you live. This is not a good thing, and if you don't have money to insulate yourself from the predators, you must live close to them. Therefore by living in smaller cities you reduce, but not eliminate, the risk of crime.

You can only live one of two lifestyles here. One is a country dweller where you can farm and raise livestock. The other is living in a community were at most you have 1/8 of an acre to grow a small vegetable patch. So, isolation and farming or community and no farming. Personally I believe that in today's economy it makes very little sense to farm. It is much cheaper to buy grain, store it, and work a job that pays well. If you farmed ten acres, harvested 500 pounds of wheat and sold that you could get maybe $25 for it. You saved $200 on produce from your garden. If you worked one day a week at a minimum wage job for a year you would make over two thousand dollars. So, farming does not pay obviously. Now, granted, I just pulled some figures out of my butt here. I have no idea what an acre of wheat will produce. But to factor into the equation land cost, equipment cost, etc., I still think it would be cheaper to buy a house in the city and work a job than to buy land in the country and farm. I understand that it is prudent to have a farm now, when you don't need it and be prepared for when the economy destructs and that farm is all that will feed you. My point is that it would be more practical and cheaper to store grain now, live on that in a crisis, and then start a farm on any available suitable land. Of course, you lack experience in farming that way. But you also lack experience in butchering, hunting, livestock raising, building, well digging, equipment repair, etc.

If you are semi self sufficient on a homestead now, you are going to be able to do for yourself in a crisis. That is the good part. The bad part is that it is expensive to live that way. You are required to work part time at a modern occupation, while at the same time working your land. The land cost money, the farm equipment, the alternate energy systems. It is expensive to live in the country. It is hard work, and it sure takes more that forty hours a week. Plus, when crunch time comes, you are all alone out on your farm and easy pickings for any roving gang with the most primitive grasp on tactics. Plus, when civilization truly collapses you are suddenly without supplies even you had to depend on out at the farm. Propane gas, lumber, parts to repair your energy system, gasoline and car/truck parts, most likely farm seed, ammunition, etc. Now your life gets even harder as you must produce your own methanol, harvest and hand cut lumber, jerry rig or abandon your energy system, produce grain or wood alcohol to power your engines, grow only from your non hybrid seeds, and conserve your ammunition lest your reloading supplies run out. All the while either fighting gangs or paying them protection with a crop quota.

Not that town/city life will be much easier, with constant warfare amongst rival factions. But, in a community you will have help against the enemy. That is the crucial difference after a collapse. The difference before will be your enhanced economic situation. Afterward you will have trusted individuals that will band together with you for self protection. Out on the farm the neighbor five miles down the road will be of little use to you if he is busy protecting his own crop. The ideal situation would be a co-op where a farm was jointly maintained from near-by urbanites who fled to the farm in an emergency. However, due to the cost, but more importantly the justified paranoia amongst survivalists, there will be no banding together. This was perhaps the true intention of Waco, the installation of fear in grouping together for protection against government stupidity.

Bugging out is not really a viable strategy. You either end up in an isolated spot where you could be under siege, or a small community were you are unknown and unwelcome unless you have a critical skill, even if you do own land there. That plus the problems of getting there in the first place. Really what needs to be done is for you to make up your mind now what your survival strategy is and do it. Do not dream pie in the sky, one day by golly type of procrastination. You can always start out in the country on a minimal amount of cash outlay. I'm not talking about forty acres and a mule homesteading but a small travel trailer on a piece of dirt or even squatting on Federal land. Look for land under the control of the agency with the biggest portion with the smallest budget, research doable in the library, and pick a spot. Hell, max out your credit cards and live on $200 a month for awhile as you pull small jobs for cash or pick up cans (in a state with a nickel deposit, otherwise commodity price sucks) or give blood. If all you need is food and gas money you will not need much. Get a gold claim. Do something besides wishing. You need to be in a safe spot before a crisis, not after.

For those that wish to remain in civilization, be it a small town or a small city, you will need to do several things. First, only live in a state that is liberal in its concealed carry laws. This will allow you protect yourself and alleviate the problem of crime to a large degree. Second, even a small apartment can store a large amount of grain. You need to stock up for yourself and those who will later be helping you survive. You will need others, because you can't do it all yourself, if only because you need to sleep sometime. And, they will not have stockpiled like you have, so plan ahead to feed at least yourself and five others. A one year supply of wheat for six will take a little over a ton of wheat, 80 five gallon buckets. This will fill a medium size closet, and cost about $375. Buying the flavor of the week war surplus rifles and 300 rounds per gun for six will bring the total cost to perhaps $1,000. That is a small price to pay for security, considering that there are plenty of folks running around with semi-auto costing more than that. Who has the better investment? P.S. make sure you have a ground floor apartment.

To get to specific equipment recommendations- There is really very little difference between what you need in the city or in the country to survive, but enough that you should be aware. I will cover weapons, food, water, shelter and transportation. Just be satisfied to know that regardless of where you end up, general survival preparations should get you through. The advice here is geared more towards getting you to accept that surviving in the city is no more undesirable than the country. The small differences there are in gear are minimal and lack of them should not induce panic.

If money is really tight and you can afford almost nothing for preparations and you must choose between weapons rather than an arsenal, by all means purchase only a pistol. In the country I would suggest only a rifle. Really, you need both. In the city a pistol should be with you at all times for self protection with a carbine or rifle used to reach out and keep the enemy away from you. In the country a rifle is close by, but a pistol is needed to remain armed at all times. In either case a pistol is only needed to get you to your rifle, but for the severely financial challenged a pistol is best for the city dweller. In the city an individual armed with a rifle is liable to draw fire immediately, whereas in the country it

would be considered the norm. I realize that unarmed civilians will also draw fire, but by having a weapon concealed you do not invite unwanted attention.

Even those strapped financially should be able to arm themselves with both. A SKS can still be purchased for $200 if you find an FFL holder that sells at cost plus 15%. Ammo is $100 per 1000 rounds delivered. That and a $100 used revolver will arm you for a grand total of $400, under the cost of most shiny new 9mm pistols with a dozen mags. Even cheaper would be a $75 war surplus bolt action and $75 per thousand rounds- with pistol $250 total. Surely anyone can afford that. A note on pistols- do not buy the cheap crap semi-autos in anemic calibers such as .25, .380, .32 etc. These are really almost worse than nothing. I would rather be armed with a bowie knife than one of these pieces of crap. You can find older .22 revolvers for under $100. They may be slightly less powerful than the semi-autos but they are reliable and hold more rounds. Remember that these are last ditch, better than nothing pistols. Look around in Shotgun News (now available at Wally World if you don't subscribe) for deals on Russian pistols. Recently there have been $80 or $90 jobber price Makarovs, about $125 your cost. These would be preferable to .22s with only a slightly added cost. For those wishing to defer magazine costs, there was a Russian 7.62 Nagant revolver for $50, $90 if buying the 32ACP cylinder to convert caliber.

It is not necessary to avoid large calibers just because you are in an urban environment. There has been a large to-do about avoiding over penetration to ensure no civilians are wounded, but this is a police issue, not a survivalist one. For home defense in normal times use pistols or shotguns (single shot Wally World special $89 for the budget impaired). That should keep you from getting sued from the next door neighbor. WTSHTF, you want large calibers to reach through the car door and kill the bad guy, or through foliage without danger of deflection. Avoid .223 caliber and stay with 30 caliber, be it carbine or battle rifle strength. If anyone saw the movie with Ed Harris recently, the Russian snipers in Stalingrad used powerful bolt actions in an urban setting at short distances. Not a bad strategy (as opposed to our troops using crappy little M16s at long ranges in the desert).

Food can't be grown in the city, to a large degree. Any plot of land such as lots, highway medians or parks under cultivation would only be practical under well controlled territory. If you are knowledgeable in companion planting, non-hybrid seeds, natural pesticides, composting, and intense gardening, your skills could easily be traded to an area warlord. In the meantime have plenty of grain stocks on hand. It would be a mistake to learn from the Great Depression as far as farmer sufficiency goes, as the world has changed and small farm holdings are no longer economically feasible. Artificially high land prices and taxes see to that. Do the smart thing and stay in town where you can afford to stock up on grain to feed yourself in an emergency. However, if you do have a typical home your front/back yard can be turned into a garden now, and that along with grain stocks will provide you handsomely. Apartment dwellers are screwed for gardens, so stock grains and rely on sprouts for fresh veggies.

Water is a concern in the city as storage space is limited except if you have a garage and rain barrels. In the country you have a cistern and pond. In town set aside at least two 55 gallon drums to store water, and you should have enough on emergency rations to last three months of drought. I would recommend an alternate strategy also. In an apartment you might have one drum, or even just some gallons in the pantry. Best have a stash of silver coins to buy on the black market, a bad idea as it exposes you even more. If nothing else, get a big water bed. This should be your first line of water storage, then drums, then an alternate supply, then black market. Also be aware of humidity condensers, a $1000 machine that uses electricity to draw moisture from the air. Also sold with a PV panel hook up option. Good for 1-3 gallons a day.

You already have shelter, in the form of a house or apartment. Prepare it for lack of power. Have space blankets to cover windows, space heaters using propane or kerosene (YOU NEED VENTILATION), candles, lamps, a way to cook (I love the Colman duel fuel stove, $35 and uses gasoline or white gas) and plenty of winter clothing. Consider building an insulated sleeping chamber. Have the materials for a composting toilet. Five gallon buckets and sawdust work if nothing else. You need to review all your Y2K plans as pertaining to systems failures and plan accordingly.

In the city an advantage over our country cousins is that we don't need to own transportation. Even without public transportation we can walk almost anywhere we need to go. Except in some sprawl cities, you have a compact area with plenty of commerce. All you really need is a bicycle. Public transportation is great except for the fact that idiots, perverts and criminals ride. Best to get your own vehicle where you can leave as you wish and go where you wish. You can buy a crap bike for $20 at a garage sale and ride forever with only flat tires and ground down bearings to worry about. I purchase a mid range bike, not Kmart crap, not mountain biker sport extreme. For two hundred bucks I put on the bike ten to twenty miles a day for two or three years until the salt air here in Florida rust it away to an unsafe condition. It keeps me in great shape, I have a monthly transportation cost of $10 which includes maintenance, and I stay off the bus where the riff-raff live. The only downside is winds, floods and cancer causing sunlight, but at least I save big bucks and am all ready for the next gas crunch.
END

HUMANITARIAN AID

By James M Dakin
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Since we began the nuclear Cold War with the Soviet Union in the fifties and the affluent began constructing fallout shelters, those preparing for the end of civilization have been asking themselves the question, “What do I do when my neighbor wants me to help him survive?” For those of use that are not politically collect, the answer is simple. Shoot the stupid bastard. You sit around sipping martinis and talk about how easy it would be for the Godless Commie scum to nuke us. He knows all about it, and he has the same salary as you, and so can also afford to prepare. Yet, he is stubbornly refusing to follow your common sense lead. Now, when the ICBMs start raining down on the cities, you just know he is going to come around knocking on your shelter begging to be let in. When you refuse he might get righteous and start messing around with your air intake or some such. So, against your better judgment, you lay away extra supplies to provide for the worthless bastard.

Nuclear war might have subsided as a threat, but then came along the sixties and the cities saw wide scale riots, looting, and unrest. As an upstanding member of society this worries you greatly and you begin to perceive a new threat. The unwashed masses would soon be pounding on your shelter door demanding that you redistribute the wealth in the event of an emergency. As there was no way to placate such numbers, you began to plan on bugging out to a country retreat in the event of unpleasantries. Instead of a shelter you now had a country retreat and a four wheel drive to get there.

Time goes on and you notice two disturbing trends. One is the increased gas mileage of most vehicles and the other is that the country is starting to get filled up with former city dwellers. With the new cars coming from Japan getting much better gas mileage, most worthless scumbag welfare pukes can now get to your retreat on a single tank of gas. This is defiantly a very bad thing. And, suddenly there are very few country locations with roads and utilities that are not getting crowded. Long hair hippie freaks are moving out to

the country bringing crime and welfare checks. Drug cultivation begins in the remote wilderness you were setting up shop.

The wilderness no longer looks as great, especially with global warming and increased droughts leading to an increase in forest fires. No point living in the middle of a forest if you're going to turn into a crispy critter. You move to a small town a reasonable distance from the big metropolitan areas. This provides a safe haven from the starving masses in times of trouble. Unfortunately after you have moved you discover that due to tree huggers saving the spotted owl the local economy really sucks. You are a professional and are in no danger of being unemployed, but most of the locals are either on welfare, growing drugs or too damn poor to live a self sufficient lifestyle.

Now you are back in the same boat you were in before. The worthless pukes refuse to prepare for disaster and you are left holding the bag in times of trouble. In the name of self preservation you are going to have to provide for your neighbors weather you want to or not. I realize this might stick in your craw. We pay the hell out of taxes, and when the stuff hits the fan we are going to be forced to take care of the idiots of society. It is enough to make one cry. The scenario of one sitting atop his mound of freeze dried food blasting away at the starving welfare bitches is such a sweet sight. Alas, it is not realistic. In the end you are either overrun by sheer numbers or you waste all your ammo and are victim of the next criminal gang that comes by. You are just going to have to suck it up and pay the piper, even if it goes against the very fiber of your being.

If you live in the country, you can plan on some type of "Lucifer's Hammer" scenario were you feed the community off stored foods until you can get the crops planted and harvested. From then on your community will stick together as their lives depend on the crops. Weather they dispose you as the leader is another question. This might be the best case scenario but depends on your dwelling in the country in the first place, plus having enough money to stash supplies. I have written on this before. It takes food and guns on hand to assure a chance of group survival. The minimum figure is $1,000 per half dozen men, using only wheat and bottom of the barrel type war surplus firearms with a minimum of corrosive ammo.

A small town existence is more realistic financially to some folks, with the same figures, but has the disadvantage of lacking pre-existing farm land. You had better have a plan on how to start farming right away. Not only must you have food and weapons, but farm supplies and tools. The city is even worse, which is unfortunate because that is were most of us live. In a city you need to provide more basic supplies, because odds are it is going to be much more difficult to start farming. Thus, figure on two years supply of wheat per person, plus weapons. At least $300 per person.

This all assumes you wish to feed, arm, and lead a group of people after a collapse. Obviously it would be quite stupid to arm an individual and then turn them loose, as they are sure to return to take everything else you own. Do not make the mistake of thinking they will be grateful and leave with what you gave them. This was meant for a group that

you could trust somewhat. It is a gamble at best to trust those you only know on a casual basis or friends you've only known a short time, but it beats trusting strangers off the street. It is a gamble any way you do it, unless your circle is comprised of lifetime friends were there is a bond. Theoretically you will be looked at for leadership since you are the one who has studied survival and have the supplies and knowledge. Good luck.

If it is your intention to help others out in a collapse situation, through a sense of either self preservation or goodwill, you may wish to supply a portion of grain to a small group. For instance, if you know a cop in a small town, you could mention you are a survivalist and he should look you up in an end-of-the-world situation. Oh, and by the way, I have plenty of food for your buddies in blue. This would assure that the new local warlords would treat you with some kind of tolerance after you fed them. Just be sure to have a needed skill for when you become expendable to them, then they will keep you alive longer. A dangerous course, but cheap in that it only takes $50 of wheat to feed one person for a year.

Do not stash food or weapons in the hopes of trading them for protection. You will simply be tortured for their location and then killed. You must deal from a position of strength. Have a needed and rare skill, or be part of an armed group when giving out food. If you are just giving it away, you might consider doing so in exchange for a future favor. But again, only from a position of strength. If you can't enforce your agreement you will get screwed. Consider the following. Bill and his band of malcontents come begging food. You agree to let him in your guarded compound. He pleads his case, and since you feel Bill might just survive you agree to loan him a ton of wheat in exchange for one half of all captured slaves in the future. If you can't field some men to recon his camp and find out if he is dealing with you honestly, plus enforcing that militarily, don't bother doing the deal in the first place.

You could simply sell your food. Granted, this is not about a business after the collapse, but about helping out your fellow man. However, if you help you could be getting yourself into trouble, so it is best to figure out how to help. A merchant with high priced vital goods is still helping out in a humane manner, he is just helping himself along the way. What would you prefer- the Red Cross giving away food for free, but they run out before you get there, or a businessman that rapes you on the price but can provide you with food. I would consider the profiteer more of a help to me. This is what most people fail to see during a commodity shortage. Sure, you get screwed in the deal, but at least you get what you need. If it was given away below market value, the supply would be gone too quickly and you would get none. The next time you see gas at $5 a gallon during a shortage, consider that. If it was $1 a gallon they would have already been sold out.

When selling, there is the question of what to accept in exchange. Gold and silver are great and at first you could be seeing a great profit as the metals are over valued. Since very few people have precious metals, the initial short supply would drive up the cost. It would not be unreasonable to see several pounds of grain or a case of canned goods to sell

for one ounce of silver. Also, supply and demand would work in your favor. The thing to keep in mind with gold and silver is that you will need to wait until a degree of stability returns before a market is established. Many might be reluctant to trade with them when the immediate concern is starvation. You might see grain and canned goods become the immediate currency. Even after trade in silver returns it would do you little harm to keep trading in foodstuffs. It could be quite awhile before they are reduced in value. Also think about tobacco. This could be a great barter item. Salt would be worth extra away from the costal areas.

Putting aside any plans to form a group or to become a merchant, you could simply give away food. This will sooth any feelings of guilt you might develop by surviving while others around you starve. My feelings are less of caring and more on self-preservation, but you may think differently. Stock up now, give away X portion of food to starving peasants, then go about taking care of just you and your family. Be aware the danger of rumors circulating and a long never ending line forming. This will be bound to happen, so think of how to deal with the situation beforehand. An Out Of Food sign on your front door might start a riot, so stand by with a few frag grenades, shotguns and bottles of napalm. Feed the starving masses, then kill them. Seriously, just have a hasty retreat planned if things get ugly.

A simple and cheap food giveaway would involve a used pot with lid from the thrift shop and a three pound bag of rice. The pot is under a buck, and the rice $1 at a discount store. Realizing the shortages of pots at thrift stores, also look to garage sales. For two dollars a person you could provide a helping hand to your starving neighbors. Over the course of months or years you could amass a tidy sum of cooking pots and rice. If you forego the pots and store away three pounds of rice per person, you could feed all comers at $1 per applicant. You could store these bags in large garbage cans to avoid infestation. But, keep in mind that you should store the rice no more than about five years, then feed it to livestock and refresh your stockpile.

Better yet is to stock mini survival kits to give away. A bag of rice in a pot, a space blanket, small candle with matches and a cheap pocket knife could be had for $5 if you shop carefully. At $100 per twenty people, you could hand out these kits to those that came begging. " No, I can't take you in, but I can spare this to help you out" kind of thing. Those that beg for more can be told to take it or leave it, and those getting nasty can be hit aside the head with an ax handle to provide incentive. Again, you need to be charitable only if it doesn't endanger your life. If you are going to provide for supplies now out of your less than adequate cash, you surely would be foolish to get killed later for your troubles.

Most likely the cheapest grain you are going to find will be corn. The last I looked right before Y2K it was about $4 per 50 pounds. If you fed others a starvation diet of about ½ pound per day of corn gruel it would cost you about $1.25 per person per MONTH to feed them. Thus if you spent $1,000 over a period of time ($4 at a time) you could feed fifty people for a year (bucket cost being factored in). A select group of skilled persons

could thus be kept alive for some time before crops came in on a small room full of buckets containing corn. This might seem like a large amount of money, but how much did last years auto insurance cost? Odds are, you didn't even need that insurance.

Another tactic would be to buy corn and pork and beans in cans anytime you see them on sale for three for $1. Canned goods do take up space, but with grain/bean products you shouldn't have to worry overly much about expiration dates and it presents a ready to eat food negating cooking cost. The poor fool just opens and gulps. Thus there is no lingering around poorly constructed camp fires hatching plots to get more than their fair share. Take your can and go. Again, this assumes you have plenty for you and yours and have extra in which to be generous. With reloading, a bullet will cost no more than a can of beans, so you might just wish to stock up on ammo components and kill all beggars. However, that goes against the spirit of helping we are trying to foster here, and it is bad publicity to kill all that cross your path.

You need not plan on feeding everyone forever. You need to plan ahead and set limits. It would be easy to say screw it and keep all supplies to yourself on the eve of a catastrophe, but keep in mind that the humanitarian aid allows you several options. One, you can recruit and feed others to your group. Two, you can appear to be generous and somewhat dispel bad feelings toward you. Three, you are actually helping others and that goes a long way in intrinsic rewards. Just beware that no one but the Mormon church can store enough grain to feed everyone for any length of time. Set a limit of persons and/or amounts and stick to it. You can help some but not all.
END

THE BASIC FOUR MENU
by James M Dakin
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The basic four in food storage refers to wheat, milk, honey and salt. Most people equate this with the Mormons and their food storage. Where this originally came from I'm not sure, but it has been around for awhile. The wonderful thing about basics is that it is dirt cheap, takes little space, and can be purchased gradually.

An excellent book still in print covering this is Making The Best Of Basics by James Stevens, Gold Leaf Press. I picked mine up at Books-A-Million, I'm sure you can get in at Amazon. Expect to pay around $20, and it is one of the few great bargains for survivalist literature. The layout is wonderful and it has all the information you will need. This pamphlet is geared more for a general introduction and assumes some previous knowledge on your part.

Wheat is the centerpiece of your food storage, and even some commercial freeze dried units rely heavily on calories from wheat. If you assume that wheat supplies almost all of your calories you will need a pound a day per person, or rounded off to 400 pounds each. Thus, about $65 a person is all that is required for a bare bones food budget for a year. Even the most severely economically challenged individual will be able to afford that.

Of course that is not all that is needed, and we will cover your other requirements, but that incredibly cheap figure should convince you of the practicality of providing for your family and friends in a time of need. When it is cheaper to buy a years supply of wheat than 500 rounds of cheap imported ammo, you should seriously consider the strategy of feeding your neighbors instead of fighting them off.

You may wish to pack your own wheat from the feed mill and use recycled five gallon plastic buckets from bakeries, the $65 figure, or purchase from a survival outfitter. I was fortunate enough to live within driving distance of one and chose to purchase two years

supply of the Mylar/nitrogen packed buckets. Living in Florida I felt there was too much moisture and bugs to take a chance. $350, not including gas. If you get the company to ship it expect to spend a lot more. Out West, were it is dry and has fewer pest I have merely dumped the wheat in a bucket and sealed it up. They lasted for many years without damage just like that. No bags, no nitrogen. The cost of that was $150 for two years supply.

Do not attempt to store flour, as it will quickly go rancid. The whole kernels are not only far and away more nutritious but will last indefinitely. There has been wheat from the Egyptian tombs that still sprouted, and so you could say with some certainty that wheat is the one grain proven to last for as long as you protect it from weather and pests. This is no small consideration, as a food keeping its nutritional value forever has a strong endorsement as the perfect survival food.

You will also need to purchase a hand powered grain mill. Use metal rather than stone, as the stone will leave behind minute abrasive material that is not healthy on your teeth long term. Go to any health food store or purchase through the mail a Corona mill. Not only is this the cheapest but also the most sturdy and long lasting. This brut weighs a ton and is hard to turn, but you could use it every day for the rest of your life and it will still work fine. And that should be the purpose of a survival tool. Cost is around $50. Avoid powered mills, high-tech light weight mills, or anything liable to break. This is one area were low tech is best.

With your grain mill, a years supply of wheat for four persons, plus plastic buckets for storage, your total cost should average around $300 to $350. This is such a small price to pay to ensure your family is fed for a year. It is criminal not to do so. You go to three locations on a day off. The feed mill. The health food store. Any bakery, donut shop or deli that cleans out five gallon buckets and sells them with lids to the public for $1 each. Go home, store your wheat in buckets and hid the buckets in an area out of sight. One whole day and a minimal amount of cash, in a one time purchase, will see to your families welfare. No longer will you have to worry about bad weather, truckers strikes, political instability, inflation, crop failure or anything else affecting your food supply. You will have peace of mind. Even if you do nothing else, you can now eat in a time of crises. Even without a fuel supply you can tear apart the garage for wood fires to cook over.

Even though this is not the place to discuss weapons, allow me to just say that regardless of your beliefs, you should arm yourself. The police will be busy elsewhere, and if you fail to protect your families food supply, you might as well kill them yourself. Without food, they will all die. Determine before the fact that you need to defend your loved ones. At the cheapest, go to Wal-mart and buy a single shot shotgun and several boxes of 00 buck ammo. The single shot is so simple that novices should feel comfortable with it. Cost is around $125 with ammo.

My suggestion for a cooking source is a gasoline stove single burner. $50 at Wal-mart. You can easily scavenger fuel from vehicles. This assumes you do not have a wood

burner. If so, stock up on non-mechanical cutting tools as well as stockpiling gas for your chainsaw. However, let's assume that money is tight. Just plan on using a campfire to cook over. A simple hatchet will be all you need.

Using wheat as the basis of your storage food insures that variety will exist. In times of stress it can be natural to not eat. Even familiar food could be turned down if it is monotonous. Gruel for every meal will cause some meals to go untouched. Just with wheat flour alone you have biscuits, pancakes, cookies, pretzels, bread sticks, crackers, pasta, muffins, tortillas, flatbread, sourdough bread, and more. Working the flour into gluten will provide a meat substitute and milk will double your menu. That should satisfy most palates.

A few basic recipes from regular cookbooks or whole wheat cookbooks will give you all you need to provide a varied menu. As with all areas of preparation, it is wise to do your own research and practice ahead of time. Find the recipes you like now, and practice them using whole wheat. If you wish to avoid the hassle of grinding now, get some flour at your health food store.

Flour is self evident. What about gluten? Gluten is whole wheat flour with the starch removed from the dough. Take flour and water in a one to five ratio. One cup water per five cups flour. Form into a ball then knead, beat of pound for at least ten minutes. Failure to beat the crap out of the ball will produce poor quality gluten. Cover with cold water for an hour, then remove starch by rinsing under hot water. When dough is firm the starch is gone. Continue to rinse until no longer gritty. Drain for a half hour. Now you have gluten. Fry in meat fat for taste or boil in flavored stock. If nothing else, stock up on beef bullion for flavoring.

Stockpile baking soda for biscuits and pancakes and such. For leavened bread, it is best to use sourdough instead of store bought yeast which has limited self life. Make a starter, a yeasted dough which will be used to make your homemade yeast from then on. When you have your starter done, take a cup out to use as your yeast. Then, replace the missing volume of flour and milk which will continue the culture for the next use. One cup yeast dough out, one cup flour and milk back in. A simple sourdough starter is a cup of fresh ground wheat and a cup of buttermilk. After 48 hours fermentation should begin. Add several more cups each of wheat and regular milk, again wait for fermentation. This is your starter which will last a long time and provide you with cheap yeast. You must keep refrigerated, at the least in a root cellar. Room temperature will turn your starter into a moldy stew which you must discard.

Start now to experiment with whole wheat, and begin to use it in your diet. White flour is a useless junk food. It is true that insects will have little to do with white flour, as there are no nutrients in it. However, contrary to the cries of health food nuts I don't believe that it is a toxic poison. It is merely the core of a wheat berry striped of its nutritional cover. It might have problems being digested as there is no fiber, but water and vegetables can help in that department. White flour is merely a "filler" with no nutrition.

That said, however, don't rely on it for survival food. In that situation you will need all the nutrients possible to counteract stress. Eat good foods.

On to the dairy section. Unless you plan on raising milk animals such as cows or goats you can count on your storage milk being nutritionally compromised. The need to process milk for storage kills the complete protein and you are left with incomplete proteins. When combined with whole wheat the two should provide a complete protein. Complete proteins are provided by meat. Grains and legumes provide incomplete proteins. By combining a grain and a legume, for instance flour tortillas and refried beans, you achieve a complete protein. If you want more details on this consult a health food nut. They advocate doing away with meat and having people only eat grains, thus having our supplies of grain "go further". A pound of meat is produced by feeding the animal twenty pounds of grain, so bypass the animal and give twenty people a pound of grain instead of one person one pound of meat. A good theory, but like many they miss the point that we have more than enough grain. In fact, we have too much grain. We feed it to cattle and hogs so we can get rid of most of it. Then we make Twinkies out of some of it. We are swimming in the stuff, it is so plentiful we need to "make it into something else". Value added products bring much better profits. Our agricultural economy is the worlds best, although that is not saying much as it is still controlled heavily by government. If every other country, including those in drought plagued Africa, were to follow suite the world would have so much food there would never be another child starving to death. The key is to allow the free market to reign supreme. Again, it ain't rocket science.
Personally I like storing milk by the can, rather than powder. My way is much bulkier, but it is easier and I can do it fifty cents at a time instead of $15 a shot. I also believe that there is less nutritional loss, but have no facts to back that up. It just seems to me that there is less processing, thus less damage to the nutrients. Use evaporated milk, fifty cents per can at a discount store. Avoid the canned milk with added "fillers". Read the ingredients before buying. Twelve ounces per can, recipe is to add one can per water to one can milk. Thus, five cans milk with added water will produce just shy of a gallon. $2.50 a gallon, actually cheaper than refrigerated fresh milk. Although the coloring is slightly off, the taste is the same as fresh. This can't be said for powdered.

Instant powdered milk from a survival supply mail order firm will run you over $1 a quart after shipping, so $4 to $5 a gallon. An almost four pound container makes nineteen quarts. This will vary slightly firm to firm. So, if you must save money go with canned milk. If less storage space and less weight, plus ease of movement are more important, go with the powdered milk. For storage I definitely would go with nitrogen packed. Avoid the store bought cardboard container of powder. There is no protection from pests or oxygen.

By storing milk in whatever form you are not only doubling your menu options from a wheat only diet, but you are increasing the protein content of your diet. From a short term viewpoint the most important consideration is that the diet is now much more palatable. Cracked wheat for breakfast, biscuits for lunch and pasta for dinner are boring. Cracked wheat and yogurt, biscuits and cottage cheese, and pasta and cheese sauce are so much

better. The only addition besides some basic equipment is yogurt culture from a health food store and rennet tablets for making the regular cheese.

Get yourself a few good books on cheese making, or better yet find a scanner on sale, $30 to $50 as of October '00. Then, get library books on the subject and scan them to disk. After the initial purchase you get free information. Excluding the tax you pay to keep the library open, of course. Even small town libraries have how to books on all the fun subjects such as gun smithing or gardening or whatnot. Then, after exhausting their supplies, they can order other books through inter-library loans. This is a great way to extend your survival library with a cheap if labor intensive method. I hesitate to give detailed information on subjects such as cheese making before I get a chance to do it myself. I'm guiding you to your destination. See to the details yourself. In time I will offer details on this and other subjects. Be patient, I have a regular job that eats up most of my time.

Honey is a great sweetener. It is natural, good for you, twice as sweet as table sugar, stores forever, and can even be used as an antibiotic on wounds. You not only need a sweetener to assist in leavening bread, but for physiological reasons. Most of us have a sweet tooth, and it is best to indulge it during times of stress were so much else must be sacrificed.

A while back when I stocked up on honey, I purchased it in #10 enameled cans. It should store forever. At the time I believe I paid around $6 per can at the grocery store. That was on the West coast and since then I have not come across any that I noticed. If you can find it that way great. Otherwise purchase it any container or size you see fit. A good ratio is about one sixth the honey as your wheat, but use your judgment. Price will dictate how much you can buy, plus storage space. In a pinch you can go a long way on just a little.

Salt is an item you need. It is dirt cheap, so you should go ahead and buy a lot more than you are going to need. Salt is three pounds a dollar right now, and if you get at least six pounds a trip to the store, in no time you will have quite a stockpile. Remember that the Latin word for salt was the basis for "salary". Salt was at one time was quite valuable. We have lost sight of that in our abundance. This can be a good barter item, but don't get carried away. There are and will be other sources of salt. You won't corner the market.

Get iodized salt. Before they offered salt in this form the only source of iodide was sea food, a problem if you live in the interior and semi's don't run anymore. You need salt for yourself, for barter and for food preparation. It is also an item that must be stored ahead of time. You can grow wheat, raise milk animals, keep bees, but it might be a little hard to find salt. Plan accordingly.

Do not bother to store canned veggies. That is a waste of time and money. As far as vitamins, a good supply of a multi-vitamin is fine. No need to get carried away. Your real source of vitamins is fresh sprouts. Sprouts are the best vegetable on a basis of nutrition.

About the worst for taste, other than brussel sprouts (no, those are not the sprouts I'm talking about here). And boy are they cheap. Pennies per helping. You can get different grains or beans to sprout or just use wheat berries. Get five quart jars, some cheesecloth or panty hose, and rubber bands or jar rings. Soak the seeds, wheat is eight to twelve hours. Have the cover on the jar. Then, drain and fill again, swish around and immediately drain. Place in a warm dark spot. Then rinse seeds two or three times a day. Fill water to cover seeds, then drain well. The idea is to keep them "watered", not covered in water. If you don't drain good enough you create mold. When sprout is seed length after three to six days you can eat it seed and all. Home grown veggies without the dirt.

With the basic four food items you are covered several ways. No need to wait for survival supply dealers to send you your food, most often from a waiting list. You can shop around locally and compare prices. No need to pay shipping costs. You are preparing nutritious wholesome food, not processed crap. You can duplicate the ingredients on a small farm. Peace of mind.

If you want to expand on the concept, you can add to your basic ingredients. First off, add different grains. This is cheap and expands your menu choices. Corn is a good choice. Cheaper than wheat, four to five dollars a fifty pound sack, it will add to your menu at almost no extra cost. Corn bread, hush puppies, chips, even coating for corn dogs using gluten. On a cold morning there is nothing better than fried corn meal mush. Soy beans are good for filler and fake meat. Rye will give you different breads. Pinto beans and other legumes can be added.

After adding grains and beans, your choices get more expensive. Cooking oil is about four bucks a gallon in a grocery, less if you buy bulk from a restaurant supply store. Canned meats, canned cheese, any #10 can sold at the grocery store. They are incredibly cheap. $3 for seven pounds of pork and beans at Wal-mart. $7 for nacho cheese. $3 for a tin of instant mashed potatoes. These add variety. It can't hurt to pick up one can a week. After a time you have a lot.

Please forget freeze dried foods. They are processed foods with little nutrition and cost a crap load of cash. They have a place as bug-out food, or if you are without any storage space at all, such as an RV dweller or someone in an apartment with roommates. Even then, however, I've stored two years worth of wheat in a three by five closet with room to spare for cloths and other everyday items. When I lived in a travel trailer I stored wheat in sealed plastic bags under the table/seats that folded down to make a bed. I don't recall exactly but I'm sure it was at least six months worth underneath.

Get one to three months worth of freeze dried and MREs. No more. It should only be for bug-outs. Patrols can be fed with hardtack, jerky, and such homemade foodstuffs. Even skipping the processed foods would be fine. Make it yourself. A great bugout kit is oatmeal/ peanut butter balls with Tang powdered drink. Throw in beef jerky and hard candy. No cooking needed, food on the run. My first attempt at a kit was a joke. Good

idea, but too much weight. Brown rice, thermos, pan and Sterno with folding stove. The idea was to boil water, throw in the thermos with rice, set overnight. Almost no cooking, cheap, nutritious, but weighed a ton when combined with tarps and other goodies.

If your area is suitable for it, you can rely on wood for your cooking. Up in the mountains you could even consider outdoor fires if you don't have a wood stove (for instance if you are in an apartment. My first plan was just that when I lived in Lake Tahoe). If you are in a less wooded area, plan on needing to store fuel. A 55 gallon drum of kerosene and a stove to burn that fuel will last you a while. My first source is going to be my reserve 100 gallon propane tank. Then my gasoline one burner stove. Hopefully there will be gas to be had from cars tanks. I do not store the gas, for safety reasons. If I had some land in the country it would be a different story. With additives you can store gas for five years. Buried or in a cement block building it would be quite safe to store.

Even though the basic four is the best way and cheapest way to store food, you might still think it a daunting task. The best way to go about it is to do a little at a time. Every week or two set aside fifty dollars. The first time get a grain grinder, then fifty plastic buckets. Next is four hundred pounds of wheat. Again the next time. In one month you have two years worth of stored wheat and a grinder. After that you can cut back if you want. At each grocery trip, put aside $20, maybe $25. Ten gallons of canned milk (five gallons in 12 once cans, ten gallons worth after adding water) or three tubs of honey, or fifty pounds of rice, or whatever. The point is that you need not spend a lot at one time. Merely make a plan and stick to it. In no time at all you will be rearranging the storage areas of your house trying to fit it all in.

Read up on the subject. There have been many people over the years experimenting with making as little as possible tasting as good as could be. Go on the Internet, buy from Mother Earth News and Backwoods Home their books on this subject. Go to the library. No one book is going to tell you everything. Disconnect cable and read all the reference books you can get your hands on. Play in the kitchen, and have fun. And remember to eat it now. A crisis is not the time to get to like whole wheat instead of white flour. Start cooking and eating now.
END

FUTURE TREATS
by James M Dakin
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About a year ago survivalists were in high gear preparing for the year 2000 computer bug, Y2K. Myself personally, after having been nearly two years in preparation, was anxiously awaiting its arrival. Imagine my disappointment when in the early morning hours of Friday after dawn I watched fireworks display's in Australia with electrical service clearly uninterrupted. I finished the day making last minute runs for supplies and trying to convince myself that it was all an elaborate hoax designed to fool the general population. Alas, it was all for naught and perfect opportunity for the collapse of civilization was wasted.

There have been many threats that have not come to pass. The October 87 stock market crash. The crash of the Berlin wall. Nuclear war. Oil embargos. The Club of Rome. The Asian Flu. The list is endless, especially if you read the supermarket tabloids. The computer bug had the positive effect of getting a lot of fence sitters involved in preparing for disaster, but true preparedness is not event specific. Even though one may have been prepared only for nuclear war, the stockpiles would have seen him through depression, inflation, foreign invasion and the like. If one is to prepare for the worst possible scenario, the knowledge of what exactly will transpire is of less importance. That being said, however, it is still helpful to know what is coming down the road. Information is as important as stockpiles.

No one has a crystal ball. I have been so wrong so often that if I did have a crystal ball it would act as a black hole. This does not stop me from trying, since I'm curious. Then again, we all know what happens to the curious cat. It is up to each of us to decide what the most likely threat will be for ourselves and our families.

BAD WEATHER

In every region of this country there are threats from nature. Florida seems to have included almost all of them into a small area. We are the most struck area for lightning in the world. Disease carrying mosquitoes, alligators, sinkholes, tornados, hurricanes, hazardous water and every conceivable type of insect torment you. If you live out West you'll either suffer from lack of water, or burn up in wilderness fires. To far north and you will freeze. Even if you are in Hawaii with its perfect year-round temperature and trade winds you still face tsunamis, lack of water and isolation.

Personally I grew up in California and thought nothing of earthquakes. As long as you were not on a major fault line there was little to worry about. When I lived in Oklahoma I thought very little of tornadoes, as the mathematical probability of a hit was slim. These are all defense mechanisms to deal with danger, and can be a dangerous practice. Human nature being what it is of course, this will still happen. That is fine for day-to-day piece of mind but don't allow it to interfere with preparing for that event.

It is not at all difficult to prepare to withstand mother nature's wraith. A little cement and rebar will do wonders. Even if you were only able to dig five feet down and support the walls and roof, an earth shelter protects against all but freak accidents. If the wind is not a threat but earthquakes are, there are building designs that are suited for that threat, such as pole buildings. Volcanoes are not the most pleasant neighbors, but usually they are easily avoided. The problem there is dormant volcanoes acting up again. Fires can be neutralized by building in a clearing, avoiding flammable materials and having a water supply.

Whatever problems you can imagine, you can prepare for. The problem comes in when nature suddenly throws us for a loop. On the fringes for years, global warming has become a more prominent threat, if for no other reason than we need a new disaster to worry about. The tree huggers, commies, and liberals have been screaming about global warming for decades, but the science they used was so lopsided and unreliable that they were only taken seriously by themselves. Now, they could have a point, or at least part of a point. The advanced nations have been cleaning up their act for awhile as far as pollutants go, but the effect was meaningless since the Communists and Third World nations have been polluting even worse in an effort to catch up economically. Not that we can blame them. If we try to kill the spotted owls to save lumber jobs then why can't the Brazilians chop down the Amazon to do the same? Environment verses the economy is a tricky business. It is like using eminent domain to build an interstate. In the long run it is a benefit, in the short term many people lose their jobs, businesses and homes.

The earth has seen many climate changes. Planet wide tropics, ice ages, what have you. Now, if we were either in a change towards hotter or colder, massive amounts of pollutants could accelerate that trend. There are now news reports on the warmer conditions of the poles. The Antarctica is losing major portions of its ice shelves, the Arctic is seeing melted pools of ice- an event not witnessed before in modern times. When you add the melting fresh water from the poles to the saltwater of the oceans if you add enough you could see a change to the major currents which will totally change the global

weather patterns. As this is already happening to a small degree, it could explain the screwball weather of late. Or not. The last major change did not leave written witness unless you give credence to religious fables. It is all a guess at this point.

Art Bell and Whitley Strieber have written a book on this global warming and project a sudden violent storm preceding the ice age. $25 on bookstore shelves, $20 from Amazon.com. I was urged to buy this book, and did so. While I was glad for the "heads up", I was disappointed that it was so boring and puffed up. The whole book could have been condensed down to a magazine article, but I realize the authors wanted to actually make some money from their research and writing time. I can relate, so I wave farewell to my $20 with no ill will. "The Coming Global Superstorm" Pocket Books, ISBN 0-671-04190-8.

If that scenario is correct, what steps could you take to avoid becoming a popsicle? You don't want to be to far north, to avoid glaciers. To far south and you encounter hostile populations pissed off at the Yanks for causing a new ice age and a global economic meltdown. If you live near the Mexican border you will stay warm long enough to be killed by mobs of Mexicans thinking they might like to take back their lands we stole from them. If you seriously wish to relocate, read up on the subject more. Both "Superstorm" and Web sites. An example of where not to live would be my location, coastal Daytona Beach metro area. Surely in the initial phase of warming, the sea level would rise and flood me out. Personally my line of reasoning runs towards southern Utah, Colorado, perhaps Oklahoma. Not to close to the border nor to far north.

NUCLEAR WAR

If you thought that the threat of nuclear war ended when the Soviet Union collapsed, you would be mistaken. Despite the round the clock propaganda aimed at our own citizens, the Cold War was actually one of the safest periods to be alive. You had two superpowers controlling the entire globe, and neither had an interest in actually fighting the other directly. Using proxies was alright, in fact encouraged. The 40 Year War That Wasn't was a great time for the Military/ Industrial Machine. Both economies were run for the military. If it wasn't for the Cold War we would not have the Interstate system or the Internet, space flight and satellites might not have been, the G.I. Bill might have been scraped sooner and decreased the mass of people getting college degrees. Of course, the cost of trillions of dollars and millions of lives wasted was not worth what we gained. Not that it matters. People being who they are, and governments being what they are, war will always be with us. If you worked for a defense contractor, it was great. If you were an indigenous member of a backwards country fighting on behalf of one of the superpowers, you were dead.

When the Soviet Union spent itself into bankruptcy (a fate for the United States if we do not downsize to a proper level of government control and taxation) and the Cold War ended, we had a few years of fun and games. Then, reality set in. The Russian scientists, soldiers, and criminals that could effect the containment of nuclear weapons were being driven out to the world market by lack of pay from the government. If you had a

doctorate in nuclear engineering and were being paid $15 a month, wouldn't an offer from Pakistan to pay you one hundred times that to develop their offensive weapons appeal to you? I'm not even talking about criminal organizations here, although I'm sure they also recruited. I'm only considering legitimate offers. If you are six months behind paying the guards at a nuclear weapons storage facility, what makes you think they did not sell a unit or two to international arms dealers for a few thousand greenbacks each and a few cases of vodka? The government doesn't even know how many weapons it has in the first place. Who is going to miss one or two?

Also, consider that the new Russian government itself is in desperate need for hard currency. They flooded the market with oil, gold, diamonds, timber, natural gas, anything that would bring in a few bucks. They more than likely sold many a nuke weapon themselves. So, you have citizens selling nukes, as well as the government. Or, the citizen sales were a myth put out by the government to mask its own activity. Either way, there were plenty of sales to countries, terrorist groups, or dealers. The problem was swept under the rug with the usual disregard for truth. If the average Joe built a fallout shelter instead of buying a SUV, Detroit and the Seven Sisters would be sucking hind tit again. Can't let that happen.

South Korea was given nukes by the US. North Korea got some from China or bought some with the grain that should have gone to feed it's starving population. India and Pakistan both developed their own weapons, with or without outside help. Israel has had them for decades, perhaps from the US. South Africa has them, most likely from the US to hold that strategic spot from Soviet African advancement. Brazil and Argentina might have them. These are all old news. I've just reported what I recall from reading mass market material five or ten years ago. By now I would not be surprised if pretty much every country has at least a few nukes at its disposal. When five or so countries had nukes, the chances of use were slim. When dozens have them the chances of use are high. Very high. Recall the near miss of hostilities between Moslem Pakistan and Hindu India. That made the news. What other news items were not reported? Threat against Israel from an Arab country? Does Libya plan to resume attacks on the US, as retaliation and this time with nukes? If South Korea does not give into bribes from North Korea, will there be a nuclear exchange?

The endless possibilities of country to country nuclear conflict pale in relation to the problem of terrorist use. Cuba or Middle East countries could sponsor an attack on the US through Mexico. Who the hell needs an intercontinental missile when you can smuggle a suitcase nuke over the border with one or two people? A drug runner could smuggle one through by air or sea. We have no defense against this type of attack, contrary to movies were studly ex-doctors turn genius warrior and foil every turn by determined attackers. China has a vested interest in arming a militia group with a nuke, provided at one time they determine that they no longer wish to be our export king and instead want to become the new world superpower. The government might even use one themselves to establish a dictatorship, such as Clinton tried to do by blowing up the Oklahoma City Federal Building. Even if one views conspiracy theories with disbelief, the

dozens of them that attach to Clinton should point to the possibility of them existing mathematically.

Your best bet to avoid these unpleasantries lies in avoiding large cities. There of course will be other targets, but it is difficult to imagine what would cause greater physiological distress than the destruction of a large city such as New York or L.A. I would argue that each of these is long overdue for destruction, but I am biased towards small town living. The city is not a comfortable place for me to be. When I see a mental picture of these places it is of an overcrowded rat cage. Anyway, if you must live in the city, at least consider the suburbs instead. This gives you a fighting chance if a low level nuke is detonated after work hours. If the attack comes from Arab sponsors, I would guess that Miami, New York or D.C. would be the targets. The first two have large populations of Jews, the third, well- it's D.C. after all. Hell, if I had my druthers I would love to see D.C. nuked. Bastard Federals.

If you are in any major metro area you could be the casualty of a terrorist NBC attack. If I were a Columbian drug lord pissed at Uncle Sam for arresting my brother and I took 80% of my fortune and purchased a nuke on the international arms market I sure as hell would not waste the thing by bombing Dogs Breath, Montana. I would take out the biggest city I could. Stay out of large Metro areas.

ECONOMIC COLLAPSE

Everybody used to look at the Great Depression and then look at Wave Cycles and predict that 1990 was the time to start a new Great Depression. The problem with that theory is that computers and the Internet came along and changed all the rules. Sure, when the Asian Flu caused pain throughout the world we alone were spared because we had already caught and concurred our own brand of that flu. In the Seventies when we were convulsed by one economic problem after another the Asian crowd was a lot better off. Now it is our turn. The money flows to where the problems aren't. We are farther along in technology. We have a more decentralized economy. This grossly simplifies things, but the basic principle is that we are better able to enjoy the information economy and others are stuck in the industrial economy, which is now a buyers market.

Are we now going to coast peacefully into the new golden age? Hell no. Our government and many of our institutions are still stuck in the old top down micro managed industrial way of leadership. They will not give up the throne, and so until there is a violent event that forcibly moves in the new structures we will see the same old nonsense. There is a larger force that dictates politics through economics, and as surely as what we needed and what we got for the industrial revolution to prosper was big government, so it shall be with the information age. Very little government is needed for an economy that is run on information, and only those areas that overthrow command and control economies will prosper. Just because we are the smaller of the industrial governments does not mean that we are small enough. It is going to take more than a Reagan Revolution to bring in the Information Revolution. All of the welfare state and the regulation state programs must be abolished.

If the US is to prosper we must first crush our welfare state institutions. When entire businesses can flee, when money moves at light speed, when you can hire smart labor anywhere, you are handicapped if you pay your workers social security, unemployment insurance, and three or more forms of income tax. Not to mention being forced to pay for the protection of obscure wildlife. As more and more jurisdictions realize that the only growth potential is to abolish taxes and regulations, those areas keeping them will suffer. If you haven't noticed, there are getting to be more and more countries. Look out for competition.

Think of the Civil War. It was about slavery and states rights, but what made it possible was the battle between the old agriculture south and the new industrial north. Industry won, and the Federal government dominated the states, industry attracted all the growth, and the modern state as we know it was born. We will suffer an event as drastic as that before we truly enter an information age. Or, we will stagnate and slowly die pretty much as we are now but getting worse all the time.

Either way, if you think you are going to get social security you had better replan. Military retirement, disability payments, subsidies, protection from competition, reduced product prices, any money from Uncle Sugar will either disappear or be whittled way through inflation. If we move up, expect the pain to be swift and sharp. If we stagnate you will see less and less service for more and more taxes and inflation until the economy is in a total crime ridden incompetent state of affairs, such as most of Africa is in today.

That takes care of the big picture. As far as the events that effect you, you need to worry about inflation, deflation, job loss, crime, government, lawyers and anarchy. Inflation most of us are quite familiar with. For you young pups out there, this is how it works. Government doesn't want to tax, as it would lead to voter discontent. So, instead they debase the currency. This has been going on since before the Romans, who liked to add impure metals to their coins or to shave them. This country was started out on inflationary paper, the Continental. Thanks to the modern communications miracle most governments today are prevented from this foolishness since the instant transfer of funds will insure that traders will make your national currency worthless in no time if you step out of bounds. Today, inflationary currencies have no place on the global financial market, and instead are limited to home use.

In the U.S. inflation works in the following manner. You go to the grocery store and see a $5 item noticeable increase in price on a weekly basis. Then after a year your employer reluctantly gives you a raise equal to the official rate of inflation (always lower than the real rate). In this manner you never catch up, and always get the shaft. In other countries this happened on an accelerated scale, perhaps even daily. 1920's German hyperinflation was a fact of life throughout South America for some time. The wheelbarrow full of currency was not just a fluke 80 years ago. And don't think it can't happen here. It did after the Revolutionary War and during the War Between the States in the Confederacy.

Inflation is largely a product of big government, as are most evils in this world. Most people sent their wives to work to produce the two income family we are all familiar with today. They also purchased homes in the hopes of paying them off with cheaper dollars. With everyone seeking employment, jobs were scarce. With everyone buying homes, their prices outpaced the inflation rate. With the government constantly borrowing, the amount left for home buyers shrunk, driving up the cost of borrowing money. It was all a vicious cycle, broken only when the Reagan team caused several years of pain to break the cycle. Several years of pain, but it did the trick. Today the spineless bastard Clinton has benefited from that policy, and the same people that bitched about Reagan are cheering King Klinton on. Mindless sheep.

Deflation is a recent development, last seen in the Great Depression. Before that deflation was quite common in the 19th century and before, mostly under the stewardship of Great Briton. That global superpower ensured peaceful global trading, thus slowly but surely over time bringing down the cost of goods due to competition. Now we are almost back to that point, seeing 2% inflation. Quite low, miraculous, but not deflationary as a whole. Certain industries are savagely deflationary, such as consumer electronics. Others are as accurate as Swiss watches in their price increases, such as autos and health care. Global competition forces down the cost of goods, local politics protects other industries, such as auto unions. Health care increases can be blamed on over regulation and litigation.

At this point in time you can look at taxation, regulation and litigation as the cause for price increases and any free market run sector for the cause of falling prices. Much has been made for the falling wages of Americans, but look at the cause. It is not the wages of CEO's. It is pressure from foreign competition and falling commodity prices that force our wages to fall in real terms. But we are still winners, since prices on most goods are falling more. In 1985 I bought my first 25 inch TV. I paid over $800 for it. Today I can get it for $250. One weeks wages verses six weeks. My first computer was $2500, my last one $900. Now, look at Wal-mart. While Mom and Pop are wailing and noshing teeth over unfair competition, I'm going in to shop at a store that has price roll-backs as a policy. They are forcing others to do the same. I'm not talking about consumer spending here, either. Necessities, such as food. I can shop around for food prices at super discount food stores and never touch a coupon. The traditional grocery stores are pathetic in competition. They only exist as huge convenience stores serving the poor without transportation and the well off yuppie scum too busy to comparison shop. This strategy will serve them for a time. How long is anybodies guess.

Deflation is fun for the average Joe, as long as it does not turn depressionary. At a certain point the profits are gone and then so are the businesses. I do not think we shall have another depression, unless caused by government stupidity. There are still plenty of ways to cut costs for businesses. The present system used by most of the old dinosaurs still in business is pathetically inefficient. Look at your typical retail store. A truck comes in and unloads a big pile of boxes. The pathetic workers drag them all into the store and put them up. Most have addressed this issue by having the boxes put up during store hours. This eliminates a night shift. This is college taught business smarts? Fine, the discount

stores can save payroll by following this unsightly practice. The more expensive must present a better face to their customers. Either way common sense should allow a better way. Put the merchandise in standardized plastic containers stacked on pallets. A small forklift unloads the truck in record time. The pallets in the back room are unwrapped from the plastic holding the containers on. Each container is to a certain area, all product priced and ready to shelf. No cardboard to dispose of, no dinking around with boxes, fewer people required, lots of money saved. How hard is this?

The Internet itself shows great promise. Here are all the benefits of mail order and few of the drawbacks. You don't need store fronts, and if you do things right not even a warehouse. No need to mail out a million catalogs a year, if they are interested they come to your electric catalog. Of course you need to advertise which is a heavy expense and the competition is brutal. As it should be. You ain't seen nothing yet from the Internet. Give it a little time and you will see the dinosaurs fall.

Regardless of what direction the economy takes you can be sure of one thing. The little guy is going to suffer if he doesn't prepare. Get out of debt, immediately and drastically if you feel the need. File bankruptcy if have to. Debt is the single cause of hardship in any minor or major economic adjustment. You can claim that in inflationary climates you can pay off debts with money that is worth less, but if what you owe debt on is raising in price it does you little good. Take your house. You pay $50,000 and in 20 years it is paid off. If in that time inflation has halved the value of our money you sell it for $100,000. But all other houses also cost $100,000. What have you gained? And if you keep the house you get to pay twice as much property tax. Being in debt on the house also diminished your ability to pay for other items raising in price. The little guy does not benefit from inflation. In a deflation you will see lower prices for your consuming pleasure, but your income will remain stagnant and over time even decrease.

Being out of debt also serves as a handy safety net against job loss. If you are free and clear on your bills if in extreme cases you must cut back on wages you are not screwed. Going from $35,000 a year to $10,000 would be very difficult, but close to impossible if you were paying off a mortgage, a nice car and several gold credit cards. If you are busting your ass at a job you hate, by all means spend some money on yourself. Treat yourself. Just get out of debt. Trade down on a house, a car, and pay off your plastic. Do it now while you can afford it rather than later when you are forced to. Once you are out of debt, start your own business as a side line. This will eat up your spare time and suck up money, but it is your safety net. You never know when you will be downsized. Try to pick an area that will not be killed by digital. Starting a video rental store might fit in nicely with your hobby, but once bandwidth becomes widespread you will finely see movies on demand. And I'm not talking about cables current offering of three movies a month for $5 each. Someone will get it right and offer instant download of tens of thousands of movies at $1 each, new releases for Maybe $3. That will be a huge success.

All the advice on putting three months to six months of salary in savings as a cushion sounds real nice, but to me it has never been realistic. How the hell can I put aside that

much? I could if I really wanted to, but to me it has always made more sense to buy needed items instead of putting money aside to loose value. A half ton of wheat will feed me for a long time and is much better insurance than $150 in greenbacks. A surplus rifle with scope will feed me longer than its value in cash. You get the idea. Cash in the bank, some gold coins stashed (or at least silver), disaster supplies, all are doable on the smallest budget and they should cover any economic emergency nicely. Assuming you are out of debt. You must do that first. A little pain now, or a lot later. That awful choice we must always face when planning ahead.

Crime will increase during hard times and decrease during good times. This is inescapable and whatever the government does matters little. This point is made recently when crime decreased over the last five years despite the change in welfare laws that made assistance more difficult to procure. You would think that the starving masses would turn to crime to feed their poor crying babies. No, the lazy bitches just had to go get jobs. And there are plenty of them. The booming economy has more jobs than workers. So many more that businesses will take in welfare scum and attempt to train them. From what I've heard this has little success, as the creatures are lazy and raised without a work ethic. I think that the hardcore welfare recipients will stay in the system while the working welfare will have to fend for themselves after a time. As it should be. We have lost sight of the goal of assistance. Don't let anyone starve, and that is were it should end for public assistance. Let private charities handle the rest.

Crime is also about location. Your changes of being robbed in the ghetto are greater than downtown. Ghetto residents are robbed for $5, but the better off downtown are left alone. Why actually work at crime? Why take the bus? If you need a rock of crack it is easier to go a few blocks and roll granny than to go on a several hour round trip to get anything. This of course is statistically correct. Your odds increase of remaining unmolested the farther away you are from the scumbags. However, crime can find you anywhere. It is just that your changes are better outside the hood. Being outside the city will work even better for you. Why are you still living in a city? More jobs to pick from. Working in Hicksville is difficult at best. I'll get back there one day, for now I'm like the majority that needs to put up with the city to earn a living.

In addition to a great economy, another trend that helped lower crime was the mass of states that finely recognized our 2nd Amendment rights and began issuing concealed weapons permits. Not that we should be required to be licensed, but you must unless you live in Vermont. Just passing the law gave criminals pause since they didn't know who was armed and who wasn't. And don't whine about it all being a conspiracy to register our weapons and then take them. They already know you bought the damn thing. Register that one and go out and buy one private sale and stash it. Problem solved.

Government has always been our greatest roadblock economically. They are always there with their hand out and their nose buried in our activities. While a certain level of government is necessary as a final force to preserve peace, the bloated out of control colossus we have today is about 95% more government than we need. A two percent

sales tax would be all that was needed to maintain the courts, a skeleton police and military. Official militias should constitute the bulk of the military, and if all the police and courts did was to protect property rights we would need far less of them. Everything else could be provided by the private sector. The amount of taxes we pay now is in no way near what services we use. We have an oppressive police state that's only goal is self protection, and that is not what the Constitution is all about.

The governments power to control the economy (such as that power ever was) is far less today than what it was. Financial markets swiftly penalize stupid economic policy, and the markets collectively hold more power than any one government. The government can certainly maintain a suicidal course if it chooses, but routine blunders are quickly highlighted. Instead of inflation and other overt government moves, we are now at a point were regulation and litigation are the heart of government finances. Instead of passing a tax to increase the police force they merely confiscate and sell everything possible to bring in extra money. The cops need the war on drugs to continue, or their budgets get cut. Traffic violations are now punitive, as part of the money game. It is all about money now.

Why tax cigarettes at $2 a pack when you can sue the tobacco companies and get them to raise prices to pay the settlement? Then it is their fault, no backlash from the voters. Regulate and litigate everything that isn't bolted down, it's better than raising taxes. We are at a point were the Catholic Church was 500 years ago. Their bureaucracy was so bloated that the constant need for ever more power and money lead to such wonderful practices as selling redemption and offering a cut to informants for turning in those devil worshipers who were killed and their estate taken. Like the Church we will fall and if we come away from it we will be a pitiful shadow of our former selves.

If the economic jolt is too severe you can look forward to anarchy (as popularly described, anyway). The troops and police will try to hold on to power. The militias will try to revolt. The welfare classes will riot. Decent people will turn to gruesome crime as they go hungry. Foreign nations will send weapons and aid to different factions to help the process along. It will be a time of fun and games to be sure. Once again, best to be out of the city.

POLITICAL

The current government is a giant beast that has the vast majority of the population in its pocket through bribes. When it comes time for that beast to give up power it could do so peacefully, as has been the case with the Soviet Union, or violently, as was the case of the Federalists when the Southern states chose to dissolve the voluntary union they had recently entered. If Italy now chose to leave the European Union, would the other members insist they go to war to force Italy to remain? That was our case in the Civil War, and the end of our Constitutional Republic and the birth of the Federal monster. If just 10% of gun owners fight the Feds power struggle they can be defeated. Note I am Not advocating armed revolution at this point. That would be illegal. Only if the federal government grossly oversteps its bounds, such as becoming a dictatorship.

How likely is a coup that turns our nation towards totalitarianism? Very. Remember that Germany legalized the rise of Hitler. He was arrested for advocating violent overthrow but later rose to power legally. Our own home grown tyrant can do the same. The American people are so immune to government interference that several less than drastic steps would wipe out all our rights officially. No cry for the semi-auto ban. No fuss for Waco. Not a raised eyebrow for making a tax hike retroactive. No problem to sue a book publisher for content that by itself was harmless. The pattern is as plan as day. Each violation of our fundamental rights is given no press coverage, while bread and circus crap loads the airwaves. Is it OK to tamper with evidence in the OJ trial? Is it OK to return an innocent child to communism? Even the brain candy fed to the idiots is becoming more and more propaganda like. I guess this is what is meant by lifelong education.

The Third Reich is the role model for the Feds. Remember the first serious assault on our gun rights was copied from Hitler. Our military helmets are Kevlar copies of theirs. We use their weapons designs, from squad machine guns to rockets. The Feds have lusted after German macho military might for fifty years. The next Hitler will rise to power peacefully just as he did. The Third Reich could last a thousand years, it just has to move across the Atlantic. Individualists will be the new Jews, and collective thought will be rammed down the publics throat instead of spoon fed as is the case now. The military will consume all, and we will go to war to preserve the power elite rather than for elbow room.

This trend assumes a straight line advancement of current trends, and history is not a straight line. Things never stay the same, and the odds are good we could avoid tyranny. Or not. You can only prepare by stocking up now on foodstuffs and weapons. Don't bother to vote, as it is a waste of time, and you only give de facto acceptance to the corrupt system. Let the system fall, why try to shore it up. This is not a defeatist attitude but merely an acknowledgment that we are too far advanced in the cancer to save the victim. In my humble opinion. When the time comes, then you can fight. A bullet will change more than a vote. Again, I do not call for a revolution. It will come on its own, and then you can fight.

Please remember that big government is evil and without exception always causes much more harm than good. If things change to the better, through violence or not, please fight to install a replacement system that will not be abused in later years. Leave no loopholes for the corruption to rise again. For the cancer to spread again. We know what does and doesn't work, and what a better system can be. We might have already screwed it up for our children, let us not force future generations to also suffer.

END

The Perfect Survival Rifle
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Let me state up front that there is no such thing as the perfect survival weapon. As with all things in life, there must be compromise made. Also, the weapon that you are proficient with is in actuality the perfect weapon for you. As I have said before, a .22 rifle in practiced hands is much better than an assault rifle with a novice using it. That being said, this is an article written for the beginner survivalist that has not yet made a weapons choice, or someone that wishes to change weapons systems and has the money to do so. If you have already made up your own mind about what rifle to purchase and are proficient with it, the only use this article will have to you is for amusement.

If I was to give anyone advice on which weapon was the best rifle to be used in a long term survival situation, I would first ask what their financial situation was. If they had money to burn I would not hesitate to recommend one of the battle rifles in semi-auto. FN-FAL, H&K 91, M14 or Garand, in that order. This is based on reliability, accessibility of parts, availability on the market and not on price. With this rifle, at least twenty magazines and minimal spare parts, plus 5,000 rounds of ammunition the cost would be around $2,500. However, as I believe most people that wish to practice survivalism are not well off financially I would refer them to my own choice of perfect survival rifle.

In my humble opinion the perfect survival rifle for someone on a budget is the Lee-Enfield No. 4 SMLE bolt action in 303 caliber World War II surplus rifle. I realize this is heresy to those assault rifle loving folk, but remember that this is the perfect SURVIVALIST rifle, not the perfect combat rifle. When you burn through ten to twenty mags of ammunition in one firefight, you need a source for resupply. You are not in the Army, but on your own and there will be no source of resupply. You need to conserve every round of ammo that you have. You cant do that very well with a semi-auto, and even an SKS with a ten round mag is going to go through a lot of ammo. I believe that a minimum of ammunition for survival purposes for a semi-auto rifle should be ten thousand rounds. At the cheapest that will run you $1,000. With a bolt action you only need 1,000 and at the

cheapest that will run you $65.

There are several choices for war surplus bolt actions, but they fall under two categories. The Mauser action or the Enfield action. They were the Soviet block and NATO forces weapons of their day. Today we are faced with the two superpower weapons the M16 (accurate, not very rugged) and the AK47 (not very accurate, but really rugged). In those days you had the Mauser action (accurate, easy to jam) and the Enfield (not great accuracy, meant to be volume fired, made to withstand dirt in the action). Is it any wonder I want the Enfield? The Mauser might be the most copied action in the world for bolt actions, but I need a rifle that will stand up to abuse in the field for long periods of time with minimal cleaning.

I can purchase a factory refurbished Enfield for $175 retail (cost plus 15% plus shipping). Ammo can be had for $200 per thousand for corrosive ammo. Mid 2001 Turkish Mausers were $40 each jobber price with ammo at $60 per thousand. Retail would run you about $200 total, versus the $375 for the Enfield. So, expect to pay a little more, but you will get a much better weapons system.

Slight problems with the Enfield's are the bolt system which chews brass and loading problems with the rimmed cases, but both these are not hard to fix. Use the Lee loader which neck sizes only, and the ammo will be reloadable for quite a few times. Granted, the Mauser ammo will still give you more loads, but perfection always has a price. The same bolt system that eats brass also delivers a much faster bolt action in the field were it counts. The Mauser system pokes along in comparison. The rimmed cases do not tangle in the magazine if you put them on the stripper clip in the correct pattern- left, right, middle rim down/ those between rim over.
The Enfield No. 4 is the fastest, most rugged, best designed bolt action from the war. Invest in your perfect survival rifle, and you should not be disappointed. END

SURPLUS ARMS AND AMMO
by James M Dakin
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Semi-automatic weapons are near and dear to most of our hearts. There is nothing else quite so nice as the thought of pumping ten to thirty rounds into the soft wheezing flesh of our adversaries. After all, they are so deserving of our attention. After decades of oh so slowly bleeding us dry so as to perpetuate their own selfish desires, we could finely retaliate by blasting their putrid corpse into the dirt. Am I being to harsh? I think not, and besides what good is a fantasy if it actually comes true. Reality has that nasty habit of altering the best parts.

And so, with images of dancing AR15s in the air and HK91s filling our stockings, we save up till the day we can own our very own semi-automatic Big, Bad, Mighty and Righteous, Rambo Killing Machine. After voiding one months pay in a single transaction, we can caress its plastic stock, run around the house in our boxers throwing down at shadows or the petrified cat. We could lovingly clean it every weekend, wipe down the surface of our pre-ban high capacity mags, recount the stacks of ammo boxes, hang up our first target over the bed. Oh, sweet beauty that is all mine, charismatic spawn of our high tech society, product of mans intelligence and desire. And, when no one is home, we can lock the doors, place the phone off the hook, and hunch over our weapon in the corner and whisper sweetly to it, “My pretty, oh my pretty”.

Yeah, you COULD. But you won’t. Your dumb ass never went to college because you wanted to do it all on your own. Your dumb ass got married more than once and had too many kids and the evil bitch left you for another man with more money and now you get to pay child support on a minimum wage job. Your dumb ass is too proud to ask for help from the parasitic Federal government and so you eat shit on a shingle instead of T-bone

all the welfare bitches buy as they are talking on their cell phones that your tax dollars bought. Your dumb ass is proud and you have your pride by God, and not a single nickel to spare. If you were wondering, yes, the above applies to me. I am one dumb-ass. Still, better I did the research on living cheap than you. At this point I am even worse off than when I first started writing these pamphlets. I am living off a mere 25% of my income, and that is $14k a year. The rest goes to Uncle Sugar and the ex-wife. I know what it is like to live cheap. And part of living cheap is to not buy the bright new shiny toys that you would just love to have.

Semi-autos are great play things. I have had them, and they are a money pit, just like a house. You save up, sacrifice and scrimp by. Then you buy the son of a bitch and start putting even more money into it just to keep it up. It amazes me when people spend at least $100,000 here in central Florida for a shoddy constructed house built of stick frame and then sit and wait for nature to destroy it. This is a hot and humid climate people. Termites love it. A wood house in the jungle. $100,000. Do the math. Still, you buy a house. You repaint, re-roof, re-treat for bugs, re-sod, rework and never retire because its always wanting more money spent on it. Buy a semi-auto and you never have enough spare parts, cleaning supplies, magazines, ammo or gizmos. You spend more money to protect your investment. Go to Sears and buy a brand name tool set. Then you buy a fancy red metal holder for them, six foot high and costing more than your first child. Then, you build a shed for it. Hell, I go to the dollar store and buy a $2 hammer and a $1 screwdriver set. Then I throw them in a box on the porch. They rust. In two years I buy another. I have no expensive home to maintain, so why have good tools?

Instead of buying an expensive rifle and spending a lot on it to maintain your investment, why not buy a cheap rifle and spend nothing on it after the purchase? If you keep it clean and don't use it as a club on a wild boar after your ammo runs out, it should last forever. A rifle, even a cheap one, can outlive your grandchildren. Remember, grandpa had a weapon that was built without today's know-how on metallurgy and older firearms either rusted out or wore down quicker with use. Even with the use of corrosive ammo you can prevent bore pitting if you treat the weapon promptly, and no, it does not entail hot water and soap. More on that later.

Assuming you shop around and do your homework, a cheap semi-auto will cost at least $150. This is for a Romanian SKS (mid March 2001, all prices wholesale) and is not a bad deal. The problem is spare parts if import restrictions are not eased. Next up is any AK47 around $250 or $300. The cheapest mags I've seen are about $10. Assuming a minimum of ten magazines that adds $100 to the price. Even ten mags are not enough, as this may be your last change to grab them. I would say 20 is a minimum, but it is your call. A step up the price ladder is the Rugar Mini 14 at $500, and I have heard some bad things on it, mainly about factory required maintenance, but also some good and would not make a judgment on it without talking further to other owners. I have met few that owned one. In the future this might once again be the only choice for a cheap semi-auto if all imports are illegal. The AR15 is about $700-800 and great for ammo availability and spare parts but I would not own one if you gave it to me. Accurate it may be, but I would

sacrifice a few MOA for a more robust design. The M16 design is about the worst you can do outside the M60, a piece of crap if there ever was one. In peacetime maneuvers the M16 fouls and jams quickly from a spotlessly clean state and in a survival situation the AR15 could get you killed. Better to go with a FAL at $800-1000 for a battle rifle of proven design chambered for a superior round. Last is the caddy of semi's the HK91. About the same price but replacements and add ons are much more expensive. And, as I have said, you need at least $200-300 in mags.

If you just can't quite shaking in fear at the prospect of not having a semi-auto to battle the forces of evil with, get a CommBlock SKS. I would not recommend a Chinese, as the wood is soft and the metal inferior. Not that other Commie countries did much better, but it is an improvement. Two hundred bucks and you need not buy mags. You don't even have to buy stripper clips if you buy them with your ammo. The ammo is one third the price of bolt action fodder and thus the cost not as severe even when you are stocking ten times as much. The rule of thumb is 1000 rounds bolt action and ten thousand semi-auto. This should be your minimum. Cheapest semi-auto with ten thousand rounds is about $1500, verses the cheapest bolt action with 1000 rounds at $150, a ten to one cost factor. Also, a spare cost kit for a bolt action is one third the cost. Still, $1500 is a cheap way to arm yourself and fight through the apocalypse. Yet, some of us are so friggin poor this is still not possible.

PROS AND CONS

If you are dirt poor the best possible way to arm yourself is with a WWII surplus bolt action rifle. The downside is that they are not accurate, they have pitting due to corrosive ammo, the sights are junk and the easiest way to get spare parts is to buy a whole other rifle. The advantages are that they are dirt cheap, they are robust as hell and can shoot all day dirty, they were designed to be used in bayonet fighting and the ammo for them is damn cheap, as well as a superior caliber. Let me take these lists item by item to fill you in.

Accuracy on surplus bolt actions is nothing to brag about, but they will in general provide better performance than a SKS, an AK or, after a certain distance, lever actions. Forget 3/4 inch MOA. This belongs to your $400 modern bolt action. However, your modern bolt action is crap in combat. It was designed to be carried in the field once or twice a year and to have a few rounds fired from it. It is a deer rifle and not a combat weapon. A combat weapon is far more robust and almost immune to dirt in the action. It is not the end of the world to have a two inch group instead of a sub-inch. The human torso is at least one foot wide head on, and a center mass shot is sure to hit somewhere. Practice with your rifle and find out the idiosyncrasies. Each rifle has them. If your rifle has trouble hitting inside a foot wide target under three hundred yards, you either really suck or your rifle has too much pitting and/or crown wear and it would be best to put that rifle away and use it as a spare parts kit provided you stick with the same model on your next purchase.

The reason pitting occurred in your rifle is that the barrel was not cleaned soon after use.

The widespread use of non-corrosive primers was a relatively recent occurrence. One can't really blame the troops, as they were busy getting shot at and they could always get another if required. The trick is to get a unissued rifle, one that was not fired. They cost a bit more, at least twice as much. Failing that, pay the extra to have a hand select or refurbished. I bought a refurbished No4 Enfield and it is very pretty. You can tell it was a sloppy job, what with a spray painted mag, a nail instead of a screw on one band, and other give-aways, but the barrel has no pitting and the wood does not look like it soaked in a barrel of oil for thirty years. The good thing was that it only cost half again as much, $150 instead of the usual $100. That is my "real" gun that I use and rely on, with the other two that have pitted barrels are my kit guns.

Most bolt action rifles made for the military have post and leaf sights. The rear sight is in the shape of a U and front a post, or I.. You need to line up the post into the U, thus creating a solid square to aim with. This is a real sucky design, and the only models issued as is with the newer sights are the No4 Enfield and the American P14 which is called an Enfield but has a Mauser action. Why the Americans were the only ones to use the new sight in the First War is beyond me, and why only the British added the sight for the Second War is again beyond my powers of comprehension. The new sights are what today's assault rifles use, the peep sight. This is where the rear sight is a ring you look through at the front post. The rear sight blurs and your eye only needs to focus on two objects instead of three. The old leaf and post require you to look at the rear sight as well as the front, match them up, and then put the combined sights on target. Too hard to do. Any bolt action can be modified by placing a peep sight in the rear, but most people will refuse to spend the extra money. If that sounds like you, stick with the No4 Enfield for its superior sight.

Some will disagree with my "kit gun" strategy, which is to have several spare guns of the same type to use as spare parts kits. The reason I do this is that you get a lot of crappy guns for under $100 and I prefer to set aside those in sub-standard shape. It makes little sense to shoot several of the same kinds of guns if you reload. Each gun will mold the brass differently and thus you can't interchange brass. Also, each gun shoots differently and aims different. Best to stick with one. The reason I have several instead of one is the unknown factor of the Feds sticking their ugly snouts into the business of gun owners. Even my beloved Enfields could one day be banned from import. I would rather have several on hand just in case. Yes, individual parts are cheaper and if I had a better knowledge of all the little parts in my guns I might go that route. As it is I can field strip and that's about it. Another plus of multiple guns is that I can loan out some to help with the fighting or even have a crappy one as a decoy for confiscation and the better ones buried elsewhere.

Bolt actions are dirt cheap. Right now the favorite cheapy is the Turkey Mauser for $39 and its ammo at $75 per 1400 rounds. Wow! Years ago the Jap Mausers were going at that price. With quantity pricing you could get six rifles and 3000 rounds for $350 wholesale. That would be a hell of a barter item. I have been told that the Turkey rifles have excessive head space, but for $100 you could have a rifle, five hundred rounds and a

bayonet. This would last a lifetime of deer hunting or Commie killing. If you are up in the hills with 50-100 yard ranges the sloppy action should prove little hindrance. This is for those that are desperately poor. Even being more selective you could have an Enfield for $65. With shipping, dealer fee and sales tax that is still only a $100 rifle. Ammo is a bit pricey for .303 but you can still get corrosive for $10 for 45 rounds. Even the new from Sellier & Bellot will only be $6 per 20 for non-corrosive boxer primed. Mauser rifles in reconditioned shape are still going for under $100. The unissued are $200. You just can't argue with the price when it comes to bolt action.

Most military rifles are designed to be used in filthy conditions, with unsatisfactory maintenance and neglect from uneducated peasants. These guidelines were followed by most countries except the US when it came to the M16 rifle. We scoff at the AK47 for only getting mediocre accuracy, but we forget you can pour in a handful of dirt and the thing still functions. Okay, I exaggerate a bit, but you perhaps get my point. A field weapon should stand up to field conditions. The bolt actions from both World Wars are ideally suited for use in dirty conditions. The price you pay for usability is that one can't have superb accuracy. These are field weapons, not hand crafted works of art. We sit in front of the TV and slurp beer all year long and then go out and hunt. Our lack of practice is expected to be compensated by a highly accurate rifle. Instead get a sloppy actioned rifle and practice with it a lot. You will learn accuracy instead of buying it.

Another plus from these rifles are that you can use a bayonet with them and the barrels will not bend as would today's assault rifles. Why else would you provide wood furniture along the barrel of a rifle except to give it extra strength? These rifles were intended to be used as pig stickers. Today a bayonet is a cruel joke. Yesterdays rifles had serious bayonets. I especially like the Enfield No1 with its foot long bayonet. Way cool. Why a bayonet, you ask. We refuse to storm the trenches into the face of machine guns. True, but what of prisoners, civilians and wild animals? If a pack of rabid dogs attack you a bolt action is inferior. Better to hack and slash with a long knife held four feet from you. Plus, the heavy wood stock can be used to crush skulls. With prisoners, a bayonet is a strong deterrent to rioting. With civilians, the Japanese proved one soldier could control vast sections of land with a bayoneted rifle. Any uppity civilian was promptly gutted. Sick from a human rights standpoint, but from a strategic view it made sense. Those constantly in fear make little in the way of threats.

I have touched briefly on ammo prices, but allow me to elaborate. Right now we have a great supply of surplus ammo. Most likely this was due to the Cold War surplus and other countries dire need for greenbacks. The currant situation is easy to agree with. If you are sitting on a stockpile of worthless arms and ammo, sell to the foolish Americans. We have our AK47s, what do we need with Mauser bolt actions or M44 Russian carbines in an antiquated cartridge? Those idiots in America will buy anything (what many Chinese are laughing about as they ship over boatloads of ceramic figurines). We know that one mans trash is another mans treasure. The Commies only know about trash, so they can go screw themselves. And wouldn't it be a hoot if invading Russians were killed with their own surplus bolt actions? Right now for one thousand rounds of surplus corrosive Berden

primed ammo the prices are $60 for 8mm, $140 for .303, $120 for 7.62x54R, and $80 for 7.62x39. That covers your most popular surplus rifles, the Mauser, Enfield, M44 Carbine and SKS. Granted, the Mausers were made in many calibers, but right now the cheap stuff is in 8mm. Wait 6 months and that could change. If you are dirt poor, go with what is cheapest. If you can spend a little more than you can be choosier.

Another consideration when deciding on a firearm is the caliber itself. Even if the SKS is only slightly more expensive than the better bolt actions you should remember that its cheap ammo is the 7.62x39, an assault rifle round. The Germans researched this concept and discovered that the fighting in Spain was at far closer range than thought and that an intermediate round was sufficient for ground troops. This thinking was brought to its logical conclusion with the .223 round and does make a lot of sense if you are in charge of an army with machine guns, artillery, planes and an industrial complex backing it. If you are a lone individual that must supply himself beforehand and does not wish to engage the enemy at close range and can't afford to waste three hundred rounds every combat encounter, then a larger heavier round is desired. For this you need a .303, a 8mm, or a .308. Forget carbines and anemic rounds. For this reason alone I would urge all those on a budget to forget the SKS or AK's, even if they are $140 to $250. If you can't afford a budget FAL (yes, it is possible to procure a $500 kit, but act quick before the pre-import ban supply dries up) or a $400 Garand, go with a under $100 bolt action in large caliber. You need a round that drops a man at 500 yards. Yes, I know it is unlikely you will hit him that far away, but if your tool has the ability, you can train for the needed skill.

BAD CHOICES

There are some rifles that you should avoid no matter what. Even if you can't pass up the bargain beware of their limitations. Some deals are just too cheap to avoid, but then you are stuck with a bad choice. Like a country retooling its industry after the devastation of a war, I have had several opportunities to resupply my arsenal after several divorces. Thus, bad choices were overcome. When I bought three (that is my magic number for same type rifles needed by a survivalist, see spare part kit above) SKS rifles at $99 each, I thought I had a hell of a deal. Yet, the Chinese guns had soft wood and crappy metal. Each add on was more a hindrance than a help and I only learned of the potential problem with parts breakage (leading to inadvertent full-auto) later on. When I lost these it was bittersweet, but best in the long run. Next up was the No1 Enfields which has a cool foot long bayonet, but has bad sights. These just didn't aim well enough, and a scope added cost without much help. Glad to see those go. Next up I got three No4 Enfields which have much better sights but then I learn of the potential problem of rimmed rounds not feeding reliably if loaded incorrectly. My spending outpaces my learning curve in firearms, it seems. My choice should have been the No2 Ishapore 308 conversions, with an added peep sight (since the No1's are used they have the old crappy sights). Well, for now this looks impossible without winning the lottery, so let that be a lesson to you. Research thoroughly before putting down your hard earned cash. Now, for a list of real stinkers that have so many flaws you should avoid them if you can. Note that this is the opinion of others. I can't afford to buy and test all the guns on the market.

Italian Carcano model 1891 and 38. Bad caliber, short barrel and sorry action. Austrian Steyr-Mannlicher model 95 and Mannlicher-Berthier for obsolete ammo. The French 1936 MAS and 1886 Lebel with hard to find ammo and poor accuracy. Model 93 and 95 Mausers have no gas vents in the bolt, causing hot gas from a ruptured primer to fry your face.

The Russian type 44 or Chinese 54 are good enough but have short barrels, so only get them if you anticipate short firing distances. Also, if you get a Japanese rifle, go with the Arisaka 38 which is a very accurate rifle, but stay away from the type 99 which was wartime manufactured low quality. Also, beware of German manufactured war time rifles, many using slave labor. Not the best quality.

GOOD CHOICES

Basically you have two choices when picking a cheap bolt action. The Mauser or the Enfield. Any rifle made using the 1898 action is a suitable Mauser regardless of country of origin, with certain exceptions. I would highly recommend getting on to a chat room/news group on the Internet and asking opinions before you buy. Your other choice is the Enfield made in the British Commonwealth. My personal favorite is the No4, the WWII model.

The Mausers are available all the time, have popular ammo, and use rimless cases. This speaks favorably for them, but they also have bad sights, hold only five rounds and have slow working bolts. The Enfields have great sights (only on the No4) have a bolt action twice as fast as the Mauser, and use easy to get ammo. The downside is they use rimmed cases, a potential loading problem, and the action damages cases easily making for reloading problems. On the face of it it seems that only personal preference would determine what choice is best for you. My personal opinion is that in a survival situation your best bet is to get a No2 Ishapore 308 conversion and spend the extra to install a rear sight. This gives you a non-pitted bore, rimless ammo, good sights and a fast smooth action and twelve rounds of ammo in your magazine. The only downside is the chewed up brass and extra cost. However, even using a retail gun shop the rifle and sight can be had for under $200.

MISC

A word on scopes. For us older types, scopes work to replace failing eyes (I ain't that old but use glasses). However, scopes tend to get banged up in the field and break. Thus, a good strategy would be to use only iron sights. This makes killing bad guys from a distance more difficult but ensures that you can fire your rifle at all times. When using a No4 Enfield you need to take off the rear sight to install a B-Square mount, and thus you kill your back-up sights. A solution might be to use the No1 with old sights. On those the mount goes into the side of the action and leaves the iron sights alone. With Mausers the B-Square mounts requires you to use a long eye relief scope, since the scope is about half way up the rifle. I don't know if it's a good system or not, but I believe the Germans thought it was the only way to go. With the Moisin Nagant system you will need to drill and tap. Bummer. If you decide to go with a scope, make sure your weapon choice does

not make installation too hard. It would be a pity to buy a $75 gun and then pay the same for a gunsmith to install a mount. Still, better to save your money and not get a scope if possible. In the field it will be inevitable that you bang up your rifle. That is why you got a rugged military rifle in the first place. Relearn to use iron sights. I myself lost this lesson and spent plenty of money on mounts, scopes and bore sights. I will most likely discard it all in favor of iron sights in honor of Murphy's law.

AMMO

For now it is more than likely that you can buy case ammo cheaper than reloading. This has everything due to the US being in an advantageous economic position at this time and nothing to do with the wisdom of reloading. The wise thing to do would be to buy as close to 1000 rounds as possible now as cheaply as possible. This is your "I got an arsenal now even if I loose my job tomorrow" stash. Then, as money allows get the same type guns cheaply or spare parts kits, and reload supplies. I urge you to go with the Lee loader, the small paperback book size loader system. Each $20 kit loads one caliber and is a survivalists dream product. You can only neck size, not a disadvantage with bolt actions, but the compact size allows field use. Get also the bullet mold at basically the same price and size. Now, you are set for survival reloading in the field, as well as at home.

The basic reload kit should start out with the Lee units and then include at a rough estimate 200 rounds of boxer primed modern non-corrosive ammo. This is your reloading stock after you shoot up all the Berden primed corrosive which makes it basically non-reloadable. If your field issue of ammo is 50 rounds, than four times that amount should cover any loses over time. If done correctly that 200 rounds should last at least ten reloads a round for a minimum of two thousand rounds. If you now spend $40 on primers that will negate the need to scavenge or reload primers. For an example, use the 303 round. $70 for modern ammo, $40 for primers, $40 for Lee reloaders and $200 for one thousand surplus ammo rounds. $350 will get you, conceivable, 3000 rounds of ammo (less the powder cost, if any). Not bad considering that this should last a while if you watch your ammo carefully. Every piece of brass will be precious in a true survival situation, but beware the lessons of the past. A true story told in police academy classes is that of several state troopers in California in a firefight. As they had been trained to do, they carefully saved their revolver brass as they reloaded. One was scrambling for spilt brass when he was approached from behind and shot. Moral- brass is important, but only if it saves your life.

Berdan primed ammo can be reloaded. Lachmiller Engineering a Berdan decapper, RCBS caries seating tools, and Smith and Wesson Ammo Co of Alton Illinois offers the primers. I know you don't want to reload CommBlock 7.62x39 as they are made with steel instead of brass, but am unsure of other offered rounds. You will need to do a bit of research. Personally I say stick with boxer, but the lure of cheap ammo is strong. As always, the truly cheap of us will put all manor of sweat into shaving off a penny or two at every opportunity. Good luck.

For years the standard advice on using corrosive ammo was that one must clean with hot soapy water after use. Call me strange, but I just can't get used to the idea of putting water on my gun, no matter how rational the argument is made. Sure, it was standard practice in the military when we got back from the field to hurry up and clean our gear so we could go out and get drunk and laid. We all ran for the showers and flung our disassembled weapons into the hot water to remove the carbon build-up from firing blanks. Twenty bare asses scrubbing parts in scalding hot water. Then we went and cleaned with Breakfree, and they turned out fine. But that was with Uncle Sugars guns. Damned if I wanted to do it with my own. Following is a reprint from the Web on cleaning guns after using corrosive ammo.

How to clean after using corrosive ammo

This is how I do it... it's easy, it's fast, and it's effective. Best of all you can do it while still on the firing-line and thus not offend your significant other with the usually pungent stench of commercial cleaners in your home.

Dilute regular household ammonia (sudsy is best but regular is OK too) to 2/1 or 3/1 with water (it can be as much as 10/1 if the smell really gets to you) . Keep in a small bottle to take with you to the range but label it well so you don't mistake it for contact-lens solution or something (yeeeowww!)

After you are done firing and while still at the range moisten (not dripping-wet,~ but sorta-soaked) a patch and run it down the bore and back once. This instantly will neutralize and dissolve the corrosive salt-compounds from the primers and start in on the copper and powder fouling with a vengeance.

Let stand for thirty seconds or so (just enough time to take off and throw away the ammonia-patch you just used and put a new, dry patch on your rod) . Run the dry patch (or several) down the bore and you are most literally done.

DON'T OVERDO IT! **More ISN'T better in this case...**

You really don't want to slop ammonia (especially if heavily concentrated) all over the blued parts of the gun (as it will likely start to remove bluing after 30 minutes or so) and you also shouldn't leave the ammonia in the bore for an extended period of time (like hours, although I do know folks who do that anyway) as that may (not WILL, but MAY) cause crazing" (microscopic pitting) of the metal. I also have to caution against slopping ammonia on the

wooden parts of your rifle, as it will usually strip the finish down to bare-wood, BUT if you follow my advise on HOW MUCH ammonia to use (only enough to dampen, but not soak, a single patch per gun) you will not EVER experience ANY problems at all...

If you are worried about primer residue getting on the bolt-face you may want to quickly wipe it with the wet patch before throwing the thing away and quickly dry it. Same thing with the gas-tube in a semi-automatic rifle.., don't go overboard, just wet it and dry it and get done with it.

As a final precaution (since the ammonia will also kill all lubricants and leave the metal very dry) you can run a patch of gun-oil down the bore and leave it like that for protection from the elements (just be sure to run a dry patch down the bore before shooting it again

I've been cleaning guns this way (including *every* gun we sell) for nearly thirty years, and have never had rust form in any bore (even here in humid Florida).

However, if you are (like some folks I have met) completely obsessed about leaving traces of ANY powder or copper residue in the bore of your weapon, you can certainly follow up your "field-cleaning" with a detailed, strenuous, traditional cleaning once you are home (or in a week or month from then . But I warn you... your bore is much more be likely to be damaged from your over-enthusiastic scrubbing to get out that "last speck of copper" (which has no effect on the actual accuracy of your firearm) than it will with all the rounds you could possibly send down it during your lifetime.

~//www.empirearms.com/cIean .htm **3/6/01**

End

ANARCHIST SOCIETY

by James M Dakin
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First off, forget most of what you have heard of anarchy. As defined by the media this is a state of chaos and brutality. As in, "Anarchy rules as criminals run amok". They are saying that when people behave as if their actions will be unpunished, that they disregard authority, we have anarchy. Actually, what we have is lawlessness. This is criminal action. Semantics are a great thing when brainwashing the masses.

Anarchy is simply the absence of government. There is no government to rule over you. When I advocate anarchy it means I wish to rule myself, not have a group of parasites do so. I do not wish for a state of lawlessness. I don't want criminals running about unhindered. I merely wish to run my own life as I see fit. Now, in return for this natural right I possess just by being human, I agree not to impose my will on others. I must respect their property rights as I demand they respect mine. Property rights include my labor, my time, my body and everything I own by lawful means.

Anarchy is the system in which I live as I wish as long as I do not coerce others. Therefore, libertarianism or other crackpot schemes such as socialist anarchy or other dream worlds where there is only a little government is not workable. You are either pregnant or you are not. You are either free or you are not. When idiots tell me to love America or leave it, they imply I need to love its present form of government. Hogwash. I love this country because it is based on the principle of individual freedom, not for the present watered down socialist version it is now. I want my country to be the first area on this earth that is totally free of government.

This is not merely a utopian dream. First, government is an invention of the agricultural

revolution. Man started to stay in one spot to farm and was immediately preyed upon by bandits. It didn't take the bandits long to realize they would be more productive by taking only a small amount of food stuffs instead of the whole crop in order to ensure a continuous supply. Government was born, and with it our current nightmare of a parasite that survives only because of our own consent. Second, you might think government is the natural order of things, but you need to keep in mind that at one time slavery was considered quite natural. Very few questioned the practice, nor did they envision a society without it. At one time it was also normal to burn witches at the stake, to perform female circumcision, to deform developing children to create more desired physical characteristics and other assorted cruelties. Man has proven he can evolve mentally and stop such immoral practices. Government should be no different.

Why do you think you need government? If you name any government activity, I can, and will later, argue that the free market can perform that function cheaper, more efficiently and without coercion. Not that I am advocating a more efficient government. Thank God our government is not more efficient, or it would do a much better job in bleeding us dry and enslaving us. I want no government at all, since it is so unnecessary. Government is simply a protection racket on a grand scale.

Let us say that you own a neighborhood shop. A local thug comes in and offers you protection. You are a little dense, and so you ask him what this means. If you pay the thug, not only will he not kill you or harm you physically, but if any other thug comes around you can tell them his name and they will not bother you for any more protection money. You agree simply because you have no choice. The next month a detective from the police department comes in. He says you have not paid your taxes. If you fail to do so, you will be arrested. If arrested, you will go to prison were you will either die or get gang raped. If you do pay your taxes, the city will protect you from gangsters asking protection money. If you are the normal shop keeper you pay the other thug his protection money because you know the first thug is no match for the city government. Do you see any difference between the two protection rackets? I see only one- the size of the organization. If the Mafia was as big as our government, they would be in charge and there would be a mob run by former bureaucrats. Government is only a legitimate governing power because they are the biggest protection racket around.

You do not vote for or against government, only for whom you wish to be top bureaucrat. If you cannot vote out the government, it is not a legitimate governing body you chose to run your affairs. They are not asking if you choose to be ruled. They only ask who you wish to be the figureheads. That is why when you vote, you lend legitimacy to organized theft and coercion. I am sure that in a truly free world there would be many people who actually wish to be ruled. They cannot conduct their own affairs. Personally, I choose to live free- free to make my own decisions and to make my own mistakes and to live with my mistakes. If I fail to save for retirement, I should not force taxpayers to subsidize me when I am too old to work. If I fail to buy insurance or to go about armed, I have only myself to blame if I am mugged.

It is my aim here in this pamphlet to point out the need to abolish government, how to conduct our affairs in a free society and how we can use the coming instability of the current ruling powers to bring this all about. Make no mistake, a revolution is not necessary to bring this about. Underlying currents shaping our lives are going to bring this about. If we happen to give it a little armed push, all fine and dandy. But, we are in a period of time where most of us will see a massive decrease in the size of government. We have a wonderful opportunity to introduce a system of freedom to those that wish it.

One only needs to read The Third Wave by Toffler and about six other books on the topic of the coming Information Revolution to realize that a heavy top down government cannot run the economy as it will soon be. Just as the Industrial Revolution brought in big government and a bureaucracy in pyramid form, so will the decentralized Information Revolution bring about a small or perhaps no government. This is why we are not truly yet in the next phase of the economy. First we must shed our old power structure. Until we do this it will be impossible to actually live in the new economic order. In short, it is a historical fact that the power structure ruling today will be done away with one way or another. So, sit back in the shade and sip some lemonade, cause the bastards are going down, with or without your help.

To my way of thinking we are going to see one of two scenarios unfold. One is a natural progression of things in which the new Information Age forces out the old powers propping up the last decaying Industrial processes. This could come about in different ways but the end result will be a decentralized power structure. Just as several hundred duchies, city-states and mini kingdoms had no hope of bringing about the Industrial Revolution, neither can the big government of today rule over a decentralized economic system that will be first information based and then biological/nanotechnological based. Fast as light business cannot survive in a bureaucratic atmosphere. This is not to say that all nations will cease to exist or that all governing bodies will die. The trends are obvious but the details are impossible to see. Those areas that give up big government will thrive and prosper, as did those areas that embraced industry over agriculture during the last economic upheaval. As with the last, those areas refusing to surrender the old ways of doing things will suffer and be left behind economically. Second, we can see a sudden or violent upheaval that will change our daily lives at every level.

The sudden end of civilization is a remote possibility, but still a possibility. Just because it is near impossible that we will have a nuclear war, an asteroid strike or a sudden climate change does not mean that it is not going to happen. Long shots happen all the time, and lately it seems they happen more and more. We suffer only a recession after a Wall Street meltdown. The Soviet Union suddenly dies. Japan goes from a world economic superpower to a has been now in perpetual recession. Gold and oil stay at thirty year lows. We seem to take for granted these happenings, but they are in fact life changing events that no one thought would happen. The impossible does happen and it would be folly not to plan for it. As survivalists we do this, so even if the odds are long, prepare for such events. The other side of the coin is that such events will be a golden opportunity to shed the shackles that have bound us for millennia. Let us take the opportunity to bid

farewell to government of all kinds.

Perhaps very few have actually thought of anarchy as a viable social system. I was totally unaware of such until I purchased almost by accident a small book The Market For Liberty. This I read while in the service, in my formidable years. The oppressive nature of the military, plus this book forever changed my thinking. Here was a system where everyone could be happy, do their own thing, harm no one and advance economically if desired better than any other form of society could. I scoff at all those who claim it is impossible, especially since it had never been tried before. Neither had flight before the Wright brothers, and look how airplanes have changed our lives for the better. Look at how personal computers have racially changed our lifestyles, despite the overwhelming opinion that mainframes would reign supreme for all the days.

To say anarchy will not work is stupidity. Socialism is now known not to work, but enough desired that it would happen, that it did. Enough people start questioning the stupidity of government, and anarchy is quite possible. When the last of the parasites are shaken from the public trough, there will be little incentive to remain part of a collective, especially since it will soon become economically self-defeating. It used to pay economically to be with the collective and soon that will flip-flop to the reverse. Government takes the form of the economy. It actually paid to have a little government for farmers. It paid handsomely economically in the Industrial era, but in the Information Age it will pay to get rid of government, and thus it shall come about. I am planning on taking that to the bank.

Government fails to work as soon as the consent of the governed is lifted. After a certain point of protest and non-compliance, it is no longer possible for the government to maintain power. In the event of slow change, when this happens and there is chaos due to the government giving up power, you need to be ready to switch to a free market system. This can be difficult. It is actually almost easier to survive a government collapse after a sudden catastrophe, since all our survival plans do, or should, allow for the collapse of civilization. Most of our plans don't take into account a drastic change without this collapse. It is easy to survive nuclear war. Stay in the shelter until there is no fallout, come out and shoot any looters or bandits- be they old military units or criminals. Under a less drastic change it is not feasible to hunker down and wait it out. You actually have to interact with the public as the prevailing social order is stood on its head.

Let me give you an example that we can all relate to. The Soviet Union collapses. Suddenly your pension is worthless, your civil service job is gone, the subsidized apartment rents and food prices are no longer keeping prices down, inflation is hideous and there are no jobs being created. Yet, you can't go hunker down in a bunker, and the only thing a stockpile would do is help feed you when you didn't make enough money. It would not help you buy heating oil or cloths or repair services or any other thing in a normal economy. If this situation occurred in our country, a stash of guns and ammo would do you no good (other than day to day self-defense). Your end of civilization skills of gun smithing or reloading would not help. You still need to pay property tax on

the land where your shelter is. How do you do this if you have no job? What if gold coins were illegal? In the case of anarchy becoming the norm it is far more important to survive an economic collapse than a civilization collapse.

The most important thing to keep in mind is that everything the government controls might have that control lifted. So, you need to plan for a future without certain things. No social security. No student loans. No subsidized business loans or hospital bills. No monopoly on trades such as doctors or taxi drivers or pharmacist or barbers or any other occupation that the government has restricted access. Zoning laws may not protect your property values. For that matter, property values will decrease due to government lands becoming available and the end to building codes and oversight of banking regulations. There will be competition in currencies, postal delivery, power generation, cable TV, phone service. Try to imagine life without government. Twice your income with prices half of what they are now and all that with business profits the exact same and nothing changing as far as the private sector of the economy. There will be certain disadvantages such as fees for fire fighting services and road tolls, but all in all you will have so much more of your own money to spend your standard of living will at a minimum double.

If a civilization collapse occurs it will merely be business as usual. You provide everything for yourself, or through trade and kill anyone trying to rob you, be they the new government or standard criminals. If civilization endures, you need to take on all responsibility yourself for your well being. You will no longer get a free ride. Even if you are dyeing in an anarchist society, you had better pay for that hospital trip. The good news is that health care will be much cheaper as will insurance. But, you won't be able to have Uncle Sugar okay free care at the expense of everyone else. Personally I see no problem with that, as I imagine very few of you will.

Let me show you how easy it will be for individuals to provide all needed services in a free market society. After this you should see no damn good reason why we need government at all. The only thing keeping us out of one now is that too many nations now exist that will refuse to allow a group of freedom seekers to live in peace. I firmly believe that will change soon as the coming economy will dispose of the current nation state with massive government. Not in all places of course. Those nations refusing to change will suffer mightily economically speaking, but they will still exist to terrorize their citizens and at first their neighbors. Later as they decay they will prove little threat to others. Those areas thriving economically will have the means to buy protection, be they small enclaves or even individuals. A small nation in a depression will be little threat to others even with mighty armies. They will stick to terrorizing their own population and leave other free areas alone. More on this below.

MILITARY

Each economic period has its own set of rules for creating wealth. In the agricultural era those persons controlling land were crops flourished made wealth. The fact that Greece had good land for the cash crops of the day, olive oil and grapes, made it an equal to other areas of the Mediterranean. The fact that all these farms were close to the sea (the

cheapest mode of transport) made the economy boom. In the Industrial era location to raw materials was vital, but skill in production marks the better economies. The thing to keep in mind is that those countries still in the agricultural economy were devastated militarily by those that advanced to the next level. In the coming Information age those countries that go along and decentralize will boom, the areas staying in the factory economy will bust. Those with high taxes and factories churning out weapons and a military draft will actually be at a disadvantage.

Now, how can an anarchist society hold out against an industrialized nation with central government? First, an information economy will zoom ahead economically and the other nation will experience a decline, making it harder to fund a military. Second, when every adult is armed, usually better than his potential attacker, the enemy stands little chance. Third, defenders are fighting for freedom whereas attackers are only conscripted peasants and lack motivation. Forth, anarchists would have advanced weapons due to a free market churning out new innovative products at breakneck speed. And, last, history will be on our side.

When the information economy comes of its own, those regions following the old ways of manufacturing will fall behind and suffer economically. Suddenly, those desperate leaders blind to destiny will have a much harder time taxing and building an army when their economy turns to crap. Suddenly you have products no one needs, your exports dry up, your imports stop when no one takes your worthless currency, and in general your once invincible dictatorship is a paper tiger. See North Korea, Cuba, East European Communists regimes, etc.

If you have a region in which every adult and many youth are heavily armed, it does make it rather difficult to wage war on them. America has been helped by an ocean barrier it is true, but should a foreign army invade it would take quite a bit to pacify all the armed insurgents. Switzerland is hidden in the Alps, but a male adult population all armed with modern military rifles does factor in with its defense. Look at criminals. An armed state sees less crime, a less armed state sees more crime. Same difference.
When you take a group of largely uneducated peasants, conscript them, pay them almost nothing and then force them to risk their lives, you end up with a poor fighting force. If you choose a highly paid highly motivated force to do so there will more than likely not be enough of them to do the job, even with opponents poorly armed. Just the logistics alone would ensure eventual defeat as long as there was sufficient resistance. You can easily defeat an unarmed nation, which is why the early years saw such victory to Germany in WWII. If all they have as opponents are weak militaries, victory is easier than, say, invading Switzerland were tanks are useless and all adult males are armed. In a society such as ours, even with repeated attempts by the commies to disarm us, every other household has guns. We aren't bothered with belonging to a militia, so every citizen becomes a one man guerrilla force. In an anarchist society every man woman and child would more than likely be armed and they will be extremely motivated to shoot you the invader in the face, stab you in the back or put a homemade bomb in your gas tank. Short of a nuclear bomb to wipe out the population, you will be defeated.

As to technological advantages, think back to the golden age of firearms design here in the US. Without minute knowledge of this, I think we can still safely say that prior to the start of gun control in the Thirties all of our great gun designs came about. After that their has been nothing that knocks my socks off. It was as if without government restrictions the great minds of the day were free to bring to market the most advanced designs. Imagine that- no government interference means better and faster products being brought to market. What a concept. Think of our computer industry today as another example. To test this theory wait and see what happens if the Internet tax is applied. I can almost guarantee a plunge in productivity and innovation. As to gun design, as well as other more potent individual weapons, in a truly free market it will explode. We would quickly see cheap, accurate, and rugged assault rifles. Squad automatic weapons that did not overheat or jam at reasonable cost, caseless ammo, computerized sights, anti-tank weapons and anything else our budding defenders thought they might need. Hell, there would be a market for the big stuff, tanks and cannon and jets, as the well off members or groups of society wanted fun toys to play with. They would leave other government sponsored designers in the dust.

Taking the question of defense on a larger level, how would a society of freeman protect themselves against heavy weapons such as nuclear bombs, nerve gas, or even warships, squads of jets and armies with tanks and such? The same as now. The armies of a nation can't protect the citizens of a country against being attacked. They can only offer the threat of retaliation if the citizens are attacked. Really you are better off if you arm yourself instead of relying on the military to "protect" you. The military is there to protect the government, not you. In an anarchist society there would be the natural order in which citizens armed themselves, plus I am sure that a group would find it in their interests to offer a credible defense. Lets say an insurance group found it cheaper to have several ICBMs as defense than to potentially pay out for claims against life insurance. Or, a group pools finances and offers a standing reward of, say, ten million dollars for the head of the leader who attacks their society. This money could be offered through another party elsewhere so even after an attack the reward could be given. To me this seems the best kind of defense, if we could hold accountable the person responsible for attacking us. As for terrorism, what country can protect against that? I would think with a free society harming no one, and not meddling in the affairs of other groups, there would be little reason for a terrorist attack. Who would be pissed at such a group? The short answer to the defense of this society is it would be easier than with a society that had government. Country A goes to country B, attacks it, B's government surrenders, game over. Country A attacks an anarchist society, there is no one to surrender. They have to subdue each and every armed defender. Country A goes home.

POLICE

Why we need police at all is a mystery. If the job of the police is to protect the population and to solve crimes, then the private sector already offers these services. By arming yourself with a handgun and being trained in its use, you have the best protection available. The police only act as protection by being a threat to criminals, not actually

being there to stop them. Apply the 90% rule. 90% of people are law abiding and moral, in any group or setting. It's the 10% who cause problems. So, in a socialist country, or communist, or in a police state, in a prison even, only a few cause most of the problems. You need to protect yourself against only 10%, and there most criminals will resort to fraud over force, especially if everyone is armed and offer no opportunity of easy wealth. So, a handgun will do well in protecting you most times.

To combat fraud it will be necessary to employ detectives. They are called private investigators and are listed in the yellow pages. And, as with all services in the private sector, you only pay them if you need them. No more paying some slob for thirty years to sit at a desk and churn out paperwork and eat donuts, then retire and suck up a pension on the public trough for twenty more unless the taxpayers get lucky and he has a heart attack early and expires. We do not need to pay for this kind of waste. There is no need. Arm yourself, have an alarm and other precautions against burglary, and hire an investigator if you need to catch a criminal.

Insurance agencies would also hire the services of investigators or have them on staff. They would have a vested interest in catching criminals so that there would be no need to pay on claims against property lost. They do this sort of thing now, even with the police in place. It pays them to hire competent motivated help to tract down criminals, and at times I'm sure this is not from the public sector. What motivates you more, a paycheck (private) or a pension (public)? The private sector must produce or people loose a job. In the public sector only gross incompetence in the public eye were it embarrasses a boss will get you canned. Who do you think will produce more? Competition might be a hard thing to live with but the rewards are great. You want no work and no reward, become a commie. Give me hard-ass, no excuses, competitive free market with corresponding reward anytime.

We do not need the police to protect us, or to catch our criminals. We can do this nicely ourselves. And, in many cases are doing so even now, paying a kind of double tax. The reason the police exist now is not because we need them, it is because the State needs them. To remain in power, the government must have a police force to protect the regime currently in power. Those wishing to overthrow the government must be stopped. Those wishing to question authority must be stopped. Most importantly, those not paying taxes must be forced to pay to keep the government going. Protection and fraud resolution are merely icing on the cake, a freebie to disguise the true purpose of the state. I claim no special intelligence in pointing this out. Persons better able than I have been pointing out the evil nature of government for hundreds of years. We need to apply a little common sense and agree with them.

COURTS

It is desirable to have a decision making body to act as final arbitrator in disputes. This is the roles of our courts. What needs to be kept in mind is that this role can be easily performed by a private arbitration service. Both parties agree to abide by the decision of the service and if one refuses, sanctions can be applied. Imagine a world were no

government exists. There is no public spaces- all land and property is privately owned. Now, imagine a person who refuses to honor his contracts. More than likely he will be shunned from society and commercial activity. If business owners refuse you entrance to their stores, how do you buy food or shelter? Of course it will not be as drastic as that, as there will be those that choose to sell to these individuals at a higher than normal price. Simple supply and demand. However, there will also be bounty hunters.

Arbitration agents can replace courts, and bounty hunters can enforce their decisions. If you sign a contract stating that you will abide by the decision of that agency, and then fail to honor that contract, you are in violation of that contract. The second party more than likely collects on insurance for just such an eventuality, and then the insurance company can come after you to collect on the claim plus expenses. This at the same time your identity is plastered throughout the Net to interested merchants. Now you owe the original debt plus all expenses to involved parties and are having a hard time conducting daily transactions. A bounty hunter can recoup the costs to the insurance agent at no cost, as success is the only way to be paid and upon capture the malcontent would be forced to work off the debt. Thus there is no cost to society for a criminal unlike today where each crime cost us in police, court and prison.

As for the impartiality of arbitration agencies, keep in mind that their reputation is all that guarantees future business and reputation is assured by rendering a fair and impartial decision that both parties can accept. Contrast this to today where only one party is satisfied and maybe not even that after lawyer fees. At one time I had a doctor that stipulated that all patients agreed to an arbitration agent in the event of a dispute. Just this agreement alone assured that her malpractice insurance was of a lesser amount. An arbitration agency is in the game for a win-win situation. Today's courts are in it for power and control. Which do you think is better?

PRISONS

I don't remember exactly the cost of housing a prisoner per year, although I believe it was about three times that of my gross income. At least thirty thousand dollars a year to lock up each criminal. Remember that most criminals are today political prisoners, those guilty of crimes against our masters rather than those against fellow citizens. You are now routinely sentenced to more time for drug dealing than rape or armed robbery, and that is a very sad situation indeed. Our Top Idiots are so concerned with the War On Drugs that they must not only build jails at a feverish pace but also push out the true criminals to make room for drug offenders. Now, few appreciate a dealer who conducts drive-bys, but many are simply non-violent types out to make a little extra cash or to support their habit.

Don't even get me started on our Injustice system. Let me just compare public and private systems on a cost comparison basis and we can just assume with our current system gone justice would once again flourish. Today's jails are operated on a sewer principle. Grab money and flush it down the toilet. We pay a huge cost to warehouse societies undesirables. A jail merely keeps criminals out of reach of more victims. That is good, but to force former victims to house their attackers is a double taxation. First they

must pay in the form of lost property, then with taxes to house their offenders. Under an anarchist system the justice system merely wishes to see restitution, not revenge or segregation.

Restitution is the most desirable form of righting a wrong. Granted, money does not restore the life of a loved one, but neither does the murderer living in jail on your dime. If a person was to steal from you property, time, or ability, by restoring that which was taken is much better than just seeing him suffer in turn. Under our present system if Grandma is defrauded in an investment scam, her con man merely goes to jail. She is out money. In an anarchist society the criminal is forced to pay restitution. She gets her money back. Which is better? Today, when a drunk driver kills a child he goes to jail, partially funded by the slain child's parents through taxes. In a better system the driver must pay restitution to the family (or more likely the insurance agency that pays the total amount up front). Granted this does not bring back the child, but at least some balance is achieved. If the dead person was the family wage earner, the money helps support the family. If it is a child, perhaps some good could come of the act by giving to charity, or funding an education group to reduce drunk driving, or even sending the other child to a good college. Yes, in a sense it is blood money, but still better than what we have today.

There could be forced labor factories to ensure the uncooperative would pay. Perhaps work from home situations with monitoring. Public sanctions to further force compliance. It would be far easier to force others to work for crimes than to jail them and keep them well mannered. Think of child support today. If a parent leaves children he must pay for their upbringing. He is left alone as long as he pays. He can keep what is left. If instead we only locked them up, the other parent would see no financial aid at all. Granted, the system today is unfair and unbalanced with the system almost always favoring the female regardless of circumstances, but it does serve as an example of restitution rather than punishment.

If we were to strive to attempt to turning back the clock and trying to bring things back in balance, the system would be much more fair and just than it is now. Some situations would be sticky, such as who was responsible to restore stolen property, the fence or the customer? What is the value of a human life? How many years of support is due to a family after the death of a bread winner? Until death of the spouse? Until a marketable skill could be learned? All these would be worked out through arbitration and insurance tables and cultural norms. It might be hard to foresee all the complications now, but surely you can see what a better system it would be.

FIRE PROTECTION

Many people shudder to think about fires in a system without government. Who would protect us? Will we all burn to little charred sticks of carbonized flesh? Oh, God, the humanity!! Actually, the system as it is today is a mix of public and private concerns and it would need only partial evolution to switch completely over. A vast majority of areas now have volunteer fire fighters. What the State supplies is the standards, training and equipment. It would not be a huge burden to privatize the system and fund it through

insurance agencies and user fees. Lets say that you have a house in the city of Dog Breath, Montana. Your insurance agent that handles your fire policy does not have a local fire fighting team but instead pays a fee, aided by your deductible, to the local volunteer force if they are called to your house. A yearly fee is either paid by you, and lower policy fees are charged, or by the insurance company and they charge you higher fees. Thus, the force pays for its training, building and equipment. Perhaps a local business donates the building in exchange for reduced cost protection. Another donates the trucks for the same. Another company could have their own fire fighting force (a good example would be an airport) that they sell the services of to the town. There are many ways to do this without taxes. For those that wish to pay neither fees nor pay for fire suppression, let their buildings burn. Unless you are into charity.

ROADS

This one is the easiest to work out. Toll roads. We had them before public roads and we can have them after. Not rocket science here. For city roads there would more than likely be merchant sponsored "free" roads, roads in a residence area maintained by maintenance fees such is now is the case with condos. Perhaps you shudder at the thought of forking over a nickel every three blocks to drive. Yet, you stop in five stores along the way now and pay sales tax on every purchase. What's the difference other than lower costs through tolls?

LIBRARIES

The library is one of the cheapest government sponsored activities, and to my way of thinking one of the most beneficial. Yet, plenty of non-readers out there do not wish to sponsor another's hobby, and rightly so. Privatize libraries, as is now the case with video stores. The difference would be many areas would have subsidized libraries from "friends of the library" type organizations, perhaps coffee houses would provide them as an inducement, plus authors and publishers might donate free material. More than likely it would be a cheap and painless rental.

CHARITY

Under a welfare state we are forced to give to others through taxation. In a free society, we would be encouraged to give to private charities. But we would not be forced. Today, single mothers are coddled and treated as loyalty as gifts are bestowed to them through welfare. Those who are lazy are given food and shelter. Those that should be shot as trespassers on private land are instead given coins by those passing by. I feel no charity for others when 20% of my income is taken to feed the welfare state and another 50% is taken to give to my own private forced welfare case the ex-wife. Give me back my money and I will be generous to others in need, as I wish. Forced charity does not work, only that freely donated. Before FDR the commie puke we had nothing but private charities and they worked just fine. Cheaper and only the truly needy were helped, not the lazy.

EDUCATION

Right now going to college is an outrageous expense. But removing this from government control would quickly reduce the cost through competition. Remote, online learning would accelerate, and apprenticeships would again flourish. Why go to four years of college to learn a trade when you can go to a trade high school, or if poor become an apprentice. There are alternatives even to that, such as a scholarship in trade for X number of years of reduced wages at the sponsoring company. If a corporation was in desperate need for, say, computer programmers it could buy students by paying off a college loan in their senior year. If the projected need was four years away they could hire proven high school seniors by paying their way through college in return for a work contract. This is essentially what the military has been doing for years, paying a bonus of a college fund to entice the brainiacs to fill needed slots in tech fields.

Apprenticeships are old, and still in use in Germany for one. You enter a chosen field during teen years and do the crap work in exchange for learning the trade. Not a bad arrangement for the owner or the student. Junior ROTC is a mild form of this for the military, military school a severe form. On the job training is a watered down form of apprenticeship, but suffers in concept since the employer must pay too much. Whatever form learning takes, you can be sure that the free market will offer wonderful cheap choices.

MONEY

Who the hell wants worthless paper money when they could be using a currency backed by tangible assets? Gold and silver credits are a good way to conduct business in today's modern world. Currency should be offered by one and all and judged by the market on its worth. Land backed currency, commodity backed, future earnings backed (they are called stocks), labor promissory notes, anything at all is better than worthless fiat money only backed by the divine power of a government.

Until the 20th century, we had in this country currency in many forms. Any bank could offer its own, and consumer publications rated them for worthiness. If consumers can accept today's worthless greenbacks, a paper currency or bank credit backed by any tangible wealth would be an immense step forward in security and peace of mind.

BIG PROJECTS

One of the arguments for government necessity is that corporations are incapable of funding and carrying out big projects. Moon landings and the Interstate system are given as examples. You don't hear that excuse much anymore, what with private companies now launching into space, laying down millions of miles of fiber optic cable and leading the biotechnology revolution. The government as lead investor of the old economy is being replaced by private industry pushing us into the new economy. The Feds make ugly noises about protecting our steel industry while private companies daily perfect materials that will replace steel. They close millions of acres of public land to lumber harvesting while private industry works on a digital E-ink to replace paper. The government is still squarely in the middle of the late Industrial economy, hoarding its source of power, and the private sector is performing a quiet end run around their archaic asses.

Decentralization does make sense in many instances. Survivalists depend on this principle. However, the centralization of certain activities makes more sense. It is more efficient, cost effective and less polluting to centralize power generation. This does not mean that government must build and maintain nuclear power plants. Private industry can do this just fine. Working under the principle of private property, a power company would be liable if it released radiation. If it poisoned the air, it would face a hideous class action law suit. Thus, any insurance company that wrote a policy on it would ensure safety regulations just as effectively as any government body. This applies to most other safety issues throughout society.

MONOPOLIES

Government grants monopolies to ensure service and products over certain items such as water, power, sewer, cable. Those items which use a public delivery system. How can you have three water companies competing? Three pipes to each house? It is expensive to lay pipes, wire or telephone line. Every upstart company can't duplicate this. If a road company leased an underground water pipe to company A to deliver water, then if company B came along and delivered contaminated water, company A couldn't use the pipes again to deliver quality water until they were cleaned. The solution lays in changing the distribution system.

If gasoline delivery was treated the same as water, one company would need to lay pipes to every gas station, and the government would need to regulate the industry. Instead, each station has a semi truck deliver five thousand gallons at a time to underground tanks. There is no reason water could not be delivered the same way. The reason that water seems so cheap now is that the government subsidizes the cost, and does not encourage conservation. If the free market was in charge of water distribution, the price would soar in a drought, and people would stop watering lawns and washing cars and taking twenty minute showers. I am not saying that we would need to be stingy and live with no water, just that if water was priced subject to availability, the stuff would not be wasted. Without waste, we would need less and the delivery price would not be prohibitive.

Now, lets say that even with wireless phone we still used land lines for computer access and such. If we used a local company, and their service proved substandard, we could cut off service. Now, the company would have two choices. One, loose a customer and the investment in wire that location. Two, leasing out their access to that customer and at least getting some profit out of it. There might not even need to be more than one line to each house, if the company owning the line simply leased out to phone services. Plus, with fiber optic, you could own the wire and lease out to multiple companies at the same time- phone services, cable services, Internet services, etc. Even then competition would offer more services as technology opens up other avenues of delivery such as through gas lines, plumbing lines, etc. Technology does make possible increased competition.

Electricity is about to open up to competition. One company might have installed the lines, but another might start to sell the line company the juice it generates cheaper. If you

have an incompetent company, cancel their services the same as the phone company. They lease the lines or loose a customer. Or, emerging technology using a decentralized plant in your back yard changes propane to electricity. Even the installation of solar panels will offer a choice of power generation. You are not at the mercy of one company in an anarchist society. Power companies know this and most likely will keep prices down to break even prices. They might offer other services to make a profit, such as cable service, phone service, a bundle package, etc.

Sewage now is treated as a government monopoly. If it were opened to competition I imagine it could turn into a free service as the company treated the sewage, generated methane, and recycled the water to resell. In the desert, the water price alone would assure a profit. Take a trash and turn it into a treasure.

Trash is already open to competition. It is not hard to imagine that different trucks would be begging for your trash for the lowest possible price, or even the highest, as the rich houses had the clean and non smelling trucks pull to your door, and unload the unwanted items from your house. Perhaps offering to install a compacter for you, cleaning all cans in the house, providing air freshener, etc. The free market would even provide companies willing to pay you for your trash if it contained items of interest to them such as repairable furniture, recyclables, etc.

To conclude, in an anarchist society were the free market ruled, we would keep more of our money, face less coercion, be allowed to conduct our lives as we saw fit as long as we observed that same right for others, and in general be much happier. Live long and free.

END

WALLY-WORLD SURVIVALIST
by James M Dakin
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As you are looking through your hunting catalogs, your gun magazines, your Shotgun News, the mail order survival manuals, the Army surplus store and the pawn shop you may have wondered if there could be such a thing as one stop preparedness shopping. After all, we spend a hell of a long time learning about what we need, then spending even more time finding out where to get it. In general this is not such a bad thing, as comparison shopping is good for own bottom line. Why spend extra if it is not necessary? Thanks to free markets (or at least slightly more free) we have a cornucopia to pick from. Those that bemoan the fate of our industry fleeing oversees are missing the point. If you can buy it cheaper from oversees, why would you want to buy it locally.
If you are like me you have three different self-sufficiency magazines, several gun magazines, Shotgun News, catalogs from four survival suppliers, and a dozen Web sites to keep you informed on the best and cheapest tools for survival. For me, the best merely is a comparison to the cheapest. Cheap is what is in my budget. Well, let me tell you. The only thing I can be sure of is that all of these companies that sell to survivalists are damn expensive. I understand why. You are selling a niche product with expensive advertising and heavy duty overhead. It is not cheap keeping an inventory or sending out umpteen million catalogs. So, I understand the need for high prices. Yet, as a consumer I am not very sympathetic. They are trying to get what little money I have left after Uncle Sugar and the ex-wife finish raping me every payday and by golly I want as much for my money as I can get.

Is that so much to ask? Am I being unreasonable to think that the high cost of doing business is not my problem. Come on, be honest. As a businessman you sure bemoan the costs associated with the practice of selling a product, but when it is time to go home you stop by the groceries and bitch about the cost of a gallon of milk. It is human nature to

apply a double standard when it benefits ourselves. A consumer naturally could give a care that a 90% cut of a movie ticket goes to the studio for rental fee. He just bitches that the damn ticket cost $7 and the concession prices are insane (most profit at a movie theater is derived from snack sales- something to keep in mind when you sneak in your own candy if you want to screw it the owner). This is why you hear customers whining in line that there are not more cashiers. It is the cheapest prices in town and they are cheesed they are not waited on as royalty. That wonderful disregard of logic and reality.

So now we are at a point where we can laugh at the personal problems of preparedness suppliers and yet still complain that it is rather inconvenient to have to shop around at more than one place to get everything we need. Okay, I am joking. I try to put myself in others shoes before I judge them. But I also realize I am close to dirt poor and I am not willing to pay higher prices just out of pity. It makes for a moral quandary if you worry about such things, unless you come to terms with the fact that you are part of the problem and that you are willing to accept the consequences. I am helping turn America into a series of giant superstores, and yet I do not care. What have I lost when five small merchants are closed down by a superstore? I just lost high prices. My God, should we go back to full serve gasoline and pay higher prices just so a few illiterate high schoolers can have a job? They work at gas stations now anyway, just inside the air conditioning instead of out in the cold. They punch a register instead of pumping gas. Are they really worse off? Should we get rid of the ATMs and instead have the old bank hours of 9am to 12 pm and 1pm to 4? Would we be better off? Of course not. I know, lets burn all the computers so we can have more accountants and telephone operators and civil servants and what not. This is rubbish, people. Every job lost was gained elsewhere and so friggin what if more people work crappy jobs and earn less. Union jobs are overpaid and we all suffer because of higher prices. When we pay a high school graduate $20 an hour to weld cars together instead of having a robot do it we end up paying 75% more for a car than we would under a truly free economy.

I could go on for pages about the abuse parasitic practices heap onto our economy, yet I am sure you have no interest at this time. Let us return to the wonderful world of superstores. For the most part you will see little in the way of actual price savings at these giants. I still have to go to Office Max, Office Depot and Staples just to find a bargain on floppy disks. Yes, you would pay a lot more at a mom and pop stationary store, but it seems that other than loss leaders you normally won't find great savings. Average savings, sure. But if I shop around three different stores I want to be rewarded for my efforts with more than just a buck or two saved. Sure, they have a huge selection, but I want a huge selection and great prices. Lowes is a case in point. You go to Lowes and you find everything under the sun and great savings. And they help the mechanically challenged such as myself figure out just what in the hell they need. This is what consumers want- great savings, great service and great inventory. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to think this one up, people. The hard part is actually carrying it off.

Let's pretend that there is a survivalist superstore. In the fifties the US government decided that they were actually going to encourage the American people to invest in civil

defense. Realizing the success of the GI Bill helping to educate an entire generation the government realized a modest investment on their part would stimulate the economy and save them the bother of having to actually administer a program. Yes, I know the government refuses to pass on setting up any new program, but this is my fantasy and I guess there could have been a slight chance of this actually occurring that far back before the great leap forward into the welfare state. Anyway, the Feds pass new laws granting interest deduction from income tax, but only if the house had an approved fallout shelter stocked with a minimum supply of food water and weapons. This created a boom in construction (more so than usual for the time), agriculture and gun manufacture. Any company supplying approved items was also allowed a generous tax break. Back then it was understood that tax breaks were a means of achieving an ends cheaper than taxing and spending, unlike today when people actually think a tax break is money lost.

Time passes and the industry matures and there are the usual mergers and buy-outs and talk of monopolies and sudden advances due to small businesses introducing radical ideas and products. We pass into today's economy and we have the huge glut of imports from Asia resulting in low prices. The one thing that has changed is that in all likelihood we would still have the old Soviet Union hanging around. Think of it this way. As things are a good portion of our economy is tied up in private homes. The construction industry, the banking industry, how we save and invest. The use of tax exempt interest on home mortgages is a great engine in our economy and attempts to derail it could prove dangerous. If we had civil defense tied into that it would almost seem impossible to allow the Soviet Union to fall from power. How many times did we prop up the Soviets with food and money? From the Revolution (theirs, not ours) on there were plenty of people in power who saw advantage in selling or giving to the enemy, be it the Soviets or the Nazis. The Soviet economy was never healthy. It didn't suddenly get a cold and then die from pneumonia the next day. I think a good share of the blame lies in our lack of support. So, it is not without possibility that the old enemy could still be with us.

So we are now at the new and improved Lowes and they are full bore home improvement and self-sufficiency/survivalist orientated. Not as much artsy fartsy decoration crap. And this is where my nipples start to get hard. You walk in and see pre-fab blast shelters and bank reps with easy payment plans. Water filters have a whole section, as does reloading equipment. 55 gallons drums of Mylar wrapped wheat berries. Canned food of every description including the new square cans for improved storage space, even nitrogen packed sealed cans of ammo. Air filters, radiation suits. Hydroponics equipment and non-hybrid seeds for grains as well as veggies. Generators and alternate fuels. Atmosphere sealed all terrain vehicles. And then, a small slice of heaven. 25% of the store. Half the customers. Bedlam from open to close. The firearms section. The 60's anti-gun laws were never passed. The 30's laws prohibiting machine guns were ruled unconstitutional. Stockton and Columbine did happen, but only some of the students were killed before the gunmen were dispatched. Federal law required states to test and issue concealed carry permits as part of getting a drivers license. With 95% of the population armed at all times mass murderers were far less likely to succeed. As part of its civil defense efforts, all adults were required to arm themselves and have sufficient ammunition and supplies, and

to belong to a local official militia. Non compliance resulted in fines. The defense budget required a 1% civilian fund for guns and ammo for those less financially able to purchase said items, and the surplus from this resulted in ammo stockpiles should demand exceed individual supply. It was mandated that the militia could only be used locally and not federalized even during war. This ensured that home defense was the only goal of the militia.

As a result of these policies which cost the Feds nothing extra, military style weapons were in constant demand. Since tort reform had eliminated unneeded lawsuits for gun manufacturers, they only had to fear shoddy merchandise, not misuse from its customers. The firearms business was booming, and since R&D was rewarded by tax breaks, there were many innovative designs. The disgraceful M16 design was retired and another design of superior form was introduced. As there was no restrictions on the civilian market, military designs were encouraged. If the military was not interested a company could sell to civilians and still make a profit. This encouraged an entrepreneurial spirit only matched in the computer industry. All types and manner of personal weapons could be had, from assault rifles to squad automatic machineguns to grenade launchers and big bore sniper rifles. Suppressors were encouraged as a courtesy to ones neighbors.

Well, that's my happy little tale and I wish it were more than a hollow wish list. Now, lets get back to reality. About the only spot in which you will find some full scale A to Z survival supply stores are a scattering of mom and pop stores. Most mail order firms may have a good amount of supplies but fail to carry firearms. Daytona beach has one Army surplus store that carries a lot of guns and camping equipment but little or no food. The pickings are slim out there for a real survival supply outlet. You may get somewhat lucky having a store that fits most of your needs but more than likely prices are sky high. There is only one retail establishment in our nation that can satisfy most criteria for what supplies are needed and that is within a comfortable driving distance of just about everyone.

Almost every single survivalist out there is within traveling distance of a Wal-Mart. Not just your old style run of the mill Wal-Mart, but the new and improved Super Wal-Mart. The one with a grocery store attached. Wal-Mart, affectionately known as Wally World after the fictitious theme park from "National Lampoons Vacation". I trust we all realize that Wal-Mart is almost singularly responsible for breaking the mold on department store high prices and bringing back the practice of reducing prices over time rather than increasing them. We all take it for granted now, but it wasn't long ago that escalating prices were the norm. Let us bow our heads for a moment in reverence to the one retailer who saves us money because they can. Before polluting cars there was disease causing horse shit covering the streets. Before the Japanese killed Detroit we didn't know what gas economy was. And before the corner store killer Wal-Mart came along we knew only rising prices. There is always a price for improvement, but it is always better than the practice it replaced.

Now, you are asking yourself why in the name of all that is holy you would want to go to Wal-Mart for your preparedness supplies. The gun shop can get you weapons at cost plus

shipping and 15%, the feed store can supply all the grain you need, bakeries the plastic buckets, mail order the water filters, and K-Mart the camping supplies. Why go to only one store and limit yourself to selection? The short answer is that there are two very good reasons. Convenience and security. The long answer doesn't reveal much more, but what the hell. If you are like me you view survivalism as a hobby, one that is to be prolonged and enjoyed. I love window shopping for this crap. However, if you are like most people you value your time highly and don't wish to waste a whole lot of time fiddle farting around with getting your needed supplies. You want food in the cupboard and a gun over the mantle. This is what is wanted for a peace of mind and a security blanket. I might go into a feed and grain store and drool over stacks of wheat, but you might wish to leave that nonsense to the country bumpkins feeding their smelly livestock. As for security, think of the eyebrows you will raise going around town for survival supplies. "What do you mean you want two ton of wheat berries to feed your three chickens on your half acre lot?" "You need how many thousand rounds to go hunting?" And we all know how small town gossip is quicker than the seed of light. Staying off mail order lists and keeping the neighbors in the dark might be in your best interest.

Well, there you have it. The only two real reasons to do all your preparedness shopping at the nearest (well, not too near) Super Wal-Mart. You want to go for half a day and get it all over with, and you don't want anyone else outside your family to find out about it. Granting you will not get exactly what you want. They do not sell SKS's at Wal-Mart. Nor do they sell 13,000 gallon water filters or nitrogen sealed grain. However, if you wish to have a little extra insurance against calamities on hand, tucked away for a real rainy day, this is a quick painless process for you. This is what I did as extra insurance. I had all my own conventional supplies on hand for Y2K, but I felt I needed extra for variety and for friends and extended family. That called for something to eat besides wheat. More expensive, but a welcome variety. You would not believe the gallons of water I tossed, the pounds of rice and the quarts of cooking oil I gave to the shelter. Sure, it was hundreds of dollars down the crapper, but it was money well spent at the time for peace of mind. Remember, better to feed than fight the neighbors.

Most people in these parts don't realize it, but Wal-Mart is the de facto survival center come hurricane season. Well, to be accurate, when a specific storm is threatening the coastline. Most wait one or two days before and then go panicking for canned goods and flashlights. It makes me grin like an idiot to know I am sitting pretty while the grasshoppers scurry about in confusion. So, I am not really coming up with an original idea here. I merely thought it would be interesting to see if Wal-Mart did indeed have everything one would need to survive. It may not be perfect, but it is damn close. Following is my basic "parts list" and commentary. Perhaps you will agree that this is a viable option.

Let's start out with firearms, a subject near and dear to all survivalists hearts. Yes, you need them. You also need food and water and shelter. But let's face facts- guns are the fun part of being a survivalist. That stored wheat keeps me from being anxious about the weather, the price of oil, global warming or the futures price of grain. My number one

priority is stored food. However, a stockpile of food is damn dull. You can't fondle it, play with it, or use it. Guns are what make the whole thing fun. Without it I doubt there would be many survivalists outside the Mormon church.

You are not going to find semi-autos at Wal-Mart. They are bad for the family image. However, at least they still carry guns, which is more than can be said of certain politically correct bastard puck scumbags like Sears and K-Mart. Yet, I don't think this should present a problem. Semi's are priced out of most of our means, and even if they weren't the cost of acquiring a decent supply of magazines would add half again as much to your purchase price. They do carry the Rugar Mini-14, priced at $500. I haven't seen mags for it, perhaps because I was only slightly interested, or perhaps it is a special order item. If you are one of those who just can't stomach the thought of going through Doomsday without a semi-auto, by all means inquire into their availability. I admit that a semi-auto or three would be great, but the accumulated cost is too much for my budget. You need the gun, spare parts, lots of mags, and a hell of a lot of ammo. I prefer a bolt action and several hundred rounds. That should suffice for most folks.

They carry rimfires and shotguns. If that is your bag, you have plenty to pick from. Just remember that rimfires present a range and wounding problem. If you decide to go that way it might be because you envision a harassment/small game role for yourself. This has a possibility of being the correct course. If you subscribe to that philosophy, you can pick from several models. The Rugar 10-22 in stainless steel is $200, quite a bargain. Mags are about $10 each, so you can figure at least another $200 for them. Tube fed semi rimfires are around $100, a consideration if you can't afford magazines. Ammo is $9 for 500 rounds. Seeing as how you can carry 1000 rounds of .22 ammo with little problem, this might be just what the doctor ordered. The cheapest shotgun is $89 for a 12 gauge single shot break open. If you are on a serious budget that's damn cheap. Ammo can be $5 for twenty if you want birdshot, more expensive for man-stoppers. Most of their pumps were around the $250 point. As I said, the shotgun and .22 limit your options, but that is mostly what they carry at the store and may be just what you want if cash is dear.

That leaves bolt actions and lever guns. I don't normally see many lever actions other than .22's but if you run across one for between $250 to $300 that should be about the norm. They do carry several bolt actions, two of which I picked out for examples. One was a Rugar 7mm at a cost of $475, a bit pricey for my tastes but the only name brand I spotted. The other unknown brand was a 30-06 bolt with scope for $350. That one was more in my price range. The other consideration is ammunition. Wal-Mart only offers the higher priced hunting ammo, and so the 30-06 at $12 a box should be considered a bargain. The 7mm at $17 a box was as pricey as the rifle. Considering I can always spend $200 for an unissued or refurbished WWII bolt action I personally find modern bolt actions of less robust design for twice the price a bit of a rip off, but I realize I am in the minority. Besides, we are talking about only shopping at Wal-Mart. Pony up your $400 and shut up.

Should you be prudent enough to consider accessories for your long arm, a sling is $6, a

cleaning kit $7, a scope $25 and mount $10. Binoculars are $20 for the cheapest. I would recommend that you purchase ammo in an amount sufficient for hunting and self defense. Hunting you can use one box for several years. Add in self defense and you will need much more, even if you are only using a bolt action. I would recommend at least 400 rounds- about $250 for the 30-06 and $350 for the 7mm. This should last you many a conflict used in a sniper/harassment mode. Granted, you will most likely be killed into your first box of ammo due to your inexperience and soft urban lifestyle, but what the hell, let's think positive and plan long term. Last up on the defense front, get a decent knife. They sell a $25 model that has the non slip handle and nylon sheath. Get more knifes than you think you need, actually. Combat model, machete ($9), pocket ($8) and a few cheap back-ups. Sharpeners are $4 to $6.

You may wish to provide for camping equipment. You may be forced out of your home for a variety of reasons, or even if not you may need camping supplies to compensate for the utilities failing. Cheap sleeping bags are only $10, tents of the 3 to 4 person size are $30 or $40. Get each family member at least one sleeping bag as they only rate to about 40 degrees, but if you get them an extra one, plus several Mylar space blankets ($2 each) you should be able to survive a good dip in the temperature. I once put up a Mylar blanket in place of a pane of glass and that actually became the warmest room in the house. Do not underestimate the power of these little buggers. I would have a shoe box full of them if I were you.

For cooking I highly recommend the Coleman Duel Burner. This is actually a one burner stove but it uses either Coleman fuel or unleaded gasoline. When your supply of fuel is gone, go drain your gas tank. They are only $35, and the fuel savings is what you should be looking at, not the cost of the stove. The propane stoves are cheap to run also, the stove being as cheap as $20 and the propane canisters are $2 each, but the other stove does use gasoline which can be found all along the roadside. Buy both stoves and fuel if you can. Propane will alleviate the danger of gas use. A gallon of Coleman fuel (actually the generic brand) is $3.50 a gallon. Ten gallons for $35 will last you a while, and twenty canisters of propane will do the same at $40.

Other camping supplies include a flint fire starter at $6 and water purification tablets at $3 for enough to treat 25 quarts. This should be used as a mobile water need, not as a fixed residence water treatment method. That will be covered later. A hatchet is only $7 if you feel the need to hack up large portions of the forest. A canteen is $5, get two or three per person as a canteen should be the same as a pistol or knife- carried with you at all times. A first aid kit is $13. Not great for much more than scrapes and bruises, but better than nothing. A portable shower is $7 so you can wash off the dirt. Get some fishing gear to supplement what you have or just buy a pre-packaged kit that includes the rod and all the do-dads for $10. That way you can just stow away the whole shrink wrapped package and forget about it. You can buy a set of light weight dishes for cooking, but I would go with cast iron if you envision a motor vehicle taking you to your camping spot. The light weight is good if you are going to be hoofing it, $10 to $18. The cast iron is better if weight is no problem. They clean up easier, will last a lifetime, and are a better buy. A

three skillet set is $16, one 12 inch skillet is $10. I got the whole set plus a flat one and a Dutch oven for around $35 and I love them. Healthier, too. Iron is a good supplement, aluminum is not. Plus, the Teflon pots will loose their coating over time. Cast iron only gets better over time. To season a cast iron pot, liberally coat with cooking oil, place in the oven for an hour at 300 degrees. If the oil coating is washed out over time by too much washing with soap, repeat the seasoning process. My set is going on two years with no rust there in humid Florida. An old set a former wife had was ten years old and was so conditioned you only needed to wipe out after use. Nothing stuck to its surface.

Moving on to the plastics section, get yourself some plastic storage containers if you plan on using grains and beans in your storage food program. A 40 gallon tote will hold a hell of a lot of rice and beans. There is little defense from rodents, but it will work great keeping the bugs out. Use plastic in the tote, holding small amounts of food in each container. The large tote is $13. Zip lock bags are $1 for 20 quart size or $1 for 15 gallon size. You could get a food vacuum sealer machine if you wanted to spend the money. The machine is $100, and the bags are $10 for a count of 22 in quart size. This is expensive, but it will keep your foods oh so fresh. Plus, you can seal up ammo, dried foods, meats to prolong freezer life, etc. I have had rice stored in it's original wrapper in one of these totes for a year and a half, and nothing has disturbed it. I think that if you keep your house clean enough to deny the pests a snack, they will not go exploring for goodies. The vacuum pack may be overkill, but even only using zip-locks should be sufficient protection. I have my wheat Mylar packed, but that might be overkill also. In the past loose grain in buckets was sufficient to keep the grain pest free. It is only a question of what risk you are willing to take. I use my wheat as the ultimate safeguard against starvation, so I spent a little extra to ensure it was safeguarded. If it was only a barter item or extra, I would only use the old method. Only 1/3 the cost that way. Decide for yourself. If you are replacing rice every other year it might be foolish to spend the money vacuum sealing it. If, however, that is your only food storage, I personally would double seal it and store it in a metal container to avoid both rats/mice and bugs.

For light you will need some flashlights and some kerosene lamps. I would go with three or four cheap plastic $1 lights instead of one $10 metal flashlight. That way, loss and theft is not going to cost you your one source of light. Get plenty of batteries and replace every other year. For kerosene lamps, get as many as you can at $5 each. The replacement parts are a good idea, and cheap. The glass chimney is $2, the set of replacement wicks are $1, and the whole metal wick holder (the wick tray) with wick is $2. Stock up on them. Good to own and to trade. Fuel is expensive at $3 a half gallon, but remember we are doing all our shopping at one spot. At the gas station it would run half that cost but you would have to supply your own container, so the cost is not that bad all things considered. Plus, kerosene is smelly and harsh. The fuel you are getting here is lamp oil and is more pleasing to burn. Just keep in mind that you must have ventilation. Burning any fuel consumes oxygen, a common sense fact that many a folk tend to forget when it is cold. I assume you don't want to join grandma in heaven because you both asphyxiated yourselves. "Well, Pete, it's a little embarrassing but I forgot to crack the window when I turned on the kerosene heater". If justice is to be served you then couldn't possibly be

allowed into heaven on account of gross stupidity. Grandma is senile, what would your excuse be?

Next up we have your water needs. If you were to store two gallons of water per day per person you could scrape by on drinking water plus enough for a sponge bath and a very conservative dish washing. A one month supply of water for a family of three would equal almost two hundred gallons of water. At seventy cents a gallon your cost would be $140 just for water. It would be better to halve that amount and use that as a two week emergency supply. The remainder can be stored in a water bed, the hot water tank, the bath tub (provided you had some warning) or even a small above ground pool. The point is that you can't really store all that much water in gallons. The expiration date is usually one and a half to two years, but I would rotate it annually. I would store only one gallon a day per person just for drinking needs and have a supply of disposable plates and flatware and cups. That way dishwashing is almost unneeded and you can cut back on your needs. At one gallon a day for two weeks three people will use 42 gallons and your cost is $30. Talk to a manager about buying the water from the back were it will still be in the cardboard boxes. Then you can store them easy. Ten cardboard boxes of water should present little storage problem. Use the garage if possible to reduce the likelihood of roach infestation, as they love cardboard. A different method is to take used 2 liter pop bottles, clean them, and fill with five drops of bleach and tap water. Empty and repeat annually.

To filter water not already stored you will need a supply of bleach and a bleach filter. Use coffee filters ($1 for 200) to remove particles, then add a cap full of bleach ($1 a gallon) to a gallon of water. Allow to sit at least one half hour after agitating/stirring and you should have killed all the little nasties. Then, get your Brita brand water filter ($15-$30) which is a pitcher that filters the chlorine from the water. Get several replacement inserts that cost $7 each and last for 40 gallons. You could instead purchase the rival brand which has an indicator of filter life, but expect to pay a little more. This set-up should provide safe water , but be sure to also filter your wash water to avoid contaminants.

Last on our list will be food. Breakfast will be oatmeal at $1 a pound or grits at half that cost. I think the propaganda commercials for oatmeal caused the price to shoot up with demand, but get both for variety. Milk is $2.50 a pound for dried or 50 cents a 12-oz can for evaporated. I prefer evaporated since the taste is identical to fresh, a claim the powder cannot make unless you added illicit drugs to it. Oils are great for cooking and will substitute for the near lack of animal protein in your storage diet. A gallon of cooking oil is $4, and a six pound can of Crisco is $6. Its generic equivalent is $4 for the same amount. If you want a metal storage can you will need olive oil at about $9 a gallon, but I think the health benefits of that oil come at too high a price. For baking, sugar is $2 for five pounds or $9 for a 25 lb. bag. White flour is a $1 for five pounds. I didn't notice a bigger bag, but that is quite cheap as it is. Corn meal is under $2 for five pounds so go ahead and include some for a variety of muffins, hush puppies and scrapple. A good strategy for storing flours is to clean out your old 2 liter soda bottles and when they are bone dry fill with the flour. Labor intensive but a good defense against bugs. Otherwise, place the original sack into a gallon zip-lock bag and store in a plastic tote. Do not forget

baking powder at $1 per can, salt at five pounds at a $1 and various spices at 50 cents.

Cans of soups are fifty cents each. Use them for hot meals on a cold day and for adding to recipes such as casseroles. Top Ramen is a wonderful bachelor food. Several a day will keep you alive, but I ate far too many when I was even poorer and unless starvation struck I would not touch another . They do provide variety, and they only cost 12 cents each, so buy several cases. One pack provides 200 calories and so three packs could get you by on a starvation diet for a grand total of 35 cents a day or $10 a month so it makes sense to store away at least five or six cases at $3 a case. Another plus is the fact that you can eat them uncooked on the run if you had to. An entire Top Ramen food diet of 1200 calories a day, or six packs a day, would cost you $130 for a six month supply of food. Yuch!! But, it does a place in your food storage. Add some caned veggies to keep your teeth from falling out, 40 cents a can. And folks, corn is not a vegetable. It is a grain. Do not store can corn and fool yourself into thinking you are providing a nutritious diet.

To get a little animal protein in your diet you should get the following. Chili is $1 a can. Generic Spam is also $1. This actually taste good if fried. I usually indulge in a can for breakfast. Tuna is 50 cents each. Combine with noodles for a casserole. To add any more variety you would need to spend a lot more per serving and thus I would avoid them. Try to provide at least one can per person at least every other day. Some people have metabolisms that require little meat and others need it constantly. Plan with that thought in mind. Remember the old tree hugger cry to save our food resources? Well, the thinking was that if we in the USA would stop feeding all our grain to beef and chicken we could feed the world with our grains. A wonderful concept that ignored the economics totally. The only sound part of that was the combining of grains and legumes to give a complete protein similar to animal protein. If you combine rice and soy or wheat and beans you got the needed protein. This could be a good survivalist strategy for those on a budget that gave little room to meat sources.

Baked beans are $1 for a pound and a half. Pork and beans are 33 cents each. Canned white whole potatoes are a mere 20 cents each. Bags of rice are five pounds for $1.50. Navy beans are 25 cents a pound, pinto are 33 cents a pound. A 20 pound bag of pintos are $7. If you go to the section that has the large restaurant size cans you will realize great savings. A 7 pound can of pork and beans is $2 and corn is $3 for 6 lbs. At one time those two style of cans were all I had in stock for emergency food. I felt secure they would have feed the four unit family for quite some time. At this time let me add that you should have several manual cans openers on hand at $1 each. Hard to open the rascals any other way. On to the other big cans. Cheddar cheese $7 for 6 pounds. Pineapple (for vitamin C)was $4 for 6 pounds, and ranch beans $3 for 10 pounds. I noticed peanut butter at $7 for 4 lbs. but the container was cardboard and I think it would be better to go with the smaller size in plastic. Last big can item was the instant potatoes at $3 for 28oz. Much better than paper boxes of same. Buy metal even for day to day use to discourage pests, plus the item will stay in stock due to customer demand.

Last up would be a few odds and ends for food items. White flour pasta should have quite

a long shelf life. Mac and cheese is 33 cents each, spaghetti is 50 a pound in various shapes. Get a variety. You may wish to add sauce, at 20 cents a can for paste, or $1.25 for conventional sauce. I would not attempt to store Parmesan cheese past about six months. Last on our list is the most important, coffee. You can substitute tea at $2 for 100 bags, but I fail to see how anyone could drink that muck. We should all bow down and thank the British for taxing tea to the point we all started drinking coffee. A much better brew, and I wouldn't think to not have plenty stored away. A small metal can is $1.75 for 12 oz and a large can of two and a half lb. is $5. As a personal note it should be added that the one ex-wife that didn't like coffee was the one who screwed me over the most. Therefore it should stand to reason that anyone who doesn't like coffee is basically a communist. Chinese and Russians drink tea. Doesn't that prove my point? Ice tea is allowed, however. Don't ask me why, it just does.

I was going to add up all the following items and give you a price, but I realize it would be silly to do so. Everyone will pick and choose and not get the same items. Some will get the cheapest firearms and only one month food supply, another will max out on everything and spend thousands. Food can be based on 3000 calories a day per person or only 800. See what I mean? Also, keep in mind that all I thought of as survival needs might not be agreeable to you. You might think kerosene lamps are dangerous, smelly and expensive. Perhaps you feel only batteries are needed for light. I gathered all I thought would be needed and presented them in this pamphlet. I trust it will help you in your quest for supplies.

END

THE FRUGAL SURVIVALIST, preparations under $500
by James M Dakin
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The modern survivalist is severely handicapped financially if conventional wisdom is followed. Not only does every task call for thousands of dollars in equipment and preparation, but the list of absolutely critical needs is never ending. When I was first attempting to begin my preparations, I was discouraged from even beginning such was the staggering projected cost. Let me give a few examples.

A second home in the country with a fortified building, large scale agricultural abilities, alternate energy, an arsenal for the entire family, freeze dried food for five years for each family member, everything needed for your average self sufficient homestead. Then you needed a four wheel drive to escape the city to your homestead. You needed a lot of toys to survive.

It took me years of digging to discover that you do not need very much at all to be prepared to survive. Remember, this was pre-Internet days. It took money and time to discover options to your typical solution of spending your way out of a problem. I spent a lot of money on books and magazines just to discover I could save lots of money.

The plain truth is that instead of spending $100,000 for survival preparations, you can get by with a mere $500. Yes, there will be a world of difference in your level of comfort in the aftermath of a disaster, but the point is that the majority of the population is unable to spend the amount we are talking about here. Frugal preparations that are realistic are going to help a lot more than expensive fantasies.

To ramble for a bit; almost out of high school I was introduced to survivalism by an adult acquaintance. Soon after I entered the military were I was taught the evils of communism and the joys of eliminating the practitioners of same. Along with plenty of free time, I was also blessed with post-Vietnam generosity of an all volunteer well paid military. This not only allowed me to get drunk every night, but also to buy all the books and magazines I wanted. Almost all were devoted to my newly found love of survivalism.

Unfortunately, most were promptly forgettable and all harped on the same theme. The poor not need apply to survive. It was almost as if all these authors did not wish the great unwashed to sit at their sides while they ruled the new world order.

Well, let me tell you-that really pissed me off. I was just as qualified to exploit my fellow man after the apocalypse. Damn upper middle class yuppie scum thought they were the new better class of humans. Not in America fella. No class system here. Not as long as we are all armed.

Eventually, I got my act together and slowly but surely came up with a system of very cheap preparation. Now, of course we are talking about a very basic level of survival. The peek out of your lean-to at a smoldering fire heating your gruel as you count the remaining .22 rounds in your pocket and whittle a punji stick with your Wal-Mart $25 imitation buck knife made in China by slave labor even though at the time you could give two craps as your own $6 an hour job didn't have much more going for it level of survival. As opposed to the peek out of your fortified bunker in a fresh pair of clean cammies munching on an MRE and warmed briskly by your kerosene heater fed by one of many 55 gallon drums as you fondly caress your $2000 German made 308 assault rifle complete with quick release scope and side-by-side thirty round mags fed from your personal stockpile of a quarter of a million rounds of ammunition (and that's not counting .22s).

I know which level of survival preparations I would prefer. I also know which I can afford. So do you, fellow poor bastard.

FOOD

Stuffing your pie-hole is a pleasurable experience most of us try not to miss. I know I dearly enjoy stuffing myself to capacity after a hard days work. Yet, even on a day to day basis in this near as close to perfect as possible world food does not always meet our expectations. We are either eating crap on the run, skipping meals or even cutting back on the food budget to meet other bills. In light of our currant practice of eating, why does anyone imagine that it is necessary to spend $2000 per person per year to stock up on freeze dried foods (and that is the budget plan with wheat providing the bulk of calories). Plus, half the garbage they include on the menu I wouldn't eat anyway.

Then there are MREs. The darling of Y2K, MREs are as nasty as C-rations with the only benefit being less weight. If you think MREs are so groovy, eat two a day for a week. Then try to go take a crap. After days of agony from bloating, you can experience an anal stretching exercise that will win prizes. A few might be good for a bug out kit, but don't make a diet out of them.

The only way you are going to provide a stockpile of food on a budget is to stock up on grains and legumes. The cheapest is wheat, with the added benefit that it is also the longest lasting. There are claims that most grains other than rice will last indefinitely, but only wheat has a proven track record. Wheat from Egypt pyramids has been sprouted after 2000 years. Of course you are going to want to stock up on more than just wheat, to provide variety. If you have extra money. That is provided for later. Now we are concerned with the absolute bare minimum. And that is wheat. The staff of life. Yummy.

The general rule of thumb is one pound of wheat a day per person if no other food is

available. Add in a little extra for sprouting to provide green matter in your diet and round it out to four hundred pounds of wheat for a year of food. The cost of wheat varies around the nation, so 400 pounds will run from a minimum of $40 and a max of about $80. My average has been about $60 in the mid-west. Get your grain at a feed store, not at a grocery or health food store. Be sure to specify that it is untreated and fit for human consumption. The worm treated will be colored.

To provide a safe home for your food, purchase used and cleaned five gallon plastic buckets with lids at bakeries, restaurants and donut shops. My biggest score was a BBQ joint were I got two hundred cleaned potato salad buckets for $1 each. My ton and a half of Y2K preparations (ex-wife fodder, the cow needed every calorie).

Each bucket will hold about thirty pounds of wheat, so get 13 or 14 per 400 pounds. If $1 each figure that a year supply of wheat is $75. Dirt cheap. Do not use dry ice to create a nitrogen atmosphere. Condensation will form. Hello, mold. I have just dumped in wheat and sealed buckets and after five years of storage have had no infestation. This was in the dry climate of the west, so even though there were wide variances in temperature, there was no humidity to deal with. When I moved to Florida I bought factory sealed product at three times the price, but I felt I couldn't afford to test at the late stage of Y2K preparations. Damn that event for not occurring. I was totally psyched for it.

Now you can buy the empty Mylar bags to put your wheat in, so even without nitrogen packing that should provide an extra layer of protection. Years before this I had used cleaned out cola syrup bags as the same thing, but if have $5 each to spare, buy the factory bags. To do it yourself, go to restaurants, convenience stores and the like and see if you can't scavenge the empty cola Mylar containers (Mylar bag in cardboard box). Cut out the spout, fill with hot soapy water, clean, turn in side out to dry, fill with wheat, stuff in bucket, squeeze out air and seal opening with an iron. Free Mylar enclosure of your wheat.

Now, unless you plan on consuming all of your wheat in a boiled mush, you need to get a grain grinder. The newer light weight "high-tech" models are perfect for chewing up their small plastic washers. Go with the original and the best, the Corona. Made in Mexico, this cast iron monster was around for the hippies to grind up their own bread, and I found it to be the best even today. Also as a bonus surprise it is the cheapest. Few parts and solid. My only recommendation.

Spend about $50 and you will have a lifetime of grain grinding. Add to your $75 wheat in buckets and you have only spent $125 for a year supply of food.

Cooking is not a big issue. Hand make, don't buy, a solar oven. Use a Dutch oven and a campfire or even get a bigger tank for your currant propane stove. I don't add the cost of cooking into the basic equation because you most likely all ready have all needed materials for day to day use.

WATER

The most important thing to remember about water is that every single drop can kill you. If you would like to spend three days projecting fluids from most orifices until you

die, then by all means don't prepare a safe water supply. If you wish to survive after every cup of water you drink, after each tooth brushing, every shower, or every washed dish, you must treat all water. A sufficient fuel supply will provide boiled water. Otherwise, treat each gallon with 15 drops of bleach. This method is not the best long term, but a quality filter is $250. Not in our price range.

Bleach is available at the nearest dollar store for seventy five cents a gallon. This is also the best place to purchase because of constant turn-over. At the grocery store the $1.25 bleach will sit on the shelf for a longer time. A better substitute than bleach is calcium hypochlorite. This is pool cleaner and is better than bleach for the simple fact that liquid bleach over a period of time will degenerate into an unusable substance.

Take one heaping teaspoon in two gallons of water. This is your chlorine "stock". Use the stock as your disinfectant. Take one pint stock and add to 13 gallons of water. Do not add more, unless you entertain yourself by taking poison. Remember that many things are good in small doses but deadly in large.

A good compromise between an expensive filter and just plain old bleach is a unit that uses bleach to start and then uses a weak filter in a final stage of filtration. The unit is merely two five gallon buckets with a small filter between them. In a separate bucket you use bleach to kill the microbes, then the unit to get particles and remove the bleach. They claim you can take swamp water and treat it with this unit. Most business has been to religious types going to Africa to do good deeds. Write to Eagle Spring Filtration Inc Holly Hill FL . 1-800-881-7620. If I remember correctly I paid $50 for one, for a maximum life of 1800 gallons. Not a bad deal.

Perhaps you can achieve the same results treating with bleach after running through a mesh strainer for debris removal then filtering through one of those kitchen water filters. The types that remove chemicals from tap water. You might look into it, I'm not sure of the price differences.

Let's say you elect for an eagle spring unit at $50 and 15 gallons of bleach at $10. Your $60 added to the $125 in food equals $185, leaving plenty of your $500 left. Anyone that has ever tried to make their bills on $500 will disagree on the vastness of this sum, but as you are seeing it will buy quite a bit in terms of bare bones survival equipment.

Now to the best part, for most of us, the weapons section.

WEAPONS

I think one of the major attractions to survivalism or perhaps one of the reasons most discover the field by accident is firearms. We all love to shoot, for various reasons, and without shooting, survivalism would be a rather boring romp in the woods looking for bunny food to eat. Be certain that I own quite a few firearms, but none are expensive and all pertain to survival. Yet, I know I could get by with just one. One is all most of us can afford, and for our purposes here, one is all you are allowed to get. I have acquired many guns over the years, most are gone, but any extra gun I buy I know is just a toy. Any over one basic working gun is a waste, so only waste if you can afford your boy toys.

You have your choice of two basic weapons, the rifle or the shotgun. For now we are going to arbitrarily set your limit to $100. At that price you can buy a brand new single

shot shotgun at Wal-Mart for $80-$90 or a war surplus bolt action rifle for $75-$100. The shotgun is of new manufacture and dependable, but limited in range. Also, the limited ammunition capacity, while great for simplicity, is bad for combat situations. The bolt action rifles were originally designed for combat and thus are robust, yet they are fifty years old and shoot obsolete cartridges.

If you are in a thick wooded terrain or an urban area, the shotgun might work for you. Yet what if you were to bug out to a more open area. Oops. Better to be over powered in case you need it. The bolt action is limited by your constant need to conserve ammunition. I would not consider this an option unless you plan on reloading, a $50 add-on expense.

I have given you a choice of a limited range, one round shotgun or an out of date bolt gun firing obsolete rounds and limited in it's accuracy. You can get around these obstacles in a couple of ways. One is to go with a .22. This still has the range problem, with the added problem of less than desired lethal impact. You don't have ammo supply problem, however. You can carry 1000 rounds with no problem. Any pawn shop that deals in firearms will carry several .22 rifles for$75 and up. If you get a tube fed magazine, you most likely will need to replace the spring. Look in gun parts company catalogs. I do not recommend the .22 for other than varmint hunting and perhaps harassment, but if that is what you desire as far as trade-offs, go for it.

No survival weapon you can afford on a budget is going to be close to perfect. You are going to be faced with serious trade-offs. If you have an unlimited budget you should get a HK 91 semi auto 308 with quick detach scope mount, a scope that costs more than the gun, tens of thousands of rounds of ammo, thirty to fifty 20 round magazines and several complete spare part kits. Or, if that $5,000 burning a hole in your pocket is just got to be sent, mail it my way. Who wants to eat wheat for a year? Who wouldn't rather have an AK47 spewing fiery death? We can not afford modern weapons of a semi-auto nature. We are reluctantly politically correct only because of finances.

My choice has been to stockpile the Lee- Enfield SMLE and its 303 ammo. I have several #4s, the WWII model. My thinking is that it is cheaper to stock the complete rifle for spare parts, rather than from a parts company. To my way of thinking, this is one of the overlooked problems-breakage of that one pretty assault rifle. It was best summed up in the Robin Williams movie The Survivors when a stray bullet smashes his rifle. He yells out something to the effect "you shot my gun. Do you know how much these things cost?" If for some reason in a survival situation you mess up your rifle you had better have a replacement. How many people with an expensive M16 have a replacement rifle? At $1000 a pop, I'll bet close to none. I'd rather have several less modern rifles.

With a bolt gun, you have a choice basically of a British Lee-Enfield or a German Mauser. Many other countries produced Mausers, beware of the lesser quality ones. The British guns hold ten rounds instead of the Mauser five. The Mauser action is much gentler on ammunition cases, a major concern for reloading. The Enfield has a much faster, smoother bolt. The Mauser doesn't use rimmed ammo, a potential problem in the Enfield for reliable feeding from the magazine. Each has its good and bad points.

To round out your arsenal, add in your boxes of ammunition. If you give your gun/ammo budget $150, and your rifle was $75 you should be able to get at least 100 rounds of ammo. This is actually quite a bit for a bolt action rifle, as the waste of semi-

auto is eliminated. I recommended a reloading unit and think it necessary, so resist the temptation of spending the reloader money on more ammo.

Lee Precision is on the Web and you can order online, mail order, or go through your local gun shop. Their portable all-in-one unit is half the size of a paperback book and cost $25. The bullet mold is the size of an overly large toothpaste tube box, also costing $25. Instructions come with the units. Your total cost for weapons, ammunition and reloading equipment is $200. You will need more, but as a bare bones kit, that's going to do it. Including primers and powder might be doable if you use moderation, but most likely you will need to cannibalize from other found/captured rounds. This is a dangerous practice and requires some research, but a useful skill to have in the worst case scenario.

$200 for your weapons, $180 for your food and water. Add a good knife, covered below, and you are at about $400-$425. The extra accounts for taxes, shipping charges and local variances in price. You can do the whole thing for a little more or less, but more on that later.

Go to Wal-Mart for your knife. Why do you want to pay for a hand crafted knife? Sure, there might be bragging rights involved, but you are poor, so how much do you have to brag about? Spending three times the cost of a factory knife is silly. Go with the mass produced item. Just avoid the $10 at a flea market made in Pakistan Bowie imitation. Good for trading perhaps, not great for personal use.

Spend $20-$40 on a good straight blade with decent scabbard. Avoid the pretty ones that feature a slick handle tapering down to the blade. You need a hand guard. You will be mighty embarrassed when you are gutting an enemy and your bloodied hand slips and you cut yourself on your own knife. What are you going to tell the guys? You need a good combat/camping knife, not a pretty boy knife.

Now go over to the camping section and look at the peg board with the clear bags hanging from green paper labels. They contain nifty items such as salt/pepper holder, snake bite kit, Mylar blankets and plastic egg holders. You want what I believe are called butterfly sharpeners. Two golden metal wings (for gripping) are attached to a V shape that is from some type of material so strong you can see little shavings of your knife peel off as you draw your knife through this sharpener. Sure, you can get a traditional stone for sharpening, but why? This $4 or $5 sharpener is the best on the market, as far as I am concerned. And I have tried just about every device made to sharpen your blade.

SHELTER

Like cooking equipment, everyday items that you already have should do just fine for shelter. If you must, throw in several Mylar blankets, some tarps and a cheap tent for about thirty bucks. It all depends on weather you wish to be mobile or not. If you believe mobility is the key, than you can do without the wheat and grinder, replacing them with about a months supply of camping food and other camping items. I don't think this approach is the best, but I will cover it in another pamphlet, as I can see the need for this action under certain circumstances. If you are not mobile, then several Mylar blankets and some tarps are all that is needed., besides the roof already over your head.

In the event of cold weather, you should construct a small sleeping frame with Mylar. About as big as a small bed, with some room to sit up. A small candle, along with

ventilation for it, inside will provide heat, along the principle of an igloo, and a cheap sleeping bag should be all that's needed. Use this shelter for tasks needing warm hands, such as patching cloths or reloading (yes, away from the candle, dumbass). This is much simpler than trying to heat the whole apartment/house. Nothing like some wood smoke to attract the looters.

Dress in layers, cheaper than buying synthetic material. Keep your feet dry, wear the wetsuit type gloves, your winter needs should be met. I used to work at the full serve gas pumps up in the mountains in winter. I had experience in prolonged cold exposure to the my poor suffering hands and feet. Feet were kept dry and warm with cheap imitation Sorrels. Again, Wal-mart, $20 for the Korean knock-offs. Get two pairs, as the boot is useless once you slash the rubber. And those nifty gloves, $12 a pair. No, this is not part of your survival stash, this is something you need every day. Don't be like everyone else and wear thin cloths then run from a warm car to a warm house/office. What if the power goes off or your car breaks. Always wear cloths in the winter that will work in an emergency.

EXTRAS

As you can see there is actually very little that you are going to need in this plan. Some wheat in buckets, a grinder, filter, gun and ammo. You will only need one corner of a small closet to put it all in. If you are like the rest of us you have almost no extra money for such things as survival supplies. That is why I strongly believe that this is a good plan. It lets everybody get the bare bones basic kit. Once you have this kit, if you wish to continue to add to it you will significantly add to your comfort/survivability factor. This section covers what you might wish to add.

My first addition would be a supply of primers and powder for reloading. $15-$20 for 1000 primers and $10-$15 for a pound of powder. You can get jacketed bullets, about $15 per hundred and even brass, but the bullet mold and initial 100 rounds of ammo should negate this need. I realize that pure lead bullets are not a good thing for the barrel of your rifle, but we are still dealing with a want, and not a need. My point here is that for about $40 you will multiply your ammo supply several times. Don't get too damn fancy about it.

How about a little protein in your diet? Wheat can be served in a variety of ways, but like all good Americans (as opposed to Communist tree huggers) meat is a necessity. I tried a lacto-vegetarian diet for a few weeks once upon a time in my "healthy" period. My stepmother, who was a nurse, was curious and ran a blood test on me. The doctor said he was surprised I was still alive. Something about a very low cell count. Not a very scientific method, but I was sold. Fire up the grill, we're having steaks tonight.

Ah, animal protein. Yummie. Most affordable storage protein is not so tasty, but meat is meat in a pinch. Forget that freeze dried soy bean turned burger crap. Go with canned goods. They are cheap, available in small quantities and are in your local store. Contrary to claims from people who wish to sell you freeze dried mystery meat at about $50 a pound, canned food will last forever. True, you loose vitamin content, but the calories/protein content is still there. Don't be an idiot and store canned green beans. In a few years the vitamin content is shot. Use fresh sprouted wheat for your vegetables.

Cans are for meats, treats and variety. Then you don't have to worry about shelf life.

Remember, you are stationary (the 400 pounds of wheat are a dead giveaway) so the weight of canned goods is not a factor. My plan is for $1 a day for protein. This is basically two cans of tuna or a can of generic Spam. The calories come from the wheat. The cans are strictly for protein. I imagine that if you put $5 a week aside for storage cans it will accumulate faster than you imagined. Some people put $10 aside a week regardless of their check amount. The fund gets paid first. Out of that they slowly but surely obtain a stockpile. A brick of .22 ammo, a bag of rice, a huge size of pork and beans. It all adds up quick. Look for sales. Wal-Mart recently had a huge display of fake Spam for fifty cents, instead of the usual buck. Score.

After canned goods, consider fuel and cooking items. A gasoline cook stove at Wal-Mart is $40. Get some gas preservative (try the auto shops before mail order, it might be cheaper) and some gas cans. Ten to twenty gallons treated to last for years would go a long way in that stove. Total about $75 for cooking. Get cast iron if you plan on using a camp fire. Great stuff.

An area not to be overlooked is information. Books are expensive but worth it. Look through Mother Earth News and Backwoods Home magazines. You are going to want books on self-sufficiency. How to plant and grow crops without artificial fertilizers or pesticides, alternate energy, producing your own methane gas, butchering, livestock care, companion crops, high intensity gardening and on and on. Look through some gun books or on the Internet and find out what is available as far as reloading, gun smithing, etc. books. Stay away from the Paladin/Loompanics type books such as "Build a nuclear bomb out of flour and moldy potatoes in five minutes". If you want to learn about home built explosives, go to community collage classes or read books on chemistry. It is one thing to try to create napalm from gas and foam cups, another to create C-4. Unless you know the science, don't attempt to do it. (To keep the record straight, I think Loompanics is a fine company that I have patronized for almost twenty years. Nowadays they have close to zero of the crap books. Paladin is honest but on the sly side of creative packaging. They send your order but you get a very padded book, full of crap surrounding a few nuggets of information. You can order from them in confidence, just be careful what you order.)

Kerosene lamps and oil. Whenever you have a spare $5 get a lamp at any discount or grocery store. Wal-Mart sells replacement wicks. Three or four lamps, half dozen wicks. Try to avoid the store bought lamp oil and find a local dealer that sells bulk kerosene. Much cheaper. Also go to the dollar stores where you can get three for $1 candles. Stock up on those, and between lamps and candles you are good to go in the lighting department.

I'm sure that once you put your mind to it that you will be able to spend money like crazy on survival supplies. Just be sure to go with the cheapest solution, not the easiest and most costly. If after reading how to do food, water, defense, lighting and cooking as inexpensively as possible you are unable to generate ideas on your own in other areas, write me and I will be happy to help you out. E-mail is okay, but no faster than snail mail. I only go online every few days. If writing postal, send a stamp so I can reply.

LESS

It is easy to spend more than $500 on survival preparations, but how about spending less? Well, of course you can spend a lot less. Actually, you need only spend about half that amount. You are really going to be pushing things, but it can be done.

There is really no good substitute for a grain grinder, but if you have a sausage/meat grinder, or know someone who has one, try a small amount of grain (small amounts are available at a health food store) in it and see if that grinder will at least crack the grain enough that you will be able to boil into a cereal. I have never tried this, nor do I remember the cost, though $20 seems to ring a bell. Maybe this will work for you. One option is to buy a grain grinder, then whatever wheat you can with buckets up to $100 worth. It will not be a years worth, but close.

Other food options are to forgo wheat altogether and go with other foods. One period in which I was so poor I could hardly eat everyday, I visited Wal-Mart every week and bought either two seven pound cans of pork and beans or one of those and a can of corn. The corn was about a buck more so that was every third week. The total cost was $5 or $6 each time. The power went out, I figured I had at least a month worth of eating cold beans from a can. Figure about three months eating for $100. Not as good as wheat, but there is no cooking involved.

Another food option is rice and dry beans. Zip-Lock bags will keep pests out. This requires cooking but is far cheaper. Nothing is cheaper than wheat, but if you wish to avoid buying a grinder there are alternatives. Buying at the grocery also means you can buy over a period of time for only a few bucks. Just remember, wheat is $5 a fifty pound bag and the buckets are $1, so you can buy a little at a time also. Yes, I keep harping on wheat. You cannot beat that deal.

You can do without a water filter. For a long time I only had a dozen gallons of bleach. I considered a filter to be a luxury. Just keep in mind that bleach is harmful over a long period of time. A month, fine. Years? Well, you be the judge. It is your body. Better to use bleach if you are unable to boil or filter. You simply cannot take the chance of water borne infections. Try to at least get a grocery store chlorine removal filter. $20 for that and a replacement element.

Wheat and a grinder, $100. Bleach and an inexpensive filter, $25. Total cost is $125. At half cost of the conventional plan you have $250 to use, which leaves another $125. This is for guns and ammo. Ask yourself what you feel most likely to happen. Civil unrest or natural disasters would easily be handled with a shotgun. A single shot at a discount store and ammo would run $100. The end of civilization would call for the cheapest ammunition, so a used .22 at a pawn shop and 3,000 rounds of ammo would be $100. If you plan on some combat, you should go with a surplus bolt action with surplus ammo (surplus is usually corrosive, so in less demand and cheaper. In one instance I bought a Lee Enfield for $75 and 250 rounds of surplus for $50. Not the best, but cheap as I could make it at the time).

Check the Shotgun News web site. They have a listing of FFL holders you can deal with, usually on a 10/15% after cost basis. Go to your local dealer and see what he can order. I've seen some of the old Russian surplus going for $39. With cheap ammo for this you can hit the under $100 mark. Just don't expect much, like accuracy. This would be best used as a keep their heads down until I can peg one of the bastards by mistake and

take his superior weapon.

Even if you spent a little more on a weapon and bought better than the bottom of the barrel, getting a better grade surplus bolt and modern ammo with reloading equipment, you should still be able to spend only $300 if you cut the corners. I cannot imagine how anyone would not be able to afford this if they were seriously motivated. I only bring home $7000 a year and support myself and girlfriend. I own my own trailer, and am only $1000 in debt, and that is for the computer, not any survival supplies. When I started years ago (minimum wage being $3.35) I did even better, putting aside half my take home pay for playing and preparations. It is as easy as can be. Buy the minimum and always think before you buy. Do you really need it?

FINANCING

Let's say that you are normal, married with kids and your ball and chain won't let you spend a damn dime of your own money because she is busy as hell spending it as fast as possible. Not that she is necessarily evil, just that she is like most people and confuse wants with need. She does not want nice cloths for work, she needs them. That phantom promotion might depend on it. You do not want that thirty grand SUV, you need it for survivability in a wreak. Okay, whatever. At this point I am not going to try to change your lifestyle, I'm just trying to squeeze another $500 from it.

Perhaps you are one of the few female survivalists and your hubby needs all the extra money for beer. Or you are trapped by bills with your mortgage/car/cards etc. Or you never went to school and do work minimum wage, probably forever. How about you are retired, have only Social Security and are just now learning that things can indeed turn to shit in a hurry.

Here is a radical concept. Save some damn money. See, that was easy.

Or, just go ahead and charge up another $500 on the credit cards. A little more can't possibly hurt at this point.

Get a second job for one or two months. The only thing you will miss is a little extra TV.

Sell a worthless boy toy, such as the boat or 50 inch TV.

Why should I even have to write this section? It could not be simpler. JUST DO IT.

END

DEFENSIVE POVERTY

by James M Dakin
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There is a saying in Chinese about the wisdom of hiding your wealth from the tax man. Of course it is flowery and sounds much better when quoted correctly, but that is the gist of it. And it is sound advice. Most Americans are still deluded by their high school civics propaganda and assume that our system of government and justice is the best in the world and that all is fair and good in their world. So, they happily go along and pay outrageous property taxes or vehicle registrations or other taxes on their wealth. "Oh, our wonderful leaders love us. We are taxed less than Europeans, our taxes are just, my head is up my ass. And, it IS for the children after all."

Let me tell you something. Comparing our tax rate to Europe is the same as comparing the death toll of Hitler and Stalin. One only killed seven million, the other over thirty mill. If you were one of those unfortunate, it doesn't matter who killed more, you are still dead. So, if the socialist government of any European nation taxes at 60% , and the US only taxes at 40%, you are still screwed out of a higher standard of living. Why can't people realize that it is their money that is being stolen. You only have a certain number of years on this earth, and any time spend in labor is your time that you can't replace. Once you use it, it is gone forever. Taxes are a roundabout way that the dominate protection racket steals part of your life. Follow the logic, not the propaganda. You have X amount of time to live. You sell Y amount of that time as labor on the job market to live and prosper. If government takes away from your compensation for your time (measured in money) than in effect it is stealing time from you, the one commodity that is truly non-renewable. Taxation is literally killing you early.

If theft is eating away your buying power, why would you want to make it easier for the thief to extract his plunder? It is bad enough that most Americans put up with a tax rate that would have instantly dropped our founding fathers in their tracks dead from a heart

attack. It is even worse when they gladly pay it. That ½ percent increase in the sales tax to build a few new schools will do nothing to advance your children education regardless of the propaganda to the contrary. If our great grandfathers received a better education in a one room multi-grade schoolhouse than our child does in a multi-million dollar school building, it is because the quality of teaching was better, not because of the location of that teaching. You may think a half cent is chump change but it is added to an already too high tax rate. The most liberal computation of all hidden and direct taxes comes to at least 50% of our income. My personal feeling is that it is closer to 75%, but the first figure can surely be agreed upon by most, even those championing big daddy government. Half our income is a worse tax than Middle Ages serfs who were taxed at only 25%. It has been estimated that Southern slaves gave back only 20% after payback and upkeep costs. How can we settle for 50% when the Revolution was fought for far less?

However, it is quite apparent that revolution will not be seen for some time. Most of our pay is stolen, our Constitution is in shreds long before the War on Drugs, we moan and bitch after each royal screwing, but continue to put up with such a degrading and demeaning existence. I am to blame as much as you are, we are all wimpy, heartless, un-American Federal serfs. As much as it sucks to be us, we go along with it since we know that no one is going to stand by our side and fight, and a lonesome death that accomplishes nothing is pointless. With the majority of us greedily sucking at the public teat, there is nothing that will be done to uproot the system, and even as it pains me to admit it, it has been a fine job of subjugation. Where else has the public so easily been subdued by gaudy trinkets since the savages at Manhattan were bought out at fire sale prices. Just like us, the Indians thought they had gotten the better end of the deal and walked away happily. We happily walk away each payday with 75% of our pay, get in our cars that are half taxes, drive on shoddy highways paid for at inflated prices, go home to our houses inflated by government sanctioned union wages, built with lumber sold at inflated prices due to Federal land closures, and paid for by interest rates kept artificially high by Federal borrowing. We go down to Best Buy and purchase the only thing going down in price, consumer electronics, and congratulate ourselves on how wonderful our lives are since we can upgrade to a bigger TV screen at a cheaper price every few years. Bread and circuses, baby.

But, getting back to hiding your wealth. I am not advocating that we all drop our regular jobs and go around selling flea market type goods from our car trunks. Black market wages are great if you can get them, but hard to come by. And I sure as hell don't want to read and follow advice on the subject from books by Paladin Press. If the author can live off the black market, why is he writing a book on it and getting a taxable check from the loyalties? And forget about all those fancy sounding legal arguments to end your taxes. You know, the "only DC residents must pay taxes, only military bases are federal property, renounce your federal citizenship and become a state citizen, get an international drivers license, how to legally quit social security" scam. I am sure there are many out right scams of this sort and just as many good intentioned persons trying to help others by researching for these "loopholes" but the plain fact of the matter is that the government is in charge, they can make the rules, break the rules, change the rules and ignore the rules.

They are the ones who made the game, write and rewrite the rule book, and they will take their ball and go home if you piss them off. The system protects itself, don't think you can change it.

You will pay taxes. Period. If you make a lot of money you can afford an accountant to minimize your taxes. If you earn a pittance and restrict your bad habits you will minimize your taxes. If you are middle class you will get screwed, blued and tattooed. The middle class by and large supports the lower class welfare pukes. At 90% taxes the well off segment of society still would not be able to provide enough taxes to keep things moving, and if you squeeze the poor too much they join the welfare ranks. So, the middle class is left to pick up the tab. Now, there is nothing wrong with being middle class. What I will argue is that it is better financially to be poor, or if middle class, live poor. Either way you will minimize the screwing you will inevitably get. It is the difference between getting bent over and shafted with no KY jelly and no kiss, with a handful of sand thrown in and getting lube and a slight bit of affection. Either way you have been violated, but one is less painful than another.

It is not going to be easy to avoid all the hidden taxes that clutter our market system. The reason that they are so successful is because they are well hidden. You may think that you are quite slick and avoid most taxes by having a certain angle. Perhaps by only buying mail order you don't pay sales tax. Or you can get a back yard mechanic to fix your car and you avoid the service fee tax. Or you rent out a room and get money not taxed. With sales tax, even if the mail order company charges a lower price to compensate for shipping charges, you are still paying taxes to the state the company is in. You just can't tell because they are hidden in the cost of the product. Even if you get certain services performed by grey market workers, you still pay taxes on the parts they provide. Or, if you want to really nit pick, their cost of living is still determined by taxes so the cost of their services are inflated indirectly. If you receive money that is not taxed by the Feds you may avoid that 25% shaft, but you will end up paying up to 50% more for every product you buy with that money in hidden and indirect taxes. One way or another Big Daddy gets the lions share of your money.

The only way to minimize financing this hideous beast is to do one or two things. One is to earn very little money. The other is to spend very little. You can do one or both. This is the only guaranteed way to minimize the tax bite. Any other method or scam will more than likely get you busted. By being poor or by being anti-materialistic, you will have the satisfaction of denying the government all but the minimal money. This alone would be well worth it, but what if you are like most people and could give two craps about what your taxes are, as long as you can enjoy life and the fruits of your labor?

This is a god point. The amount of taxes is an abstract concept only concerning those that are offended by the principle involved. If you have enough left over after taxes, and you can afford most of the toys you crave, why be concerned? The short answer is, you have no reason to let it concern you. The long answer is, there is far more to worry about than the taxes you pay. You must worry about the envy of others and their efforts to steal

from you by fraud or by government sanction. You must worry about recession, the state of the economy, the position of the dollar in world financial markets. Local politics impact your possessions and position. Federal politics do the same on a larger scale. Foreign affairs factor in, as do military actions. Lets face it, if you have any wealth at all you must be constantly on guard to protect it. And, on the flip side, lack of money can endanger you if politics turn against you. The old saying that in America you receive as much justice as you can afford has more than a grain of truth in it. Let me go over the many reasons why your wealth is in danger.

Envy is rampant at the best of times. In an economic downturn it could get you killed. For instance, I attempt to be tolerant to others and ask only that they leave me the hell alone. However, there are times such as when a prissy cell phone talking bimbo blonde yuppie scum SUV driving soccer mom cuts me off on the road that I really get to thinking evil thoughts towards the economically advantaged. How dare that pampered bitch be in such a hurry that she can't wait four extra seconds for me to pass by, when I have the right of way, and has to accelerate to cut me off! I'm pouring a gallon of sweat per second as she sits on her growing ass in the A/C and is worried I'm going to hold her up and perhaps waste some of her precious time. This is America, ho. I should bust a cap in your sorry ass! And how dare she have so much friggin money she can own a SUV, get her hair done weekly, live in a $250,000 house and have broadband Internet access. Her only contribution to society is a great set of jugs. See what I mean about envy? Even those of us content with their economic station in life can at times be jealous of others wealth. Now, imagine what other people think who are not happy with theirs. They are not only jealous, they will do something about it.

History is full of examples of those in the lower economic classes taking what they wanted from the well to do. Crime of course is the most direct and quick form of wealth redistribution, but there is also redistribution through government action. This is a favorite as it is not only legal it is safe and last a lot longer. With outright theft you are instantly gratified but the effect last only as long as your ill gotten gains. With the government on your side, the skies the limit and the plunder will last as long as the system last. And, obviously you are not concerned with preserving the system since you are so short sighted and greedy that only the short term matters to you and you are good only for living off the labor of others and not for producing wealth. Let us count the ways.

The welfare scum are the most obvious leaches in society. They are paid from your pocket not to work, and given incentives to produce offspring who will grow up to perpetuate the system. Started as a means to help the truly unfortunate, it was later used to buy off the militant minorities and has today turned into an outright handout to the lazy and worthless. These people are actually raised believing it is their right to receive government aid. Then there are union workers. Started as a means to curb company abuse and unsafe working conditions, it quickly turned into a means of working less and less for more and more. One reason not much more is made in the USA. Let us not forget civil servants. Getting one of these jobs is like winning the Lotto. You were trained in college on a government loan, work a job that is worthless in value and are paid

damn good to produce nothing. The preferred way for the poor to be on welfare without actually thinking that they are. Last but not least we have government sanctioned jobs. While technically in the private sector, these jobs would not exist without government assistance. The Post Office. Defense contractors. Anyone requiring a license such as taxi drivers, doctors, lawyers, barbers and the like. They are not supported by government, but the government interference in their practicing a trade assures little competition and higher rates. For instance, a license requirement for a sidewalk vendor assures that an upstart selling cheaper can't steal your customers. The government artificially keeps your wages up.

Government sanctioned wealth redistribution is the preferred means of theft when economic times are good. When they are not so good, brut force is also used. Think car jacking and riots. Therefore, you have a duel problem. On one hand Uncle Sugar is reaching into your wallet for your contribution, while on the other the dregs of society can't wait till the end of the month and need crack cash now. This is were you must realize that you are on your own and protect yourself. Living in a state that does not legally recognize the average citizens God given right to protect himself is not a real good idea. The areas so socialist in their thinking that they grant a protection monopoly to cops is not a fit home for you and your family. Move out of any state that does not have liberal concealed carry laws. Even if you don't carry, the mere existence of these laws seems to have the effect of giving criminals pause.

However, the best deterrent to theft is lack of wealth. Obviously I do not consider poverty a good thing, but rather the appearance of poverty. If it looks like you only own a few measly items it is unlikely that you will be bothered. This is central to your efforts at keeping your belongings. And, of course a suitable level of force will further drive home the futility of theft. A casual acquaintance of mine had a neighbor at one time in the bad section of town. The story goes that this gentleman was an avid hunter and had no problem with loading up his truck with guns and gear under the watchful eye of the local busy-bodies. Word quickly got around that this crazy cracker was armed and dangerous and he experienced no problems during his stay. You can achieve a similar effect by flaunting your concealed weapon while home, perhaps by washing the car in a T-shirt that is tight enough to show the pistol outline or some such subtle showmanship.

The central theme here is lack of obvious wealth and armed deterrent. Armed and dangerous should be easy to accomplish. Hiding your wealth should also be easy. Number one you will more than likely not own a house, probably not a car, and very little of anything else. If you are playing poor, or if you choose to live on very little and so are actually poor, a house is obviously not going to portray this image. What you need is a mobile home or travel trailer is used mode only. At this point you will be living amongst others in a state of poverty or at least reduced means. Now it will really take some thought to convince the neighbors you are not a suitable candidate for wealth redistribution. The best thing to do is not own a car. The poorest crack head ghetto dweller usually has a car, and the only members of our society that don't are recent immigrants, the infirm elderly and the truly poor. Not owning a car is a sure sign you are

social dog meat. I embellish slightly. There are plenty of people who are car-less for different reasons. The point is that the image of society is all but the worthless own a vehicle. This common prejudice will allow you to hide your wealth better than any thing else. If your only transport is a rusty pile of crap bicycle, that is even better. This boy is really poor. And, as the clincher, let everyone know you pay child support. That will explain any discrepancy between your job and your standard of living.

Other ways to camouflage your wealth include wearing thrift store clothes or at least discount store clothes. Use a clothes line. This screams "poor" to the quarter feeding Laundromat dryer crowd. Only shop at the cheapest grocery store in town. Then use the bags to take out trash. If you do own expensive items, camouflage them. An excellent example to purchase the oldest computer you can find at a thrift store (usually under $20) that meets current standards. In other words, Commodore and Apple won't do, but a old IBM clone is perfect. Get the one that screams out ancient, that has obsolete plastic cases. Then, replace the guts with all new processors and such. You get a new computer without the risk of theft. If a pawn shop won't buy it, it likely won't be stolen. An old WWII gun might not cause any envy, verses a brand new $600 bolt gun. As long as the outside is beat up, the working parts can be excellent. If you do own a car, get the crappiest rust eaten pile of crap you can find- with the engine and parts in good shape. Nothing you own should speak of your ability to buy it. It should all look discount, throw-away or repaired. Granted, anything can be stolen. Your goal should be to minimize that.

That pretty much covers individual and government theft. Next up we have poverty as a means to weather the economy. Quite simply, if you are poor now you will sail through any economic downturn unaffected. This is my fourth recession since childhood, and each time I observed it merely as a curious news item. What recession? When you live on or near minimum wage, the only problem you encounter is unemployment. And, since I have a good work ethnic, this is almost never a problem. When you work like a dog for low wages and do a good job, others are always willing to hire you, even in times of recession or high unemployment. However, if you work for decent wages, your outlook will be slightly different.

Most of you would consider $6-$7 an hour chump change. Most earn much more. And, like everyone else you spend what you make. Doing otherwise of course would be silly. Even if you are not old enough to remember the inflation of the 1970's, were you needed to spend that cash before it was worthless, mild inflation still has an effect. Even at the official rate of 2% (a lie, as any inflated sector is dropped from the computation, such as energy or food) over time money under the mattress loses value. Take into account what you loose to taxes when you do eventually buy and it is a worse deal. Now, given the general trend toward lower prices overall in most sectors thanks in most part to increased private market efficiencies and not to government policies, we have less to fear from inflation. But this is really irreverent since most of us view Federal Greenbacks as worthless fiat currency. Far better to have tangible products on hand than save worthless paper. I would rather have $100 worth of buckets of wheat than $1000 in the bank. A

rifle and its ammo are worth ten times their value in paper money.

Another natural view is that you worked hard for your money and by golly you are going to enjoy it. Bravo. I agree. You go to college for six years, and then spend another ten paying off the loan, suck up to an idiot boss and put up with a hell of a lot of stress, why not enjoy life? Why not indeed? However, you need to do so without advertising you are in the upper middle class. You might not be as well off as your neighbors, but you exceed the income of a hell of a lot of other folks, and if you are concerned about future drastic economic downturns, you need to be wary about such envious mobs. The concern here is not how much you make, or spend, but how much you need to live on. I am advocating the adoption of the minimum wage living standard for survival purposes. Make as much as you like, but only live on what minimum wage will bring in. The rest is spent on preparations, disposable activities, or hidden pleasures. This will assure that even in the event that your profession is opened to global competition, made obsolete by technology or downsized, you will face little disruption.

A quick word on minimum wage. I do not foresee this arbitrary standard remaining in place indefinitely. I have contended for some time that eventually we will see a rollback in big government and most of its regulations and taxes that go with it. This is not because I hate government, which I do, but because the general trend is towards decentralization. Remember, the economy dictates what government we have, not vice- versa. We are moving towards a decentralized, information intense economy. Top down bureaucratic command and control impedes information flow. 100 years ago society began to centralize to improve economic performance. Now we will begin do the opposite to achieve the same effect. So, minimum wage most likely won't survive. I don't count on this arbitrary figure to achieve a set amount of income, but rather use it as a benchmark. Without government controls and in a period of adjustment where the economy got rid of any government imposed inefficiencies that amount would be less. In a truly free economy the old standard of supply and demand would be back in force. High unemployment equals lower pay. Merely use the minimum wage as a arbitrary figure for planning purposes. Hell, I make less than minimum wage after child support, but I still use that as my planning guide. As in, I need one half of minimum wage to live on. This has usually been my goal and it has saved my ass more than once.

It doesn't matter if you make $5,000 a year or $25,000. If you live on $350 to $700 a month as your core expenses you will likely never see any economic pain unless severely injured or in the middle of another Great Depression. Allow me to share my budget just to give you an idea of what I'm talking about. Everyone is different and situations vary, but it will serve as an example. $150 lot rent for my trailer and electric utilities. $100 for food. $50 for telephone and Internet access. $50 for credit card payments (which include the purchase of a quality bicycle for transportation) and $50 for other misc. expenses such as checking account fees, kids allowances and the occasional meal out (Denney's $2.99 Grand Slam breakfast being the favorite). That is it, and you will note that in really lean times I could shave up to $100 off if I really had to. Also note that this is for two people, myself and my girlfriend. Her only contribution is one half the rent, so if I was on my own

my rent would raise and my costs would be $500 rather than $400. Still, not bad for living here in high cost of living Central Florida coastal Daytona Beach (home of Bike Week, great beaches, Daytona 500 races and the worst economic performing county in the state).

Another way of thinking about this standard of living is to plan on your expenses to equal each month the price of one ounce of gold. This way, if you do adopt this plan and first pay off your credit, then you can if you so desire purchase and store one ounce gold coins as an inflation proof savings for your expenses. This would cover unemployment periods and be more stable than cash. Remember, this is a core expense standard. There is nothing saying you can't spend all the rest of your cash each month. Just don't add to your bare bones living expenses. Only spend on a whim and not on a payment schedule. In other words, if you want to buy a lot instead of rent one, save up your money instead of getting in debt to finance it. Then, when hard times come around you will not be stuck with a big bill you can't pay, nor will you have your funds tied up. Likewise, rather than have a two year contract with a cellular phone, buy the pay as you go type. Instead of getting a two year contract for a satellite, just get cable. And, for the love of God, don't sign up for two or three years of Internet access for a cash refund. There is no telling when cheap broadband will come around and you don't want to get stuck with an obsolete service.

Everything you spend after your core budget should be either frivolous, disposable or highly liquid. Sure, sign up for cable with movie packages and pay per view, as long as you can cancel the service at will. Eat out all you want, but that is entertainment, not grocery money. You had better know how to cook from scratch if you want your food bill to be low. Any moron can spend $10 at the Colonels for fried chicken, but only practice can churn out the home version for $3. The reason I was able to invest $100 a week in survival preparations for Y2K on a salary of $20k was because I was living this cheaply. However, when my job ended suddenly I was able to take the pay cut of 30% in stride. So, by living this cheap I am able to blow money on toys, enjoy life since I work low stress jobs, and still am able to weather economic jolts. Screw high paid jobs, Yuppie lifestyles and headaches over bills. Give me self induced, genteel poverty.
END ARTICLE

A email from one of my readers:
"The Bison" spoke of how good the Remington Nylon 66 , .22 cal. rifle is. I agree. I've always been able to fill the camp stew pot with small game (when on deer hunting trips) with mine. My wife shoots it with ease, along with her .30-.30 Winchester. She likes them both because of the light weight and recoil (she's 105 lbs.). It's a shame that they stopped manufacturing the Nylon 66 right after I bought mine in a Big 5* store in the LA area years ago, when I lived in CA. I haven't seen any for sale in the Portland, OR area in quite a while, or I'd buy another.
As far as the lowly .22 having enough punch to do the job on larger animals, I have an interesting story.
Several years ago (before returning to Graduate School) I was a uniformed Police Officer

in Portland, OR. We had an officer stop a car at night. When he walked up to the car the driver stepped out and shot him in the chest with a load of double-ought 12 gauge. We had recently received our Kevlar body armor, fortunately. The officer landed on his butt, pulled his .38 Special and killed the bastard with two rounds in the heart. The shotgun blast BADLY bruised the officers chest. He was back to work in two weeks, or so.
About three months later I was on night patrol at the fringe of our local black part of town when I heard gunshots coming from the area of the Calaroga Terrace high-rise nursing home building. When I got there I saw that we had a shooter on the roof of a ten story motel across the street. I called in, and in moments we had the building surrounded. The bad guy had a half dozen guns that he was using to shoot at passing cars coming out of the black neighborhood. He was on the roof.
Anyway, to the point. He had shot up most of his ammo and was now down to using his bolt action .22 rifle. One of the officers (the idiot)jumped up from behind his car and tried to run, in the open, across the street. He was hit in the chest with a .22 short round. He was hit in the vest but the round went HALF-WAY through the vest. He went down, hard. We thought he was dead, but he then got up, staggered in a circle, and fell again. He then crawled a few feet and passed out. A couple of moments later he got up again, and staggered around for a while. I don't know why the shooter didn’t shoot him again. When the officer staggered near one of the cars two officers ran out, grabbed him and dragged him to safety. He was taken to Emanuel Hospital by ambulance and damned near died twice before they could get him to Emergency. We, of course, got the shooter, finally.
The point of all of this was that both officers were wearing Second Chance* vests when shot in the chest. The one with the shotgun blast was bruised and killed his shooter. The one hit by the .22 was in no condition to shot back and could have easily been killed. I had a whole new respect for the lowly .22 cal. after that.
END

THE FRUGAL SNIPER

by James M Dakin

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This pamphlet shows how to take a surplus firearm and perform minor gun smithing tasks on it to turn that weapon into a much more accurate rifle. If you are totally incompetent at any mechanical task please do not attempt any of these procedures. However, as you will be working with a gun that more than likely cost you less than $100, this may not matter to you.

While most of us gaze lovingly at the sniper rifle pictured in gun magazines, few of us can afford it. That is why a converted surplus rifle will appeal to so many. You are spending only ten to twenty percent of the commercial system when you do it yourself. With most things, this is a compromise. Most likely you will sacrifice some accuracy, but the cost savings should make this worth your while.

Besides the monetary savings, by switching from commercial to military you are gaining in robustness. Military rifles are made to be abused. You can slop them through the mud and they will function. You can fire them repeatedly and they will continue to perform. In a survival situation this is no small matter. Commercial rifles are pretty, delicate, accurate and expensive. Military rifles are ugly, not the most accurate, rugged, and cheap.

By following the steps here you can upgrade the accuracy of a surplus military rifle to near sniper grade, at a cheap price, and to some a piece of beauty. This will eliminate the negative aspects of military surplus, giving you a all the good with none of the bad.

To give the devil his due, this pamphlet is based largely on "The Poor Mans Sniper Rifle" by D. Boone, Desert Publications. It is a fine book and teaches the subject better than I, but at a price of $25 after shipping/handling, you may wish to seriously think before you put down your hard earned dollars. The action/men’s book publishers industry is full of

crap, and I consider the above title one of the few good ones. You decide.

RIFLES TO SELECT

If you already own a military surplus rifle, that type may or may not be suitable for conversion. Even if you own one of these that proves to be unsuitable, you may wish to try out these procedures on a "junk" rifle before going on to a better grade. Let us assume you are just starting out and can purchase your choice. The rifles to avoid are to follow. For now, look for positive criteria.

Most important is the condition of the barrel in the rifle. Most surplus will not be match grade, but attempt to approach this condition. Next is barrel length. A barrel too much under the optimum 25 inches should not be used. The bullet velocity will not be adequate, other than for short range. A longer barrel is okay, but only adds weight without improving accuracy much.

Your next consideration is caliber. Avoid too large or too small. Obviously a .22 is not suited for a sniper rifle. Large calibers, such as .45, need to be avoided since their large heavy bullets have an arched trajectory. This leaves one to elevate the barrel up to high for a shot. The best calibers are mid range, 7 to 8 mm or 30 to 32 caliber. American surplus is all 30 caliber, from the 30-40 Krag to the M14. European rifles are varied from the 8mm Mauser to the 303 British Enfield (7.7mm).

Last, consider ammunition. The 30.06 or 8mm are widely available in different configurations. The 8x56 mm is not. Check out shotgun news or your favorite catalog to see about availability before you purchase your rifle. You may be able to get your surplus rifle for $50 wholesale, but if one box of this ammo cost $25, you are more than likely making the wrong choice. Nor is this an exaggeration. The above example was from a Japanese rifle and its ammo some years back in Shotgun News.

Weigh all these factors. You may feel that a 6.5mm Swedish Mauser is the best bolt action made. This may be slightly more expensive, or its ammo, is a smaller caliber, etc. If you think it will do the trick by all means go with it. The above is your optimal guidelines.

Specifically, select one of the following for your best choice for conversion. Springfield rifles in 30.06 1903A1 or 1903A3. Those without the "A" are limited to Springfield Armory models over the 800,000 serial number or Rock Island over the 285,500 serial. Those with smaller numbers were heat treated improperly and are dangerous.

Mausers in 7 to 8mm. Any model based on the 1898 action. The American Enfield pattern 17 in 30.06, and the British Enfield pattern 14 in .303 British.

Any SMLE, short magazine Lee Enfield, the British warhorse for two World Wars. Beware the Jungle carbines, check barrel length first.

Some fine rifles whose only problem is hard to get ammo are the Japanese Arisaka 38 in 6.5 Japanese, 1896 model Swedish Mauser in 6.5x55mm, and perhaps the Russian Moisin Nagant model 91 in 7.62x54mm. The first two are quite accurate rifles even without modification, and you may wish to leave them that way. A bonus with the Swedish was that they never used corrosive ammo and so the bore condition is often superb.

RIFLES TO AVOID

Italian Carcano in models 1891 and 38. Bad caliber, short barrels and crude actions. This was the wonder rifle the CIA used to assassinate Kennedy. The tight bastards didn't want to spend more than $20 on a mail order rifle for the throw away gun. Or, the fact that it was mail order may have been the point. Did the same faction that killed Kennedy to pass the restrictive 60's gun control acts also kill the Stockton schoolyard children to pass the semi-auto ban in the bellwether state of California? I'm only slightly being paranoid here, by the way. Look what Roosevelt did to get us in WWII.

Austrian Steyr-Mannlicher 95. Obsolete ammo and short barrel. Type 54 Chinese or type 44 Russian also have too short of barrels. So does the French 1936 MAS in 8mm Lebel which also has scarce ammo and a poor bolt action and bad accuracy.

Beware Mauser actions from models 93 and 95. Lack of a gas vent makes them dangerous. Mauser 98 in late WWII were poorly constructed due to war time shortages and slave labor. Avoid these.

Type 99 Arisaka, a much lower quality than the model 38. Also due to war time shortages and hurried construction.

Semi-auto rifles in general are not as accurate as bolt actions for sniper ops. Also, due to the public feeding frenzy over the Klinton gun grab, all semi's are up in price. Stick with bolt action for better accuracy and cheaper prices.

BUYING YOUR RIFLE

Ever since I moved from California I have had excellent luck at buying surplus rifles. Tulsa not only had a pawn shop next to every church and bar, but is home to the best gun shop on the planet, Dongs. What would normally be a regular gun shop was turned into a cheap bastards wet dream with drums upon drums of military surplus rifles. Whatever you wanted he had at least five of. Enfields, Mausers, Nagants, whatever. If you live anywhere near the area, stop by and buy. Dongs, unfortunately, was one of the few retail gun stores to carry surplus.

Next in line for a reliable supply were pawn shops. It took a bit of shopping, but you could find what you wanted after a time. Your best bet of course is to go to your friendly FFL holder and buy at cost, rifle and shipping, plus 15%. This is much easier than it used to be. Go to the Web site of Shotgun News and look up their list of FFL holders. Get one close to you and give him a call. The last place I lived I was blessed to have a mom and pop gun store one half block away from my apartment. Most of the guns I now have

I went in to their store, put 10% down and made payments on. Sadly, the owner passed away. Here was a retail shop that charged 15% over cost. They had an attachment to the house that bordered a busy street, turned it into the shop and worked it six hours a day. They had no overhead, so this worked for them.
First, subscribe to Shotgun News. Even if you only buy one rifle, you will want the paper to order ammunition out of. This way, when you see the rifle of your dreams you can earmark the page and go order it from your new buddy the FFL guy. Take the jobber cost advertised, add about $15 for shipping, then add 15% to that total. This is roughly what you are going to spend. Take a little more to cover miscalculation, have the possibility of check payment covered before you go. And don't worry about being ripped off. No one is going to jeopardize their license.

If the bore is pitted or worn out, return the rifle through your dealer. It is better to pay the return shipping than to keep the rifle, as it will be useless as a sniper weapon. Another potential problem is excessive head space, liable to be a safety problem. If you can get a gunsmith to test them with a head space gauge, otherwise you can use the rule of thumb, good barrel and stock means little use and good head space. Lastly, remove all cosmoline to prevent wear on moving parts. The stuff is a preservative and not a lubricant.

CONVERSION
There are five basic areas that effect accuracy on a rifle. These are barrel condition, ammunition, stock, trigger and sights. Each are covered below. The converted rifle is an Enfield No. 4 for certain illustrations but the following applies to most surplus rifles.

BARREL CONDITION
We are of course dealing with military surplus and you are going to have to make allowances, but the following is the ideal when you are searching for a rifle good enough for conversion to a sniper grade rifle. In general most surplus rifles you get will be good enough but you must beware the occasional junk. Pre-war is the best, wartime manufacture will vary.

The way to tell if your bore is up to specifications is as follows. Lubricate your barrel after removing the action. Take a slug of pure lead or a 00 buckshot pellet and with a mallet and wooden dowel tap the lead piece down the barrel towards the action (end of barrel towards the trigger). The rifled barrel cut grooves into the lead. The raised areas in the barrel are lands, the low areas are grooves. So, the slug will measure both for you, in reverse. Your slug low areas measure the barrel lands, the slug high areas the barrel grooves. Take a caliper capable of measuring 1/1000 inch and measure both lands and grooves. If need be take it to a gunsmith or a machinist to measure.

The groove diameter should match the diameter of the bullet the rifle shoots. For instance, American surplus rifles shoot a .308 diameter bullet. If the groove is much more than .001 oversize, it will generally not work for your sniper use. The lands on a new barrel are from .002 to .006 of an inch. If your used rifle has too shallow lands, less than about .0005, than you have little life left in them and your bullet will not get an adequate

hold on the barrel, shooting accuracy to shit.

Beware a pitted barrel. Pitting is caused by ammunition using corrosive primers. In combat conditions there was little likelihood of the weapons being cleaned immediately after use, and corrosion occurred in the barrel. Those little tiny holes will render your rifle inaccurate.

Another wonderful problem you must worry about is your muzzle face. The outside of your barrel at the muzzle can be beat up, but if this damage goes down into the barrel opening it will effect your accuracy. To solve this you can cut off a small piece of your barrel, filing and recrowning. See if you can get this done, but if you must do it yourself, do the following:

Remove the stock. Clamp the barrel horizontally in a padded vise with the end of the barrel three/four inches from the jaws and support the action to remove the weight from the barrel. Cut about 1/4 inch off the barrel with a hacksaw using a fine blade. This eliminates some file work later, but the cutting will go slow. Move the barrel to a vertical position, keeping the pads on to protect the finish. Use a flat file and remove the hacksaw marks making sure to file square with the end of the barrel. Use alternating 45 degree strokes. Remove sharp edges with a file. To crown, you must make a tool. Take a ball bearing twice the bore diameter and have a welder braze the bearing onto a straight metal rod around 6 inches long. Get valve grinding compound at an auto parts store, place your tool in an electric hand drill. Put the ball bearing in the course grinding compound, place the ball to the barrel opening and use your low setting to drill. Squeeze the trigger until the ball spins then release, using light pressure. Repeat over and over, redipping the ball in compound when it stops cutting. When you see a crown, or indentation across the barrel opening, stop. Use bore solvent to clean out all compound from the rifle and tool. Next use the fine grinding compound. Continue grinding as before until the crown is smooth. Clean as before. To test, run a cotton ball through. If it catches on the tip of the barrel and leaves strands you have burrs and must continue. BURRS ON THE BARREL CAN CAUSE AN OBSTRUCTION WHICH CAN BLOW UP YOUR GUN. If your cotton ball slides out smooth you are done. Just make sure you test on a dry barrel and you push through slow, to get an accurate test. Last, touch up with bluing compound.

AMMUNITION

Ammunition is very important in obtaining accuracy from a rifle. If you mix and match batches of ammo from different manufacturers, you are going to get mixed results even with the exact same type of ammo. The importance is in consistency, in powder charge, primers, type and weight of bullets.

Your best choice for ammunition is match grade. As the name implies, this is ammunition used in shooting matches. Because of this fact, the ammo is of greater accuracy. Of course, the price will be greater also. Match ammo uses consistent powder charges and primers.

Next in accuracy is hand loads, and most likely also the cheapest. It may take a bit of fiddling, but you will develop fine loads for your gun with some practice. Reloading can be as cheap as $30 to start with a Lee loader and manual.

In military surplus, avoid ammo that is older than twenty five years or so, and try to stay away from corrosive ammo. You can clean immediately afterwards with soap and hot water or carburetor cleaner and then clean/lube as normal, but to me the hassle is not worth the bother. The reason the ammo is half the price is that not many others want to bother either. If you go with surplus, you may also be using Berden primed ammo. So, you can't reload.

Last in desirability is hunting ammo. This is fine for hunting, but not for sniping. Use this only if you must. The tolerances are much more loose in quality.

STOCK

The way in which the action and barrel fit with your stock can effect accuracy. All surplus prior to Vietnam was made with wooden stocks which caused a potential problem. Assembly line cutting of the wood could produce a bad fit, and improperly cured wood can later warp. There are three solutions to problems with wood stocks. Get a synthetic stock, at least fifty bucks. This will eliminate warping. Free float the barrel, pretty much free but grit can get under and you can later throw off accuracy if you knock the barrel too hard. Last is glass bedding, a permanent solution that is pretty inexpensive.

Synthetics are made for pretty much all rifles, but the cheap ones (40$) are only for your popular models such as SKS and Rugar 10/22. Military surplus such as Mauser and Enfields will run you $50/$60 and up. My problem with synthetic is that besides the price, the finished product looks ugly. An Enfield was meant to have wood furniture. It just doesn't look cool otherwise. If you think I'm being silly, look at the rifles in the movie Escape From New York. M16s with the hand guards removed. Now, don't they look ugly? Not very intimidating, are they?

Next is free floating. This is only a bit more work than removing the wood furniture, and almost free. The only drawback is that the process is not permanent. You could bump the barrel too hard and it will move and screw up accuracy. If you are in the field, you will bump your rifle around. Remember, this is why we are using surplus instead of civilian rifles. There are two methods of free floating. One is traditional, the other jerry rigging that almost works as good. The traditional method requires a scraper available from any gun smithing supplier. Remove wood from the inletting channel until there is none touching the barrel. To test this clearance between the barrel and stock black the bottom of the barrel with candle soot. Reassemble, disassemble and look for black marks on the wood. Scrape these marks, retest, repeat if necessary. You only need enough space to slide a piece of paper between the stock and barrel. The next way, involves cheating but the results or almost identical. Remove the barrel from the stock, take a smooth tire inner tube and cut two small squares of rubber. One will fit the bottom of the recoil lug recess the other either side of the recoil lug bolt hole. Reassemble and test with a piece of paper.

If there is insufficient clearance place an identical set of rubber squares on top of the first set.

Glass bedding is more complicated but the results are permanent. The following supplies are necessary. Small chisel, coarse sandpaper, two inch wide paintbrush, liquid wax, masking tape, commercial bedding compound, and modeling clay. Remove the stock and cut wood from the inletted recess below the upper edge of the stock. Then move 3/16 of an inch from under the action and around the recoil lug, 1/8 inch from around the sides of the action and around the barrel. Cut behind the recoil lug and the sides. There is no need to cut around the upper hand guards. Nature to leave supporting edges on each side of the inletting to support the action otherwise the action will sink into the bedding compound. Take the outside of the stock with your masking tape and use the brush to apply liquid wax on the outside of your action and barrel. You must cover all metal areas or your compound will glue them to the stock. Also dip the stock bolts in the wax. Make sure to avoid acrylic wax as this may not work as well. Any holes other than stock bolts you should filled with modeling clay to keep the compound from finding an anchor. Follow the directions on the commercial bedding compound, and when mixed apply to the areas were wood has been removed. Assemble the rifle. When the compound has a rubber feel trim all excess amounts. When it has cured to its final hardness unscrew the stock bolts halfway and hit their heads with a wooden mallet as well as the bottom of the barrel. The barrel and action should loosen from the stock, otherwise put the rifle in the freezer for several hours and try again. If this fails to loosen the two more than likely the metal and stock are permanently bound together and it would be wise to just leave it as is.

TRIGGER

Trigger pull on military rifles vary from five to 8 lb. The best trigger pull for a sniper rifle is between two and four pounds. There are commercial replacement triggers available to many surplus rifles, through gunsmith suppliers. It is preferable to purchase a commercial trigger but if one is not available you will need modification to the trigger. Disassemble the rifle removing only what is needed to reach the sear and cocking piece. If the sear pin will not remove you must work on the sear in place. Examine for burrs on the sear, removing inning with a small file then an India stone to smooth the filed surface. Next use a crocus cloth from a hardware store on the sear and cocking piece sear slot until smooth. These polished pieces will reduce friction and improved your trigger pull. Assemble the rifle and try the trigger which should have a easy pull. If this does not work you will need to modify further. You will need to take the trigger spring and grind down the middle thick areas being careful to avoid the thin ends. Reduce the thick area by 20 percent, reblue the metal and assemble.

SIGHTS

Most of the procedures describe so far can be avoided if you purchase a fairly decent rifle. The one area that is critical regardless of your rifle is its slight system. If you have bad sights you'll be unable to achieve any kind of accuracy. There are several types of sight systems which include metallic, peep, electronic, laser, night vision, or telescopic. The metallic sight is what you get on the Enfield or Mauser. This consists of a V. rear sight

and a front post. This is a difficult system to use due to your eyesight being required to focus on three points at once. The next type, peep, is much better in that the rear post with hole will blur and you are able to focus on the front post and target. The peep sight comes only on the number four Enfield, other models incorporate the earlier metallic. All Mausers are metallic. With metallic sights you must replace with at least a peep sight, but it is not recommended that you to your own drilling. If you have metallic sights, you should think of using telescopic. The advantage of peep sights are that there is nothing to break in the field, but do not use this system in less you are young with good eye site.

Electronic sights such as Aimpoint or Mirage place a red dot on the target and does provide extremely quick target acquisition. The drawbacks are that the units are expensive, bulky, need batteries, and are only for short range. Next are lasers, which are quite easy to use. You merely placed the dot on target and shoot. This is a great system for pistols, assault rifles, and shotguns. However, after 200 yards the laser dot begins to open up and becomes unusable. Other drawbacks are that the system cannot be used in bright sunlight and in smoke or fog the beam can be traced back to its user. Night vision scopes have come down in price to the collapse of the Soviet Union, yet still require several hundred dollars. Therefore, that system should not be considered.

Last are telescopic sights. These have been used for decades for sniping purposes and is the best system for the money. They are to a certain extent fragile, but are so much more accurate than peep sights that you should consider nothing but telescopic sights. The military choice after much experimentation has been to go with the single power scope rather than the variable powered ones. At times range finding devices built into the scope were used but proved unreliable. The single power scopes are used to avoid the problem of changing the point of impact for bullets by changing magnification. However, if you are older and your eye sight is suffering you may wish to use a variable scope.

If you wish you can easily spend more on a scope than you did on the rifle. If you wish to buy as cheaply as possible try garage sales. Pawn shops in general will not have good scopes cheap and it is better to go to Wal-Mart. You can always buy at your FFL holder, but make sure to shop around. Next you'll need to purchase a scope mount. B-Square has a large selection for surplus military rifles, as does S&K, and while it is a good idea to shop around in discount hunting catalogs for other brands, these two brands are quite a bargain if you take into consideration that no drilling or tapping is required to mount. I have seen advertisements for scope mounts for almost all surplus military rifles.

IN CLOSING

If you can find a surplus rifle under $75 your cost, the scope for around $30, and the scope mount also for $30 your total cost for a sniper rifle could be under $150. This assumes that you free floated the barrel and were not required the purchase both the scrapper and the bedding kit. Even if you did purchase the kit and the tool and also paid for various services such as bullet measurement and welding your costs should still be under $200. If you were to purchase a set of binoculars and a rangefinder your costs should still stay under $350. By purchasing a scope that does not contain external

windage and elevation knobs you have saved yourself $100, since most of these start at over $100. The best way to overcome this problem is to zero your scope at the best range and adjust your aim accordingly. For instance, on a 303 zero your scope at 200 yards which will put you five inches high at 100 yards, right on at 200 yards, six inches low at 300 yards, a foot low at 400 yards and two feet low at 500 yards. Without a much more expensive scope you'll have to forget most shots over 500 yards. With a rangefinder you'll know the distance to your target. The distances mentioned above will enable you to hit your target in the kill zone if your crosshairs are held at the base of the throat.

Also, please be advised that the procedures described in this pamphlet are not first-hand experience but rather procedures I have read about. Please use common sense when doing any work such as described. Do not write to me and complain that you have ruined your rifle. Get help from a knowledgeable friend or consult a library book. Purchase exploded diagrams of your particular rifle. Do a little research before you jump in. Hopefully you will be able to find a rifle that was not abused and needs little modification. If you wish to avoid modifying the rifle think about purchasing a post World War II weapon such as an Indian 308 conversion of the Enfield or a Mauser. More than likely these did not use corrosive ammunition and were built to higher standards. Perhaps you may wish to purchase a synthetic stock. Even if you do this your costs should not exceed $500. Another thing to keep in mind is that even if you purchase a rifle that you did not believe to be satisfactory may pursue the strategy I have adapted. I have bought several of the same types of rifle at as cheap a price as possible and even if they are not up to standards I still have a stockpile of spare parts for the one rifle which shoots satisfactorily. In a survival situation this is certainly something you may wish to think about. Having one expensive good rifle will defeat your planning if it is damaged. Better to have several cheaper rifles of the same type.

Below are addresses of companies you may wish to patronize. I have used most and am satisfied with their service and products.
BOOKS- Desert Publications, Box 1751, El Dorado AR 71731
Loompanics, Box 1197, Port Townsend WA 98368
DIAGRAMS/PARTS- Gun Parts Corp., West Hurley NY 12491
PARTS/TOOLS- Brownells, 200 South Front St, Montezuma, Iowa 50171
GUNS- Shotgun News, Box 669, Hastings NE 68902

I have given the snail mail addresses to the above companies for those that are technologically deficient, but you would do well to go down to the public library and use their computer to get on the Internet. You turn it on and it is online. There isn't anything you can't handle after the librarian holds your hand for a few minutes. If you order by catalog you will pay for it. Loompanics is $5, Brownells $8, Gun Corp $10, a sample issue of Shotgun News is $4 at a book store. Go on the Internet to make sure these companies have what you want and you need not spend any money.

END

ALPHA STRATEGY 2000
by James M Dakin
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Reading the Alpha Strategy around 15 years ago, I was quite impressed with the book. John Pugsley is an excellent writer and I tip the propeller hat to him. However, I do not believe that his book has aged very well. As with Mel Tappan's book on guns, his ideas need to be upgraded to fit the times. Granted, he would make a much better author to an update, but I don't think it's going to happen. Hell, the poor bastard could even be dead for all I know (ain't my dedication to research wonderful).

My chief complaint with regards to this book at the turn of the century is that while at the time the economics section was fascinating, now it is very old hat. Boring. Yawn. How many times do we have to read about how evil the government is about the true meaning of inflation and about the need to reduce the deficit. Do not get me wrong. His book is superb- for twenty years ago. Now, we could care less. Been there, done that. The reason this is such a concern is that one half to two thirds of the book is a discourse on economics. Only the last small part is actually concerned with fighting inflation through hoarding consumable items. I realize he needed to puff up the page count to take it from a magazine article to a book and thus justify the price tag. This is standard for the publishing industry.

I have come to loath the puffing up of the printed word. Very few authors can churn out a mind numbing number of pages and actually have them count. Sure, Steven King can write a thousand page book at the drop of a hat, but in non-fiction this is rarely needed. My time is valuable and I would prefer not to have to waste it reading a bunch of crap to get to a few kernels of information. Today there is very little wheat and a whole lot of

chaff in the non-fiction printed word. I just got done reading a book on the rise of the German economy after World War Two and it was a good read, but the basic message was that the freer economies always out-performed the socialist ones. The theme was repeated in one form or another every chapter. I learned a bit of history which I love, but I also wasted half that reading time.

I realize that there is a need for mind- numbing statistics and facts. There is a place for length and detail. We don't always want a short magazine article. What I am saying is that what is annoying is the widespread practice of filling up a book with the material from a pamphlet. Hell, I only write pamphlets six to twelve pages in length and even I must often puff it up to get that far. But I would never try to write a two hundred page book from that material. Get to the damn point, people. And stop charging $25 for a hardback book. Offer the same material in a cheap newsprint booklet and sell it for $5. Time and money is in short supply.

After reading so many books in certain fields I have come to dread the same material that the newcomer needs. In books such as those by Howard Ruff, we must slog through the standard government is doing this to cause this section before we can get to the section we need, the when and the solution. When will all hell break loose and what is the solution. In The Coming Global Superstorm by Art Bell I had to read over two hundred pages of double spaced large print to get to the point- don't live north of a certain point unless you want to get quick frozen. I spent $20 to learn that tidbit.

And, as much as I want to I just cannot bring myself to skip parts of a book. I am afraid of missing a valuable nugget of information. Is it any wonder that I buy most of my books at thrift shops for 25 cents or get them free at the library? I am afraid of being ripped off.

Okay, enough of that. Talk about padding the writing! The meat of the Alpha Strategy was the section of stockpiling. We need to discuss what has changed regarding that, but also the economic changes. Now, I said that the economic section was boring- but that was because it has been already done so often. The economic section was vital to understand the rest of the book. So, my chief complaint was that the material is today repetitive. I will discuss what has changed in the economics and how that changes the stockpiling. Bear with me.

A lot has changed in twenty years as far as the economy is concerned. The fiat currency the dollar is once again at the top of the heap in relation to other currencies. In effect the world has voted that since all currencies are intrinsically worthless, the vote is going to be for the one that has the best performing economy. That is the good old USA. In the beginning of the 1980's almost any other currency was better than the greenback. Hell, in the late eighties the Korean Won gained strength against the dollar when I was stationed there. That is indeed a sad state of affairs. Today we basically tell Japan and the European Union that their currency is crap. I would snicker, but God knows how long it will last.

It used to be an entire industry in its own right to praise the Japanese and ridicule ourselves as far as the economy was concerned. Japan was number one and we were scum. They could do no wrong. “I am turning Japanese-a” was the song, Shogun was still popular, their cars were excellent and ours were garbage. Today the tables are turned and Japanese youth are noted for wearing our 50's fashions. We export more than just lumber to their country- today we ship over fast food franchises and watch as their children turn pasty and fat just as ours do.

In the Seventies the Arabs had a choke hold on our oil supply. There was panic in the street as those former Western colonies had the gall to demand a fair share of the pie. Insolent bastards. Today we import more oil, but not all is from OPEC and our reliance is lessened incrementally by advanced technology and conservation measures. We didn’t learn our lesson about dependence but as a result of other factors we negated the importance of OPEC anyway.

In the 70's we were also at the mercy of the printing presses. The governments were in love with inflation to pay their bills, and the population went along with it to avoid taxes. Who in the name of God wanted more taxes anyway? We were the USA and nothing bad like hyperinflation could happen here. We thought that the world would prop us up to avoid economic suicide. Okay, the Japanese have no memory of nuclear weapons used on their soil? The Germans thought it was okay to give half their country to Russia? The idea that other countries would save us is laughable. If nothing else, envy would see to it that we failed. The printing presses stopped not because the governments wanted them to, but because they had to.
Twenty to thirty years ago unemployment was a national concern. The figures rose above the single digit line and everyone started to piss and moan about another Great Depression. Recently we were in a situation were we were forced to hire seniors, teenagers and welfare bitches just to have enough positions filled so our booming economy could surge ahead. And, keep in mind, this was after over twenty years of steady worker productivity growth. Everyone was much more productive per hour worked, yet we needed even more man-hours.

In the 1970's our Industrial Economy was coming apart. When one system starts to die and another is born there is chaos and confusion and economic trials and tribulations. We had produced for the world after the war in which we had suffered no industrial damage. The two concurred nations Japan and Germany had seen their industry shattered. Thus, they started out with the newest and most modern machines after the war. We grew fat and lazy and antiquated while they were lean mean and very competitive. Any newcomer is going to kick major butt when they battle the old lumbering dinosaur, as long as their survival is at stake.

Japan and Germany ended up at the pinnacle of perfection as industrial nations, and our industry died. Our workers were heavily unionized, our productivity was in the toilet, and we thought the world would sit by and remain our willing economic colonies. We sucked

and it was as simple as that. In hindsight it is easy to see that our infant Information economy was being born and our factory economy was dying. At the time of course we were pulling out our hair and soiling ourselves. The sky is falling, the sky is falling!! Wipe out all corporate taxes and get factories in to our state or city. More tariffs, less trade with the Japs!! Oh my God, our TV production is all overseas. We make none of our own chips. Without chips our computers are at the mercy of foreign enemies.

Even today many people, perhaps the majority, believe that we are in a industrial economy. Oh, the economy is poor, wages are down, it's because we don't have any factories here in our town. Volusia county were Daytona Beach is located (Holly Hill is a city in the Daytona Metro area) is about the worst in the state as far as economics go. The old bastards come in with their Social Security checks, the rich come in with their loot, the cost of living is driven sky high and the wages are depressed since we are in a tourist area. Tourism does not rule in Orlando with Disney since they have a healthy information economy, but there in Daytona if it were not for NASCAR, Spring Break or a wonderful beach, we would be merely a jerk water town. Our local economy does not suck because we have no factories but because we have tourists.

An economy does need factories and industry. It also needs agriculture. Yet, were is agriculture? At our nations founding we were nothing but farmers. The majority of folks farmed the land. Today only 3% do. Yet, we have much more food coming off the farms. So much that we can literally feed half the world. And, folks, that is with Industrial forces applied to agriculture. When corporations are allowed to fully implement the Information forces onto agriculture we will see yet another boom. Once we genetically alter food crops we will see a food bonanza that will make the Green Revolution look like a lucky break for a couple of bumbling fools. Agriculture pays well for those that play by the new economic rules, yet it is not the engine that runs the economy.

Industry no longer rules the economy, either, but it does rule the government and cultural aspects of our society. We are experiencing the beginning of an Information economy yet our government and our institutions behave as though we are still firmly back on the factory floor. Newt Gingrich may have been many things, but at least he was one politician who understood history and thus was able to see the future. To me, that was his true sin and the reason he was booted. The dinosaurs are trying to rule us as we mammals go scurrying about trying to survive the climate change caused by asteroid strikes. " Stop scampering about you little bastards, all is the same as it ever was. Remain calm. No need to panic."

Twenty years ago the national government was able to manipulate the economy through inflation. The printing press was just another means of squeezing the last drop of revenues from the hapless peasants. Today, the market is able to instantly penalize a government for such short sighted thinking by moving out of its currency. That is why the Asian Flu was so quick. If you wander too far out of accepted boundaries in manipulating your economy, the money markets sell your currency - and brother, they have a lot more juice than any national bank. Banana Republics are not anchoring their currencies to the dollar

because they want to, it is because they have to.

As a whole, the nations of the world are moving towards the free market. Again, not because they want to, but because they are forced to. Markets and corporations are increasing in the position to pick and choose amongst the most favorable nations. Ireland is the best performing nation economically in Europe right now because it has the lowest taxes. Is this an accident? Even the densest dictators should be able to see the handwriting on the wall. Lower taxes, lower regulations, become business friendly, or the next nation over will get the economic boom. No boom means a brain drain in your country, a capital drain in your country, and soon the only thing left will be politicians and welfare recipients. The process is slow right now, and there is still much resistance to this idea. Politicians are wedded to the tax and spend mode. However, the tide more than likely cannot be turned back. The world as a whole will not go back to the factory line when there is so much more to be made behind the word processor, the drafting table, the monitor, the R&D lab, or any other high paid, low capital investment occupation.

Inflation is still quite possible. Politicians are masters at survival and little else. They could still be stupid enough to start printing again. However, the general trend should be a slow deflation as competition forces productivity up and prices down. Therefore, you are not stockpiling goods to save money in the future. You are stockpiling goods to safeguard against the coming turmoil economically and politically when to days ruling elite fight against the inevitable decentralization of societies makeup.

It used to be a good idea to stockpile consumer goods to avoid paying more for them next month or next year. If you went through two dozen light bulbs a year, and inflation was 10% a year and you bought about 200 bulbs, you avoided paying double the price six years later. OK, this made a great deal of sense. However, if you factor in pay raises and lost interest on your invested cash, you were only marginally ahead monetarily. Of course, then you have to factor in taxes on the interest and pay raises. I would say that a ballpark figure is you loose only one half the inflation rate in total buying power. So, that 10% inflation is in fact only a lose of 5% a year. Now it will take around ten to twelve years of bulbs to avoid paying twice the price. Now you need to spend $300 in bulbs to avoid inflation. Multiply that requirement by multiple items. Motor oil, tires, toilet paper, sheets, envelopes, food items, fabric, etc. Unless you are flush in cash it is an impossible dream. Plus, if you had that much in cash you could have invested in the rich boys inflation fighting investments.

You can drive yourself crazy trying to stockpile everything you need to survive hard times. You can't guess the rate of inflation, or your pay raises or if you will even have a job. Twenty years ago your biggest problem was fighting inflation of consumer goods. Today I would say it is job security. Sure, we still have to worry about nuclear war and terrorism and such, but here we are primarily worried about how to pay your way through life month by month. Today the old security of a corporate retirement is gone. We are now in an economy where you are really at the mercy of the marketplace and your company can downsize overnight, go bankrupt or declare your job obsolete.

Today it is much more prudent to stockpile for six months living expenses to help you over the bumps in your career. I do not mean six months wages, an impossible goal for many, but goods stashed aside for being able to live for six months of avoiding the stores. This should be separate from your survival of Armageddon stockpile, a matter of having years worth of grain, ammo and water filters. This is for living day to day. This is not as hard as it sounds.

Your doomsday stockpile should cost under $500. In case you are too damn lazy to read my pamphlet on this, here is a short summery. One year wheat with poly buckets $75, with grain filter at $50, total is $125. Surplus rifle is $100, ammo $75. $50 water filter. $350 for a bare bones survival kit. Anyone, even a minimum wage earner can afford this, and it can be purchased piecemeal, thus alleviating the need to have all that amount at once. Your living expense fund should be no more than three times that if you are very frugal.

As I said, it is next to impossible for most of us to save a half years salary. I don't make crap, and I can't save half of that. How is someone supposed to save half of $15,000 or $25,00? I think that advice is very impractical, and I shudder every time I read it. And why would you want to save money to pay off a mortgage? Save money at 3% in case I loose my job so I can pay my monthly house payment that is 10% interest annually. Sell that overpriced "keeping up with the Joneses" money pit and go buy a used mobile home for cash. In many cases your yearly lot rent will be little more than your property taxes were. At the very least if you have money to burn, pay off the principle quicker. True, that does not help you pay the mortgage during a financial down turn, but that leads me to the next thing.

Live below your means. Let me repeat that in case your eyes were glazing over because you rushed over that line to finish the paragraph because your bladder is full. Live BELOW your means. Your expenses should be below your income. You don't even need to save the difference. Go blow it on fun non-essentials. Go to the movies or dine out. Buy lots of guns and ammo. Buy lots of books from me. The point is to have a cushion in case of need. I have always made a point of living on minimum wage expenses. If forty hours a week at minimum wages was, say, $500- that is what I lived on even if I brought home more. Of course this was always a guide and sometimes it was more, but I always was in that ball park. And, many times I suddenly moved, or left a wife/girlfriend, or was laid off, and I was suddenly thrust back into the lower wage field. And I did just fine.

Oh, I can hear it now. "I'm a computer programmer. I make $50,000 a year. Piss on you and your low wage scumbags. I'm living large." One little problem with that. Technology. I may know next to nothing about programming, but I do know we could eventually either program in English or have other software program for us. Bill Gates did not see the mass use of the Internet, and programmers led the charge against Y2K. Don't tell me there isn't a possibility I could be right. And even if I'm wrong, Indian

programmers can do to days jobs at present technology levels at 10% of the cost. One remaining obstacle- broadband. And that is not too far away. Real time conferencing over the Internet for no more than a monthly access charge will end the only real roadblock to long distance information work. Be warned.

People, we are entering a global economy were competition is going to increase. Your higher paying job is not a guaranteed thing. Hell, minimum wage will one day disappear. You need to invest now in as many areas as possible to decrease your cost of living. That is a much better approach than stockpiling consumer goods. You should stockpile the basics. That goes without saying in any economy. However, the more important task is to lower your cost of living. With the coming global competition in the information field, you need to beware of falling wages. Right now we have falling prices for basic goods. This is due to competition. The next area will be brain work. With broadband a doctor in Russia can diagnose, receive data such as X-rays and CAT scans, perhaps even prescribe a drug. This at a fraction of the cost of homegrown medical personal. A nerd in Pakistan can do para-legal work for a state-side law firm. The fun part now is plunging prices. The hard part later will be falling wages. You can take this to the bank. It is far more likely than increased inflation.

Decrease your cost of living now. Downsize your living quarters, your transportation, especially your debt, and your "luxury" requirements. Treat yourself, but on a more limited fashion. Now, at the same time you need to stockpile your basics. Food, everyday items such as toiletries. Make a list of what you use everyday, get rid of the unnecessary, and figure out a six month supply. That is an arbitrary length of time. If you can only afford three months, go for that. Or, start out with a one month supply and slowly add to it. Just remember that you need to set priorities. The first order of business is a survival stockpile. Food, water, guns and ammo. Then, get out of debt or at least get the debt down to a level easily paid off with a minimum wage job. Next, downsize your living expenses, then at the last you should stockpile basics.

What good does it do you to have months worth of groceries if they will throw you out of your house because you can barely pay your mortgage now, let alone if your income dips? The first thing you should do is make your dwelling an affordable one. Even if all you have is a used cab-over camper sitting in the back yard ready to be loaded onto your pick-up truck, at least that can be shelter in an emergency. At one time when I was making over $20,000 a year (big time for me) I still made sure to have a back-up plan. I bought a $500 truck with shell and bought a gym membership. I would have lived in the back of the truck and showered at the gym everyday. Auto insurance, membership fees, and gas combined were 25% the cost of renting a cheap apartment.

Now it should be a safe bet to begin stockpiling basics. And food is as basic as it gets. You can't really depend on the same diet as your survival stash. It is one thing to eat nothing but wheat during the end of the world, quite another to do so during a recession. This means plenty of everyday foods items stored in one form or another. Have a good supply of frozen meat, potatoes and veggies, but don't be over reliant on the electric

supply. Even if the power is not wiped out it can be unreliable. Ask the folks in California during the Spring of '01.

It is fine to freeze a months supply of food. If power is lost you can have a BBQ and not waste anything. Anything more is asking for the potential of major loss. As a practice I stock two to four weeks of meat in a small chest freezer. The electric consumed is about $3-$5 a month and sometimes if nothing else it comes in handy to skip a week of shopping. In an emergency if I stretch out the meat to smaller portions and skip every other night serving meat I would have at least two months supply of frozen meat. My canned meat would double that. All this (a four month supply of meat) cost me no noticeable extra. Meaning, I picked up one extra item here and there, skipped a night serving meat, ate leftovers instead of a new serving- all that slowly filled my freezer without going over my normal food budget. In effect, it was "free" food.

However, it is really hard to beat the classic can for storage food. It has been around for over two hundred years and provides economics of scale that no other packaging technology can match. I realize it is much easier to tote around a plastic bag instead of a metal can, but the cost of light weight is an increased factor of two or three. Generic Spam is $1, a smaller chunk of mystery meat in MRE or freeze dried form is at least $3. It would be fine to have a weeks worth of bug out MREs in a rucksack, but at home stay with low cost cans. I would even wager to bet that the cost of the can is less than that of the food inside. Other inferior cultures (read: those countries more socialist than ours) might sneer and look askew at the wasteful Americans, but boy can we crank out those products that waste natural resources. Look at all those SUVs on the road. Almost as bad on gas as an old Caddy. However, the price of a product determines its availability. If it costs food producers only cents a can to churn out billions of metal cans a year, the marketplace is saying we have plenty of steel to spare. Piss on those tree huggers, and turn up the marketplace.

It is much cheaper to buy the large restaurant size cans of food and they are available at Super Wal-Mart. However if you only want to feed yourself, it might be a little much. A #10 can of pork and beans might be too much for just yourself. One can and you would swear off of them for the next five years. Try to pick at least seven different foods so as to have a different dinner every night. Meat and mashed potatoes one night, pork and beans and bread the next. Then, mac and cheese with chili. Spaghetti dinner one night. Rice and fish or chicken. Can chunk potatoes and meat. Perhaps cornbread and beans. Better yet is fourteen meal plans for a two week period. Pick the foods you can eat. I dislike rice but will eat it just for variety.

All this food is inexpensive. A pound of noodles is 50 cents. A pound of rice, a pound of beans, a few servings of mashed potatoes, a can or two of corn. All your food storage other than meat is under a dollar, and even that can be if you eat tuna, sardines, etc. If you spent an extra $5 a week on storage food you would get each week 10 pounds of carbohydrates or three to ten servings of animal protein. In very little time you would have many months of storage food. A #10 of potatoes is $3. If you alone were eating it

two servings a week, the can would last at lest a month with good size servings. A bag of rice the same. The only reason we put off doing this is that we take our normal food budget and multiply it by six months. Poppycock!! The way we buy groceries is to do a budget, find out what amount is left over for food and then spend as much as possible on the tastiest foods possible. For your storage foods you merely shop for variety, longevity and caloric count. Taste is unimportant at that point. Variety is important, as you need to keep eating to avoid sickness. In a stressful situation a monotonous diet will force you to eat less, and your immune system will suffer.

So why, you ask, is our survival diet made up of just wheat. Money, health, and storage. You can't afford any other food for a two or three years supply. Health is important after the collapse, and whole grains are great for you. White flour products are not. Fine for a short term situation, but not long term. And, storage time. You store your wheat for fifteen or twenty years it turns out just fine. The same cannot be said for prepared foods. Now is a good time to talk about the shelf life of foods. Prepared foods- rice, noodles, instant mashed potatoes (in a box) should all be discarded after a reasonable time. Why not a fixed time? Because I think that for liability reasons companies date out their products earlier than necessary. Use your own judgment. I have noodles in cardboard boxes I had since before Y2K. Mid 99 to present is two years. Even in my humid climate, I still think they have plenty of time to go. Not ten years, but at least another two or three. White flour and rice has little nutrients. It is empty carbs. A filler. Good to fill out a meal, but not as a diet. So, they store well. Cans will last forever as long as the can does not corrode. Veggies inside will loose their vitamins, but proteins will be fine. Get your fresh veggies through sprouting, your animal flesh and carbs from cans and dried goods. By the way, corn is NOT a vegetable, it is a grain.

What else do you consume everyday? Your clothing should last you through six months. Household items about the house such as light bulbs can be planned for by setting aside a few extra boxes. Transportation. You will need to plan on still getting to work even if it is a lesser job. The cheapest plan would be to buy a $10 bicycle at a garage sale, make sure it is in good shape, get extra tires for it along with tubes, or at least a patch kit. Keep it oiled and the tires inflated, and you can leave it in the garage until they come to repo your car. A step up would be to buy a moped for under $1,000. Tell everyone at work you are now a tree-hugger, or if that won't fly, stash it in the garage and take it out on weekends. Ten gallons of stashed gas will take you at least 1200 miles on a moped. You can also stash a small amount of gas for your car but I doubt it will last very long even if you have a Metro. Even if paid for your car is going to be a major financial drain on you in times of lean. Plan accordingly.

Toilet paper. Here is where it is not a good idea to improvise. That stack of newspapers in the garage is not a good idea. Even if you have an ass of steel you will still plug up the pipes. Note your weekly paper consumption and multiply it by 26. A pack a week is 26 packs is no more than $20. A small price to pay for a very important creature comfort. Yes, you will need to convert your towel closet to T.P., but let me give you a small tip. Do not buy loose rolled T.P. That is a waste of space. Buy tight packed such as Scotts

and you will only take half the space. Better yet if you wish to buy a years supply call up janitorial supply houses and buy a case of commercial T.P. This is the stuff you see in gas station restrooms, a big roll so tightly packed you think it will never end. Now, one more thing about T.P. Don't use so much. I don't usually ask people their wiping habits, but it would seem to me everyone does it about the same. Get a wad of paper and wipe. Repeat until you are clean. If you wipe once to remove the extra, then use a baby wipe or a wet wad of T.P. and you will finish the job faster with less paper use. Water cleans better than dry.

Items around the bathroom. Tooth paste is easy, have a few extra tubes. At a buck each this is a cheap way to avoid the dentist. Razor blades. I use a 20 cent disposable, the good kind with twin blades and a lubricating strip. One a month, as I shave every other day and shave down with the grain. My total cost after a year shaving with soap is $3.50 at most. Even if you triple that by throwing the blade away sooner it will only cost you $5 for six months shaving. Deodorant is another $10 or less using the dollar store cheapies. A pack of toothbrushes is only $1. What else do you need? Don't be a pretty boy. Leave all the other crap like mousse and aftershave alone. You just need sanitation and the means to not offend others. Think about the females. Get enough pads/tampons to last. Oh, they must have shampoo, the spoiled bitches! You can find it for a $1 a bottle along with the conditioners. I can't imagine there is a serious shelf life issue here. Get a 6 month to a years supply and keep it rotated.

Anything in the kitchen is pretty cheap. Do not use paper towels. For the cost of one roll you can get two fabric towels. Buy about six and through in the dirties with the normal wash. Fill up under the sink with dish soap. Forget automatic dishwasher soap, you can't afford to use it under adverse financial conditions. You'll have to do it by hand. Stock up before hand with pesticides just in case. Napkins are cheap enough to stockpile but consider cloth napkins. If you buy cheapie washcloths instead of oh so refined linen napkins you can supply the family with a new napkin every night of the week for the cost of about $5 for a pack of two dozen.

Don't want to add on to the family during a financial emergency? Stock up on condoms. Free if you go to the clinic. Wear old cloths and don't brush your teeth or shave. Don't let them know you have any money. Hey, go over there on your used bike. In fact, that's a good strategy for stockpiling food if you have no pride. Go to church food giveaways. If you do have rug rats of a tender age, do not stock up on disposable diapers. Instead, get cloth. Twenty a day for a week is twelve dozen. With pins and plastic over-pants you can stockpile three years worth of diapers for $50-$75.

Bad habits? If you must have coffee every morning you need to stockpile a few cans. Six cans should last at least six months if you use a quarter cup per pot of coffee, one pot a day using 2 lb cans. The currant cost after the coffee shortage has died down is now a respectable $4 a can, $2 a pound. $25 for six months supply of generic, low cost coffee. If you are a sauce monkey you need to stash alcohol. Forget beer. It has a limited shelf life and you need too much. If you guzzle a six pack a day six months worth would be at

the cheapest $500. If you must get wasted go for rotgut hard liqueur. A bottle of vodka would last at least a week and be half the cost of beer. Better yet, learn to brew your own moonshine. You stay bloato cheap and can sell to others if a black market develops. Tobacco is a very difficult habit to break. If you just can't shake that monkey, consider at least the possibility of cutting back in a financial emergency. If you were to start to roll your own you would pay at the most half price. In Florida mid 2001 a carton of generic is $22. They have cheaper, no doubt tobacco rejected by all other reputable companies, but I am talking about Dorals instead of the pricier Marlboros or Winstons. They are about $30 at the cheapest. Right now roll your own with filters and papers is $12. This is actually a higher price than what you will pay, as the filter takes up 1/4 the space and so you will get more than 200 cigarettes out of a can of tobacco. If you smoke only ten cigs a day in an emergency you can get by with spending only $15 a month for cigarettes. Drugs? Shoot yourself now. It is cheaper and less painful. Prescription drugs you need to develop a stockpile plan and get your doctor to agree, or at least get a veterinarian substitute.

Consider your other expenses. If you live in a cold climate you shouldn't be content with currant practices such as wearing tennis shoes and a sweat shirt and then dashing from your heated car to a heated building. Have plenty of warm clothing in case you have to start walking or taking the bus. In a hot climate you may not always be able to afford a central air conditioner. Shade is a lot cheaper than A/C. If you only buy throw away shoes (the $10 pair from Wal-Mart) at least have several pairs in reserve. They only last about a year. Medical expenses? I am blessed with good health, but I invite disaster by only going to the doctor or dentist when I have insurance, a rare occurrence. An example. One of my fillings chipped when I was flossing my teeth and since at the time I had no hope of paying for a dentist, I let it go. Sure enough, a year or so later I had to go get the bitch pulled. $150 after the check-up and surgery and it all had to go on the credit card. That took 6 months of saving to pay off. The point is that no matter how much it hurts the pocketbook, it is still cheaper to treat conditions early. Now my wonderful set of teeth has a hole in them. Curses.

Don't forget entertainment. I love to read and so I stock up on paperback books at thrift shops. They cost five for a dollar and although they are mass market drivel, they are better than nothing should I run out of things to read. Consider your hobby and stock up on those goods cheaply. Even a few decks of playing cards or used board games from garage sales will help pass the time when you can relax. The mind needs to unwind after a hard day, and better to pursue a hobby or game than watch the idiot box.

Make a habit of thinking about downsizing expenses and stockpiling needed items. For me it leads to frugal living and material to write about. For you it makes it that much more easy to live cheap when it is necessary. Don't wait for another Y2K scare to motivate you into action. Preparing now is a cheap form of insurance against all of life's uncertainties, from economic change to political deceit to natural disasters. Hurricane season is merely a time period at my house. I am already prepared. I sleep soundly at night and don't worry too much about missing the weather report for a week at a time.

Piece of mind, for a small investment.

END

MOBILE SURVIVAL
by James M Dakin
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The majority of survivalist plan on using their regular homes as the shelter of choice once a major disaster takes place. This makes good sense, as a bug out shelter has the risk of getting there in the first place. The problem is that you may be living in the wrong area when it all goes down. This pamphlet covers the pitfalls and the benefits of doing away with shelter and instead relying on a mobile lifestyle after a systems collapse.

During the fifties start of the Cold War, well off suburbanites could afford construct fallout shelters. The American economy was surging supplying the war ravaged world with basic supplies and our own country with all the luxury items denied us during the Depression and World War. An entire demobilized army of men turned into an army of college graduates and supplied the booming economy with the professionals needed. Even simple jobs gave good wages as union membership reached a high level. This was the fabled time of Leave It To Beaver, when Dad could work and leave Mom at home to raise the family.

The whole concept seems foreign to us now, but there was a time when wages were fair and the American dream was in the grasp of all. The economy was booming because of business. Not because of government spending. That came later. For a time there was enough to raise a family in a proper manner, and even to protect them properly by living in safe neighborhoods and if the need was felt, to build them a fallout shelter. Try building one now, legally, and the various minions of government will deny you the opportunity. Do you actually think that the building codes have evolved into their unreadable mess we have now by accident? As with the tax code, the environmental protection code, and all others the point is to be so complex that any bureaucrat can shut you down at will. Not that it was intended that way. It got to be that way through self interested careerist and

political favoritism, then was kept that way for the needs of the bureaucrats.

During the turmoil of the sixties, the whole structure of government was changed. What was good for business was good for America turned into what was good for the Federalists was good for the country. The unruly blacks in the ghettos were bought off with bribes of Welfare and make work jobs, usually in civil service positions, but also in private sector jobs through coercion using "equal access". This quieted the threat to the system. It was a shakedown on a great scale, and the taxpayer picked up the tab. And don't throw the race issue at me. I am calling it how it is. The same thing is shortly going to happen with the Social Security issue, as seen through the election 2000 promises. Most issues were pushed to the side, but by God the candidates better have a good piece of coin for the seniors with system stability and an added bonus for voting by promising reduced price prescription drugs.

At the same time as we were serving up a big glob of rich butter to the shirkers, slackers and stupid, we added a whole lot of guns for the shirkers, slackers and stupid on corporate boards in the defense industry. Open a defense plant in your district, get reelected. Now with all the defense plants only producing at a minimal level, start a war. Why the hell would you want to fight an unconventional war on the enemy when the standard tactics waste 50,000 rounds of ammunition per enemy soldier killed. Keeping the power elite in position calls for a mountain of bodies, then and now. Luckily for us now, the one good thing produced by the media was a distaste for the death of our own troops.

By frittering away the economic gains from winning the Second World War, the politicians gave us two income families, latch key kids, high divorce rates, skyrocketing taxes, inflation and our dubious honor of being the worlds biggest debtor nation. After Reagan killed Carters child of near hyperinflation, we cried out against higher taxes or inflation. It was promised to us and we expected it delivered. So, the Feds gave us hidden taxes, hidden income redistribution, and hidden politicians in the form of regulatory functions. Our bloated system survives by hiding and blending in. It is all about income redistribution, on a quiet scale. No muss or fuss, but death by a thousand small cuts.

We have pretty much given up the idea of a need for fallout shelters. This is not short sighted, but realistic. We face many threats, and must weigh each one out. There are finite resources to be had for preparations. The threat of Russian nuke strikes is slim. However, this does not mean it is a bad idea. I would love to have a fallout shelter, if I had the money. And here in Florida, it would take some money. A hardened underground shelter is tough in a swamp, but can be done. What is worse is the humidity. Everything rusts, including rebar. One day I shall bid farewell to this swamp and wish it a hastened sinking. Then, back West. Home to the desert and no damn wet air.

If you live in the mid-west you really have no excuse for not having a shelter. Tornadoes. But, again it is a matter of cash. Because of an ex-wife I see a personal tax rate of 50-60%. So, I can relate to lack of money. Think in smaller terms. Instead of a fully operating shelter, construct a small storm shelter and in a hurry you can quickly convert it

to a fallout shelter. NUCLEAR WAR SURVIVAL SKILLS gives the needed details on air pumps, radiation monitors and other equipment that can be homemade. Dig a hole, put up cinder block, lay over pipes, board, plastic and dirt. A ladder or steps down, a back window at ground level for air. I saw this home grown eye soar in Oklahoma out in the sticks, away from building inspectors. Even if they had been interested, it was only a storm shelter/root cellar. It couldn't have cost more than $100 and a lot of labor. Cheap tornado protection. And keep in mind that this was east OK, were there are heavy duty rains. This simple construction stood up to them.

Once the fallout shelter fad was basically over, the new phase was for bugging out to a fort in the mountains. Since most of us live in the cities so we can work, this made sense, but it only works for the wealthy. I save enough for a few years and I can afford a patch of dirt in the desert in a used travel trailer. Let alone a house. Let alone a house in the city and a shelter in the mountains were I hide my fortune in supplies. Come on. Survival of the mentally and physically fit sounds a sight better than survival of the richest. That strategy was about all that we heard about in the 1980's. There was little better, other than living off the land in a hippie commune. Jim Jones tried it and proved that indeed Kool-Aid was bad for you.

Let us say for the sake of argument that you live in the city, earn a great wage, and have a country retreat. You are well stocked and have a four wheel drive vehicle to get there. By living such a lifestyle you are quite vulnerable to income disruption. Making $6 an hour you can easily loose your job and get another. How easy is it to replace that $75,000 a year job? Can you say middle management layoffs? What about terrorism? There is no warning of that, and even if there was you would need to be 100% sure before you could skip work to bug out of town. You are a slave to your paycheck. Granted, we all need one. The point is you stay in a dangerous location to keep one- not smart from a survival point of view.

It sucks being poor at the bottom of the economic scale, but with it comes a certain freedom to place things other than a job in importance. I could move for Y2K, not to the country but at least out of any cold areas. The only thing keeping me here in Florida is my kids. When they move on, so will I. When I move it will be to any location I choose, as I have no need to keep or get a high paying job. I can do it on minimum wage. Poor is a state of mind, not lack of cash. I eat well, and have a roof over my head, as well as work less than I used to. That is all I need. Peace of mind is better than a Lexus.

Okay, so you are all set to bug out. No terrorist attacks, plenty of warning. Your vehicle is in great shape mechanically. Now, get out on the road. And wait. And wait. Five o'clock traffic ten times worse, with road rage translated into firefights. You could put her into four wheel and get off the freeway, but you will sooner or later hit, literally, an obstruction. It could be a strand of trees, an underpass, a drop off or what have you. If you don't parallel the road you run into fences, buildings, water, cliffs or many others. This is the wrong time to discover this whole thing is a bad idea.

Perhaps you experience a hurricane evacuation before and so you have a good idea what you might be up against. Still determined that getting out of the city is a good idea, you plan on an off road motorcycle instead off a truck or SUV. This is a far superior plan and might just work. The lack of a road is not insurmountable. Your biggest problems are going to be a limited supply of gas and criminal activity. The gas problem can be solved by carrying along about ten gallons, a five gallon canister on each side, as if they were saddlebags. This is slightly dangerous, but no more than staying in the city. That should get you through at least several states. Plan on loosing some to an accident, and have a siphon hose along. You could have a rifle scabbard strapped on as well as a backpack for food and minimal camping supplies.

Criminal activity during a bug out is going to be a serious problem. A new shiny SUV is going to be more tempting than a grandma on the first of the month walking home alone. A motorcycle is just plain useful for ten types of mischief and also a tempting target. Let's face it, the criminal types are unprepared and anything from a toothbrush up is going to be a wanted item. A wire strung between two trees is all that is needed to take out a motorcycle and a log across the road will stop a truck. It stops, the tree behind is given a final cut and blocks the rear. Molotov cocktail finishes the job. That is if they know you are on your way. If not, a semi-skilled marksman with an SKS can down the motorcycle rider and stop the truck.

I'm Joe Middle Class riding by with my $10,000 off road motorcycle with all kinds of fancy crap strapped on heading for my super retreat. I happen by a camp and an alert sentry who is hungry, cold and shoeless happens to draw a bead on me and opens up. I can't hear him because of my bike, or see too well because of my helmet. I dodge and turn, but one lucky bullet out of twenty manages to hit me. Chances are I end up as the stew. One more Yuppie scum getting their just desserts. Money only protects you in a civilized society. After the collapse you need a new currency- food, guns, whatever. Greenbacks won't even be much good for wiping paper.

You could go on about retreating to a remote location, using a mountain bike or canoe, or pack horse or what have you, but the bottom line is that you are exposed to danger on your trip. You may think this would also pertain to mobile survival, but there are differences in strategy that should make a difference. More on that to come.

Another survival strategy is to move to the boonies beforehand and practice a self-reliant lifestyle that translates well to comfort after a collapse. This is much better than bugging out to a mountain retreat. You are already out of city, you are no where near as dependant on utilities and food production as most, and you are surrounded by like minded people. The big downside to this is that not only must you work full time to pay the bills, you also have a second full time job just keeping the place going. It is real work keeping even a few acres in good shape, but it does not pay the bills.

For all it's hard work this is the lifestyle I would recommend as far as survivalism goes. Just make sure you have plenty of neighbors. Being totally alone out in the middle of

nowhere is asking for trouble. The small town strategy is also great. And by small I mean perhaps one or two thousand tops. Have a house or trailer, a garden, solar panels, a well, etc. Not as much work as a homestead, less food production, but you are close to work and shopping. Perhaps you can even do away with a vehicle. In the long run it is cheaper, but less self-sufficient. It takes a lot of money to build a house, drill a well, put in septic, erect solar panels, raise livestock, run a tractor, etc.

The purpose of mobile survival is to have a back-up plan. Some may see it as their only plan, and why not as long as you know the limitations. Mobile survival is basically a nomadic existence and it's biggest benefit in a survival situation is that you are mobile and not stationary. A stationary target is at the mercy of whatever roving band of criminal is near. However, the negative aspect is that you are mobile and not stationary. You can't grow crops, have assistance from neighbors, keep out of bad weather, or live in any level of comfort. There is both good and bad, and that is why I think it is best used as a back-up plan in case you loose your home to banditry.

It might appeal to some to be as the mountain men of old, leaving behind the idiots of civilization and being one with nature. I admit the thought has been with me a time or two. Most people are complete morons and best ignored. The sad part is that these same idiots also provide us goods and services we need, so we are forced to put up with them. Such is the tradeoff. If you think you can do without their products, you are a good candidate for a mobile lifestyle. Hell, why not just take off now and not wait for a collapse? Admit it, you are tempted.

EQUIPMENT

The standard bug out kit is usually for surviving a short period of time, as in through a natural disaster, or to get to ones retreat. A knife, space blanket and some Band-Aids are not going to be enough if you plan on living out in the boonies for any period of time. Keep in mind that you will not be able to take all that you need, as the weight factor is paramount. Weight is so important that it takes precedent over cost, comfort, or sometimes even necessity.

Even when you have a bare minimum, it is going to weigh a lot. You must be in reasonable shape to take this on. If you are overweight, smoke, and work in an office, this strategy will not work for you. After you have your kit, practice with it. See if you can handle the weight over several days. If there is major problems, other than normal unused muscle pains, get rid of more weight or rethink the whole thing.

The most important consideration is a great pair of boots. $50 Wal-mart specials are not going to cut it. Go to a sports store and get advice and information. Spend $150, if you have to. Getting a bad pair of boots is like bugging out in a Yugo. Boots are literally the engine that carries you around. In a protracted collapse it may come to pass that you descend into 18th century technology to survive, in which case you will wear out those boots and need primitive footwear such as moccasins. Until that time get an excellent pair of shoes to last you years of daily use.

Along with boots, get good socks and foot care kit. Moleskin and the like. Also, leather preservative. A small light kit that is needed to maintain foot and boot. Remember weight. Talk to your sport equipment salesman or read up on hiking books in the library. Then, go hiking. Books are great things, but experience is needed to sharpen the lessons they teach. There might be variances in weather or terrain that change your requirements slightly. Go for longevity in your footwear, keeping in mind that it will not be possible to retread your soles. A sales pitch that your boots are easily resoled is not important in this situation.

The next vital piece of equipment is a weapon. All the fancy camping equipment in the world is useless if you can't protect yourself or gather game. Also, this is your biggest weight factor. Lugging around an eight pound piece of wood and metal is going to be a bitch, and along that is the added weight of ammunition. You can run and scurry about through the woods with almost no weight but you will sacrifice range and usefulness. The more gun you carry, the less of everything else. The less gun you need to lug about, the more food and shelter. Neither chose is wrong, but you need to decide what will work for you.

Carrying a war surplus rifle will get you a reasonable cheap weapon with range and knock down power. The weapon will hold up well in dirty conditions and ammunition resupply will be less of a concern since ammo is used sparingly in a bolt action. They weigh a lot, but the trade off can be worth the peace of mind that goes with it. I can carry 75 rounds in a bandoleer, and reloading supplies in my backpack. This will get me through a long period if the ammo is only used for hunting and limited combat. Your role will only be that of harassment and sniping, as head to head combat is stupid against semi-auto weapons. And forget about a semi-auto yourself. The standard ammo supply is two to three hundred rounds and that is with a resupply back at base. That is only good for a firefight or at the most two. More importantly, the natural tendency during combat is to spray the target. You can train all you want, but when adrenalin is pumping your finger is squeezing off as many rounds as it can. The mind and body work to fight or flee. It is a survival trait. Learn to live with it. With a bolt action, you have a little voice screaming at you. I have to work the bolt, I have to reload. Your body doesn't want to get shot during that time. That should give you just enough of an edge during aiming. The guy with a semi-auto is saturating the area with lead. You only get one shot. That is the theory, anyway. I'll be damned if I'm going to go testing it for you.

There are several options open to you on firearms. One is a single shot rifle. The single shot is great in that it has the same stinginess with ammo as a bolt action, but does not rely on old surplus weapons as an affordable way of buying a firearm. A modern single shot is light weight and available for under two hundred bucks. A surplus bolt action is at least $100, but the need to add a scope mount adds at least thirty to that. So, for an extra $75 you get a modern arm that is light weight, more accurate, has fewer parts to break, and uses more common ammo rather than the typical surplus hard to find type. The only drawback is the single shot verses five to ten in the bolt action, but you may consider this

worth the sacrifice.

Perhaps you would like to consider a .22 rifle. I dislike this choice as the ammo is not reloadable and at most you can carry about two thousand rounds. Of course that is about all you can carry for a bolt action with reloading supplies, but at least with that you have a hard hitting round for enemies and game. With a .22 it is wounding capability at best. Another poor choice is a bow or crossbow. Sure, you can reuse the ammo. However, the skill level needed is high, and the range just plain sucks. The only good thing is silent firing.

Avoid any firearm that is not designed to withstand the rigors of outdoor life. It might even include the single shot, but definitely most modern bolt action hunting rifles. They shoot great but are not designed to be beat up in the brush for an indefinite period. Lever-actions might be suitable, but suffer from range problems. The best contender is of course military surplus. They were made to bang around. Their problem is massive weight and less than ideal accuracy. It will have to be your call. Remember the golden rule of survival guns. The best one is the one you can shoot the best. My recommendations don't mean squat if you are comfortable and proficient with my "don't get" firearms. You just need to compensate for their short comings.

You will always be on guard for ammo and components you can beg, borrow and steal. However, your primary source is going to be reloading what you have. Get a Lee reloader, the kind that is about the size of a paperback book. They are $20. Get the bullet mold, also $20. They both come with instructions, and are really all you need to get started. Have one hundred rounds of your ammo, factory new with non-corrosive Boxer primed. This is what you will use and reuse. Now, get two or three thousand rifle primers, about fifty bucks. You need at least one thousand to carry around at one time. You can remelt bullets to fill your mold. The powder in a one pound can should be sufficient. You need more, but the weight is adding up already with your reloading components. This alone should keep you in ammo for some time. Eventually you will run out, but you should be resupplying from your fallen enemies.

You will need a good knife or three. One for camp use and combat. A pocket knife for emergency use. Perhaps a back-up. The idea here is not to add a whole lot of weight because of a never ending list, but to have those items that are tools to add to your supplies without having to carry them. A rifle gets you food and protects you. A reloading kit cuts down on the number of rounds you need to carry. A knife is for protection, skinning game, and making tools so you don't need to carry them, such as snares or tent pegs or the occasional walking stick. Carving a fishhook from bone. Whatever. The knife is too important a tool NOT to carry. Don't be cheap on it, but don't pay designer prices either. $50 Wal-mart special should be a good bet.

So far between ammo, reloading equipment and components you have roughly ten pounds or so. The Lee reloader and mold come to a little under two pounds, and a stripper clip of 303 ammo is five ounces. One hundred rounds of ammo and one thousand primers plus

powder and a pan or cup of some sort for melting should set the total at about ten pounds. I do not include the rifle weight, as it is not part of your pack. My personal limit is twenty pounds in a pack for long term use. I was in the service and know all too well the accumulative effect of a heavy pack. When you are evading an enemy and trying to more fast and silent, being a pack mule is not the way to do it.

Your remaining weight allowance is needed for food and shelter. You can carry a heavier pack and cart around more food and whatnot. I am against that. Even a twenty pound pack is going to get irritating after awhile. Do yourself a favor and test this out before hand. Get a twenty pound sack of dog food and put it in your pack. Go hiking for a day. Carry a metal pipe to simulate the weight of your rifle, using it as a walking stick. If anyone asks you are experimenting for an article on hiking, as you are a writer. Do not carry the regular equipment, especially the weapons. If you are on Federal land, even state land, you could get busted. Go off the trail, run at times. Dodge in and out of tree clusters. Stimulate evasion and stealth. Can you handle the weight? Small aches and pains are okay, major discomfort is not. Chances are you are no longer 18 and in the best shape of your life. You can't duplicate your military or college sports performance.

Your pack need not be large or expensive. Just be sure it can handle the abuse. Do not get a huge pack, as it only adds to your weight. Stay away from ALICE web gear. The crap is expensive, not worth two hoots, and dangerous. The idea to use suspenders is good, if the web gear was used for a short patrol without a pack. With a pack you have two sets of straps rubbing your shoulders raw. Also, whenever you move around, dive to the ground, or what have you, the gear twists around and is hard to get to. A better idea would have been a sort of tie down to your trouser belt such as cops use. Not the best, I suppose, but an improvement. Web gear can be used with a fanny pack if you only use a day pack with it. That might be better than a pack, as more is instantly available. For me, personal experience has turned me off of ALICE gear. Also keep in mind that if all your gear is on one piece of equipment and you loose it, you loose everything. Have your knife on another belt, have your ammo in a chest bandoleer, etc.

For a tent I would use a small tarp, and for a sleeping bag I would use a space blanket. If you are in severe cold you will need to carry as much in cold weather gear as in the rest of your equipment. Try to stay in a mild climate, if for nothing else than to avoid camping fires. These are dangerous in enemy territory. You could cart around a small gasoline stove to avoid this problem, but you had better plan of days without being able to find abandoned cars (and thus salvageable gas) and carry foods not needing cooking. If you are in the hills or mountains and need cold weather gear, try to use as little as possible. Long johns, and a small sleeping bag along with a space blanket might do the trick. Perform the back yard test. Take your equipment, go out to the back yard and sit for hours through the night. If you can handle the cold it is all right to use that equipment. Tell a buddy to help you out. It will pass the time and help if you fall asleep and don't wake up. It can happen, as seen from the stories of the geriatrics freezing in their apartments in severe winter storms.

Aside from whatever clothing you see fit to wear as befits your section of the country, that is about it as far as major equipment goes. Of course you need such things as cooking utensils and small medical kits, sunglasses or a hat or what have you. You can pretty much figure out what you need by trying out camping and hiking on a trial basis. Start out on short trips and slowly increase it. This is the best way to learn through trial and error. I could tell you to wear a big floppy hat, but the day spent outside in a ball cap will learn ya a thing or two, especially when you have sun burned ears. Get it?

CACHING

The image of running around with everything you will ever need on your back and killing as much wild deer as you need for food is romantic but false. Even the Indians who grew up on the land and hunted in untamed wilderness sometimes went hungry or starved. If you stay mobile you must except the fact that you might go hungry at times. Aside from trading your best bet for a continued food supply is going to be caching. Setting up caches beforehand could be the difference between having an emergency reserve and starving.

Absolute secrecy is vital. This cache is emergency food. If it is an emergency for you it will also be for others, and if they know of its existence they will steal it from you. Plus, in today's highly paranoid anti-drug culture they will assume you are burying drugs and arrest you, take your supplies, and never return them. Take one or so five gallon buckets full of supplies with you on camping trips and bury them in places you will remember. Twenty miles apart is about a maximum distance, and if you always have three days food on you, you are always in range of food and ammo supplies.

If you go camping once a month and take three buckets each time, in a year you will have two years supply of wheat, three thousand rounds worth of reloading supplies, and trade goods all hidden away at a cost of only $50 to $60 a month. Ten for the wheat, another ten for ammo and twenty for ammo components, perhaps ten for misc. Two buckets of wheat each time and a bucket of reload supplies and trade goods. Barter items could be space blankets, cheap import pocket knifes, combs, flint fire start kits, cans of "luxury" foods such as pineapple or candied cherries, laminated area maps, sewing needles, shaving razors, etc.

Always use different areas and different stash ideas. One time use a cave, another bury them in sand, another at the point between two boulders. In the middle of a thicket. Seal the contents in Mylar bags so that food scent is eliminated and that moisture is less of a problem. After several months dig up one and check it out. Any problems can be rectified for future burials. Have a laminated map which pinpoints your burials. I personally would not rely on a GPS system. It is a great trick, but those systems are a product of the high spending Cold War. Who knows the future upkeep problems those birds might have. Place your faith in the government to maintain things at your own risk. Ask Russian retirees.

There is really not a lot to caching. You are burying supplies in a location you will

remember or can look up. Bury it, dig it up later. Elementary. Use Cosmoline and plastic if you bury firearms. If you can't afford that, bury some shotgun shells and appropriate size steel pipe. In an emergency you can construct a makeshift shotgun and "procure" a true firearm.

LIFESTYLE

As mentioned earlier, starvation could be a problem for you in a mobile lifestyle. With caching you can stay away from civilization for a time using stored supplies. When things return to a semi-normal state you can return to inhabited areas and begin trading. Use your stored trade goods if you must, but a better idea would be to have a post-civilization type trade. Gunsmith, blacksmith, doctor, veterinarian, carpenter, chemist, boot maker, butcher, etc.

Concentrate on the older skills, pre-industrial. If things really degenerate, an artist who can construct a flintlock rifle is going to be in demand. A barrel maker is a dead art, perhaps it will be needed later. Kurt Saxon had the right idea when he focused on 19th century cottage industry. Perhaps you might wish to purchase his books, or his collection of books on a CD-ROM. Go to the Internet and use your browser, type in Kurt Saxon. You'll find his Web site. A word of warning. He publishes a lot of material that only points you in the right direction rather than spelling it out for you. Kind of like me.

If you are a product of late 20th century American economy, you may only be skilled in flipping hamburgers or other similar service sector "jobs". In this case, you lack college or trade skills. My suggestion is to think of a niche that you can fill after an apocalypse. One idea is to purchase a notebook computer with CD drive and equipped with a solar power panel. Precede to copy as many books on 19th century technology as possible, from the library if nothing else. Also copy books such as alternate technology, alternate gardening, the Mother Earth News stuff. Copy on to CD-ROM as much as possible. Later you can trade your knowledge. Another thought is to self train yourself in whatever you think you might be interested in. Serious hobbyists were once a great source of innovation in many industries. You might also stock up on cheap but non-duplicatable trade goods and become a merchant. Try to be original.

If things are disrupted for quite a time and trade is not likely for some time, you will need to stay mobile. Try growing "wild" gardens, where plants are grown in small batches here and there but not in any recognizable pattern such as rows. Another thought which is less than pleasant but which might become necessary is cannibalism. Not the greatest way to get supper, but if that's what it takes...

Boredom will become a factor after some time. You can only go slinking around the woods for so long. Camping and hiking are fun if they are a hobby. As a way of life in time they will be not only boring but perhaps a source of dread. Think of what you can do now to prepare for diversions later on. Writing a journal, bringing a long book you can read and reread (such as Atlas Shrugged), whatever will take up little space and weigh little.

END

Trailer Living Cheap

by James M Dakin
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If you were either brave enough or stupid enough to go down to Mexico you would be able to see for yourself how the poor construct shelters. I have never had the privilege of first hand sightings but descriptions paint a picture of cardboard and tin with raw sewage around the place. I think this might be exaggerated at some point, but we shall let that stand. Suffice it to say that in Third World nations, shelter is pretty much what you can find and erect. Here in the good old USA we do things a little different. If you are poor city folk, you live in the projects. If you are country folk you live in a beat to hell trailer.

It simply amazes me that the market for both mobile homes and travel trailers is so vast that there is a thriving secondary market for the used ones at mind numbingly low prices. With cars it is a little different. They actually need a working motor to get along. This limits the amount of damage you can accept in a used vehicle. If you are offered almost any car for under $500 you know the thing is really not likely to make it through the next traffic light. A $500 trailer most likely merely needs roof sealant and a water heater. Fixing a trailer is not like a car repair. With a trailer you can actually get novices to do them. A car needs a computer technician anymore.

Have you priced a new mobile home or travel trailer lately? The trailers are as expensive as a car and the mobiles are half as much as a house. They are both way overpriced for a box of sheet metal. However, like cars they loose value as you drive them off the lot and so us poor folks are blessed with an abundance of cheap used choices. In some areas where the price of living is outrageous you will get reamed on a sale, but go to any economially depressed area and deals are waiting at your cash filled fingertips.

I have several theories on this price structure. One, travel trailer buyers are well off middle class types who buy the thing, pay out the wazoo for it and use it once a year. It is the first thing sold in lean times. Two, others with more disposable income trade up to niftier more classy models so as not to be outdone by the Joneses. Three, those with enough sense to save cash come across these bargains, live in them awhile and then sell them as they move up the economic ladder. Four, Joe and JoBeth Six-Pack sue everyone

they can, finely collect, buy a used trailer but then have to sell it because their crack habit uses up all the rent money and they get thrown from the park. A last one might be a relative was living in the thing out back, died in it, then the in-laws tried to get rid of the cursed thing.

No matter what the reason, you can have a cheap home if you save up cash, shop around and be patient. Don't treat this as a impulse buy. Sure, you can get one cheaper than your computer, but since you will actually live in the beast, give it some thought. I have yet to live in a cheap trailer that didn't have some redeeming values, but I only want shelter, so my standards are low. If you want a cozy home you need to be careful. More so in mobiles than trailers, but still careful.

The difference between mobile homes and travel trailers is that of size, quality and price. A mobile home is much bigger, usually around the size of a modest house. The home is shipped in two or three sections and assembled on site. After that you are asking for trouble if you move them as they tend to shake apart in vital areas. If you are a handyman, by all means go ahead and move it, but not if you expect a turn-key home. Areas with a lot of mobiles will have competition among movers and you can get the beast moved across town for a few hundred dollars. If you are in an area that has few, you will likely pay as much or more than the trailer to get it towed. If you are claustrophobic, have kids or own a lot of crap your best bet is to buy a mobile home. Really, its only advantage is size. If you need to feel like you are actually in a house, this is your best bet.

Why anyone buys mobiles new is a mystery to me. If you have more than a five year note on the financing you are living in damaged goods and still paying out the wallet. Consider a thirty year loan on $30,000. This is your cheapest mobile home, and your longest loan. I am going to give a rough estimate, for exact payment plans you will need an interest table. At ten percent you will pay roughly $250 a month FOR THIRTY YEARS. The trailer will have sags, leaks, holes and a generally sad appearance by then. At fifteen years you pay $400 a month, ten years is $500 and if you only finance for five years you will pay `$750 a month. Much better than a house, but still and all a hefty bite for shelter. My personal rule is $12,000 max for a used mobile home. At ten percent interest for five years I am only paying $300 a month. And that is only in high cost of living areas. You can get them much cheaper. Right now I'm paying $150 a month home payment for four years. With lot rent it comes to $325 a month. I had payed one off, but needed to move to a larger domicile on account of girlfriends teenager. They sure are high maintenance (girlfriends, not trailers).

Really, all you gain when you buy a new mobile is a longer grace period before they fall apart. It is better to get one real cheap that already has problems, fix them, and even then you come out ahead financially. Mobiles are made as cheap as possible. Your walls are literally paper thin. It doesn't take as many accidents to wear them down quick. You move furniture around, things get banged up. The old lady throws dishes at you, it tears things up. The kids go tearing around the place, things get roughed up. The cat jumps up on a shelf, it falls and puts a dent in the floor. Things out of your control conspire to wear

down your home. The cheaper the quality, the quicker it gets worn down.

Travel trailers are made to be moved about constantly. They are much more rugged. I have had twenty year old travel trailers that were in much better shape than a five year old mobile home. I have owned a total of three travel trailers and three mobile homes and they ranged in age from 35 years to five years old. In my humble opinion, travel trailers are much better at ageing than mobiles. In the future I will buy either one as price and circumstances dictate, but for a hassle free living I would always prefer a travel trailer. True, the space is much less, but if you have storage sheds and try to cut back on buying too much crap that should not be a criteria. Plus, keep in mind that it is real cheap to live in a trailer as far as utilities are concerned, while a mobile is an energy pig.
Another thing to consider when choosing between the two is that travel trailers usually have 12 volt wiring in them, with perhaps some appliances as well. If you are living off the grid you will almost certainly need to go with the trailer so you can wire up to a PV panel for juice. But, if you are in town, just plug into an outlet and you can use city power. With a mobile you do not have this flexibility. Decide what you want to do with your home before you buy it. Any future moves? Go with a trailer. Claustrophobic? Go with and stay with a mobile, regardless. You're a cheap bastard who doesn't want to pay that much for a home, or utilities? Buy a travel trailer. If you want to test your resolve of living in a small space, live in one room and do everything there. Computer, TV, books, sleep, cook. If you can stand the small quarters, you can stand a travel trailer.

Expect to pay in the neighborhood of $1,000 to $3,000 for a used travel trailer. These are quite aged but in good condition. Anything under this price should be given a good inspection. A mobile will usually be three to four thousand and up, but as they age less gracefully older models or those in worse condition will sell as cheap or cheaper than travel trailers. In certain areas they will be given away for a song simply because the currant location has lot rents that are to punishing. These would be a prime candidate for moving. For your cheapest living conditions consider a used cab-over camper, from three hundred to seven hundred dollars or there abouts. It seems these are either of poor quality or to confining and thus do not gather much in the secondary market. Ask around to those that have owned one for the scoop. I have never owned one nor spoke to those that did, so I am not able to give you any information. Points to consider besides close quarters are they have no toilet facilities. That should be of little concern for those that want to rough it.

LAND
Should you buy some land or should you rent? Most of the time your answer is going to be to buy, but there are important exceptions. Obviously, your age is a criteria. If you are eighty years old, what is the point in buying some land? You'll be dead soon. Rent a space and spend as much of your money as possible quickly before the government and your ingrate relatives start fighting over what is left. Even if you are only sixty-five and expect to live for twenty more years, there is little point in buying since you save little in the long run. A $200 a month lot rent is $48,000 in twenty years. If land in your area is going for $30,000 for a city lot (like they do in Central Florida coastal areas, as a

minimum) why bother over the difference? Actually there will not be an $18,000 difference because of property taxes. At 1% your tax is $300 a year for a total of $6,000 which is only a $12,000 difference. Over twenty years that is only a $50 a month penalty for renting rather than owning.

Now let us say that you buy a lot at age thirty and live to 85. Over fifty five years property taxes will be $16,500. Lot rent would be $132,000. Add the thirty thousand to taxes for a rental penalty of almost one hundred grand!! That is a $150 monthly hit. I neglected interest rates and rent increases to simplify the numbers, to make the point that it pays to do the math. In most areas it does pay to buy, as land is much cheaper but rents are not. If you go to the boonies and buy a $5,000 lot, and local rents are $100 a month, you will see that after only four years you are living rent free.

However, there is another factor to consider. Jobs and supplies. At one time I was buying land in Arizona. The cost was $3,000 for an acre, and I was making payments. Even when I paid it off in five years I still can't move out there as it is located six miles from any town and forty five minutes away from any jobs. This is where not having a car is a bummer. If I was to get a car just to commute to a job to pay for a car, I would be better off staying where I am which is in a city where I can bike to work. My rent here is $125 not including water/trash. A car payment would be considerably more. So I need an outside job to survive. If you can import a job, you are all set. Otherwise, forget it. Every rural economially depressed area already has enough farmers and handymen. You need to bring a job with you.

As for supplies, consider that in any halfway decent size town there is a Wal-Mart. In small rural hick towns there is only Mom and Pops, with much higher prices. Consider the increased cost of supplies into your equation. In my case in Arizona I either pay for water deliveries and bike into nearby hicksville for high priced groceries, or I buy a car. Even a $500 car/truck would require at least $75 a month in insurance and gas, not even including maintenance. A way around this might be to pay a slightly higher price for less land to get closer to a small town. Then, you don't need a vehicle or need to pay as high of prices as there is sure to be some competition from merchants. Plus, you might even find a job.

Of course it is not all about money. There are other considerations hard to put a value on, such as peace of mind. What is it worth to be free of the landlord? Wouldn't it be nice not to have to worry about inflation as far as a dwelling is concerned. Plus, from a survivalist standpoint you have further concerns such as mobility and constructing shelters.

You could be living in a nice little area that over the years slowly but surely turns into a tourist destination. At one point you could find your rent substantially increased. Or, a decent landlord could die and his son could take over the property and turns out to be a real bastard. What about retirement? If Social Security turns out to be a stinker, you could find it harder to make ends meet, and it would be much better to own land free and clear. And what if you want to build a bomb shelter? Why build it on land you could loose? But mostly it is about sleeping sounder at night knowing it is a lot harder to loose

your home if you own it.

On the down side of ownership is the location you picked. The economy could suck, the government could turn hostile, the neighbors could be real idiots. Once you buy you are almost stuck. Any move could jeopardize your investment. So, mobility is sacrificed, plus you might miss a migration that is needed since you are committed to that spot. The overused example is the German Jews, but they are an example for a reason. Do not be afraid to uproot and move if it becomes necessary. Thus, by buying cheap land and a cheap trailer, you can move if you must and face a minimal lose. With this strategy it would of course be prudent to own a functional travel trailer and a vehicle. I am not totally adverse to vehicle ownership, especially if it is intended as an escape vehicle.

Another option is to avoid the problems of renting and ownership and just squat. The legal way to do this is to get a gold claim. The illegal way is to just pick a spot, cop a squat, and prepare to move if needed. If you are far enough from a road to avoid sighting but close enough to be able to get to town, you might not be hassled. If you pick a spot in the mountains, beware of woodsmoke revealing your position. In the desert you need to avoid long rang detection (since one can see long distances) and stay behind a natural obstruction. Use a little imagination and do a little work. There is unbelievably huge areas not inhabited.

Consider this situation if you are squatting. You have a trailer about ten miles from a small town. Twice a week you pedal your mountain bike into town, check your post office box for your mail order business, buy some non-perishable groceries and fill up a few Jerry-cans with water. Have a few side baskets for the cans and a back pack for groceries, or a small bike pulled trailer for it all. Every once in a while you bring in a propane stove to refill. You could have your small trailer covered in sandbags for concealment and to regulate temperature. Take sponge baths, have an outhouse, perhaps a PV panel for electric. With this set up I imagine you could survive nicely for under $1,000 a year. That means you only need a small mail order business to bring in enough. For hermit types this would be as cheap as it gets without living as a bum.

Land prices are going to vary considerably. From $500 lots to quarter million dollar lots, to multiple acres at five hundred an acre. I researched the net and mail order companies for almost two years before I settled on Arizona land. It was far from perfect, but all cheap land has a catch. Otherwise, why would it be cheap? My first criteria was location. I was born and raised in the West, which has a certain character that Yankees and Southerners lack. Also, as importantly, it has no humidity. I hate humidity. Humidity is to me a most repulsive force of nature, unequaled by most natural disasters. Even if it cost me more to live out West, I would pay more just to avoid the humidity. To me, anything east of mid Texas/Oklahoma etc. was out of bounds. That of course left the problem of high land prices. In the west we have a huge load of land, but in many instances it is cheaper to live back East were it is much more congested. This has two reasons. One, the bastard pukes the Feds own most of the land and thus drive up prices for the remainder. Two, the water rights are not privately owned and thus there is an

unnatural distortion in land prices regarding its location to water, either above or below ground.

Another effect on land prices is California. I was born and raised in California, and thus feel qualified to trash talk it. The socialist, tree hugging, commie punks who run the joint trashed the economy good in the early nineties and sent a good amount of people out of the state. This had the undesirable effect of running up land prices in all nearby areas. Nevada, Washington, Montana, Idaho, etc. Oregon was already firmly screwed up by its granola crowd, so no loss there. Land prices were already bad, but that made it much worse. Nevada was hardest hit since it had little land to begin with (the Feds own 90% of it). My father recently moved there after becoming tired of all the taxes, but high house prices dictate he will not pay off his place unless he lives into his 90's. Two state retirement checks, social security for him and his wife, and it should barely be enough to support his mortgage and truck payment. God forbid he should heed my warnings and beware of the demise of big government. He always was pro-gov, an ailment of his generation.

West Texas had promise, with land at $5,00 an acre in a county with no building codes, and a communal well on the development, but I passed because of the proximity to Mexico. In a period of political and/or economic upheaval there will be masses of peasants crossing the border causing problems on our side. I chose an area still near the border, but much farther north. Not perfect, but any further north and colder winters would have presented serious economic changes, such as buying stoves and stockpiling wood in a region not known for its forests. If you want to read up on one view of the danger from Mexico, read up on the author of Civil War II. He has his own Web site on the coming of racial tensions in this country. I tend to regard his warnings as worse case, but it still is a possibility. Thomas Chittum, and I believe the Web site is civilwartwo.com.

Farm land in Oklahoma can be had for $500 an acre, in quantities of ten acres and up. However, if OK is a desirable state for you to locate, keep in mind that anywhere out of its two metro areas you can buy very cheap lots, such as for $2,000 in small towns. That gives you the utilities at hand, but no job prospects. OK is economially depressed with sky high taxes and an inferiority complex with its southern neighbor, but if you can import a job, you can live cheaply as far as land/rent goes. Keep in mind that sales tax varies by county, with the worse off ones charging 10%, which is applied to food purchases. Some counties also have higher property tax. If you buy land, plan on a storm cellar. Most likely you will be right in tornado alley.

I have heard Michigan has lots with log homes as low as $3,000 in the upper north. I imagine these were hunting properties. Beware big daddy government and being snowed in for the winter. Economially depressed areas of Tennessee and Kentucky, etc. could offer hope for the frugal. I didn't research the area, but there have been rumors. The classifieds from Backwoods Home should offer many firms to pick from. Ozarksland started out the trend selling real estate through the mail with all the work done for you, but as of late I see only higher priced units offered. You might think an acre for $8,000 is

cheap, but I do not. However, if you are interested in Arkansas/Missouri land, check them out.

HOME MADE UTILITIES

If you find yourself out in the middle of no-where, most likely you will need to rig up your own utilities. Trash is easy, as you merely get a used 55 gallon drum and burn everything (under a metal wire mesh screen, of course). Sewage is not too difficult. A homemade septic or compost system is easy. Power is not so hard, either. A PV panel and small generator should do the trick for a 12 volt system. The hard part is going to be water. In most cases digging a well is expensive and prone to error. If you start to haul water, be prepared to radically change your lifestyle in this regard.

If you recycle those items you can cash in, and start a compost heap, your only remaining trash should all burn. Take a look at your garbage. What is in it? Food waste and packaging. Mostly packaging. Recycle aluminum cans and glass, metal and newspaper, donate magazines to the library. If you are going into town for supplies anyway, you might as well take in your recycles. If you only get 25 cents for five feet of stacked newspaper, who cares? It is free money. It is only when you make extra trips or go out of your way that recycling is not cost effective. Two liter bottles can be kept and filled with bleach water. If you drink soda anyway, this is free water supplies. While in town fill up some five gallon jugs at the gas station for free and transfer them to 2 liter containers when you get home. After some time at this you could have a month or two of stored water to be used in an emergency.

One of the reasons I ended up purchasing my land is that the power lines were adjacent to the properties, thus ensuring that power hook up was free. Sure, I can hook up a PV panel for “free” utilities but after you factor in panels, batteries, replacing batteries, and specialty appliances (propane refrigerators are high price) the costs should be about the same. I realize the desirability of having a decentralized power source, for emergencies and as a back-up, but for day to day living I prefer to use the public utility. If I only cook, use a half size refer, use the lights and computer, and don’t waste, my bill only comes to $20 a month. If I was to buy a propane refrigerator, a PV panel, batteries, a used notebook computer with separate PV power source, and other required extras, I don’t think I could do it for under $2,000. That is over fifteen years pay back time. Why worry about it? If your utility bill is that low, use PV only if you foresee another Y2K situation where power supplies are seriously disrupted.

Remember, decentralized is not always better. People lack roof panels and their own propane tanks not because they are short-sighted. They do so because it is cheaper to rely on the utility company. Remember, this pamphlet is not on disaster preparedness, but about living cheap. Even if civilization ended and you thought you were energy independent, you face several problems. One is that your propane tank is going to run out. Two is that your batteries are going to need to be replaced. Three, if you haul wood from any distance, you will run out of gas for your truck and your chain saw. Oops!!

I think that the best option for you for both saving money and being true self sufficient in energy is to do three things. Have an underground house. This gives you zero heating and cooling bills. Learn to produce your own bio-gas for cooking, and learn to produce your own primitive PV panels and batteries for when replacements are no longer available. Anything else is just being independent from the power company, not from the industrial supply chain.

There is an abundance of material on the Web covering alternate energy, from PV power to windmills to water and fuel cells, etc. There are plenty of FAQs and company advertisements to let you find out everything you need to know. Beware claims for the need to spend great quantities of cash. There should be plenty of material on do-it-yourself, Jerry-rigged operations. Do not fall for the hype that these systems are expensive. Sure, if you try to duplicate a middle class lifestyle you need to spend $100,000 to provide enough juice to your home. Why not just spend $1,000 and have limited use of electricity? Reading the new Mother Earth News you might get the impression that only the rich can save the planet. Do yourself a favor and save money. If you help mother earth along the way, well, kudos for you.

I do not mean to imply that power generation is difficult. Simply by getting a propane refer and water heater, leasing a big gas tank, and throwing up a PV panel and batteries for lights and some 12volt appliances should do the trick. If you need to heat in the winter, installing a small wood stove is as easy as clearing a corner, putting up a heat shield and placing the pipe through a window. Skirting with galvanized tin will keep the floor warm. However, you do need to beware the downside as I have outlined. Up front cost and no true self sufficiency. Also, keep in mind that there are fuel cell units coming to market now or very soon. The prices could start at around $5,000 and you still need a fuel source such as propane. The prices should go down in the future and even with higher prices plus propane costs, this could be the way to go for off the grid living with no construction needed and no need for conserving energy, buying batteries, or repairing the system. I mention this only as an option, not as the solution. The cost for this emerging technology are still prohibitive. Plus, your location off the grid may mean you are forced to have an alternate energy system anyway, regardless of cost. Such is the drawbacks of living in the boonies.

Sewage can be handled in a manner of ways. An outhouse and composting toilet are unpleasant although cheap ways to dispose of waste. Another way is to provide a septic system. Nor does this need to be a commercial system. It is possible to do the whole thing as a Jerry rig special. First, however, be aware of the first options. They have the benefit of being simple, don't use water, and are basically free. The outhouse is a hole in the ground away from your water source, if any, with a structure over it to provide privacy and some weather protection. Dig a deep hole, construct an outhouse over it, do your duty, and cover each of your creations with a bit of dirt. When it is full, move the house over a fresh hole. A good idea would be to use your grey water disposal system for urination and the outhouse for solid waste. By not mixing the two you provide for a less

toxic atmosphere and cut down on your trips. Another idea is to use a five gallon bucket with a seat on it partially filled with sawdust. Crap in it, cover your treasure with sawdust, repeat until full with the bucket lid on in-between squats. Then when full you can dig a two foot hole somewhere and deposit the contents. The only advantage this offers is an indoor system and less smell, but it does present a tub of crap in your domicile. Not what company wants to see, I'm sure.

The respectable solution is a septic system, and this can be homemade. It basically consists of two plastic 55 gallon drums, PVC pipe and a lot of digging. I could bluff my way through on this but at this point I am going to direct you to "Travel-Trailer Homesteading Under $5,000" second edition by Brian Kelling for $10 at Loompanics P.O. Box 1197 Port Townsend WA 98368 at 1-800-380-2230 or Loompanics.com on the web. Call or look them up for up to date price and shipping cost. Believe me this book is a bargain. Not only does he give you details on making your own septic system for under $100, he tells you how to hook up the PV panels, the wood stove, etc. If you are serious about living on your own land in a cheap dwelling, you must have this book.

Water is most likely going to be your biggest problem. How many lots of land do you see around that have running water? That you can afford? How many of you can afford $3,000 to drill a well that may or may not dry up sometime in the future. Sure, grandpappy dug a well and it still puts out fifty years later, but times, they are-a changing. Not many people used to live in the desert. Now, every Tom, Dick, and Harry with a social security check is settling in Texas, Arizona or Florida. We must keep the old bastards warm, you understand. Now, Tom and Dick they served in WWII as admin clerks, so they figure they are entitled to suck at the government teet. And, By God, if they want to deplete the water table in an arid region so they can wash their Caddies, grow a lawn, and rinse out their dentures, they sure as hell are because they fought for their country, unlike us whippersnappers. Now, please don't get me wrong. Some vets did actually volunteer. Some actually did fight in combat. I applaud those brave souls and thank them. But, the reality is that most suckers were drafted. It was not their choice. Also, not all who were in the military did any fighting. There were more support troops than fighting personal. Plus, we didn't need to get involved in the war. Roosevelt was a socialist bastard who wanted to join the fighting to advance his own agenda. He goaded Japan into fighting us. I am not saying that veterans deserve our scorn, I am saying that the government did not screw them over any worse than it does a lot of other groups and I see no reason why my hard earned money is taxed to death to pay these people to live in leisure. For Christ sake, we gave them a college education after the war so they could get good jobs. Isn't that enough already? Give me a break and get these people off welfare.

Now, after the swollen populations of desert cities waste the areas natural resources you might be faced with your well drying up because the water table has fallen. Growing up in central California in a small town that used to be a swamp we were faced with an annual two inch drop of our water table. This is a Mediterranean climate, not a desert, and a mere twenty five thousand people with only a small agricultural sector caused this rapid water depletion. Imagine the effect a city such as Phoenix has on their water resources.

Do not expect people to actually change their consumption habits until crisis hits. Think the oil embargo. And by no means think I am advocating conserving water to the point it effects the economy, such as our protection of the forests add hundreds or thousands of dollars to the cost of a home because of timber prices. I merely think that rather than apply socialist measures to the supply of water we should allow the free market to regulate it. This would immediately raise the price if the supply dwindled.

So what else do you do if you can't dig a well? The common solution is to haul water from town and this system works as far as conserving water. If you haul six 55-gallon drums in from town once a week, you will damn sure not waste any of this precious liquid. Even if the water is free, the cost of hauling it (assuming even that the barrels were free or very cheap) will approach around thirty to fifty cents a mile, the average cost of owning and operating a motor vehicle. This will mean you use a composting system, perhaps adapt conservation techniques such as turning off the tap as you are brushing your teeth or shaving, taking quick showers with less pressure, using a filled sink to rinse dishes rather than with running water, etc.

Hauling water also means you will need to wash your vehicle and your clothes in town. Most likely you will also start to let your urine sit in the bowl a time or two before you flush. God forbid you might even start to take sponge baths. There are many fun and happy ways to conserve water, and you will rediscover them all. However, the hauling method costs little to start, a reasonable amount to continue, and is a common enough practice that there are facilities and equipment to serve this need.

Another way to supply yourself with water is to rig up rain gutters to a large roof and bury a cistern. Even in an area were there is little rainfall, this method will still provide a large amount of water, but not all of your supply. You will still need to conserve and to haul some from town. The rainfall will merely supplement unless you are in an area with a good amount of rainfall and if that is the case you may wish to build a pond. This will supply water, perhaps a small amount of hydroelectric power, and even fish. If your land area prohibits this, by installing several cisterns you may be able to supply all your needs. One last method is condensation. I am familiar with two methods to capture moisture from the air, but both are problematic. The first is a pyramid shape pile of stones with a hollow core up the center and running around the sides up and down are channels. The heated stones act on the cold night air and produce condensation which forms on the stones, drips to the channels, rolls down to the core and out the bottom to a collector. The concept is easy to imagine (think of an artificial Christmas tree with the trunk as core and the branches as the channels) but I have only seen one source for this, since lost. I have no idea how big the structure would have to be or how much it could produce. The good thing is that the bigger the difference in day and night temperature, the more efficient, perfect for were it is most needed- the desert. It was supposedly based on an ancient Mid East design. The second is an American company that has a machine that uses air moisture to produce five to fifteen gallons of purified water a day using around $1 a day in electricity. The upside is that regardless of climate you have at a minimum drinking water for the family, with no strange construction methods to worry about. The

downside is an up-front cost of $2,000 plus shipping. Personally this appeals to me more than a well, and it's cheaper. The company is Aqua Aire at 5624 Hwy 78 Sachse TX 75048. Toll free 1-877-450-8111. Check with them for up to date info, as I contacted them pre Y2K. An up to date source is miragewater.com and theirs is only $1,000.

FINAL THOUGHTS

The whole idea of living in a trailer or mobile is to reduce your shelter cost. Why anyone wants to pay a third of their income for a third of their life for a space were you sleep, cook and relax is beyond my comprehension. Remember that a home is shelter, not a trophy place to impress people. Impress them by being young, semi-retired, having a paid for house and being able to enjoy life. Money comes and goes, but you only have a certain amount of time in this world. Don't waste it, enjoy it. Instead of working, go fishing. Do whatever makes you happy with the time you have left. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it.

END

GOOD TIMES AHEAD??
By James M Dakin
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Just the other day I had the dubious pleasure of a dental appointment. While this would

normally not cause undo notice, this time I was lucky enough to be randomly flipping magazine pages and came across an interesting piece on an economic forecast. The magazine was almost a year old and thus published at the start of our current recession. This could either be your typical pro business cheerleading or perhaps they were on to something.

Now, most times I am quite pessimistic and look at any bright economic outlook with a healthy dose of skepticism, disdain and sarcasm. So, while others are busy playing the stock market and making almost as much money as a dart throwing monkey, I am salting away wheat and 303 ammo. While this does assure that I sleep soundly at night, it does nothing for my state of poverty and lack of upward mobility. After a record number of false readings of the economy, I am almost ready to believe that perhaps optimism be given a trial period.

The magazine is Fast Company, issue July 2001. Page 88- Roger Cass The Last Optimist. I must admit to never hearing of the gentleman, although his wave theory was familiar. Nikolai Kondratieff is the grandpappy of modern wave theory in which history is studied and a predictable up and down cycle is noticed. Hence, a wave action. I have always liked this theory as I love history and truly believe that the past is a pretty darn good guidepost for the future. The problem in the past is that all authors covering this were slanted in the direction of another Great Depression.

The old saying is that when you have a hammer, everything looks like a nail. When you are bound and determined that we are headed for a depression, all data tends to support that view. Those following the wave theory said that since we skipped the thirty year mark for having a depression, at the sixty year mark it would be even more of a severe fall. The gist of it being that every sixty year complete cycle we have 30 good and 30 bad years. But, if we have 60 good, at the end of that all hell breaks loose. All books and articles I read up to this point said essentially the same thing. You would not believe the amount of total mathematical crap I had to wade through reading all these. And, now it would seem that somewhere down the line some idiot did not see his thirty year depression in the late sixties and concocted a new theory to explain this failure and every Tom, Dick and Harry after that parroted the same tired line.

So it seems that the wave theory is correct but that a common sense theory was over complicated by over educated individuals who were in general overly excitable. Now, don't get me wrong. My crystal ball is so cloudy the future keeps bumping into me from behind as I am busy peering ahead into the damn thing. I am almost always wrong about the timing of events, or the severity. I can get the general trend okay, it's just the details that befuddle me. Let me give you a small sample. In the late 80's and early 90's I get the bright idea that it would be swell to have my own business. So, being that my two hobbies before the Internet were reading and watching movies, I chose to start a video store. Being loath to start a business in debt, I planned on working a second job and putting all proceeds into purchasing videos as they went on sale. In several years I would have an adequate library and I could move to a small town in the mountains and open a store with

no competition. Get out of the city, have my own business, and do what interested me. A great plan. Then, about 100 videos later I was struck with the thought that eventually video stores would be obsolete when pay-per-view matured to the point where thousands of films were available at any time for a buck. In this I am still certain, yet it seems I was a bit hasty as this yet has to come about. I could have already been settled and in business. But, who can say if it was good or not.

My point being- I can't point fingers at others being wrong. But I can be pissed they wasted my time and money, can't I? How could so many be wrong unless all of our economic forecasters were merely part of the pack, baying at the moon and making a lot of noise, while still following the Alpha male without an original thought of their own. Bastards.

There is a Mayan belief that catastrophe strikes every 50 years or so. It seems this was valid, as their cycles were driven by crops and climate. Agrarian output was driven by the sun, and now we all know about sunspot activity. Yet, we are a service economy and thus the cycles of nature are to us merely curiosities, unless you are the rare individual compiling data of nature as it effects insurance rates or commodities markets. The Mayans had no such options, as their economy was purely agricultural. They were great with heavenly bodies because that was the information that paid. So, before our observant Soviet scientist was sent to Siberia for his troubles of predicting the Great Depression two years in advance, the ancients were able to tell us the same thing.

Roger Cass can be said to be quite proficient at analyzing wave theory. He wades through an amazing amount of information to arrive at his wave readings. Cell phone call rates, air passenger fares, confidence ratings, oil issues, Internet connection speeds, on and on with data from over 150 countries. From all of this he tells of the last five waves, and predicts the coming attractions.

In the last 200 years-
**1789 began the first boom starting in the midst of the Industrial Revolution and went on for 26 years. It was stopped by the 33 years of the post Napoleonic War recession.
**The Great Railway Era lasted 25 years from 1848 until 1872 when financial companies funding the railroads started to go bust. The down period lasted 24 years.
**1897 saw the start of autos, telephones and electricity which ushered in a great economic boom. World War One pretty much screwed things up and by 1921 the down period started. It did not end until 1947 after 27 years.
**1948 started the upswing from the first computers, the end of world war, Bretton Woods and colonial independence. It ended after 26 years with the oil crises and destabilized currencies in 1973. The down period lasted a mere 20 years.
**The current up cycle started in 1994, about the time new communications started revolutionizing our lives. This age is predicted to last 27 years until 2020. That is a nice round number to remember.

Good ol Roger is said to have been contrary for quite some time. In the late 70's he called

Saudi economic stagnation and OPEC impotence when everyone else was calling to nuke the Middle East for the oil. He called others on the prediction that Japan would eclipse us. If true, it is quite impressive. I only offer a bit of doubt since it seems everyone seems to have a great track record and then they really drop the ball. Such as Howard Ruff who had a still pertinent book How To Prosper In The Coming Bad Years. Then he wrote the spin-off predicting Y2K. Oops. Or the Indian gentleman (Butra?) who had a best seller on the coming Great Depression of 1995 when all we saw was a great economy. The book jacket gave him quite a track record also.

If Mr. Cass is right, than you will see-
**US productivity will average an annual growth of 3.5% with a 1% employment growth.
**Broadband will finally see widespread use as the "last mile" issue is resolved.
**The US will shift from an investment in telecommunications to one of fiber optic.
**Japan will turn around big time.
**Local capital markets will emerge in developing countries in a major way.

Hmmm. I guess that these are no great revelations. I could have predicted those. Not terribly difficult. Still, it is interesting in that he predicts economic growth for so long. Myself, I liked the theory that in 2007 to 2010 we would be plunged into a depression as the bulk of the Baby Boomers retired, overloaded the system and sending us into a severe economic tailspin. But, this article is about me being too pessimistic, and perhaps we won't see the Boomer retirement crisis hit us for ten years after it happens. It is very possible. Since most of the sheeple are loath to admit that Uncle Sugar could not support use with "free" money it might take awhile for the effects to sink in to popular consciousness. Then again, I could be a hammer in search of a nail.

END ARTICLE

BUTCHER, BAKER, CANDLESTICK MAKER
Occupations, skills, and specialties in a post apocalyptic or economically disadvantaged environment

by James M Dakin

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Whether the future sees prosperity or cataclysm, ones focus on a career or bread winning occupation should be that of acute paranoia. Even if an asteroid fails to hit, a plague fails to wipe out 90% of the population or a nuclear war is averted, your current job should be a constant preoccupation. The question you should usually ask yourself is, “Does my job have a future?” “Will my job exist in the future?” “What do I need to do now to assure a job in the future?”. It does not take anything more than NAFTA, free market competition or technology to kill your job. Any and all jobs and occupations should be suspect. You are a buggy whip manufacture and you know that automobiles are coming. What do you do? Do you switch from leather whips to leather upholstery, or do you keep making whips thinking the auto is only a rich mans toy? Do you relearn another occupation or go work for the new factory? Hindsight is indeed 20/20.

The difference between now at the start of the information age and back at the start of the industrial age is that the general education level is much higher. Many educated men back then guessed at the direction the economy would take and acted on it. The difference is that now a larger percentage of the population should be aware that a change is already occurring. This is not news, as it has been a constant for twenty or thirty years. I would hope that most people realize the trend. Perhaps I am wrong and give my fellow humans too much credit, assuming they do indeed have their head pulled out of their butts. Regardless, we SHOULD know better. Why does it come as a surprise as we are downsized? Plus, things are still not as bad as they are going to get. For years the agriculture and manufacturing sector have been under ruthless competition. Improve or go out of business. Now, or in the near future, the workers will be under the same kind of pressure. Competition is a good thing, regardless of the immediate pain it causes. Humans were meant to progress, not stagnate. Forced progression is painful, but in the long run benefits everyone, even if it is only future generations in some cases.

So, to put it bluntly, not only must you plan for a future of the global marketplace with hyper speed, ruthless competition and low wages/prices, you must also at the same time plan ahead for a possible economic downturn, and even a severe sociological meltdown. Oh, gee, what fun and games. As depressing as this may sound, if you look at it in the right frame of mind it can be fun and interesting. First off, know that you must plan ahead for leaner times economically. Plan to live below your income, and strive to be debt free and over time decrease your cost of living. If I am correct about the general trend ahead, you will be under increased pressure to decrease your wages in response to global competition. Next, develop on a hobby level another skill that interests you. And be realistic. Just because you love to read books does not mean there will be an opening for a critic. If you love to watch movies, plan on a concession stand instead of a critic. Third, take a similar or that same hobby and plan it as a survivalist occupation. The last two are complimentary, with the difference being one of severity. A hobby of stuffing sausage might get you a small business selling them over the Web. That hobby will provide a means of meat preservation if refrigerators cease to exist.

It should not be too surprising that jobs are under increased pressure. We saw the worst of it over the last thirty years, with the last ten finely paying some dividends on our sacrifice as a whole. The changeover from industry to information paid off in the nineties, as our economy surged ahead of those nations still seeking to perfect the manufacturing process. Japan was at the top of the heap when it came to manufacturing at the most efficient. Fortunately for us we are already moving to the next level where manufacturing is merely a means of delivering information and service. Think about it for a second. Growing wheat is a low paying commodity business. So is growing sugar beets. However if you purchase those two items and you increase its value added factor by turning it into a Twinkie, you make a tremendous profit. The same with corn. Corn has little economic value other than cattle feed. However, take that corn and turn it into a Dorito chip and you make a tremendous profit. The same with manufacturing. A tennis shoe cost perhaps $10 to manufacture and ship. It sells for $100. The cost in agriculture commodities and manufactured raw material is negligible. What is the cost of the corn, oil and seasonings in that bag of chips? 25 cents? The real cost is advertising and promoting a brand name, market research, tracking computerized sales figures, etc. Information and services dictate profit, with the goods merely being a means to an end. If there was a market for bronzed turds, the turd cost would barely factor into the equation of its retail price. Japan made high quality items at low profits. And I'd wager that FedEx made a better profit shipping it across this country.

Economics of scale dictate that any widget you buy will cost almost nothing to build. So, under increased pressure of competition, what does the seller do? Cut back on advertising? Foolish. Cut back on middle management and replace their job with computers and flatten the hierarchy. Sound thinking, lets do that. Sullen pimply faced teenagers not showing up for work at McDonnalds? Put in a machine that does the French fries all by itself. You think you can always fall back on a minimum wage job, think about that for a second. Now, expand on that. Several companies are working on a radio emitting strip that will replace bar codes. When they get it small enough it will be put on retail items. Not only will a cart full of food be instantly rung up, but inventory can be conducted daily of an entire store. The important part is this. See how convenience stores are run by one person at a time. The same can be done for a grocery store up to a certain level. Goodbye cashiers jobs that used to pay well. Now, any Tom, Dick or Harry can do it for minimum wage. Wages are an item able to be reduced. You can't reduce rent or other overhead but you can demand more out of employees or eliminate them to a degree or all together. Everyone has seem this happening for decades. When global wage competition is a fact, it will intensify.

You scoff at the concept of global wage competition, but consider. A Russian doctor is only prevented from practicing in this country by anti-competitive measures such as immigration controls and licensing restrictions. If the national control on these items is reduced, such as by the natural evolution towards a decentralized government, your once protected job is in danger. A lawyer can be replaced by software on many mundane tasks. The only thing protecting him is his participation in lobbying the government. We have

only had strong central governments for a short period of time, only about two hundred years. Don't think it can't go in the opposite direction. If indeed the marketplace does dictate the government we have, we will decentralize in time or be left behind in Third World status, as is the fate of any country clinging to the past instead of embracing the future. And what if the government refuses to cut back on regulations and interference? Sure, it might be slightly difficult to send in illegal goods, such as prescription drugs (recently legalized) or duty-free items, but with the coming of broadband telecommunications services should be able to be readily "smuggled" in. What is to stop you from excepting the services of a foreign doctor if they are performed over the Web? Why couldn't you have a home kit to take a blood sample and transmit the results? People much smarter than myself will see a market for these kinds of things.

Even if we are somehow miraculously spared from foreign wage competition, the increased squeeze on profits at home will dictate we continue to get more productivity from workers and replace them with machines. You need to decide if you wish to continue educating yourself to always stay on the cutting edge, train for a possible "hot" new career, or teach yourself a new skill to broaden your economic value. These I leave to you, as you know your field the best. The other possibility I will cover is to start your own business. I would hesitate to recommend an independent consultant, as there is more competition there. More layoffs mean even more competition. The best bet would be into a niche market that others are not aware of. I mentioned sausage by mail, although I have no idea if it could work. My first attempts at this were what I deemed a unique and very cheap newsletter. I can't say it wouldn't have worked had I been able to advertise. In any case here I am again with what I consider a unique product. Time will tell if it works.

Do not compete on one item or concept. If you go just on cheap price, another can always beat you at that game. Someone can always get more capital or cheaper labor. Vast inventory alone may not make up for high price. You need to provide something different at not too high a price with good service. Good luck. However, if you start now, the plan is to eventually have a profitable business that can take the place of a wage. Keep in mind that this will usually be below what you had been making, so plan on reducing your living expenses at the same slow and steady pace, with an equal outcome if all goes well. As an example, in ten years my monthly living costs will go down to under $300 with the same standard of living I now enjoy (sort of). If all I get from a mail order business is that amount I will be able to semi-retire and need only to write. I think a business taking in $3000 in profits a year is a reasonable goal, as most need more than that a month.

Even if you fail to come up with a novel idea, even a better way of doing things could be sufficient to get you enough business. A lawn mowing service that used a push mower (non-motorized) and a bicycle with bike trailer to haul supplies could be so cheap to use that you could undercut your competitors on price. And, don't forget other bike businesses. If you had a relatively small area to service you could perhaps provide a delivery service to others. A service that offered to pick up and return videos for spare change. Blockbusters video cost $3.99 plus tax. Even at ten percent tax the cost will

only be $4.39. If you provided this service for the remaining 61 cents, few people would miss that. I think of the cost as $5 anyway, and that keeps me away from renting videos, but most people would be happy to get this cheap service. If you standardized delivery and pick up times to a few blocks of time you could make profit in quantity. If an average of twenty people did this daily you would see a $12 to $16 profit for going to the store a few times and peddling around the neighborhood. Even if you doubled your daily food intake to compensate for lost calories you would still see $10 a day. If you have a paid off trailer on your own lot, what more would you need to live?

Once you have identified a niche market to serve, your next project will be a way to "survivalize" it. In other words, what would it take to run that business after a social collapse. There are obvious examples such as a knife maker and gunsmith that naturally require little modification to be suitable for a post apocalypse economy. Doctors, dentists, chemists, engineers and carpenters are other examples. However, do not assume you need not prepare for what may be ahead. A modern doctor would quickly be out of work without supplies and drugs. You would need to research renewable supply methods. What was used 100 years ago? Alternate pain killers? Herbal medicines, etc. Ask yourself how you could continue without UPS running. Assume you hand craft muzzle loading rifles and sell to the reenactment crowd. This might be a good post collapse business. However, you would need to find a replacement for barrel blanks, factory gunpowder, primers and exotic wood. Sylvan Hart, the legendary "modern" mountain man in Idaho during the Depression fashioned his own tools and flintlocks from all natural materials including his own smelted metal. Could you? Know of a local source of iron ore?

One subject I keep meaning to research in further detail is the Revolutionary War era breech loader invented by a Briton and used on a small scale before they were quietly disposed of. The Ferguson rifle. This was great for our independence, as they were revolutionary (pun intended) weapons. The speed of reloading was amazing for the time. Had the idiots adapted and mass produced the rifles PDQ the French may have been a much less problematic ally to us. Of course, to give the devil his due, this was before factories and just before the beginning of standardize interchangeable parts, so the reluctance on the Brits part was mostly since it was a near impossible task. Now, imagine how popular this gun might be if it was to be reproduced. The reenactors should enjoy it and it would be a great weapon to have if we were to be really reduced in our level of technology. I don't know if a reproduction is even possible on a profitable level, but I think it is an interesting idea.

Don't discount the idea of researching an area totally different than what you are trained in now. If something interests you enough to fire your imagination, by all means follow up on that. There are successful magazines on Stone Age technology run by persons that took it up as a hobby and loved it enough to share the knowledge. What could you teach that is a "lost" technology? Steam engines, the construction of giant catapults or bi-planes, old fashion manufacture or mining, how the first presses were built for printing, making black powder from natural sources, military tactics of other centuries, etc.

Knowledge is more valuable than supplies, although you will need to stockpile the tools and materials of your chosen new trade.

I imagine now would be a good time to discount several theories on the future. I do not seriously believe we will actually have a nuclear war on a global scale, nor an asteroid strike nor a global disease outbreak that will reduce our civilization to a more primitive level. I think the chances are better that we will keep going ever faster into the information economy and after that the nanotechnology economy. Therefore, your most important strategy is to reduce your needed income level and to increase your skills in the information area or learn to live on the fringes of the service sector cheaply. However, there is no sense not to think about possibilities and if possible to prepare for the worse. Who would have thought that the Dark Ages would have followed the fall of Rome? After all, scientific knowledge was available previously. What caused society to regress to such an extent? The point is it happened even if it shouldn't have. Possibly it could occur again. You might as well make contingency plans for it now and have a fun time doing it. Who knows, you could help save civilization with your saved wisdom.

This somewhat parrots the views of Kurt Saxon who believes that with his books a few fearless leaders will be able to take over the world using the 19th century technology he reprinted from encyclopedias of the time. I do provide the same services by reprinting that eras books as I find them, but I differ in that I see them as part of the solution. Throw in some modern Mother Earth News and alternate technology from VITA (alt tech for third world countries) and you are closer to our goal. We need to take technology from all areas and apply any that are accessible by the individual and reproducible without our modern supply chain. If you focus only on 19th century you miss certain things such as solar and wind power and even a small computer industry capable of being prolonged with minimal hoarding now.

I speak from only partial knowledge here, but it seems quite feasible that one could collect older computer components and stash them for future assembly of PC's so that we might not loose all computer power when, or if, we regress technologically. Even if you were to only go back 6 years and collect the first Pentium and run Windows 95 apps you could use most of today's software and the cost would be dirt cheap for the hardware. Go back further for 386's and 486's and you could buy for electronic scrap prices. If you did build with a minimum of modern parts you could even sell starter computer kits, say for $100. That might be profitable if there was a market for it. There are still plenty of people that think a computer is still a luxury, but might change their minds if the price was well under $500. The only glitch I can see is the battery problem. I seem to recall there is a small battery on the motherboard that if it dies your whole system is inoperable. I'm fuzzy on details here, it could perhaps only be the older models. Check with a computer nerd before starting this project.

Now we run into the "reinvent the wheel" problem. No matter what your interest or no matter how obscure you think your researched interest, there is bound to be others who have the same knowledge. If they are close at hand they might prove to be a competition

to you. Say that you can make household soap (as can everybody else) but you know how to modify it so it is not so harsh and won't nearly burn ones eyes out. Don't you think someone else won't also come up with a solution? This is an occasional occurrence throughout history, with two inventors coming to the same invention at the same time and that cruel bitch history only giving credit to one. Half the fun of inventing something is to be remembered forever for your greatness.

One solution to this problem is to hold back certain advances for future release. Say, you've invented the Henry rifle and wait awhile to introduce the trap door loading feature and enclosed feeding tube. This way once competitors catch up you can once again leave them in the dust. Or a manufacturing method that doubles productivity and halves the price. Wait awhile before you start using it. Buying occurs in cycles, with innovators buying it first regardless of price, then your average Joe when the price comes down. Another possibility is to research several fields/products so that if one turns out to be a dud, you can move on to the next idea. The same as keeping all your eggs out of one basket. What if you have a great idea for starting your own metal canning factory, yet at the same time someone finds a warehouse full of glass canning jars and lids. In the long run your idea is better, but at the time the market is saturated by glass and you can't compete profitably. Better have another trade to practice until it does become profitable.

The following is a partial listing of trades and occupations that could be adapted to an economic downturn or social collapse. It is limited only by my imagination, not by any one items lack of suitability.

BUTCHER- almost anyone can become a butcher by trial and error. If you "butchered several attempts" (hey,hey) you would eventually learn. The key is to research preservation techniques to replace refrigeration, and unique and innovative styles/spices to give it a different taste. Old German sausage recipes could help.

BAKER- Any house could bake its own bread. The key to success is to set up shop in an urban environment with less competition from households and to offer a different product. Today a great product would be whole wheat, after a collapse when everyone is eating that, find a way to offer white bread. They've had this for centuries, so find out how it was done before you needed a huge factory. Also, dessert would be a way to greater profit. Learn how to make your own sugar and stockpile a lot of wheat.

CANDLESTICK MAKER- Not real hard to figure this one out, but how to create a value added factor to beat competitors? Perhaps you should bypass candles and create not only lamps but a renewable oil. I hear hemp makes a great oil, but I'm not sure if it is eating oil or flammable oil. Nonetheless, there are other plants that can produce oil. Research them.

FARMER- This one is going to provide a lot of competition, so your best bet is not only to farm but to create machinery and techniques to increase productivity. Research modern techniques for sustainable farming and also closed system farming. Having a team of oxen

plow a field and tossing around seed will not work as well as deep narrow beds planted with companion crops. A flock of chickens will produce little compared with a system of earthworms, chickens over a fish pond and aquiculture. Not hard to figure out how to get the most on a farm without machinery or pesticides. Don't forget to stockpile non-hybrid seeds and research alternate crops such as hemp (provides food, rope, oil, etc. and is a weed easily grown, the only difficulty being the raising of super resin female plants for the stoner crowd-leave that to others).

CHEMIST- Sure to be an occupation in extreme demand. Think of the arms industry, plastics, composite materials. Our society would look like a 1901 Sears Roebuck catalog if we didn't have modern chemistry to thank. Everything would be heavy, clumsy, made from natural materials. Compare the weight of a Mauser to that of an M16, and thank plastic for the difference. Or think how to replace a Zip-lock bag. Chemistry does lead to a better life, tree-huggers to the contrary.

COMPUTER TECH- Already covered previously. Think lower tech, stockpile accordingly and cheaply, teach yourself how to work on hardware. It shouldn't be to difficult, courses are available on the Web. Computers can be useful, even alongside woodstoves and black powder. Research older computer industry methods for easier chip manufacturing. Previous to fab plants and clean rooms, if possible. Is there a way to make your own from raw materials?

BARBER-Think back to the Old West where you went to a barber for not only a haircut but also a shave and a bath. Should indoor plumbing become a rarity, this occupation could resurface.

LAUNDRY SERVICE-Not many people are going to want to scrub cloths by hand, and those can afford it will pay a service to do the laundry. Have a manual washer plus ringer, as supplied by those companies selling appliances that don't use electricity.

MERCENARY-Covered in its own pamphlet. Basically, continually innovate your own arms industry to stay one step ahead of your enemies. You could do this on a small individual scale by specializing such as a sniper, demo expert, sapper, etc. Tradesman in military arms could hire out their production skills on demand, if inventories were non-existent due to high demand.

SALT MERCHANT- Interior dwellers could face a shortage of salt, and traveling salesmen could meet this demand. Just make sure to protect against the idiots who would highjack you.

GUNSMITH- Most gunsmiths should stock up on small parts to the best of their ability, but as this is near impossible it might be feasible to have a machine shop and an alternate power source to fabricate parts. Also, collect dies to reload and try to Jerry-rig powder and primer to ensure your continued supply.

CLOTHING MANUFACTURE- This should be in high demand since not everyone could find enough stockpiled clothing or wear hides. Hemp would be an ideal fiber since it is not climate sensitive like cotton. Research the machine introduced just before hemp prohibition that replaced manual separation of the fibers. There should be patent diagrams and such. However, even using manual labor, this will make a great material. Research old time spinning, looms, etc. How to use wool? Meat source, research vet care and such, as well as clothing fiber. There is a lot to research here, but when clothing becomes much more expensive to manufacture, the price will shoot up. It should be quite rewarding.

BOOT/SHOE MAKER- On par with clothing. Everyone needs footwear. Difficult to research old fashion techniques, but it could be worth the trouble.

MECHANIC- With millions of cars and trucks out there it will be easy to collect spare parts. The problem is going to be to create an alternate fuel and keep them running. If vehicle fuel competes with crop land, it won't be excepted except for military use. Find other sources such as wood alcohol or hydrogen. Other mechanical work will be needed with hydro-electric motors and such. Two cycle engines might be popular for mopeds and such to conserve fuel.

SANITATION EXPERT- perhaps an occupation not in great demand, since officials from the old Health Department might be around to offer their expertise, but this is a job that needs doing. Someone needs to know about disease and how to prevent it and establish guidelines for the rulers to avoid Black Death and Cholera.

DOCTOR/DENTIST- I imagine one could learn this on an informal basis if you were strongly motivated. Otherwise, all that need be done is for those trained in this field is to research alternate supply/drug sources. Don't stockpile drugs, least you become a target for crack-heads needing a fix.

ADVISOR- If you are one of those people that love to learn a little bit about everything, you might be a good candidate for a general advisor to heads of state. The hard part would be to convince others of your broad knowledge being useful. Many times specialists miss the trees for the forest.

INVENTOR- Another area where it would be hard to convince others of your worth. Have a prototype ready, the best being a weapon system. Don't be afraid to re-invent a great old fashion machine, such as a Maxim machine gun.

TOBACCONIST- A great occupation. People are going to need tobacco. Figure out the seeds to buy (non-hybrid) and store, the best growing method and the means to make the paper and perhaps the filters. Available stocks might get most through the first growing season, then sell to them dear.

POWER GENERATION- With the centralized power companies shut down, it would pay

to have the knowledge of how to Jerry-rig alternate power generation equipment. Study methods from such sources as old Mother Earth News issues or better yet Backwoods Home Mag. Beware those small details like cars don't have deep cell batteries and silicon won't be manufactured anymore.

BICYCLE SHOP- It might be difficult to manufacture bicycles, but research the possibility as they should be the vehicle of choice in the future. In the mean time know how to fix and mend those that are already out there. Beware most will be the crap Huffy and Murray type made in China. You will have your hands full trying to keep those working.

AIRSHIP OWNER- A bizarre one, but think of the ease of manufacturing a Zeppelin airship as compared to running track for a railroad or maintaining deteriorating asphalt roads. Well, perhaps not any easier, but much for fuel efficient. Also has military uses, along with cargo transport and luxury passenger trips.

SHIPBUILDER- Why not build a navy for that budding dictator? Research older building techniques, with perhaps even sail. And don't forget strange building plans such as Ferro-cement or such.

ARMS MAKER- A business that will be in great demand. Small arms and ammo will generate riches, but don't forget the big stuff. Cannon, rockets, tanks, aircraft, transports. Focus on renewable resources, not salvaged material, otherwise your business will not last long.

LEATHER WORKER- Think of all the old material made from leather such as gun belts and ammo pouches, purses and saddles. Might make a good co-specialty with butcher.

METAL WORKER- Not necessarily the same as a blacksmith. You need more than horseshoes and wagon parts. Weapons, transportation, and tools all need a workshop to be fabricated. A blacksmith uses force to pound metal into shape, a metal worker uses precision cuts and molds. It shouldn't be too difficult to equip a workshop full of cheap, pre-computerized machine tools. Don't forget a library on metallurgy.

COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST- You can't retreat into your own little corner and hide. You must find out what is happening around you, plus the best comm gains an edge in battle. Research those devices without computers as a back-up if needed, stock up on modern equipment or at least their parts. Just ask yourself what you will need to continue this industry after a centralized economic collapse.

LIBRARIAN- Another good job for those that collect information rather than apply it. The better your library, the more in demand your services will be. Don't worry about copyright laws, as this will be for your private use. Get everything you can think of that might be useful on computer, microfiche and paper. Use all three whenever possible and have multiple locations. One location could spell disaster, as in the Alexandria library.

Beware CD-ROM corrosion (after about 20 years) by applying to a new disc every other year, don't use acid paper to avoid degradation and keep microfiche out of light when stored. This should preserve your library.

OTHER- I'm sure there are others that I have missed. I can almost hear you shouting in the background "Occupation XYZ, you idiot!! That's the most important of all!!" My purpose here was to get your creative juices flowing so you could apply your job and hobbies to the problem of rebuilding the economy after a collapse, at a profit. Without a profit incentive no advances will be made to mankinds general condition. Don't look at profit as anything other than the single greatest contribution to mans current level of comfort. Without profit we would still be in the Dark Ages. Embrace it, it is a tool for good. Have fun, and even if only good times are ahead (let us pray!) then think of the intellectual joy to be gained from this exercise.

END

POST-APOCALYPTIC DICTATORSHIP
by James M. Dakin
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INTRODUCTION
I have written this booklet for those that fantasize of a post apocalyptic dictatorship with

themselves as supreme ruler over the suffering masses. I make no apologies for this subject, as I considered it all in good fun and if you are humor impaired than you have no business reading it. You also have no business being on this planet, but we will let that go for now. If the prospects of being the big fish in the pool do not appeal to you, then obviously you were meant to be ruled. This being the case, you will of course have no problem working in the fields from dusk tell dawn with only the most meager scientifically calculated amount of calories to sustain you for another days work. Personally, if this were to be my fate I would go out of my way to be as ruthless and evil as was necessary to avoid this. If this meant that I was to be the ruthless overlord to my fellow humans, then so be it.

Not only is the prospects of rule a satisfactory one, for the sheer joy of primitive power lust, but it can also be viewed as a legitimate strategy. While others have gone no further than to stockpile a closet full of freeze dried foods, a water filter, a set of fatigues and a hunting rifle with a box of ammunition, you can prepare to rule your little corner of the universe. The costs of the two strategies will not differ greatly, but in the end one will leave you sitting atop a pile of food with nothing to do but defended against invaders, while the other will allow you to conquer, rule, and generally make a pest of yourself.

The hobby of survivalism is mostly comprised of reading and buying a lot of crap. Anyone can go down to Wal-Mart and by a case of tuna or a gross of safety pins. And we have all seen the scores of books offered on the subject. What is generally avoided, other than in fiction, is how life will be after any general collapse of society. Even in fiction the scenarios defied credibility to such a point that they are useless. What I am doing here is pointing out a very realistic scenario and showing you how to take advantage of it rather than being a victim of it. The inhabitants of the late 20th-century North American continent as a general rule have enjoyed an extremely luxurious and safe lifestyle. What most forget is that life can be very savage and unpleasant.

When life is comprised of struggling to survive such behavior as civility, compassion, rational thinking, logic or most other behavior we take for granted today is not observed. People will treat others in the most shameful manner and will think nothing of it. What is more, others will think nothing of it also. Why else would slavery, lack of women's rights, class systems or other rude behavior be tolerated throughout the ages? The sad fact is that treating other people in a decent manner is a relatively new phenomenon, the roots of which can more than likely be traced back a mere few hundred years. When the day-to-day priority is to fill your stomach most people will be more than happy to snatch that crust of bread from a stranger's mouth, by force if necessary.

If an actual by God calamity were to strike which totally disrupted society and we were to revert to a state of dog eat dog, you will be glad that you made plans now to be on top of the food chain. If in the event life were to suddenly resemble that of the Middle Ages, you can take several things for granted. Starvation, disease, genocide, pollution, slavery, mass rape and murder, cannibalism, infanticide and I'm sure many others. If you were to develop the proper mind set enabling you to deal with these facts of life now in the

present, you can plan and prepare for them. If you wait for events, you will have no control. If you plan for events you'll have a say in your future. This should come as no surprise to anyone, as life in general must be planed and prepared for. Schooling, family, retirement and other activities do not just happen. You actively work at shaping these events to your satisfaction. Why should preparing for calamities be any different?

If at this time you're having doubts about the morality of it all, it is imperative that you remind yourself that there will be two classes in the new reality. One are the rulers. Two are the ruled. You were either on the top or on the bottom. Discussing logically what two civilized adults should do during a period of crises with a starving, armed lunatic will more than likely result in your becoming dinner. Remember, it is going to be a whole new reality out there and shedding tears over it will accomplish nothing. I contend that most of us fantasize of becoming less civilized and returning to the more basic, unencumbered past. To do this we must also embrace our savage nature. The two go hand in hand. If one is to become part of the Mongol hoard it would be wise to be rid of all civilized behavior. Live a little. Be the murdering, savage warrior that you always wanted to be as you were stuck in bumper to bumper traffic on your way to your office job.

CHAPTER ONE
ECONOMICS

It will be surprisingly easy to finance your fantasy dictatorship. Even working one of the service jobs paying minimum wage in a short period of time you can easily put enough in the piggy bank to acquire all the material goods needed to run a kingdom. As you are sitting on your cracked uncomfortable stool serving ungrateful, rude customers you can allow your mind to wander freely. You can call this your free thinking strategy sessions. God knows that were you to actually concentrate on work you would recognize the stupidity of all and quit. This is counterproductive. Even the lowest paying job will serve your needs.

Continuing the example of a minimum wage worker, we will assume that he is single. Most individuals that are either married and/or have children will of course already have made a small climb up the pay ladder and make a small token amount over minimum wage. Our single worker therefore can get by with minimum luxuries and live quite cheaply. For shelter, he can rent a room much cheaper than an apartment. By buying no prepared foods and only preparing basic foodstuffs the cost of eating will be quite low. Transportation will consist of a second hand bike or public transportation such as a bus. By this criteria, it is not unrealistic to assume that living expenses will be under $300. At minimum wage this leaves over half of take home pay that can be put aside for preparations. In a year's time our industrious clerk will have saved roughly $5000.

One might assume that this amount is quite paltry and quite useless but of course they would be wrong. The mathematics are quite simple. To outfit an army one must possess firearms, ammunition, and food. All other considerations can be taken care of any non-financial manner. Of course we are going under the assumption that extreme care will be taken when purchasing any supplies. No detail will go unnoticed in the quest to spend as

little as possible. Of course, being frugal is a necessity. This should be obvious to anyone making minimum wage. If I were to arm two dozen men with modern assault rifles, fatigue uniforms, backpacks and other supply carrying gear, combat rations, medical gear, the large supply of ammunition that would be needed, and logistical support I would of course run out of money on the second man. You will not be equipping a modern army. You will be equipping a post apocalyptic army. There is a big difference.

In the New World order that we envision scarcity will be the rule of the day. After the first week all store supplies will be shifted through and carried off. What you have stockpiled ahead of time is what you will have. More likely than not, the existing modern Armed Forces in your area will have a similar logistics problem as the general population. After the first several weeks of either attempting to restore order or to rule themselves, those military units will lack ammunition and food. They then cease to be a military threat. One must remember that today's military has no conception of scarcity or conservation. Guerrilla armies understand this but the chances of one of these units being in the Continental United States are slim indeed. Your best chances of encountering a military unit will be that of the National Guard. These units are even more unprepared in the regular army.

From a very beginning you understand that any post apocalyptic army will be run on a shoestring budget, so to speak. Each round of ammunition will be treated as it could be the last. Each meal however nauseating by today's standards will be viewed as payment. Therefore, a minimum supply of ammunition and food will suffice nicely. For food all that is really necessary is a supply of wheat. The Roman legions ate almost nothing but. With several grain grinders and several ton of grain, your entire food budget will cost less than $500. Two grain grinders will cost $100. Each 1000 pounds of grain will cost another $100. Two tons and two grinders for $500 will feed 20 men for six months. An additional $400 will bring that time to one-year. Therefore, the cost of feeding two squads of soldiers for a year will be under $1000.

To equip your army with firearms and ammunition will also be relatively inexpensive. It will more than likely be a good investment to purchase a federal firearms license. This will cost you $300. As you are paying a roughly 50 percent mark-up on firearms purchases, after $600 the license will have paid for itself. As an added benefit you might actually make a profit selling to others which you can reinvest back into your plans. Having a license will also alleviate any questions as to why one individual would need 20 rifles of the same make in so short a time. With a license bulk purchasing on a sale item is quite natural.

Your selection of firearm is of course quite important. Several factors must be weighed. Cost is the first consideration, but others are equally if not more important. The second consideration has to do with ammunition reloading. Even if it were possible to stockpile a large amount of ammunition you must consider that some point in time the ammunition supply will run out. You must then reload. Therefore, it is critical that your firearm allow the use of reloads. My favorite firearm is Lee-Enfield 303 British. I consider this the

premier surplus rifle. The design of the bolt action allows for smoother and quicker chambering, and the ten round magazine is superior the standard five round. Another plus is the fact that manufacturing took place in one area, rather than being licensed to any Tom Dick and Harry who wished to arm his banana Republic.

The major shortcoming of the Lee-Enfield is that its design destroys cartridges after only several uses. The Mauser has no such problem, and its cartridge may be reused a dozen or more times. At the time of these firearms design, the reuse of ammunition was not a consideration. Re-loading is almost uniquely an American preoccupation. The Lee-Enfield was designed to quickly re-chamber a round on the battlefield smoothly and reliably, and with its 10 round magazine the volume of fire was double that of the enemy. Of course individual infantry fire was decreasing in importance at the time, and the importance of machine gunfire and artillery was increasing. Nevertheless, the designers of this firearm set out to create the premier individual battlefield weapon and in my opinion did so.

Your choice of a surplus military firearm is basically between the British and the German design for the simple fact that these were the two military superpowers of the day and their weapons are those which are in most supply. Today if one were to discuss military rifles the choice would be between the M16 and the AK4 7. There might be better designs available but the fact is that these two rifles are what dominates in today's world of infantry arms. One can easily argue that the German H. K. 91 is a vastly superior firearm. The problem is the high-cost and its scarcity.

As my personal choice I have gone with the Lee, but I have also stockpiled a large supply of surplus ammunition. The simple fact of the matter is that to completely start over for firearms, ammunition, cleaning supplies and accessories would be much more expensive than to simply oversupply myself with ammunition. If you are just starting out, I would strongly recommend that you go with the Mauser. The Lee simply is not a viable alternative if you are considering ammunition supply. Wartime surplus ammunition at a minimum is 30 cents a round. Reloading is half that.

Yet even the cost of stock piling reloading supplies is not your primary consideration. In the event of a prolonged catastrophe you were going to be faced with the certainty that you're going to have to take incompatible ammunition and strip them of its usable parts to use in your own caliber of ammunition. That is why you must use bolt action rifles and revolvers. Semi automatic firearms are simply too sensitive to variations in your ammunition. A common scenario would be to take the .223 rounds from National Guard troops and use the powder and primer as well as the bullet to remold. You're not going to use their round in your own M16. You're going to use the different parts of the round for your own caliber reloading. Yes, of course you can use captured M16s and ammunition but their higher rate of ammunition consumption and unknown rate of supply work against that concept. This of course not even taking into consideration the fact that he M16 is a pile of crap.

If finances allow the optimal solution would be to supply each individual with reloading supplies. This works out to about $50 per individual at retail cost. This is for the portable Lee reloader and bullet cast. If you are to buy all 20 units of each at one time you could of course buy at dealer cost, and while I have no figures I would imagine that you could save at least 40 percent. So call reloading cost about $600.

If you purchase your firearms at dealer cost each rifles should cost you in the neighborhood of $75. For 20 rifles this figure comes to $1500. The total cost of rifles and equipment will be run around two thousand dollars. Your total cost so far for food and weapons is $3000. At about another $1000 for ammunition you leave yourself a small amount for miscellaneous goods. At $1000 for factory new ammunition you configure on 100 to 150 rounds per individual. This is more than enough for a bolt action rifle. If in the course of a fire fight an individual is stupid enough to go through so much ammunition that in dangers and self and his fellow soldiers, then it would probably be wise to take his rifle, his empty ammunition cases and any other equipment and recruit a new soldier. After disposing of his body the wisdom of conserving ammunition would be known to all. Firing a round at a sound or a perceived threat is not the way to fight. If a target is not within your sites it would make no sense to fire at it.

A casual reading of guerrilla warfare in the 20th century will also introduced the importance to fighting troops of such mundane items as footwear. More so than food or ammunition the number one item in demand among guerrilla fighters was boots. It is of course impossible to stockpile all conceivable sizes of boots for your future army. One would be wise to make contingency plans. Literature on old-fashioned shoe manufacture might come in handy. If you live in a warm climate it might be cheap enough to stock up on flip flop sandals when they are on sale. It is not uncommon to see them for one dollar a pair in the fall. If you live in a climate the that to experiences severe weather you'll need to worry about cold weather gear. This is where the additional $1000 will serve you well. You are not expected to stockpile all items of the clothing that will be needed. It would be a good idea to have hard to reproduce items stockpiled ahead of time, with the rest taken or manufactured.

CHAPTER TWO
RECRUITING

This may come as an unpleasant surprise to you, but there are unfortunately very few survivalists out there. What we view as a natural and healthy pastime most look upon with horror, if in fact they think about at all. The bastard left liberal commie media folks totally massacred the hobby in the late 70's, early 80's. If this is too far back for you, just remember back to the smear on the militias around mid 90's to get a picture of the carnage. When survivalists were portrayed in the same likeness as Satan, many choice to sell the bomb shelter and move back to squaresville to avoid being thought less of. Then, the Berlin Wall fell and the survivalist movement almost went into terminal status. The only thing keeping us more numerous than the recipient of sex change operations was an ungodly paranoia and an untestably high IQ.

The movement went into higher gear about one year before Y2K, but the unfortunate inability of the economy to crash did further irreversible harm to the field, the practice, the greatness that is survivalism. May we hang our heads in sadness.

The whole point is, you will find no recruits. Zero. No one will share your quite correct assumption that the whole of civilization is ordained by the gods to take a big dump and die a horrible death. This is unfortunate but true. Deal with it. In all my years of interacting with near strangers (seen on a regular basis but sharing no interests) the closest that many came to survivalism was the "got a gun and I'll go kill Bambi and the government won't be able to touch me if the balloon goes up" kind of BS. They go hunting once a year and they are wilderness survival experts. That is the extent of their thought on the subject. Morons.

Let us assume that you did the correct thing and failed to tell anyone your plans. Because if you did you will face an unpleasant situation. Every Joe Blow and his brother will naturally assume that he is entitled to all of your supplies. It is really quite that simple. Human nature being what it is, your so called friends will in a second turn on you and kill you for the moldy lint encrusted lemon drop candy in your pocket if the world ends tomorrow. Every once in awhile I rent the video "Deep Impact" just so I can laugh like a fool. One year to the asteroid impact (or however long it is. Plenty of time as I remember) and the president says "OK, no looting, price increases, etc." And everybody actually goes along with it. Now, I can buy that nobody panics because most people are sheep and will continue to graze as the wolf gets near, But to assume that everyone will treat each other decently is beyond credibility. Humans are crap to one another, more so in a calamity. Your whole recruiting effort will by necessity remain secret. No one must know until the appropriate time. I believe that the instant need for survival will garner as many converts as are needed.

There are many sources for potential recruits. Buddies that you hunt with or go to the shooting range with. Those that frown on the liberal content of the paper. Acquaintances that were in the military. Casual conversation will quickly point to an individuals views in life and give you an indication of his worthiness. This may seem arbitrary and subject to error, but you must keep in mind that you only need to ferret out the totally worthless. Those with the slightest potential will do just fine with the proper motivation. Those to avoid at the onset would be the more obviously worthless such as pacifists, liberals, lawyers, politicians, welfare recipients, in all others whose general existence mirrors that of a parasite.

It would be good idea to have one trusted individual that you may rely on when events take the turn for the worse. Not that you need tell said individual of your plans, just someone to help you out right away, someone who can be trusted to do what you ask. Those individuals that you have targeted for recruiting must be approached and offered a position. It would not be a good idea for you to actually do this. This is for your trusted individual. While he is out recruiting your targeted individuals you will act as security at your place of materials storage. If one individual that you are trying to recruit were to suddenly become violent, your life would be forfeited. Therefore, by having another

person in the field to act as a go between, you protect yourself.

It should be quite simple to win over your recruits. If it is a question between starvation and serving in a military, the answer will be obvious to all. You have now completed the easy parts. The short-term, minor investment that you made to secure supplies and the actually quite simple matter of inviting others to engage in a better lifestyle were minor compared to the task now at hand.

Now it is a question of training your military force, crushing any potential rebellion, gathering your slave labor force, and receiving maximum output from your subjects. All of these subjects will be addressed in the coming pages.

CHAPTER THREE
TRAINING YOUR FORCE

Your first order of business will be to gather the potential military force you have assembled and quickly explain the new reality that confronts them. At this time it would be a good idea to be the only one armed. In this manner any potential rebellion can be easily foiled. After you have a reasonably good idea that your recruits are likely to remain well behaved you may arm them. As you are working with bolt action rifles this orientation class should be brief. Issue them a limited amount of ammunition and gather up your stockpiled supplies to be moved to a predetermined location if it has been determined that this provides better security. It is assumed that your supplies were either in your domicile or a storage facility. As this was determined by day-to-day living realities and not by the possibility of a coming social collapse, more than likely you will have to move. The idea is secure a location where you may train your force away from the distracting death of society.

If you were in the military at one time think back to the fun that was basic training. This is what you need to accomplish but in a much shorter time. Since you are able to do away with much of the more worthless activities you should be able to compress training time down into a period of perhaps two or three days. Your recruits have just gone through an extremely traumatic event. Now is the perfect time to instill a new world view into them. As a grown adult will only dramatically alter his mind set under extreme stress, you will be able to mold him into your perfect soldier. An extremely simplified form of military courtesy may be taught, but the primary consideration will be small arms training and tactics, and discipline. Do not skip on discipline. This is your most important element to unit stability. Small arms may be taught after the initial training, but your chance to teach conformity is limited.

After you have brainwashed your recruits to perform to your expectations and taught them the basics in military tactics and small arms use, it will be time to turn them lose. Of course in the first few days of chaos the population as a whole will be in a panic running about and causing mischief. If you wait too long all material goods will have been taken from retail establishments. Your best course of action will be to send your troops into areas that the general population has not thought to plunder. Rather than contend for the

same supplies in such areas as supermarkets, pawn shops, drugstores, gun stores and the like, a small amount of research previously will provide you with a proverbial cornucopia of treasurers.

It can be assumed the general population is quite ignorant about economics in general, and more specifically the art and science of goods distribution. While some might actually think about how the food they are consuming ends up on the table, few will take the time to find out where in particular it comes from. With not much more than the phone book and a trip to the library you can find out the location of jobbers, wholesalers, warehouses, freight yards, and middlemen. These sources of supplies will not be pilfered other than perhaps by employees. A warehouse that stocks canned goods will be much more valuable than your corner grocer. The distributor of firearms will prove to be much more valuable than a pawn shop. A rail car full of grain will be less fought after than supplies at your local feed store.
By sending your troops to these locations and will be able to secure a supply of goods with a minimum of casualties. At this point of maximum chaos, confusion and danger it would of course not seen like the best idea for you to lead your troops on this resupply mission. But of course you'll have to. The military overlord means that you will lead the assault in the front, not from the rear. And besides, let's face it. You will more than likely be killed in any number of ways, such as disease, starvation or attempted coup. You might as well have fun while you are alive. So set the example can be the ruthless barbaric military leader.

In the first few days of plundering, looting and what not you'll find work enhanced considerably by utilizing abandoned motor vehicles and salvaging the remaining gasoline supply from vehicles that are nonfunctional. In a long-term of course you'll be running on alternate energy supplies or by draft animal, but at first you can use of the remaining gasoline supplies. Even 20 or so individuals will not be able to carry by hand that much weight, to speak nothing of the military disadvantage of trying to protect oneself with an armful of loot.

There is no better way to train a military force than by combat. The initial short period of training will be more than compensated for in trial by fire. Teaching individuals marksmanship, small unit tactics, discipline and in then forcing them in a hostile environment will quickly produce two types of individuals. One is a combat proven soldier and the other is someone who you would rather not feed. So don't. Of course would also be good idea not to arm them. There will be plenty of willing replacements. The question of whether or not you wish to eat your failed recruits is one you should have decided before hand. Banishment might be more your style, but consuming those that displease you is not only a good source of meat but an excellent intimidation factor.

CHAPTER FOUR
PREVENTING REBELLION

Even before such actions as training, one of the first things you should do is develop the state security apparatus. One has to have one's priorities straight, after all. Of the utmost

importance is the continuation of the state, namely yourself. Before vast military conquests are achieved you must make sure that your security is in place. That is not to say that you will not be taking risk. Initial combat participation poses a great danger to your person. The basic plan is to scale back your participation in the fighting as time goes on. After you have established your reputation you can semi retire and attend to the affairs of state. In the first days of fighting and especially after you retire, it will be of great importance to assure that you're not knifed in the back. This of the is where your security detail is needed.

State security to initially be comprised of two to three individuals. As time goes on the apparatus will more than likely grow, but initially your own personal protection is all that matters. Later this system can act as a terrorist tool to be sure that the population in general is kept under control. We will discuss later the merits of the award and punishment but for now punishment is what concerns us.

Your two to three men security detail will simply serve as a bodyguard unit to begin with. Secure their loyalty at once by promising and then delivering lavish rewards for their devotion. The percentage of all looted items given to them, plus their choice of female slaves will be insignificant to the amount that crosses your door, but more adequate for their needs. Just as in present-day America were confiscated goods are given to law-enforcement agencies, you giving the security detail percentage of goods will be used as payment.

Do not go to such great lengths as the former Communist Germany did when they devoted such a large percentage of the population to state security. When you have 25 percent of the population engaged in spying on their neighbors a natural result will be that almost nothing is accomplished other than mass arrests. Think back to the example of the Japanese during World War II. They assigned a single soldier with the bolt action rifle and bayonet to patrol several square miles of territory. Previous examples of extreme cruelty had been witnessed by the local population. Then, all that was needed to continue to keep the peace was that single soldier. That is the example that you would wish to emulate. Strike terror into the hearts of the local population with a minimum of manpower. The problem with the Nazi and Communist regime's state security apparatus was that they became diluted, bureaucratic and political. You must insure from the start to all levels of your organization maximize resources with minimal output.

You must cease to think of industrial economy organizations. To achieve maximum results more often than not large bureaucracies were formed. With rising factory output this was naturally the correct way of doing things. With the collapse of industrial society and a return to cottage industry and hand crafts, minimal organization is required. Instead of each village requiring its own police organization, a roaming Marshall can be used. Agents working for the state security can be local inhabitants working either under bribery or intimidation. Rather than keeping a force garrisoned in a fixed location, alternating squads roaming about in a random pattern would produce the best results. This not only alleviates the problem of defense but also maximizes the use of manpower for security.

You may find it advantageous to reintroduce such practices as lynchings, firing squads and torture. While the debate may not be settled over whether or not capital punishment is an effective deterrent to crime, you might as well err on the side of caution. Besides which, eliminating the costs associated with keeping prisoners will be in keeping with your minimal costs policy. Take care to dictate a common sense policy in the laws that you pass. While no one must mistake your intentions to rule absolutely, neither would it be a good idea to make the enforcement of your laws arbitrary. Resist temptation to rule on a whim and instead rule by a predetermined set of laws that all know and may abide by.

It is absolutely necessary to have the force of law protect your political structure. It is also necessary for you to dress up these laws to provide an excuse for them to be followed. Ruling by force consumes resources. Far better utilize a mixture of propaganda, payoffs and just enough force to do the job.

CHAPTER FIVE
SLAVE LABOR

After the basics are taken care as far as military force, security and defense your next order of business will be to assure that you ave a ready supply of labor and talent. At first you will obtain willing labor with the promise of food, shelter and protection. As time goes on you can readily supplement your labor pool from convicted criminals, defeated military troops and indentured servants.

Convicted criminals can provide brute force for projects such as construction, soil preparation for crops, any task not easily sabotaged. Enemy troops can provide slightly more sensitive tasks, as rewards of citizenship will properly motivate them towards positive behavior. Indentured servants can be created from prospective immigrants. A related field could be apprentices in the trades, yet those would fall under private control, not public.

Slavery is going to be necessary for the useless mouths needing to be fed. Former lawyers, ad men, civil servants, etc. will more likely than not provide no needed services. Food and board will be their only reward. For a long while just the promise of a half full belly will be all the motivation that is needed. In the short term slavery is a great way of rapidly accomplishing the needed tasks for your survival.

In the long term you may wish to provide difficult yet obtainable methods of advancing ones station in life. If a criminal has a realistic change of getting out before he is old and gray than he should cooperate. Don't mess around with life sentences. Incarcerate for a short while or just kill the stupid son of a bitch. A threat of dire consequences is fine and dandy, but if you include a reward for behavior above and beyond you will increase positive behavior. An eventual reward of citizenship will compel former enemies to love you. You could toil dawn to dusk all your life for an inadequate food supply, or you could increase your productivity and be set free in twenty years. Twenty years in the military could get you a plot of land. Yeh, it's free to the government, they used the

soldiers to liberate it.

Talent must be rewarded. If a former accountant was also a gardener and he showed you how to double the crop yield, he should not be punished for being useless. He can't dig a ditch, or fight, nor do you need accountants, but his part time hobby can prove useful to you. If you have in place a system of rewarding creativity, the unknown talent will find you. No need to screen for skills after a certain extent, just let greed take its natural path. Here you can create two classes. One are slaves, with threats to work and difficult but doable rewards, and the other are citizens, as a reward for talent and abilities. Citizens pay taxes, but are left to participate in the free market. Slaves receive no pay other than food/shelter.
Let us say that after several years of salvaging your ammo supply is running out. There is no hope of finding anymore. Rather than turning to swords and bows, you would encourage anyone with a knowledge of chemistry to find a means of producing in a cottage industry the ammunition components needed. A slave with the workable answer would be given citizenship and a percentage of the sales from the same. The government would control the production and distribution, perhaps issuing credits as payment. Credits could be used in government run brothels and bars, for instance, thus costing nothing to motivate and profit innovation.

CHAPTER SIX
THE ECONOMY

We have briefly touched on economic activity in the above section. To summarize. Slaves are made from the useless, mentally incapable. Criminals revert to slaves, reinstated if excellent behavior. Prisoners of war may be criminals, citizens if they prove themselves. Provide a means of motivation for improved behavior.

Now to the meat of the problem. We talked of motivation, now about needed economic activity. The first two crucial elements are the military and the farms. These are crucial to immediate survival. Next is industry, critical for long term economic health. You will obviously need food to be grown and harvested before your storage food runs out. You must protect what is yours, as well as seize what isn't. Finely you must continually innovate to evolve and keep both the economic and military edge.

Your personal food stash is sufficient for your initial small staff. What you steal quickly after things go to hell determines how many extra you can take on into your group. Farming must be started at once. Military scouting and raiding must season the troops as well as gain needed material. Again, the start of things will be simple, as food will provide all needed payment.

Most payments for government service can be managed by bartered goods and services. Government run brothels and bars pay the military. Land seized in war can be given to retiring troops. Trades persons can be paid by the food collected as taxes. Farms can be "rent to own". One half the crop totals for say ten years and then they own the land but pay a twenty percent tax. The land was free to you, the incentive to buy provided the

motivation to produce record crops. Trades persons give a percentage of earnings, taxes being a mix and match of barter and money.

Be cautious to always provide an incentive for advancement. The way need not be easy, nor the rewards generous but there must be motivation for everyone to strive for more. The way to motivate a man to produce more is not to tax his payoff from hard work. If a leather worker invents a system to mass produce boots, he should be taxed less on any earnings made from that. When he takes that extra earnings and opens a second factory, lower the taxes again. You must have a carrot, the stick alone doesn't always work.

Your economy is a triad. Farming feeds the populace and provides trade. Military adventurism provides more land, slaves and weapon innovation. Industry feeds the other two and allows them to advance. You must have all three. You can never grow too many crops, own enough land or manufacture too many weapons. Our currant economy is imperfect in that consumer goods can only stimulate the economy for so long. It would be much better to make enemies, batter them into submission, recruit their scientists and then sell them all our excess output. This is what we did to Germany after WWII and it did wonders for our economy. Many of our advances are thanks to the Germans. They were technologically advanced but had too small of an industrial base. We simply out produced them. The Russians tried that trick on us but were handicapped by mass stupidity. It finely caught up to them.

WWII Germany is a good example of a dictatorship achieving great results. Slave labor, captured land for food and supplies, absolute control of the economy. The problem was lack of motivation to succeed. There was too much stick and no carrot outside of perhaps the goal of Aryan Supremacy. What crap. Who cares what race/creed you are. If you produce for the State, you are an asset.

The Romans are a good example of military might. Continual warfare, continual booty and lands. Give the soldiers captured land as rewards. The problem was a huge welfare state sucking off the spoils of victory. Everyone works except you the supreme ruler. And, hey, even you work. Running a kingdom takes a lot of effort. Always push everyone to advance, improve and move forward. Have hard rules, but fair and always the same for everyone. No graft, no leisure class, no waste.

All aspects of the government are self sufficient Military pay is in services and captured goods. Farmers are rewarded with less taxes and eventual land. Industry sells to the farmers and military. Everyone is allowed to trade on the free market to a limited extent, using the money you issue. Wars stimulate all sectors, controlling out of control growth of the military by limiting the scale and frequency of war. Farmers can sell surplus crops, move into meat production and alcohol to increase profits. Innovation by industry provides growth through replacement of equipment.

CONCLUSION

To sum up nicely, prepare food and weapons. Feed recruits. Put labor to work in areas

suited to each. Continue to expand and conquer to continue growth throughout the economy.

Remember, each heinous act you commit to get and keep power has been tested right here in the good 'ol USA. Uncle Sam is your role model.

Personally, I am an anarchist and wish for the next evolutionary step in which self rule is the natural law and government is as barbaric as slavery or burning witches. Realistically I think this has little change of happening as most people are pitiful sheep who need to be led. As I said at first, this is a humorous look at power lust. However, it is also meant to stimulate your grey matter. If the choice is rule or be ruled, better to be the ruler. Just try to be benevolent. It would be wonderful if we ended up in a free market after a collapse, such as in the fiction Farnhams Freehold by R. Heinlein. Just figure the odds and prepare.

MODERN SURVIVAL ARSENAL
by James M Dakin
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Since Mel Tappan wrote Survival Guns around thirty years back, a lot has happened with the field of survivalism. The commonly held belief for the need of a country retreat has been challenged, the need for a massive amount of money to finance that hobby is false, and in general times have changed.

The old belief that you needed a country retreat away from your city home is pretty much passé by now. Few of us can afford two houses, the advisability of bugging out is low, and day to day weather and political/economic troubles are more likely than a nuclear attack. Even if you could have lived out in the country you needed to commute daily to a job, and the possibility of making it economically on a farm was close to zero. That was back when we thought the government would be kind enough to alert us of an impending attack.

Another problem was the assumption that we were all as well off as the author and could afford $100,000 towards a retreat and equipment. I don't know about you but my total investment in survival supplies is only around three grand, and that was after many years. If I win the lottery you can bet I'll be living in the most isolated spot in the lower 48, a fortified bunker stocked with at least ten years of provisions and all the pretty assault rifles I can manage. Until then, I'm stuck spending on the low scale. Need is cheaper than want.

And boy, how times have changed. Almost no one foresaw the collapse of the Soviets. The non-event of October 87 spelled out a new beginning in economic unreality, the American public lost interest in politics and let whoever the hell wanted be president, all former communists countries began to import their firearms, AIDS became a minor event to all those not getting it up the butt, inflation took a long nap, almost everything became cheaper to buy with Wal-mart and imitators, gas was at an inflation adjusted price below that of the embargo, tax protesters were no longer targeted by the government but women and children were, the Web sprang into being overnight, the whole crazy world was different.

It is time to start thinking that the needs of a survivalist arsenal are different now. It no longer matters how many 9mm rounds you can stuff into a magazine, a whole field of imported arms are now available, wood stocks are no longer needed on long arms, Colts patent on the AR15 has expired, semi-autos are currently expensive, the American gun industry is struggling, and lawsuits are another threat to our freedoms. It ain’t the seventies anymore, the good old mainstream 60s are a memory, and Mel would be quite lost in today’s funhouse we call reality.

THE NEW BATTLE RIFLES

Make no mistake, any breakthrough small arms ideas were last made in WWII. The Germans invented the modern assault rifle and the Soviets made them cheap enough to put one in the hands of every third world peasant. No new ideas have been implemented since. It seems our contribution to small arms stopped at the Garand, the Soviets saw no

need to tinker with their stolen idea, the Germans merely modified old plans, the whole world concentrated on nuclear and strategic and swept aside the foot soldier.

The main differences we now face are economic and political. The Chinese flood of cheap SKS's was due to the fast industrialization of that country, in the 70s they were not an import king, but a sick farming nation. The $250 AK47 was due to the collapse of the Communists and their desperate need for currency. Colt had it's AR15 patent expire and you could get then get one almost half price.

The semi-auto ban boosted prices for a time, and that along with import bans made American battle rifles economically unattractive. Lawsuits then made an almost knock out punch to the industry. Of course things should get better. Too damn many people want firearms and if nothing else we love to sell anything to make a profit. Forget those pimply self righteous little bastards who complain about the evils of the tobacco industry. Political correctness is dead everywhere but on campuses and in government. We shall overcome and make it safe again to hurt ourselves if we so choose.

Anything under $500 is going to have to be imported. Mid 2000 you can get an SKS, after shipping and with a 15% over cost markup, for about $200. AK's are about $300. $500 can get you a Rugar mini, maybe a Garand, $700 an AR15, $800 an HK91. The only weapon cheap to reload is the SKS, using stripper clips. On the rest plan to spend $10 a magazine or more (Garand clips are on the pricey side, so included with mags). With twenty mags a good idea, add $200 to each weapon. That is a minimum of $500 for an AK. This is on the high side for my budget, but I could charge it and pay it over time.

Assault or battle rifles are your best consideration for combat. Compared to the cost of a pistol, they are not at all expensive, but you must decide based on your own criteria. If you feel that combat is a likely event, you are not going to want to be to cheap when it comes to your life. However, if you do think this way, then your expenses are just beginning. I would have another duplicate weapon or at least an extensive spare parts kit. Drop that expensive rifle against a rock and screw up a vital part, you need a replacement. Then add ammo to the equation. Do you think one thousand rounds are going to do it? Try ten thousand minimum. Semi-autos burn through ammunition very quickly.

This is your priciest option, but also your best. If you do feel that you need to arm yourself as best as possible, yet as cheap as you can, do the following. Buy three SKS's. Romanian is more likely available than Chinese. That is $600. Ten thousand rounds will be at least $1000. Take the other $400 and get add ons and some spare parts as well as stripper clips. If you must, put it all on a credit card. Pay the minimum of $50 every month until you get your tax return and pay it off. You are now armed with a reasonable good semi-auto battle weapon with adequate supplies of ammo. You are using a popular round so that scrounging is possible, and you are insured against breakage. And it only cost you a minimum.

THE RIMFIRE ARSENAL

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The lowly .22 is often suggested as a survival option, most often in a negative light. While the round and its weapons do play a minor role, most often in small game hunting, it can be used as your sole means of defense and hunting. This of course is not recommended for most, but those that are proficient or that see a total collapse may wish to consider it.

The .22 sells more rounds than all other cartridges. The big reason for this may be the negligible cost at two cents a round. Also, any .22 is excellent for training beginners. And, it is fun to go out and plink for a day. Your ears don't hurt, your shoulder isn't raw, your wallet was not raped and in general you had a great time.

Semi-auto .22s will usually not cost you more than $150, with tube fed semi, bolt, or pump going for around $100. You can buy used pistols and rifles for well below $100. Buying ten thousand rounds would only run you $200, perhaps less if bought at one time. Semis will have the added cost of mags, but $100 should get you about 15, and you can add gradually.

So, the cost is very little. The problem is performance. A .22 point blank should kill you if it hit the right spot. At a distance there is little chance of this happening except by accident. And by then you have to factor in expended energy. I am not saying that a .22 is not dangerous. I am saying that it is not a battle weapon. It will not stop an enemy. What you can use a .22 for is hunting game and harassing an enemy. You can't defeat an enemy using a .22, but you can harass him enough that he will leave you alone, duck his head allowing you to escape, or give him pause with a minor wound.

The rimfire arsenal is for those that want to spend very little, want to carry around as little weight as possible, and want to avoid conflict whenever they can. If you can live with the limitations, the positive aspects might be enough to convince you of it's merits.

THE SHOTGUN

Cops carry them, they look cool in Vietnam flicks, every hillbilly has one and in general the shotgun is everybody’s favorite flesh shredding machine. Of course, the ammo is heavy as is the gun, but not oppressive. You are limited to the amount of rounds you can carry, and this is strictly a short range weapon, less than even a .22. The up side is that within that range if you get a good shot, you have a better than even change of getting a first shot kill or incapacitation.

The range is not limiting in an urban, woods, or jungle setting. If you are out West you are pretty much asking for trouble using a shotgun in the open spaces. Since most of us are more than likely going to be in towns/cities, most can take advantage of the shotgun if we wish.

You are limited in your choices. Single, double, pump or semi. Do not use a skeet or trap

gun that is not robust for the field. You are going into combat, so act accordingly. The single is damn cheap, under $80 in Wal-mart. The double is usually as much or more than a pump, so seems a waste to me. The pump is felt by many to be more reliable, and the semi is better for absorbing some recoil and slightly faster action.

The massive kick of a shotgun assures that follow up shots are slow coming, so a semi to me seems less warranted. This is my opinion, and you should of course disregard it if you are comfortable with that system. Whatever you are comfortable with and perform the best with is what you should do. My personal preference is the single shot, both for its low cost and its extreme ruggedness. How many parts are there to fail?

If you are concerned about replacement parts, consider Remington and Mossberg, as they are two of the more popular ones. I would stay away from all but the 12 gauge, since all others are marginal in availability.

BOLT ACTION

The bolt action is the preferred weapon system for sniping and hunting. This is not pray and spray but controlled firing. If your primary concern is with survival rather than combat, you should opt for a bolt action rifle. Ammunition resupply may be a problem in some scenarios, and nothing wastes ammo more than emptying a thirty round mag at a noise in the bush over yonder. With a bolt action you have no other choice but to be careful what you shoot at.

Why do you think Hitler did not approve the production of assault rifle except in limited numbers? He used blitzkrieg tactics from the start, so the idea of a squad of his troops being able to outgun an enemy company was not a foreign or unwanted idea. I believe that he saw the production problems that such weapons would cause. Paratroops and SS troops armed with machine guns was one thing, but if every foot soldier in the army started burning off ten or more thirty round clips every engagement, the ammo resupply problem would soon be insurmountable. Germany had superior weapons and tactics but very little industrial capability, compared to the Allies. WWII was about elbow room and more important raw materials.

If you decide that the bolt action rifle is for you, stay away from hunting rifles. If you already own one and are proficient, fine. Otherwise they pose limitations. They are designed for one or so shots, used seasonally. They are not designed to shoot rapidly or stand up to abuse in the field.

What you need is a military bolt action from either of the World Wars. These were rifles made to fire rapidly all day is the mud trenches or similar filthy setting. The majority of the barrel was covered with wood to protect from damage. Form a mental image. Take your hunting rifle, throw it in the mud, then butt- stroke your mother in law with it. Now go try to fire it. Now try the same with a surplus Mauser. See the difference?

You need to trade accuracy for durability. It is more important to have a functional

weapon accurate to 350 yards than a fragile one that is a 700 yard tack driver. Wasting ammo is not an issue when you use a less accurate rifle. Your weapon must function when it comes time to save your life. You are not Carlos the super sniper. 1,000 yard hits are just luck for the average shooter. Be content with a six inch MOA instead of a two.

The two superpowers of the day were the British and the Germans. Each designed a great weapon system, each with its limitations as we see it today. The German Mauser and the British Enfield. The British armed the Commonwealth and the Germans licensed the manufacture to every Joe Blow they thought useful to their purposes.

The Enfield has a ten round magazine verses the Mauser five. The Enfield is more robust in the field and has a superior bolt action. The #4 Enfield has peep sights, far superior to the Mausers post and leaf. In turn, the Mauser does not destroy brass like the Enfield. The Mauser is more accurate and it is in better supply on the market. Personally I prefer the Enfield but if your major concern is with the reloading of brass, stay with the Mauser.

SINGLE SHOT

Recently there has been introduced a rather clever rifle. The same folks who brought you the $90 single shot shotgun (H&R) have used the same operating system on a single shot rifle. While you might not be excited about this, I think it might have possibilities. The calibers are 222, 223 and a few others. The important caliber is the 223. Yes, the friendly little M16 round available from any cop or soldier, and for now cheap to buy for stocking/shooting.

With your low rate of fire and your unlimited supply from the enemy, the 223 is an excellent round to go with. You are confined to a harassment role, but unlike the .22 you have much better range and killing capacity. The rifle comes with scope mount, put even a cheap scope on for great 250 yard kills. The unit is light and there are close to no parts to break or wear out due to its simple design.

A few years ago when I checked this rifle was about $250. It is still around that area. This is retail price. Single shots are nothing new, but these low prices are.

PISTOLS

A pistol in a survival situation has a vital role. This is the weapon that you wear at all times, put under your pillow and in general never have out of your site. This is your last ditch defense. It is an important choice, and you will more than likely spend as much on it as you do your primary battle weapon.

I am not going to spend a lot of time debating caliber or action choice. You can pick up any gun book or magazine and get that. Get a revolver if you just want to load it and forget about it, and if you have a problem with engaging any levels to fire. A revolver is perfect for your novice shooter. If you want an increase in rounds, more controllability and quicker fire rate get a auto loader.

If you want easy pickings on ammo stay with the 38/357, 9mm, or 45. Personally I think the 9mm sucks, but if you love underpowered rounds by all means go with it. I see a place for revolvers, such as stash guns or panic weapons. However if you can only afford one pistol and you already know you want an auto over a revolver, I think the best choice is the 1911A1 .45. The fact that the Army dumped it says little for military intelligence.

The Army had two decades of getting rid of great equipment and getting a bunch of crap. The simple and robust jeep was replaced by the grotesque hummer, a over priced over complicated piece of garbage. The perfect .45 was dumped for the faggy 9mm made by a bunch of commie Euro-trash. The comfortable and good looking fatigues were replaced by the BDUs which look like hell even off the ironing board and get waded up under equipment. The amazing grenade launcher M79 was given up for a uncomfortable under the M16 barrel arrangement 203. The crap M60 was replaced by another Euro gun, which may be better but replaced the 7.62 with 223. Putting a 223 in the SAW instead of a robust round is like cutting off your manhood so you have less to carry. Sometimes you need that weight.

A 9mm with hollow points and 18 round mags might be just the thing for a firefight with the local druggies, but for a simple, proven, reliable, robust side arm design that takes half the rounds to do the same job, go with the 45.

GUNS TO AVOID

First on your list of guns that you are better off without are the Saturday Night Specials. If you are desperate and need to be armed for under $50, better to get an old .22 pistol. The cheaply produced pistols do have a place, but not in a survival arsenal. They are great so that even the poorest crack smoking looser can be armed. However pathetic or undeserving, everyone needs to be able to protect themselves.

Next off I really must rag on the M16 and its civilian offshoot the AR15. Lets pretend that there were two types of video recording machines. One was a Jap import, cost $300, recorded eight hours and was ugly, slightly less sharp in picture quality but in general would never break. The other was a US government sponsored machine. It cost $1000, had a great picture but only played tapes for five hours and was always breaking. However, the Feds proclaimed that theirs was the only machine that was going to be used. Those that knew spoke out about the shortcomings, but over time more and more forgot there was a better machine out there and came to love the US machine, especially since a stronger eject button was installed to get out the frequently stuck tapes. Substitute the Jap machine for almost any other assault rifle system, and the US machine for the M16.

The M16 is without competition for the crappiest assault rifle ever produced outside of a Banana Republic. This is a rifle that is not reliable in the field. It is not robust enough. In the early 80's I went through basic training. This was long after Nam and all the problems with the M16 were "ironed out". Like hell. With a rifle that was so damn clean you could eat off it, the damn thing was constantly jamming. Nor was it just my rifle. In field conditions lasting more than several days there were always problems. The rifle is too

delicate. It shoots great, when it shoots. For all you young pups that just got back from a minor police action, I say thank God your M16 did not jam up on you. If in fact you had no problems.

In a survival situation you are not back in the army. There is not an armory at your disposal, nor replacements. Plan for the worst to happen to your weapons and ask yourself which one can hold up to the abuse.

END

POST-APOCALYPSE MERCENARIES

I can foresee four main occupations after an apocalypse. Rulers, farmers, craftsmen and service providers. Under services you can classify two of societies frowned upon

professions- prostitutes and mercenaries. Of course you are going to see a blurring of lines. Farmers provide a service, craftsman can be professional and service providers. Doctors can be either. The point is that you can be in charge, you can have a needed skill, or you can sell your body. Those are your three choices. Few of us are going to rule, if you don't have a skill now you had better develop one now before it is too late, and your last choice is to quickly develop a skilled use of your body by either being a hell of a good lay or able to kill people well.

I have covered how to become a dictator/ruler/king already. In the future I will write a paper on needed post-apocalypse skills. For now let us focus on becoming a mercenary. A prostitute can easily get all the on the job training they need quickly. With that keep in mind that you are most likely going to be competing with slaves, other prostitutes, or changed social conditions such as drafted females for military "service" or legal multiple wives. You had better be a real looker and skilled to compete. As for military service you will also have competition, but with the right information and preparations beforehand this should be a minimal problem.

Keep in mind that most military service will consist of mindless muscle. After the remnants of today's professionals are wiped away from lack of high tech maintenance, you will be faced with masses of illiterate conscripts clashing with each other over the spoils of yesterdays society. There will be plenty of people willing to fight for local petty rulers for three square meals a day. If they are killed off quickly, then draftees will take their place. Lay low and live off your supplies for a time. After the ammo runs out you will see primitive weapons come into use and then you will be in an advantageous position to offer your (new) high tech weapons to the highest bidder.

You will learn how to prepare now, where to relocate, how long to wait, how to offer your services, and what to do to insure you're constantly advancing militarily to stay ahead of the competition and protect yourself.

PREPARING BEFOREHAND

The one critical action you must take now ahead of time is to gather information. All the supplies in the world are not going to do you a bit of good if you don't know how to use them, or they are damaged or stolen. After you have provided a bare bones stash of personal survival gear you would best be served by gathering knowledge on this subject or even any other that will give you an edge after the collapse. There will be too many mouths and not enough skills. Read Lucifer's Hammer to get the idea. You must have a critical skill. Sustainable new tech military gear and tactics are one of those. New tech refers to those skills that are sustainable without our present level of technology. Even solar rechargeable batteries will wear out after X amount of recharges, but a primitive battery in a glass jar can be made and used after the collapse. That sort of thing.

Read and collect books now on military themes. Strategy and tactics throughout history including guerrilla tactics. The manufacture of black powder and black powder arms. Primitive rifle primers. 19th century arms and their method of manufacture. Appropriate technology. Alcohol or steam or hydrogen powered vehicles. Backyard manufacture of metal. Home manufacture of weapons. Can smokeless powder be improvised. Can black

powder be used in grenades or rockets. Using firecracker manufacture methods to improvise rockets. Homemade tank killers. Primitive anti-aircraft. Study the Civil War and WWI for emerging methods of modern weapons. How did Nobel manufacture dynamite. Think the early Mother Earth News and its method of low-tech funky homemade power production and apply it to weapons.

You can read up on how to make your own C4 with model car racing fuel, but that relies on today's high tech manufacturing. Instead figure on using a black powder bomb with a fuse. Low tech and easily manufactured. You can stash thousands of primers cheaply today, but they will run out. Better to learn how to make the old corrosive kind. If they had primers in the early 1800's it couldn't be to difficult to produce them with minimal technology. They had the Gatling gun before the Civil War. Why couldn't we reproduce that with low tech? 99%of the surviving population is going to rely solely on currant supplies. You can beat them by adapting early to using old fashion primitive manufacturing techniques to build up your military forces and equip them with superior arms. The early bird will take the field and hold it if he continues to advance.

Your "corporation" of military mayhem is going to have to consist of both a fighting arm and a research facility. You can start out with a platoon or company, but if you are ahead of the competition in arms you will easily recruit more soldiers and scientists to add to a snowballing effect. Get there first, and stay ahead. After a collapse the available ammunition is going to run out quickly. All military arms will be quickly rendered useless by lack of maintenance and spare parts. Personal small arms are going to dominate with only occasional use of anything bigger being used. If you can manufacture your own arms and ammo, plus heavy weapons (even if primitive) and implement sound strategy and tactics, you should gain the edge over your opponents. Think of the Gulf War. We kicked ass by high tech, and lost few men. The vast army of Iraq was based on WWI tactics and lost quickly. Post-apocalypse versions of this are going to be close to the British massacre of African tribesman by machine guns. Against a trio of Gatling guns using black powder, a few modern hunting rifles are going to be no match.

Modified car chassis turned to "dune buggy" light vehicles running on alcohol and having mounted black powder machineguns and shooting black powder grenades could be a devastating Calvary attack against surviving Army units using M16s. The one is technologically sustainable and the other is only as good as its current supplies. I am sure by studying old methods of manufacture one can determine how to make smokeless powder. Even if dangerous, it could be a worthwhile risk if sufficient inducement is offered. Remember the early dangers of working coal mines or railroads or lumbering? If a situation were it is either work or starve, people will work in dangerous conditions. Unlike today, thank goodness. The point is that despite the dangers, you should be able to manufacture smokeless powder. Do the research and it will be worth its weight in gold. It cannot be stressed enough that at this point research is much more valuable than any supplies. Books should be your only physical goods. There are scores of subjects that all tie in together to forma more perfect military/industrial complex. Study how Chinese peasants produced home-made methane and use that to generate power for your factory. Homemade solar generators are far less efficient but only require glass and copper. Study metal production to achieve a better grade of metal than is produced by merely melting old

car bodies. The study of chemistry will instruct you on chemical weapons, powder, propellants, dynamite, etc. Study the making of glass and produce your own sniper scopes (after reading up on old fashioned telescopes). Learn how to produce and run engines on alcohol for fueling vehicles. Reading up on Scandinavian manufacture of wood alcohol during the 1930s will give you ideas on how to get alcohol fuel without using valuable farm products. How can craftsmen produce batches of metal in their backyards? The Chinese did not so long ago. WWII British Sten guns were farmed out as a cottage industry. Even finding out how to mine your own ore could come in handy one day. Modern methods of intensive small area farming and game raising could be used as a cheaper method of feeding your troops. The point is to think of all the ways we need to get less dependant on today's manufacturing methods. High tech has little place in a post apocalypse environment unless it can be sustainable with low tech methods.

RELOCATE

A serious consideration is going to be defense. If you send out your forces in the services of another ruler, how are you going to defend your home base and weapons production? My advice is to take a page from the Swiss. They have been able to stay independent throughout the gunpowder age because of the Alps. This natural fortress used in a proper strategic manner protected them as first they hired out as mercenaries and later became the preferred banks of the civilized world. Could Hitler have defeated them? Even if he didn't have an eastern front? More than likely not. Blitzkrieg works with fast armor and air attacks, and is not adapt in mountainous terrain. Could the USSR taken this little country? About as well as they took Afghanistan. When every male citizen is in the militia and has in his home a full auto military battle rifle with ammunition and supplies, when every bridge and tunnel has place settings for blasting charges, when the whole country can go underground and survive NBC attack, and to top all that off when the whole damn thing is only reachable by land and is a mass of mountains, that country will most likely stay free. And don't forget that Switzerland is a remarkably stable country that governs almost not at all. It leaves it's citizens alone to survive, even helping them avert war. Can we say the same with the USA?

Go into the mountains. The Rockies cover a great amount of land, they are easily protected, and should be avoided by most. Farmland is not the best spot for being anything other than a farmer, and that is tough enough today, let alone in a future without law and order. You are going to have to learn to farm in the mountains, to raise herds, establish fish farms and the like. The Swiss and the Japanese and the British, etc., all learned to live on small areas that were not easily farmed. With today's knowledge on farming you should do much better than they ever did. Trading is great but strive for 100%self sufficiency. Don't let food be used against you as a weapon.

Pick a spot in the Rockies that is a combination of rugged terrain and pockets of farmable land. As you grow in power and technology, advance up and/or down the mountain chain. In time your decedents should be able to claim and farm a great deal of easily protected land. Avoid areas that could cause problems, such as Mormon land. If anyone will survive as a group it will be the Mormons. They don't store food to feed the homeless. It is to survive the folly brought on by the idiots surrounding them. As much as I admire the group, they will provide a problem for some after a collapse. Think of how

the Catholic Church was a wonderful idea until they came into power and after a time they became corrupt and evil, killing off all that stood in their way. As do all governments after a time. Bastards (this is why I am an anarchist).

I am not suggesting that it is necessary for you to run a government. You should be able to get along quite nicely in a military structured environment. Military justice is simple and understood by all. Running your unit, no matter the size, in a military fashion will alleviate the need for a costly and burdensome government. Not that a dictatorship is the best idea. Concoct a manual of rules and punishment easily understood by all and adhere to that no matter the circumstances. If the rule of law is strictly adhered to and it is a just system, it will be followed by the majority. Most people are quite content to be told what to do and to have a chosen path which is a “crutch” in times of indecision. Our present System has fallen into a lawyer mentality, were those in power or with money can interpret the law as they see fit (what is the definition of “is”). In past times, law was common sense and spelled out in a thing called the Constitution. It was nice while it lasted. The point is to make law, then to live by that law.

Life in mountainous regions is going to be a bit different under primitive conditions. It would be advisable to construct underground shelters, both as an energy saver (wood should be used for alcohol fuel) and as a defense against forest fires. Settlements will be in relatively flat areas with a water source. Static defense should not be employed but instead decentralized to each habitable area, with the primary focus on scouting and preemptive strikes. It is better to move against the enemy in his territory than to fight him after invasion. Demilitarized zones are a handy way of letting everyone to now they are acting in an aggressive manner and will be attacked if they trespass.

As every person is part of the military, an attack on your territory even when the bulk of troops is away employed will not be a problem. The remaining troops can fight even if their primary duties are research, farming, craftsmen or what have you. This will solve your problem of home defense while your troops are away earning coin or barter. By only allowing troops to habitat your lands, you alleviate the problem of dependants or even of pay. You can employee your troops while only paying them room and board (which they themselves grow/build) and thus need not worry about currency, inflation, scarcity of precious metal, etc. However, if all profits are divided on a merit system, an incentive to produce extra will exist. You should set up a system of reward that is not easily corrupted and is fair and stable, not arbitrary. While the free market does this best, until a time you are able to practice that you most compromise and devise a reward system practical in a cash poor society. You may be paid in grain for your fighting services. If you are serving troops food as pay, the wheat has little value to the troops as an extra reward. Rank and privilege, perhaps such as in Soviet Russia, might be the answer.

Persons changing duties will pose a problem. Say you employ females as a free prostitute service to the troops. If one decides to marry a trooper, she had better be of use in another area, such as farming, fighting or a craft. If children are born, they can be utilized as farm help or craft apprentices, at the same time as they are in a para-military structure. When they are of legal age they can be free to migrate or to join. This makes everyone happy, as they earn their keep, they grow up with needed skills, and they are already

trained if they decide to stay. Injured or retired troops can be used as craftsmen or teachers, as can older folks. Even the old and physically challenged can serve some use, if only as nurse assistants or nursery workers or even sweeping the streets. No one gets a free ride. If you want to eat, work.

TIMING

It would not behoove you to move rapidly after the collapse. There will be some targets you may wish to loot, such as feed stores and libraries. These are fine, as they are soft targets and there will be less competition for them. You will want to avoid other entanglements, however. Do not quickly offer your services to the first local warlord you run across. In the beginning you are going to have every two bit dictator wanna-be out and about shooting things up. The National Guard and the Feds, along with SWATs are going to be trying to assert control. White supremacists and black panthers are going to be battling. Stay out of their way and let them kill off each other. Jet aircraft will run out of fuel and spare parts. Tanks will do the same. Launchers will run out of missiles. Be patient, work on building up your supplies, train, put aside extra food stocks. Send out recons for intelligence gathering and sit tight until the main forces play themselves out, and the modern weapons are used up. There is no sense going up against armed helicopters or tanks.

Your next move should be to bloody your troops. Get your NCOs and officers out into combat in a limited role, such as scouting, ambushes or the like. Then, offer your services in a limited role such as trainers, special units and such. Hitler's armies were trained and his militaries strategies tested in Spain. They worked out great, and Germany was not obligated by his role. It was a win-win situation for all around. Think of this example. You need to test your troops, your weapons and your tactics. Pick a little war that will not be noticed. It will do you no good to advertise. Once the Genie is out of the bag, it will be time to modify everything. Do not fight the last war, try to always be fighting the next one. If you develop a certain style, your enemies will adapt to it. Change before they do, keep them thrown off.

From this point on, every war you are paid to fight in will be your new testing ground. In effect your research and development efforts are going to be subsidized by your customers. That is a sweet deal, so make sure to take advantage of it. For instance, at first you may be forced to use a limited amount of smokeless powder and the majority black powder. This creates huge obscuring clouds on the battlefield which dictates leadership style. As you develop your own smokeless powder you can change tactics accordingly. Test them out as they develop. Poor tactics and weapons can be easily ferreted out as you will test them live. A regular army must guess if these will work, as they are not at war constantly. However, yours will be, and difficulties can be ironed out quickly. And best of all you are paid to do so, whereas others must raid the national treasury to go to war.

It should go without saying that there will be a strong need to vary your combat troops. The same unit should not be constantly reentered into the fighting. Serious downtime is required for maximum performance. While you don't want to limit your money making opportunities, you also don't want to burn out your troops. Just keep in mind that 20th

century standards of job stress will not apply. There is little harm in pushing all personal beyond what we are used to today. If you offer slightly better standards than your competition, you should be fine. Remember that you want the best and brightest to come to you, so you can have your pick. You can only do this if you offer a better lifestyle.

SOLICITING

Mercenaries are pretty much an anachronism these days. Other than a brief resurgence in Africa twenty and thirty years ago, there has been little modern activities from mercs for near two hundred years now. I am sure if one dug deep enough he could find uninterrupted examples of mercenary activity throughout history, but I am referring to the recent lack of attention, or rather the recent ignorance of the population as a whole on the existence of mercenaries. After the Middle Ages one finds little reference other than the Germanic states offerings. After Britain used Hessians in the Revolution, you find nothing of mercenaries in the general populations memory. The Nation State had come into its own and there was no use for other than national armies.

Even though the use of mercenaries has fallen out of favor recently, that should change in the future when the nation states break up, industrial economies change to information, and in general the entire political landscape changes. Centralized nations provided their own armies, decentralized ones will find it convenient or necessary to hire them. As an example if corporations are global in scope and beholden to no government, it would behoove them to hire a mercenary unit to dispose of a dictator who nationalized their property. It is the same as prostitution. When it is illegal it is small and often only a one person operation. When it is legal or at least unenforceable, the operation grows to industry size. In the past nations made mercenaries “illegal”. When they no longer have the power to prohibit them, they will prosper.

If mercenaries make a comeback before a collapse occurs, it will make for an interesting post apocalypse situation. Mercenary units will have combat experience, unlike most national armies, they will be better equipped than police units, yet they might stay out of any political situation. They may or may not provide keen competition to you, but there are doubts, as they are as dependant on modern weapons as are official armies. It might be that they are merely recruiting pools for your forces.

After you have engaged your forces in their initial combat and proven your weapons and tactics, you will be ready to offer your services to whatever bidder meets your price. As with all things in the marketplace, supply and demand will determine the price. Even if you supply a “modern” military force there may be little demand for them. If every two bit dictator has his own army that fights out of fear of being unemployed and starving, you can offer little other than a far superior force. That alone would be worth little to the tyrant. He can afford to loose many men as cannon fodder if they essentially cost him nothing. Look at the Soviet Union in WWII. Stalin commanded human waves of soldiers into battle, overwhelming the professional and superiorly equipped Germans. China did the same against us in the Korean Conflict. Sometimes the wave method works great. Your task is going to be to convince others that not only are your services great, but essential. If the market will not purchase your product, cheat. Look at the way business can alter the market in their favor. When a product is too cheap, add an import duty to it.

When others undercut the price of your service, form professional organizations that regulate entry. In the first, think Japanese imports with a hefty import duty bringing their price up to American “standards”. The latter example would be the American Medical Association regulating how doctors are licensed. How about state licensing boards for barbers? Perhaps an individual has little skill but can at least give crew cuts. He could charge two bucks each, taking two minutes each. No can do. The punk needs a full schooling and apprenticeship, plus licensing. A regular barber takes fifteen minutes to give a crew cut, basically dicking about, and charges $8. Job security. These practices make others rich at our expense and stifle competition, making a mockery of our “free” market system. However, they do give you lots of wonderful examples.

When nations need to go to war to advance the leaders, enliven the economy or dupe the populace there is little problem starting one. American policy towards Japan almost guaranteed they would attack us. We cut off their supplies of required raw materials. Yet there was still trade with Nazi Germany. We pretended moral outrage over China being occupied, but not Austria, Poland or the rest. Why? The same reason we have today’s insane policy in the Middle East. We care about our own interests first. If hundreds of thousands of civilians die at the hands of others, oh well. This is reality, and my only outrage is when our leaders pretend to care for the downtrodden. Only certain downtrodden, of course. The US anticipated their entry into WWII. The Garand rifle, a superior small arm technologically, was commissioned before Pearl Harbor. Strategy was discussed. Planning took place. FDR, that most tyrannical of presidents, wanted to enter the war. Why is unimportant, but clearly if it was to stay in power he succeeded.

History is written by the victors. Fictions are created to start wars, and afterward they become fact. Politicians are kissing cousins of lawyers, and always remember that both will screw you over as sure as night follows day. Some are less invasive than others, yet the end remains the same. You need not become involved in the filthy business of politics, but you can learn from them. Personally I would not feel so bad trying dirty tricks on politicians/rulers/lords. They deserve only contempt, and their populations little better if they allow themselves to be led to the slaughter. Any that oppose being led should break free and fight for themselves. And of course, they can always hire mercenaries to fight for Them if need be. It is a cozy little circle for a mercenary leader.

You can incite wars between neighbors, especially if one is militarily weak. That one would be likely to hire mercs. Associations of craftsmen can have their greed fed by falsified evidence that natural resources they need were found in a certain area. Then, when you “hear rumors”, your emissaries can suggest that your forces invade. Perhaps a grain silo is accidentally destroyed and one ruler must attack another to gain feed for the fast approaching winter. What if a fire destroyed farm crops. Same outcome. There are many excuses that can be caused resulting in warring parties. As always you are there waiting ready to fight for whoever has the pay. This is rather sneaky and far from noble. Exercise extreme caution when orchestrating these events. It would not do to be caught. A special intelligence unit can be formed for this. Hopefully it will not be a necessary diversion of manpower. Just plan for it in case a nasty period of peace breaks out.

SERVICES

Just as in any business, by offering a product of increased desirability, you increase your profits. A farmer selling only grain will not prosper as much as one who takes that grain and turns it into animal flesh or drinking alcohol. It is known as a value added product and those that practice it are rewarded economically. The Japanese are a nation living on an island the size of California with a population the size of the US. The bulk is mountainous and crop growing areas are scarce. They import almost everything they need, yet they are the most prosperous nation in general. For ten years after their bubble economy burst they have been in a slump, but once again that country will pull ahead. The Japanese can take cheap raw material and turn it into valuable products. That was the strength of their last economic miracle. Now that is over. The digital or biological economy that will be here next will most likely see the Japs in the forefront.

The recent advances in our own economy have been largely due to the world wide flight of capital away from economic unstable regions towards the US where we have a less unstable economy. A small part is due to our taking the worlds cheapest raw material, sand, and turning it into a multi billion dollar industry. Silicon is the engine that is helping our economy stay above water, and the brains of Silicon Valley and elsewhere are the fuel. That is the ultimate value added. Sand and brains into an intangible product.

Unfortunately for us, the old structure that was the industrial age is holding us back and may even cause our demise. The whole of society was created around the machine age and they are not going to give up without a fight. Do you actually think that Pittsburgh, Detroit or Washington DC have much of anything to add to the new economy. Of course not. But they will not go gracefully into that night.

The military also must provide a value added product to compete in the new world order. After a collapse everyone and his brother will be fielding an army. Your job is going to be to offer a product of higher value. Of course you must innovate constantly, and R&D will be a heavy investment. Yet it will be worth both its military and civilian uses. The military uses are obvious. The better products will produce a better force that commands higher prices. Don't overlook the civilian side. In chemicals alone your factories could make a handsome profit that could subsidize the military research. Whoever was to restart a chemical industry could be the new economic powerhouse. Think of the multiple industries that are dependant on chemicals.

A post apocalypse army will be mostly infantry. Small arms will predominate, and you might even see cavalry units and edged weapons again. If black powder comes into use again, that might not be so far fetched. Tanks, planes and autos will die quickly after oil gas and spare parts dry up. You need to circumvent these problems and introduce a monopoly on all higher order military forces. Tanks were a solution to trench warfare, and as they need infantry as support, the only significance they play is a mobile tank killer and artillery platform. You could bypass the need for tanks by substituting those two functions with another weapon. You will need to develop rocket launchers to kill tanks, and mobile artillery as a support platform. Planes are useful and needed, for without an air force you are vulnerable to both detection and bombardment. You could substitute jets and bombers by using small planes, ultra lights and balloons. For your primitive economy, heavy industry needed to produce heavy weapons such as tanks and jet aircraft are not

going to be available to manufacture, even with older technology. Wait for your manufacturing capability to mature before you gear up to the big boys. And remember, some weapons are no longer needed. In my humble opinion, tanks are as obsolete as battleships.

If it does come to pass that infantry is the primary unit fielded by warring factions, your job should be simple. You can provide artillery, snipers, demolition experts, aircraft, special forces, and tank hunter teams. These will be in demand units that can provide good pay and less casualties. Mere cannon fodder is a suckers racket. Go with the value added units. If you can keep computers going or even keep manufacturing them, your artillery speed and computations should be superior. Also, by using alcohol powered trucks, you can haul your field pieces faster than horse drawn units. With your advanced manufacturing concern, your shells and guns will be better and more accurate.

Snipers are going to be a better money maker than infantry. They are rare, not because of the equipment but because of the skill. Any idiot that survives can have a scoped deer rifle. If they can use it skillfully is another matter. In WWII the USSR fielded masses of sniper units, but these were not as you or I would describe it. They were quickly trained, used a crappy rifle, and generally operated within several hundred yards in urban environments. Three hundred yards was about the maximum effective range. Again, masses were thrown into the fray and by sheer numbers alone won. With a quality scope, a well trained man, and perhaps even a 50 caliber rifle your sniper team can do some serious long distance killing. The standard 308 is good for 1000 yards in skilled hands. That can put a serious crimp in the enemies style.

Demolition experts are going to be easy to find, given the number of veterans or other idiots that like to play with HE. You are going to have to ensure that your industry can turn out the product.

You must ensure your people are top notch, and that your industry can turn out safe and effective product. You couldn’t pay me enough to set off a homemade charge of C4, if the maker was a hobbyist who had read a few books from Paladin Press. However, someone with college courses in chemistry, or even someone of high intelligence who had read through school texts on the subject should be able to turn out a decent product. If the chemicals were available. Raiding abandoned stocks will only last a short time and so it is imperative that you learn to produce everything you need for yourself.

Aircraft are going to be needed, as without them your forces will be reduced in force to guerrilla bands. If your enemy has any aircraft at all you are going to screw the pooch. Just an observer can report troop positions for artillery. You need aircraft to do your own spotting an then you will have the advantage. Then, just in case the enemy also has aircraft, you need fighters to combat that threat. Then, you can also have bombers and aircraft that combat troops and tanks. This can pose a problem, as planes are a high tech industrial item, so for a time you are going to be back at the dawn of combat aviation. Study up on WWI aircraft. They had cloth winged aircraft and hand thrown bombs. Surely even in a post apocalypse environment we could reproduce that. And forget about the difficulty in training pilots. Back then it was seat of the pants using civilian crop

dusters and performers who had learned their flying in a strictly non-professional manner. If you can keep air superiority, consider the eventual use of blimps to move cargo and troops. It is quite an economical way to ship.

Special forces are a great investment as you only need to feed and billet those troops. There is no special equipment needed other than small arms. Training can be live. The trick in differentiating these troops from normal infantry veterans is that you screen applicants for those that enjoy their work, then rewarding them for their efforts. There will always be those that thrive on the thrill of combat, and the fact that you always have a war going on will attract those types. If they are skilled ninja types, make sure they get downtime with perks. You may wish to consider an alcohol ration for all to avoid the old Soviet problem of troops selling their arms for vodka. With a reward system you might add to this a prostitute and drug ration. After a time they will be chomping at the bit and want to return to combat.

Tank hunter teams are going to be needed if pre-collapse tanks are kept operational. I can envision circumstances in which one or two vehicles can be kept going, and with it the controlling faction can terrorize it's neighbors. If your industry can churn out rockets, so much the better, but a bazooka can work, or even modified artillery. In extremes, your Team could dig a ditch and hid it. Lure the tank your way, wait for it to fall in the pit, roast with Molotov cocktails. The trick to killing a tank when you are poorly armed is not to combat it in the open, but as a guerrilla fighter would. Do not engage a weapon in the area it was designed to fight in.

There will other specialties, dictated by circumstance. If in general there are little in the way of modern communications, you could provide that specialty if you could develop the equipment. Comm teams could be in demand. Medical teams could be in demand if pre-collapse doctors were scarce. You get the idea.
END

FLATBREAD
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Like most red blooded Americans who grew up in the late 1970's, I was fascinated with the Soviet Unions invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. One got a look at all kinds of nifty weapons and tactics, and the Afghan resistance was inspiring to those fearing Communist world dominance. It was here that I first fell in love with the Lee-Enfield rifle and that I learned of the existence of a dietary staple called flatbread.

I didn't really catch on to the fact that this was only a tortilla. Heroic freedom fighters sitting around a fire slurping down flat slabs of cooked wheat dough was more inspiring than our southern neighbors chowing down on white flour tortillas and beans. Real men ate whole wheat!

I had forgotten all about this early episode of global culinary inspiration until our next foray into the mountains of Afghanistan to arm certain tribes so they might easily slaughter one another. Once again, there were those crafty little bastards sitting around the fire eating flatbread so they had the energy to go forth and smite the Godless infidel, or second best a fellow tribe member (just to keep the martial skills up to snuff- then later he could go smite the heathen dogs).

Flatbread is about as inspiring as it gets for those of us poor, cheap and lazy. All you really need is a bit of water and some whole wheat flour, along with a flat hot cooking surface. There is no need for yeast or baking powder, kneading or an hour cooking in the energy guzzling oven. Now, I love bread- but the ritual of mixing, twenty minutes of kneading, an hour to rise, deflating and allowing another rise, then cooking is in my mind a task better suited to grandma forty years ago. She didn't work a job and was thus able to devote half the day in the kitchen making everything from scratch cheaply (a task every bit as difficult as a mans paid job). Today my only options are to use technology (fake food) or handy kitchen gadgets (an electronic bread maker). The bread maker is great at saving labor, but takes just as long and in my mind turns out an inferior product. And forget about buying bread. The real stuff is greatly inflated and the pale imitation has no nutritional value. I buy my fake bread at the day old store for 33cents a loaf and use it only for sandwiches. I do not expect it to fill me up or to add to my diet.

To get a stick-to-the-ribs meal out of wheat you need whole wheat flour. To obtain that quickly and cheaply I recommend flatbread. I suppose you could call it tortillas, but in my mind the difference is that tortillas require lard and white flour whereas flatbread is whole wheat flour and water. Perhaps that is merely a misconception on my part but that's my story and I'm sticking to it. Myself, I add a mix of half liquid cooking oil and half water to my flatbread. This works for me since I am not as poor as the peasants traditionally cooking them, I have a fast metabolism and can eat more fat than I should and I have a manual labor job that requires a lot of energy. I'm sure most of you will wish to stay with the straight water.

First, if you have an electric range, turn it on to medium heat under a large skillet. For gas or those using a thin aluminum pan you can wait a bit for this. I use a large cast iron

skillet and I find that with an electric stove it takes all your prep time to heat it up. I realize that in a survival situation you will be using propane gas or a camp fire, but I am concerned here with day to day cheap healthy eating. Next, get a big deep bowl to mix your flour and liquid in. I use whatever is handy, most times a used three pound margarine container (my idea of Tupperware). Put in as much flour as you wish. I don't measure, but a half cup of flour seems to make one large or two medium breads. I just dump a bunch in- half the tub makes about ten good size portions. Why worry about exact measures? Save the leftovers in plastic in the fridge. None of your portions are going to turn out the same size diameter or thickness. This is an art and not a science.

Next, if your arteries can handle it put in a bit of cooking oil. I use soybean oil, but if you can afford it use olive oil. That stuff is actually healthy for you. Perhaps a quarter of a cup. Or even less. The idea is to add flavor and calories, not to soak your flour to the level of a donut. Add a bit of water, then stir with a stout spoon. Add a little more water. Stir. You want to keep going until you get the consistency of bread dough. If you don't know what that is, it is when your mass does not stick to your hands or any other surface, but the whole thing still sticks together. Imagine the pizza guy throwing up the uncooked crust. Of course, if you added too much water, just throw in a bit more flour.

Once you have your dough, separate into portions. I break off a bit slightly larger than a golf ball. Any bigger and you will overflow the pan, smaller and you waste heat cooking too many pieces. The size rolled out should about fill up a standard dinner plate. Once you have your dough balls get your rolling pin and a cutting board. You can use a counter top and any cylinder, but the proper tools cost a total of $5 and are recommended if you are going to do this often. If you just want to try this out, use the kitchen counter and an old dowel or cut off broomstick (without paint). Throw some flour down on your flat surface to avoid sticking, and flour the rolling pin for the same reason. Repeat the flour application before every piece. If you really must improvise, just shape the dough into a flat round shape with the heel of your hands. It is better to roll it out to an even thin layer, but you work with what you have.

Your heating surface should be hot enough that a drop of water will dance around on it. Place a flattened piece of dough in the skillet and keep an eye on it while you roll out your next one. You can roll the mall out prior to cooking, but I find that even with flour sprinkled in-between them they tend to start sticking together and so I roll out one at a time while another cooks. Watch the one in the pan. When faint brown spots start to appear, flip it over. If you wait much longer the spots turn black and you are on your way to charcoal. Keep an eye on the down side and repeat. You should flip one or two times before the spots start to turn black, then you are done. The trick is to time it just right so you have no black, but good luck with that. It usually won't happen. If your heat was too low you will have burns on the outside and uncooked dough on the inside, plus wasted fuel. Too high and you have the same thing.

There is no need to oil the skillet. The flour on the bread from rolling it flat will keep it From sticking to the surface. And, you can add any ratio of white to wheat flour. I prefer all wheat since it gives me the staying power from complex carbohydrates, keeps me regular, and takes a lot less to fill me up. If whole wheat flour costs twice white flour, but

you use three times as much white to fill up your gut, it will be cheaper to go with whole wheat flour in the first place. It is not as difficult as it used to be to buy whole wheat flour. Before you had to go to a health food store and buy a five pound bag for about five bucks. It had probably been sitting there since the first bowl of granola was eaten back in Berkeley during the Summer Of Love. Now, however, you can go on down to your Super Wal-Mart and buy a nice and fresh bag for a smidgen under two dollars. May all the Gods bless you, Sam Walton.

Don't get me wrong. Milled and bagged store bought whole wheat flour is not your best choice. It is far more nutritious to grind your own and use it immediately. However, if you are like me you will tend to put off doing good things if they prove too much trouble and a viable alternative is available. I would work up a sweat just grinding up my kernels, then when it came time to stand over a hot stove- forgetaboutit! Even if I ground up enough flour for a weeks worth of use and froze it the entire ordeal just didn't seem worth it. I found myself not using whole wheat flour all that much. So, when the grocery chains started carrying the wheat flour I started cooking with it on a scale never seen before. Sure, it is not as healthy- but is it more healthy than not using any whole wheat flour at all? See what I mean?

After awhile the new and exciting world of flatbread will pale a bit. I can eat a weeks worth of them for breakfast before the thought of another flatbread makes me ill. Try to vary your menu. One day flatbread (remember you can cook them up today and eat the rest several days later) and the next a waffle. Then toast. Then biscuits. You get the idea. Throw in a day a week with some fried eggs added to the toast, or toast and grits. Or start using corn as an every other day alternative. Cornbread, grits, fried corn mush. If you only use wheat and corn for breakfast your costs will plummet on your food bill. A hearty whole grain and grease breakfast, a small lunch, and dinner with real meat should give you a damn cheap healthy diet. Add in citrus for breakfast and a green veggie for dinner and you will be good to go. Limit your food to wholesome natural foods (go easy on the hot dogs). Or come as close as you can. I love whole foods I prepare myself, since they are cheap and will keep me out of the hospital in later years. But, I do not get enough veggies. And, I use white sugar on occasion as well. I am not a fanatic, tree hugging, nuke the whales type. I believe in moderation in most things. A Cheeto eating coach potato is just as bad as a tofu eating hippie. A little refined sugar will not kill you. Either will a pancake with whole wheat instead of white flour. At least add in half whole wheat.

Speaking of going overboard, be careful if you are new to whole wheat. If all you have ever eaten is white flour, introducing whole wheat to your diet will play havoc with your System for awhile. I am talking clear out your pipes havoc, and usually at the wrong times. Slowly add it into your recipes. You will most likely enjoy it after you get used to it. No reason to live on it exclusively. I still eat white flour pastas, and white rice. I use Them as a filler, and for variety. If you start searching for whole wheat spaghetti noodles, and only use brown rice, and shy away from all refined sugar- you will have a very dull diet. And, perhaps it gets so dull you give up the whole idea of whole grains in your diet. Bad idea. Use moderation.

Besides using this new food idea to save money and improve your health, how does any of this pertain to survival? Well, think about the concept of cooking some loaves of bread using a wood stove. Not the easiest thing to do. But how difficult would it be to use that same stove to cook flatbread with? Not at all hard to do. And a camp fire. How in the name of all that's holy are you going to use a camp fire to cook a loaf of bread? You might, using a Dutch oven. Much quicker to cook flatbread, and the skillet weighs a lot less if you are traveling. And, when traveling on foot, perhaps on combat patrol, flatbread takes up less space than leavened bread. Can you see the possibilities? Think about them, and consider flatbread. END ARTICLE

CHEAP RETREAT
by James M Dakin
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Most survivalists are urban dwellers, if for no other reason that cities are where the jobs are. We may wish we were living in East Dog Breath, Wyoming but the sad fact is that it takes a slightly larger local to support the economic activity in which a bunch of undereducated high school graduates actually are gainfully employed. True, in to days climate, and more so in the future, anyone with an in-demand skill can telecommute from anywhere. It is possible to live happily in East Dog Breath, Wyoming with a big city income. If anyone out there knows what these demanded skills are that doesn't take a college degree and can be self taught let me know because otherwise I am stuck in the city where I can earn a living at retail management.

As we are all aware, the ideal circumstances that a survivalists finds him/ her selves in would be a energy efficient dwelling in a small town out in the middle of nowhere on enough land to support the growing of crops. Good luck to your average Joe getting that. The rest of us can do one of two things in the event of an emergency. Stay where we are and tough it out or bug out and get ourselves to the country out of harms way. Each has its own problems. Staying where you are at is great if you are poor and can afford neither a vehicle nor a retreat. The down side is that you are facing Angry Ghetto Dwelling Welfare Mobs. That plus the shut down of critical services such as water, sewer and fire suppression. All these factors must be planned for. If, on the other hand, you are going to bug out you must first face the problem of escaping over jammed roads and then hoping your retreat is in one piece. All problems must be considered and all choices are not the best, but we are dealing in reality here and not fantasy. At a later time I might undertake to write on other dimensions of the location problem but for now I wish to address to those that choose to bug out the best way to acquire a retreat should they so wish to own one. I make no calls here on the practicality, just on the means to a desired end. Myself, I will stay in the city until I can move out to a small town on a permanent basis. However, this is my personal choice and I grant you not the best. You do the best with what you have.

How does one afford a country retreat if one is poor, or at least struggling financially as we all are except Bill Gates and most bankrupt company CEO's? If you think that bugging out is an important survival strategy, how do you swing buying land out in the country? I assume here for simplicities sake that you have solved the transportation problem and are merely concerned with the location. I should point out here that anyone can bug out, even a minimum wage earner with almost no finances. A bicycle and homemade trailer can transport camping equipment and food for a considerable distance to any number of cheap locations such as a spot in the woods in a National Forrest, a relatives home in a small town or even an abandoned building in the suburbs (less of a fire

risk in a metal building on an asphalt lot). But what we are talking about here is a cheap place to bug out to that you own a title to.

When we talk about a cheap place to retreat to, we have a lot more options than if we were looking for a place to live full time in normal circumstances. When you look for property there are many things you don't want for your permanent home. Such as lack of water or septic tank. You want a useable road, location near shopping and recreation and a job. Resale value is nice since no one job can be counted on to last forever and no location can be counted on to stay viable economically forever. With a retreat site you can be far less concerned with these amenities and more focused on price. For instance, going with a bit of research on the Web one would find that a choice Ozark lot close to town and near a paved road with a year round creek goes for an uncomfortable $15,000. However, if you settled for an acre in the desert you would only pay $3,000. And the difference would only grow, as the Ozark land prohibited trailers and required a conventional home, whereas the Arizona land had no building codes. This is the difference between a home and a retreat, ten times the price at a minimum(land plus house verses land plus trailer). Obviously if you live in Buffalo NY you can't bug out to Arizona. I am merely giving examples. And keep in mind that the desert property is high since it is capable of being electrified at no personal cost (the nearest pole is close enough to avoid excess hook up fees). You can easily buy desert property for under $1,000. You should be able to find property anywhere for that price. The question is how far must you travel to get there. If you are in Manhattan you need to travel a bit to get to affordable land. At my location in Daytona Beach, Florida I would most likely need to travel to Georgia to get to affordable land. Here, even the swamp in expensive.

There are two extremes that we tend to study when we look at land. One is the expensive properties where the jobs are and the other is the super cheap far from where we live. If you must travel too far for a retreat to be practical, you must consider alternatives. One is a group purchase. I realize that there are far too few of us survivalists out there to start a group retreat, but how about a group purchase of hunting land? That seems to be somewhat popular and widespread. Still, what with the average range of to days cars I would think that you should be able to find something in the two to three hundred mile range. Hell, in one hundred miles I would be over the Florida/Georgia line and on my way to a cheap retreat if I so wished. It might take forever to get there with everyone else bugging out, but the journey is in the range of a gas tank. If all you require is a bit of dirt that you legally own you should be able to find something in an affordable range near your permanent home.

One good resource is the publication Rural Properties Bulletin. They have a Website and a sample listing to give you a good example of what's available. If you are serious about a retreat you can then subscribe.

Now, assuming that you have located a property close enough, what about the two big questions that determine livability. How can I get water and where can I get out of the weather? Water is a problem almost anywhere and you are going to have to focus on

conservation as well as unconventional procurement. In the case of the aforementioned desert land, Lake Mead was about ten miles north. A well might be too expensive, but for an emergency source one could always bicycle up and cart home at least ten gallons. Dangerous and labor intensive, but at least it was possible. The same can be considered elsewhere, as most places do have some source of water somewhat nearby. The key to that would be to own a workable, repairable bicycle. After a short period of time there will be no more gasoline to be had. And whatever shelter you have can be rigged up to capture rain. Plan on having plenty of tarps for dew collection. So, between trips to collect water, run-off, and dew if you conserve water you should have enough for emergency living. As far as shelter you can find something to fit every budget. You could start at a cheap tent and go up to a travel trailer. As this article is on a cheap retreat I will stick with practical choices. A used beater truck pulling a used trailer going to a crappy piece of land will be within the price range of most working stiffs. Is $5,000 too much to pay for all three? Personally I don't think so. First of all you will have either a second vehicle or a work truck that can be used everyday. Second is a trailer that can be used in a vacation and/or used to store those survival supplies that the wife doesn't want in the house such as buckets of wheat. Plus, even though you wouldn't want to live on your retreat land in normal times, isn't it nice to know that you will have a place to live if the economy takes a dive and you loose your job and the bank repos the house? Think of it as insurance. We all pay insurance, and I think $5,000 is a paltry sum compared what you pay for the house or even the car insurance. But even that figure need not be so high.

If you already have a vehicle that you are using for work and errands there is no need to factor in the cost of transportation to your retreat cost. My thought was you might wish to have a pickup to haul supplies to the retreat or use the truck to haul a cab over camper as they sell very cheap used ($500 average). So, forget that cost and your "retreat insurance" goes down to about $3,000 or $3,500. However, do you even need to buy a trailer? A large tent and some add-on tarps can be a fine shelter for around $200. Even a junker vehicle you can tow to the site can be used for shelter. A Pull-and-Pay junk yard might have a great old bread truck or bus without an engine that you could buy real cheap. Tow it and turn it into a grand old emergency shelter with the added benefit of no added taxes on the structure (anything with axles is good to avoid those pesky taxes other than on your cheap unimproved land). So, assuming you bought the land for around $1,000 and spent no more than $500 for shelter you could be in possession of a workable retreat for the grand sum of $1,500. This could be financed from one credit card or one years tax return. Anyone who is gainfully employed should be able to own their own retreat site.

I can hear the chorus of objections already. What about growing my own food (stockpile two years worth of wheat at $150 in case of consecutive crop failure and in the meantime visit your land regularly to fertilize and improve the soil and stock seeds and basic tools, the most important being drip irrigation hose to conserve water). Temporary shelter is vulnerable to attack (so is the conventional house so unless you have solid concrete walls you are screwed anyway). It is dangerous to rely on your methods of finding water (so is relying on your solar or wind powered well since part break-downs in an emergency mean no replacement). I can't find land as cheap as you say, such as anywhere in California (

move out to a more realistic state that is not so expensive due to government or market forces artificially increasing prices).

It is not too expensive to have a retreat. What makes it so is that most people have certain expectations as to what they must have. A four by four to get to their retreat, a concrete reinforced bunker to live in. An alternate energy system to power that retreat with its electrified fence and spotlights and home entertainment system. An arsenal to outfit a private army. A vast estate to grow enough crops to feed that army. I could go on, but perhaps you get my point. Those are what you want. What you get is a scrap of dirt to pitch a tent on. As the bumper sticker on the rusted pile of imported junk stated, "Don't laugh, at least it's paid for." More than we can say for our mortgaged home that can be taken away. You might just have to learn to settle. A square of dirt with a tent is better than being homeless, and that same hovel is going to be a viable escape when the only other choice is to stay in the burning rioting cities. END

SURVIVING RETIREMENT
by James M Dakin
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In east Pennsylvania there lies an abandoned complex that was once the showcase of industrial giant Bethlehem Steel. Back in the good old days of the height of the Industrial Revolution this company turned out most of the ships that fought in the Pacific during World War II, and most of the girders making up the New York skyline and the Golden Gate bridge. Then, of course, it all turned to crap. Besides the addition of "mini-mills" that used more efficient technology the U.S. steel industry became the victim of its own success. There was so much invested in the old ways that had once led the industry to massive profits, only ineffective stop-gap measures were able to be made. European and Japanese state-of-the-art companies danced circles around the obsolete industry and short sighted labor unions demanded so many wage and benefit increases that to this day the industry is crippled. Even in bankruptcy Bethlehem Steel must pay out $180 million a year in retirement benefits and an incredible ratio of ONE worker must support six retirees. The industry as a whole last year asked the federal government for a $13 billion bailout to cover retiree costs. That's billion with a B.

I wonder what my share of that is as a taxpayer. On a guess that perhaps 1/3 the population works, I figure about $130 a year for just one of the Federals pet projects. I really think that I could use that $130 more than a bunch of pampered old farts who make about three times my take home pay monthly when you combine Union retirement, Social Security, and other goodies such as Medicare. Actually, more like four times. The Social Security alone is twice my take-home. Now, multiply that $130 by every other socialist, commie, wealth-redistribution scheme Uncle Sugar could possible come up with. Unions, Social Security, welfare recipients, military retirees, federal worker retirees, the Defense industry, all these just being the most obvious. Grey areas such as lawyers living off the fat of litigation allowed by the government, minorities being forcible given jobs, countless jobs created by regulation producing nothing but paperwork for our masters, city, county, and state workers duplicating the destruction of the Feds. The wonder of it all is how our economy is as healthy as it is with this incredible deadweight dragging it down. Our economy is more socialist, or fascist if you wish to get technical, than it is free market. And yet it still leads the world. I would hate to see first-hand what other economies do if they are even more screwed up than ours.

The point is that most of us don't make enough to cover that kind of cost. The government is spending so much more than it takes in that massive deficits have been the order of the day for over half a century. Now, scores of books have been written predicting the coming collapse of our system. The usual advice is how to get rich of certain investments as the world collapses around you. Frankly, I get very tired of seeing all the same advice. If our present day system collapses you are not going to safely drive

down to the store to spend your ill gotten gains. The best portrayal of this I have seen was in the book "The Rift" by Walter J Williams. A very good read, although it suffers from the usual Big Daddy Government Will Save The Day In The End. I won't spoil it for you if you decide to read it, but pay attention to the commodities trader character.

I won't try to predict the collapse of our system. I can't. I have no way of knowing with any certainty. It is sufficient to prepare now, and worry about the date later. However, one book I really must insist that you read is The Great Reckoning by James Dale Davidson and Lord William Rees-Mogg. It is out of print, but it was a best seller and there are plenty of copies out there. Get it from a library or buy it used on the Internet. This is my Bible. I swear by the information in this work. Their timing was off- the Depression was forecast for about ten years ago. Also, they suffer from the Invest And Prosper Your Way Through Societies Collapse way of thinking. However, the reason that you must read this book carefully is that they forecast the way that society is moving. It doesn't matter if the call for an economic depression does not pan out. With the economy shifting from one mode of production (industry) to another (information) it is very hard to predict how the economy will react. The broad trends the book covers are over generations and centuries. This is your roadmap to the future. The trends are already taking place. Pay attention carefully. In fact, this book is more on target now, post 9-11, than it was when it was written ten years ago. I plead with you to read this book. If you agree with it's basic premises that everything I am predicting in this article will seem second nature to you.

The point about the steel industry is that economic giants in their day do fall, and are not to be trusted in your future plans. Lately the scandals with Enron and others makes this old news, but just six months ago most people would take a more lackluster attitude. Even if they thought that there was a chance that Social Security would fail, there was always a retirement pension from a private company and at least a 401(k) or other investments. Today, I would not trust another soul to see me through retirement. Not the federal, state, or local government. Not any private company. Hell, I wouldn't even count on being able to stay employed by one company for twenty years. And, certainly not Wall Street. Nobody can be said to have your interests at heart. You may scoff at the notion of government not being around to pay your way through the golden years, but I feel that they will offer no security. When one little piggy starts to suckle at the big fat sow, there is more milk than it can ever consume. After a time many more line up for supper, and the pickings get lean. When they all come around from nearby farms, the teats go dry.

You don't need a degree from college to take any trend and project it in a linear fashion to its final logical conclusion. Population increases without a counter force would eventually overwhelm the earth. Without war, famine, soil depletion, or whatnot, the population would reach a point were there was actually no place to stand. If a bank account stayed in place and earned compound interest uninterrupted at some time it would earn more money than was actually in circulation. It is the simple fable of the rice and the chess board. A king asks a wise man to name his price for a deed. The man asks only for a grain of rice

on the first square, two on the second, four on the third, doubling the last square every time. There is not enough rice in the kingdom to last through the chess board. Of course, at some point the (un)wise man is beheaded by the king for his trickery. And that proves as well as anything that events will not be allowed to progress past a certain point. Nothing moves in a straight line forever.

The economic system our parents grew fat on may or may not continue for us. My bet is it won't. But it doesn't matter if I'm right or wrong. What matters is that it is foolish to bet your life on that fact. And, if things go south, you will literally be betting your life on it. If things return to pre-Great Depression, you will find that it is a lot easier to starve. Food Stamps, Social Security, mass government employment, all the safety nets we take for granted are only about sixty-five years old. They are a historical aberration, not the social norm. To plan on them in the past was a pretty safe bet. When there are scores of workers supporting each retiree, and the average life expectancy was below the retirement age, the mathematical odds were heavily in your favor of being given a pension. Today three workers support each retiree. They live an average of ten years past retirement age. They get automatic annual increases while most workers do not. They get more and more in health benefits, and the medical industry has an annual inflation of twenty percent. The huge waves of Baby Boomers are going to start retiring in about five years. Add it all up and to save the system you would need several things to happen. Increased taxes, increased immigration, a shrink in benefits and means-testing, a halt to increased medical inflation, a continued robust economy and a bit of luck. Can you see this happening?

Any increase in taxes is a gamble with reelection. This is always the last resort. Better to hid any tax and call it something else, such as a fee/regulation/Do Good Fund etc. You don't pay a forth tax on the sale of a set of tires. You pay a Environmental Impact Fee. God forbid that set ever wears out and they end up in the dump. Course, you have to pay a Users Fee to go to the dump. And then when the dump is full of used tires that were supposed to have had their removal paid for by your Environmental Impact Fee and User Fee the local government strong arms the passage of a Sales Tax increase of only a piddling 1/4 percent for only the next 15 years. Of course, that percentage was politically acceptable. A full point is not, but a fraction is. But then when you buy anything under two dollars you find that the fraction is rounded UP to the next cent and you end up paying the whole increased percentage point. And at the fifteen year mark everyone forgot what the whole point of the increase was and use the Feel Good slogan of the day to keep the original increase for another fifteen years. It's For The Children. It's For The Environment. It's For The Parasitic Politicians (oops!-forget that one).

Increased Immigration used to be the fallback tactic for saving Social Security. Well, then 9-11 happened and King George II saw his chance to take everyone's mind off our declining economy. George is not that bad of a fellow, but he is a politician and they must pay off their sponsors. So, big inefficient old industry was given tax breaks and favorable regulation as pay-off, and the real engines of economic growth such as broadband were ignored. Not that they needed any government handout, but abolishing agencies that protected the telecom monopolies would be nice. As an unfortunate side effect of

reelecting George we must bankrupt some airlines, double the national debt, halt economic progress and take away most civil liberties. And, as a side note, let's severely restrict immigration. Anyone coming over to join the Welfare roles is welcomed, but any Indian coming over to start a software company looks too much like a raghead so let's make his life miserable. At least for now, I don't think immigration will be the answer. At the very least another bumbling agency must protect its own butt and cover its incompetence with more rules and regulations.

Shrinking benefits and means testing just aren't going to happen. The WWII generation has kept its collective snout in the public trough for so long that the thought of Uncle Sugar not being there to redistribute Other Peoples Money sends them out under any conditions to vote. Why, perish the thought that your taxes shouldn't be paid to make me nice and comfy. I suppose a paid vacation in the military, free college, a government or union job and a free retirement aren't enough. Now they are starting to whine about increased medical and free prescription drugs. Grandma might be 95 years old and have the visual and audio range of three feet, but by God she is going to be out bright and early every election day driving her Caddy in a very dangerous manner and pull that lever in favor of all the goodies she is entitled to. Things have even gotten so desperate what with voter apathy and all that they are even pulling out the big guns and giving free labor to propagandize for the common good ("whoever you vote for, just vote"). Most of us are quite educated about the issues. We don't vote because it only legitimizes our oppression. So, the geriatrics have the run of the field and they, along with AARP, are going to make sure not one penny of your money is not going to go to them. I would even look for their benefits to increase above and beyond COLA. It might be political suicide to increase taxes, but if the screaming hoards of seniors insist on it there may be no choice to our prostituting elected officials.

Also dubious is a halt to medical inflation. When a government monopoly increases their price every year, what can you do? The folks that run that sector might honestly want to cut costs, but the inefficiency is built in to the bureaucracy and there is little that can be done. Just compare the US Post Office with FedEx. FedEx has several burdens- Union payroll, aircraft fuel cost and a slowing economy. Yet they seriously out-perform the Post Office. The Post Office does make a profit every year- on first class mail. Then, they take that profit and piss it away by subsidizing their package shipping costs, making the service artificially low to compete with UPS and FedEx. Yet, if you have something you want to actually be delivered, you avoid the Post Office. They do not guarantee time or actually even a delivery. The others do. And still the Post Office continues to raise their rates on an average of every six months. That is inflation due to monopoly. Yet, with electronic mail the monopoly is threatened. Too bad- raise prices. When broadband is widely available they will start to see a serious erosion in catalog and magazine shipping. And their response will be- raise prices! The medical industry as a whole suffers from some of these problems. They are granted a monopoly through the AMA. Certification is heavily regulated. The FDA is notorious for delaying life-saving drugs. Lawyers are allowed free reign to plunder at will, so insurance (another over-regulated industry) is continuously increasing. At every turn government has so many fingers in this pie that it is a wonder

the industry does so well. Only the fact that a small free- market incentive is allowed to survive is the reason our health care is the best in the world. Not in free access, not in doctor per-capita, not in so many of the oft-quoted statistics, but in the fact that if you have the cash you can be saved immediately and not be put on the mandated waiting list and for the fact that this is where most of the advances are made, by and large. 15-20% annual cost increases are caused by government interference. Productivity increases are a result of free-market economies, however distorted by coercive interference.

The last factor, a robust economy and a bit of luck are just as easy to achieve as the rest but lack of will and our addiction to "free" money make all of them nearly impossible to achieve. The times they are a' changing and we are going along for the ride willing or not. Our whole economy is changing and the trip is going to be well worth it even though it's going to hurt a bit. Most of what you see around you is the death of the old economic system. We don't know what will take its place. We know information will replace industry, but have little idea how the new economy will perform. Let me give a small example. If you were a farmer at the turn of the century (102 years ago- my time line still seems stuck in the twentieth century) you saw great upheaval after the Civil War and great innovations with machinery. Yet, you would still see the economy through the eyes of a farmer. The economy still was fueled by crops and land. In hindsight we can see the War of Northern Aggression as the triumph of industry over agriculture. You would have seen new farm machinery as a way to produce more food- but in reality the machines came to have all the economic value. After the Agriculture Age food was still very important but it had little value economically. Industry was what fueled growth. In the coming Age of Information machines and products will have an important place but the growth will come from information. The farmer and the tractor manufacture will pale in comparison in terms of economic value and growth to the scientist that genetically engineers the crop seeds.

What we are witnessing now is merely the last dance around the totem of manufacturing. The Japanese were successful because they applied the most efficient management principles to manufacturing, plus their whole economy was geared toward export. It really was a well oiled machine. Wal-Mart is highly successful in applying the newest information technology towards retailing. Yet, unless they change in the future they are merely putting the finishing touches on the old manufacturing economy. Yes, we all need to eat and thus farms and crops are important. We all need to buy goods and thus factories and products are important. But the economic arena of the future will belong to the nerds. Factories will continue to hum and farms will churn out crops but manipulating ideas and replacing matter will pay the bills. One primitive example is e-mail. The prime factor behind the growth of Internet Service Providers was the desire for e-mail. We spent three to ten times the monthly cost of stamps to electronically communicate with others. Not to mention the cost of the computer. Yet, we were not just beating the monopoly of the Post Office. We send as much mail as we wish, we can eliminate long distance calls, we can shop online and reduce trips into town, replace the morning paper and the set of encyclopedias and turn off the nightly news. And that is just from the desire to communicate more efficiently without the incompetence of a bureaucratic monopoly.

We replaced semi-trucks full of paper with a few fiber optic lines.

A genetically modified lawn seed could replace a whole industry. If that seed could be programmed to grow to a certain height and no higher we could eliminate everyone involved in cutting that lawn (or cut way down on the number- pun intended) from the mower manufacture to the guy pushing that machine. They are already growing vats of fake protein meat substitute. Not that that will ever catch on but a truly efficient cheap process could feed the starving masses and replace welfare payments. With nanotechnology there will be little that man needs to actually build anymore. Even without nanotech new innovations can radically alter our way of building. Without the monopoly of government mandated construction codes and regulations we could be literally spraying/pouring up buildings. The whole concept we have now of information work is tainted by our having grown up and being surrounded by a manufacturing economy. The future will be a lot different and better than we can imagine.

But, back to the economy we have now. For radical change to take place there must first be a traumatic upheaval. The War Between The States and finally the Great Depression cemented into place the Manufacturing Economy. Do you think we can escape a similar period of upheaval as we overthrow the current ruling elite to get a better and improved way of economic livelihood? Our last economic savior (in the 90's) was the fact that the rest of the developing world was in a Depression and all the money came pouring in from them. Every Joe Blow with two bucks to rub together after buying rice sent it our way to be invested in the relatively stable dollar instead of the worthless local currency. All that incoming cash saved our butts by pouring non-inflationary cash into our economy. What is going to save us next time? Our good looks? Sure, perhaps we can pull off another miracle but I think the odds are heavily against it. Will that crash be our turning point into the next economy? Darned if I know, but I can tell you that when things do finally change our whole world will be turned upside down. Do not rely on the current institutions to bankroll your retirement. Not government pensions, government insured bank accounts, government protected Unions, nothing at all connected to the Welfare State we are currently burdened with. That yoke will be violently thrown off and not survive its current form.

So, how does one survive retirement without outside help? It ain't going to be your leisure walk in the park, play shuffleboard and go on cruises type of retirement. It could very well be more like the choose between food or rent, can't fix the Caddy so you have to ride the bus, sitting on the porch playing checkers and hacking up lung cookies, got five kids and not one of the little bastards will send me a dime, buy your cloths at the thrift store type of retirement the government propaganda depicted years ago to get us to pay more in taxes. In other words, retirement will mean the same kind of poverty a lot of us face now. And let there be no mistake. If you are doing okay right now economically it is a precarious existence. Only a few paychecks are between your BMW driving butt and a life of flipping hamburgers, living in a trailer and paying the ex-wife most of your wages. The system is coming unglued and most people are either living in dignified poverty or grabbing more of the shrinking pie by means fair or foul. You had better learn to live

cheap now while you have a choice.

The most important thing you can do now is get out of debt. I know you hear that all the time and it is easy to say and hard to do. However it is the one way to gain the flexibility you need in a time of sudden job loss, economic downturn or even a way of moving from an oppressive government location. You can always walk away from your debt. Credit cards are unsecured loans. Your car and house can be repossessed. You will not go to debtors prison. But consider that waiting until this happens leaves you with very few options. Were are you going to live? How are you going to get there? Even renting entails a credit check. Best to honorably pay off your debts as fast as possible. My debt total for home and credit cards is over three times my annual take home pay. The burden of paying this off is at times too much. I'm sure you can all relate. However, it will all be over in a little over four years and then I can breath a little easier. I will be able to maneuver financially. If I walked away from it now I might gain a year or two in my schedule towards financial independence but will more than likely limit my options in the future. If your debt is too considerable to pay off in a reasonable time frame by all means declare bankruptcy. Before the new laws are passed making this much harder. Credit is a great tool if responsibly used. But it is even better to be liable to no one. Learn to save and spend instead of spend and pay. Believe me, it was hard as hell to cut up those cards. I didn't even spend frivolously. Broken appliances, home repairs, the kids needing a loan, the old lady out of work, flying out to see my father after an accident, all purchases on the cards were needed. But, when you are spending more on card payments than on the grocery bill it is time to stop.

After you get out off debt, stay that way. That might actually be harder than paying off the debt in the first place. Most of us have been there when suddenly, out of the blue, our small innocent and entirely manageable credit card purchases magically turned into an uncontrollable unpayable crushing debt. And that is when times are good. Imagine what happens if you suddenly loose your job. It is far better to stay out of debt totally than to chance raking up another headache of a bill. Do whatever works for you. Screw up your credit so bad that you will never be offered another line of credit again. Or, just cut up your cards and cancel the accounts. Or, keep one small card that has a credit limit you can pay back in at most six months with money you always have extra. That way it will be hard to get in trouble and you have a card for emergencies. Whatever you do, just stay out of debt. That way you have much more room to maneuver than most folks. It was true that it was financially prudent to buy instead of rent and so a home mortgage made good sense. However, if you think there are hard times ahead, it would make better sense to stay out of debt in case of sudden job loss. It is better to live in a trailer that is paid for than a house that has twenty-five years left on its bank note. If the economy tanks you will loose the house anyway, so why bother wasting money. Live below your means now.

Be creative in your quest to eliminate and stay out of debt. For instance, if you are in debt for ten grand on credit cards, have a mortgage and a car payment, you would consider yourself screwed. But, what if you used your good credit to your advantage while you could? Lets say you got approved for a loan for a recreational vehicle. Then, you took

out a second mortgage on the house for a small loan and used that to buy a cheap piece of land. You live out of the RV, commute to work on a used motorcycle, sell your house, repo the car, and use the difference between the RV payment and the mortgage to pay down the credit cards quickly. This of course assumes you have the equity in the home to do this. Or, do the same without the second mortgage and instead camp out at a friends or a nearby state park and save up for that lot purchase. The point here is that you can work around your debt problem in more ways than just trying to find more money to pay off debts. That itself is usually not possible. How about using that overvalued house to your advantage by renting out to roommates. They pay most of the mortgage and you take what you were spending to get a cheaper place to live. Crunch the numbers. Try to get out of debt in under five years. At first it is painful and it seems no progress is being made. Then, things start picking up and you are on your way.

The second most important thing to do after becoming debt free is to find a place to live that is rent free. It is great to have no mortgage and live in a paid-for trailer, but what if you were living in a trailer park and paying a lot rent? Things are certainly cheaper, and this is a wise strategy if you also are saving up to buy land for that trailer. However, if you stay on that rented lot several things can happen in the future. The lot rent can continually be increased until you can't afford it or a sudden job lose means you can't afford it or the owners sell the park and you are kicked out. Lot rental is best for a short time only, then it is better to buy. Granted, you can lose a bought and paid-for piece of land to the government and you still must pay taxes on it, but $200 a year is easier to pay than $200 a month. Trailer or no, self-built cinder block house or tent, mansion you inherited or living out of an old school bus, the goal here is to minimize your monthly shelter cost. Even if your conventional house is paid for, make sure you can afford its taxes and upkeep on a reduced income, or get rid of it and get a shelter as cheap as possible. If social security is greatly reduced or even eliminated, can you afford your dwelling on a part time income or savings? That is your prime consideration. A $1,000 used truck with a $500 cab-over camper and a good tool box might be the best retirement investment you can make now. See last weeks issue on cheap retreats for really cheap places to live. You must be debt free and rent free to survive the coming hostile retirement environment.

A quick note on transportation here. Is your car able to be nursed along for the rest of your life? Are you able to fix it yourself? Will you be able to afford insurance on a limited income? Do you live in a house in the suburbs that makes a car mandatory? You must take into account transportation costs when calculating the cost of your shelter. If I find a place to live in the country for $5,000 should I buy that or the $25,000 lot in town. If you factor in transportation cost it might be cheaper to live in town. Consider that for ten years the cost of a car is at least $10,000 (minimum car cost that lasts twice the life of the loan). Ten years of insurance is at least $7,000. At twenty thousand miles a year gas is at $1.25 a gallon (and with a MPG of 35) just under a thousand bucks, but lets round it up to account for a more realistic average figure and say gas will run you another $10,000 for the cars life. Without anything going wrong mechanically, it is still more expensive to own a car and live on a cheap acre than to not own a car and live on an expensive lot.

This is of course for those not mechanically inclined. If you are, the equation is different. However, you must still be realistic about the true cost of living in the country. It looks cheap until you add a car. And higher food prices. Less crime and no starving welfare masses are nice and would be important, but you need to be able to afford those luxuries. Also, the bus service most likely will not be in existence under our scenario. Remember, most locals subsidize them. Extreme economic conditions will wipe them out. Your best bet is a good, dependable bicycle with a good lock to prevent theft. Start now and get in shape. Twenty pounds overweight and smoking is not a good start for suddenly being forced to pedal for groceries. Start now and work up to it.

Food is going to be harder to come by in the future, be it from inflation or income reduction. Have several years of grains stocked up, along with a good size pantry for canned meats and such, plus even a tiny garden will do nicely to take you through any rough spots. I can see being
totally self-sufficient in food as a welcome and attainable goal, even in the city. But be realistic about your abilities and desires. If several hours a day between a garden and small livestock is not in the cards, lean heavily towards a stockpile. I will cover this in more detail soon in another article. Food is really not your biggest concern. That is why I listed it almost last. A stockpile is ridiculously cheap and with practice anyone can successfully garden and raise animals even in the northern-most climes. With a few how-to books and some preparation no one is going to starve. Stay hungry, perhaps. Crave the old days of dining out, sure. Starving, no.

Second to last, you are going to need a casual income in retirement, even without debt, rent or the cost of a car. Taxes must be paid on your land, the bicycle will need new tubes or tires, you need to buy such foods as salt and sugar and white flour, baking soda or canned pineapple. You will need to patch a roof or refill the propane tank. Hell, you are not self-sufficient. You need to pay some electricity, even if you are well insulated and have a wood burner. Without central heat/air and using propane to cook with you will see electric bills of only twenty dollars a month, but that is still an expense that you need income to pay. You need to look into the future and determine the odds that your skills will be needed. Remember, we are going to a service and information rich economy. Manufacturing and farming will always be needed, but they will not be in great demand insofar as jobs are concerned. I see a time when the manufacturing sector employs as little as does agriculture, currently under 5%. Deal with it. Most of us will provide services for the informational elite. Except those of us who lost jobs to computers or overseas service workers. On the endangered list are paralegal, administration types, phone service reps, excess cashiers (think radio emitting strips replacing bar codes and eliminating the need to scan an item for sale- oops, there goes companies that inventory stock as a service), even some doctor services can be replaced by overseas workers. Use your imagination to try and eliminate your job, then retrain or teach others how to eliminate your job. It will pay quite well as companies are in dire need to constantly automate labor or double workers output at little extra cost. At the lower end of the economic ladder you should be able to always find work unless we enter a Depression. A good work history and a willingness to work hard for little compensation will ensure you always have at least a part time low

paying job. If possible, work for yourself at a hobby. With little income needed you can earn a casual income.

Last on the list I offer heath care/medical cost. You might think this would be the first consideration with retirement, as the whining seniors catch all the headlines in the news. Help us, oy veh, the cost of pills is killing us!! Just ask yourself one question. Can you afford medical cost now, at age thirty in good health and with a full time job? No, odds are you can't. Like most of us you concentrate on prevention because you can't afford a trip to the doctors, let alone insurance. Or, if you have insurance you can't afford the premium or co-pay. We are screwed at any age for health care. So what. We just go on, do the best we can and deal with emergencies as best we can. Your strategy at retirement for medical care is the same as it is when you are healthy and employed. Exercise and eat right to keep healthy. Avoid the most dangerous activities to increase your odds of staying out of the hospital. Folks, this is not a cop-out. I am being serious here. I know you are more prone to health problems as you age. I realize old folks are more brittle. But, you need to get the mind set that health care is a luxury. This is the way it used to be, and we need to think of it as such again. Learn to take care of yourself, practice preventive medicine, and improve your mental outlook on life. It will go a long way to keeping you out of the hospital. Some of us are a walking medical disaster. Some have afflictions that require a doctor and not a home cure. Fine, you practice the cheap living advice here and you can then afford your medical care. It is only a problem when you add a nice home and a Cadillac to the equation. The point is that medical problems are a prioritized expense. You cut back on some things to afford others. You can't have it all.

So, let me sum this up nicely. You will be poor and receive no government aid when you retire. Prepare now to live cheap and healthy. Or, work until you die stressed out and bitter. Your choice. END

A THOUSAND CUTS

by James M Dakin

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Economic incentives ensure that productivity increases. To keep our jobs and/or to advance we continually improve. Plus, without thinking up ways to save ourselves some effort we would be so bored with our dead-end jobs we would kill ourselves in spectacular fashion. Thus, our employer is encouraged to make our jobs as boring as possible so we will show the moron how to do it better and cheaper, all at no cost to him. Well, not such a moron, as he just played you for a sucker. But definitely not very creative. Then, once we show him how to do twice as much in the same time period, we get fired one year from retirement so a new fresh face can move in and implement our cost saving ideas at half the salary. And thus, our capitalist system sustains itself. Hey, it's a heck of a lot better than socialism.

Sometime back in the dark recesses of antiquity, an enterprising young lad who was motivated by this same force came up with a wonderful new creative way of performing his job. Actually, since this was definitely not a capitalistic system his primary motivation had to have been keeping his head rather than his paycheck. Be that as it may, his wonderful new and exciting method of performing his job was a great advance from previous practices and undoubtedly pleased his boss to no end. Our young genius observed that if one was to disembowel a subject with a sword, said subject expired rather quickly. Now, not only did this dismay the spectators of the event, it also prevented any extraction of information and provided only minimal satisfaction to those that ordered the torture in the first place. If one is bent on revenge, or hoping to provide an example to others to promote acceptable behavior, one really wanted a more prolonged affair. The solution appeared to be Death By A Thousand Cuts. Instead of a huge lumbering broadsword hacking and spewing fiery death, a small razor sharp blade artfully applied over time was so much more appropriate. Why, it could go on for days!! In the guild of torturers, this must have had as profound an impact as the printing press.

Today we are faced with a similar situation. Of course, the process has been vastly improved. After thousands of years and victims, you would expect a certain amount of productivity increase. A torture that lasts days? How primitive! In today's modern society the torture can literally last a lifetime. And instead of being for such barbaric reasons as revenge or to set an example, today's torture provides a much more desirable outcome. Its practitioners can literally live off of the practice. It provides their subsistence. And, no I don't mean vampires. At least not in a literal sense. The same class of parasites that eons ago carved up their prisoners to provide others with the desired attitude today practices the torture to keep themselves in the comforts they deserve. Why kill one subject to get one hundred to cough up some taxes when you can

deceive all 101 into paying more than they even realize and all without any messy body fluids being shed.

This is the beauty of productivity increases. You just keep making incremental improvements and before you know it the whole process looks different and the rewards are a multiple factor. Take agriculture. In a mere 100 years we have improved the process, one small step at a time, so much that as measured in income we can now buy three times the food for half the money. And that is only buying groceries to cook with. The whole process of feeding ourselves has changed. Today, for less time spent working, we can get other people to cook and clean up for us. Today's consumer will spend less to go out and eat than our ancestors did to take home basics and cook from scratch (all measured in labor hours rather than the misleading dollar figures). And when it comes to governing the populace, the productiveness are just as satisfactory. The process of taxation has reached such a fine art that most of the citizenry is left unawares.

But hiding taxes in a clever manner in itself is still rather primitive. What I am really talking about here is the process of manipulating the entire system economically and politically, living grandly off the results, and letting others suffer for it. I harp a lot on politics and taxes and the evil of government. There is a reason for that. Government is the single force shaping our environment today just as a thousand years ago it was the church that controlled everything. The ruling class is skilled at nothing other than siphoning off our labor to live luxuriously, and they do it with a skill that is in and of itself truly a work of art. Taxes are the visible but minor aspect. Our masters have moved on to tweaking the system. Economy down, start a war. Wars cost money, so inflate the dollar. Dollar is inflated, remove it from a fixed exchange rate. Inflation out of control, stop the printing press and start a major recession closing businesses and costing jobs. Too much unemployment, expand the government payrolls and mandate minority hiring along with real wages lagging behind inflation and productivity increases. Exports down, devalue the dollar. Imports down strengthen the dollar by selling off gold stocks. Gold prices too low, start a war. Wars cost money, sell bonds to foreigners. Foreigners won't buy bonds, start a Third World Depression by directing the World Bank to insist on inflationary practices to qualify for a loan. No loans wanted, import jobs to that country so factories will be built. No manufacturing jobs in this country, create plenty of service jobs manipulating money. No demand for data jobs, devalue the dollar and create a private sector in currency speculation. Currency speculation out of control, allow speculation in power generation. Speculation in power generation creates state wide power outages, allow private company providers to triple rates to consumers. Consumers can't afford utility rates, lower the interest rate to start a real estate bubble and encourage equity loans for spending cash. Real estate bubble out of control, direct savings into retirement accounts through tax incentives. Savings in retirement accounts wiped out from energy speculation companies going bankrupt, start means testing for Social Security thus cutting many off benefits. It goes on forever. There are so many ways to manipulate so many factors you can play the game for a long time.

Now, I don't mean to imply that there is a conspiracy afloat. I don't believe in them.

Greedy people don't act together, they only screw each other. What I am saying is that taken together, a lot of power players in corporate or government sectors manipulate events to suite themselves. Then, they take the negative results from that and make more money off of that. No grand conspiracy, just those in power creating misery and living off of it. And all of us suffer as a result. A little bit at a time. One small cut here, another there. A bit of inflation here, lower savings rates there. Overpaying on a house now, higher appraised value now, drastically reduced sometime in the future. Paying into Social Security now, no benefits later. Trying to bypass that retirement system, getting screwed on our pensions or 401K's. Every setback is manageable, just barely, and then along comes another crises.

All of this would not be so bad if there was an end in sight. But, I think not. The dying system is being looted, and at the end of the road lies the big event that will transform the entire thing into a much more manageable system. But not before a traumatic event sweeps out the old ruling class. I don't know what, or when, or for how long. But history teaches it almost always happens that way. The Catholic Church did not go quietly into the night. It put up one nasty fight as it lost power over the centuries. And a lot of ordinary folks suffered. Then, centralized governments in Nation States took over and things improved for us for quite a time. But then that system started to collapse on its own excesses and we are living through that time. Lucky us.

Perhaps we will be the exception to the rule and only suffer one small jolt after another until things change drastically. I would hate for it to end in a nuclear holocaust. Only time will tell. But I think not. Too many have their livelihoods tied to the survival of the old regime. Most of the population has its horses hitched to the government wagon, and reason and good sense are not going to get them to dismount. Hang on for the ride. END

LED's
by James M Dakin
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Several years ago I ran across a blurb on an LED (light emitting diode) flashlight, most likely in American Survival Guide magazine (now defunct). As this was pre-Y2K, I dismissed it as an outrageous claim at best and blatant rip-off at worse. How the hell could you get two hundred hours of light out of a few AA batteries? We are all familiar with your standard flashlight losing power after an hour and the need for frequent bulb changes. Well, I didn't really give it much thought after that until I needed to put a light on my bicycle some time later. It seems that the same folks that are making us safe from motorcyclists skulls exploding on the pavement are also protecting us from bicycles on the sidewalk. The one tenths of a percent of the population that actually uses the sidewalk after dark must be able to see those of us on bicycles. OK, fair enough. The only problem is that there are only two classes of people who use bicycles after dark (yuppie tree huggers don't count- they only ride bikes during the day to go to their make-work public sector jobs). The first group are habitual drunks who have no license or car and are a danger to others even on foot and lit up like a Christmas tree. The other group are so poor they have no choice but to pedal from place to place. Now, to a rational person it follows that if you are too poor to own a car, you are also unable to afford to replace batteries in a headlamp every week. Alas, politicians are far from rational and from this (plus revenue enhancement) there follows the law that we must all come equipped with lights.

If judged from the local compliance levels, most feel no need to rush out and buy the needed equipment. A few have sloppily lashed flashlights to the handlebars with duct tape, but until the local constables instituted a roving Bike Nazi's patrol few felt the need to adhere to the law. Now, with the threat of $60 fines, most bicyclists have headlamps. The duct tape solution seems near universal, but a minority have conventional lamps. The problem with both is that the average set of batteries will only last a few weeks of casual night rides. For those of us that pedaled every night, one week was tops. I solved the problem early quite by accident. I was in the local bike shop and asked the prices on lamps. Only then was I informed about LED flashers. Available in green or red, these might seem old hat to a lot of you, but I was totally surprised that a light with two AAA batteries could last up to one hundred hours. I don't shop a lot, so am somewhat behind the curve. I had these flashers for some years until I too was pulled over by Johnny Law. It seems that while I was busy transporting my sweating body around town by bike, our local government changed the rules on us. Now, not just any bike light would do. One had to have a white light. A ticket was not issued, thank goodness, but a quick calculation told me I would soon be spending at least $1 a week on batteries. Most of us would scoff at such a paltry sum, but my innate frugality rebelled at this.

At first I cable-tied an existing flashlight to my handlebar, and invested $13 in some

rechargeable batteries. Well, as is the case with most investments today, I ended up losing that money. It failed to register in my struggling brain at the time that the bulb would soon burn out, if not break due to constant vibration. Rather than constantly buying five dollar flashlights and every three nights changing and recharging batteries I decided to follow that tiny voice in my head mumbling some darn thing about an LED flashlight. Another trip to the bike store provided the answer that white light LED head lamps were available. And all for the paltry sum of $25. Well, I did not find that sum so easy to contemplate and so I procrastinated for a few months, hoped my Jerry-rigged flashlight held together, and waiting til after my tax return to make yet another transportation investment. And I am glad I did. Now, instead of one hour of steady light per set of batteries I get over 100 hours on twice that. Actually the lamp is rated at 300 hours but it only provides 100 of full brightness. So, two batteries in a $5 flashlight gave one hour of light or four batteries in a $25 lamp gave 100 hours (or 50 hours per two batteries). A ratio of 25 to 1. Thus, this lamp paid for itself in one battery cycle. True, I had been using rechargeable batteries, but even with the five cent recharge cost the cost of the charger and the batteries equal the cost of the LED lamp.

I tested the power of the LED lamp and the flashlight, and it was plain that the incandescent light was much brighter. However, that was with full batteries and the conventional bulb would have dulled quickly. The LED stays constant for much longer. There was available “super bright” LED lamps for only $5 more, but only got 1/10th the life. I preferred to go with the longer lasting as I was only biking in the city and the areas without street lamps are minimal. Regardless of the LED you choose the life span of the bulbs are all about 100,000 hours, or eleven years worth if they are left on constantly. This explains why traffic lights and traffic cone hazard lights and even semi-truck brake lights are switching over to LED’s. It is not the bulb cost nor the energy consumption considerations, but rather the fact that they need not be replaced so often. In the case of traffic lights, it is obvious that a burned out bulb presents a danger. For Semi drivers it means there is less likelihood of a costly traffic ticket.

As I was over-analyzing yet another purchase I did think about the idea of using LED’s on the homestead. Aside from appliances and lights, most energy consumption in a remote habitat can be provided by propane, kerosene and wood. If one was to install a propane refrigerator and solar water heating panels, along with a windmill for the pump, the only other electric user would be lighting (I discount fuel lamps due to the danger and inconvenience). LED lamps and lights seemed a natural fit. If you were to purchase a solar recharger for $30, a few sets of batteries for about $10 a pair and a few LED lamps for $10 to $20 each your lighting problems would be solved. I did mention the problem of rechargeables losing power over a short period, but if you were to change them out every time they dimmed and put in a fully charged set it would not matter your battery life was shortened. I would guess if you left them on twelve hours a night instead of only when you needed them they would dim from use before they dimmed from non-use (the one month power drain from rechargeables would result from them not being used, or under-used, so you would be limited to that time period whether you used them or not). So with an outlay of under $100 you could light three rooms all night at the same time and

have a renewable energy source that lasted ten to twenty years. Much better than a few thousand to light up the whole house, but rather primitive I grant you.

You might shop the Web for other LED products, but other than key ring mini-lights I saw nothing more than what the bike shop carried. And no cheaper. If you do go with the red or green flashers (which can also be set on steady light) for faint illumination you can get them at Wal-Mart for about $5 each. These would be good for a low light need such as in the bathroom or on combat patrols requiring one to keep night vision. The expensive white lights are for high power needs, such as reading. Just a little food for thought. END

YOUR FOOD PANTRY
by James M Dakin
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Guns get a lot of ink when it comes to survivalism. And for good reason, as they are fun. There are few things quite as enjoyable, with your cloths on, as killing paper targets with multiple semi-auto hits. Hell, even the clean up afterwards can have its moments. Alas, food does not merit that level of attention. Aside from gardening, about the only way you can enjoy food is to cook up something new in the kitchen. Otherwise you just basically sit and look at the shelves in a slack-jawed manner. Sure, you can sort the cans. Perhaps rearrange them by group. That excitement plateau will peak early, however. Let's just face the fact that after the initial catalog perusal, food preparation is boring. Yet, I myself consider it to be the most important aspect of preparations. Guns get the headlines, food is what keeps you alive. Granted, guns help you keep your food. Each is important, but you need to pay as much attention to one as the other.

Among others, one of the images used by the media to paint survivalists as dangerous lunatics is that of a cammo-clad redneck sitting atop a huge pile of freeze-dried food clutching his assault rifle ready to kill all of the screaming starving hoards that will soon mob him. They seem to want to make the point that this scenario is ludicrous since a), the Feds will always be there to take care of us and b), no one could possibly starve in America. Well, we all know the fallacy of our wonderful government actually caring about us. But is the image of starving mobs fighting for food correct, or just paranoid over imagination? The question you should be asking is, how secure is our oil supply? It all comes down to oil.

Oil is the lifeblood of our economy. Even in a pure information, as opposed to industrial, economy oil is as necessary as air and water. Without oil, we have no food. Oil fertilizes the crops, transports the crops, processes them, cooks them. Even in the near future with massive genetically engineered crop changes, oil plays a key role in food production. We do produce enough of our own oil to continue this, plus keep the military moving around, but if all foreign oil was cut off our economy would implode without the civilian sector being able to commute to work or businesses being able to procure affordable energy. The question is not whether we can feed ourselves since we do that quite well along with quite a few other folks. The question is can we feed ourselves and continue a healthy economy without imported oil? Without a job it is possible to starve, even in a land of plenty. Could the Feds feed 25% of the population? That was the number of unemployed in the last Great Depression. The number this time will be much higher, as even now in a limping but still functioning economy we have over half the population dependant on Uncle Sugar for their livelihood. Would the federal government feed one half to three quarters of the population in a major economic downturn? Could it? More importantly,

would you want to bet your life on that?

It is only prudent to prepare to feed yourself. It really matters little if anything bad is going to happen. Whether or not the government will help us. What matters is that you take responsibility for your own future welfare and prepare now to be able to feed yourself and your family if any calamity happens in the future. Folks think nothing of paying $600 a year for insurance on the car to protect their transportation investment yet will not consider for one moment spending a one time amount of $150 to feed themselves for a year in the event of an emergency. Granted, the odds of an auto accident are much greater than a nationwide economic crash. But you are also making a much smaller investment to cover that lesser possibility. In ten years of commuting to work and shopping you spend six grand to cover the possibility of an auto accident. Why not spend a little over $100 to insure against starvation? That same seven buckets of wheat you bought ten years ago can remain tucked into the corner of a garage or closet out of sight and mind, yet ready to feed you if the need arises. Right now you could spend as little as $75 for a year supply of wheat in poly buckets and a grain grinder.

I have covered this before, but I would like to repeat the information for my new subscribers. You can feed yourself for a year for as little as $75. If you have a feed and grain store near to you, you can buy untreated (treated has vet medicine on it) wheat in fifty pound bags for $5 to $7 each. Make sure it is hard red winter, but you can use any variety. That is the best in as far as protein and moisture content. Buy 400 pounds. A pound of wheat a day will feed you well. The remainder should provide enough for sprouts for your vitamin requirements. Now, purchase used five gallon poly buckets with lids from bakeries, donut shops or restaurants. The standard fee is $1 each for a cleaned bucket. Each one will hold about thirty pounds of wheat, so you need about twelve. Fill up and seal your buckets as soon as you open the bags of wheat. I do NOT recommend using dry ice for a nitrogen atmosphere in the buckets, as many recommend. This is only my personal opinion, as I feel condensation is possible with this method. However, this is only my conjecture. I base it on nothing else. I have gotten excellent results doing nothing else but filling and sealing buckets, some stored as long as five years with no infestation. Yet I realize if this is your only food, you may wish to make further steps as a precaution. Search online under grain storage for a lot of further information. Last, you will want a grain grinder. The cheapest is a cast iron chrome-plated metal burred unit made in Mexico or Columbia called the Corona. I had always paid $50 for mine, but I recently saw them advertised for under $20 from Major Surplus and Survival. A note on this grinder. Many trash talk this grinder as poorly constructed and prone to fast rusting but my experience has been positive both in my youth as I ground away for mom and in recent years as I got back to healthier eating. The nay-sayers wish you to buy a $300 grinder, and I file that away as Yuppie over-spending. I am talking the cheapest, not the best. A Glock plastic pistol is the best defense but a good ol' slab of steel .45 will still put them down hard, and cheaper.

For those of you not blessed with a feed store in driving range, your options are still open but you will spend much more. The Cadillac of wheat storage are the companies that seal

their grain in Mylar bags in a nitrogen atmosphere and then pack those in “super buckets”, being slightly bigger than your standard poly bucket. The down-side is the shipping cost. Wheat does not ship cheaply by standard mail. If you were ordering by the Semi-truck it would be reasonable charges per unit, but small 300 pound purchases match the cost of the product with the shipping cost. You will spend even more if you buy organic grain at a health food store, and it doesn’t even come Mylar packed. But at least that way you don’t need to buy several hundred pounds at a time. My recommendation is to buy through the mail from Emergency Essentials at roughly $250 after shipping for 300 pounds. They are an honest and fair company, with the bonus of having the shipping cost added into the cost of the product. Buying from them you spend slightly under a dollar per pound, versus the $1.50 a pound from your local health food store (and that isn’t even in a bucket-add another twenty cents per pound to bag and bucket it yourself).

Even if you were to spend almost $300 on a years supply of wheat per person for the fail-safe professional packing it would still be money well spent. This is your one time starvation insurance cost. My first wheat purchase was the cheap version, and since that time I have had a stock of wheat in one form or another. Along with a firearm in the closet, this is the best way I know of to ensure a good nights sleep. I do not exaggerate when I say that since then the morning newspaper fails to bother me. I no longer get a hollow feeling in the pit of my stomach when I contemplate the possibilities of trucker strikes, droughts, weather patterns changing or commodity prices driving out the small farmer. I can feed myself, defend myself and remain a free individual who doesn’t need to wait in a government run soup line, hat in hand, ready to grovel and submit.

Now, advocating a year supply of wheat is just my way of showing that anyone in the most humble financial circumstance can afford to stock up to feed himself. I do not mean that this is all you will want to store. I usually eat whole wheat flour once or twice a day due to poverty. I would much rather chow down on some fat dripping slaughtered animal but I settle for wheat. And I am tired of it. I can eat while on the computer or watching television and so trick myself into not really tasting it. The point is that you will get tired of an all wheat diet very quickly. By all means rush out and stock up on wheat berries and an adequate storage system. This will provide peace of mind. Then, go about getting as much other storage food as possible. You will be very happy you did shortly after any emergency. I never did this until two years prior to Y2K, and then added whatever was available at Super Wal-Mart. It costs much more, is more than likely not what you regularly eat and is a pain to rotate, but I consider it the next affordable step in your food storage program.

If you wish you can avoid this step. I provide it as a means to gain versatility in your storage plan. With all grain you provide a backbone to your emergency diet. With Wal-Mart bulk foods you can add padding to meals, provide for additional family members or neighbors and have possible barter items. The last most expensive level of your plan is to provide duplicate items of your everyday diet. This you provide for yourself, since, hey, it’s all yours anyway. But while you are chowing down on canned tuna, Uncle Fred can be content on instant mashed potatoes. The good stuff, considered treats in an emergency

is all yours. But more on this later-let's focus on bulk storage from the grocer.

I use Super Wal-Mart as it is located nation wide and has the same prices. You will wish to shop around of course. They may claim to be the low price leader but I have noticed a disturbing trend as of late were the food prices are fluctuating. Allow me to give an example. A standard bottle of cooking oil (slightly under 50 ounces) Was $1.59. At the time the same generic bottle at Dollar General (a dollar store located in the south and mid west) was $1.50. I guess that was an insult to the Walton clan and they lowered their oil to something like $1.48. Now, suddenly, it is at $1.79. Dollar General is still the same. And so is Save-A-Lot, a discount grocery store were they carry all generic and you bag your own stuff. All along they were at $1.39. It pays to shop around. But we will stick to Wal-Mart since I assume this will be read all around the country and we need a benchmark. Not that prices are the consideration here as much as what you might wish to stockpile. I covered prices in a previous article.

Everybody is going to view selection differently, so I just list the bulky and reasonably cheap items. Most items are in #10 cans, the super size metal cans that usually conjure up images of eating at the mess hall or school cafeteria. You open up one of them and you seem to never finish eating that one item. There is instant mashed potatoes in cans. Avoid the cardboard due to bug and moisture problems. Cans might rust after a certain number of years in a humid environment but that is preferable to feeding insects. Pork and beans and corn so cheap you will hate to buy another small conventional size can. Huge bags of white rice, as well as pinto beans. Pasta by the pound. Bakery size sacks of white flour and sugar. Cans of soups and cheddar cheese sauce. And this is just the bulk items. Their small standard sizes are cheap enough to buy by the case, but for now concentrate on the bulk.

As I said, the bulk items other than the flour, sugar and corn most likely will not normally be used by you. Yet, for feeding the inevitable parasites such as in-laws this is your best bet. Institutional food that is cheap and filling yet not very nutritious. But even though most people hate pork and beans, at least it will offer a choice if you get tired of the same old monotonous menu. So, consider these items as a different fare for yourself and as what you can offer your guests. I stock them as an alternate to whole wheat. Yet, I also hold them in low regard. That hundred pounds of rice I stick in totes in my closet are given to charity after two years and a new stock purchased. I feel no need to eat it regular. If I bought ten pounds of rice a year for regular eating I would be surprised. It's just not my bag, baby. Same with the instant potatoes. I eat, day to day, raw potatoes. Not instant. The stuff tastes like dried glue. But it is under three bucks for almost two pounds net weight. Much cheaper than freeze dried through the mail, and it is my "variety" food supply. Go in to the food section of Wally World early on a week day morning when it is less crowded and just wander around and get ideas. You will be surprised what you can get super-sized.

The most expensive way to store food for an emergency is to duplicate your daily menu items. If, say, you spend $300 a month on food it would be a little hard to double that.

But there is no need to do that. You simply decide what dollar amount extra you wish to spend and buy these extra items as you can afford them within this budget. Even $5 a week will add up quicker than you would think. Three pounds of salt, three pounds of rice, ten pounds of flour and two cans of olives are $5 total and most likely would cover a months worth of use for all these items (the salt being several years worth). Then you can ignore these particular items for awhile. Go to the next few items. Before you know it you have a months supply of all your regular food. Then go for two months worth. Your eventual goal is a years worth of non-perishables, six months worth of freezer food. If you only eat meat once a day in reasonable portions you can easily store that amount in a freezer. If you purchase a new freezer you will be surprised to discover that the energy cost is negligible with the new insulations they are now using. I have a small chest freezer that uses a whopping $2 of electric a month- well worth the cost to have at least a months supply of meat when one third full. One third holds several months supply of whole grain and white flour, the remainder cheap bread I buy at the day-old store. With a bigger chest the energy cost might be about $5 a month and you could hold that six months worth of meat.
I realize that it is a poor idea to rely of freezer food for emergencies. But they are not there to feed me during a hurricane or a nuclear war. Freezer food is there to feed you during economic hardship. Allow me to share another tale of misery with you. No need to feel sorry for me- I do that enough. Due to state mandate I am compelled to keep the ex-wife in a level of comfort to which she is accustomed (to be fair it is child support- but on the other side of the coin child support allows for such activities as Bingo and worse it is tax free for her whereas I have it earn it at 20% taxation). As a result my income is so piss-poor (I bring home $108 a week on a $16k income) I must rent out a room of our trailer to a roommate. If we have a roommate, I have food money. If not, I go without shopping that week. Needless to say I have learned that it is a real good idea to stock up on regular groceries as much as possible for the likely event it could be weeks between shopping. Not all of use are taken to the cleaners in a divorce. But, all of us can become unemployed. Just ask the Union pilots of a bankrupt airline or a former Soviet Union civil servant.

In today's economy it is simply prudent to keep as much of a reserve of food on hand as possible. One may never get as far as a years supply of regular food on hand, but it is a worthy goal. Remember that auto insurance we were talking about? Ten years of cheap transportation insurance costs an annoying $5,000 to $6,000. That is for the cheaper rates. And all you really did was protect a hunk of metal. For the same amount you could have a years worth of regular groceries, a year or two of bulk foods, and up to ten years worth of a wheat only diet. If you mixed them up you could easily survive for a dozen years after the apocalypse eating like a king for the low sum of a $500 per year investment now. Could you come up with $50 a month? Changes are that we will all see another ten years of near normal times. At the end of that time you could feed your family of three for four years in the event of a calamity. Is your family worth $50 a month?

Now to the hard part-rotation. Not that this is brain surgery, just that is takes the effort of organizing a system. Obviously, throwing a few piles of canned goods into a hall closet

will do nothing for your organization. Nor is it necessary to buy expensive shelving units. Take stock of what you have on hand and improvise. At one time I had my wheat buckets with planks between them set up as shelves. On them I piled hundreds of books. Ten by six feet of a quarter ton of wheat and all that paper in a mobile home. And they stored quite well for years. In retrospect I'm surprised the floor didn't give way, but it shows the amount of stuff you can cram into a small area. Another time I stored a years supply of wheat, multiple gallons of water and bleach and several dozen cardboard boxes full of your usual junk in a four by four closet. Granted, these were not rotated. But the storage system can cost as little as you wish. You could put a piece of plywood with strips of 1"x2"s parallel to the short end and use one side of the bed to load a new can into a channel and the other end to remove the oldest can. Or take over your linen closet and practice the standard pull forward, place new can in back routine. Best of all is using a bunch of scrap wood and building slightly slanting shelves with the back open. Add the new to the back, grab from the front. With the cans on their side gravity works with you instead of against you. You must rotate. This is the key to the system.

If you fail to rotate your food (all but sealed wheat berries and honey) you will find infested, stale, nutritionally deficient slop. Or worse it might kill you. Rotate the food every day for your expensive food, yearly for your bulk food (if you don't eat it regular just get rid of it- there are plenty of poor people who would like it and white flour and rice should last twice as long as you need it if you replace annually). Forget about trying to decipher the manufacturers code unless you are buying a suspected out-of-date-so-on-sale item. Just keep it rotated and remember that aside from tomatoes most canned food will last forever. In vegetables the vitamins will quickly deteriorate, but most other canned foods will still provide the calories and proteins. You rotate to ensure freshness, as this is your day to day food. After a nuclear war it will be great to eat a ten year old can of Beef-Raviolios but you needn't take that risk everyday.

Another benefit of stocking up on food is that you can ride out price fluctuations. The best example is that of coffee. Not too long ago the cheapest generic brand in the big can was at least $5. Now it can be had on sale for under $3. And you can be sure that the price will go up again soon as the commodity market lurches all over the place. Stock up on sale for a consistently cheap caffeine buzz. Right now it is insane to try to buy a good cut of beef. After the Mad Cow scare in Britain our beef prices went crazy and they are just now getting back to normal. It was fine for big restaurant chains locking in prices through contracts, but Joe and Jane Blow paid dearly for a weekend barbeque. A few sealed bags in the freezer would have provided a good respite from an all chicken and pork meat diet. Even if food prices didn't fluctuate you could stock up on sales. If white flour suddenly dipped in price from 99 cents a bag to 79 cents that would mean every sixth bag was free using the old prices. With a freezer you could stock a dozen bags and not have to worry that they were almost out of date. In fact, due to the local climate I would not consider storing flour anywhere else. I use what I need and replace the paper bag in its plastic shopping bag and put it back in the freezer. I rotate by writing the purchase date on the top of the bag and opening up the oldest one.

I have not considered farm food storage here. Folks in the country or with a garden know how to put food up. This is for us folks that buy most or all of our food. We are the most in need of storage food, as next years groceries are not out there in our yard growing. Don't depend on the kindness of our masters to provide your daily bread. Prepare now to eat later. END

THE DOLLAR DECLINE
by James M Dakin
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Recently the U.S. dollar has done quite good compared to other nations Monopoly money. For a few wondrous years we even saw a vision through the looking glass as gold and the Swiss Franc lost position to the Greenback. President Clinton had the good fortune to reign during that time and thus his scandals and tom-foolery was overlooked. True, we all knew he actually had little to do with it, but most of the Sheeple are superstitious and didn't wish to rock the boat in fear that our collective daydream would end. Well boys and girls, that wonderful time is now officially done and gone.

In the last year the dollar has lost 20% of its value to the Euro. It has lost 10% of its value against the Japanese Yen. These are not dry facts that only worry a few currency traders in New York City. Think about it for just a second. The worlds only economic and military superpower has a currency that is losing value against economies that should be weaker than ours. The European Union is a collection of socialist countries that have chronic high unemployment, high inflation and in general very weak economies. Mexico comes close to a few of their countries, economically speaking. Japan has a lot more going for it, with extreme savings rates by its workers, little debt, no military complex to feed and is still buying all the trade and goodwill it wants. The only problem they had was a bit of a bubble economy at the end of their economic miracle. We have all heard of stories were the grounds of the Imperial Palace was valued at more than the entire assets of the state of California. They had their real estate bubble burst some ten years before our Tech-Wreak and they have been in a recession ever since. They are not in a depression because of their otherwise sound indicators, but their stock market continues to decline and it really doesn't look as if they are going to be out of that recession anytime soon.

The reason for the rise of these two currencies is more than likely speculation and desperation in the case of the Euro. As for the Yen, I think that speaks volumes about how bad our economy is going to get. The world needs a premiere currency. It can't be gold for the fact that no nation has the fiscal discipline to keep a currency unmanipulated and because there simply isn't enough of it to go around and keep the gears of trade lubricated. The Swiss Franc is a lot healthier than most and the Swiss have the most stable society around. However, there is not enough Francs to keep global trade going. What you are looking for in a stable currency is an economy with little or no debt, a trade surplus and a positive balance of payments. Does any of this sound like the United States and the dollar?

The last Secretary of the Treasury we had was the last "strong dollar" advocate. Now we

have hints of a willingness to inflate. In a speech last November the Fed remarked on our ability to start up the printing presses. Gee, that sounds like something that will inspire confidence to foreigners. Since that speech, direct foreign investment has declined 85%. Did you see that item in your local paper? Foreign investment was the only thing that kept us out of economic hot water in the 1990's. Well, we're taking a bath now. The U.S. national debt to foreigners is $6 trillion. The interest on that every year is $333 billion. Add in all our other problems. What problems? Far more than a mere recession. The stock market doesn't seem to want to tank. Instead, it most likely will just slowly erode. For years. We have corporate bankruptcies becoming a daily occurrence. The unemployment rate is steadily increasing. Accounting scandals are mushrooming. We are continuing to export high tech jobs overseas. Inflation is making a comeback. Does all this mean a Depression? It very well could, although I side with the "long drawn out suffering" scenario instead of the "it suddenly all turns bad" possibility. My whole point here is not to forecast an economic calamity but to state that with the dollar losing its position as the global currency we are just making our economic problems that much worse.

When the dollar loses value a few special interest groups are better off. Farmers, lumber interests, most exporters see increases business since foreigners can buy more of our goods. However, most of us see a downside with consumer prices increasing. In case you haven't noticed lately, we are getting most of our goods from overseas. Even if you limit your consumption of most goods you still are going to be effected by oil prices. Right now the price of oil has increased due to Venezuela economic and political troubles and by the world markets being leery of a second Gulf War. If we have a prolonged fight, if OPEC doesn't raise output enough to compensate for the present shortage and if the dollar continues to lose value you can be sure of one thing. You ain't seen nothing yet at the gas pump or in your electric bill. Rising oil prices will also have an across the board effect on most prices. Food, airlines, UPS, all are obvious and immediate. But a prolonged affair will trigger an increase in all goods sold retail (they must be shipped). Most services are likely to eventually see increases. The exterminator has to drive to your house, the hair dresser has to light and heat/cool the shop. The cost of frying your burger will go up.

A weak dollar is of course nothing new to us, nor is inflation or severe business corrections. There is nothing this time that guarantees a serious fall economically. We could easily pick up and go about business as usual. Will we? I for one have no idea. Since the 1970's we have had a chorus of voices shouting that the sky is falling. Every few years conditions deteriorate even further and someone else starts to shout from the rooftops. No one wants to be the idiot that writes a book on the Depression of 1990/1995/2000/2003 or whatever and sees no downturn. But who wants to be the goofball that proclaimed good times forever in 1929? We must eventually see a correction to all our economic shenanigans. We have overindulged at the credit speakeasy for far to long. The question is, will the correction be long and manageable or sudden and unspeakable? I think we have been on a 30 year correction with a few good years thrown in here and there to dilute our perspective. Times turn positive, or more correctly times

become less worse, and we throw a party and proclaim the good times are here to stay. Then we wake up with a hangover. No one cared if the 401(k)'s of half the population lost half their value. We laughed as the Yuppie scum had to prolong retirement. No one cared when the tech industry had massive layoffs. Again, screw the Yuppies. We seem to have a collective resentment against those that made money. It stems from our subliminal concern we are stuck in our sociological-economic rut and have no hope of escaping. Well, the common man, the great unwashed masses are going to be next to feel the pain. A weaker dollar will effect all of us.

Do not count on inflation as your savior to eliminate debt. It could happen, but more likely we will see a deflationary recession. It could go either way. We could inflate our way from the frying pan into the fire. The only reason I have to guess that we won't is the fact that we are prepared for that eventuality. It seems that when we get screwed, it comes from an unexpected place. Not very scientific, I know. But my gut feeling. If things get really bad, inflation will only add to the problem, not solve it. My two cents worth. Now, what should you do since the dollar is losing value? My recommendation, which will not hurt you if I am wrong, is simply more of the same. Get out of debt, have a rent/mortgage free dwelling, stockpile a lot of food and a bit of consumer goods, plant a garden and be prepared for unemployment. Great advice, not easy to follow. I myself can only meet each goal half way. If your time frame extends years into meeting these goals, just have a back-up plan. What will you do if you are suddenly unemployed and homeless, but the rest of the economy is still limping along? And you simply can't find another job other than minimum wage? Consider living out of your car/van/truck. A situation none of us wish for, but perhaps the only one you can afford. It is a good last case scenario. This is were having that money pit for transportation turns into an asset. Myself, being car-less, have the good old tent in the woods to look forward to. Feel lucky you have a sheet of metal between yourself and wildlife. My first week in the woods I will likely turn into gator bait.

Well, have fun as our economy turns south. More unemployment, more stock market loses, more inflation. An interesting time to be alive. END

THE PHOENIX OF THE TECH BUBBLE

by James M Dakin
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Most people who gave it any thought at all quickly chalked up the Tech Wreck three years ago as another Wall Street aberration such as was the case sixteen years ago when the market crashed and had no effect on our daily lives. Perhaps good for another recession but that was about it. There are some alarmists, such as myself, who cry that the sky is falling as a result but in truth we know just as little as the others. The economy is a weird bird and the flight pattern is unknown. One effect we can almost safely predict is that out of the carnage we will see several economic effects that were unintentional.

As a general rule, profits are rare in the airline industry. It is hard to see were the value is to stockholders in the industry as a whole. What the government doesn't tax away or the Unions don't confiscate usually gets sucked up in higher fuel prices or lost in fare wars. Yet, for society in general the airlines are a very good thing. Air travel is much safer than taking a car down the highway, business is conducted face to face relatively cheap, and physical goods reach their destination in hours rather than days. This was also the case a little over 100 years ago. The railroad industry is another example. Gross overcapacity, ruinous competition and financial manipulation led to bankruptcies, consolidation and almost non-existent profits. But the true beneficiaries of this Rail Bubble were consumers. Suddenly Sears Roebucks or Montgomery Wards could very cheaply ship goods and rural consumers could shop cheaper than the local mercantile.

Some would argue that the Cold War was not in this category, but if you view the ruinous taxation of the citizens as the high cost and the low profits (over time) of the Defense Industry as the supposed beneficiaries, this would qualify as an economic bubble also. Government and the Military-Industrial Complex should have been the winners of the Cold War, but it does look as if we the consumers are going to benefit the most. Technology is now its own economic machine that supports itself, but in the critical period of incubation it was military money that sustained it.

The airlines, the Cold War industry, the railroads and now the technology sector in the end turned around and bit the hands that fed them. If you invested in those sectors by and large you took a lose. However, out of this economic wasteland emerges a new and improved industry that benefits us all in the end. The result of the Tech wreck will be an overcapacity of infrastructure to support the emerging broadband sector. Dial-up service is on the way out (look for it to exit ahead of VHS tapes) which is one of the reasons AOL is in so much trouble- their business model is to sign up as many computer illiterates

as possible and charge too much. When broadband decreases in cost enough they will reach a critical mass and soon everybody and his brother will sign up. When this happens we can be sure to see several things happen. One, the ability to have true pay-per-view will finally happen (it still sucks). Two, the monopoly of the Post Office will finally be seriously eroded as catalogs and magazines can become electronic. Three, the promise of online shopping will be realized. Retail will not die- it is hard to beat the cost of shipping by semi truck for heavy bulky items. It would be ridiculous to expect to sell liquid laundry soap by mail. However, most items now requiring a trip to the store can be successfully sold through the mail if a computer tour is easier and as fail-safe as a physical trip. I would not buy real estate on-line from a photo, but if I had a real time video tour and could instantly access bankers for financing and the locations government site to authenticate the seller than I just might shop online instead of driving 30 miles and making a day out of it. Clothing photos do little for sales, but a video of models wearing them might entice me. Just use your imagination to think of the possibilities. You might be able to start working from home, Blockbuster Video might lower its prices with competition and you could do your grocery shopping with a lightning fast connection (scroll down each virtual isle, click each nutrition label, comparison shop instantly and then get a local delivery from the warehouse. In some instances it would be cheaper even now to deliver instead of opening to the public, land prices for a parking lot being what they are). We took a giant economic hit with the Tech Bubble, but if it doesn't destroy us it could end up making us all better off. END

WHY WE ARE IN IRAQ
by James M Dakin
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It seems at times that the U.S. media is not that far removed from the old Soviet Union's official propaganda rag Pravda (truth). Under our system we have freedom of speech, meaning that anyone can write what they want as long as no one reads it. If there are a fair number of subscribers, most likely you will see only Liberal, Socialist Politically Correct pap. By catering to the lowest denominator and seeking a leftist slant, most media plays nicely into the Federalist camp. Again this last year they proved their loyalty and dutifully reported the official hogwash on why we are attacking (or were planning to attack) Iraq. It did not help that the official bumper-sticker slogans kept changing, but the media kept a good game face and played along. We must stop weapons of mass destruction. We must provide democracy in the Middle East. We need a regime change. Whatever. If weapons of mass destruction were an issue we would not be handling North Korea with kid gloves. Or being chummy with Pakistan. Each of these countries poses a much more immediate threat to world peace (or at least a threat to keeping nuclear fallout from the milk supply). Democracy in any country has always been the last thing we cared about (except our own since it undermines the Constitution). If a country serves our interests, we could care less what form of tyranny they practice. The most casual glance at the history of our allies will prove this. The Shah of Iran, Chavez in Venezuela, China, Saddam before we changed our minds. To paraphrase the Sex Pistols, its all about ourselves, our beautiful selves (cause we have no feelings). Empire is a great thing if you are on the winning side, but it really bites when things turn south. What we are doing now is trying to keep things going our way.

Since the emergence of our empire before World War Two we have directed events towards our geopolitical needs. It is fascinating to read about the manipulations towards our empire, and it does cast Roosevelt in a much better light than usual. Conservatives and Libertarians usually cast him in a negative light due to his pushing us into a Welfare state, but if you focus on his manipulation of world events and his skills at stripping the British Empire of its naval dominance you can appreciate what he has done for the American way of life. It is all starting to come undone of course, but it was a good ride while it lasted.

After the World War we became interested in Mid East oil in a big way. Saudi Arabia has been the pivotal player in our schemes. To run a military and an industrial economy you need oil. Oil was the reason for WWII, and the victors had plenty of their own. The losers didn't have enough to start. We knew the strategic value of oil and we knew we needed to control world supply. We could go it alone with our own production and perhaps with that of the rest of North America, but to run our Empire we needed two things- oil and a dominant navy. The last sixty years have been all about those two. A large part of the Cold War was about containing the Soviet acquisition of a warm water

port, or at least hemming them in to the least desirable one. Take a look at Japan on the map and see how our military control of that country contained the Soviet naval threat. And the other part, oil, was handled nicely by placing the Saudi royal family firmly in our pockets.

Well, the demise of the old world order has shaken things up a bit. The old large structures are crumbling and being replaced by smaller and nastier parts. The emergence of Muslim extremists is in large part due to this shake-up. And they don't take kindly to pro-Western leaders. Our bought and paid for royal Saudi family is on the edge of this unrest. The country of Saudi Arabia is at the brink of chaos. A year ago anti-western riots started in the major towns of Saudi Arabia. Not that you saw much of this on the news (see start of article). It almost looks like any other demonstration, what with US flags burning and nasty slogans being chanted. Now add in calls for the ouster of the royal family. Normally this would cause little alarm, as protesters are insignificant in the scheme of things. But look at the underlying problems of this country. Despite selling $3 trillion in oil during the last twenty years, Saudi Arabia is approaching bankruptcy. Its national debt is half again as much as its Gross Domestic Product, its streets are potholed and the capital city regularly loses electrical service. Does this sound like a Banana Republic or the worlds number one oil exporter? And don't forget the 40% unemployment that provides plenty of malcontents for those riots.

King Fahd, our boy, lies dying in a Swiss hospital. His brother who is now in charge back home is not really that friendly to the U.S. The Saudi Minister of Defense has publicly denounced the pro-western stance of the government. Back to the general populace, the countries best selling book is about bin Laden, his happy mug graces many a T-shirt. 15 of 19 hijackers on 9-11 were from Saudi Arabia. If my take on this is correct, our intelligence establishment and the Federals are actually going to be preemptive and secure another source of oil before we loose control of the Saudi oil fields. And the second largest source of crude oil is...you guessed it, Iraq.

The first Gulf War was about Saddam taking over the Kuwaiti oil production and cornering the market on Mid East oil. The rest of the industrial world jumped on that bandwagon PDQ, since it was in their best interests to have a fragmented oil supply. If OPEC pulled another 1973 surprise the equivalent price increase in today's dollars would be to about $60 a barrel for crude. That might approach the tripwire amount sending the world economy into a severe tailspin. It was well worth the military and economic investment to put him down. This time around the Second Gulf War (or Operation Iraqi Oil Production Freedom) we only have the interest of our Empire at stake. Is it any wonder we had to buy our allies (except England- and I think their interest is in keeping it all Anglo, but I could be wrong)? Japan had such a high stake in the first war that they levied a special $90 tax per head just to chip in enough to pay our military to kick butt. Today, they could care less. And remember, to Japan the oil is what keeps their economy going. They must import everything except rice. Without oil, they are back in the Stone Ages economically. If they are not concerned it means the world oil supply is not at risk.

All of this is just one part of the equation. Besides the risk to Saudi oil supplies, the other side of the coin is the risk to our currency. The US dollar is just like all the other worthless paper currencies out there (except the Swiss Franc and they rely on deposited gold for their reserves) in that they are backed by absolutely nothing of tangible value. No gold, land or commodities back any nations currencies. They are merely printed pieces of paper. So why is only one currency valued above the others? Because if not, the whole house of cards would collapse. One currency must act as the store of value, like gold used to a long time ago. Our dollar has had its ups and downs, with the current location at the top. This de facto leadership has allowed us to sell our deficit to others rather than raising taxes to fund our empire. And others have played along since we sold world security. All this since the end of the Cold War, of course. The last decade has seen our economic supremacy only because of our military leadership. In effect, we are selling security to the world. They buy our normally worthless government bonds and we keep the wheels of commerce well lubed by our control of the trade routes through our navy. It is referred to as being the worlds policeman, but the usually portrayal is that this is an intolerable economic burden on us. This is incorrect. Being the worlds policeman allows us to keep up our usually imprudent economic practices such as massive deficits. Now our major exports are movies, farm products and mercenaries. That is the reason we will not see a military draft return. In the high tech world police force conscripts are more of a hindrance than a help.

A short time ago Iraq stated that they would only accept Euros for oil, rather than American dollars. They tried to get OPEC to follow. We immediately started rattling our sabers. The dollar must stay on the top of the food chain, as our economic livelihood depended on it. If the Euro became the worlds reserve currency we would be rather screwed. The US economy has too many problems, with our massive debt, the need to recover from the Tech Wreck, the housing bubble forming, the economy being pulled in two bad directions (too much deflation in goods and too much inflation in services) and other assorted ills. We need to keep the foreign investment coming in. In the end of course it will take a world wide depression to sort the whole mess out, but for now most nations are stuck on a certain course of events. Things have progressed too far to be turned around. It is like the credit card junkie that spends past a certain point and must continue to charge on credit just to pay the bills since the bill money goes to pay the credit card bills. A vicious cycle, ending only in disruption such as bankruptcy.

Currently we seem to be having a few problems in the war over there. All our high tech wonder toys don't work in a sandstorm (let this be another lesson in the unsuitability of the AR15 as a survivalist weapon- the M16s in the desert require continuous cleaning). Not a problem, just wait out the storm and go back to air supremacy. Our need to double the number of troops suddenly (not a good sign). Then of course there is the trend towards guerrilla warfare from the better trained Iraqi troops. The lack of a northern front. And our having to fund the whole war ourselves. But I don't find any of this worrisome. Either we are going to do whatever it takes to win and postpone the inevitable economic collapse, or this is going to be the start of the end to our global rule. The end result is the same, the only difference being the timetable. Isn't it great to be alive

and well at the twilight of American Empire?

To summarize, we need a new secure source of oil for ourselves and a way to control the rest of the industrialized worlds oil. All of which keeps other countries investing in our bankrupt economy. The dollar must remain supreme for the same reason. They compliment each other. Oil and the dollar keep us on top. The fact that it is other peoples oil and others wealth propping up the dollar is of little matter. We are going to fight and claw to keep our supreme position. Does this explain the behavior of others, of their resentment? Most others hate us. We are a bully, much like a policeman must be in a dominant position to keep the peace. No one likes to be dictated to, but this is reality. Without a strong country in charge there is worldwide chaos. And the power vacuum will always be filled. The world should be grateful it is us and not the Russians or Chinese. The fact that we benefit from our dominance is really not the issue. We provide a needed service, and others prosper from peace. But most will not see the issue as rationally. Expect much more terrorist activity against the U.S. Ah, to live in interesting times!!
END

THE RIMFIRE ARSENAL
by James M Dakin
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While not exactly an earth-shattering new-and-exciting topic, I felt the need to once again dwell into the topic of the lowly rimfire as survivalist arsenal. This is more of a "devils advocate" article than a personal endorsement, but as you will see I do find merit in the idea.

In general terms there are several kinds of survivalists. One is the camping in the wilds, making primitive weapons, eating grubs and plants, getting back to nature as we hug a tree type. This includes the nothing can ever go wrong with our wonderful society, big daddy government will protect me, the only thing bad that will ever happen to me is that I will be lost in the woods types. Two is the self sufficient, geodesic dome living, no pesticide organic gardening, by God why can't I play in the dirt and make a living at it, neo-Luddite, can't stand the city types. Three is the all I need to survive is guns, Jerry Ahern is my favorite author, when millions flee the cities there will still be enough deer for me to hunt, I never met an assault rifle I didn't love, I never was in the military but I watched Rambo twenty three times types. Fourth is the I am going to prove end times by reading the bible, an asteroid is just waiting to hit us and wipe out everyone, mankind was repopulated by aliens after a nuclear war ten thousand years ago, TEOTWAWKI will happen against all logic and kill most people except me even though I live in a big city at my folks house and only own an extra case of cream of mushroom soup and a sling shot types.

I'm having a bit of fun here, for you anal retentive types. I for one view survivalism as a fun hobby that contains an element of humor because way too many folks take it much to seriously. The odds are that nothing serious is ever going to happen to any of us. Most of life's stressful events are going to gradually work their way into our midst and we will be able to process them and deal with them. Now, I am not saying that riots and wars and dictatorships and natural disasters and climate changes and technological changes do not happen and I certainly am not saying that they won't have serious impact on us. What I am saying is that by and large mathematically speaking the odds are good that we will pass through life with nothing more traumatic than the usual job loss, divorce, death in the family type of disaster that is pretty widespread, understood and adaptable. I am not saying that preparations are a bad idea. I am saying that we should prepare, but at the same time have a little fun with it and don't take ourselves seriously enough to cause an ulcer.

I don't think that getting back to the land and being "self-sufficient" is the be all and end all it is made out to be. I can see being fed up with our current system and wishing to

minimize it's impact on our lives. I can see wishing to plan on minimizing a disruption in our system. I can see the advantages in not planning on our electric grid or food distribution system being going through a disaster unchanged. What I question is the thinking that living in the country will shelter you from the ills that befall us. First, living by yourself out in the boonies is an invitation to day by day criminals now, and roving bands of outlaws after a collapse. Plus, self sufficiency is a myth. You are still dependant on our complex system for spare parts to your vehicle or solar power plant or water well or what not. You still need to purchase kerosene or gasoline or propane. You will need to replace ammunition or plumbing or electrical parts. Living in the country only makes you less dependant, not self sufficient.

I see little use for wilderness survival skills. If this is your hobby, fine and dandy. Otherwise, unless you camp in the deepest wilds, when are you going to need to start a fire with friction, or identify edible plants, or fashion primitive weapons? In a end of the world type situation, how can more than a few people survive off the wilderness in any given area. Using figures from primitive hunter-gatherers, each person needs literally many square miles to subsist in the woods. Now, how many fugitives from the cities are going to be competing with you for the same land area? Realistically, more than the carrying capacity of that land. This also applies to the " I got a gun and when things go to hell I'll go hunting Bambi" types. The deer, bear, squirrel, rodent population will be decimated about two hours after a major TEOTWAWKI event. And that includes about half the hunters going after that game.

Next up are the "guns solve all problems" folk. I do appreciate the problem solving capabilities of firearms. When you have a shotgun, a shovel and an opponent that no one will miss, certain problems take care of themselves. However, in today's society lawyers have all but replaced dueling and vigilante action. In a disaster of epic proportions guns will again reign supreme as a problem solver, but they are only one tool for your survival. Storage food is just as important. Water filters, cooking fuel, clothing to include footwear, these things can't be substituted with firearms. A fine collection of firearms is great, except most folks of modest means than can't afford the required items that go along with these arms. Nifty items such as way more ammunition than you thought you would need, more magazines than you could afford, a complete spare parts kit for every single firearm you own. A sexy new H&K91 is just the thing to show off at the shooting range. To bad you only have three mags for it along with a thousand rounds of 308. Assuming your enemies will allow to reload those few magazines, that thousand rounds of ammo will only last you a couple of firefights. Assuming that you will also live through them. Even if you have plenty of mags and ammo for your primary battle weapon, what about the other twelve guns you own? You need to minimize the number of firearms you own and maximize their accessories. Guns are a needed survival tool. Don't neglect the other ones.

Last up we have the "Lucifer's Hammer" folks. The greatest survival fiction ever printed. And the thought pattern of a great many survivalists. The world will somehow end tomorrow and kill most people and I'll survive as king of the hill. And any scenario will

do. An asteroid strike. Y2K. Ice age, global warming, solar flares, environmental catastrophe, nuclear war, whatever. I myself worry about these and wonder about the possibilities. I also take it all with a grain of salt. It is fun to theorize and ponder, even to fantasize a bit. Remember, survivalism is a hobby and supposed to be fun. Just try not to get carried away. You could max out your credit cards, refinance the house, learn a skill useful for telecommuting to stay in your shelter and still work, stockpile tons of wheat and scores of thousands of rounds of ammunition along with dozens of surplus rifles, work a second job, build a fallout shelter, get a divorce from your non-survivalist wife, move to the state least likely to be in the path of fallout. And then, not a damn thing happens. Oops. Read up on the old works from Tappan, Saxon and Ruff. They all (along with others) screamed that the sky was falling and demanded that you move to a small community out of harms way. Now. Immediately. Before all was lost. Before the cities went up in smoke. And nothing happened. Good advice, bad timing. I hope no one met with financial ruin listening to them. They could still be right. Just use good judgment instead of panic.

Now, having said all that, lets look at an arsenal from the point of view of a TEOTWAWKI survivalist. If you are contemplating a fight with the Federal government, this is not what you wish to consider. For that you will need to consider military tactics and equipment. The end of the world survivalist must do the exact opposite. By its very nature, military planning and execution calls for casualties, death, and vast equipment expenditure. The difference between conventional armed forces and guerrilla forces are ones of degree, in as far as equipment is concerned. The tactics are different. Obviously. Yet, casualties are still expected and equipment is in the same category. To defeat an enemy you must engage in battle. You will minimize your own casualties if for no other reason you have fewer troops. You will use booby traps and sniping and other non direct methods to inflict death on your enemy. However, you still need conventional weapons to fight that battle. You need explosives and assault rifles and vast quantities of ammunition. Therefore, a survivalist who is more along the lines of a militia member needs to prepare with semi-auto weapons, magazines, ammunition and spare parts. If you wish to only prepare for self defense in a social collapse scenario, you must look at things from an entirely different perspective.

Combat weapons can be survivalist weapons. But not in a TEOTWAWKI situation. The over riding consideration would then be resupply. That is your main concern. While a few could easily stockpile 50,000 to 75,000 rounds (probably the average life of your semi-auto) I doubt the average survivalist could afford that. Sure, most of modest means could if they didn't own a car. Not that they would make that trade-off. A car, as expensive and wasteful as it is, still provides a means of transportation to work. Thus it is more an investment than a consumable. Of course, so is ammo if you consider it an investment in your life, as most survivalists do. I am saying that on this scale of investment, immediate justifiable expenses overrule risky and possibly unnecessary ones. Lets say that buying in bulk you could spend as little as ten cents a round, even after shipping. Perhaps on the unrealistic low side, but it makes for a nice round figure. 50,000 rounds will cost $5,000. Perhaps you think this is reasonable. I certainly do not. After

gun and part purchases you will spend another $500 (an SKS) to $1500 (about everything else with detachable mag) at a minimum. If I had that money I would buy an acre of land with a trailer or mobile home. This, since I regard the likely future to include an economic meltdown more than an asteroid strike.

Since we might be in agreement that when it all falls apart you will be limited to only the supplies you have on hand, let us rule out the use of semi-auto rifles as a means for your survival weapon. Yes, they are superior in combat. Yes, they consume a dreadful amount of ammunition. If you are not financially able to supply this ahead of time, you need to look at a weapon that is cheaper to feed. Please forget about finding or stealing enough ammunition to get you through. It will of course help. But will it be enough? Even with using the same round as the military in time your supplies will dry up. Of course you will need to buy, steal and find more ammo. You will have to unless you plan on manufacturing your own. By which I mean primitive industry, not reloading. Those supplies run out too. The simple fact is that assault rifles use too much ammo and you can't match today's resupply methods in a feces hits the fan world. Lets look at the alternatives to a semi auto assault weapon survivalist arsenal.

I have advocated a World War Two surplus rifle survival weapon in the past. I still think this has merit. Alas, it also has its problems. Not that you shouldn't consider them. They do have several things going for them. First, they are real cheap. Both the rifles and the surplus corrosive ammo is so cheap it enables even the poorest down on his luck minimum wage earning slob the opportunity to prepare to survive. This is no small thing when there are too few of us survivalists out there and we would do better to add to our ranks. The more people that prepare ahead of time, the less the pain and suffering there will be. And, the fewer who will try to steal our supplies. Two, bolt action rifles use far less ammunition than their semi-auto brethren. The difference between one thousand rounds of oddball caliber and ten thousand rounds of current military caliber is about $900. Minimum. At the extreme, an HK91 with ten thousand rounds of 308 and twenty mags will cost you about $2000 (if you use a clone, not the real McCoy- and using crap corrosive ammo). A Turkish Mauser and one thousand rounds will cost about $110. Both are jobber price without shipping costs. This compares a Cadillac to a moped, but if you don't want to walk and are poor, a moped will do. I am not saying that it is a great idea to buy the currently available Turkish rifle, as they are reported to be real crap. But if you are truly, desperately financially challenged you can, with that purchase and another $90 for wheat and grinder (see issue #29), become prepared for survival for $200-250.

I have covered bolt actions previously, so let me just say that if you can overcome their limitations of inaccuracy, corrosive ammo and recoil you could do a lot worse. Such as the AR15.

Relying on a rimfire round to put down an enemy soldier is close to using a .38 to stop a grizzly. If you are close enough to accurately hit the correct spot you will put him down. Otherwise you are just going to piss him off and become his lunch. He might later die from the wound but it would be too late for you at that point. However, that also misses

the point of this article. If a .38 is all you have and if you are skilled with it, it can (barely) do the job. A piece of duct tape can repair just about anything, as long as you realize its limitations. Realize what this round can and cannot do, and you could use it to your advantage. The number one selling point to a .22 is that the ammo is so cheap you can literally go out and shoot every week and not even hurt your budget. Even the cheapest 8mm for your Mauser is going to run ten cents a round after shipping and as cheap as that is you are still going to have a problem shooting on a regular basis. If you were to go out every week and shoot 30 rounds from your bolt action (about all the recoil your shoulder can handle unless you are built like line-backer) you would spend a whole $12 a month. Not bad, and all of us can handle that cost. Will that allow you to become proficient? That is for you to decide. If you feel that this amount of practice will allow you to hit what you are aiming at, you have got yourself a winner. Stick with your surplus bolt action.

However, if you need a lot more practice to remain an acceptable marksman than for a grand sum of $2 a week you can shoot 100 rounds of ammo in practice each time you go to the range. I would think that this would be enough for anybody to become very good at hitting their target. And that really is what the main concern is here. If you are not able to practice on a regular basis you will not be able to engage the enemy and win. If you can't hit your target you are useless. This was once understood over 75 years ago when hunting was the only way to put meat on the table. Then came World War Two and although officially marksmanship was encouraged once on the battlefield common practice was to lay down suppressing fire at any opportunity. Not that I blame the troops one bit. If it was me and I could keep the enemies head down so they wouldn't fire at me and I knew that there was plenty more ammo available I would have done the same thing. The only problem with this practice is when you are cut off from resupply you are suddenly forced to switch practices and conserve ammo. Not that easy to do under the stress of battle. The German forces on the other hand were trained with and issued a five round bolt action that loaded slowly. The doctrine was to take your time, aim, and fire only at a target. How much both these practices had to do with regards for the soldiers lives and how much it had to do with the military-industrial base of their respective countries is open for debate. But the point being that since that point our militaries practice if not official training has been to Spray and Pray. That is what the M16 does best (when it is working) and why we are in no hurry to replace it. If we were dependant on the infantry to inflict most of the enemy casualties we would have a much better rifle for them to use. But tactics have been for almost 100 years that the real killers are artillery and machine guns. The ground pounders just help protect those systems (tanks being mobile artillery).

In a End Of The World scenario it is assumed that industry ceases to exist. When that happens you cease to have resupply. Without resupply you cease to have artillery or machine guns or assault weapons. What is left is what you have in your personal supply. This is where the rimfire also shines through. You can stockpile enough. Lets say you call the bore life of a semi-auto 50,000 rounds. A 7.62x39 supply using surplus ammo is $5,000. A .22 supply is $1,000. It is going to cost you more to buy a .22 and magazines,

but the initial investment is a couple of hundred dollars difference. The ammo cost difference is several thousand. Another consideration is ammo weight. You can carry a lot more .22s with you than conventional rifle ammo. Now, I realize that this is the same argument that was used to replace thirty caliber rounds with the puny ineffective .223, but the end goals must to entered into the equation. With the 30-06 and .308 it was assumed that all rounds were aimed at long distances. The .223 was used as a high volume short range shock weapons system. The two rounds were for totally different objectives. The .22 is ideal only for its low cost. It has very little else going for it unless all you ever kill are squirrels. You must realize that a .22 is only considered a compromise. You must stockpile rounds cheaply, and be able to practice a lot cheaply. Only the .22 rimfire is cheap enough for these two criteria. Its performance as a man stopper is pathetic and must be compensated for.

Remember, the rimfire arsenal is only meant for End Of The World survival use. I do not recommend it for any other survival scenario, be it looters after a natural disaster, a government insurrection or other conventional combat plans. Regular warfare, be it guerrilla or conventional troops, needs a lot of firepower of medium to high caliber. A rimfire is ludicrous in that case. But when you are looking at the end of our industrial supply base, it makes perfect sense. The only other choices are to start your own industry or use black powder, or both. They are better choices, but require more organization than the loner survivalist has. For a go-it-alone after TEOTWAWKI scenario, stay with the .22 if you foresee long term industry collapse. But what if you are unsure which scenario will unfold? Well, that's not so easy. You can compromise such as I have. A bolt action and a thousand rounds will be sufficient for conventional confrontations and as a backup plan I bought a cheap .22 arsenal with another 1000 rounds. It is nothing to brag about, being a single shot rifle and an old beat up revolver, but at a total of $125 after ammo it is damn cheap insurance against an asteroid or nuclear strike. You could just take the plunge and buy a complete arsenal and at least ten thousand rounds (twenty would be better) and then justify the cost by calling it your weekend plinking gun. But even a used rifle with tube magazine bought for $75 at a pawn shop and two thousand rounds of ammo for $40 will run you under $120 and is a small enough purchase to perhaps slip under the spouses radar screen or at least become a gift request. Most of us make enough to supply ourselves splendidly for survival but have a really high maintenance family that selfishly consumes all of our discretionary income. That is the main reason I write on surviving fugally, not because we are all living on minimum wage. At times those poor people are the ones who have better survival supplies. It is a lot easier to save when you don't have a car payment, a house payment, college tuition or retirement plans. But I digress.

If you have the money I would seriously stress the need for the best .22 rifle you can get. The difference between the best and worse .22 is perhaps $75. Not enough to worry about in most cases. The difference between the best and worse battle rifle is $750. A big difference and why I stress getting war surplus bolt actions instead of new assault rifles. But with a .22 it is not quite the same thing. Even if truly poor, $75 is only another months of savings. True, the final cost with magazines will bring this difference higher. The final cost of a tube magazine rifle will be about $100. The final cost of a $150 Rugar

10/22 after twenty magazines (at $15 each) is just under $500. Add $500 for 25,000 of ammo and the final cost is $600 verses $1000. If you add a decent scope for $50 this will encompass your total cost for your survival arsenal. You could get a SKS carbine and 5,000 round of ammo just as cheaply, but remember that we are concerned here with stockpiling a lot more than 5k rounds and also with practicing on a regular basis. You can't just look at the immediate purchase.

Another reason why you might wish to spend the additional $500 is tactics. In an ambush you are already at a serious disadvantage using the .22. The last thing you want is to handicap yourself further by lack of a detachable, quickly loaded magazine. I understand that most of us will go with the $120 minimal .22 package. In that case you are going to be restricted to a hit and run, three shot maximum ambush. Which is fine and dandy. For those who wish to go the extra mile and raise the rimfire battle tactics to a fine art, stick with a Rugar 10/22, get plenty of magazines (even more than twenty if possible) and practice a lot. Let us say that you only have the tube magazine rimfire. With a decent scope (I would buy a moderately cheap two or three rather than one expensive one in case of damage) and a reasonable amount of practice you can set up an ambush, shoot off two or three shots and get the heck out of there. You must obviously select your site with care. With a two or three man team all equipped with Rugars, you can ambush a fire team (if you have the guts) and with multiply hits per enemy you can defeat an enemy with superior weapons. This assumes a concealed site with cover and the skill to take down the enemy before he can find you.

The rimfire arsenal is for a specialized scenario for those financially hindered in their preparations. The thing you must have or develop is skill. You must practice enough that under the stress of combat acquiring your target is second nature. If you can't hit a two inch circle at one hundred yards under rapid fire you will not be able to hit critical areas on an enemy such as the throat, crotch or ankle. The goal is to incapacitate. If I am on the ground screaming like a girl because I have a round through my foot I will not be shooting back at you. Even if I was to shrug off that wound another one two seconds later to my skull and then my neck would put me out of the action. The wounds would then fester and I would die a horrible death due to lack of medical care. This is not for everyone. Be sure of your limitations and skills before you undertake these preparations. END

THE BLACK COMPANY
by James M Dakin
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After the Event life got a heck of a lot more interesting. People from the advanced economic nations found themselves back in conflict with nature. This was a bit of a shock, as most citizens of these former civilized territories had no concept of what nature was really capable of. When it was 20 degrees below zero they would run from their heated car to their heated home or office clad only in a light jacket and a pair of tennis shoes.

When a hurricane leveled whole city blocks or a storm flooded out a neighborhood they were inconvenienced into checking into a nearby hotel and waiting for an insurance check. Television shows of starving children were quickly bypassed in favor of less depressing fare, typically a mindless sitcom featuring the bimbo of the week. Cities were built on flood plains, homes were constructed in dry grasses or forests. Desert that had no water was turned into metropolises and water was imported at great cost to taxpayers and to the environment. Not that most would have it any other way. Outside of a few rugged outdoorsman and some tree hugging hippies, most folks liked their creature comforts just fine, thank you. Nothing wrong with that. No reason to live like a savage if it was not needed. But it did make for something of an adjustment when it all went to hell.

Desmond Smith thought often of the old days. Sure, in some ways things were better. No mortgage to worry about. Or retirement. Right after the turn of the millennium those things had gotten a lot harder to accomplish. Christ, interest rates had gotten as low as three percent. But a starter house in any part of the country that had any jobs to speak of was close to $200,000. And wages were always pressured lower. Internet stocks for a time made it easy to get a job, and you were treated like a king. Then, the tech bubble burst and a short time later 9-11 took place and the economy started its long slide down. Jobs were immediately hard to get if you were white collar. It all seemed so normal back then. The Internet. White collar, blue collar jobs. Economic indicators. The availability of a house with central heat and air. A job to work at, for money. A car to get to that job. Nice while it lasted, until the crap hit the fan and everything came unglued and Desmond Smith found himself manning a guard post atop a small hill in the middle of a forest out in the middle of absolutely nowhere. Forty seven years old and he was back in the military with two bum knees and a receding hairline.

And he had it better than most. Three squares a day and a bed to sleep in at night. Three hots and a cot, as it had been known 70 years ago when those brought up during the Great Depression fond comfort in joining the military at the start of World War Two. Only seventy years between the end of one great depression and the start of another world wide downturn. Of course, that one had fared a sight better, what with the lack of nuclear weapons and all. Desmond knew he was part of the new middle class, just from the fact that he was fed regularly. Piss poor fare it was indeed, but he had gone hungry enough right after the Event to appreciate even the dullest menu. Yet still, he would literally kill for a Dr. Pepper and a Moon Pie. The grotesque overabundance of America was still

fresh in his mind. Sodas, coffee, cigarettes all available at every corner convenience store. Such thoughts had their way of still bringing a tear to his eye. Desmond had turned religious overnight, like most survivors of the Event, and he thanked God every meal with wholehearted conviction rather than forced routine. Still, after many meals of good wholesome food he was more than ready to pig out on some sugar laden junk food.

Ah, sweet sweet sugar. Greasy plastic-like fake food that was easy to chew and digest, a blast of ready carbohydrates straight to the body's system. No endless chewing of whole grain breads and dishes, never ending mastication to achieve an eventual energy load to the body. He knew what he had started to subsist on was much healthier for his system. Christ, it would probably keep him alive that much longer until his skull was crushed in from a rock welded by a hairy lice ridden starving walking skeleton. Who wouldn't want to hang around longer for just such a possibility? But still, hadn't these jag-offs in charge of this place ever heard of protein? Some jerked meat would really hit the spot. Desmond was defiantly not a vegetarian and the craving for meat was just as strong as that of sugar. He was used to a lack of tobacco, his last cigarette having run out months ago. Coffee was out unless you were an officer. What was left to enjoy? No meat, caffeine, nicotine. No sugar or fruits. Just bread and twice a week wheat grass as a substitute for vegetables.

And, yet, as much as his mind wandered to the good ol days and as much as his thoughts soured to past pleasures, he had to keep the correct mind set if he was to make it here. Getting in to this sanctuary was not easy, and if he screwed it up he could kiss his butt goodbye. The world out there in what used to be the good old USA was a hell-hole and made the Bosnian conflict look like a Hippie Love-In. He had no idea people hated each other so much. Not that it should come as much of a surprise. He had long suspected that the forced politically correct attitudes masked a lot of resentment. When central control and the Welfare state ended, so did the forced tolerance. And Desmond was half black. Here he was welcome, but out there he was a glowing neon sign for any good old boy with an attitude or even another Afro-American who deemed him not black enough. Whatever side didn't like him, whether he was declared a nigger or an Oreo, he was going to be tortured, killed and more than likely eaten. His best bet was here in the Company, were he was barely tolerated. Not because of his skin color but because he was barely skilled enough to warrant being fed. True, he had been in the regular military for twenty one years with the rank of a warrant officer and the skills in a Blackhawk helicopter. But, what did that do for an infantry unit? Air support had been too costly for most central governments militaries before it all happened. After the Event anything bigger than an ultra light recon craft needed too many spare parts that just weren't around anymore. Not to mention the lack of petroleum. So, he had become a foot soldier. And that only grudgingly. If he hadn't had that M-16 with a few rounds left in it he could not have bought his probation. That had been a strange affair.

Desmond had awoken just before dawn to a sound. Not that sounds were foreign out in the woods, what with wildlife still in evidence despite the waves of desperate would-be hunters after the Event. Lucky for Mother Nature, the intruders were absent skills and cunning. The regular wildlife was left intact to a large degree and stray dogs gone feral added to the population. Men died off quickly. Desmond had just entered the woods, ready to start the same ordeal as the others. Near starvation to begin with, having fought his way through urban areas and thus almost out of ammunition, the woods were a last

resort. He was city born and raised and didn't know the first thing about living outside of concrete. True, the Army had exposed him to camping and running around in non-urban areas. But truthfully, all that had been more like a weekend in the park. There had always been tents and resupply runs, occasional hot meals. Nothing like living alone out in the wilds. So, he had slept little and the smallest sound had snapped him awake. That one morning when he came awake he had kept still and listened carefully. His sleeping bag was under a pile of leaves against a downed tree. Not the greatest hiding place but he had assumed better than in a clearing. He lay and listened, almost drifting back asleep when he heard something again. His weakened system at that point rebelling against lack of sleep, his last bit of adrenalin forcing his body to remain alert, Desmond could almost feel himself start to snap. He had about had it with fleeing from every perceived threat. The tension started to mount, he could feel his chest start to constrict, and when he barely saw the outline of a walking man come not even four feet from his position he let out what he then considered a berserker scream (later to be labeled as more of a feminine wail by others) jumped up from the sleeping bag he always kept unzipped and tackled the form. He even managed to get the fellows rifle away from him and to use his own knife to subdue him. Desmond sat on the ground trembling and breathing hard, one arm around the mans head and the other holding the knife to his throat.

The tactical blunder revealed itself in the next few seconds as the mans teammates surrounded him and aimed their own rifles at Desmond. It all had a surreal quality to it, the dawn barely breaking and most of what was seen being lit more by starlight than anything. Other than his girlish scream no one had said anything. One form moved closer and Desmond felt a barrel being placed against his head and heard a hammer being cocked. He swallowed and lifted the knife away from his hostage, let go of his head and felt the man scramble away. Then he saw stars as he was knocked on the head with a rifle butt, and unconsciousness provided his needed rest.

When he came to, he was in another part of the woods, his wrist in a handcuff and the other end attached to a pipe from what looked like a restroom urinal. The fact that he was laying on broken ceramic tiles attested to this. He looked around and figured it was more than likely an old Ranger station with a public outdoor bathroom. The gap between the ceiling and walls covered with wire mesh and the piles of blown in leaves was another reason to suspect this. The lack of smell suggested it had been awhile since the building had been used for its original purpose. "Yeh, it's a crapper all right. You are being held in what used to be Uncle Sam's finest outdoor outhouse. Courtesy of the Park Service. Now, lets go about determining your fate, times awaiting. I'll be Frank, your hostage last night and tour guide to your new home. Here's the key to your cuffs, don't try anything funny or I'll hit you on the same spot the Sarge did. It already looks like it hurts. Hurry up, chop, chop." Boomed the happy-go-lucky voice from the corner. Desmond hurriedly complied and walked ahead of his guide towards the other building.

"In you go, the front door. Gotta talk to the Chief. The Sarge will see you now." Frank said. Desmond was seated in front of a desk with its occupant leaning back and eyeballing him.

"My name is Sergeant Malhoon. I'm the fellow that brought you here instead of killing you in the wee hours of this morning. The only reason you are alive is because I said so, and the only way you are going to stay that way is if you give me a good reason why it

should be so. You had a bit of common sense sleeping where you did, and it took guts to attack us, although it was rather stupid as I'm sure you'll agree. Because of that I made an allowance and let you live. Now, talk to me and make it good."

So, Desmond told him about his Army career how he had come this far. It really didn't take that long and at the end the Sarge looked at him, scowled, and took a moment to ponder. "Son, you are just another sad excuse of an ex-military refugee that lacks any skill we can use. If you were a Green Beenie or Ranger, sure, we could take you. If you were a mechanic instead of a pilot. If you had a civilian skill you would be useful. But you are just a high-tech one skill wonder. If there are no more copters flying you are worthless to us. However, as I said I did take an interest in you because you were slightly less stupid than the average refugee that wanders in here. I am going to give you several choices. One, back track the way you came, get out of my woods. Don't come back. Two, you can join a work gang. They are volunteers, not POW labor, so you can leave as you wish. Technically I could call you a prisoner as you attacked us and were captured, but I think in this case it would be better if I didn't do that. Not because you are much use to us, but because you didn't kill any of my men, and I am a fair man. Anyway, a work gang gets paid in room and board only. As you know, that in itself is mighty generous since you are starving at this time. We feed you and work the hell out of you. Your third option and only reason I am giving it to you is you seem to be intelligent enough, is to buy your way into the military. If you had the skills we needed we would pay you an enlistment bonus. Without the skill, you need to buy your way in. You had a mag on you, does that mean you have your rifle stashed somewhere?"

"With only three rounds left I decided it wasn't really worth the risk of carrying it around and getting shot over it. I'll go get it for you if I decide you take you up on your offer. But first, can you tell me who you guys are and why I would want to join. I'm pretty darn hungry right now, but see no point in getting killed next week even with a full belly. I came too far to piss it all away by joining an old National Guard unit that is running around trying to be the next central government."

The Sarge just grinned, "Son, we ain't no sorry ass Guard unit. We are the Black Company, a for profit private armed force. You might not have heard of us, but I'm sure we are headed for great things. I for one wouldn't waste my time for just any two bit jag-off outfit. You might start out as cannon fodder but if you prove yourself you move up in importance and we have less of an interest in seeing you killed."

Desmond of course had lied. He really was desperate. The choice was combat or manual labor. The road back wasn't really an option if he wanted to eat. He hadn't ever been much of a laborer, but that was a safe route. On the other hand, he was used to the military, and he had already shot at people. Well, from the air anyway. These last few months was all just running around and hiding from potential foes. Could he stomach being in real combat? He was no longer a spring chicken, although his reflexes had stayed sharp from flying. In the end it came down to fear of failing to perform back breaking work, or fear of being shot. Better to be shot and get it over than to be kicked out and forced to go back wandering and starving.

In the end, he accepted the military, trading in his Army M16 for the chance to work for this strange "Black Company". He had no idea what was in store for him, but found it was likely not going to be good.

"Did I forget to mention? You have to start all over again. You get to go back to Basic Training." Oh, crap.

END PART ONE

THE FUTURE OF YOUR JOB
by James M Dakin
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By now most of us are used to the idea that we will not be hired at one company, work there for forty years and retire with a pension. That concept of work was short lived and declared dead years ago. We know that we will need to change occupations several times in our career. Any job that has a bit of skill to it will require constant addition to our education. In short, the world keeps changing and we had better keep up.

A couple of decades ago, those bright boys at the top of the corporate food chain discovered computers. A few decided that middle managers whose sole job was to convey information up and down the hierarchy were obsolete. Thus began the flattening of the classic pyramid command structure. It took awhile, most companies are still to this day befuddled as to what a computer chip can do. But by and large, we see the death of middle management. And with it a trend towards the reversal of the bell curve of wealth. In Americas mythical golden days we saw a small poor class, and a small wealthy class with the bulk as middle class. Even those not officially in the salary range were on the way up economically and could be considered middle class. Any immigrant family could work hard, send their offspring to college and in two generations arrive in the suburbs. Middle management was of course not the sole means of this. Unions gave an escape clause to those uneducated poor. The government actually ran good schools way back when, college grants were easy to get. But for many reasons this era is over and today the wealth curve is reversed. You are either poor or wealthy and the middle ground continues to shrink.

One could point to the Vietnam War as the beginning of the end. The incredible cost of that conflict along with the War On Poverty tipped the scales from a economically balanced Federal government to a perpetually crisis-prone leviathan. Of course today that cost seems trivial, but the die was cast and we have yet to look back. Today we have so much wrong with our economy it is a wonder we are still going. But rather than starting again on the many problems of our system, lets take a look at the future of our job market.

We are in trouble, folks. The economy is shredding manufacturing jobs. Soon, they will constitute no more of a percentage of workers than does farming. This is unstoppable, and there is no going back. The future is information and services. But wait!! If that wasn't bad enough, losing the traditionally good paying jobs, we have another problem on our hands. Information Technology jobs are starting to be exported. Those jobs that were supposed to replace the manufacturing work are also being sent overseas. Knowledge work is going to India, the Philippines, Russia and Eastern Europe to name a few. Major tech parks are going up around the big cities in India. Bank of America, Texas Instruments, Intel, Lehman Brothers, HP, AmEx, Dell, Kodak, IBM, GE, Microsoft, P&G and Citibank have Indian workers there doing our "new economic age"

work. Mortgage lenders, hospitals and architectural firms are farming out work.

Radiologists interpret CT scans, engineers design mobile phone chips for T.I., Biologists do research for pharmaceutical companies. An Indian engineer starts at $5,000. At first it will be just like manufacturing. The overseas work will be substandard, but cheap enough for some applications. Then, over time, quality will improve. Our jobs disappear or our wages come way down. Companies are under tremendous pressure to cut costs. Lawyers and governments are sucking off their profits, as are pensioners and competition. Henry Ford might have raised workers pay to enable his workers to buy the product they made, but don't expect that kind of far-sighted business sense in this century. To remain competitive long term our economy must shred government, curb litigation, plow money into education (real training, not P.C. brainwashing) and research and development, and stay on the leading edge of technology. We can keep our farming jobs with bioengineering, our manufacturing jobs with value added high tech and our information jobs with leading edge R&D. But will we? If we do we will remain at the top. If not we go the way of the last Empire, Great Briton. They have yet to recover from World War One. WWII just did them in for good. Of course we may not go the way of defeated empires. If we get out of the empire business. Lets wait and see about Iran and Syria. If we attack on another weak premise I fear we are stepping into deep kemshi.

If you are going to get a private sector pension, be very careful. If enough companies go bankrupt over unfunded pension liabilities (it is that serious of a problem right now) we might see bankruptcy courts forced to deny future pension payments either because of the sheer numbers of companies or the inability of the government to pick up the obligations. Public sector pensions are in just as much trouble, but with a printing press and the power to tax, they will last a bit longer. But even there watch out. The news as of late is full of local and state governments cutting back on vital services because of budget problems. And you ain't seen nothing yet.

I am not offering any solutions here. The path ahead is really unknown, too many factors can go too many ways to tell how it will all turn out. But you may wish to consider your job and ask yourself if it is in danger of being exported. Can a foreign college graduate with a second language of English do your job? Just off the top of my head I would say that the only safe short term job is in the creative field (foreigners don't do our culture well) or cutting edge tech. I sure would not spend money on one of those private school courses teaching computer programming or some such. You know the ones, daytime TV is full of them hawking an instant good paying job. Danger, Will Robinson!! Remember, if it's too good to be true, it is. These schools are selling obsolete skills.

Live below your means, and keep an avenue open for another career. When you change jobs more than likely your income will decrease. Stay out of debt, try for no mortgage if possible. A house might be a sucker bet for a few years at least. If your standards must remain high at least consider a modular home on your own land. Half the cost of a regular house and most zoning boards are kind to them, unlike manufactured homes. If your area is declining economically and you feel a move might be in order down the road, buy a

cheap mobile home in a park- the payments and lot rent most times beat an apartment in cost and you can resell for something (though not much). Learn to cut your costs now, if possible. Trial and error now is better than when it is forced on you later.

We may just be in a slump, but we might also have started a long term decline. The life of conspicuous consumption should be over for those of us remotely concerned with the future. A few years of hardship now and later, with no debt, you can spend frivolously. Broad trends can seem worse than they are, but it never hurts to plan for the worse. END

HERMIT SURVIVALIST
by James M Dakin
copyright 2003

It doesn't really require that much thought to put aside some food for storage, stockpile some guns with ammunition, have water jugs in the garage and an extra propane cylinder set aside for emergency cooking. If most Americans followed the simple advice given for preparations, even that lame government version, in times of crisis we would all be better off. Obviously this is not going to happen, what with generations of propaganda preaching dependence and all. Now, of course, the government is in its classic cycle of being unable to pay for its previous brainstorm and so suddenly is changing its tune to implore the sheeple to fend for themselves. Again, this won't happen. You don't reverse decades of indoctrination just because at present you are facing a budget squeeze. The masses will continue to look for Uncle Sugar to fend for them. The fact that the Feds are responsible for the problem in the first place is of no importance. Yet still, hope springs eternal. On the other side of the optimism coin we find reality, that cruel and unforgiving mistress. And reality dictates that the great unwashed will not help beforehand. They will in fact hinder. The American police state grows, asinine policies are embraced, and the lemmings jostle for a position at the head of the stampede.

On a more personal level the economic pressures grow steadily worse for everyone, from the minimum wage part time dishwasher to a CEO of a corporation. Overseas workers place pressure downward on American wages as the likelihood of jobs exportation threatens us. Despite a welcome depression in certain commodities, inflation continues to gradually weaken our purchasing power. To pay for the expansion of empire and to provide the masses with bread and circuses government weakens the currency and sells our future to foreign banks. The inability of outmoded business practices to produce profits to corporations induce them to steal from pension funds, depriving future retirees of the one asset that could have replaced a failing Social Security system. Reckless debt has become the last economic engine for the economy before the coming crash of the system as homeowners embrace negative equity. Anyone who cares to look can see the probability of a system-wide collapse.

For some the answer to this foreboding future is to drop out of the system to whatever extent possible. The back-to-the-land movement saw its biggest surge since the mid-70s just before Y2K. That scare obviously did not induce many rational persons to abandon the cities, but it did give a little push to those already inclined in that direction. The underlying economic system will dictate the success of those publications that preach such a move. Mother Earth News did quite well in the Carter administration and only survived by transforming itself into a Yuppie gardening magazine when times turned good. Recently Backwoods Home Mag came about and prospered in part due to a sound business practice but mostly for the fact that as a whole our system is coming unglued, some of us know it, and we are preparing for it. Back-to-the-land is mainly appealing to

the tree hugger crowd and survivalists generally just pick and choose the desired aspects of its teachings from the fringes. We tend to value firepower over fireplaces. Chopping wood for the winter is therapeutic, but so is shredding paper targets. We can easily save up for a Glock or an HK91, but putting aside for a place in the country is several times in magnitude harder. Living in the country can be very expensive, time consuming and difficult.

Not that it is a bad thing. Anything worthwhile is going to be hard. But if one wishes to abandon our sinking ship perhaps it is not the best thing to have to wait around for ten years having to pay off debt, saving from a second job, researching farming and hoping to one day go off into the wild blue yonder if everything works out just right. Perhaps you feel it would be better to get the heck out of dodge now. If you can't afford to wait, or don't want to, what can you do instead? Even in an economically depressed area, houses with land are going to go for at least $20,000. And assuming you have this cash (it would be the height of foolishness to assume debt) either from retreating from the stock market or selling your overvalued gum and glue dwelling or whatever, there would still be the question of earning a casual income to supplement your skills at raising organic squash. The main problem with living in the country is that you need to earn a level of cash even if it is very low. And earning cash in the country is difficult because there are very few jobs to be had. You are not going to be self sufficient on a farm or ranch, in general, on a small amount of land with a limited investment. The little guy needs to supplement. You are going to need to devote full time to raising food, part time to earning a supplemental income and if you are lucky the rest of the time to getting enough sleep. Sure, this beats working for a corporation and killing yourself over mindless office work, but it still seems a very hard way to make a living. A much better way might be to drop out of the system totally.

I am not saying that this is for everyone. Just as in the case for living in the country, if you are not so inclined you should not try this out. If, on the other hand, you have always harbored a secret desire to yell from the rooftops that everybody is worthless, your job is senseless, and you refuse to take it anymore as you pack up a bandana on a stick to embark on the lifestyle of a hobo, then you may wish to consider dropping out. Dropping out of the system is not the same as living on the fringes, but neither is it living the life of squalor. Back to the land living is minimizing the cost of living to a small degree, but maximizing your self sufficiency. Living in squalor such as a bum begging for coins over a street vent, waiting for the next pint of Mad Dog to transform him into the blissful state of drunkenness is not a valid strategy for survival. In between the one way of life in the country that is expensive in both time and money and the low end in life styles that is dangerous and degrading is the way of the hermit.

Being a hermit means that you are minimizing both your time devoted to earning your daily bread and its cost and at the same time still maintaining a level of comfort and dignity not available if you are living hand to mouth on the streets. Living in the country is still possible in this way, but lacks the expensive infrastructure typically associated with it. I am using the term country living to convey the life style of "five acres and independence"

"mother earth news" types. This is the mostly self sufficient way of living that mimics the middle class life without the dependence on the centralized distribution of food, energy etc. I use the term hermit to convey the life style of an individual who still lives comfortably but without the expensive tools of country living such as a conventional house, a motor vehicle, tractor, water well, etc. A hermit does not necessarily avoid human contact, but minimizes it due to his choice of dwelling away from most people to minimize costs. A hermit brings to mind a sour old codger out in the middle of the desert trying to find gold and coming into town once a year for bacon and beans. You can be this kind of hermit, but I see more than one way to be a drop out from society without living that far from human interaction.

Being a hermit allows one to realize several benefits. One, you can quite the rat race. Two, you are away from the cities and are thus relieved of the worry of bugging out should any problems occur there. Opting out of the rat race has always sounding good to most of us- it is just that the cost of doing so is too high. Not in money, but in our way of life. Be sure you want to pay that price. If you do, the up side is lack of worry from job security. You need to worry about your health and getting enough to eat, plus peace of mind. But you needn't worry about a mortgage or the car payment, kissing up to the boss, pissing away hours of your life commuting to and from work or sucking up your yearly growing resentment at all the hopeless sea of humanity that surrounds you. It used to be that the one thing that kept me from embracing the life of a hermit was the fear of starvation. Well, I am not anywhere close to starving but lately there have been plenty of times when I go hungry and it makes me wonder if the whole "buckle down and suck it up, put in your forty hours with nothing to show for it and pay your bills" kind of life is what I want to do the rest of my life. When you earn a gross income in excess of what they consider poverty but after paying off the ex wife and Uncle Sugar you net less than the rent payment it makes you wonder why you bother. Plenty of you reading this earn far in excess of my income, but I wager your problems are just as severe. It is cheaper to buy a house than rent in most cases, but as always there is some parasite waiting with his hand out to mess with your restful nights sleep. Insurance rates escalate yearly along with your houses value to the point where you could be paying 25% again as much over the mortgage in taxes and insurance. The house always seems to need some kind of repair even new. Cars get more expensive as the price of gas shoots up and commutes get longer as more cars jam the road, making it more expensive to get to a job that pays less every year in real terms and offers less in security as time goes on. Why does everybody put up with it? Because they have few other choices.

For a small minority, there is the choice of opting out. To become a hermit is easy. You just need to decide it is the thing to do. Just like when you quit smoking cigarettes, it seems impossible when thinking about it, but as soon as you know absolutely without a doubt that you want to do it quitting is easy. Do a little research. You need to pick a spot were you want to live. In the mountains, in a forest? The desert? A suburban area with enough greenery to mask your presence? For the "pick up cans and drink rotgut til you die" crowd, urban areas have always offered a area to hide in, from the green spaces of Orlando to the underground aqueducts of Las Vegas. To avoid this canker of society, your best bet is to avoid the cities and suburbs and concentrate on true rural areas. It

really doesn't require you to be all that far from a source of casual employment and resupply. Outside of heavily congested areas such as the northeast coast corridor and the southern California coastline, once you get away from cities it takes very little distance from a road to be alone and away from humanity. Use the typical Americans unnatural addiction to his automobile and rely on the fact that if a spot is more than a few minutes away walking distance from a road it most likely will be left undisturbed.

Once you know where you want to live, you need to decide what you want to live in. A cave in the woods sounds nice, but they are rare and you need to keep out their natural inhabitants. If you have access to a cheap houseboat or build one yourself there are some large areas you could float around in at your leisure and possibly avoid most harassment. The delta in central California goes from the Bay area to Sacramento and offers a lot of area, as does the St. Johns river area in Florida and the swamps of Louisiana. A bit of research should prove that one could easily live on the inland water ways. The western deserts are mostly empty and provide abundant areas to hide. The Rockies and Sierras have vast uninhabited regions. Even the East coast provides areas to get lost in, if one is familiar with the area. A trailer might be difficult to deliver to one of these remote areas, but is a possibility. Your best bet would probably be a dug-out, underground shelter. This adds to its camouflage and reduces the need for heating or cooling. One man with a shovel and axe and saw should be able to construct a rude shelter without too much trouble. You only need to keep out the elements, pests and intruders. A one room shelter should work out fine, as most of your supplies should be cached in other areas. One could easily live out of a tent in a temperate climate, perhaps even staying mobile. This idea has merit, although personally I tend towards solid walls between myself and that big bad ugly world out there.

If you know where you want to live, and have an idea what to live in, you could consider a gradual move. By working a few more months you could take the weekends to stock your area with supplies and save up cash. The move away from civilization should not be made in haste and without planning. That would be foolish, and I am not saying it should take a long time. You could measure the delay in weeks, not years. Even more important than a normal lifestyle is your stash of food. Now we can stockpile a years worth of grain and forget about it. It is used only if things really turn bad. In a hermit lifestyle that year of grain could literally feed you and keep you alive at any time. You need to realize that your casual economic outlook will mean that food money is not a regular incoming item, but rather a hit and miss affair. You should have your year of grain stashed for TEOTWAWKI, and another year for when you need to eat day to day. After you have a grain grinder your total expense for a years worth of wheat with storage buckets is $60 and about $40 for a years worth of corn. It would be simplicity itself to stockpile away several years, at least financially before your move. Transporting it is another matter, as is replacing after use.

Regular eating is going to vary by individual, but I can see in general trapping, hunting, gathering and gardening as your main source. Wild gardening is possible, but a bit unorthodox. There are several books on the subject you might wish to get as research,

along with the standards on wild plants, trapping, etc. Any other required foodstuffs are going to be bought and for that you need occasional trips to town and the odd bit of cash. Along with food replacement is the requirement for clothing and shoes, ammunition, matches etc. You should have a source of income in mind before you move. Traveling the highways for aluminum cans, seasonal work, income from writing, you need something to keep yourself going. You can't do without some money and can only stash so much ahead of time. Whatever cash you do save, you may wish to consider only a years worth of paper money and the rest gold or silver. It would be a pity to come into town after a year and discover inflation just rose 10%. Consider the metal as a stash for really bad times. Paper should be for your immediate needs. But please, keep in mind this strategy of opting out of society is romantic and far fetched. It entails the possibility of actually starving. Do not attempt this at home kids, it is only for professionals. Be sure of your abilities and state of mind. If you are sure, it will prove to be quite an adventure.

I do not advocate buying property and living on it at a minimal income level in this article. An idea with merit and it would be close to the same thing, but falls under the category of frugal homesteader. The yearly requirements are different, as you will need to pay taxes. Even in a marginal tax environment and using only minimal utilities your cash needs will easily triple. Suddenly you no longer need just $100 a year to scrape by but $300-$1,000. The ease of gardening and the unlimited storage space for storing food/grain will counteract this somewhat, but consider the minimal costs. On a lot with a junker house or trailer expect at least $75-$100 a year in property tax. Even with a well or cheap county water rates, $10 a month in water (assuming a septic tank). Minimal electric use doing without central heat or air, efficient appliances, etc is at least $20 a month. Even with solar panels you need maintenance and battery replacement so figure at least $10 a month average. Your own property costs you almost $400 a year. A bit much if you have no income. If of course you can scrape up $1000 a year you could meet your food and clothing and property needs if you lived in genteel poverty. You could do that by giving plasma once a week if a center was in bicycle range but I for one hate needles. But a possibility. This does go against what we are trying to accomplish here, which is avoiding the cities and most people and to stay within a financial range of preparations anyone can achieve. Perhaps. It is still doable. If you found a sub-$1,000 lot of land and a $500 used trailer you could become a hermit with a legal residence. If you only paid $50 a year in taxes since the land was raw and unimproved, and just needed the occasional kerosene and propane, $200 a year could sustain you in a primitive manner. A kissing cousin to actual ownership could be a gold mining claim. It gives you a place to hang your hat legally, and has some things going for it, but beware entanglements with the Empire. The same goes for applying for Food Stamps.

One source for ideas on how to live a simplistic nomadic lifestyle is
Dwelling Portably
PO Box 190
Philomath OR 97370
They have been in business for twenty years, basically telling how they live a free and simple life. Ideas such as a portable shower from junk, insulating a tent, etc. Great ideas,

send a dollar for a sample issue. They should also have information on back issues. Last I checked some years ago they had a microfiche available for a few bucks- a good bargain for a lot of ideas you will find practical. Not sure what's available at this point.

So, if the idea of telling everyone to bugger off appeals to you, if you want to be a modern mountain man, if the wilderness looks more attractive than sitting in the city waiting for disaster to strike, consider dropping out and living the life of leisure on the fringes of poverty. Cheers.
END

THE $200 SURVIVAL RIFLE

by James M Dakin

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In the past I have advocated the cheapest serviceable rifle one could find as the ideal survivalist long arm. This idea still has merit in that there are many of us who either are quite poor or just don't have the means to purchase many preparedness supplies. Most of us have to worry about what the spouse will think, or whether they will even approve such an unauthorized purchase. I avoid this problem by continually remarrying until I have a spouse that keeps her paws off my money. Of course, the old wives have created such a financial burden that I am in the same boat as a hen-pecked owner of a trophy wife, drowning in debt and unable to earn the money fast enough to support trips to the mall. I would not recommend either leaving an uncooperative spouse or putting up with unsound economic practices of a currant one. But that is your personal problem. I am just trying to suggest how to prepare on a budget. So, if you are poor or on a budget of your spouses making, budget survival preparedness make good sense. What may not have made a whole lot of sense was confining your rifle budget to under $100.

I had picked the arbitrary sum of $500 for the limit of a budget preparedness program. My reasoning was that almost anyone, regardless of income or discretionary spending, could afford this sum. I still think this idea has merit. That sum allowed one year of food in the form of wheat, a grinder, a water filter, a rifle and ammunition. So by necessity your rifle purchase price was limited to about $100. This allowed for your choice of war surplus bolt action rifles, or in new manufacture a single shot 12 gauge or .22 rifle. The later two choices were rather limited, and it was best to go with a bolt action in thirty caliber. Really, too much gun for most of us, but too much is better than too little. However, even if one was to stick to that $500 limit, you could still double the sum devoted to your rifle. If you could purchase your grain at a feed store and find a grinder on sale, plus purchase your ammunition cheaply enough and improvise a water filter, you could spend the extra. Let me explain why.

A thirty caliber rifle is a great idea. With an assault weapon you are using a mid-sized cartridge and your range is half that of a battle rifle. You can have your round easily deflected, be it from foliage or light man made material such as sheet metal. A full size round in a battle rifle will punch through such obstacles and still have enough energy to take out your enemy. And to quell the inevitable protest, I am using the term 30 cal. rifle to depict the family of full size battle rifles using .308s, .303s, 8mm, etc. Don't nit-pick me to death on the finer points of ammunition. And while it is great to have this extra power available to you, certain problems present themselves. One is that in a bolt action rifle, the recoil is going to effect your ability to hit what you are aiming at. Not in a sniper role, of course. Don't get me wrong. I am talking about using a full size rifle as your primary combat weapon. If you are good enough to be a sniper, stay with a surplus bolt

action. And I don't mean military sniper good. You don't have the money or time to become that proficient. I am talking about being better than your average Joe that takes three shots at 100 yards to hit a deer (or at least a killing hit).

Lets face it, folks. Due to time and money limitations most of us don't practice enough to stay proficient with our rifles. We have real lives, and jobs, and it is hard to set aside the time. I said most of us. I'm sure there are a few of you reading this that are just itching to brag to me how you spend half the day every weekend on the range spending $30 on reloads becoming the next Lee-Harvey. I am talking about the average working slob who does this survival gig because it makes sense, and devotes enough time to it to get by. Not the abnormal type who lives and eats survivalism. You are a freak (although in an admirable way). I am talking to the silent majority here. We suck at shooting. We don't get enough practice and so we are going to suck at hitting a target at long distances. At two hundred yards if you can hit a man sized target you are average. And without a lot of practice, you will stay average. Nothing wrong with that. But you should stay with an average tool. The assault carbine concept was based on the realities of modern combat- troops couldn't hit much beyond 200 yards and the recoil and performance of an intermediate round were sufficient at those ranges. Most combat was discovered to take place under 100 yards. Rapid fire at these ranges proved more effective than slower aimed fire.

Now, combat in the military and combat under survival conditions are quite different. As a survivalist you lack access to support services such as aircraft, squad automatic weapons and artillery. Your weapon you carry is all the help you are going to get. So it may make sense for a trooper to fire away with an ineffective M16 because he can throw in a few grenades and call in the artillery to take you out. You can't afford to be so ineffective, and a well placed shot with a 8mm round beats a half a magazine worth of unaimed .223. That being said, if you can't hit much with a bolt action rifle, the recoil and lack of rapid fire work against you instead of with you. So my advice should have been that unless you can devote enough resources to become proficient in a long range rifle, stay with an assault carbine where you can remain effective at short ranges. However, if you are desperately poor you can still use the surplus bolt action. Just don't fool yourself into thinking you can hit much past three hundred yards. The effective range might be 500 yards or more, but your range of ability is still that of a carbine. Plan accordingly.

The one carbine you can afford on a budget is the SKS. That illegitimate egg-sucker Clinton closed the window on Chinese weapon imports and so the days of used $99 and new $150 retail guns are gone, but you can now buy imports from Eastern Europe in the $140-$160 dealer cost range. When you find a cost plus 10% dealer (look up the list on the Shotgun News site) you can buy an SKS for under $200 your cost. Your cost delivered for ammo will be about $100 for at least 800 rounds on stripper clips. Not enough for practice and stockpiling, but a start and better than nothing. Do not modify the weapon. The scopes are worse than the original peep sites. The composite stocks don't allow easy field stripping. Just leave good enough alone and be content with a pouch for ammo as your only add-on. Resist temptation to buy a lot of junk for this gun.

The SKS is one of the hardiest, most robust, best engineered cheap assault carbine around. I emphasized cheap. The best battle rifle in existence is the HK91. It allows precession without being fragile. All other combat weapons have only one, not both of these characteristics. The HK is the only one to combine both. But you must pay for this. If your budget does not easily allow you to spend $1000 on a rifle, stay with an SKS. They are cheap and very reliable, but lack precision. I for one would rather have a weapon that stood up to dirt and powder residue and got a three inch group than a tack driver getting that magic one half inch group but seized up like a virgin on prom night at the first sign of foreign particles. Hint, hint, the M16/AR15.

But this article is not really about one weapon or another, but about realizing your limitations as a shooter and factoring that in to your weapons choice. If you will need more firepower to compensate for lack of skill, you should provide that. I have preached on the necessity of conserving ammo in a TEOTWAWKI situation, but realize that all the wishful thinking will not change you into a marksman if you are not one. If you have no skills at gardening it would be prudent to overstock on stored grains to compensate for your lack of skill (you will need to go longer before you can manage that first successful harvest) and so it is with guns and ammo. If you are an urban dweller and infrequently practice shooting, perhaps it would be prudent to give up your dreams of becoming the next super sniper on a future battlefield and have the extra ammunition you need to feed a semi-auto shorter range assault rifle. It all boils down to being realistic, at least to yourself. We can brag to our buddies about how great a shot we are. But be honest with yourself. If old age, lack of practice or other factors make you less of a shooter than you used to be, plan accordingly. It could be your life. END

FOR THE GRACE OF GEAR GO I
by James M Dakin
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As a general rule, we Americans are voracious consumers. We will buy anything and everything and congratulate ourselves while doing it. Why? Because we can. And because it really is the only sane thing we can do. Some societies are congratulated in the press as savers, such as the Japanese. On the other hand, Americans are looked down on for their spending habits. Except before the Christmas season when we are scolded for not spending enough. So, why save? The reason Third World societies have too many children is to provide for the parents in their old age. As disease wipes out some, the others are expected to survive and provide for the parents later. The fact that overpopulation contributes to starvation, ecological disaster and generally miserable conditions is besides the point. The process of having too many offspring is a rational economic choice, the consequences are merely the price of that choice. The Japanese make an equally rational economic choice, as savings help their economy and provide for retirement. That is their only good choice. Americans are rewarded for spending. We are given tax breaks for it, inflation makes spending a good choice and social programs offer a retirement option. Why save if the dollar is worth only 10 to 20% of its value in thirty or forty years? Why save if there is Social Security? Why not consume and use it as a tax write-off? The fact that is causes its own problems is not overlooked. Every action has a reaction. No free lunch. So we pay the price.

When there is less spending cash to go around because of price hikes (such as gasoline or medical or education) the economy stalls, being so dependant on consumers. Our credit is abused. We owe other countries a lot of money, and the interest on the national debt is disgraceful. Yet, it is the best choice we can make. That being said, rampant consumer spending also causes another problem. We have turned into gadget freaks. It is no longer enough to buy a product, we must purchase a dozen items to accompany it. If you were to only factor in the cost of an original purchase, we might congratulate yourself on your frugal living (at least compared to that mythological Average Joe). But when you start to figure up the cost of all the gadgets that go along with the item you might be surprised at the upkeep cost of that product.

When we buy a computer, it turns into a money pit, even considering recent cost decreases. Even if you were to only download free software and actually buy none you would still have the other expenses. Monthly Internet access of $10 to $50. Bi-yearly upgrades, the continual need for more hard drive space, evolving storage devices as from a floppy drive to a CD burner, printers and their ink cartridges. The initial purchase and the electricity to run it is less than the subsequent costs. Or, we go out and buy a television. Then, we have to get cable access, or at least an antenna. A VCR to tape shows, blank tapes, a DVD for all our favorite old shows and new releases, then when all this gear makes the original TV seem small and insignificant, a bigger TV. A car is a good

example. Insurance, gas and upkeep cost more than the car did at first. Or a house. Even new ones seem to require constant maintenance right away. Add in the cost of taxes and insurance and mortgage interest and you have just doubled or tripled your cost.

Buying a fancy new big bad mighty and righteous semi-auto assault rifle is a purchase we would all love to make. After you save up for awhile, it is time to start buying all the required gear. Ten to twenty magazines, thousands of rounds of ammunition, a reload kit with all assorted parts and components, slings, carry cases, scope mounts and scope, range finder, spotting scope, spare parts. All of this cost twice what you paid for the rifle. Other sports such as hiking and camping or biking have plenty of cost. To go hiking it would seem one needed a sturdy pair of boots and a canteen, with perhaps a few candy bars thrown in with a compass and pocket knife. But even this simple exercise can be cause for shopping. Special boots costing two hundred dollars, a day pack with emergency kit, first aid kit, floppy brimmed hat, cool sunglasses with those leather sides looking like you just got back from the Arctic, sun block for your nose, insect repellant, walking staff, two walkie talkies even if you're walking together, a G.P.S. system, maps, Rambo survival knife with hollow handle holding fish hooks, etc. And that's just to go hiking for a day. Once you start camping you can carry more than an Airborne soldier. Tents, folding chairs, air mattresses, cooking gear, lantern, backpack with at least twenty pockets, hatchet, folding saw, take-down rifle, lighter/matches/tinder/sparking bar, food for every meal and cultural choice along with spices and snack food and quick energy food and emergency food, fuel bars and stove, tarp, poncho, boot knife, extra socks and underwear, cell phone, etc.

We own so much junk that every time we move we need a bigger truck, even after a garage sale. And once we get to our bigger house we have to fill the garage with boxes instead of a car and then we still have to rent a storage room. Are we insane? Do we need so many do-dads that we don't even know what we have? Most liberal commie pinkos would of course immediately pull out charts comparing the gross tonnage of commodities consumed by American consumers compared to the rest of the world. Hey, we are pigs. We do indeed consume a hell of a lot. But guess what. Without our selfish greedy consumption a good portion of the Third World population now employed would have no job. We are in effect putting rice in others mouths due to our spending habits. I am not saying that in the general scheme of things our consumption is bad. What I am saying, however, is that in as far as survivalism is concerned we need to seriously rethink our habits. While a general lifestyle cluttered with unneeded items is fine and dandy for the world economy, while preparing your survival supplies it is best to minimize.

The more complex a system is, in general, the easier it is to fail. I could give plenty of examples how complex systems did or didn't fail but common sense holds that most of the time simple is better when it comes to devices that might save your life. As a far out example consider your primary emergency food source. Some buckets of wheat verses a system of greenhouses, fish ponds, solar and wind power, organic pest control and non-hybrid seeds. Don't you think the complex system has a better chance of failure? Of course that is what you want for a long term food source, but for an emergency source of

food simple is better. I am not saying that you shouldn't strive for a complex self sufficient complete system in all things survival. In a post apocalyptic setting you will need the above mentioned food system along with the ability to smelt your metals, produce your own chemicals, start from scratch manufacturing to replace a reliance on salvaged material, etc. But for now if you are on a budget for preparedness, nothing is better than simplicity. Do away with unneeded gear at all levels.

The best example would be an assault rifle. If I chose an SKS instead of an AK I would be able to do away with the need for magazines. So instead of a savings of twice (SKS is $200, AK is $400) I get a savings of three times the amount (AK for $400, plus 20 mags at $10 each for a total of $600). Not only that I can do away with magazine pouches and the worry about spring failure. I will no longer have a problem firing prone, and it has been said that the SKS is marginally more robust than the AK, and is that robust indeed. As stripper clips usually come free with its ammo I have a vastly more simple operation. The only drawback would be going from a thirty round capacity to ten rounds, but even that might be a blessing in disguise if it forces better fire discipline.

Stocking up on canned foods instead of freeze dried allows you do away with an excess of water for preparation, costs a lot less and is available down the street instead of through the mail. True, shelf life is shorter, but that is not a factor if you buy regular menu items and use regularly and replace. In this case you don't really reduce needed items, but the monetary savings and better taste are worth it and in reality it is much simpler.

A $1 plastic drop cloth and some clothesline along with a space blanket can replace a dome tent, sleeping bag and backpack to haul it. $5 verses $100-$200. A Corona grain mill for $30 is not as good as a $300 unit, granted. But it will last a lifetime and continue to grind grain just the same. A bug out bag with a tarp and space blanket, some band-aids and aspirin, candle and lighter with some forty cent candy bars and a bottle of water and some purification tablets will fit in a fanny pack and cost perhaps $7. Compare this to advertised emergency bags at $20-$60. An LED bike light costs $5 and can replace a $10 flashlight with $5 worth of batteries. Both need a solar recharger with batteries, but the LED's last 80 times as long. A set of BDUs are perhaps good camouflage for the woods, but they are not necessary. Regular rugged clothing in earth tones will almost do as good and don't mark you as an enemy soldier (how do militias differentiate themselves from the Feds, other than lack of a helmet?).

Sure, a lot of this is about not wasting money. But more importantly by simplifying and becoming less dependant on unneeded gear you should increase your changes of survival. In the end it is not dollar signs but independence that is important. We will all spend what it takes to prepare, but in most cases it can be done for a lot less than we think is needed, and if we can reduce the things we need to survive that is all the better. END

PO BOYS GOLD
by James M Dakin
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Ah, gold. Wonderful gold. Real value, something we can all count on to retain its real store of wealth forever (or until we start to mine the seabed's or asteroids and the value plummets per unit). Alas, gold is expensive. The average cost being $350 an once these last few years. Clinton and his band of merry pranksters did send the price in the toilet by dumping central bank stocks mid to late 1990's, and for a short time you could buy at about $270 an once. I almost bit the bullet and bought a coin, but even at historical lows adjusted for inflation (at least since price controls were lifted) I still felt it was too much to spend. Thus I have never even held a real gold coin. My heart is heavy, but like most poor folk I can pretend to own real wealth by substituting silver for gold. At less than $5 an once silver is much easier to buy than gold. And the two easiest ways to get silver coin is to buy private mint coins with one once of silver in each. These typically sell for a minimum of a twenty percent markup.

The other way is to get the coins that used to be circulated as US currency. Silver dimes, quarters, half dollars and dollars minted prior to 1965 had a good portion of their weight in silver. They are referred to as "junk" silver because they have absolutely zero collector value. Myself, I see collectable coins being in general a rip-off. I don't care how rare the darn thing is, I just want some silver in my collection to be used in an emergency since paper currency is worthless. Collector grade just means I have to pay a lot more for the package that the silver comes in. Now, at this time I am very poor but I am still able to get silver coins. Working in retail has one benefit in that I can buy silver coins at face value. It is rare, but pre-65 coins still keep trickling in. So I wanted to know how much silver each coin contained.

It was close to impossible to find on the Internet. It was all about collectibles. No books in the library. What information I did find was hard to decipher. I just wanted the weight of silver in each coin and you would have thought I wanted a national secret. Here is what I found.

Pre-1965 coins are 90% silver
Pre-1965 dime is .07 of an once
Pre-1965 quarter is .18 of an once
Pre-1965 half dollar is .36 of an once
Pre-1965 dollar is .77 of an once

These figures account for slight wear on the coin due to long circulation. The weight will be approximate. 1965 to 1969 half dollars are 40% silver and are .15 of an once. The standard was .715 of an once per $1 of face value for all coins but the post-64 half dollars. Hence, ten dimes contain a total of .715 of an once of silver. Canada kept their silver

coins circulating two years after us. So, all Canadian 10/25/50 cents coins are 80% silver until 1967, the last year having both the dime and quarter having either 50% or 80% silver. END

THE LAST GASP OF CIVILITY

by James M Dakin

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For the last generation or two society has been fragmented and at odds with itself. Whether by design or by accident as a society we have been broken into smaller and smaller groups and these have been feuding with one another. The strategy of divide and conquer has been widely known and practiced seen the birth of politics and thus I am predisposed to believe it has been intentional. Not that I see a giant conspiracy around every corner or under every bed, but politicians are predictable in their strategy if not their tactics. We can safely say that in a thousand years if governments are still with us that they will use taxation and inflation as well as envy and greed as a means to stay in power. Of course each individual will bite and claw and practice all means fair and foul to stay in power, but at heart they all realize that they are fighting for something much bigger than themselves. If the very structure of the system that provides their comforts is jeopardized than all is lost. That is why so many of them are seen as cooperating, even gracefully bowing out of power to another. The system itself will take care of them, as above all the basic framework must be preserved.

What was widely ignored in the last presidential election and the Florida voting scam was that the system as a whole operated like a well oiled machine to protect itself. The computer rigging that has gone on since they were first used in elections (or at least shortly thereafter-the possibilities are too ripe to ignore) was suddenly noticed. I don't know if this was a leak by either side, an overzealous media, or what, but it happened and made news for whatever reason and was not swept under the rug as usual. Both sides made complete fools of themselves but Gore was the most noticed as he had set himself up for failure for far too long. Suddenly the two contestants were acting like spoiled kids over a toy. The embarrassment was too much and the system acted like a fire had been lit under it. In a system were it takes a year to pass a budget, and where court cases move slower than a glacier, suddenly the Supreme Court swoops down and resolves the split in no time at all. The difference in speed was like your arthritic 95 year old grandmother suddenly entering and winning the Iron Man competition. Believe me, I don't place any substance in conspiracy theories, but if nothing else that little episode gave credibility to those theories.

There is no giant conspiracy as by their nature devious people will try to crush any competitors real or likely and not cooperate with them. What you have instead is those in power at all levels using the system to their advantage. And being morally bankrupt they see only grey areas, not black and white. And when everything is a grey area, you don't break the law but bend it. And if you constantly bend the law it is useless. And when the law has no meaning all types of injustice take place and the system cannot last indefinitely. But it will last a long time before it breaks, how long is anybodies guess. And while it is in decline towards the inevitable crash the powers that be great and small will use us to their

advantage. Taxes are an obvious consequence as is graft and favoritism, but the far more serious trend is the powers that be pitting us against ourselves. We are so consumed in our hatred of one another that we ignore (even if we know better) the cause of our misery.

As a whole we are easily manipulated by studying our basic primal instincts. Few of use take the time to learn what motivates us on a primitive level so as to avoid that manipulation but you can bet that the few bright ones in marketing and politics do. By emulating their peers others can ape the effects, but the brilliant ones study what makes the human ape tick and thus are able to achieve their desired goals of moving us like so many puppets on a string. Reading about it taking place does little good, nor does knowing it takes place. Without a conscious effort to repel its effects you are still going to be under its spell. Take the following example. In a movie we all know special effects take place. A lot of use study how these effects are made as seen in the popularity of DVD add-ons. And yet, when we are in the theater we are engulfed in the movie and are manipulated by it. Not in any sinister way, of course. Movie makers are paid to suspend reality for us for a certain time period and they do a fine job. The point is that even when we know it is a con job we still are fooled.

The one emotion that gives use the biggest problem is the group identity. As much as we may think we are rugged individuals humans are by nature highly group orientated. We are just as bad as a pack of dogs. The Alpha male rules and we follow, with the usual jockeying for lesser positions of power up and down the line. Humans must be part of a group to survive, and so we have the added baggage of our intense hatred of those outside the group. In antiquity this served us well, but as we evolve we are still burdened by this base emotion. Those that are able to overcome it are usually just being politically collect with only a few being able to condition themselves away from the subconscious emotion. And then of course they get themselves in trouble by getting robbed or conned as a stranger takes advantage of their naivety. Criminals are also good at the game of using peoples emotions against them, but they are trained in prison and generally wouldn't recognize what they are doing on an intellectual level. I would guess that this is were you see the generalizations of recluse genius, street smart or Machiavellian. Those with a more evolved intellect must protect themselves against outside threats. Street smarts are instinctively knowing you must protect yourself in certain ways by manipulating others or knowing how they will manipulate you. A Machiavellian mind set is the ability to gain and hold power by tapping into others primitive motivators.

Most of us are in this trap of seeking our own level of alpha male leadership (for the males- God knows what motivates females). This is another aspect of the group identity trap. And without this it would be much harder to herd us into competing groups. We are constantly moving about attempting to become the leader of the pack. Most of the juicy positions are already taken and so we must continually improvise. There can only be one president of the company or country, only so many leaders of various levels of an organization. Most of us are left with leading hobby organizations, Boy Scout troops or the like. Even the anti-social are competing to become an alpha male by becoming The

Best at something, anything. The Internet is a perfect breeding ground for the marginally powerful. Shut-in geeks compete for the title of best hacker, discussion boards are full of voices screaming to be recognized as the authority on any subject. Think of it as office politics in real life. Speaking of which, observe the next person to profess to hate office politics. Ten to one he is at the bottom of the office pile. He hates what he can't control and directs his energy towards another group he can try to dominate.

So on the one hand we have all the low level baboons in the pact trying to dominate one another and on the other hand their survival instinct of distrusting outsiders. It would be stupid for a person in a position of power not to take advantage of these two natural forces and use them to his advantage. And so we come to a time were we are in perpetual conflict with one another and all the benefits of this go directly to the powers that be. And it is not going to stop but only become worse. This is as easy to forecast as the following of the seasons. When a system is in decline the factions of that system are going to be much more vicious in their attempts to survive and prosper. When the pie is shrinking, more and more people are going to fight harder for their piece of that pie. This is one of the reasons we see today such a compulsion to flee the rat race and avoid the whole cycle that is playing itself out. When a new economic system establishes itself (as opposed to when it is fighting the old order for dominance-the situation now) the new order broadly benefits the largest number of people. This is the prosperous phase and the mostly peaceful one. But we have yet to get there. Now it is every man for himself, and things are getting ugly.

Ask yourself why is it that governments tax more and more yet at the same time have less and less to spend. It can't be inflation by and large, it is by historical standards low. It is quite simply greed. Greed by 80% of citizens and by 99% of politicians and their paymasters. Everybody is wanting more and more because even if only on a subconscious level they realize that the pickings are going to shortly get mighty slim. They are not closet survivalists, nor are they capable of thought that draws out the consequences of their actions to its logical conclusion. They are merely part of the herd and are getting in on the action before it is all gone. They don't really stop and think they are helping to kill the system they are robbing (and for those irony-challenged I just used both group identity to exclude myself and readers and placed myself in an alpha male position by my daring insight).

The financial situation has been recently lampooned by the comic strip Doonesbury. I should find myself hating the strip as it is generally left leaning, but the mans wit is too great a draw. You might find it amusing to go to the library and read the last week or so of the strip (or perhaps it might be online- I couldn't say). A budget crisis in Oregon is causing the schools to drastically cut back on programs and the teacher is explaining to students why their parents should vote for a new tax. The give and take in the classroom is very funny, and I won't ruin it for you (although it might be classified as dry humor-be warned). In the less funny news of our (un)real world take California for another example. The California I grew up in was business friendly, the land relatively cheap (of course one paid a premium for good climate), the state services were good and the tax

structure fair. The state I went back to after the service was very different. It has become a socialist welfare state with everything possible wrong with the way of life except the climate, which is still great. Today every resident, legal or not, owes $1000 for its budget deficit. New York is fiscally sound compared to California. If California fired every state worker it would still be $10 Billion in the red. The deficit is 20% of state spending and a third of the operating budget. In the last decade two million state citizens moved from the state (I was one of them, with U-Haul trailers going for a premium of four times the national average since the exodus was so great). Compare to the Federal government which has a deficit of one percent of its budget. California has a deficit twenty times larger percentage wise.

Other places are not nearly so bad, but still have problems. Oregon in January had released prisoners early (some had charges of drug manufacturing or sexual assault) and was threatening to lay off over 100 state troopers and stop medical benefits to 12,000 elderly and disabled. The school year had been slashed 15 days and another 9 threatened. In Florida voters recently decided to cut classroom size (a perfect example why democracy is dangerous around idiots) in a vain attempt to spend their way towards literacy. This of course ran right in to the pending budget deficit and after paying off his owners Dubyas brother doesn't quite have enough cash for that. The stop gap solution was to argue over the legal definition of the numbers. I would be embarrassed to be a Floridian, but after the Chad Fiasco it is anti-climatic (and still better than living in California).

But government financial problems are merely a side show. The real Oscar nominated show is that of the squabbling bloody pack of vicious mutant pigs laboring mightily to be the last and only one at the teat when the milk runs dry. Lawyers, welfare recipients, union members, government contractors, civil servants, Social Security and Medicaid recipients, workers on compensation, politicians, corporate leaders, educators, lobbyists, females cashing out of a marriage, etc. People complain that nowadays there is a lack of civility. That we are surrounded by a mass of rude, uptight jerks. Pathetic attempts have been made linking the cell phone and voice messages to our harried pace. Technology is seen as taking away our free time. To which I say balderdash. Those go-to boys that revel in the fast pace of business are going to live eat and breath their job, technology only makes it easier. I'm sure when the telephone first came into widespread use the same claim was made of it. No, the reason so many people are running around stressed is fear. We can't fight it or run from it, and so we fear it and the inability to do either causes stress. Yes, it is true. They are out to get you. You are forced to scramble and fight and struggle to "make hay while the sun shines" because you know its all going to end in the crapper. You know Social security is not going to be there for you. If fact, in a poll (but being a poll, it is suspect) more Americans believed in UFO's than in the financial solvency of our retirement system (another grain of salt- witness the sales of the National Enquirer). What this tells me is that the average non-survivalist is also aware that things are not as rosy as they should be and fears for his future. So earn it while you can, and since we can't count on stocks or company retirement either, the last hope is buying a home. As bad as an investment that is (you can't tell me that $200,000 for a lot of land

and a stick frame gum-and-glue home is worth even one-eighth that), it is all you've got if you are Joe Average.

But it is going to be a very stressful thirty years paying off that mortgage. It has become part of the daily backdrop the multitude of voices clamoring for our wallets. Does a day go by that you don't hear from someone somewhere asking for more money that will directly or indirectly come out of your pocket? The Post Office asks for a stamp price hike every six months, and the request is rubber-stamped in record time (which is why I do most of my bills electronically and only e-mail my correspondence). Here in Florida it looks like a shoe-in that the legislature will allow the phone company to double rates over the next four years. Cigarette taxes seen to increase every year. Every day this country sees multiply idiotic lawsuits which are blatantly gold-digging. The institution of marriage is in trouble for no other reason that the law allows divorce under the most frivolous grounds and in 95% of cases rewards the female monetarily. In fact illegitimacy is rewarded by our welfare state. Unions which started out as a needed means of curbing excessive company disregard towards safety has turned into an organization that overpays members to such a degree that jobs are sent overseas or in some cases pays members not to work at all. And yet they still agitate for members pay to remain the same (even if cuts are the only thing that might save a bankrupt company) or even increases. How much of the price of a car are you overpaying because of union labor? The government at all levels is constantly wanting more taxes. That is old news. But look at all that takes place in the news and ask yourself, how much is that going to cost me? A frivolous lawsuit adds slightly to the cost of a product. Now, you might think that in to-days deflationary climate that companies don't always pass on the cost to the customer. That is true, on the surface. But there is more than one way to increase the cost of an item. An obvious example is Lays potato chips. In one year they slightly increase the price. The next year they slightly subtract some of the product. The year after, price increase again. They do this year after year, but it seems manageable by the customer since he only notices a price hike every other year. But that is child's play. A better trick is to decrease the weight by a fraction of an once but also adding salt in relation to other ingredients to get a slight cost savings, even if it is now a less healthy product.

IF you start to look for it, you will begin to notice how more and more people and organizations are trying to put the screws to you in more subtle and devious ways. You might as well make a game of it and see if you can make a giant list of all the ways in which your general standard of living is being eroded. Because they are out to get your money. It doesn't matter if you are on the edge of poverty, you still have a penny here and a penny there that can be plundered. The game is so advanced that the pennies are where the action is anymore. They all add up. So don't discount the small stuff. If they want a half cent increase in the sales tax, scream and yell and fight it, once it passes it will never go away and then they will add another one. Concern yourself with the lowest interest rate on a credit card. One percent adds up after a few years. Whenever possible tell a company why you will cease to buy a product when they lower quality or raise prices. Write to the newspaper and yell about every small increase from government. Boycott a service if possible to protest a tax, and let everyone know about it. Or, keep

your mouth shut and don't alert them that you are on to their game. Whatever works, you can do something. Stop cable service and install an antenna, depriving the government of a twenty percent tax. Don't buy a new car, 25% at a minimum is the mark-up from unions and taxes. Or don't even own a car and avoid insurance that is all due to lobbyists forcing through mandatory coverage. You can minimize some attempted screw-jobs.

Remember, you are royally screwed in the long run, so relax and enjoy today. Tomorrow will be a little less rewarding (financially, that is). Have a nice day. END

FRUGAL HYGIENE
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For those of us with more time than money it is common to experiment with every possible means to save money. It is quite easy to save time by throwing money at the problem, but quite another thing to save money. Actually it is merely a process of trial and error, but without the motivation to save money most of us don't bother. Nothing here is earth shattering, just my observations on how to save on your personal hygiene outlays. My toiletries have always been paid out of my grocery fund when I went shopping for food, and it is indeed a strong inducement to pare costs to the bone when the alternative is to do without some food. Not only does hygiene cost compete for limited cash with everyday food, but also with my storage food fund which comprises of whatever I can spare that week. Being poor sucks, but it is a valuable leaning experience.

Lets start with your hair. The last time I paid for a haircut was about eleven years ago. At that time a regular barber (not a stylist) charged about $8 and after the tip I had spent almost two hours of wages. Clearly this was unacceptable. I had two choices, one was to get the old lady to cut my hair (a frightening prospect as her domestic skills were wanting) or do it myself. I spent $20 on a hair clipper set and started to give myself haircuts. At first since I was cutting in a military high-and-tight I had quite a few mistakes. At times I had to just shave the whole thing to the skull and let it grow back and try again. After a few years the process proved too time consuming and I just went with a quarter inch cut all the way around. I won't cut any shorter than that for fear of being targeted as a skinhead, and it works great. I cut my hair every ten days or so, and buy a new pair of clippers every other year or every third year (at this time the price is down to $10 a pair). In the shower I just rub a bit of soap on the stubble to clean my hair. No shampoo, conditioner, combs or brushes. No $15-$20 haircuts. Cost per year for hair care about $5.50.

Shaving has always been a large pain in my backside. No matter what method you use of softening the skin it always boils down to scraping hair away from your face in the morning when you are tired. Blood is a foregone conclusion. I minimize the cost by only shaving three times a week (every other day and skipping the weekend). This works for me because I don't work in an office where some uptight jerk is concerned about my dress code. Sure, like most other workers I wear a uniform, but I am allowed a certain amount of leeway. I shave with soap and only shave down with the grain, thus saving on blade wear. With this method I am able to get one blade to last all month. I only buy blades from the dollar store when they are on sale, double the normal amount at ten for a dollar (instead of five) of the lube strip double blade. Cost per year with soap $1.50. In the case of being required to shave everyday I would buy a cheap electric and alternate days with that, add $25 a year. This is only because I find using a blade everyday tears up my beautiful face. Those with leathery skin can just double the blade cost.

You don’t want to skimp on tooth care, but you can do it quite cheap nonetheless. At the same friendly dollar store buy a five pack of soft bristle toothbrushes for a buck and dental floss. The brushes should last a year if you change out every two and a half months, and the floss all year long if you reuse the floss. When done using, simply run your fingers down the string to remove food particles and use the same piece until it falls apart. Some might gag at the thought of this, but it’s your saliva on the thing and you are just reusing it like you would a brush. If you must, wash off after each use. For toothpaste, use a small portion about the size of a pencil eraser. No need to waste it, a small amount just means there is less to spit out. Plus, look for coupons in the paper (borrow the neighbors if you don’t read daily) for toothpaste. Most is for the new fancy kinds companies are always dreaming up and trying to push on us like Super Foaming With Mouthwash Cleanser And Stain Fighter Along With Digital Alert When Your Breath Turns Funky Again brand. But a number of them are for any brand of that manufacture, and with a coupon you can sometimes get a tube for twenty five cents or even free other than sales tax when using them at a dollar store. Even without coupons, total yearly cost is a total of $6.

Instead of deodorant at $1 a small tube, buy the biggest cheapest cologne or body spray you can find. One or two small sprays on the armpits will keep your stench from gagging others. A couple of $1 bottles should last you all year. For soap there is plenty to pick from at three bars for a buck. Also get a soap holder that hold the soap out of the bottom of the dish to prolong its life. About $6 a year on soap (not including that which is used on hair and shaving, already factored in). Your yearly hygiene outlaw is now at a total of $19. You can thank me later. Happy cheapness. END

SURVIVAL BICYCLE
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Back when American Survival Guide was still being printed there appeared an article not too long ago on the merits of an alternate transportation system for ones bug-out plans. As one raced through the wilderness in a mighty SUV glancing out the window at the poor down-trodden riff-raff not special enough to be in possession of such a righteous vehicle you could become even more smug in the knowledge that just in case of mechanical failure you had a contingency plan by strapping a mountain bike on a rear mount. It was of course assumed that the only logical plan did indeed include an SUV and the mountain bike was only an afterthought. It was never a consideration that, yes, your vehicle would surely suffer a breakdown since it was an overpriced piece of American Union built junk that was designed to look cool on the highway and cater to juvenile fantasies of males and to empower hapless females. If your average SUV even sees a dirt road chances are it will immediately fail mechanically just at the thought of off-road performance. Of course a hail of outrage is now heard as legions of drivers accost me for speaking with a cranial-rectal inversion problem. Why, just last week they drove 100 yards down a sandy power pole access road in four wheel drive! SUV's rock, buddy!!

Leaving aside the problems of your primary transportation, there still remains the question of the bicycle itself. American Survival Guide, being who they were (Yuppie Survival Guide in disguise), of course only recommended the most expensive mountain bike one could buy off the shelf. Of course you could spend more, if you custom built the thing and included exotic metals and composites. Just under $1000 for a friggin mountain bike!! To say the least I was a bit shocked. I am sure that you received superior performance and suffered less wear and tear from these wonders, but at what cost? Huffy brand fake mountain bikes from Wal-Mart are pure garbage fit only for children quickly outgrowing their equipment or infrequent users who only need the occasional outing. But super-stud bikes belonging to the oh-gee-look-at-me crowd who stroll around in those gay looking butt hugging bike shorts and the Devo looking wind tunnel designed helmet is simply spending too much on a piece of equipment that will see little use. I can see spending that much if you only bike and have no car, perhaps, but not for a once in a while item.

Bypass Wal-Mart, go directly past Wal-Mart and visit your local bike shop. I have no love lost for inefficient overpriced local Mom-and-Pop stores but they indeed do fill a niche that the huge chain stores can't match. The big boys can sell retail an item that a small business owner can't buy for wholesale cost, but what they can do is sell quality. They need to learn to leave quantity alone. Get over your whining about Wal-Mart, you can't compete against them on price. Oh, woe unto me, the big sinister store is giving customers what they want and I am left to go out of business. How dare they offer customers low prices! Why can't I be subsidized by everyone else for my outdated

obsolete business practices? I understand they saved and worked like a dog to start a business, but times have changed and they need to get over themselves. Start a business that does NOT compete with business selling on volume. Offer quality items, niche items, or service that is better and cheaper than competitors. With Big Daddy government holding our hands for the last 75 years we seem to have forgotten that this country was supposed to be about minimal government responsible only for our protection against force or fraud, not a guardian against competition. We are supposed to be living and working in a system that is free market capitalist. And unfettered capitalism is a brutal system. Does the term "creative destruction" ring a bell? As I learned from a wise friend long ago and what I try to teach my kids (with the little influence I have being a non-custodial parent) is that "fair" is where you go to sell your pig. For you city folk they feature pigs at county fairs. That is the only kind of fair. It may not be "fair" that businesses must fold, but only by becoming unprofitable and folding will the old make way for the new. We all benefit from this system. Unfortunately some try to rig the game by getting the government involved and that's were the trouble starts.

At your local bike shop you will notice that the cheapest bike starts at about $300 for a mountain bike. This is definitely not Wal-Mart prices. And the funny thing is that unless you get the really expensive types you are still buying a product from China. My $200 bike is Chinese, and I imagine the frame is the exact same as the $100 discount store model. The thing you are paying for is the add-ons. Higher quality items that don't rust or shake apart so fast. So chances are that your $300 mountain bike was made in China, the same as a model one third the price. Make sure to talk to the salesman and find out the differences that justify the price increase. Don't take it on faith, but as a general rule you are getting a better quality by buying from an independent shop. I don't use a mountain bike, but a "beach cruiser" which is just an adult version of the Schwinn coaster bikes we grew up with. I will explain my choice later, my point here being that in my experience the price difference was justified. I've owned both types, bike shop and discount store, and in my view I would pay the extra up to a certain point. At one point I figured that it would be cheaper to replace the discount bike every year than to buy the more expensive version. This was just after I got in a wreak and needed a replacement. As I was happily pedaling home from K-Mart half way there the damn thing started to shake apart on me. This was normal as they pay some idiot minimum wage to assemble the bikes from an instruction book off the back of a cereal box. But the reason I returned the thing was that it didn't have the correct feel to it. Too lightweight and you can feel the parts interact almost like they were poorly engineered and would never fit together properly. The bike shop version did not have these problems as experts put it together (a business owner would not hire an idiot to fix a customers two grand bike) and in my estimation had better parts, although to be honest I am going on feelings and not facts.

You can spend half as much on a bike as you would a cheap new car. I was in the bike shop not long ago to get some repair or add-on and heard a customer talking to the clerk about a perfectly normal looking bike. Would you believe $5,000? I didn't hear what special features justified this price as I quickly left the area for fear that the price tag alone would injure me. You can spend as little as $59 when a sale occurs at the discount store.

My advice would be to spend no more than $500 for an occasional use bike that you plan on using as a back-up to your bug-out vehicle. This is the mid price range between too cheap and too expensive. You can reasonably expect good quality here. But only if you seriously expect to need to bug-out. Otherwise you are only buying a rich boy toy that you don't need to brag about to friends. Kind of like that worthless AR-15 to impress the boys at the shooting range. OK, I won't get started on that again. But also consider your cheapest bike. It does have a place in your survival plans, or even disaster plans. For instance, the chances of an area wide electric outage for a prolonged time are slim indeed. If it ever happened you would eventually need a bike after the car ran out of gas. However, since the odds of it happening are so remote you would be hard pressed to spending too much money on it. Better just to have a cheap bike that you spent very little on, perhaps even from a garage sale. Or if you thought bugging out AND breaking down was another remote possibility, why spend too much cash on it? Better to go cheap. If that bike was the sole means of bugging out, by all means spend the extra on quality. Just don't spend so much that you are enriching others at your expense.

I knew one fellow that bought an older station wagon for a few hundred dollars, then bought a used bike for a few bucks and kept it in the back of the car in case the car ever broke down on the way to work. Since the most he would have had to pedal was four miles the combination of the two cheap modes of transportation was sufficient. An added bonus was the fact that if he ever became homeless he would have had a place to sleep. Not bad for under $500. Cheap bikes do have a place in your emergency plans. A few garage sale bikes in your own garage will be the perfect investment for a gas shortage. If they are all the same type you can practice repairs, strip for parts, rummage for trashed bikes and in a time of crisis have a nice little bike repair business. In a time of expensive gasoline and roads packed with fuel guzzling SUV's you can charge dear for all those super cheap bikes/bike parts you bought for a song when times were good. That being said, only buy cheap when your life does not depend on it. Expensive quality is what you want for a bug-out if that bike is your primary means of transport. Cheap is what you want for everything else, other than if a bike is your primary means of transport every day.

But why buy a mountain bike at all? Unless you are surrounded by steep hills you could do just fine by going with a coaster bike. These are the ones without gears and that are braked by stepping back on the pedals, just like us kids had before there was a nationwide Wal-Mart, Chinese imports or even mountain bikes. But back then the extra money spent on Schwinn was not a bad investment. The bikes were sturdy and well made and the only concern was replacing inner tubes unlike the pseudo-mountain bikes today which have so many gears, wires and levers that one should be a NASA engineer to get all the parts to work in harmony. Well, on second thought a NASA engineer might cause the bike to blow up. But at least a professional of some sort. The beauty of coaster brakes is in their simplicity, a concept getting short shift lately. Look at the old Soviet Union. Their quality control was non-existent and thus equipment was extremely shoddy, but their basic premise of simplicity on the battlefield was brilliant. This is what ultimately won them World War Two. In the early stages the Germans should have won, and would have had they not dismissed the danger of Russian winters thinking they would win before it got

cold (evidently Hitler was not familiar with Napoleon). The Russians were so disrupted from the Officer Corp purge that the only strategy they could come up with was to practice the human wave assault (I guess they never heard of the Crimean War, American Civil War, or World War One). One might safely argue that we saved Russia by merely entering the war, but even if we hadn't if the Soviets had held on they would have eventually won by their industrial capacity. The Germans, bless them and their quality products engineered to perfection, were incapable of mass production. Their mind set forced them to over-engineer everything to perfection. This is great in peacetime and even in war to an extent (nice to know your equipment will work), but that kind of manufacturing can't compete with mass manufacturing. Just because the German tank was superior in every way did not mean it could stand up to twenty to one odds from simple crudely manufactured enemy tanks. Of course I simplify here to make a point. One could write a book on the subject (maybe someone already has) but here I am saying that at times simplicity is best for both combat and survival. A crude AK47 built for about one hundred bucks (if that) today by former Com-Block nations will out live a $500 (wholesale) M16 on the battlefield by virtue of its simplicity of design. A monkey could disassemble an AK and barely clean it, put it together and fire off a few more thousand rounds in the time it takes a GI to try to clean an M16. If he was lucky it might work for a few hundred rounds after that before it needed cleaning again. If there was no mud or sandstorm to get it dirty. Sure, you can actually hit something with an M16 past two hundred yards. When it works it works great. When it works.

Take a look at a mountain bike the next time you are at Wal-Mart. Unlike a pro shop, no salesman will pressure you. One good thing about the discount stores is that once you learn the layout you know where to find everything and no pressure to buy-browse all you want. I did research for an article for over an hour one time in Wal-Mart writing down prices and descriptions and was only bothered at sporting goods. I told the clerk I was comparison shopping for guns for when my tax return came in (otherwise I might have been in trouble- who knows the mischief a person with paper and pen can cause). Pull, poke and prod at a bike. See the amazing variety of gears and wires? Every one of these can fail at a critical time. Rust here, fatigue there, breakage over yonder. If a part is there, it will eventually break. Subsection C (b) of Murphy's Law. Now go over and look at a coaster brake bike. What do you see? A frame, some tires and a chain. What can go wrong with it? Okay, any moving part will wear out, but on the coaster bike there is 90% less to break and wear down. And those same parts that do wear out on the coaster also wear out on the mountain bike (other than the braking mechanism). You are cutting your parts failure rate substantially if you pick the coaster bike over the mountain bike and as a bonus at your local bike shop where you buy quality the coaster is cheaper than the mountain (unlike the discount store where it is more expensive due to sales volume I imagine). Unless you live in San Francisco or another equally hilly locale, you should seriously consider going with the coaster bike.

It is a rare town or city that is not built on a level area. The exceptions prove the rule. San Francisco is a bizarre collection of humanity whose general mental condition draws them to a location where steep inclines grace an unstable earthquake zone. Those

wonderful quaint terraced mountains in Peru are a marvel, but must rank right up there with the Arctic for extreme places to live. You see plenty of hillside living in Japan and Switzerland but that is for dainty farm villages, not locations for commerce and sane living. Most folks prefer to stroll about their daily lives, not roll about down inclines. So in most cases you will not need a mountain bike to get around. If you go pedaling up and down mountains this is the kind of bike you need. I really can't see how the mountain bike popularity came about. It is an extreme sport, and to emulate it makes as much sense as going around in skateboard or snowboard clothing, pretending to be painfully youthful and oh-so-hip, daddyoh. But, hey, no one is paying me to spot the next trendy thing. I still smirk at colored punk hair spikes and I've had 25 years to get used to them. Do you see the folly yet in buying an overly complicated useless bike with too many gears? The only advantage I can see with them is that since they are so cheap they will make a good emergency business as outlined earlier. Otherwise just stick with the simple and rugged coaster bike.

A few tips on coaster bikes I had to learn the hard way. The inner tubes that come from the factory are garbage. Replace with the thickest ones they have at time of purchase. Otherwise you will find the smallest things deflating your tires such as those little prickly balls from plants that always stick to your socks. These actually cause slow leaks in thin tubes. If you get any amount of regular rain where you live, purchase fenders. These will keep the water from splashing up your back and on your legs, a consideration if you use the bike for transportation to and from work. Do not buy the chrome fenders if you live in a humid climate. They rust very easy up inside the well where you can't dry them other than by removing. If you do have terrain that is not absolutely flat replace the standard plastic pedals with metal ones. They can stand the strain of the weight you place on them by standing up to pedal going up an incline. The factory grease in the bearings is substandard. Don't wait too long to repack with a quality lube. Buy one of those flat wrenches they have at the shop to tighten up the back wheel. On a coaster bike the back wheel is always loosening up. You have a forward loosening which causes the chain to loose tautness which can be adjusted with a regular wrench, but also a side to side loosening from the hub unscrewing itself. You need to keep that tightened or the lubricant on the bearings will leak out. When you can take your fingertips and jiggle the wheel back and forth it is time to tighten with that flat (the thickness of a half-dollar) wrench, selling for about ten dollars. Tighten up until you meet resistance, then back it off slightly. By backing off you allow movement without metal grinding on metal. You can easily test by riding a few yards. If it is too tight you can hear the grinding of parts. Talk to you bike store clerk, who just might show you. Get this wrench and learn to make the adjustments, because labor is usually quite steep at these places.

I have never had a brake mechanism failure. I've put good miles on one bike for years without having had a problem. However, if you ever do experience this, it is better to just replace the whole back wheel. The labor cost to repair is the same as the replacement cost of the entire back wheel assembly. My wheels are aluminum with stainless steel spokes due to the Florida climate rusting everything else so quickly. A replacement is $50. Labor to repair the wheel other than a bearing replacement is around $40-$50. So, it would not

be unreasonable to keep a spare back wheel. Add to that two tires, several tubes and a chain or two and for day to day problems you could handle any break down yourself. Added cost of around $100-$150. If you anticipate a long term need to service a bike yourself, get several sets of bearings (about $10 each). I have been told replacing them is not too difficult if you keep track of the order in which the parts go in and then reverse that order with the new set. For now I leave that to the pros, being totally non-mechanical by nature, but I can see the advantage learning this in a survival situation. Get a quality lubricant and chain oil. You should now be all set to keep your same bike humming along for years.

Having a quality bicycle in good working order with spare parts and a knowledge of basic repairs will be invaluable in a survival situation (a good quality lock and chain will keep your investment safe). But what about a bicycle for daily use? I currently use a bike for my sole transportation due to financial conditions imposed by an ex-wife and a kangaroo-court system, but even before that I was never too crazy about owning a car. Usually I could have paid for it, having decent jobs and an ability to live cheaply. But I felt I was enriching too many other people by my purchase. Lets face it, the auto changed totally the American way of life, and as it became an institution the parasites from far and near attached themselves to it. The government has so many taxes hidden in the price of a car I'm sure they make more than the dealer with every sale. Unions triple the needed labor cost. Insurance companies lobby for mandatory insurance laws. Lawyers sue over every aspect of autos, from accidents to safety issues in manufacturing. You wonder why the value of an auto drops the moment you leave the lot? It is because you just paid taxes and hidden regulatory costs, the actual free-market value of the car is less those costs. It is like my going in to a store and buying a candy bar for a buck. If I paid $1.09 for it I just paid sales tax on it. If I immediately resold that bar, it would be worth $1, not the $1.09 I paid for it. I hate on principle alone to support parasites and by not owning a car I fail to feed at least some of them. Usually when I move to a new place I find a place to live and then a job close enough to pedal to. I would never live so far away I needed to commute an hour to work. It takes me a half hour now for a three mile ride, but I'm not in gridlock. I am pedaling on the sidewalk mostly out of harms way getting exercise and fresh air. I almost never owned a car except a few times when I married and inherited one.

Cars are expensive. To avoid most maintenance you must buy a new car. To avoid high cost payments you must continually pay for repairs. Even if you are a wiz doing your own repairs and a car was given to you, just the cost of insurance and gas are a burden to us poor folk. I would say at the best you spend $100 a month for a car (used, cheap, doing your own work). This is much better than a $250 new car payment, with insurance and gas added to that. However, just taking into account insurance and nothing else, I would spend less buying a whole new bike every three months than most of you spend on your car insurance. If you add gas, it is cheaper to buy a brand new bike every other month. If you buy a quality bike and do most of your easy repairs on it and purchase a new one every three years (I assume a humid climate and rust being a problem- most bikes will last ten years with minimal care) you will only spend $10 a month on transportation, and that takes into account a lot of miles with frequent parts replacement. Your insurance alone

starts at about $40 a month for a car. Even if you rent a car or pay for a taxi once a month for shopping you are still paying less (although you would be surprised at the amount of groceries one can carry in a backpack and tied to handlebars).

But even if times are all right (not great) and you think you can easily afford a car, what about in a gas shortage? Even if the oil just keeps on pumping out of the ground forever, what about Mid-East instability, or more likely a terrorist attack on our oil refineries? It is not too great a leap to imagine that terrorists, foreign or domestic, might be able to wreck a refinery (and speaking of domestic terrorists, why is it that they no longer exist? The D.C. sniper, the anthrax scare, the Midwest mailbox pipe bombs, etc., all are now labeled as crimes, not terror attacks). One refinery goes down and the price of gas goes way up. You and that stupid SUV getting ten miles to the gallon, now you must suddenly pay $4.00 a gallon. Is that in your budget? We plan our daily lives around the assumption of cheap imported oil, but I feel strongly this will not last too much longer. You may not wish to plan accordingly, but would it really hurt to hit the garage sales and pick up a used bike for $20? Then go to Wal-Mart and buy needed replacement parts for $30. A $50 investment might be all the insurance you need to keep a form of transportation going in hard times. END

EVERYBODY ELSE IS AN IDIOT

We all think we are smarter than everybody else and we prove it time and again by always being correct about what's best for ourselves. Of course we ignore the fact that no one else had all the facts to make such decisions. We just know everybody else is an idiot. Now there is more proof. In the May 26 edition of Forbes magazine we come across the column of a Mr. Kenneth L Fisher on page 182, and he is convinced that everybody else is an idiot.

What he actually says is that in financial markets, commonly known information is already factored into the equation and most often is incorrect. Therefore, if you do the opposite of the market you will be right more often than the market. This is just the Contrarian Principle being called by another name, but it has enough common sense in it that it should not be ignored. I call it the Bovine Effect, namely that most of us are stampeding along blindly in a herd and are running on even less of our already low intelligence level. Same thing. Mr. Fisher states that we should worry about what the crowd is not worried about. As proof, look at the Y2K non-event. Everybody was concerned, and nothing happened (I am going from the article, so "everyone" refers to the markets). Nor did anyone see the Tech Wreck coming, they were so concerned with the New Economy and all the feel good nonsense that went with it. They thought that, once again, we had entered into another Vietnam over in Iraq. Then they thought the war would magically transform the economy, and it didn't. Then they thought the war would weaken the economy, and it hasn't. And so he concludes that since everyone is worried about a recession, we won't have one. And since stocks are underperforming, they will improve. He then recommends some stocks, among them underperforming retailers such as Dillard's.

Well, I agree that everybody else is an idiot in a general sense. Or I should say in a macro sense. Everybody is quite smart about maximizing their own gain but quite stupid about contributing to our eventual doom. Every small action adds up to actions effecting us all in the long term. The first few thousand to play the Lawyer Lottery did little to effect the rest of us but after a trip point each and every lawsuit cost us money indirectly. Welfare recipients may cost the taxpayer only a small portion, but the spread of their numbers created a monster bureaucracy that cost more to operate than the benefits it hands out. You get the picture. As a mob, we do stupid things. I don't agree with the stupidity of Y2K. Putting aside the fact that more of us are prepared now, think about the benefits we got from redundant system construction as a result of preparing for Y2K. If the World Trade Center had been hit in 1998 or 1999, chances are it would have actually damaged our economy just as the attackers had anticipated. But his point is still valid, the event didn't happen as we thought it would.

So, okay, the mob always points in the wrong direction. If you follow the news regularly

and conclude the opposite from what they worry about, you should have a fairly good indication of the way thing actually are. Right now everyone is in a sweat over the possibility of deflation and as usual they have it half right. Yes, there is deflation. But as long as it is price deflation brought about by productivity increases and technology advances it is a good thing, not bad. When deflation comes about because of high unemployment or other factors decreasing demand forcing companies to slash profits to gain sales, that is when things can turn south quick. The reason the last Depression was so bad is because the government stepped in an tried to stimulate the economy. If they had allowed inefficient companies to fail and competent ones to take their place it would have been over a lot quicker and we would not have needed to enter a war to save our economy. Right now we see a mass profitlessness amongst most companies. If we leave them alone and let them fail the economy will emerge healthier. Imagine if our economy was full of companies like FedEx and Southwest Air instead of the multitudes of imitators to the Post Office and American Airlines.

If you think deflation is right around the corner, then why do we have medical care inflating at 20% a year, college education at 15-25% and most others price increases at a healthy 5% or so (many disguised by quality decreases)? Right now I would say that the primary cause of inflation is the explosion of credit from housing refinancing. I am not saying that we couldn't have another Great Depression. Not at all. The Feds could mess things up in an instant. What I am saying is that the papers scream about the danger of deflation and right now the only thing we are seeing at best is a decrease in the rate of inflation. The herd is wrong. What a bunch of idiots (you and me excluded, as always). Have fun, life is always getting more interesting. END

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WHEAT AND CORN, PERFECT SURVIVAL FOOD

While I do find it hard to believe that anyone could possibly disagree with the statement that the title to this article makes, since most humans are contrary cusses I am sure at least some of you are at this very moment thinking that I am an idiot. One could claim rice or beans or even non-grains/legumes are a better choice for stockpiled food. The French were said to have dismissed corn as fit only for livestock as they starved after World War Two. Being the French, I tend to believe this (and not just because it is currently fashionable to rag on them). How a culture can eat snails and yet look down their noses at corn is beyond my comprehension. Of course to those with an intolerance of wheat I can see their point. But no one else gets cut any slack. How can you not agree that wheat, the staff of Western life, is the perfect food? Not even perfect for a survival food, but for daily consumption. Corn is not that familiar to most of us not living on a traditional diet, but it has a proven track record feeding the poor and being able to thrive in marginal soil.

Grain is a descendant of wild grass and the whole reason civilization got started in the first place. A society dependant on hunting and gathering is incapable of supporting an advanced structure in which certain individuals are freed up to further the race by using their brains instead of their muscles. If one farmer can support five soldiers, and administrator and a craftsman then as a whole the group can support advances over time. A hunter/gatherer society remains stagnant as can be witnessed by the few remaining societies that still remain as such. Now, sure agriculture solved a few problems, but it also introduced a few others, the chief problem being the evil of government. We have yet to realize this, as a society, but as time goes on and we realize that this structure is unsuited for our new economy we shall perhaps abolish it before it spells our ruin. Just as slavery thrived under agriculture yet was unable to survival the industrial age (sabotage risks dictated that slaves not use machines as well as workers be overcompensated) so too will government die away as we realize an economy that is knowledge driven cannot afford the cost of a superficial control structure.

Wheat has an indefinite shelf life. Wheat from the Egyptian tombs was sprouted after thousands of years. As long as moisture and insects are kept from the grain, it will not spoil. Thus, a Mylar sealed bag of wheat in a poly bucket will last, literally, forever. Baring theft or damage, your relatively inexpensive one time purchase will be your only expense for stockpiled food. The reason that corn is introduced to the mix is that it is half the price of wheat, it adds variety to your diet and by combining the two grains you will achieve a complete protein similar to animal protein. Some of us don't require a large protein intake in our diets, but most of us do. In the absence of meat, you will need to use complementary vegetable proteins. Cost of course is important, and variety is a subject not usually given appropriate concern. If you doubt this, eat two meals a day with only

one item, for a week. At the end of the week, this item will be repulsive to you.

Corn does not have the shelf life of wheat. When storing the whole grain variety you will have to guesstimate the shelf life. I have seen claims from one year to 20 years, so it is pretty much up to you how long you wish to store it. I would say five years is a good turn-around time, ten years if it is a factory Mylar sealed product. Of course your best bet would be to actually eat on a daily basis what you store and in this case a bucket of corn wouldn't be stored any longer than the time it took to end up on the dinner table. For instance, if you wished to have a three year supply of corn on hand, by replacing every bucket as it was consumed no storage bucket would be older than three years old, even ten or fifteen years after you started the storage program. Not many of us would consider a diet primarily made up of whole grains other than under an emergency, TEOTWAWKI situation. However, assuming you were either a super-stud survivalist type or a tree hugger back to nature freak this option would at once feed you daily very cheaply and also cost you very little in storage costs, as you are only stockpiling groceries per se and not emergency food. Let us say that I am marginally concerned with survival preparations and so stockpile one months worth of whole wheat flour in my freezer. Even with a power failure (freezer storage eliminates rancidity now, removing and consuming after power failure will not spoil the food since it is a short term exposure) you will have one months supply of food assuming a diet of one pound of flour per day. This would cost the survivalist $13. It would cost the whole grain dieter nothing extra, as he merely replaced each bag as it was consumed and would constitute his regular grocery bill.

Roughly, corn contains 1700 calories per pound and wheat has 1300 calories per pound. If you were to consume half of each grain per day you would receive 1500 calories per day from a pound of grain costing under forty-five cents for store bought flour, eleven cents if you bought the grains at your feed store and ground them yourself. If this constituted three quarters of your daily calories and you bought all other groceries at the store rather than growing any yourself you could eat rather nicely on about $1 a day per person (and without having to resort to dumpster diving or driving out to a farm for produce or eating road-kill). If you were so paranoid about our systems collapse that you refused to rely on it for any food you could stockpile enough grain and raise your own chickens and vegetables and be self reliant on everything but grain and your food bill would be about $45 a year. If you stored enough grain for ten years at $450 and replaced the consumption annually you would be in a very comfortable position, survival wise. The beauty of combining corn and wheat for your storage and/or diet needs is that in addition to variety you also lower the cost by 25%, as corn is half the cost of wheat. It of course varies regionally, but figure about $8 per 50 pound sack on wheat and $4 per 50 pound sack of corn.

For home storage it is hard to beat the good ol' poly bucket in five gallon size. The fact that they are everywhere and make up the storage device for a variety of items from paint to pastry filler is what makes them so attractive. The price is quite reasonable due to their universal availability. You can go around to restaurants, bakeries and donut shops and some will usually be willing to sell you the cleaned used buckets with lid for about a $1.

Even if you can't get any of these places to part with their buckets you could buy them new. I'm sure someone is still selling them through the mail, although it will be no where near the glut of product available pre-millennium. I sure missed those days of consumer gluttony, when a survivalist could order virtually anything out of American Survival Guide in order to continue civilization after the collapse. You could order a pallet of new poly buckets for about four dollars fifty cents per bucket with lid in quantities of 90. Not cheap, as they are manufactured for about $2 each or less, but this was a classic supply and demand scenario. Today you can go down to Lowes home improvement super center and buy a single bucket and lid for the same price as you could have bought only in quantity four years ago (I imagine the competitors at Home Depot are about the same price- $4.50 per bucket/lid set, new).

Speaking of American Survival Guide (I ignore their last few issues and the pathetic politically correct name change that went with it) I do confess to missing them. The articles were certainly nothing to brag about, mostly being grade school level basics with a lot of pictures thrown in to juice it all up. There were far too many articles on the same topic (cold weather, poison animals and natural disasters toped the list), although on guns we could never get enough. Even the bragging about being twenty years old was a bit of an untruth, as I remember reading them in 1984 about the time they were changing over from a strictly gun mag to a survivalist publication. But for all their faults the one thing they did provide was a lot of advertisements. The great thing about a specialty publication is that the advertisers find a target audience and the readers get exactly the products they are interested in presented to them. Now it is hard to find companies that sell survival supplies except through the Internet, and even harder to find smaller companies offering niche survival products. Oh well, what can you do?

If you wish to further protect your grain you may wish to store in a Mylar bag inside your poly bucket. You can buy them new from Major Surplus & Survival for around $1.75 to $2.00 each bought in half dozen or dozen packs. The only problem with these is that they are 6 gallon size and your buckets most likely are going to be 5 gallon size, so there will be waste. Now, you could also buy the 6 gallon size buckets from them, around the $7 range which will save you from making the trip to buy them (although I don't know why this is a problem since you need to go out and buy the wheat anyway). I can see trimming off the waste portion if using 5 gallon buckets and resealing the scraps for small items such as a box of ammo. You just need to decide what you want to do, waste some bag space or pay $4 extra per bucket. Do note that a 5 gallon holds 30 pounds of wheat and a 6 gallon holds 45 pounds. If you do buy those bags, you will need a sealer. This is a small hand held device that heats up to the perfect temperature and seals the bag closed. You can use a cloths iron, which I have done, but you need an extra set of hands to complete this maneuver (you need to seal close to the grain to fit it in a bucket). The sealer is $25 last time I looked, but keep in mind I am using old catalogs. This just gives you a ball park figure. But I did see pretty much the same thing in Wal-Mart for half that price. Just like on T.V. where the gizmo seals all bags shut, like a bag of chips after you ate half. At one time I did get free Mylar bags by taking the old Pepsi syrup cardboard boxes out of dumpsters from convenience stores. Coke bags were plastic, but Pepsi was Mylar. I

withdrew the bag from the box, cut off the hose attachment plastic part, filled with hot water and soap, shook a few times while holding closed, turned inside out and let dry. Then, fill with grain and seal the top shut with an iron. Thus, no money for containers. I stored the wheat on top of my kitchen cabinets where there was a nine inch gap between the top and the ceiling. I don't know how good the weight was for them, but this wasn't exactly hurting the resale value of a dilapidated mobile home. I would have put them under the bed except all the rifles under there. Ask your friendly convenience store clerk about the Pepsi bags, it could save you a bit of money.

If you wish to flush the oxygen from the Mylar bags you could do it yourself with nitrogen gas. I would not recommend the dry ice method at all, due to condensation forming as the ice evaporates and cools down the bucket and contents. You can go to any shop selling gas, gas tanks and equipment and buy, rent or lease a nitrogen tank and regulator. I paid around $100 over ten years ago for a used tank, filled, and a regulator. Then, like an idiot, I filled poly buckets with the gas and sealed. Not thinking plastic is porous. Then, to compound my mistake I must have moved that darn tank three or four times as I traveled around in my nomadic existence before I just gave it away. Make sure this is an investment, not a foolish consumer expenditure. Let's assume you bought all new materials. A new 6 gallon bucket, new Mylar, nitrogen packed. $8 for the bucket, $2 for the bag, $1 for the nitrogen (tank and gas, averaged out over time) and $10 for the wheat (adding in a bit for transport cost). At the most a bucket of wheat just like "store bought" cost you $20. With shipping it would cost over twice that through the mail. Heck, you might even think about a home based part time business selling these. Advertise through the local classifieds and if you sell each bucket for $30 you can make a good profit while undercutting the competition, meet fellow survivalists and perhaps even be able to buy your supplies in bulk.

If you are still deciding if it is wise to stockpile wheat and corn, or are unsure if you could eat them instead of, say, canned goods or other grains or even (God forbid) MRE's, you may wish to try them out on a trial basis. No need to buy a grinder or visit the feed store, just go on down to your nearest Super Wal-Mart and buy some already ground meal. No fuss or muss, just open the bag and get cooking. The whole wheat flour that you want is Gold Medal brand specialty flour whole wheat. Do not get any other brand, it will be graham flour, a putrid unholy substance that will choke you and cause ill effects of all kinds. The type you want sells for a premium of $2.09, compared to white flour at ninety-seven cents for the same amount, five pounds. Very few folks eat the whole wheat in flour, so even if it is cheaper to produce the white can be purchased much cheaper since it is sold in bulk. I buy the whole wheat and pay the extra, thankful at least someone sells it. For the corn meal, get Martha White brand yellow plain enriched corn meal for about $1.85 for five pounds. As far as I could tell this was the only one that was the meal of the whole kernel (whole corn, if you will). All others are processed with part of the grain removed. You want the whole grain meal, in corn as well as the wheat. The reason it is enriched has to do with the Federals discovering that around the time of the Great Depression youth in the South eating a traditional corn heavy diet were malnourished by corns natural lack of certain minerals/vitamins. So, standards were put in effect adding

those to corn meal. Sort of like vitamin C being added to Kool-Aid since our little darlings don't drink enough citrus juice. A noble goal, one more thing we don't need to think about for ourselves.

Stockpiling flour is a good supplement to your other storage food. Thirty pounds of flour will easily fit in your freezer and for $12 you have another months worth or survival rations. I stock six bags of whole wheat flour and rotate them regularly as I consume the flour daily. I have two bags of white flour to supplement that, as well as two bags of corn meal. Ten bags of flour, tucked away in the freezer and rotated regularly and costing all of $18, which provides me with a daily diet of whole grain quite cheaply. It would be healthier if I ground the grain myself, and cheaper, but for various reasons including laziness I just buy the store bought flour. I imagine that you could put the white flour in an air tight container and store for a year or more at room temperature, but I think freezer storage is better for longevity and pest control. In the event of long term power failure you could use up your flour quick enough to avoid spoilage. Flour is more for daily consumption with the benefit of emergency storage, rather than strictly an emergency supply since the electric consumption adds two to three dollars a month to the equation.

I have covered in another article the subject of flatbread, that tasty unleavened wheat bread. To me that is the best method of preparing wheat in an extended emergency event. It is also a great daily food item. I am in the habit of taking some to work every once in a while for lunches. I put a few in the microwave and add some sugar or salt to them hot and have a quick cheap tasty lunch. And the whole grain gives complex carbohydrates so your energy level stays high. Much better than a pastry with its empty calories or high cost sandwiches. Not that I have anything against protein, I love mounds of dead animal flesh. I just get most of my calories from carbs and supplement protein two out of three meals. That is the poor peasant way- the meat adds flavor, it is not a main dish. So, breakfast is always a waffle. Flour, water and baking powder soaked in butter after cooking. Much less labor intensive than pancakes. Lunch is flatbread or a peanut butter sandwich or leftovers. Or just a snack of whatever I can put together without a fuss. Dinner is the traditional meat and potatoes/rice/pasta. So my grocery shopping is really only for one meal a day, dinner, and the rest is taken care of by having a supply of flour on hand. Much cheaper and healthy than having a meat heavy meal three times a day. Who doesn't love bacon (other than Muslims-need we say more?) and a side of eggs, hash browns covered in hot sauce? Sweet, sweet bacon. But that is only a treat for special occasions, such as when we treat ourselves to a meal out. Self-imposed restrictions make the occasional consumption all that much more enjoyable. Try not eating a favorite food for a few months, then indulge. It is all the better, and healthier for you and your pocketbook.

As for corn, my two favorite recipes are for fried mush and stove top bread. Fried mush is a delicacy around our house. The low cost and ease of preparation are great, but the clean-up is a bit much. So, we have it about once a month and it is superb. Take 5 cups of water and 2 cups of corn meal and put them in a crock pot on high for three hours (or half that amount for only one serving). You really need a crock pot because direct heat

will burn the mush. You might try a double burner, but you really should have a crock pot for stews and chili and preparing beans, etc. You can buy a baby pot for under $10 at a dollar store, a regular size about $20. You can run a butter knife along the edges every hour to keep the hard crust of the mush from forming or just let it go for the whole three hours. There is going to be some residue that cling to the sides after cooking, the first bad part of the clean-up. Just soak the empty ceramic insert of the crock pot in water for a few hours to loosen that up and the worse part will be throwing away the gunk (if you don't have a garbage disposal you will need to scoop it out of the sink). I stir the water and meal first thing into the pot, then generally just leave it alone. But if you wish you can stir occasionally. The whole thing is simple. Measure, dump, mix, cook. The hardest part should be keeping an eye on the clock. After the mush is done cooking, pour into a container that is not too deep and put in the fridge overnight. In the morning turn over the container and a solid chunk of mush will fall out. Cut this into strips and fry up in oil (the second hard part of clean-up is the oil splatter). Drain and salt. This is a superb breakfast.

Your second corn recipe is stove top bread. I started doing this because I refuse to turn on our electric oven without a darn good reason. And bread isn't one of them. Our counter top toaster oven handles most baking chores and is so much easier on the electric bill. But toaster oven corn bread sounded like too much hassle, and so I started making stove top cornbread. Nothing new here, I was just reinventing the wheel. For this you need half wheat and half corn. Pre-heat your greased pan on medium. To the flour add baking powder and sugar. Or at least honey. You need the sweetener or it just won't turn out right. You can add an egg, up to you depending on your protein craving. Put in just enough water to were you will have to pull the batter out of the bowl into the pan and use the spoon to spread the batter out in the pan. If you make it any thinner it turns into a pancake and tastes totally different. Keep an eye on the thing, it does not take long to cook. I keep flipping up the edge to check the middle bottom. It can burn quick. Turn over after it turns brown (the top will still be raw). Cook until the other side is also brown. If the pan is medium to large in size you will most likely need to cut into halves or quarters before your first flip. Being corn, this bread crumbles easy. When done, cut open and add butter or margarine. I like salt and pepper also, or a jam/jelly. Quick, easy, cheap, healthy and tasty. END

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FIREARMS WITHOUT PAPERWORK

I have written about firearm purchases on the grey or black market before. But I've come across a new idea I want to share with you. If for whatever reason you wish to buy a firearm legally but don't want a paperwork trail, then consider the following. If you were to buy a black powder pistol replica of a 1858 Remington, you could also buy a drop in cylinder that uses cartridges. The conversion piece is legal, not registered as it is not a firearm, and you turn a coal burner into a modern weapon. The cylinder takes .45 Long Colt, about the power of a .32 ACP, but better than no pistol at all. Black powder replica pistols are available in many places, but to get the cylinder you need to contact:

R & D gun shop
5728 E county Rd X
Beloit, WI 53511-9546

I have no pricing information on either the replica pistols or the cylinder. If it was me, I would include a stamped self addressed envelope when writing R&D, both to facilitate a reply and because it is the courteous thing to do. You may wish to use another name and address, just in case, or pay a premium to get a gun shop to buy it for you anonymously. I know this is paranoid in the extreme, but the whole point here is to avoid a paperwork trail of any kind and if you end up on their mailing list along with whoever you bought the pistol from it defeats the whole purpose. Don't expect this to be cheap. I have seen replica prices and they are not for the bargain hunters.

Your best bet is to buy at a private sale. If you live in California, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey or Road Island you can't legally buy privately. It is easy to circumvent but when they come to round up all your guns you had better be able to account for all of them. It that case the seller takes the heat and drops a dime on you the buyer. It won't matter how good of friends you were at the time of the sale. Better just to move out of these states, being the Fascist strongholds that they are. At this time private sale guns are slim pickings, but you take what you can get. You could buy a gun manufactured in 1898 or earlier (actual manufacture date, not model date) where, again, choices are limited. Some single action revolvers, a few Mausers or some Mosin-Nagants. Twenty years ago Shotgun News was selling pre-1898 French bolt actions for $75, with ammo. It's a lot harder to find them now. Good luck.

Of course the best thing to do if you are on a budget is to assemble the components for "slam-bangs" now. These are pieces of metal pipe in which the inner diameter is the same size as the outer dimensions of a cartridge case. A shotgun shell is your best bet due to lack of aiming. This pipe in turn fits into a slightly larger pipe, that one being capped at the bottom and a wooden dowel having a blunted nail sticking up towards the opening.

The smaller pipe might need some sanding to aid in rapid insertion. You tape a recoil pad of some type (piece of plywood perhaps) to your stomach, grab the large pipe with your weak hand and hold it against the pad, the smaller with your strong hand, and slam the pipe down. The primer hits the nail, Boom! I personally would discard the pipes after each use rather than reusing them, but then again perhaps you could sell them on the black market. I would be worried about the quality of the metal under repeated firings. But the idea here is to kill an enemy soldier and get his gun. Stockpile these components and the ammo now before there are any restrictions. I would not keep them on your property, however. They can be used against you by the jackboots, claiming they are pipe bomb components.

I see little need for alarm at this point. It is unlikely we will see a clamp down at the Federal level, and if you live in a state that recognizes individual freedom you will not have to worry about it locally. And just as a side note, do not expect Bush to let the semi-auto ban die. He needs the urban vote for his re-election and he is going to buy it by continuing this un-Constitutional ban. At this time there is plenty of assault rifles to pick from that are post-ban legal, and magazines over ten rounds are still available cheap enough. The ban merely changes the cosmetics of semi-autos. The ten round mag limit just means we need to practice more so we hit something with the first group. END

CORRECTIONS. In the "Po Boys Gold" article on silver, I incorrectly stated that old pre-1965 coins had 80% silver content. They have 90%. In last Fridays article, the full size version of Corn & Wheat, I wrote that Pepsi syrup used to come in Mylar bags (you could reuse for grain storage). Unless it differs by regional bottler, they now only have plastic bags. Meaning as far as I know there is no longer a way to get free Mylar bags (even Frito chips changed).

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MICROWAVE BREAD

Last week at work I had a co-worker offer me a bag of whole wheat flour. Her and her husband found the taste objectionable and I was not so proud as to decline, seeing as how it would more than likely be thrown away. Later that day I was getting quite hungry and did not wish to spend any money on lunch. As I grew weaker and my thoughts turned to 90% food and 10% of what I needed to do to stay employed I had yet another brilliant moment. When ones creativity is not sapped by repetitive mind-numbing useless employment it is amazing what you can come up with. To my mind this represents a breakthrough accomplishment on par with the wheel or sliced white bread, although you might differ in your opinion as you don't share my self appreciation.

I wondered to myself how I could eat without spending any sparse cash. It seemed a waste to spend money when a perfectly good bag of wheat flour was just sitting there in the break room refrigerator. If only that bag of flour was instead a stack of flat bread. And then it hit me! Microwave some bread dough. If it turned out to be a sodden mess, no harm done. The flour was free, as was the electricity. I took a Styrofoam cup and plate and a plastic knife and got the bag of flour. I filled the eight ounce cup about three quarters full with the flour and then with a shot of tap water. I mixed it with the knife and added a little more water until I got the consistency of a stiff waffle batter. I pried the glob out of the cup on to the plate and then spread it around with the knife until most of the plate was covered. I placed the plate in our microwave oven which being a small model I figured was a low powered appliance and guessed five minutes cooking time. After looking askew at the oven for its impossibly long (relatively) cooking time and hoping against hope that the darn thing was edible because by this time I was really hungry, I opened the door, gave a gentle pry to remove the wheat platter from the plate and gave a tentative bite. And it worked the first time! I could not believe my luck, as most of my cooking experiments are burnt to carbon disasters. I wolfed down the bread in piggish delight and giggled to myself for my good fortune and outstanding brilliance. I had down the impossible, improving on the age old perfection of flat bread. The Gods were indeed kind that day.

Think back, if you will, to our discussion to flat bread. You got whole wheat flour, put in a touch of oil and water, mixed and kneaded, floured a board and rolled flat the dough balls, placed the flat bread in a hot skillet and stood over the hot stove top flipping each piece several times to avoid burning. Your time and energy devoted to delicious nutritious stick to the ribs whole wheat goodness meals to go. But now, there is a vastly simplified way to get the same food. Nuke bread, easier than a waffle and a serious electric energy saver. The batch of flat bread and a similar size batch of nuke bread are going to take roughly the same amount of time to process and cook But with conventional flat bread you are going through a lot of motions and have an energy pig of a

stove top sucking up juice at a hideous pace. Nuke bread requires only a little mixing and spreading with the bulk of the time sitting around and waiting for the energy sipping microwave oven to finish the cooking chore. I estimate that your personal time spent on pre-cook preparation is fifteen minutes for a conventional flat bread batch and fifty cents in electric cost verses five minutes prep time for a nuke bread batch and under five cents of electricity. This does for flat bread what an electric bread maker did for yeast bread, taking all the work out of preparation and making for a less energy consumption task all with only a slight sacrifice in taste.

I'm sure there will be a reader or two who cry out that microwave ovens are an evil device of the global conspiracy, bent on controlling our very thoughts. They will unscroll documented proof that Kennedy is still alive in Argentina, and the Illuminati are cruising about in anti-gravity ships that the ignorant unschooled masses mistakenly think to be UFO's, beaming down thought control energy to fry our brains while the Chinese build tunnels beneath Beijing and plot to start a nuclear war with us, at the same time stealing all our good jobs like dangerous steel mill workers toiling around molten steel or factory work were a herd of sheeple perform repetitive tasks all day long, and only leave us crappy jobs like sitting in an office shuffling paperwork or leaning against a counter in an air-conditioned retail store. To them microwave ovens are Lucifer's playground equipment and must be avoided at all cost. I say to them, better put on your aluminum foil hats (shiny side out) because those scary unseen cancer causing beams are zapping through us all day long. Heard of a cell phone? Whatever health problems are associated with microwave ovens, I can live with compared with the frying I get just walking around.

Experiment a little, as your oven will vary in power. Also keep an eye on the thickness of the spread out dough. Too thin and you burn and toughen the bread. Too thick and it is doughy in the middle. You will be surprised, though. Even with the thickness of the spread and the quantity of the flour fluctuating you will still get a pretty consistent product. It is only at the extremes that you will see variations, such as the spread so thin you can almost see the plate or so thick you could use it as plaster. Avoid plastic type plates, the dough sticks to them and will only yield after a long soaking. I use a ceramic or Pyrex plate at home and Styrofoam at work, although I am a bit leery of Styrofoam cooking as it might be belching poisons into my food. The benefits I gain are energy conservation (it might be important again some day) and the end of a daily lunch import. Plus another time saving feeding technique. END

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THE R.V. SURVIVALIST

Recreational vehicles are overpriced, gas guzzlers, prone to breakdown and have cramped living spaces. The perfect survivalist vehicle. Actually, R.V.'s are all of the above, but in spite of all that can be a viable option for survival. I am not necessarily speaking here of mobile survival, the practice of bugging out after a disaster. "Gridlock" should be your one word needed to discourage this practice. Instead, think of being mobile before a disaster and being able to reside in the most beneficial location preparedness wise as well as financially. Then, when a disaster does occur, just sit tight. You are already at your destination.

Being able to move your home at will means you are not at the mercy of others. If your area suffers economically, just move. If the taxes from the local government become too much of a burden, just move away. This is the biggest factor in mobile living. You are not at the mercy of factors beyond your control. Once you buy a piece of dirt, you are at the beck and call of your masters. It is not only a financial factor but psychology plays in as well. You are investing your hard work into a place to live and don't want to move. And the taxes are just low enough to scrap by. The price of moving is too high. So they have you over a barrel. The government has been in business since the Agricultural Revolution and they know exactly what it takes to stay in business. Keep squeezing your victims slowly and watch the Treasury fill. These people are not idiots, they know what they are doing.

Let's say that you were reasonable smart about life and, instead of trial and error the rest of us went through, you bought a house early in your life. At twenty-five years of age you had a few thousand saved up and you bought a small house in a reasonable good neighborhood at a fair price. Your mortgage is 30% of your income, you have no credit card bills, your car is used and paid off, and you can do all house repairs and auto repairs yourself. At fifty years old you have the house paid off. You are thinking of retiring, as your monthly bills are only insurance, food, utilities and not much else. You think you might get a part time job for "mad money" and you have all the right things happening. Your garden produces all your vegetables, you have a solar hot water heater and good insulation so your electric bill is very low, you have cheap transportation, everything looks good from a semi-self sufficiency standpoint. Remember, everything you have going for you is the exception to your average Joe. You don't have a mortgage to pay after retirement, your style of living does not force you to keep up with the Jones', your kids are grown up and not sucking off your hide with a college tuition. And yet, storm clouds are gathering on the horizon.

The Tech Wreak happens and it all starts to turn ugly. Instead of employers begging people to work, now they are being laid off in record numbers and the ones who remain

are usually treated in a shabby manner. The stock marker turns from rewarding novices for nothing more than good timing to treating everyone including brokers to mind-numbing losses. Most stocks prove to be way overpriced and all the pension funds that had been looking for easy gains now suffer from easy losses. A lot of large companies turn to financial shenanigans to keep their stock from nose diving, are caught, and go bankrupt. After that wonderful news then just around the corner comes the fact that companies are really under funded in their pension funds and suddenly it looks like once secure giants might no longer be able to pay retirement benefits. Everybody panics and jumps into real estate as a last resort, despite wisdom telling them that if the economy is headed south the last thing you want is a thirty year mortgage based on a two income earnings. The panic induces lemming like behavior, everybody chips in to loan money to the average idiot, real estate prices soar out of sight and the whole system feeds on itself. The government lowers the prime rate, interest rates fall, the buying panic intensifies. Second mortgages or refinancing feeds money into the system, the government devalues the dollar against foreign currencies to gain time, and the plans for inflation to forestall a collapse are solidly in place. Despite all this you would still be sitting pretty, even if your private pension was wiped out since you could just go to working part time. Even if you lost your job before you could collect the pension you could be a handyman with your loan free truck and mechanical skills. With the housing market booming you would have plenty of work. But wait, there is a slight problem.

Your local government is having financial problems due to the rise in unemployment, the increase in welfare and the loss of taxes from the business decline. They are going to raise your property tax. Even a five hundred dollar a year increase (due to either raised taxes or raised appraised value due to the market gain in value) will hurt you if you are retired or working part time. Then, the state allows an increase in real estate insurance (thanks to a few campaign contributions). What can you do? Pay. You could sell, the housing market is booming, but you would just be trading it for another of equal value. You could sell and run with the money, but any other location with affordable housing has no jobs to offer you or if self employed no market for your services. Your only choice is to pay the ransom or sell and retire and hope the extra cash lasts as long as you do. Almost thirty years of mortgage payments and a lot of sweat and tears down the drain. Is it a wonder most would just pay the increases? Some would sell, buy a cheap mobile home and then live off the difference, but rising lot rents cut into that along with higher electric bills and the headache of the park closing its doors or a tornado/hurricane blowing down the home.

Or lets say that you are up north and about that time your mortgage is paid off you live through that wonderful time when the industrial giant turned into the Rust Bucket. The entire economy is dependant on factories, which all fold against competition overseas. What a glorious time to own a home. You can't sell because of the loss you will suffer, if you take the loss and move to a job that areas real estate will be selling at an increase and you will not have enough or worse have to take out another loan. You are almost forced to stay, even when the government raises the taxes because there are no businesses to tax and home owners forced to stay are the only ones left to pay for increased welfare. As you can see either way, be it a housing bubble or a bust you are getting screwed in one

way or another. Home ownership has turned into a nightmare. Instead of an investment in your golden years you have turned into a rube for the parasitic government who will tax your accomplishments, your hard work and your very life. And what do we receive in return? A police force that is more interested in asset forfeiture than in protecting the populace. The Supreme Court has ruled that the police do not have an obligation to protect any one person. What was meant was to protect a department against negligence lawsuits and for good reason, there are not enough police to protect us all. In practice it means a detective staking out a drug deal is under no lawful obligation to stop a mugging nearby. The government is not your friend or protector but merely the current ruling criminal gang.

And speaking of crime, what about your once lovely neighborhood turning into a housing slum? Just look at Greyhound bus lines. For a time they offered good, reasonably priced service. Then the drivers decided to jack the company for more money, the owner refused to knuckle under, and a bunch of inexperienced drivers took over. The majority of routes were condensed and instead of fast cheap service you had slow service as one bus stopped at every jerk water town instead of being an express. It used to be that several buses served one route and thus every bus didn't need to stop at every station. No longer. And of course it didn't help when our masters the Feds decided that smoking was evil and prohibited smoking on bus lines. Now, not only did one bus stop at every town they had to wait around while the nicotine junkies got off and puffed away. It is almost faster to walk than to take a bus any more. And it is no longer cheap. But the whole point about crime and Greyhound is that they built stations in the bustling down town areas of the day. They did not pick the bad parts of town to save money, they built in nice areas in the center of the populace. Then, over the years these areas turned into slums. This was another factor leading to the demise of Greyhound. It is almost as if the Gods decided that this particular company was to get No Cosmic Breaks. They were after a time stuck with rotten real estate locations. To further beat this dead horse, let me state that while I detest the usual way in which businesses blunder about without a lick of common sense I also detest the way in which Unions hold companies for ransom and we end up paying inflated prices for goods until the factories go overseas and then we end up paying more taxes for unemployment benefits.

There you are, in about the same financial straights as Greyhound and you own a piece of dirt. In a good neighborhood. Then, after twenty years your formally wonderful place in town turns into a ghetto and you still have another ten years to go on that mortgage. What are you going to do? That crack dealer on the corner is not going to take kindly to your attempts to form a neighborhood watch. The police are not interested in your problems unless you 1) pay a lot of taxes, or 2) pose a public relations nightmare. Yuppies on the good side of town will only smirk and look at you snidely as they privately voice wonderment at your stupidity since you have not thrown masses of money at this particular problem. They would already have moved to a better part of town, you poor pitiful, lower middle class income person. It is the middle of a recession and getting a better paying job is nearly impossible. You buy an alarm so the neighbors can hear the moment buglers enter your residence. That way they can help the police who show up

three hours later fill in the slot labeled “time of occurrence”. You can’t legally carry a concealed weapon since the politicians are not interested in your non-contribution making poor sorry self. If you do go packing and are caught it is you who gets to go to jail and experience the joys of forced sodomy from a prison populace with a reported 30% AIDS infection rate (note that is the official rate- surely higher in reality). Your only option is to sell at a loss or live in a hell hole. Now aren’t you glad you bought into the American dream?

In the past I have advocated mobile home living. Due to the fact that these residences depreciate in value quicker than a Yugo in a salt mine they make for excellent cheap homes. It is quite easy to find a livable one for under five grand. The nicer older ones are still under $10,000. Anyone can afford that kind of home, even a minimum wage earning poor sap grossing that much every year. The affordable pay-off is five years not twenty or thirty. But for the love of all that is good and holy do not buy a new one unless that is your last home ever. Even better would be to not buy new unless that is your last home AND you own the land under it. Otherwise you are paying too much for it. They do depreciate much too quickly. But you are still burdened with the ownership problem. If you buy the mobile and pay lot rent you are stuck with yearly rent increases and at the mercy of the park owner/manager. True, the law does place limits on their arbitrary power. But really what you are faced with is if you hack off the owner he doesn’t have to rent a lot to you. And without a lot you have only two choices. You can pay $1500 to have it towed across town to another park (assuming there is an available one) or you just have to sell it for whatever the market dictates. The only difference between that and a house is you loose a whole lot less money if things turn south. If you own the land under it you can engage it whatever loutish behavior you desire and you will not get kicked out. The downside is you are once again stuck in one location at the mercy of the job market and the local government. In an area where you can buy land cheap there are no jobs and in areas where there is employment you will find land prices outlandish. The great thing about mobile homes is that they are very cheap used, in most cases apartments are more expensive than a loan payment on one and the lot rent combined, and if you do need to vacate the area for whatever reason you have not lost a lot of money. But in the end, just like a house, you can not take your investment with you. You are stuck in that area, and as we all know an area can move from great to worse. The economy changes, politicians get greedy, crime gets worse. At a time when everything was stable in the Beaver Cleaver years it made since to sink down roots and make an investment into your future.

We could argue until the cows come home about when exactly our nation turned from the worlds leading economic powerhouse to the worlds economic powerhouse only by default and inertia and now waiting for a pivotal event to shove us into the abyss. We are in the same position as the British after the first world war. We know we have painted ourselves into a corner and are just waiting for someone else to come along and take over. Not that we couldn’t stay out ahead financially (although perhaps not politically). If the head idiots in charge do not handicap us too badly our culture has a lot of good things going for it. We are risk takers and entrepreneurs. We are not adverse to loose our shirts starting a

business venture and then start all over again. We are good at running small decentralized businesses, just the sort that the new economy rewards. Most of the bad economic news now is based on the performances of the old economy dinosaurs. We are still focused on the old gang of has-beens instead of the up and comers. If we discounted the old companies and their influence on the market indicators the economy would not seem so mired in under-performance. The tech wreak did produce plenty of new economy failures, but the start of any new economy is risky. But we are still going to have a lot of financial turbulence as the current administration fights valiantly to win its reelection by any means including sinking the economy by devaluing the currency, killing off as many soldiers as is necessary overseas and starting as many new senior citizen welfare programs as needed. Not that they are any worse than the Clinton clan selling off as much military information or strategic locations as needed to the Chinese for the funds for reelection. Banana republics should be taking lessons from us. The whole point here is that the years ahead are going to be anything but predictable or stable. We may or may not loose our empire. We may or may not crash economically. We will see upheaval however. And this is precisely why you might want to consider being mobile so that you are not stuck in one place that might see turbulence.

One good way to ensure mobility and at the same time have a place to live is a recreational vehicle. The good ol' R.V. Once the plaything of the Yuppie who took out their monster trophies of prosperity about twice a year to impress the ignorant poor masses, now those same vehicles are flooding the market as the ranks of tech workers are laid off from the Dot Comm companies. There has always been a thriving market for used R.V.'s for reasons I shall get into shortly, but at this point it would be sweet irony indeed to short change a greedy Yuppie bastard and buy his land yacht for pennies on the dollar. Ha, ha! OK, I know I shouldn't glory in the misfortunes of others, having been there myself so many times, so for now we shall just say that this is a good time to pick yourself up a cheap RV. The term motor home means a self contained vehicle with living accommodations. The other choice is a travel trailer, the same thing but without a motor that needs to be towed with a separate vehicle. For our purposes I am using the two interchangeably, as well as including cab-overs (fit in the back of a truck with the bed portion over the cab of the truck), pop-ups (a travel trailer that is only a few feet tall towed which folds out its collapsible sides for use) and van conversions (a pregnant tall full size van as a smaller version of the motor home). An R.V. is any livable area that is mobile.

The motor home is the most desirable, being those twenty to thirty foot monsters that contain all the creature comforts and have the benefit of not having to be towed. Pull into the campground, perhaps level it out, and pop a beer before starting the BBQ. The problem is that like most of the great things in life they cost an obscene amount of money. And I do mean obscene. Most new ones will cost you about the same as a median priced home in most of the US. As in almost $100 grand. For a vehicle. Sure, that vehicle has a satellite dish and microwave oven, but it is still a narrow tin box on wheels with a motor. If you are making a quarter of a million dollars a year, then fine and dandy. Otherwise why in the hell would you want to spend that kind of money? One reason you see a lot of

these hardly used motor homes on the market is that the monthly payments are just too hard to keep up after you fill the gas tank. You get five to ten miles to the gallon and you are paying more on it than your mortgage. If you must have a newer one, try for one with very little mileage in the $30 grand range, about the price of a SUV. Much more manageable with a slightly used one, because they are a vehicle and they do depreciate. Let depreciation be your friend and buy used, not your foe when you buy new. Whatever price range you choose (under ten thousand almost guarantees mechanical problems) make sure you can afford the payments. The whole point here is that you will be living in it and can't take a chance with a repossession.

Much more affordable is a travel trailer. Even brand spanking new you can find a good size one with those nifty pop out sides for fifteen grand. The truck to pull it is about the same if you shop around. This is the same price as a used motor home but with no wear and tear. Financially speaking if makes almost no sense to buy a motor home, and all the sense to get a travel trailer. Another great thing about the trailer is that you don't even really need to own the vehicle that tows it. If your budget is tight just buy the trailer, park it and live in it. If you have to move rent a U-Haul and tow the trailer to your new location. The cost of renting is about equal to one year of auto insurance for that truck. The bad part of a trailer is that they are a bitch to tow and set up. But for all that hassle the financial side makes it worth it. Another thing to consider is if you are not mechanically inclined and must pay for maintenance your cost are going to be double or triple in a motor home compared to a regular truck that pulls your trailer. And a regular mechanic is much easier to find than an RV mechanic. A final consideration is that with a truck you can put a cover over the bed and have a lot of storage space than you won't find in the motor home (buckets of wheat come to my mind).

You can still find travel trailers used in good shape for under two thousand dollars. Imagine owning a home for $2,000. Never a mortgage, or insurance, or property tax. Your only sacrifice is living space. But if you think about it most of our living space in a home is under-utilized. Your living room is a couch and a TV with perhaps some book shelves. Your dining room has a table in the middle of it. Your bedroom is just for sleeping, and the garage just to store accumulated junk. Do you really need all that space? Would you trade a monthly mortgage of one third your income for less space? I would. The only reason I am living in a mobile home right now instead of a travel trailer is that here in Daytona Beach Florida every RV park is heavily biased against permanent residents. We have Race Week, two Bike Weeks, Spring Break and beach tourists. Parks make a heck of a lot more money renting nightly to the poor saps who come on vacation even if they have the spots vacant most of the year. Bastards. I have never had a problem finding an RV park to rent spaces monthly until I moved here. The lesson here is to find a spot before you get that RV.

Other choices for RV's are the cab over. These are very cheap used because they make a pickup very top heavy and they are very confined in living space, but if that is of little concern to you it should be relatively easy to find one around the $500 range. A pop up is basically just a tent on wheels and I would not consider one myself (why not just buy a

tent?) but they do have the advantage of keeping you off the ground, not leaking like a fabric tent and being able to be towed by a small vehicle. However, the cab over and the pop up both suffer from living space. They are great for camping but I don't know about full time. If I had a spot in the woods I could squat on they would be ideal (easy to get in and out and hide) since you would spend most of your time outdoors but I think they are impractical for living in the city, working forty hours type of living.

I have lived in many homes, apartments, mobile homes and travel trailers and I have never experienced cabin fever from the trailers. And I am a homebody. I spend a lot of time there, but I am more interested in the book I am reading, the food I am eating, the computer screen or the TV than I am concerned about my surroundings. To me a trailer is a great way to live. Even if I don't own the land and pay rent it is still so cheap I can live on next to nothing. If I feel confined I just get out for awhile instead of paying the big bucks for a lot of living space. And no matter what happens, I can quickly escape with a minimum of monetary loss while still owning my own dwelling (unlike apartment living). Being mobile is a great sort of security. Being stationary makes you a great target. END

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THE DEATH OF MOM AND POP

Why are small businesses unable to compete? Why are they closing their doors after a Wal-Mart moves to town? Why is Mom and Pop dying? The answer is important to us because this is economics on a small personal level that impacts our daily lives. You need to know the answer in case you ever plan on going to work for yourself and open your own business, and it helps to know the general direction commerce is moving to plan on your future. Most people go about their lives uninterested and oblivious to economics and history. This will not change, but it is a shame as the two subjects do have a bearing on your being able to plan ahead in life.

Really, economics is quite easy to understand, contrary to what the academic types in the field try to convey. This is most likely due to the very understandable human motivation of job security and ego. Whenever an overeducated type starts mumbling about Gross Domestic Product or pulls out a pie chart, you can safely ignore them. There is one, and only one, economic law that you need to know in order to understand everything else. The law of supply and demand. If the supply is limited the demand is higher. If the supply is unlimited the demand is lower. The same with demand. It is simple. If you are eating Top Ramen noodles every night, a steak looks mighty tasty. But if you ate steak every night soon the thought of another would make you slightly nauseous. The entire amount of gold in the world would make a cube of only several hundred yards if melted down. That amount of concrete would only cost several ounces of that gold. If there is a limited amount of an item, it will cost a lot. If the supply is close to unlimited the cost is much lower.

In the case of a small local business, there is a limited supply of any one item and the cost will reflect the high per unit cost due to limited buying on the wholesale level and also the high per unit cost due to the limited retail sales. If you open a sidewalk hot dog stand you can only order a small amount of product from a restaurant supplier and your limited sales together force you to charge a high retail price even if your profit margin is small. But a famous hot dog place in a metro area which sells ten thousand dogs a day can buy the raw ingredients much cheaper and sell cheaper. They sell a dog with fixings for a buck and make more doing so per sale even with higher overhead (employees, building) than you do charging half again as much without employees to pay or a building to purchase and maintain. This is the classic Industrial Age economics. It takes a lot of capital to own the means of production. It took an incredible amount of money to open a factory, put machines and workers in it. Then, you crank out as much product as you can to earn pennies on the dollar per unit. This was why strikes cost so much money. Down time on an assembly line represents not only profit loss from what is not produced, but machinery not paying back its initial investment and stockholders (the investors who financed it all in the first place) losing money. As inefficient as the stock market is at investing for the

future (only immediate results count) it does provide the service it was designed for admirably. Raising capital to build factories. Today, like everything else that was designed for the Industrial Age, the entire structure is ripe for change.

The reason for the Japanese miracle, the reason Mom and Pop are dead, the reason why politics does not change anything, and why more and more taxes give less and less return, all is explained by system change. Our current system is through and through a product of the Industrial Age. Our schools, our Social Security, our pension system, our government, our courts, our stock market, insurance system, everything is made for the Industrial Economy. Now, our economy is dying and all the systems that were made for it are dying also. We all hear a lot of talk about the Information Age, but we are no where near it. The old dying order is going to hold on to its last dying breath. The Industrial Era was all about centralizing production, centralizing control, learning, standards, etc. It was all centralized for economics of scale. A craftsman building muskets was no match for a factory turning out, per worker, many times as much product. And so all the institutions of the day died. Craftsmanship, apprenticeships, small scale learning. It was all slowly but surely centralized. Not all at one time, of course. It did not all at once spring into being. It was only at the start of World War Two that standard teaching of trades in schools replaced on the job training. We have seen the slow centralization of our economy for two hundred years and it is just recently that retail sales have joined the ranks of the old economy (from a position little changed from the last two thousand years, incredibly).

It was just in the last twenty or thirty years that Japan took the manufacturing of product to the pinnacle and became the powerhouse of the world economy. But they had just won the old war. The new one (information) is struggling to be born and the one place it is going to have a tough place taking hold is in Japan. Japanese society is very collective orientated and not at all geared toward the individual. Perfect for a centralized economy. The US, on the other hand, is just the opposite despite decades of attempts to socialize the place. This might be our savings grace unless we totally mess it up. We are individualistic and our economy still thrives on entrepreneurship. This is exactly what a decentralized, information rich economy demands. But only time will tell if the death of our old order institutions will allow those traits to survive or be dragged down with the old ship.

Now, on top of the death of our manufacturing sector we are faced with the new problem of the death of Mom and Pop. As if it weren't bad enough that we went through decades of upheaval with factory jobs moving overseas (the old machinery no longer competed with the new everywhere else, an unintended consequence of our victory in WWII- we kept the old and the rest of the world started over) now we are faced with the loss of an outlet for those displaced workers, that of being able to open your own business if you can't be hired. The reason you saw such a growth in the area of consultancy was that a lot of the unemployed white collared workers realized there was no future in retail and instead tried to resell themselves to the same company that laid them off, but in a non-employed role. That backfired as there was no market for their services (their functions were automated or forced onto others as additional tasks). They read one market right but botched the second.

Retail at this point is on a murder spree. Any small scale business that survives due mostly only to extra work and reinvested savings is under continuing pressure from those large companies that have the capital to build and buy in massive quantities. On a scale that the small business owner is unable to approach. Now, here I am talking about retail sales and not services. To a large extent this applies to the small versions of Wal-Mart, Kmart, Office Depot, Best Buy, etc. If Wal-Mart sells it, your small business had better not. Goods, not services. The eye doctor in a small office in Wal-Mart is going to charge roughly the same prices there as well as in a private practice. I shall come back to services, but for now we are talking about goods sold at retail. You of course can sell the same items as the chain stores, but not the exact same type. You can offer a better product with services such as repair work, but the one thing you can't do is beat them on price. The big boys sell the $59 mountain bike, you can only offer to fix those or offer a better one at higher prices. It really is not rocket science. You have to beat overseas workers. Period.

We all know that the Chinese are pretty smart. After a few hits and misses, they have got their brand of communism down pat. As the individual is regarded quite low priority wise, the system can chew them up and spit them out. They are going to be the next industrial powerhouse (although at the expense of their citizens and environment). We have no worries that they will overtake us in an information context, all things being equal, but already they are doing most of our industrial work. If it is a product selling on price alone, the Chinese will beat almost anyone else. And already the quality of their products are improving. We are now seeing microwave ovens and DVD players at the under $50 mark retail from China. This is the same thing that happened with the Japanese, who started with inferior trinkets and worked up to making the best products in the world all in the space of about forty years. And, I might add, almost became the premiere currency of the globe. They gave us a run for our money and would have won if not for the dawn of the information economy. China will not follow the exact same path (if for no other reason than they have no ageing work force to contend with) but they will most likely be a major force we will have to reckon with in the future. Their currency is tied to ours which is causing problems at home but in the future that could be turned against us. We could be facing a future problem of vital parts that we no longer manufacture. They are in a much better position to get Russian oil than we are currently able to get it from Iraq. If we allow them to run roughshod over Asia they will not challenge us, but I get a feeling of a repeat of the 1920's (substitute China for Japan, the US for Great Britain).

But, getting back to economics rather than strategy or politics. If it isn't China it is India or East Europe. Our industrial base is as good as gone. The next wave of jobs to leave is going to be in services. Already India is turning into the de facto service call center for many domestic companies. One reason I will not buy a Dell computer regardless of price is that if you have any problems with it you call a number and get an Indian on the other end trying to converse with you in broken English. Not that my patriotism compels me to buy shoddy products just because they were made here, but who needs the hassle of trying to solve problems with the speaker of another language? For that you can just go down to

the corner convenience store. What is next? A technician reading X-rays. Certain paralegal services. Office work. Use your imagination. As a whole the big corporations are ruthless uncaring bastards who would put their mother out on the street to jack the up the price of their quarterly dividends by three cents. So what job will they export overseas? Yours? It makes little difference to them that by putting too many people out of work they will be losing all their customers. They will just move to the next batch of customers in the next economic powerhouse after they have looted and burned down the US economy. Unless it all bites them in the butt. The one thing all the big corporations have in common (including Wal-Mart it must be added) is that they are going to be victims of their own success shortly. Whatever it was that propelled them to economic supremacy is the model they will blindly follow until they bankrupt themselves. Once a system in any bureaucracy (public or private) comes into place it instantly freezes in place and will not budge despite whatever forces align against it. Everybody from the CEO down to the retail manager or from the cabinet level chief down to the lowest civil servant is so frightened of failure that they can only blindly follow the rules no matter how counter-productive any action is. You of course expect this kind of idiocy from government, but in the private sector it is rather sad and pathetic. Here are allegedly educated people acting in a stupid manner as a matter of course. The expression educated idiot had to have been inspired by businessmen. There are a few exceptions as some creative types are also good at business (a rare breed) and so are able to run exceptional companies. But these are so rare that they produce endless fodder for the nauseating parade of self help business books that are churned out without end. Take a look at some of these pathetic books. They are usually just another take on thinking positive and acting confident. Great advice. Now we have a slew of idiots puffing out their chests and taking action (any action) just so they look good doing it. I would vomit in loathing if I wasn't yet another moron depending on these jerkoffs for a regular paycheck. This blind adherence to the old centralized method of management surely will not last too much longer, and good riddance.

Now at this point you may think I am under the misguided notion that we are about to enter another Great Depression with 100% unemployment and a wasteland of an economy. Far from it. I am speaking of general trends here, with plenty of play in the shadows to give enough leeway for you to get along nicely. It might be true that a small business owner cannot even buy at wholesale an item that Wal-Mart is selling retail, but that is comparing apples to apples. You need to learn to sell oranges if you are a small business. As a bookseller you can't sell a copy of Steven Kings latest door-stopper for the same discounted price. They just bought one million copies and got a heck of a discount to pass on to the customer. How can you compete with a dozen copies? But if you were to sell other mystery books by other authors not on bestseller lists you will find plenty of customers willing to pay full retail price for something different (with the added bonus that most likely the library will not carry most of them and siphon off sales- although in general free samples do spur sales). As a publisher you could not compete with the huge presses getting economics of scale. They can publish 100,000 copies at under a buck per unit for a hardback but most of that over $20 profit is tied up in the losses from all non-best sellers and retail returns. You can do much better using on-demand publishing and

only publishing as orders come in, sometimes as low as one book at a time. Even if you print it yourself instead of paying someone else to, for less than $1000 you can get yourself a laser printer and binding system and do it yourself. Your exposure and sales are limited but so is your investment costs.

As a sporting goods retailer you are not going to be able to compete with the big boys on the discount items. You are going to have to sell only specialty items. Not $20 rod and reels, but $100 ones. Not cheap tents for the weekend trip out of the back of the family sedan but a quality tent used by campers who know the difference. There might be some things that seem you just can't beat them at, such as oil changes. Well, how about a mobile oil change service? They already have mobile car washes where your car is washed at your work by a self-contained unit that carries its own water and power. Could there be a market for mobile oil changes. If everyone is charging the same at insta-lubes, why not offer more convenience to get business? If you think outside the box you can easily conceive of a sound business idea that is unique. Of course whether or not it is successful or not is a different matter. In general I would say that if you have a passion and you make it into a business you can make it successful. A niche product in a niche market from a truly passionate hobbyist can prosper if sound business practices are employed. Wal-Mart might truly be passionate about selling at the cheapest possible price (they do this quite well, except on food) but they could care less about any specific item. Your path to fame and fortune is in the fact that you care about those certain items and are passionate and very knowledgeable about it. Sure, Wal-Mart sells guns a few bucks cheaper than you can get at a retail gun store. If you know exactly what you want this might be the route to go. But if you need a clerk that knows his guns, loves them, breathes them, you go to the little guy.

It would be impossible to compete head on with Blockbuster Video. They have a deal with the studios where they don't even have to buy videos. They manufacture their own videos and DVD's at one to two bucks each and then compensate the movie makers with a cut of each movies rental. This way they can stock two dozen copies of each title, the physical unit only costing pennies per rental, and make an additional profit from day one instead of waiting for the pay-off. Any other video rental store must pay up front for the videos, although it is no where near as expensive as it used to be. When I managed a video store in the mid 1980's the top rated movies were selling for $90 each. In to days dollars that was $150 (inflation calculator- http://www.bls.gov/ go to the upper left corner and click on "inflation calculator" and a box will pop up, fill in amounts). Now a new video just released is usually under $20, and a DVD always under $30. It still takes a bit of investment to get this business off the ground, but not what is used to. If I was interested in starting a small business with only a few grand I would go to Wal-Mart and either buy the under $5 VHS tapes or better yet, as they last longer, DVD's for under $10. Then, I would offer a $2 one night rental with delivery and pick up for no extra charge and rent within that area I could use a bicycle to deliver. Use a Web site to list new additions, E-mail to take orders. Then, at one time each evening deliver them all and pick up last nights. If you leave the new releases alone and just make due with the old favorites your investment and reinvestment stays small. Here where I live I could deliver to five mobile

home parks all within a few blocks, have several hundred potential customers, still charge over a dollar and compete with the store up the street since they don't offer old DVD's or delivery and still have my day job since delivery time is only minutes.

Not only can you not set up a traditional business selling the standard items, not only is your job in jeopardy due to overseas labor and soon services, you must also keep in mind that soon your employer might go belly up due to antiquated business practices. Companies follow a familiar pattern. Innovation into some new way of doing things. Staying with that practice since it worked the first time. Going out of business after that model becomes obsolete. If your company is following the old hierarchal business method they are destined for the dustbin of history unless they reinvent themselves. Anymore, it might be said that there is more job security in opening your own business with something new and exciting than with working for the dinosaurs. This goes against conventional wisdom, but then that is really the only way to succeed anymore. END

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YOU CAN BET ON INFLATION

For those under twenty five years of age, inflation is off the radar screen. It is a non-event, something akin to an old fart trying to tell us about the Great Depression. Depression? How could that be? Look at the material abundance surrounding us! Intellectually we know that the Great Depression did in fact happen. But most of us will discount the event as a one time bizarre happening that could not possibly reoccur, along with such hard to fathom episodes as the War Between the States (Civil War to you Yankees), the hyper inflated prices during the California Gold Rush or Indian Extermination. We know they happen, yet they are such strange occurrences that we have trouble accepting that they might ever repeat themselves. Such is the case with the younger generation and inflation.

To those young whippersnappers (I'm only 38, but I love using "whippersnapper") the Vietnam War is as personal as the Korean or Spanish American War. It is only a footnote in the history book. They think nothing of the cultural ramifications of the war (they actually think of little else except where their next beer is coming from, but since each of us was already there we can relate). They are also probably not even aware of the Stagflation of the 1970's. Or the OPEC embargo or Jimmy Carter (other than that house building guy) or the 15% official inflation that went along with that time. Officially, that was the inflation rate. In reality it was a bit higher. Now, I might have only been at a tender age at the time, but I do remember them. I had recently abandoned sports, much to my lifetime basketball playing fathers chagrin, and stuck my nose into books where it belongs to this day. The news to me at age ten was important and fascinating, and while I lacked the wisdom to understand it or put it in perspective I at least was informed of world events early on. I also liked to hang around adults and bother them with idiotic questions, so that too helped keep me informed. Not only was I following the news, but the personal effects at home were felt. Rationing meat consumption, taking on part time jobs, improvising ways to save on spending cash, etc. I realize most likely I am preaching to the choir here. Most of us are familiar with the 1970's. The point here is not to forget them. Times up until recently have been, on the whole, a little too good. We might forget how badly things can get mucked up.

President Reagan was, in my humble opinion, one of the best presidents we have ever had. If I had my way we would yank that evil Fascist bastard Lincoln's face off the five dollar bill and put Reagan's on there (although I think you have to be dead to qualify). Reagan may have jacked up the Federal deficit, but he did preside over the government at a time when the excesses of the 70's were being corrected. And, as much as any president has the power to do, he did clean up that mess over the objections of the Democrats who held power in the Congress and fought him every step of the way. And, it may be remembered, he bombed Libya to put a stop to terrorist funding. Reagan, even having whatever faults politicians in general have, was at heart a true freedom loving American more concerned

with the Bill of Rights than any other president in living memory. And he laid the foundation for our last twenty years of economic prosperity. A legacy that outlasted two presidents bumbling and only succumbed to the last market imbalance.

King George the First was mainly concerned with lining the pockets of his handlers, a once hidden practice he publicized that continues to this day. When you have to line the pockets of both the voters and your sponsors, little real ruling done. Reagan was the last president elected with original ideas. Since then it has been a contest settled by graft. Bush One was a former spook and oil man and his East Coast power buddies put him in power. He then bumbled about and managed to do little for four years. What little he did do was wrong (hint, hint, the Gulf War). Clinton was elected after Bush raised taxes (read my lips) and proceeded to keep the economy humming along by gutting the military to such an extent that had he not been in the pockets of the Chinese government they could have defeated us had we not had a nuclear deterrent. Clinton kept the masses happy with those eight years of payola, and neither setting children aflame nor killing off all his old buddies who knew a few too many secrets about dirty politics down in Arkansas could dethrone him. Even Monica wasn't enough of a problem (you know your priorities are slipping when impeachment goes from illegal funding of guerillas to getting a blow job). Without Monica I am sure he would have found a way to repeal the two presidential term amendment, drove the economy into the ground with feel good spending, and been cheered all the way by the minority who still votes. The geriatrics want all the money we can give them, and more, to live grandly before decaying but they do draw the line at public performances of depravity. And so, we ended up with Bush Two. And the whole thing turned south.

I am not saying that the government has unlimited control over the economy. It no longer does. Instead, all those thousands of traders around the world sitting at their computers voting with their money what economy and currency are the most desirable is what shapes our destiny to the greatest degree. However, a government does have a say in the whole affair. It can help or hurt through its actions. And one of the things it does is shape public opinion. It is a very powerful force. If the citizens are happy and content the economy can hum along even if unsound. If public perception is negative then you will have more problems than you should. This is , again, just a small part in the general scheme but it does play a large role influencing events. Bush Two is perceived to have been elected under shady circumstances, and while he did everything right in the Ronald Reagan "One For The Gipper" Political Handbook, he is beginning to be seen as a bit too much like his predecessors. A lot can be chalked up to Democratic smear jobs, but mostly the War On Terror and the War For Oil is starting to backfire on him. We Americans like a quick fight with big gains. This tradition started in 1812 when we tried to grab Canada, continued nicely with the annexation of Old Mexico, paid off grandly with picking a fight with the weakest colonial power around (Spain) when we got Cuba (should have kept that one) and the Philippines. We got a little sidetracked with a few World Wars, but stayed in the game by invading any little punk South/Central American politician who dared meddle in the affairs of any American company exploiting local resources. We are back big time now. Afghanistan can remain ours if we stay smart and let the locals continue to kill each

other instead of us, but it looks like a tougher nut is going to be Iraq. Afghanistan is important strategically, but the black gold is the key prize.

Dubya has little control over unemployment at this point. As one in six working adults is employed by the government, any drastic cuts in the size of that government (the only real way to improve the economy) are just not feasible. Thus, only Band-Aid solutions are going to happen. This is going to come back to bite him on the butt if we stay in perpetual recession or enter stagflation. His biggest concern right now is going to be Iraq, inasmuch as public opinion is concerned. These two forces are going to derail his reelection if they are not kept under control. And one of the great ways he can buy time with the economy is to inflate. Even if Bush was not in the picture, we would face inflation (but I will get to that). However, without the quick infusion of cheap plentiful oil he is right back at the problem with the economy. And the economy dictates a politicians future. Why do you think that little courtship with Russian leader Putin took place? To get rid of nukes? Balderdash! It was about securing a cheap plentiful source of oil. I don't know if intelligence told us the Russian fields were unreliable, or we failed to give Putin what he wanted, or what the problem was. But I can say, just using reason, that this whole mess is about oil. You don't need some contacts inside the corridors of power to figure out the big picture here. Our economy is based on oil. Not oil at any price but cheap oil gushing from the ground. Our military control of our world trade, our abundant agricultural output, our quest for daily employment, every facet of our daily life is based on cheap oil. It is really as simple as that. And, if we are running out as some suggest (but they said that thirty years ago, too) then it is even more important to get what we can now. To his credit, Bush is doing exactly what needs to be done by the worlds leading economy. However, the general public does not see the big picture and focuses on the small irritating details. That is what is going to trip him up. But, there is another just like him in the wings ready to take over. Politicians are all the same with the only difference being their bed side manner as they administer our medicine.

But lets leave aside the oil problem. Focus on our economic ills. And, boy howdy, do we have plenty of them. At the end of WWII we were the worlds leader in economic power. We had to battle for over forty years with the Soviet Union to gain the title military superpower, but the only thing that bought us was a lot of unpaid bills and a ever increasing cost of policing the globe to enable trade to enable foreign countries to sell us manufactured goods to enable them to buy our bonds (debt) to pay for our global policing military. In the end the US is a sucker and we have enriched many other countries while weakening ours. But such is the cost of empire. Now, how do you keep the machinery running just a little bit longer so the whole thing doesn't break down on your watch? Believe me, no politician wants to get in on the history books as the idiot who brought down the deck of cards. Look at the British prime minister Chamberlain prior to the war. The English were still militarily and economically spent from the last war and the last thing anyone wanted was another one. He went along with their wishes and gave in to Hitler time and again until it was too late. Then he was hounded from office and is forever known as the weak politician that let Hitler get a foothold in Europe. He was just giving the citizens what they wanted, but history has been very unkind. No

politician wants that negative legacy. Now, keep in mind what happened to Britain. They were the military and economic world power of the day. The first World War bankrupted them. The US came along and bailed them out at a very steep price (conceding dominance). The same could very well happen to us. Not in the exact same fashion, but after we bankrupt ourselves we will loose the title Master of the Globe. We owe foreigners something around $8 trillion. Our future unfunded liabilities to our retirees (social security, military, Medicaid, etc) is an unbelievable $40 trillion dollars. We will go bankrupt. Our economy is only $10 trillion annually, and you can't pay back the kind of debt we have on the governments take of that amount. Even if the government steals half that amount through hidden taxes it still only has a few trillion a year to play with, and what's left over after immediate expenses won't even come close to repayment. And so the answer must be... that's right, inflation!!!

Every single paper currency through out all of history was inflated out of existence. Every one of them. Any fiat (backed by no tangible goods, ordered by government decree, or fiat [Latin for "let it be done"]) currency has been debased. There are no exceptions. It is almost a natural law that big daddy government can't balance his checkbook and in the end he will start writing checks no matter what his balance, buying off his supporters and paying off the military to crush his enemies. It's free money- whee!! He gets all the money his tax collectors can squeeze out of the populace, plus can print up as much cash as he needs for his mad money. You can imagine the pain and suffering our future politicians suffered in the Ivy League schools while put on a strict allowance, so it is no wonder they spend other peoples money very freely once in power. The poor dears! Now, let me repeat myself in case there is any confusion out there. Unbacked paper currency is always inflated to a worthless condition, unless that currencies issuer was suddenly thrown from power, in which case the former currency is replaced anyway. Paper currency, in the long run, is worthless. What is paper currency? A promise by a government. That is all. And a promise by a government (again, in the long run despite periods of good behavior) is about as trustworthy as a promise by an adulterer to his wife to reform.

Paper currency came about as a substitute for hard currency. A paper receipt was issued for gold warehoused, and that receipt was in time used for trade rather than the physical metal itself. Well, about two minutes after that practice was accepted some bright boy figured out that since only a small fraction of the actual metal was ever withdrawn on a daily basis he didn't really need to keep as much gold on hand as there were paper receipts in circulation. That's why he could stop charging people a warehousing fee and start paying them interest on the money left with him as he made more by inflating the paper supply than by charging a fee. And about five minutes after that bright boy started issuing more paper than there was redeemable gold, the government saw the magic of this free money machine and promptly beheaded the private banker and monopolized the practice for themselves. But all that playing about with paper currency was primitive and required messy ink and paying for engravers, etc. Now we have bypassed paper altogether.

The definition of inflation is very simple. You print more money. The law of supply and

demand stipulates that the more there is of a product the less the cost, and vice versa. The more currency you print the less each note can buy and so more are required to buy the same amount.. The suppliers of product will increase the price to gain equilibrium in the supply and demand process. If we were playing the board game Monopoly and one player had the entire money supply of another identical game hidden in his pockets, as soon as the other players noticed he had doubled the money supply they would simply double the price of all properties to give the game a level playing field (after expelling the cheater and dividing up the proceeds). This is what inflation is in a nutshell. Just in a far more subtle way. The government, if it is in for the long haul, will only add a bit here and there. No drastic devaluations. And usually hidden quite well. I am sure that there exists a room full of bean counters who figure out the value added to the economy from private enterprise through productivity increases, takes that amount and adds to it the official inflation rate as decided on in advance, then adds the amount they know they can discount such as food and energy increases and therein the true inflation rate comes into being.

So, in my little conspiracy theory here, we have the value added by the real economy through productivity increases (such as increased work enabled by more computer power), the official admitted inflation rate, the inflation rate of food and energy (if we devalue the currency then OPEC raises rates to adjust, as do importers of food [fruits, coffee, etc]) then we come to the real rate of inflation. Of course it is still tricky because a lot of items you need to discount. For instance, college tuition is only increasing so fast because of monopoly state power and a financial problem forcing states to increase tuition rather than other taxes. Housing prices reflect a financial mania plus the effects of manipulating the interest rates plus hidden taxes such as impact fees added to the cost of a house. In general, just take the rise in energy costs (discounting sudden supply problems caused by political upheaval) and food (discounting supply problems caused by disease or weather) and add to the admitted rate increase. Thus, they claimed 2% inflation last year, but by my unscientific reckoning that amount did not take into account the steady increase in gasoline price of about 30 cents (just about right for our 20% devaluation of the dollar overseas) and the food hike of around three percent. The food increase (discounting beef price increases due to Mad Cow) reflects less foreign influence as we can readily feed ourselves. Still, taking into account the practice of reducing volume rather than increasing cost and factoring in increases across the board on some items (it seems mainly grain and legume) I arrive at a best guess of an increase. So, guessing again at a worker productivity increase of three percent (if nothing else to add on the work of laid off co-workers), minus the token 1% pay increase, we add it all together for a guess of a real inflation rate of ten percent last year. As I said, unscientific but I simply do not have time to wade through volumes of data to write two paragraphs in a free newsletter, so I do the next best thing and just ballpark it.

And now, the place I was trying to get to before I distracted myself, as usual, on matters only marginally connected to the subject at hand. Our government has a vested interest in inflation. It will inflate to keep from raising taxes. It will inflate to stay in power, and it will inflate to pay off the bills it runs up. We will muddle through for awhile, but baring a crisis in another area such as home sales drying up or another quagmire on top of Iraq,

when the Baby Boomers start to retire in mass we will crank up the printing presses (ok, actually just add more credit into the computer) and really start inflating the money supply. It is a bit complicated, what with foreign trade and bond purchases, foreign currency inflation, international bank bail-outs, etc. However, to simplify things just look to the next big jolt to our benefactor Uncle Sugar and that is going to be when the new batch of seniors hobble up to the bank teller on canes and walkers and demand with threats of the voting booth that they get what was promised to them. The check had better be in the mail (or Direct Deposited). How Grandma can bounce the grandson on her knee and gaze lovingly into his eyes all the while planning to bankrupt the country by her selfish greedy voting for increased welfare payments is beyond my comprehension. Remember- the total future unfunded liability of our Federal government is $40 trillion, and we owe foreigners who bought our debt almost a years worth of gross domestic product (to picture the problem with this, imagine that you owed a loan shark the amount equal to a year of your gross pay [before taxes]). We will inflate. It is the only way to pay our debts, period. The only question is how much and how fast (oh, and by the way- if you have an adjustable mortgage rate, beware , and if you expect inflation to make it easier to pay the mortgage remember food and energy increases and take into account gamblers never beat the house).

All this talk about deflation by Greenspan is smoke and mirrors. You can add inflation to death and taxes on the list of life's sure things. END.

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E-BAY LAND FOR HOMESTEADING
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As of late the cost of land is ridiculous in most areas of the US where normal people live and work. A lot of 1/8 acre is costing more than regular houses used to. There are multiple answers to why this has come about, none of which are likely to matter to you as you struggle to pay your mortgage. However, being the irritating blowhard that I am, I can't resist sharing with you my pearls of wisdom.

First and foremost we can point to the lying, cheating bastards in the government. The only reason we have inflation is that the government prints more money. Supply and demand- the more dollars in circulation the less each is worth. The government inflates the money supply and everything costs more, including the house you live on. It is all fine and dandy that your grandfather paid $5,000 for his first house in the 1940's, but he earned a lot less in dollars. In roughly the last 100 years we have seen the amount a dollar can buy plunge from $20 to the current lone greenback. And our last century was kind to our currency, in relation to other paper currencies. Wonderful places like Argentina have seen inflation at 1,000% a month. So our rate of being screwed over is certainly slower. But you will still lose in the long run. Inflation is a hidden tax that the government imposes on all holders of its money, and they can change the rules on a whim. Today, 2/3 of a percent a month. Tomorrow it could be 3% a month. Hold paper and it buys less. And, no, inflation never evens out your pay with your costs. Even if it does, income tax bracket creep will still put you behind. But as a general rule, figure monthly price hikes with annual wage hikes.

Next we have interest rate reduction. You might think that Uncle Sugar is doing you a favor by lowering interest rates, but of course you would be wrong. The government only does favors to the little guy by accident. By lowering the cost of borrowing money, more people buy. The more that buy, the higher the cost. You would probably be spending less right now per month if interest rates were double and the insane housing bubble never started (barring regional manias of course). The government is inflating and reducing the interest rate to get almost everyone to borrow. With everyone borrowing, our sick feeble economy lasts much longer before crashing. Please keep in mind that we have had a worldwide depression, bank bailouts, the Tech-Wreak, Y2K, a terrorist attack on Wall Street, two expensive wars, another wave of manufacturing leaving the country, and a severe recession all in the last ten years. One percent interest rates are the last bullet propping up the US economy.

The California Effect also contributes to housing costs rising. For many a decade

California was blessed with fat defense contracts and perfect weather. The prices of houses surged. Then, the Cold War ended, defense contracts disappeared, the state went socialist big time and a whole lot of folks sold and moved out of state. Even if the local market was depressed, it was still big enough to afford a large premium. Former Californians drove up the cost of houses all over the West by leaving in droves with a fat bank account and arriving in markets depressed by crappy local economies. Of course, once again the California market is booming along with the rest of the country (for God knows what reason) and the premium is still there. I'm a former Californian, but not one with property, so I suffer the effects without any benefits.

There are other reasons. The effect of middle class professionals bidding up prices to get into the best school districts. The effect of the Federal government owning most of the land west of the Mississippi. Zoning regulations bidding up the price in favor of the campaign contributor. Perhaps a few more very good reasons. The fact of the matter is that you would be a fool to buy a house in the current housing market. Even at 5% interest rates, it will more often than not take two incomes to pay the mortgage as well as the bills. With too many jobs being out-sourced to India and most employment figures based on part time work or government jobs, it is a very real possibility that one of you will loose your job and the mortgage will not be paid. Even one missed payment would send most folks into a serious financial hole.

Perhaps one answer to high rent and mortgage would be the old fashion practice of not getting into debt. Radically down-size your expectations. I have talked before of living in a trailer rather than a home. Now, lets talk about getting land a lot cheaper. One great answer currently is to shop through the Internet on www.ebay.com. They are the ones that auction everything from old dirty socks to new cars. Now, I for one was most hesitant to participate in the auction process. To be honest with you it was due to one of those embarrassing childhood experiences one retains with clarity and wishes to forget. While in the Cub Scouts (or some variant) we held an auction of pies to raise money and I embarrassed myself by immediately bidding some ridiculously high price. It was a stupid episode, but one that kept me away from auctions for thirty years. After much hesitation I finally tried out EBay, mainly due to the impersonal nature of total computerization. I had no one to embarrass myself in front of. I'm glad I did.

Now, I am not talking about buying expensive land. There is plenty of that online. I am saying that if one shops for awhile there is plenty of land to buy for under $2,000 (one months mortgage for some folks) and even some under $1,000 (what most of us spend on either mortgage or rent each month). I have done it, and while I still must live in town for a job, it is peace of mind to know that in an emergency I have some rent free land to settle on.

You can expect to be at least five to ten miles from any town, twenty to forty miles from any Wal-Mart, have no near-by power or water and have at least one mile of dirt road to get to pavement at this price. But it would be all yours, legally, and at most you would pay $20 a year in property taxes if you didn't have a permanent structure with foundation.

For those earning only a casual income, living in a small trailer and being self-sufficient this would certainly be the way to go. If you hauled water on a bike, used minimal propane for cooking only and had a source for cheap heating wood you could live on one to two thousand dollars a year. This even assumes you must buy groceries instead of gardening.

Lets say that you bought a lot in the desert. There is a river or a small town with water within five miles. Even if you had to pedal a bike several times a week it would take no more than two hours a trip. Most of us spend that much time everyday just commuting. Even if you went once a week to a further location for cheap groceries (say 45 mile round trip) you would only spend four to five hours doing that. Eleven hours a week on a bicycle is great exercise, costs only a few bucks a month in replacement costs and saves you thousands of dollars a year in motor vehicle costs. But most of us have cars. The trick to buying cheap land with a car is to make sure you can drive to your land in the first place, to make sure that the dirt roads will not tear up the vehicle and not to pay more in vehicle costs than what rent would cost you in town. If an RV lot rents for $200 a month and your vehicle payment is $250, it is cheaper not to own property. Assuming you gave up owning a car. Otherwise, if you keep a car you might as well not pay rent also.

It seems a lot of folks I read about assume a land payment even if they build their own house. Why? They are most likely willing only to settle in one given area. Why handicap yourself with debt that can later lose you the land you sweated for, built a home on and came to love in case of economic hardship? I realize most of you immediately retch at the thought of economics, but you must know that our economy is in serious trouble. We escaped the depression of the 1970's by living on massive amounts of debt. That debt is going to make the next time harder to achieve a soft landing. In just the last few years we have seriously devalued our currency, moved a lot of jobs overseas, started up inflationary forces, pumped up our government job roles, eliminated a lot of requirements for pension fund solvency, wiped out billions in stock market wealth and started two huge wars all in the name of saving our economy. What is left to do macro-economically that can prolong the inevitable decline? Get out of debt now, and stay out. A 15 foot travel trailer on a quarter acre land twenty minutes from town with a bike for transportation all paid for is much better than a nice house in the burbs with an SUV in the garage, all being paid for the next few decades. Sure, keep your toys. But sell at least one to finance a cheap retreat.

Most if not all of you will refuse to adapt such a crude lifestyle. This is understandable. If we have to work hard we might as well enjoy some creature comforts. It is nice to know that a cop is patrolling our neighborhood, electricity flows freely and entertainment is a click away. Living in the sticks without water or power or neighbors or even a fire department might not seem the ideal way to get a self sufficient living arrangement. But we have to be honest. Will you ever get out into the country if you maintain the regular amenities? Twenty acres with a two thousand square foot house, a truck and tractor, livestock and solar panels. That is a nice chunk of change. Is it more realistic to assume you can only buy a junk piece of land in a less than desirable location and live in a crappy

trailer and have a heck of a time getting into town? I believe that we are not too far away from an economic downturn, so for myself I choose to settle for far less now and to be prepared rather than building a dream utopia in the country some time in the future.

You can buy regular house lots or country estates through E-Bay, but here I am focused on a cheap retreat you can buy now. I have two lots myself, one in the desert in Arizona that I bought for $400 (I do not include document preparation fees, but they are on average just under $100) for a quarter of an acre and one fifth of an acre in Arkansas for $300. Both properties are less than ideal. Arizona is a bit off a county dirt road and it is doubtful the subdivision roads are not overgrown. It would take a GPS receiver to find the property and you would need to travel off-road to do so. A stream is close, but it is seasonal (i.e. it fills up a couple times a year when it rains) and the closest permanent water is fifteen miles away. There is the closest town only five miles away in which water can be obtained. Life on this property would involve careful water rationing, hauling and off site purchasing. A water well is far beyond my budget. Even food procurement is less than easy. Preliminary research shows the closest town of 700 population does not even offer a grocery store (one assumes the Super Wal-Mart 40 miles away killed any local business, but only an on site visit will say for sure). Food is 15 miles north. This involves a lot a peddling.

The property in Arkansas is within ten miles of town. Only one mile to the paved road. Yet, the whole appeal to this property, plenty of rain, assures that dirt road will be mud a great deal of the time. Also, water helps all those great trees grow. The lot is either all trees (removal being a problem) or not enough trees to offer shade and negate the effects of heat in the summer. This lot offers no power. Furthermore, in an economic downturn fire services might be eliminated or reach the point of uselessness. Any reduction of normal precipitation will cause fires, either man made or by lightning. And this area is home of some of the most destructive tornadoes outside Oklahoma. So, as you can see, both these properties offer serious disadvantages. What do you choose, isolation and drought, or forest fires/mud/killer winds?

The advantages of the desert are lack of fires, unobstructed views to spy intruders, complete isolation from marauding city dwellers and mostly a lack of natural disasters. The Mississippi River region offers plentiful water, the opportunity to garden and easy access into town. Both properties are paid for and cost very little tax wise. I would at this moment be living on one or the other and living in the above described lifestyle if my child support obligations were not so great financially. Oh, the dream of dropping out of the rat race and avoiding the potential social collapse!

When visiting the E-Bay website just go to the real estate section. You can refine your search to several criteria, but I have found that the search engine is seriously flawed. I had better luck just viewing all land offerings. When you look at the sub $1000 category most is just down payments. The buy nows (purchase direct, no auction) are mostly down payments. When you go to one state only, it usually is only the expensive items other than both Arizona and Arkansas which combined are about 20% of all items for sale. I found

both my lots by just looking under the general land sales (although it is usually at least 800 items). After a time you learn to skip past most. An example would be any California land. Even if the auction is $200, you know the monthly payments would last twenty years. There is little to no cheap California land. Any land over an acre is most likely out of the cheap range. You are looking for land that the bidding price is the final sale.

However, even some land is worth making payments on. There was New Mexico land, one acre for $1500, at $75 a month interest free. Utah land, 1/2 acre for $2500 and only ten miles to town and near a river. A lot of land went for $5000, but there was almost no down and small payments. I would avoid all debt, but if your income allows a fast pay-off that might be the way to go and usually the more expensive land offers fewer drawbacks. Still, there should be enough land under $1000 available to offer the poorest folks out there a chance to own land.

You don't even need a credit card to buy this land outright. Most sellers prefer PayPal, but I just overnighted a money order by UPS (about $20) and thus fulfilled the payment in three days requirement. As far as fraud is concerned, go to the sellers comment page and you can see how previous customers rated the service. Fraud is always a concern, so read the sites policy if you are worried. I had no problems, but there is less of an incentive to cheat with cheap land. Any negative rating would hurt future sales. Caveat Emptor, however. My own recommendation is that I trust rated sellers on E-Bay over the next door used car salesman.

Good luck finding a dirt cheap piece of dirt!
END

ROUGHING IT AT HOME
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Lowes and Home Depot have made a very handsome living in recent decades catering to the nesting urge that all affluent (or near affluent) Americans have given in to. In the last five years a combination of a non-performing stock market and record breaking low interest rates along with an explosion of finance companies salivating at the chance to offer everyone a second mortgage has led to a proverbial cornucopia of home improvement activity. Now, setting aside the grotesque real estate bubble and its prices, and forgetting the detail that a new home costing a quarter of a million dollars should not need maintenance almost immediately, we will focus on the needs of the average person, Joe Can't Get A Decent Job That Pays A Living Wage. Joe will scrimp and save for quite some time, forgoing a newer used car and instead continuing to nurse the old piece of junk along, only eating out once a month and then at a cheaper place, buying used instead of new, and then one glorious day as the clouds part and heavenly trumpets blare, Joe puts down 25% on a used mobile home almost as old as himself. He now faces the challenge of continuing repairs. The ongoing, never ending, all consuming repairs. Yet, unlike the middle class consumer of stick built new homes, Joe doesn't need new and pretty. He buys used and repairs are functional. Lowes and Home Depot are not going to be selling a whole lot of high mark-up items to Joe. They do cater to the cheap-skate, but their bread and butter is the guy that is improving a newer home, not nursing an old one along.

Joe will usually be seen tooling down the road in a 1975 Ford pick-up truck (pre-computer chip vehicles are great for using baling wire on) looking for junk piles containing fodder for his next jerry-rigged project. Pallet fences seem to be popular, as are water tank meat smokers. All of which is just fine. There is nothing wrong with being poor. Most are. The problem for some folks lie with the American myth. That we must all aspire to greatness. Try and climb the economic ladder. Well, that myth died in the 1970's. After Reagan forced the economy back on track at the expense of future generations in the form of a monstrous debt (a trend all presidents since are only too happy to continue) the American dream of working towards middle class nirvana has been substituted by the illusion thereof. We are now more concerned with attaining the picture of middle class wealth, not with actually living the middle class lifestyle. The middle class has always been a value system, not an economic benchmark. Working hard, saving for a 25% down on a house that's payments were cheaper than rent, putting the kids through college, contributing to society, making a mark, not being dependant. Now, it is more to do with a consumer society, with toys, the trappings of success even if that success is an illusion and at the expense of others. The middle class lifestyle almost forces one to get, stay, and die in debt. Far better to live the values of middle class while staying poor and

humble.

If events have seen to it that you will stay poor, either by your own choice or by circumstances, your best bet is to live within your means. If you are lucky enough to import a job into an economic depressed area than you can buy a cheap house and fix it up. It is not uncommon even today to find houses for sale under $30,000 in these areas. If you can bring a job with you. Otherwise, there are always mobile homes for sale under $5,000 with a short tow fee of around $500. Or travel trailers available for under $2,000 for decent ones, under $1,000 for small/old/in bad shape. You can always own a home for under $500 if you wish to buy a used cab-over camper and can live in a space under 100 square feet. Yet even at these cheap housing prices, some of us are so poor that after purchase there is literally no more money available for repairs. This is where roughing it is going to come into effect. There is no divine law that states that you must have central heat or air, ovens, hot water heaters, or even a refrigerator or flushing toilet. Even running water might be a luxury. Back in days of yore, all these things did not exist. When they did become available they were merely nice things to get. Now they are regarded as necessities. Us poor folk need to step back and look at the point were need and want got tangled up, and we need to untangle the whole mess.

Of course we must face the reality that there is never a zero cost associated with owning anything. Some exceptions do exist, such as a Corona grain mill. One can use it for a lifetime and most likely you will never spend a penny more to operate it. Or good manual tools, never needing more than a light coating of oil (and one really would be too anal if they insisted oil was an operating cost- but even if they did point out you could use your discarded car oil). Without being too picky, it is a valid point to state that most objects require an additional infusion of cash to continue operating them. Not only must you learn to minimize these costs, an issue for another day, more importantly you are going to have to learn to substitute and/or do without. You can save a pretty penny by reducing your costs on fixing up your home, but you can save even more by learning to do without modern conveniences by substituting far less expensive ways of achieving the same end that the modern equipment or method requires. As my first example, allow me to demonstrate the trials and tribulations of having hot water flowing out of your tap.

A hot water heater is a great idea. By washing cloths in hot water, dirt and its accompanying vermin are eliminated. By washing dishes in hot water, food poisoning is less likely. Washing ones hands after using the toilet is a great way to stop spreading disease. And the morning shave is a lot less painful with hot water than with cold. However, as good as the hot water heater was in the past, technology has surpassed it. Over in Europe, the norm is the tank less heater. A small device compared to a regular American heater, a tank less heater heats as water passes through the unit rather than our practice of keeping water heated 24 hours a day. Europeans lack the ability of using military action, political persuasion or a subsidized currency to get cheap overseas oil. They view energy self-sufficiency far more importantly than we do. Which is why France generates a far higher percentage of electric power from nuclear plants, or coastal areas see experiments in wave generated power that make no economic sense but plenty

sufficiency-wise, or drivers pay five times our gas tax, or taxpayers subsidize huge windmills, or why mopeds are so popular as are diesels. If we priced our water like Europeans price their energy the American West would have no drought.

Yet even a tank less heater might not be called for. Allow me to regale you with yet another sad tale of woe from the Dakin Files. My last home in Florida was a fairly decent mobile home in a park. Rent was a modest $250 with the payments about the same. Not bad compared to housing cost, but still not good enough for poor folk. However, roommates were required all the same. Not a practice I recommend at all, as the scum sucking worthless deadbeats will cost you money, and seem to outnumber the decent folks. I needed roommates to eat, yet to keep roommates I needed to keep up maintenance on the central heat/air and water heater. Thankfully the cooler never broke, but I was not so lucky with the hot water heater. Because of the age of the pipes, I was unable to do the work myself (not that I would have done a great job anyway) and had to hire help. After I was done being financially raped by this "professional" he left, with a connecting pipe still leaking (he was "only hired to install") I paid yet another plumber to fix the problem. $300 later I had a $100 hot water heater installed. This after two years previously being screwed by another plumber that had sub-contracted through Lowes where I bought a heater for another mobile home. Central Florida has about zero standards to become a plumber, if any con artists out there are interested. After these two instances I was bound and determined to never pay another individual to install a hot water heater.

After I moved to Nevada I bought a travel trailer that had a propane water heater. At the time I was tapped out financially even after the last of our tangible assets were sold so I kept putting off buying new propane tanks. It seems that every so often our wonderful government sees fit to upgrade safety requirements on propane tanks, suddenly finding the old standards as dangerous as nuclear waste, asbestos and sarin nerve gas combined and swiftly move in to save us from ourselves and outlaw the sale or refilling of old type containers. Perhaps it is a good thing as plenty of tight wads out there would continue using tanks so covered with rust that the tank could double as a source for phosphorous grenade components. Yet, on principle I dislike the government looking out for my safety, if for no other reason that it usually means I'm going to get screwed over. If I was not the trusting type I might conclude a certain industry group bribed a few civil servants to upgrade standards in order to goose sales.

Then, four or five months later I bought a trailer that was twice as big (me and the old lady were getting on each others nerves in a sixteen foot long trailer). It was a sweet price, but much was wrong with the old dear. One thing was the hot water heater was trashed. So, between the two trailers I learned how to live without a hot water heater. I still bathe every day, shave with hot water, use hot water for dishes, etc. It really is simply just forgetting that water should flow through pipes. Just revert back to the old heat and carry method. It might be one thing in a two story house, but in a small space such as a travel trailer it is really easy. I use a microwave oven ($30 new from Wal-Mart, $5 to $15 used) and a coffee maker. The microwave safe bowl carries about three quarts

(okay, exactly three liters, but I hate the metric system) and the coffee maker ($10 Wal-Mart) two quarts. Ten minutes in the nuker, same for the brewing cycle and you have over a gallon of near boiling water for about the cost of under two hundred watts of electricity (most folks cost would be two cents).

Since a coffee maker and a microwave oven are already in everyone's house, your equipment cost to heat water is nothing. If you take two bathes a day per household, shave once, and do dishes once, the electric cost for hot water per month is under two dollars. Can a hot water heater come close? Granted, you are using far less water. The gallon of hot water is added to cold for a very shallow bath or very skimpy shower. The dishes are done by dipping each item into a bowl containing hot soapy water, not by filling the sink. My clothes are done at a Laundromat, but even at home I would only use cold water anyway. By hauling hot water you save over a hundred bucks in equipment costs and at least $20 a month in electricity. While this may seem trivial to the monied spoiled pampered Yuppie scum out there, think about what those costs can get to in another energy crises. If energy costs (not just gasoline costs) start to act like food or health care costs have recently, you just might need to turn off your hot water heater somewhere down the road. As a final note, our coffee maker is run at least three times a day and is still running strong after a year. The microwave should last forever.

Now, on to other items. What about your heat and cooling? Although a central unit is efficient, especially at higher or lower than normal settings, the initial cost plus the repair cost must be added to the monthly cost of operation. It is better to adapt your unit to the climate and only heat/cool certain areas instead of the entire dwelling. Even in a humid climate it is possible to live in comfort if the house is shaded and a minimum of clothing is worn and small rotary fans used. Air conditioning is not a necessity. In dry climates all that is needed is shade. Even in our trailer park with restrictions on adding any permanent structure such as secondary roofs a bit of shading from trees goes a long way, with some open windows and a fan. On your own land away from other idiots dictating how your property looks, a few used tires on the roof with a tarp over them and two pieces of plywood sloping from each side will shade your trailer at a cost of under $30. For heat use a few oil filled radiant heaters. One only heats one room and costs about $30 a month to run 24/7 on low, but if you live in a small dwelling it will be all you need. This assumes you don't have a wood stove and a good source of cheap wood. In a conventional size home I usually hear the owners complaining of electric bills at least two hundred dollars in the winter, half that in the summer. Not that I would ever pay for such luxury, but if I was living in such an energy pig I would shut off most of the house and only heat a few rooms. If the windows leak too much, cover them with a Mylar blanket, they work great,

A regular size oven is a big energy pig, especially if it is electric. Propane for years was a great bargain but recent inflation has wiped out that deal. Both gasoline and propane, any derivatives of crude oil, are now in a faze where any disruption instantly is reflected in the retail price. Which is why any two bit Banana Republic can have a coup and even if it only supplies 2% of the worlds oil the markets overreact. Because China suddenly started demanding more market share the demand is way over supply. Plus, plenty of oil pipeline

attacks in Iraq and Saudi Arabia are helping to spook the commodities people even if that particular news item is rarely shared with the American public. Now is the perfect time to start conserving energy, before prices of energy are reflected in your power bill. Coal, hydropower, and nuclear plants give us plenty of leeway in electric generation, unlike gasoline prices that go crazy immediately. Just beware that tree hugging environmental wack jobs are doing their best to kill all three of those sources. They alone will be responsible for any increased dependency on foreign oil. But, back to ovens. If you bake once a week, baking all bread at once and cooking the next weeks dishes at once to be frozen, by all means use your oven. Otherwise just turn it into a depository for pots and pans and only use a countertop toaster oven. If you mostly use a microwave and the stovetop you don't need that much room to bake anyway.

You might not even need a stovetop. I only use mine to boil water, such as for boiled eggs and prepping chicken. My rice and noodles and potatoes I boil in the microwave. Any other use I need a stovetop for I use an electric skillet. It uses less energy and I don't need it every day. By adapting all these energy saving tricks I see an electric bill of $15 in the summer and $45 in the winter in a 35 foot travel trailer at high elevation with summers 95 degrees, winter down to 15 or 20 degrees. And that is with no propane, electric only at 10 cents a kilowatt hour. I sit at times dripping sweat or piling on more blankets and I can't say I'm all that comfortable. But it gets the job done. By roughing it you can save big bucks.
END

VOTING FOR TWEEDLE-DUMB OR TWEEDLE-DUMBER
or, Who Cares Who Ruins The Country
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If it wasn't so darn annoying, repetitive and vulgar, the election rhetoric would be slightly amusing. Here are two idiots telling the sheeple what they think they want to hear, all of which makes absolutely no difference in the long run. Our end of empire is as good as guaranteed, and along with it will be the pain associated with one no longer making the rules and being at the mercy of others might. This is the natural order of things. It might also be the order of things for those in declining empire to deny this long after the fact, creating a spectacle of themselves and being an embarrassment, but that makes watching no less painful. I am pretty quick with the remote whenever either candidate makes an appearance and so might have missed a sound bite or two, but essentially I take it that both candidates are promising us the moon, along with everything else they can think of. Winning in Iraq, next to free health care, giving the seniors their drug fix, tax cuts for all, no deficits, and creating jobs for one and all.

I couldn't say for sure if we started fighting in Iraq for oil to stimulate the economy, to re-elect the Prez, to justify loss of civil rights and the creation of the anti-terrorist state or even a combination of these reasons. I for one believe that a pre-emptive grab at a reliable oil supply to replace the increasingly shaky Saudis rule is most feasible but then it has been awhile sense I was invited to participate in any discussions at the White House. I would say my scenario stands at a 80% chance of being correct, but its all just a mental exercise anyway. Other than those poor bastards bleeding in the sand over there, the rest of us are unaffected for now. We will be later, to be sure. But for now it really matters little why we went over there in the first place. We are in Iraq and both presidential candidates spew feel good speeches about how we are going to get behind the troops, let them win, perhaps win one for the Gipper. Fine, I agree that if you start a war, go ahead and win the damn thing. The problem is that we may not be able to. We may think we can kill insurgents with F-16s, but mainly we kill civilians and only end up fostering resentment amongst the population. Gee, kinda sounds like Vietnam all over again. And speaking of Vietnam, it seems that both candidates are using the service record issue to make an unstated connection. Vietnam, we lost. Iraq, elect me and we will win and erase the memory of defeat. We lost more than a war in Vietnam, we lost a stable currency to pay for a war. Nixon (may he rot in the fiery depths of Hell) ended the post WWII agreement of Bretton Woods in which the US held gold for its currency and all other currencies were backed by dollars. This allowed for stable currencies. Ending it allowed the printing presses to run, brought about the 1970s inflation and forced the Arabs to

reprice oil in new dollar inflation adjusted amounts. We will pay for this one with comparable inflation.

By buying the senior vote with subsidized prescription drug benefits President Bush in a single spasm of bonehead idiocy created a welfare program potentially as harmful to the economy as Social Security. Health care costs are inflating at a minimum of 10% a year so the natural reaction of politicians is to pay for it with your tax money. Money that isn't there now and money that won't be there next year plus ten percent. Money that is being spent in war. One candidate wants a war, increased welfare and tax cuts. The other wants a war, increased welfare, tax cuts and to top it off more money thrown down the public school sewer. Lets say the Federal government was a household, the Jones', down the street. The Jones' are free spending morons who constantly try to win the vote of other neighbors for "House of the Year". It's only a plastic trophy, but they are competitive. To pay for house improvements, they borrow money from the local loan shark. They actually get decent rates of interest since they borrow twice their income every year and the loan shark owns the construction company they use to build on to their house. And the Jones' are his best customer. He loans out money at interest to get more business for his company. A sweet deal all around. Then one day the Chinese Triad move in on the Mafia and open another loan shark business and construction company. They try to horn in on the market for the Jones' building spree. By now the Jones residence has three stories, a pool, and even a nuclear fallout shelter, but in pursuit of this years trophy they decide to add a subterranean addition to the garage to park twice the cars (the Triad guys own a used car lot and they are selling used BMWs cheap that "fell off a truck"). By now both crime groups are selling twice as much at half the profits and lowering the interest rates, but it still pays the bills so they continue. But when another gang moves in, profits fall so much they all go out of business. And the money dries up for Mr. Jones who now can't even pay taxes on his new monstrosity. And so he moves into a trailer park.

Tax cuts are great. After the government steals our money they graciously agree to give back five to ten percent. Sort of like when the IRS takes a big bite of our paycheck and then at the end of the year they force us to figure out what we actually owe them usually by paying someone else to do the math since the whole process is overly complicated and then after they have used our money all year interest free they give us back some of it and force us to feel grateful and then as if that isn't enough hold that over our heads forever more that they did actually give us back our own money but if we made a mistake they would charge us only ten percent interest but then tack on fees and penalties that put them on par with payday loan businesses that charge around 20% a week. Or when a electronics superstore advertises a computer system with all the bells and whistles plus a free printer even and then you read the fine print and you have to come up with over twice the sales price up front and they charge you sales tax at that price and then you have to fill out long forms for the printer manufacturer, and one for the monitor and one for the chip guys, one for whoever put the pieces together even though everything was actually made in Asia and then you have to address all those envelopes with really long names like "Super Duper Computer Deal, Department 123D8hh, Super Duper Company Street,

Business Loop, Palookaville NY 100001-7766", and then after you wait perhaps two to three months you get back a crumpled stained envelope that is actually the refund check itself and you take it down to the bank and they never heard of the company because they buy their computers at full retail and they think you printed up the check of your new printer you got free but its not a great deal since it costs $35 to replace the ink cartridge and you can't refill them because the bastards put some damn gizmo on there to prevent such a thing and then it takes another two weeks to get the check cashed and you have to do that for every check and by then of course the computer is technologically obsolete and you have to go out and buy another one. Bush is using your own money to bribe you to vote for him, but you have to wait for the refund check in the mail.

Reducing the deficit for the Federal government is all smoke and mirrors. Clinton did a great job by gutting the military and transferring Social Security, a strategy that I must admire even if it scars my anarchist soul. If we screw the Baby Boomers (they by and large had it too easy anyway) and reduce the military to mostly a nuclear umbrella we might actually save ourselves from economic ruin. Not that its going to happen. Between the vote of the geriatrics, the military construction companies in each Congressman's voting district and the fact that the only thing keeping the economy going right now is government spending, we can assume quite safely that dangerous levels of government debt are going to continue. The only thing that might change is the level of debt that we assume every year. We always run a deficit, it is only a matter of what amount, and really that is what all the commotion is about. How quickly do we run ourselves into the poor house?

The campaign lies about job creation are perhaps the worse of all. Again, the evil actions of Nixon can be said to be the start of it all. Inflate the money supply to pay for the war, forcing oil producers to charge in inflation adjusted dollars, sending an economy totally dependant on the black goo into a tailspin and start the process of sending the factories overseas. Of course, the government had already done that by favoring Japanese and Korean heavy industry in order to prop up their economies so as to keep those countries in the Capitalistic Bloc (as opposed to the Communist Bloc). But that was chump change compared to the industrial sector as a whole that looked on overseas manufacture as a way to reduce the American workers outrageous demand to be paid a living wage. Now, granted, a lot of factory work was Unionized and in fact was grossly overpaid, and if we had kept the factories most likely the only people that would have wanted to work there would have been recent immigrants. But the fact remains that factory work is needed to keep the undereducated sector employed. One largely ignored consequence of the early factory migration was the widespread unemployment of the Black population, its movement away from the American Dream and middle class, and the rise of the welfare state, ghettos and high incarceration in the growing prison industry. It really is not racism as much as economics. The Black population is denied jobs and then we express shock at the general movement towards crime to pay the bills. Not that the uneducated White sector is any smaller in size but by and large cultural differences as opposed to racism explain why one group is employed over another. The fact of the matter is that our manufacturing sector is as good as gone, a done deal, and campaign lies will not bring

back jobs that pay Union wages, overpriced Workman's Comp bills, exploding health care costs, and overly generous retirement benefits. We have priced ourselves out of the market long before Bush came along.

And so the two candidates are able and ready to spend us into national bankruptcy all in the name of being elected. Two idiots fighting to see who's going to become the captain of the Titanic. Could it be they have no clue? Both are educated at exclusive institutes of higher learning. Are our schools now so worthless that their graduates have no clue? Who the hell would want to go down in the history books as the moron who sunk the American Empire? Looking at it that way, both candidates deserve to be elected.
END

SURVIVAL INVESTING
or, What To Do With Increasingly Worthless Greenbacks
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Surely you realize that when our economy goes down the toilet all of your paper investments will sink with it. Corporate retirement is as good as worthless, as is (at some point) government retirement. Stocks and bonds will loose, IRAs, 401Ks, even house values will plummet. If a corporate or government promise was made on your future prosperity it is most likely a hollow and empty promise. There has never been an inflated money supply in the history of governments that has not lost all its value, either through hyper-inflation, deflation or outright replacement. The dollar replaced the continental after the Revolutionary War which was hyper-inflated. The Confederate notes which ran half the economy were hyper-inflated in a few short years. And that's just in our country. The rest of the world was even worse. A paper currency sooner or later is made worthless. Add in an economic super event such as a transfer from manufacturing to information (which is far from over- more pain still to come) and all economic relationships that could be relied on at one time are subject to becoming null and void. All safety nets/retirement systems/investments that worked in an agrarian economy did not work in an industrial economy and we will see a repeat of that again. Not guaranteed, but very probable. The risks are great enough that it would be silly to bet your well being on it. As in Y2K, it was not if an event was to occur, but rather the consequences if it did that was a concern.

If your spouse works and you rely on two incomes to pay the mortgage, you are betting on thirty years of economic stability. Yet daily there is news of more jobs in the white collar sector being sent overseas where workers are 90% cheaper because college education are cheaper, food is cheaper, houses are far less than $200,000, there is no retirement or workman’s comp or lawyers suing anyone that moves. If our housing bubble pops your $2,000 a month payments are going to be paying for a house that kept only 25% of its value. If both of you are still working. Otherwise that money you paid into that house just vanished into thin air. And only a few of us still believe in the fairy tale of corporate pensions. That fable has pounded into the dirt for decades. So the next best thing is a 401K. Except that between banks which are loaning money very irresponsibly to every breathing walking being and the government which will inflate your money without fail you are either not going to see your retirement account or it is going to be worth a lot less. Social Security is an unfunded plan that is going to go broke as soon as the bulk of Baby Boomers retire. Relying on it is as dangerous as assuming your kids are going to take you in, feed you and wipe your butt. The stock market is an

anachronism for the Industrial Economy and is nothing less than a casino. Gambling is not a sound retirement option. Promises are worthless. You need to rely on nothing else but your talents and investments on hand. An auto mechanic with a food storage is going to be much better off in the future than a stock broker with a huge stockpile of paper cash in the bank.

Your immediate survival investment should be silver, brass and wheat. Silver in the form of water filters (the filter contains silver to keep the ceramic element from forming bacteria) and coin, brass in the form of ammunition and arms, and wheat in the form of food storage. There are other investments for survival, but these are the cheapest and most important. Further on I will cover the others. Being debt free, paid for land and shelter, healthier life style for low cost health insurance, education and commodity stockpiles. For now you should focus on the first three.

Assuming you are remiss in your survivalist duties and your water supply is old, replace it immediately. Containers are more precious than filters and they should come first if you are in a drought area. Fill those containers and treat them with bleach. If your area has a lot of rainfall than a filter would be most important. Its hard to filter water you don't have and its silly to store water when the average rainfall is fifty inches a year and a pond is out back. Do your research on water filters. The best of course is a Katadyn for portability, thirteen thousand gallons of treated water for about $200, replacement elements about half that. If you are stationary go with the Berkely, about the size of a big coffee urn and will treat 25,000 gallons for $250 with replacement elements about half that. If you can afford a filter. You may not be able to come up with that amount of cash all at once. If you feel the need for immediate coverage go to Wal-Mart and buy household bleach filters. Buy replacement elements every visit. Soon you will have a nice stockpile. Pour water through a mesh screen to remove large particles into a five gallon bucket treated with a few tablespoons of bleach. Let sit for awhile and then filter the bleach from the water. Not as cost effective as the more expensive units but sometimes it is smarter to buy small units of an item now instead of one expensive item later, or perhaps never if time runs out.

After you can supply a safe water source you may wish to think of silver coins. Even just buying one ounce of silver a payday will add up quickly and it is so much better than cash in the bank. Sure, keep enough cash on hand for emergency use. But don't get crazy. Any paper you own will inflate away rapidly (fast enough with just the "official" rate of inflation, far worse at actual rates). Silver coins are the better savings route. If silver is $6 that week and your local coin shop charges a 15% mark-up plus sales tax you could buy three ounces for a tad over $20. That amount is a movie and popcorn and less than a carton of cigarettes in most states. And almost less than having a steak barbecue. But even one ounce a week will cost you under $10 unless silver prices go nuts and at the end of the year you own three pounds of silver. Nothing the average poor working Joe is going to sneeze at. Besides, even though it should be a strict buy and hold strategy there is reason to believe that the price of silver is being artificially held down by government stockpile dumping and in the long run the actual purchasing power of silver will be higher than at present (I avoid thinking in terms of Greenback value, an oxymoron). Do not

neglect your other survival investments, but if the extra saving is there do consider silver hoarding.

Wheat is my favorite storage food as it keeps literally forever if protected. If money is tight your first step towards food storage should be wheat over all other items. In the long run you should slowly work towards a normal grocery stockpile (the same items you eat every day bought in duplicate and stored) but if dirt poor a few years worth of wheat is better than nothing. And cheap. A bushel (for wheat that's around fifty pounds) is currently selling around three bucks on the futures market so if you could buy wholesale you could in theory eat nothing but wheat and a years supply of food would cost you $25. But of course we must buy retail and protect our food from pests so consider the cost at full retail to be more like $125. That is if you must buy new buckets at Wal-Mart for $3.50, instead of used from bakeries at $1 each. Then the cost would be $80. If you got used buckets and new lids the cost would be $95. I prefer new only because the difference is marginal ($30) and the extra safety marginal of a better sealing lid and unused bucket. If bought over time each payday, anyone can have a huge stockpile of wheat at little financial pain. Three buckets holds 100 pounds. I pay extra for my wheat to avoid a long commute to buy, cheaper than wear and tear on a vehicle. At this time wheat is about $7.50 per 50 pound bag. It is considered pet food and so taxed. With three buckets and lids from Wal-Mart my cost is just under $30 for 100 pounds of wheat. Done each payday soon I will be able to feed several family members and myself for some time after the collapse of this miserable regime.

Brass of course is a favorite subject. All red-blooded Americans love guns. I had a buddy some years back from Missouri (of all places- must have been a city slicker) who had never fired a gun in his thirty some odd years. I got him to go out shooting one day with me and he instantly fell in love with my 1911 (is there any other?) 45. I'm sure if I had loaned him a pussy 9mm it might have been another story, but since I gave him a real gun he really had no choice but to imprint with it. Guns are in the blood. Anyone that loves freedom can recognize the potential a firearm represents. Anyone opposing firearm ownership favors socialism and the lack of individual freedom and should be shot as a defensive measure. Not that they'll let us. It would have been possible in McCarthy's day. But back to less depressing subjects than our dying individualism. You should of course by now have a long rifle. Even a $39 Turkish Mauser with $50 in corrosive ammo is better than no rifle at all. No need to save up $900 for an AR-15 (you might as well send me the money and I'll come out and shoot you with a real gun since those damn things will get you killed soon enough due to jamming on dirt as soon as you start running around in the woods instead of standing on that concrete pad at the shooting range right after you spent an hour cleaning it). If you must have a semi-auto spend $200 on an SKS. But by all means get a rifle, best one without the need for magazines, and then go out and buy a heck of a lot of ammo for it along with all needed accessories. You can't have enough ammo if TSHTF. A box of ammo for a real gun (.30 cal) is about the same price as a sack of wheat or an once of silver. Odd how it is all so affordable. Some things are too good of a bargain NOT to buy. If every week you bought 100 pounds of wheat, one once of silver, one water filter and one box of ammo will run a whopping $60. And soon you

will run out of room for wheat so you can stop after a ton or whatever. Then the cost is only $30 a week. On minimum wage you could afford that if you lived cheap (used travel trailer, lot rent, basic foods from scratch, no debt). Or alternate weeks, one spent on wheat, the other all other items. Or just one item a week at ten bucks a week. One bag wheat with one bucket, one water filter, etc. Slower but anyone with any budget can do that. Buy basics now. Brass, silver, wheat.

After the floorboards are creaking under the weight of too many wheat buckets, after the wife is threatening divorce over the purchase of one more box of ammunition or silver coin, it might be time to move on to other survival investments. I think your next priorities should be to become debt free, have a retreat if needed, start eating healthier, get a second trade, and last stockpile commodities. Being debt free is of course hard to do. The last several generations have almost had no choice as far as living in debt. No one can afford a conventional house without a mortgage, or a new car. Not if you work for a living. You have to live outside the norm. Mobile homes or travel trailers instead of stick built homes, used cars or better yet bicycles instead of a new car, and most important of all no credit cards. It is a little scary to rely just on what cash you can save up instead of having a cushion in the form of ready credit, especially since the job market is so tight and projected to get tighter still. And yet, having credit card debt in that job market is worse. If you must, declare bankruptcy (a subject for another day). Repo the car, sell the house while it still has some over inflated value. Being without a good credit rating just means you have to live poor. Do it now while you have control instead of later when forced to. I realize I am extreme here, most are unwilling. My step mom is in her 60's with a great house in a wonderful neighborhood that could sell now at twice the price she paid four years ago. She could downgrade now and have a paid for dwelling rather than twenty some odd more years of a mortgage. But she won't do it. "Too much struggle over the years not to live in a nice place." And its not going to be a struggle to make the payments when she is in her 70's? Don't be like that, burying your head in the sand. Things are going to get worse, and even if they don't it's a hairy gamble on your part.

If you do keep your mortgage or if you live in a big city, think about getting a little chunk of land in the country that has been paid for and has shelter. I just covered the subject on buying land under $1000. Shelter can be as simple as a tent or used $500 cab-over camper. If you loose your house due to job loss or are forced to flee the city, you need a debt free place to go. It doesn't even matter if you never need it. If you have a piece of dirt out in the middle of no-where and taxes on it are $20 a year and it cost a whole $600 to buy, who cares if you never use it. It is peace of mind, an insurance policy, maybe even your retirement home (after Social Security crashes).

Next start to treat yourself better. It takes little in the way of cash, just willpower. No need to get drastic, just start doing a little bit and work your way to better health over the years. This is the best way to cut back on future heath costs that by then only the wealthy can afford. One of the easiest ways to start is to eat whole wheat flour instead of white flour each day. You need to anyway to get used to using storage wheat (store what you eat, eat what you store) and the fiber is good for you. If you cheat a little and buy pre-

ground flour from the store there is no work involved (but less nutrition, whole flour spoils quicker) and as a plus you can start out on white wheat. This is also whole wheat but is white wheat rather than red wheat and so is lighter in color and texture than red and easier to get used to. Red wheat is rather dense and heavy. Wal-Mart carries the whole wheat white in the flour section for $2 for five pounds. Check it out. Another thing to do is to eat your veggies. I have always been a meat and potatoes guy and feel that spuds provide most of the vegetable matter I need, but don't neglect the dark green stuff. If you hate cooked, try raw in salads. If you really don't want to cook and/or store the bunny food go to Wendy's a couple of times a week and buy a Caesar salad for 99 cents. It comes with dressing and is fresh, and the price beats home-made. Or if you are really poor, eat sprouts or wheat grass. Pennies for your veggies. Start cutting back on bad habits. I quite smoking many times over the years, stop for 1-2 years, start again. I got tired of the cravings and the health problems of smoking a pack a day (minor but the start of bad things) and so I arrived at a solution that worked great for me. I smoke just one cigarette a day. This alleviates the cravings and the health problems and even the cost issue. Cut back on coffee, and especially soda. If a hard liquor drinker, think about going to just a small glass of wine once a day. Healthier and you still get your hooch. The key to healthier living is to slowly, not drastically, move in that direction. Do all things in moderation. It leads to a more balanced life. No one likes the reformed drinker that preaches abstinence. The guy that sips some red every evening sure seems relaxed though. Don't be so pure you don't enjoy. A Twinkie every once in awhile will not kill you, but a diet of them will. Moderation.

Education is of course important. Not necessarily a college education as it seems the institutes of higher learning are turning out some real idiots these days. Even twenty years ago as stupid as I was I still regarded a college degree as just a piece of paper. I was and am more interested in reading my way towards learning. I try to read about three non-fiction books for every fiction. And even though I read far less than I would like I still think I get plenty of it done. Over the years you can't help but be exposed to learning. And you enjoy yourself. Unlike college where beer must be used for enjoyment, since the classes must resemble death itself as some old bitter guy stands in front of a hundred students and drones on about some very boring subject using the same lecture he gives three times a week for the last twenty years and by now must know by heart and has no excitement about unlike if he just opened the damn morning paper and got a fresh and new perspective that could be applied to almost any subject if he had even a shred of creativity but most likely doesn't ever since he got tenure which started out as a good idea but is now just a way for educated idiots to turn out carbon copies of themselves without working hard at it and at the same time insulating themselves from reality and any free market pressures and so facing no competition which forces up the cost of higher education far and above what is needed and won't it really be amusing to see that whole ball of wax melt as widespread broadband introduces a complete education from accredited colleges online for far less than is now available on campus. And so it might be better to consider a trade school or better yet self taught in a subject that interests you. A serious hobbyist with a passion can really do great things (as an example watch the movie "The Birdman of Alcatraz"). Passion in most cases is better than a formal education.

Commodity stockpiling is really just buying extra on sale of your everyday items. I bought the heck out of canned coffee when it was on sale for $3 a can and now you can't find it for under $4. You know tuna is going to cost two for a buck every day, so when you see it three for a buck or even five for two dollars, buy as much as you can. Last month I got lucky and was in the Dollar Tree the day they put out big jugs of laundry detergent. Not their usual puny container but the big 96 ounce jugs for a dollar each. I bought as many as I could carry and store. I should have bought more and found more room for them but as it stands now I have a years worth of laundry soap for $6. When good toilet paper (as opposed to the stuff that has about ten squares only and is like sand paper) was twenty percent off I bought as much as I could store and spent very little for the last six months use of TP. When Albertsons has their 10 for 10 sale at least twice a month it is always worth a look. Most often it is a rip-off, but when sugar is $1 (when it is $1.60 everywhere else) it is time to stock up even on seldom used items. Conventional run grocery stores are a dinosaur waiting to die (it will just take a sudden drop in middle class buying power- hint, the housing bubble popping) but in the meantime enjoy their loss-leader items. The trick to commodity shopping is to always have a slush fund of cash waiting to be used to snatch up waiting items, plus a willingness to keep an eye out shopping. Go to garage sales, thrift stores and every store in town. Do not be afraid to walk out many times with nothing to show for your efforts. If you walk or bike there is no expense (important now that gas is $2.25 a gallon and rising).

Survival investing costs very little money. Unlike the stock market you buy peace of mind and always get a return. Even those on minimum wage can participate. You can daily stock up on supplies and save big bucks. You can enjoy living so much cheaper than others and at the same time providing for your future security. What more could you wish for? Enjoy.
END

DID 9-11 START AN ECONOMIC DEPRESSION?
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Let me start out by saying that most of us are grossly misinformed about world events, and I include myself in that statement. The mass media dumbs down information to such a degree that it is largely useless. The Internet is a great source of alternate media, but is larded with authors having an axe to grind or being of the conspiracy theory variety. And, since most of us have to appease the wife at home and the boss at work, we have very little time to devote to researching anything in great detail. Mass media gives us a general overview, perhaps the Internet gives us a different perspective in which to judge that news, and that's as good as it gets. Anyone claiming to have all the answers is a liar, even if they don't know it. My goal there is to merely offer my perspective and hope it does some good.

Before 9-11, we had seen the Asian Flu, the bailout of several Third World countries, the Tech Wreck, another bank bailout of our own and huge financial misappropriation for Y2K. Now, the bastard could just be lucky, but either that or he's a brilliant strategist. Bin Laden (assuming he was behind 9-11) struck us after we were already financially weak. He took a page from the collapse of Communism and demonstrated to the world how vulnerable we are militarily, by bombing the Pentagon. He almost got the Capitol Building (or White House, whatever the target was) showing our fearless leaders they were easy targets. I guess our decades long indoctrination into passivity didn't work with a few passengers on that flight, since they did fight back. Then, we got hit in the middle of our financial center with the Twin Tower attack. I don't know if it was thought that this would actually break the economy, but even if that failed what followed surely was just as good.

As a result of those attacks, we nearly bankrupted the airline industry, spent God knows how much on added security, shut down the banking/trading industry, centralized our Federal government to a further incompetent level, started two wars far from home with a military that had been gutted by the Clinton Administration, and most importantly, started to irrevocably harm the economy to pay for it all. We were already in debt to a unimaginable degree. The Clinton surplus was a lie, built on stripping the military and adding in the Social Security surplus (which itself was merely stealing funds from the future benefits to surplus that current year only). The only course of action for a huge, bloated, out of control government in that situation is to inflate the money supply and ease up on credit to get consumers to get further into debt. In the last few years consumer spending has shot up as a percentage of GDP.

At this point about the only thing that the economy is doing is selling to local consumers. We don't manufacture much of anything anymore for foreigners other than movies and farm products, and farmers in the Ukraine will one day advance to pre-Bolshevik yields giving competition to our grain exports. Even our fabled Information Sector is made up to a large degree of mere financial market manipulation. Even if that is overstated, one day due to our miserable educational establishments we will see a nosedive in our brain industries. If we continue our barring of foreign students due to security concerns, we will only strengthen that trend.

And speaking of immigration concerns, if we allow the policy of curtailing immigration to continue we will be in trouble with Social Security. Only immigration allows enough young workers in to contribute to the system to keep it healthy. Domestically we are not popping out enough replacements. Europe is a lot worse off in this regard. Their welfare is much more generous and the birth rate is lower. They literally must allow Moslems to continue to immigrate if they want their entitlements to continue. If things don't change there the Moslems will take over by the ballet box one day, rather than by terror attacks. As such, we can be thankful we are not following their path, but that does not change the fact that such action will hasten the demise of our own welfare state.

Much has been made of the fact that since 9-11 there have been no attacks on our soil. We might be led to believe it was an isolated incident, and that by attacking Afghanistan all is right and well in our magical kingdom. Did everyone miss the mailing of anthrax and the D.C. area sniper attacks? Sure, the anthrax could well have been domestic, non-Moslem terrorists. Could have been. But I am convinced that the sniper attacks were, if not directly sponsored by foreigners, directly motivated by the same religious outlook. The guy was a converted Moslem. Yet no one says there is a connection. Is our fear of a lesser lifestyle so great that we will wear blinders just to get a few more years of soft living? We ignore the imperial over-reach of the government, and are astounded when foreigners strike back. We become so focused on another airplane attack that we fail to see a sniper attack from a motor vehicle as connected to the big picture.

Our leaders are in denial, the general public is in denial. Islam is a religion founded on conquest. The Christians somehow managed to beat them back in the Middle Ages, but I would imagine that they never quite forgot it. Then we rubbed salt in the wound and not only exploited them for the oil by installing figurehead rulers but also turned them against each other and propped up Israel to provide further distraction. First the British and then the good old USA. Empire requires cheap plentiful oil. The Middle East has it and for almost 100 years the Anglos have meddled in the region to prop up their global conquest. We just returned the favor, and I'm sure that pissed off the ragheads even more. They tried to take over Europe, but since Islam prohibits usury commerce has always suffered in their homeland. No commerce means no standing armies financed by bankers, no metal industry to perfect cannon, little in the way of a small arms. Europe started the Gunpowder Revolution that ultimately defeated Islam and most of the rest of the world. Well, the US pissed away controlling the MidEast after Vietnam and we got OPEC. In

turn OPEC gave a taste of freedom to the region and we have been loosing the battle since then. And its not even a battle we will win. There is no regional standing army to defeat.

The US has a huge military/industrial complex that started in WWII and only grew bigger. The Cold War fed and nurtured this abnormal beast. I think it is safe to say that while Russia was almost destroyed by Communism, the ultimate command and control economy, we managed to hang on a little longer by having a healthy dose of profit motive inserted into the equation. Otherwise the systems were really only different in how the citizenry was motivated. The Russians only knew the stick, were we preferred the carrot (the stick was only used if one refused to play by the carrot rules). The logical extension of the Industrial Revolution, both our systems evolved towards more government. To win by the old rules, the biggest government was needed. The Bolsheviks got theirs all at once, by custom we required awhile to get around to it. By accident, that saved our system until now.

The Gunpowder Revolution is on the way out, while the Microchip Revolution is picking up steam. The form of the economy dictates the form of government we will get, and it is not possible that a brain intensive economy can prosper under a large government. Government can own or control large industry, tax and conscript, dictate resources. When commodities control the economy, economy of scale encourages huge industry along with huge government. When thought controls the economy, only a decentralized government (or more likely a smaller government controlled by corporates) will do. Anybody can shovel coal, only a profit encouraging system can produce knowledge workers. Before, workers were indeed small cogs in a large machine, easily replaceable. Now, and for a time to come, we are turning towards a system in which the individual is just as powerless, but must be motivated by reward rather than intimidated by threat of unemployment. We will get less government of force, more corporate bribery.

Unfortunately, a lack of a central government has the one disadvantage that is already being exploited. We might have a huge military, but we lack the funds to use it well, plus no enemy to use it against. When armies are decentralized, they present a small target. When terrorist armies are urbanized, tanks loose much of their advantage. When there is no industrial army to fight, the other army has no means to defeat that enemy. When it pays for armies to fragment, they do so. We were so confident when we defeated Iraq's WWI-type army that we thought nothing of going in again. Yet, when we defeated that armies government we merely freed the factions to fight us and each other. We have no defense against a guerrilla army, which is ironic seeing as how those were the tactics we used with such success against the British in our freedom fight. Of course, we were freedom fighters, whereas Iraqis are only terrorists. The sheeple are a bit gullible.

Narco-terrorists are impossible to defeat in our own hemisphere, yet we assume we can defeat oil financed terrorists half the world away. And that it will not hurt financially. In one year the dollar lost 20% of its value against foreign currency. Granted, it was not the 50% seen at the end of the eighties (we had to pay for the stock market crash one way or another) and that did not kill our economy. But it is a lot, and it was just one year. Add

them up and it approaches half. Now, add in that over half of the Treasury obligations are owned by foreigners. We have no real economy other than Hollywood/entertainment, farm products and the financial sector. We shipped out most of our factories and hope to replace that with a brain economy led by public school educated idiots, presided over by a huge bloated government that uses at a minimum half of produced wealth (most of which is pissed away trying to maintain power, little of which is put towards productive means). I am not saying that any of these things spells our demise. It has all been going on for awhile. I am saying that by weakening us, we are ripe to fall at the same time that a fundamental change in the laws of power is taking place.

Power is a fickle mistress, and cares not who she sleeps with. If metal is scarce, those few with swords will rule. If gunpowder weapons are widespread, kings will fall. If only one river waters the crops, he who controls the water controls the populace. And, when computers enable everyone to communicate the power of centralized information is greatly diminished. Information is more dangerous than cannon to a society ruled by lies. When your government is powerless to stop foreign nationals from killing you, your return on your tax dollar is reduced. Not that the American public will ever revolt. The Feds have too many votes bought and paid for by the welfare state. Alas, the voters will continue to insist that the money keeps pouring in. When the other nations stop buying our debt (and eventually they always do) we can only turn on the printing presses. Then we will have nothing but problems.

At a time when industrial economies are weakening our schools get worse. At a time when our military gets more expensive to run they are less effective against the only armies that most of the world can afford, insurgents. At a time when we borrow more and more from other nations and get ever deeper into debt we print more and more worthless paper money. While factories go overseas and we replace lost jobs with make-work government jobs. While domestic inflation is three to fives times the admitted rate and paychecks rarely see a raise we hike taxes and add regulations. After foreigners bomb the command center of our military we crack down on our own citizens traveling. While governments accomplish less and less they demand more and more funds and power. While fewer states bow to the will of our empire we invade more and more nations. We as a nation are in decline militarily, politically, economically and morally. It can only end badly.
END

DAWN OF THE DEAD
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The new updated version of "Dawn Of The Dead" staring Ving Rhames just now out on DVD in the directors uncut version. Only one nipple peek and one brief full front breast shot for those concerned with nudity, the usual amount of cussing and a whole lot of cannibal action. I had seen the "Night Of The Living Dead" just a few years back on video and was impressed with a film that was pure talent and imagination and no budget, and so expected little from a remake of the sequel to the original of all zombie flicks. But let me just tell you, the new version stands on its own as a very good movie. (Read no further if you want to see the movie and don't want me to spoil the fun) The plot is like the original in that everyone outside wants to eat you and our heroes board up to escape becoming dinner but the whole thing is city wide rather than in a secluded farm house. The humans hole up in a shopping mall instead of a house. There is borrowing from the original here and there, but rather as homage instead of a rip-off due to lack of imagination. Lots of cool special effects due to a big budget such as aerial shots of burning city blocks, explosions, etc. Now, there was an original DOTD ten years after "Night" also by George Romaro which was rated highly by L. Maltins video review book. That itself could be better than this remake, but as I have not seen that one I am just comparing apples to oranges here.

The humans lock themselves up in a mall, dispose of a few remaining zombies (one by a crochet mallet up into the brain), quarrel amongst themselves as the resident security guards are none to happy to see outsiders especially since one is a real cop. That situation provides for some drama, then more humans show up. They are let in over the objections of the head of security who is a typical redneck but just happens to be the only one in the movie who is not a moron since his paranoid nature saves him almost to the end. And of course he is right, one of the humans from outside that is let in had been bitten and turns zombie. Later after the city electricity finally fails them lead security guy is let out of lock-up (he got there after a show down over letting in more humans) so he can show the yuppies how to get the generators going (doesn't work, almost eaten). In the meantime our cop is on the roof communicating across the parking lot to a gun shop owner using whiteboards and binoculars. Being pussified and politically correct, the mall has no guns in the sporting goods store. And being a good sniper but a lousy planner, the gun store owner has no food. Mall guys send over a dog with a strap on pack of food, hoping to get a return of ammo. No go, zombies get inside, gun store guy gets bit, blah, blah, humans must armor up two mall buses (I guess there to transport geriatrics from near by rest homes), go through the sewers to gun shop for ammo, come back zombies running after, mad dash to vehicles, escape to marina where lead yuppie has a boat, more death and

eating of heroes, escape. Other interesting situations such as when one original arriving human with pregnant girlfriend stashes her since only he knows she was bitten trying to keep the others from finding out. So of course she turns zombie and gives birth to a little zombie dude. Now, really, all this would be good enough but at the end when they escape by boat to get to an island the credits start to roll and in between they use brief scene flashes to tell the rest of the story (short version, they all get eaten).

Now, if you just take away the cannibal zombie undead aspect and substitute that with a widespread disease, you have a great survivalist tale. Instead of zombies wanting your flesh, those unprepared want your food and supplies. Instead of humans being thrown into an unexpected situation and improvising to survive zombie attacks, think normal folks trying to survive an unexpected disaster. The reason I liked this movie as a survivalist cautionary tale rather than last weeks "The Day After Tomorrow" was that movie was your typical crap about one hero saving the day and the government coming to the rescue. DOTD is more rigidly focused on a personal scale of survival, and no one came to the rescue (much more realistic). And most realistically, they all died in the end. Plus, the music was pretty cool in DOTD. If you watch this from a survivalist viewpoint several lessons are reinforced.

First off, what the heck were they doing in the city and expecting to survive. City equals lots of people equals lots of people wishing you harm come an apocalypse. Second, you can't carry enough ammo on you regularly. Don't move away from an ammo supply. Third, don't take in strangers, they just might kill you. Four, half ass plans to escape are no substitute for a clear plan before hand. Five, half ass escape plans relying on untested equipment are worse. Six, make sure your escape destination is not worse than were you left. Seven, all guns and no food is not a great plan. Eight, redneck dumbasses can be smarter than educated yuppies. Nine, there will always be one in the group that will screw up your best plans by doing something stupid. And ten, there are much better places to hole up in than shopping malls. They used to be bad just to your financial well being :). Now, lets take these one at a time.

Why are you in a city? Your only excuse would be a job, and a pay cut to a smaller city (rather than a metropolis) or better yet a town are much better bets. The cut in pay will be matched by a cut in cost of living and there are a lot less people to do you harm come any troubles. Stay out of cities and you increase your odds of survival, as you see less crime, less tax, less chances of terrorist attack, less chance of most bad things like a ratio of 1000 to one of zombies to live humans. Not good odds as there are way too many drooling hungry zombies for every available living pound of human flesh.

Your ammo supply is especially important. When zombies attack you, only head shots work real well. And modern zombies haul ass, they just don't shuffle slowly. You need to use a lot of ammo on these things. Now think about when the Department of Security (Homeland, one each) federalizes all law enforcement and they have full body Imperial Stormtrooper armor. Perhaps only head shots will work. So you need the classic two shots to center mass to stun, one to the head to finish off. And both zombies and federal

troops travel in packs. You need lots of ammo, and nearby.

And for goodness sack, don't take in strangers unless you can plan ahead of time for them and their problems. First, you have to get them into the mall, that takes ammo and endangers your fellow humans. Then, when you let them in out of the goodness of your heart, they turn around and eat you. No gratitude at all. But that's human nature for you (not just limited to zombies). They will convince themselves of their righteousness even when they are worthless welfare recipients, mass murderers or flesh swilling zombies. Of course no one thought of a quarantine of new arrivals in the movie, an obvious answer, so they should have just left them outside.

Now, going to the mall in the first place was not a stupid idea. After all most of the city just turned cannibal and they needed to get out of Dodge fast. None of them had ever been a Boy Scout of course or plans would have been formulated beforehand for just such an eventuality as the living undead trying to eat you which is not any more far fetched than sudden polar magnetic shifts or global warming causing a sudden superstorm, and speaking of which I swear the guy who wrote Day After Tomorrow ripped off the whole plot from the book by Art Bell who in anyone's book is really out there in left field when he can write a book combining global warming and UFO's building advanced island engineering works for whatever reason most likely having to do with propagating a new race of half human half UFO guys for some diabolical future plan like all super races have perhaps having to do with self breeding of tens of billions of humans so the master race has food for after the conquest, although that part wasn't very clear (like the rest of the book). But to get to the original point. Even if your location sucks, don't leave unless you have a good plan. Running through thousands of zombies to get somewhere is not a good plan.

Points five and six. Untested equipment for escape, and ending up at a worse place than you left. I'll leave the concept of armored mall buses alone here as they are too easy of a target and focus on the boat. It belonged to the super Yuppie of the group (super yuppies are like your normal middle class urban types, but more so) who of course had to make a flippant remark about escaping on it and the other idiots actually thought it was a good idea. To be honest, so did members of the audience (namely, me) who rooted for our heroes to get to the darn thing and only in the end credits were we dispelled of that bad idea when we observe flash scenes of the captain drinking and being morally debased by a visiting voluptuous female type, which (we should have known) led to NO drinking water onboard, NO gas in the tank, and even an engine fire for that prized Maraschino cherry on top of the whole sundae all because our super yuppie character type was being tempted by the pleasures of the flesh AND demon rum and so neglected his duties as captain/supply officer/mechanic which never would have happened had he been a good Mormon or even in a pinch a Protestant and so been immune from such evil influences (and speaking of good Mormons, Ken on Jeopardy is sure winning a whole lot of money, so you can't tell me God is NOT on their side which you might have thought was not possible after getting kicked out of several states by other sects of that oh-so-forgiving religion of Christianity and then ending up in some crap hole desert location which they

actually liked but then they had to join the Union and give up extra wives which is a bummer since wives are like cats if you have just one they bug the heck out of you since they are lonely but if you get two or more they keep each other company and leave you alone). And so they are forced to drift to the nearest land mass which we should have known was just full of hungry zombies.

Now, as mentioned earlier, the guy way across the parking lot was a gun store owner and had boarded up his shop (but I saw no accordion metal type security gate which I just assumed was standard equipment). So he spent his time up on the roof. After he and cop dude discovered each other when each was scanning the zombie crowd with binoculars they started playing chess by writing out each move on a whiteboard and looking through the glass when the other held it up. Gun shop guy even spent one afternoon sniping the zombie crowd to the cheers of the mall humans. But despite all the fun that was had with high powered firearms the guy got hungry and weak in the end. What, no darn MREs in a gun store stocked with clothing and such for hunters? You stock a store with guns and ammo and don't even have a stale cracker to eat? Food is just as important as guns.

Points eight and nine. Rednecks can be smarter than your average bear, and someone in the group will always screw up the best plan. Chief security guy was pretty sure he didn't want the original arrivals to enter his domain, and adamant about not letting more humans in at a later time. Well, he was right. The original humans were the cop and lady he found in a car wreck (she was fleeing a little zombie who used to be the neighbor girl) a pregnant female with her boyfriend and a guy that worked in Best Buy. The TV salesman does a minimum of stupid stuff, to his credit, but boyfriend later finds out that prego got bit and when he finds out that this means she will turn zombie he hides her out in another part of the mall, ties her up and waits for her to pop out little baby zombie. What an idiot. Pop a cap in her zombie butt and burn her and the zombie kid. Was he not paying attention the whole time that zombies are really hungry and the Food Mall just will not hit the spot but that the nearest human is just what will fit the bill. Love ain't got nothing to do with zombie hunger.

Final point in zombie avoidance. The mall is not your best spot to hide. Now, granted I did say it was better than nothing in a pinch. However, malls no longer have gun stores (not in urban areas anyway) and since Sears pussied up and dropped them from stock you can't even get a .22 rifle or a shotgun shell full of birdshot at a mall. Communists. So, no guns in there to kill zombies, commies or even geriatrics come the Age Wars. And little in the way of storage foods. The food mall will only feed you as long as the electricity stays on. And did anyone think of those big front entrances always made up of glass? Sure, no one is going to hurl their body on them and break the glass, but any object free for the taking nearby could be used as a battering ram. Not smart to leave that big of a potential opening.

Okay, thus ends your lessons learned from watching way too much television. You know what NOT to do against zombies and can now plan accordingly.
END

WHEAT STORAGE
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Wheat berries are your ideal survival food. Wheat, the staff of life for Western man, has an indefinite shelf life (unlike that crap rice, which has a one year life whole grain, two to three years white processed). Wheat is still dirt cheap, even after several years of inflation and increased demand competition from Asia. A fifty pound sack is under $8 locally from the higher priced location. Even with continued price increases over the long term you should be able to count on a 50 pound sack of wheat roughly selling for the same price as one ounce of silver or one hour of labor for non-union wages (non-managerial). This of course assumes a lack of disasters such as runaway inflation, severe draught in the grain growing regions, wage and price controls, etc. But that is why you buy food ahead of time, so as to avoid worrying about such events.

A nice stash of wheat sitting in the garage corner will go a long way toward stopping sleepless nights (accompanied by sufficient firepower to discourage the misappropriation of same by unauthorized personnel). For so little money you can invest in long term starvation insurance. Buying as little as one bag at a time costs the same as a movie ticket or the newest paperback book. Assuming the lack of funds for any other kind of food storage, a one year supply of wheat (one pound a day, plus some for sprouting for fresh vegetables) will take 400 pounds or eight sacks of grain. At $8 each your year supply of food costs $64.

The standard way of storing grain on a small scale has been used five gallon poly buckets. Usually available for a dollar or two, cleaned with lid, this is a great way of storing your food. If you found your buckets at a local bakery or restaurant for $1 each, and a sack of wheat was $8, then your total cost per hundred pounds of storage food is $19-$20 (about thirty pounds of wheat will fit in each bucket). This low cost assumed eliminating Mylar storage bags, diatomaceous earth or bay leaves, or dry ice or moisture packets. It also assumes you can find used buckets.

If for whatever strange reason you can't find used poly buckets locally, you will have to pay full retail. I know this really sticks in my craw, but sometimes you have no choice. Wal-Mart sells new buckets in the paint section for $2.50. The lid costs another $1. Lowes is $4.50 for the set.

So you can get a rough figure of half again as much in total storage cost (about $30 per hundred pounds, versus $20). And remember, this is for feed store grain. If you buy health food store grain you might as well just buy MRE's for your food supply, the extra cost is so steep. To save you a trip, compare this cost. Health food store $5 for five pounds of whole wheat flour. Wal-Mart $2. It is a shame Wal-Mart doesn't offer whole grains other than rice and pinto beans, but on an unrelated note I recently saw shelf-stable cooked and seasoned hamburger for about $3.50 a pound in the canned meat section.

Another method to consider if space is at a premium is vacuum sealed bags. I recently started using this method due to my limited storage space in an RV. A Black and Decker brand food vacuum sealer was about $50 (not bad as the cheap brand was $125 two years ago) at Wal-Mart. The cheapest rolls of bags about $7 each. I also use the sealer for my flour and other foods, so the high investment was better justified (although to be honest it would be cheaper to throw out and replace old flour than to store it this way- the only reason to buy this system is having a freezer full of meat or the RV wheat storage). Since the only way to store wheat in an RV is to use the storage space under the floor, I had to use this method (buckets were too wide). However, it is not much more expensive than new buckets. Just not as rodent resistant. One $7 roll bagged one hundred pounds of grain (there is a bit of waste as the top of the bag remains unused).

If you have no reason to be moving any time soon, you may wish to consider used 55 gallon food grade plastic drums. At one time the cola bottlers used them for syrup and sold them used. The last I heard they were about $30 through a dealer. This is not the most cost effective way of storage, as it will not even hold a full years worth of grain. However, if you think you might need water storage from the container after you get done using them, it might be worth the cost premium.
Another bulk storage idea would be non-working chest freezers (perhaps with new gaskets). With functional gaskets, you should have a rodent proof storage (although perhaps not insect-proof) for no to little cost. Visit your local dump for possibilities (or used appliance store for their rejects). Just keep in mind the drawbacks of bulk storage. When a bucket gets infested you loose 30 pounds at a time. When a barrel gets infested you loose 300 pounds. I would think at this point, you need to add diatomaceous earth and bay leaves as well as moisture packets.

To avoid those irritations, just combine the two systems. Seal small amounts of grain (in vacuum sealing the longer the bag the less waste) and put them in a metal container, such as a used freezer or refrigerator that was free or cheap, or even a galvanized trash can (all metal should be

off concrete to avoid rust). Even done cheaply these methods can add up, but they do assure insect and rodent free grain storage. If you are really poor, the plain old grain in the poly bucket is better than no food storage at all, just be aware that some infestation can happen. For those that plan on hoarding enough grain to feed an army (literally, perhaps?) consider a used ocean cargo metal container. Even the half size twenty footers could hold a heck of a lot of five gallon buckets. Assume a square foot of space per bucket, one and a half foot tall, stacked on pallets and not touching the metal walls. Five tall, eight wide, eighteen long. Ten tons of wheat in over 700 poly buckets costing $6 each filled costing around $5,000 depending on the container cost delivered. Say you bought the container $900 delivered and then just filled it several buckets at a time. Most of us could afford that.

Getting back to reality, an even cheaper way to store grain is used 2 liter pop bottles. Mostly free for the scrounging, all that is needed is a little bleach water to clean and sanitize and then some patience as they completely dry. Then fill with grain and cap. Two bottles makes a gallon, or close enough, so ten would equal a poly bucket. Expect more space to be taken, and less to be stacked on top of each other, but it is free and the empties can be a great water storage and transporter. And as a benefit you can see insect infestation. Plus, one bad batch spoils a lot less than with poly buckets. And much easier to carry (I have moved so many buckets of wheat so many times they are the curse of every move I make).

In the event of an approaching catastrophe, run-don't-walk to the nearest feed store and buy every bag of edible grain (corn as well as wheat plus who knows what else) they have in stock. Have your handy cash stash as well as some silver coin to sweeten the deal. Do not risk checks or credit cards being rejected. Worry about protecting your paper sacks of grain after that. The same with Wal-Mart or the grocery store to buy 50 pound sacks of sugar, white flour, rice, etc. In a lot of cases the mere packaging will suffice to keep bugs and rodents away, especially if stored in the house rather than the garage. Warehouses use insecticides and traps to keep infestation at a minimum. You can store those ahead of time and treat the rooms with paper sacked foods in them, plus perhaps have a cat around (although surely it will die early from cancer because of the sprayed baseboards). If the choice is 1000 pounds of well protected food alone, or that plus another one thousand pounds that are minimally protected and you experience a 25% loss of the second stash, wouldn't you prefer the larger unit?

Remember, don't use trash bags for storage. They contain insecticides. Zip locks are fine, but they will split open if stacked too tall. I hope this provided some ideas on grain storage, and if you have any to add, please

let me know. END ARTICLE

THE COST OF TRANSPORTATION
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America perfected the mass production method of the automobile, and ever since the nations love affair has blossomed. Well, actually the love affair started and now we have degenerated into the equivalent of a deranged stalker. Our obsession with the auto is so pronounced that most would rank the internal combustion right up with food and water as necessities. Our entire culture is centered around the car, and even the poorest slum dwelling low life seems to own one. There is of course nothing as near and dear to my heart as seeing multitudes of welfare bitches arriving for their benefits meetings in near new cars, cell phones glued to their ears. I don't know if you are allowed to even own a car if you are sucking the system dry, my guess is not (but if the parents or current shack up register under their own name it is easily done). I would imagine that the attitude is one of universal disgust at any suggestion that those lazy ass no good parasitic criminal breeding slimebags would even think of walking, riding a bike or even take the bus. Not only would their self-esteem suffer at such a thought, it would also possibly be viewed as racist and oh so politically incorrect to tactfully hint that their huge fat ass needs a little exercise anyway. So they motor to their monthly meetings secure in the knowledge that, by gum, they are proud to be Americans and they get a car, too.

I myself had the typical teenagers love affair with cool cars and lusted after them. Alas, at 16 I was given a scooter. Not that I ever had a problem with that. It was a vast improvement over living in the country and taking the extremely early bus or walking into town to see my buddy (or even worse giving him gas money- his GTO took a lot of gas and I only worked causally). It was a Honda Passport, the 80cc bike with the plastic fairing you always saw in views of Vietnam traffic. They do not sell them here anymore. But what a bike. Oil and lube only and it took my abuse and ran perfect for two years at which time I got almost half the retail back selling to a dealer. I was able to afford insurance just by half-ass mowing lawns. Try doing that today. I'm not talking ancient history when me and the greasy haired toughs went to the junk yard and rebuilt a clunker into a oh so bitchen hot rod. This was after the OPEC embargo. But how costs have risen for transportation in just twenty five years.

As any long suffering reader knows, I am an avid bicycle rider. Both a royal screw job by the ex-wife and my frugal ways have made it an easy decision that I do not care to own a motor vehicle. After rent it is your costliest bill. I choose to do away with the need. Even twenty years ago I didn't own a car or motorcycle 80-90% of the time. I loved the practice of living in a trailer, eating well and smoking and still only spending half of my

minimum-wage paycheck. Of course that was before children, but even with a yard full of rugrats you can live cheap. Whole foods without processed groceries, thrift store cloths, and a used mobile home on your own land can be cheap living, especially if you forgo the car. Yet the idea is very foreign to 99% of us. Not own a car? The very walls of heaven will tumble down!! I need it for...fill in the blanks. Work, school, groceries, entertainment, If There Is An Accident, blah blah blah. Stop confusing need and want.

What you want is the convenience of a personal motor vehicle. What you need is transportation. And that can be any variety of means. Walking. Public transportation. Bicycle. Moped. Motorcycle. Car. Each has its pros and cons, just like anything in life. A car is the most comfortable and most convenient, yet the most costly. A motorcycle cost half the money of a car but is more dangerous. A moped is slow, but much cheaper. A bicycle is very cheap, mostly safe, but exposed to the elements. Public transportation sucks because of the company you keep and is not that cheap but requires little up front cost. Walking is free except shoe leather, but is really slow and boring.

Lets take everyone's favorite first. The car. Everybody loves their car. You can experience total personal freedom of movement. No waiting for a bus schedule. No need to go anywhere other than your own destination. You can go to work, drive across the country, or the next town over where a sale is going on. It also serves as a means of escape, either from rioting masses, a bad job or marriage or over-taxing local government. It entails the freedom we have come to expect. Alas, by now that freedom has a price tag attached to it that outweighs the benefits. It was only in the last few years that car prices didn't increase annually. Every time you buy a car, you support a militant minority of Union workers living and retiring large on your blood and sweat. The government grows fat off your purchase, with some estimates putting the direct and indirect taxes at one half the purchase price. Insurance industry hired guns have over the years bribed enough government officials to make auto insurance mandatory and with that comes monopoly power to increase rates almost at will. As a price for negligible gas mileage increases, most cars now are so complicated almost no-one can do their own repairs and the labor rates are in the $60 an hour range (although to be fair the cars today break down a lot less than they used to). It is becoming common to assume six year loans on cars now, rather than three to five, despite increased "cash-back" incentives. And gas. The coming shortages are a subject for another day, but you can see the problems caused by just a short trip to the $2.50 a gallon range. It seems a shame to assume a crippling five year loan based on the assumption of continuing cheap crude oil prices.

A motorcycle has the advantage of being half the cost of a car, both in purchase price, gas, and insurance. The cheap car today from Korea costs at least $9,000. A good Japanese bike about half that. Insurance, half of a car. Gas mileage is at least twice as good on a bike. The downside is that the other idiots on the road would just as well prefer to run you over than to share the space. And, it really sucks to ride a bike in most parts of the country in winter time, thanks to freezing water both on you and under you. And even at half the cost of a car, the sacrifice of cargo space and protection from weather is not worth the price. Factoring in inflation, the cost of both new and used bikes are still double

what they were in my youth, and so in my opinion worthy of hobby status rather than a serious transportation option.

A moped is a great option for transportation if you are not putting in a lot of miles. The great part of mopeds is that they require only a regular drivers license (although your state might be different) instead of a motorcycle permit if the engine is under 50cc. But even better is the fact that NO INSURANCE IS NEEDED. The insurance savings alone will pay for a new moped yearly for most people. If you are a young driver it is a great deal, as your car insurance is deathly expensive. Of course, the dangers are shared with that of a motorcycle. For goodness sakes wear a helmet on one of these things. Even if they only go 30 miles an hour your brains will still smear the asphalt in an accident. The downside of these things is that they get a lot less mileage than cars, the engine needing a rebuild after about ten thousand miles (at about one quarter the price of buying a new one). The real selling point is the 100 miles a gallon they get. Adjusted for inflation, the 1970's OPEC embargo had a barrel of crude selling at around 70-80 of today's dollars, twice the price of today. Mopeds got real popular then, and most likely will again.

A bicycle is your best transportation available. Per calorie consumed for operation, the bicycle beats all other forms of transportation, including walking. This is because of inertia. Once the energy is given to start, very little is needed to continue movement. It is along the lines of a jumbo jet, where the majority of fuel is on take-off and landing. Cruising altitude takes little fuel. A bicycle will only take you along at one third the speed of a moped, one sixth the speed of a car. Thus a comfortable half hour commute in a car would take an unrealistic and uncomfortable three hours on bike. This is why very few bicycle to work. Yet, what you need to understand is that living that far from work is not realistic in any form of transportation other than in times of good and plenty. Do you think those times will continue? Only the most optimistic of us. And I can't imagine they are even reading this. The fact is that you need to get closer to work now, in manageable times, before the next energy crises, or economic downturn, or personal crises. We could be seeing oil at ten bucks a gallon, but if you are laid off and the choice is keep paying the mortgage or sell the car, you are going to sell the car. Then, if you live in the suburbs you are screwed getting another job through lack of transportation. It was quite logical to flee the sinking cities to the suburbs, but now transportation costs are turning them into prisons. Move to a smaller town to eliminate the cost of transportation/isolated in the suburbs trap. And then use a bike to pedal your sorry butt around town. Once a month, rent a U-Haul or pay for a taxi for shopping. Or, go weekly on your bike. I have no problem hauling one weeks groceries for two people on a bike. If you invested in a bike trailer, cargo space problems would be solved. You still scoff, but there really is no need for a car to be owned and operated full time.

Public transportation is usually the last option for most of us. Those folks that frequent the towns tax subsidized, badly run system usually also are usually, quite simply, scumbags. There are exceptions, such as New York where almost everyone uses the subway. Your lone person who hates cars. Mostly though, the dregs of society frequent the bus/train system. Perhaps it is their social circle in action. Perhaps it is the fact that

those on welfare receive free monthly passes (not to go look for work, I'm sure). Whatever the reason, using the bus sucks. Not even to mention the crappy schedule. Most locals are rides on the half hour, but some are worse at one ride an hour. So, you get there 15 minutes early since their time could differ from yours or traffic is off. Then you get picked up at 15 minutes after. You wait a half hour to take a one half hour bus ride to go four miles. All to avoid the weather. I have tried public transport in every area I have lived (a considerable number) and I can sum it up with the following example of inefficiency. It is about five miles to Wal-Mart. I walk my spouse to the bus stop, pushing my bicycle. The bus comes, wife deposited on same. I mount my trusty steed and pedal at my standard 7-9 mph. Traffic, lack of sidewalks slow me down at times. Humidity is the standard 120%. The sun glares, I sweat. Meanwhile, the better half sits in air-conditioned splendor, barely noticing the frequent stops for other passengers. About thirty or forty minutes later, I arrive at Wal-Mart. I chain up my bike, and am almost at the door when the bus pulls up to the stop next to the front entrance. I beat the bus along the same route, the exact same distance. There were no traffic delays. The bus cost $1. My ride costs pennies, including the food needed for energy. My only cost is discomfort in the summer heat, but I must say I'm in good shape for a forty year old. The good part of public transportation? No up front costs and great for the idle, out of shape slacker.

Walking is your standard Third World society form of transportation. The only cost is shoe replacement. Not that you should discount that. If you are really poor, the replacement cost of shoes will be much more prohibitive in terms of proportion of income. If you stock up now on cheap pairs you will eventually run out again, as the cheap ones are lucky to last a year. On the other hand, quality shoes cost the equivalent of cheap replacements to resole and every year there are less and less cobblers available to fix good shoes. Just as anymore you can almost buy a dress cheaper than making it yourself (even with free labor), the flood of ever cheaper shoe imports drive out those that repair instead of replace. The floor space rent in a Wal-Mart devoted to shoes is cheaper due to high turnover than the rent for a cobbler, even in a seedier section of town. That lack of quantity raises the cost of repairs. The same reasoning is behind the death of TV repairmen. The Chinese can produce one cheaper than we can repair one (or close enough as far as the consumer is concerned). The Real Estate Bubble raises the cost of a mortgage, the real rate of inflation plus the explosion of litigation leading to the high cost of health care, the rising rate of food due to oil costs escalating, all these things and more force the small businessman to keep his labor rates high. And high labor cannot compete with ever cheap Chinese imports. And on a related note, radio emitting chips are almost due to get down to the single retail item. This will help Wal-Mart further reduce prices. See the article elsewhere. Getting back to shoes, pick your strategy now for replacements or repairs now if you are planning to be walking a lot as your means of transportation.

My shoe preference is the black "hiking" boots from Payless Shoes. They are synthetic leather and so they didn't work too well for me in a humid climate, as my feet got soft and clammy. However, here in the desert they work fine. They are less than ideal, rarely lasting over a year since I walk at any job I'm at (either back and forth behind a counter or around a building area). The reason I stick with them is that their break in time is hours

rather than days, I can buy them when they go on sale (buy one, the next half off) and I can usually find a Payless no matter were I move to. You might even be able to get them online. I forgo high priced quality shoes due to initial price plus repair costs, but I'm not saying that's not the way to go. Their probably much better for the health of your feet. It's just that my personal preference is cheap, more often. Just not Wal-Mart brand. I don't know why, I love all things Wal-Mart. It's just their shoes I can't wear. They kill my feet. The only type I never returned or threw away was flip-flops. If you stick with the disposable strategy, my recommendation would be at least two or three years worth of shoes, Shoe-Goo, laces, and silver coins as a worse case replacement currency. Despite inflation worries, we might see deflation at least at the consumer level. If that happens stashed dollars will replace shoes, but I would go with silver just in case.

Costs of various means of transport. This assumes best case scenario along with common practices. The car does not break, the shoes and bike last a year. The moped does not need repairs, etc. I assumed, a dangerous practice, but its the only way to figure costs.
CAR- one year financed on a cheap import, average insurance cost, no repairs, 20k driven a year. $10k cost, five year payment at 5% interest, total car cost $12,500. One year is $2500. Insurance at $600 a year. 30 miles a gallon, driven 20k a year, $2 a gallon. Gas is $1300. Cost per mile is 22 cents.
MOTORCYCLE- half the cost of a car, so 11 cents a mile.
MOPED- can only run for ten thousand miles before an engine overhaul, so that must be factored in. 10k a year in miles, the cost is $1000, the overhaul $250. At 100 miles a gallon (but also adding oil) gas at $2 a gallon using a $1 of oil, running cost are $600. Cost per mile 9 cents.
BIKE- unlikely to last 20k miles. But even buying one every few thousand miles will only cost $300 a year (assuming you pedaled that much). A very rough estimate for food cost doubles that, that arbitrary figure is suspect, so do it again. $900 a year. Cost per mile at a max under a nickel.
BUS- a monthly pass is maybe $30. Twelve times that is $360. The cost is 2 cents a mile your cost. Just keep in mind that it is only around town and the actual costs are higher (tax payer subsidized). Also, this comparison may not reflect actual use. In practice you only go through one bike a year, so bike versus bus is actually $50 versus $360.
WALKING- also an unrealistic comparison, as I know of few people walking 20k a year. However, at a pair every 1000 miles, and $20 a pair, $400 a year costs about the same as a bus pass, 2 cents a mile.

A more realistic figure could be a monthly cost.
CAR- about $375
MOTORCYCLE- around $185
MOPED- at more realistic mileage of under 1k driven miles a month, $100
BUS- a monthly pass for unlimited mileage is around $30
BIKE- even riding the heck out of the things and replacing instead of repair, $20
WALKING- a walking fool getting a pair of shoes every other month, total a month $10

If one was to bike around but still rent a U-Haul or taxi once a month, add $40. Even

twice rental cost means you pay only $100 a month instead of $375 to own your own car. And if you are so poor you have no monthly budget at times, the rental can be dropped at will since they are not a fixed expense. You only think you need a car. For those with kids, think a less mobile existence. They bus to school, bike to friends houses, and don't go along once a month when you pedal to the U-Haul dealer, rent a truck, go buy in bulk, return and pedal home. The cost in electricity for a large freezer is $3 a month. How does that compare with driving to the grocery store every week?
END

MIDDLE-CLASS ABDUCTIONS

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For quite some time California has served as the trend setter for the rest of the US. Two good examples would be environmental wackiness and semi-auto gun bans. The semi-auto ban was the whole reason I moved out of the state over a dozen years ago, and quite frankly I never thought the rest of the nation was crazy enough to follow suit. I was sure the "California as trend leader" role was going to break down before that happened, and as we all know I was sure wrong about that. California leads, the rest of the nation follows. Not a carbon copy, to be sure. Details differ. But, in general, in a lot of things California is first. Right now their government debt is worse percentage wise than the Federal government, a pretty damn sad situation considering that the state can't print money or create credit like Uncle Sugar can. And remember, Orange County went bankrupt. A trend that the state will follow? And then other states? I would predict so. But, alas, I will not blather on again about macro-economics. Today we are going to talk about others being the trend setters. The new and exciting trend is middle-class kidnapping.

As liberals are loath to admit, in general a heavy hand is required to keep the savages of the world in line. Britain understood this well enough keeping her Empire intact, and as a fledging empire one hundred years ago we did also. Alas, decades of reprogramming the populace to become docile sheep in order to most cost-effectively keep the peace has led to a herd of idiots controlling policy through politicians postulating themselves before polling results. If you want to police the world, carry a big stick and beat the holy crap out of any upstart. Our drastic policy swings in concert with elections every four years essentially sends a message that we are wishy-washy, unable to constantly enforce our policy. We allowed former Soviet republics and controlled semi-states to give out to every Tom, Dick and Harry nuclear weapons (which will bite us in the butt one day). Now, we took a dictator out of power who for all his faults at least kept his populace under control. In its place we have a lot of heavily armed gangs fighting for power. In a place like Afghanistan this is no big deal. In the regions number two oil supplier it is cause for concern. One result of a country in anarchy is lots of crime, and a lucrative practice is swiping unarmed individuals such as children and holding them ransom.

This is no repetition of Mexico or Columbia were the country is almost all either filthy rich or dirt poor. The rich there can buy protection. In Iraq, by contrast, you have a larger middle class. The Iraqi rich buy their protection, the poor offer no target, and the middle class become the new victims. You can't afford much protection, and only by selling almost all assets and borrowing from relatives can you pay ransoms. In the end you are most likely ruined. As a parent my heart does go out to these families. However,

realistically, it is only an abstraction. We face a much more civilized form of ransom here (taxes and regulations, violence threatened in muted form) and that occupies most of us. But, stop and think for a minute. What if our economy was to nose-dive? Is Iraq a trend setter? Would we follow suit and see massive kidnappings targeted at the unprotected middle-class?

The average American is surrounded by luxury, most of which is financed by debt. After a severe economic crash, perhaps the home mortgage bubble popping, everything bought on credit is going to be repossessed. What is left is going to be assumed as being owned free and clear. Hence, able to be sold to raise money that can be extorted. If you own anything of value, watch out. When one quarter to one half the private sector work force has no job and welfare does not keep up with hyper-inflation even a pittance in ransom is going to look attractive to newly created criminals. Look at the low end of the possible spectrum. When things got really bad in places, evil was sold cheap. Columbia saw $10 assassinations, Albania saw $30 AK-47's, and Iraq saw $300 ransoms. Things can get that bad. That's not to say they will, just that they can. If you live in a crappy trailer in the middle of nowhere and are heavily armed no one but the government will mess with your kids. If you live in suburbia and drive a newer car, you might be paying bad men to get Junior back.
END

A HOUSING BUBBLE?
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The Chicken Little Press, of which the Bison is proud to belong, is a group of concerned writers who are convinced that the sky is, indeed, falling. Your publication can join this unofficial organization with the only requirement being that you the publisher are extremely paranoid, untrusting and most importantly have something to sell by panicking the masses. The founding members of the Press are the Gold Bugs, those companies selling gold at embarrassingly high mark-ups to pay for slick ads and cool Web sites featuring daily reports on the economic calamity just about to befall us. Merchants of high processed inedible storage foods can also join, but only if they use catalog space to join the bray of warning voices. Bison is as yet only an honorary member, as I love to proclaim imminent doom but have nothing to sell my readers to help them survive in comfort as civilization crumbles around us. Honest, I'm working on it.

I have been a survivalist for twenty-five years. I did not waiver when the Soviet Union dissolved, nor when Clinton failed to become a dictator. I sailed on after Y2K, and kept proclaiming the faith. I will always strive to prepare to survive, and will always stay convinced the system will fail and try to take me down with it. Bastards. But after all this time I am trying to develop a better balance to my paranoia. Despite things looking really bad out there, they usually work out okay in the end. Not that I am letting my guard down. Far from it. I still treat each paycheck as my last, I still stockpile as though inflation is just about to explode to double digits, and I look at each potential purchase with an eye towards future market conditions. My point here is that each crisis that comes along is usually not as bad as proclaimed and works out in the end. Take the case of the housing bubble.

Real estate is a huge sector in our economy. Other than the financial market and the Federal government (in the form of future benefit promises) most people have their wealth tied up in real estate. I myself do not agree with the premise that a house is a good investment, but 999 out of a thousand disagree with me. Most will toil away one half to one third of their lives to struggle to pay a mortgage just so they have a building of their own that they can maintain each weekend. This is a recent development, started after World War Two, when in a short number of years we went from a 25% to 40% down payment to finance a reasonably affordable dwelling in a few years time to today’s monstrosity of 1% to 5% down to buy a poorly constructed gum and glue dwelling that required immediate and continuous maintenance with a thirty year note and perhaps even longer as I just heard of a forty year mortgage being introduced which of course is no where near as bad as the Japanese multi-generational mortgage where the note was sixty

to eighty years long which was insane even on an island which is mostly mountains and no one will build a high rise apartment even with the worlds premiere earthquake proof architecture and everybody is stuffed into one damn city, but since we are, after all, not going to 'aturnen Japanesea' we can just worry about our own brand of stupidity which is locking up a heck of a lot of good land under Federal control and jacking up the price of housing beyond what it should be and screwing the average guy to further their nefarious ends to keep the bunch of low life motherless scum suckers in power and in control.

One can only guess if it was intentional or not, but government has invented a lot of different ways to keep the price of real estate jacked up. The best way is to control vast tracts of land, taking most available real estate off the market to boost up the price of what is left. 95% of Nevada is Federal land and about 85% in Arizona. Remember that egg-sucker Clinton, our most favorite president in living memory? He added a big chunk of Utah to the Feds control. I guess there just wasn't enough national parks there showcasing more barren dirt. The government always makes profound noises about why they should control the land, but whatever the reasons the effect is that if available real estate is only a fraction of what is out there the price is gong to be much higher. Another way to increase prices is to lock in Union wages by building codes, licensing contractors, granting permits and the like. By regulating in minute detail what can and can not be done, and by whom, by decreeing a semi-monopoly the government is assuring higher prices than necessary. By controlling the banking industry, lending rates are drawn up or down to slow or stimulate house purchasing. Many different government agencies are active is stimulating the real estate market by guaranteeing loans to otherwise unqualified buyers, such as VA loans, Fannie May, etc. The more buyers, the higher prices go.

By keeping the prices of houses far ahead of what a free market would charge, the government realizes several advantages. First and foremost, inflation (a hidden tax on every dollar earned, even "untaxed" amounts from the grey and black markets) is made into the friend of most folks. Inflation makes paying off that overpriced crackerbox more palatable. Why, in twenty years you only make half the payment that you do now in real inflation adjusted dollars. If your biggest expense is a mortgage, and inflation works with you to pay less on that bill, then the other worrisome aspects of rising prices such as less affordable milk and gasoline are manageable at least. In one respect, you are agreeing to feed the kids less animal protein and fresh produce in exchange for a cheaper house (though to be fair you will refinance in the end to pay for a college education for the tikes even if that education is next to worthless in real value, but better than nothing since even a sheepskin in advanced basket weaving is better than a high school graduation only). Another benefit in controlling the prices of housing is that large sectors of the financial market have their fingers in the real estate pie. Retirement accounts from the private sector are especially bad in this practice (though not as bad as putting their own companies stock in as assets). If real estate prices in general fell the government would have a heck of a time paying off all the losses as it has agreed to do through various insurance programs. And, I suppose one could also argue that another benefit would be to keep the masses in servitude with outrageous mortgage obligations would be a more docile population that readily agrees to pay its taxes or send the household breadwinner

off to war for better pay than the hometown offers, what with the steel mill closing since Japan and Korea were given preferential treatment in that industry to keep them out of Communist influence during the Cold War (we lost our industrial base long before it was rhetoric this last election). If dad has to work over in Iraq for a private defense contractor since it pays three times the local wage or the son must join the Army due to a bleak financial future, the fiction of voluntary involvement is maintained.

There is a lot at stake for the government as far as maintaining control. To allow a housing bubble to pop is unacceptable. As much as we would like to see California real estate prices fall so half the population would stop selling out and moving to surrounding states and jacking up the cost of living there, it most likely will not happen. Too much is at risk to our masters and they will try all the tricks in the book to sustain the rise in housing prices. Don't misunderstand, corrections are allowed. Any given market that is overheated could fall quite a bit. But as a whole the Feds will try to keep things moving along without a fuss. To expect this housing bubble to pop is wishful thinking. My guess is that prices might slow, might even fall at acceptable levels, but that slowing will just allow our expanding inflation to race ahead and catch up in the race. Before you know it all other prices will match the insanity of housing costs. When a house costs $200,000 that cost $75k just a few short years ago, who will think twice about $7 a gallon milk or gasoline, $500 a month heating bills, $200 cable bills, etc? Perhaps instead of a housing bubble we are really only seeing inflation growing a lot quicker in some sectors than others. I understand there are other variables. Artificially lowered interest rates for one. But here we are concerned with letting the genie out of the bag, and the effects of keeping him under control. Outrageous housing costs might just be a part of our happy little lives from now on.
END

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER

Once upon a time there was an industrious ant and a rather lazy grasshopper. Now, each was rather unremarkable, as ants will be ants and grasshoppers likewise will be grasshoppers. The ant toiled away and made ready for lean times and the grasshopper took it easy and enjoyed life, trusting that things would always work out in the end as they always had.

At a glance, it seemed that the grasshopper was the smarter of the two. All during spring, summer and fall he sat around being a slacker, enjoying life, talking to his grasshopper buddies, drinking beer and eating nachos. During winter things got a little lean, it was cold out, but grasshopper had enough body fat to get him through, plus he could always find a spare nacho chip behind the couch if he got really hunger.

The ant, on the other hand, was the very picture of someone a little too anal compulsive. He worked his regular job moving freight during the day and then at night after work he would go around to all the dumpsters and pick out dented cans and other discarded non-perishables to stock up on, plus got all the aluminum beer cans the grasshopper threw

away to take to the recycling center for cash.

Now, the grasshopper had just been told by the free health clinic that his blood pressure was in real good shape and been advised to continue whatever lifestyle he was leading as it was sure to lead to a long stress free life, but also to cut back a little on the beer and nachos since it wasn't all that healthy and was given a food pyramid fact sheet showing the optimum food balance. Well, grasshopper knew that beer was made from grains so he knew he was doing that part right and he decided to put jalapenos on his nachos for more vegetable consumption.

The ant finally got tired of his wives nagging and went to see the family doctor were he was told he was under way too much stress and his heart could explode if he didn't take it a little more easy. He was advised to drink several glasses of wine a week to relax, and given a food pyramid sheet showing the optimum food balance. Ant saw that corn was under the vegetable section, which anyone not working for the government knew was a freakin grain, so he assumed the whole bit of advice was a fraud and the doctor was a member of a monopoly protected trade and out to cheat him.

Grasshopper and his buddies all were shacking up with their bitches who were on welfare so they could always steal a little cash out of the old ladies purse to buy another 40 of beer as they all sat around the front porch complaining about life in general. One day grasshopper heard that they could all register to vote and if they voted democrat their bitches could get more benefits which would mean more beer. Ant would just have to pay more taxes since grasshoppers were an oppressed minority and they couldn't get a decent job that paid more than chump change, and besides grasshopper wanted a new cell phone and there was no reason that Uncle Sugar shouldn't pay for it.

Ant was a little pissed that he needed to pay more taxes, what with him having to support his own family and all. He collected aluminum cans to recycle for money to save up for his kids college education, not so he could give more to the damn government to support a permanent welfare class. In fact he was so pissed off that he suffered a minor heart attack and while in the hospital decided if the Feds were going to kill him anyway he might as well start a revolution and overthrow them, or at least try. And that is what he did.
The End
Moral Of The Story- The people in government ain't stupid. There are no more taxes, just hidden fees. But mostly a nice tax called inflation. Watch your wealth disappear before your eyes!!
END

DEFINITION OF A SURVIVALIST RIFLE
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The main thing to keep in mind while shopping for a rifle for survivalist purposes is that a survivalist and a soldier are two different things. Too often military tactics and equipment are used by the survivalist and other than providing rich fodder for liberal media hype the main thing this will accomplish is to get you killed during a genuine emergency. As a survivalist you are not a soldier, just as it can usually be stated that most soldiers are not very good at surviving (if for no other reason than a staff officer will see to it otherwise). Most survivalist types might glory in dressing up in camouflage and collecting military manuals and memorabilia, but fantasy and Hollywood hype are no training for the real world. You are better off training by going camping than by going to boot camp.

The organized militaries of the world are set up to project force upon other nations and more often the citizens at home. The need of the collective is everything, the need of the individual is nothing. Casualties are expected and factored into the equation. If one half of a battalion is expended taking an obscure hill to secure a minor objective if the number of troops expected to be killed is available than the hill will be taken. The thing that matters is that men are pieces of equipment and as long as you have the equipment necessary to get the job done, the expenditure of equipment is acceptable. Not that all commanders are calculating and cold blooded, but that when the good of the many is made more important than the good of the few you can bet that a heck of a lot of those few are going to get screwed.

At the dawn of modern warfare when black powder firearms became safe enough to be used by all troops as opposed by an elite few, tactics came about to compensate for the inherently inaccuracy of those weapons. Men stood shoulder to shoulder and fired in mass volleys and like one giant shotgun something was bound to be hit. Much better than going one on one with some guy with a sword, to be sure, but the terror factor must have been extreme. A combination of brainwashing and the real economic facts that it was serve in the military or die starving from a lack of any other employment kept the poor bastards going. We have never really gotten too far in our thinking from the mass volley approach. It might be safer now that each trooper is not part of a giant target, but the approach is still to throw a mass of men at each other along with pumping as much high velocity metal at each other as possible.

There was a hint of the possibilities to come with a combination of Indian warfare and rifled muskets, mainly seen as savagery rather than innovation as marksmanship and stealth replaced mass fire and butchery as a means of warfare. Some notable uses of these

tactics were adapted by whites such as with Rodgers Rangers but by and large these intelligent tactics were ignored. The majority of troops had been drilled and trained in State sponsored militias and fought the Revolutionary War that way. If guerilla tactics had been used on a far wider scale we would not have needed the French and a war of attrition would have eventually won us independence. However, being as how the fighting rebels were in the minority, the cloak of Statehood was needed to legitimize the entire enterprise and politics as usual guaranteed battlefield casualties.

And so we arrive at the modern battlefield were masses of troops use masses of lead to spray the enemy position and hope for some casualties but better yet surrender or retreat. This is the smart thing to do. Why get yourself killed if you can help it? The problem is that you need to get close in for this sort of thing. The closer you are the worse your chances of escaping harm are. Yet, the modern assault rifle is designed specifically to be used at short distances, up close to danger. Due to the limitations of the human eye it is difficult to see enough to hit something after a certain distance. You might be able to see a human form five hundred yards away, but if its just a little dot easily obscured by terrain how are you supposed to hit it? I am discounting the use of artillery, heavy machine guns, tanks and the like to keep things simple. You need to see enough target to hit with a rifle.

The assault rifle (as was most weapons used today) was invented by the Germans. They took a cut down round and made the weapon self loading, taking the firepower of a machinegun and giving it a lot more range. Yet it lacked the kick of a rifle using a full size round and to a large degree simplified training for its use. It met the criteria of the realities of shorter range combat. The Russians probably stole the idea with the SKS (later morphing into the AK47) and they took an overly-engineered design and simplified it to be mass-produced and more rugged even if accuracy was sacrificed. Assault rifles made everyone happy since the rate of mass volley shot up. But that was only good for the heavily industrialized nations that loved to churn out a lot of weapons to replace quality with quantity. For a time that worked. But wars are no longer global and mass industry no longer wins wars. Sound tactics do. We didn't win in Vietnam using jets and tanks against guerrilla warfare and we won't do it in Iraq. We are giving a shot in the arm to the economy and perhaps giving notice to the oil producing nations not to screw with us, but we are not winning a war. But I digress.

No one weapon can do everything. Each has a purpose. The assault rifle attempted to marry submachine guns and battle rifles and the result was okay. But only if you are a trooper wanting to wade into the action and take a chance getting killed. If you are a survivalist you want to stay far away from the enemies assault rifle and fight him with a battle rifle using a full size round. Distance equals safety. Again, I am not discounting the effects of the big guns, but here we focus on infantry. If you are fighting troops armed with assault rifles, their effective range is half to one third yours using a larger round. I have talked to way too many survivalists that have an AR15, and worse love them. Now, while it is true that the gun you are good at is the perfect weapon, try to think about getting a weapon that is better than your opponents. In irregular warfare an aimed shot from far away is much better than a sprayed magazine close in. Your enemy is praying

and spraying, you can do things smarter. Think of the smooth bore Brown Bess verses the rifled musket. Be better than your enemy or die, since there are a lot more of them.

The best choice for a full size round weapon would be a battle rifle, the semi-autos using a .308 round or something similar. These would be the HK91, FN-FAL, M1 Garand, M14, etc. My choice if finances allowed would be the HK91 or even if need be its bastard stepchild from Spain (the licensed version for half the price). That weapon is in my view the only design that is both accurate and rugged, as most others are only one or the other, not both. But anything that is scoped and throws a big round far away is a good choice. If semi-auto is too expensive, a bolt action is just fine. Even better for survivalists if future ammo supply is seen as a problem. I think most of you know of my irrational fondness for the Lee-Enfield, but I'm sure most will opt for the discounted hunting rifle from Wal-Mart to achieve long range firepower. Fine. As long as you stay out of harms way.
END

BIG (CORPORATE) BROTHER IS WATCHING

I always did enjoy reading science fiction. When done right, or even close, it gave you something to think about. Thus, you got a "two-fer". Entertainment and intellectual stimulation. The sub-genre I enjoyed most other than Libertarian was Cyber-Punk. Cyber-Punk was what you got when you crossed government collapse with the Information Economy. It touched on such wonders as implanted circuitry, genetic alteration, artificial intelligence, etc (see William Gibson's "Neuromancer" for the classic. Others are Bruce Sterling, Rudy Rucker. Do an online search for a wealth of information). The other subject it briefly touched on was corporate control of the economy (or rather corporate contested control, as crime syndicates seemed to be in the mix along with the Soviets). This is what held my curiosity long after the genre went out of favor. It is a shame, seeing as how the Soviet collapse and the brief economic respite from it did not invalidate the themes in the fiction. Keep in mind this was mostly pre-Internet writing. Either the genre was pretty good at projecting trends, or life imitated art real good.

Anyone who thinks it is far fetched that corporate control is possible has not been paying attention in recent years. As much as I fear Democrats, I hold Republicans only slightly above them as a sub-species, and has Bush ever been feeding at the corporate trough!! Bush was elected with corporate cash and most likely re-elected, and he has been paying back the favor ever since. He also made a whole lot of tax-cuts in a bid to buy the '04 election, so Joe Six-pack is unlikely to vote for a tax and spend candidate. Bush pays for his buying spree through inflation and (mostly) debt, much more agreeable to masses. Since it worked for thirty years, they can only hope it keeps working. Plus, after a hard day at the office sucking the boss' ass, most folks can even see the wisdom of Bush being bought. The same has happened to them, all for the price of a few rickety wooden walls on the edge of the slum and a questionable education for junior so he can follow in their footsteps. A mid-life crises is just the realization that your efforts have been worthless, and you don't have long to go before you are broke eating dog food and then dead as your

medication costs more than rent and is thus unaffordable.

We are most likely not going to see '70s style inflation, seeing as how the Central Banks are forced to play nice by the checking power of financial traders. In a world were private entities control vast pools of digital wealth, too much inflation is punished rapidly. The cost is now higher when inflating. Supply and demand- the higher the cost, the less there will be. Plus, as much as our experience denies it, inflation might not be our future. Global competition might apply too much of a downward pressure. Thus, the mightiest tool of big government, manipulating the money supply, just might no longer be used. The government is indeed still growing, but is in the position that it is hurting itself by that growth. Soon. big daddy government might collapse, and into every void another power hungry group steps. One possible entity is corporate power. They can create credit, jobs, and cash. They can pick and choose where factories go, where white collar jobs go (hint- not to the USA). They create or destroy politicians. They buy up competition. They manipulate stock markets, changing or ignoring securities laws. They purchase and turn mainstream voices that become too popular.

Corporations are in effect at war with government. Both want to control, both have our money for their war chest. Both offer the illusion of change but are identical in their idiocy and limitless greed. Neither one will be a kind taskmaster, but at least with big business we are manipulated by greed rather than fear of punishment. I could very well be projecting my biased wishes onto future trends, but to me this seems a repeat of history were the Church fought off the Nation State until defeated and to the victor went economic control. We shall see.
END

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REVIEW
THE COMING GENERATIONAL STORM

The Coming Generational Storm by Laurence J Kotlikoff and Scott Burns, MIT Press copyright 2004. An up to date look at the coming massive transfer payments the Baby Boomers will demand, to include Social Security and Medicare. The latest boondoggle of the Prescription drug benefits is included in the calculations, and our grand total is over $50 trillion in obligations.

Surprisingly, the entire book is quite readable. I finished reading the almost 300 pages in two work days. The math is spelled out in some detail, and it is not boring. In a word, we are rather screwed. Solutions are given, but the authors are realistic is their pessimistic view that they will not be forthcoming. Most looks at the problem sum up the same dreary projections in much less detail. It is to these authors credit that the mind numbing numbers are presented in a pleasing style. If you want a realistic, accurate, detailed picture of why the geriatrics will screw over future generations to retire in style, read this book.

The changing birth rate, the increasing longevity, better medicine, the delay in first births due to women entering the work force, the break down of the nuclear family spelling out lack of care from children, the increased Federal debt, the glossing over of the retirement finances by government, all are covered. The projected fixes are exposed as unworkable, including productivity increases based on unrealistic high numbers, privatization that will bring in a negative cash flow, increased capital spending that won't be there, financial bail-outs from rich countries with a worse demographic than us, young workers unable to provide care for parents after increased taxes, private pension plans that have even worse financial footing, raising the retirement age that lags behind increased survival ages, immigrants that contribute little to the system after welfare benefits are factored in, voodoo economics based on a few abnormally high years, and eliminating waste that will only save a few percent on the budget.

The inevitable inflation is shown to be unworkable. Other countries are highlighted, their problems being far worse than ours. Medical inflation is a hidden danger that is exposed. Private pensions are shown to be a money losing proposition. Some fix-it steps are advised, such as using currently taxed private retirement funds to eliminate future tax hikes, reducing fees on private pensions, the different types of assets to hold, owning a debt free house, factoring in cuts to your financial calculations, delaying retirement, selling and downsizing your house, gold backed investing, even saving. All with possible down-sides, but better than letting Uncle Sugar take care of your well being.

Not that you should read this book for a Joe Normal retirement plan. Just read it to get a true picture of how bad things will get. As a survivalist, your plans are far cheaper and much more paranoid. But unless you just hate finance, you should read this book.
END

REVIEWS

FINANCIAL RECKONING DAY-surviving the soft depression of the 21st century.
by William Bonner & Addison Wiggin
William Bonner heads up the great Web page www.dailyreckoning.com
This book is not just more of the same, but a more focused, detailed view of why perhaps very soon America will indeed be sucking wind. Especially welcome is the intellectual honesty when the basic attitude is, "Here is what similar events in history are telling us most likely will happen, but, hey, we have no crystal ball so it is all just a guess. " After reading dozens of chicken little books, I relish that change of pace.

The sad history of central banks is given, the eerie parallels between us and Japan (they were ten years ahead of us with a soft depression), why Greenspan is an idiot, why mobs are dumber than a box of rocks, etc. A great book, but one that is background as to why, rather than a real guide as to what to do. Their basic advice is to buy gold and then just relax, since you now have real money. Not bad advice, but limited to folks with a lot of unreal money in the form of Fed notes to buy gold with. They spew out the "buy gold" advice as readily as I do with sacks of wheat. If you are poor, this is just a great read. It is always nice to know in what direction catastrophe is coming from. Highly recommended, but you are strongly advised to check it out at the library first. $20 is still $20, even in worthless paper.

THE RUNAWAY JURY- movie from John Grisham
I normally look upon lawyers as scum sucking parasitic communist bastards, but I always did like this guys books. They were a good read, and almost did make lawyers human. Now I shall not buy another new book or watch a movie from Mr. Grisham, any activity that puts royalty money in his pocket. The Runaway Jury was so grotesquely, violently, uncompromisingly anti-gun that I have been in a tither ever since the movie first came out on DVD. I usually will watch a movie just because Gene Hackman is in it. Now, since he appeared in this blatantly liberal piece of crap, I might just take him off my Christmas list also. I don't even really like the gun industry all that much (the bad guys in this film) since they were most likely behind the foreign gun import ban, but this film paints such an ugly picture of them any believer in the Second Amendment is surely going to be offended. If someone offers you $100 to watch this movie, please decline, perform unspeakable acts upon them, and then use the stiffening corpse to bludgeon to death the nearest lawyer, liberal actor, politician or person who voted for Clinton (you shouldn't have far to look).

COUNTRYSIDE & SMALL STOCK JOURNAL- bimonthly magazine, $18 a year.

www.countrysidemag.com

I used to discount this as the "how to raise chickens" magazine. However, after buying several issues at the newsstand, I have come to view this as the better of the homesteading mags. Not really survivalist orientated, but still useful in a sense. Mother Earth News of course is too focused on the Yuppie migration, requiring way too much cash. Backwoods Home is great, but still a little on the light side of needed information. A little like Wonder Bread, but mostly like AOL. It is great for beginners, easy on the eyes, but always just short of what you need on a more serious level. I will continue reading BWH, and liking it, but still needing something more, such as Countryside.

END

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INFORMATION AGE ORGANICS

Genetically modified crops were hailed as a promise to declining farm yields. They also cut back on pollution (reduced use of pesticides) and use of fertilizers, saving money. A good portion of the U.S. corn crop is genetic. Fine and dandy in a world of huge conglomerate farming. The patented seeds are made by one company, sold to another. The problem is that when one company has control over the seed supply, prices go up. In a culture where corn is only seen as having value as Doritos chips, this might be seen as a non-problem. However, corn is widely used as vegetable oil stock and feed for livestock. The bottom line for corn seed does effect your pocketbook. Of course, increased yields should keep the price stable or falling, negating the increased seed cost. Where it causes a problem is the global scene. It is in our interests to see that the world is kept well fed. As galling as it might have been to feed the Soviet Unions masses when communism was our arch enemy, it made perfect sense. Starving populations are a bigger threat than a well armed rival government which is only interested in keeping themselves in power. In effect, we bought peace through superior firepower and food.

Now apply that wisdom to China and India. They have a heck of a lot of people, and they both have nuclear weapons. They are not going to attack us to get food, but it is reasonable to expect that if mass starvation was a problem they would attack a neighbor. Regional instability, and the threat of nukes, could fast become our problem. Plus, just the threat of looming food shortages might cause the leadership of China to threaten us into shipping over more subsidized grain. We have foolishly made ourselves vulnerable by allowing them to hold a lot of our Treasury Notes as we spent our way from prosperity (Japan holds more of our debt, but are less of a threat). It would be better if we never let that happen by making sure they get enough to eat. Not that the government has done anything. Indirectly, sure, by way of University grants into food gene banks. But, by and large it is the work of individuals motivated by doing good deeds. Our government has its slimy fingers in every pie, hurting more than helping. Credit should not go to them for helping to feed the world.

A new practice of augmenting organic growing through information technology is providing the new Green Revolution, without using gene modification (FrankenFoods). Gene modifying uses a grafted gene from another food to introduce a desired trait, such as resistance to bugs, mold, salinity, etc. People envision fields spawning toxic gene byproducts. It was actually amusing to watch footage of bio-suited scientists in a strawberry field. But perhaps they have a point. We thought nuclear power had no side effects, and were we wrong. But here I am more concerned with control over supply

through patenting seeds. Some things really should be kept out of the control of corporations. The Internet is a good example of what a free enterprise system without government control, with little or no corporate control, with a noble goal as its driving force can accomplish. Farming seed should be the same. It's too late to save the family farm, but lets not let corporations rule our food supply.

Applying information technology to organic farming works as follows. Gene banks (collections of varieties of seeds genes) are available for nearly all the worlds crops. Rice itself has almost 85,000 seed types, wild and domesticated. When this is computerized, you can easily search it for a desired trait, say resistance to blight. They find the match, tag the gene, use that plant containing the gene to cross breed with a local variety, and get a potential blight resistant strain. That new plant is analyzed, tested by exposing them to blight and the survivors are your winners (a little more involved than that, but there are the basics). You now have a rice breed that thrives under local conditions, without getting infected. The gene banks are usually University sponsored, and the results are not intellectual property. They are available to all, quickly. Computers replace years of experimentation in the fields. So, in theory you could move quickly to stamp out a new crop disease by next season, and the results being available to all.

Don't get me wrong, I am not a leftists leaning, politically collect muttonhead, pinko commie fag, socialist, fascist, tree-hugging, government cheerleader puke. I stand proud and tall an anarchist. But that does not mean I am a conservative who is elected by corporate sponsors (I won't mention any names like Bush, Sr & Jr). I would much rather see corporate rule than government sponsored mob rule. But when we can use one against the other to benefit ourselves rather than one of them, so much the better. Government sponsored Universities which disallow intellectual licensing (some of the time, anyway) can neutralize corporate greed. This benefits the common folk. Maybe those crazy Europeans did everyone a favor by making such a stink about GM foods. Now it is mostly unprofitable and to keep paying the bills on those capital intensive corporate farms they might have to use natural crops to make money.
END ARTICLE

HOW THE NEW BAR CODES WILL CUT YOUR RETAIL COSTS

Rather recently we began to become accustomed to lower prices everyday, courtesy of Wal-Mart. Say what you will about them, they are nothing but good news to consumers. When you wake up in the morning and take a shower and cook breakfast, that electricity costs you more every year. You drive to work in a car that cost you more to own every year. The health care you get at work costs you more every year. In real terms your job pays you less every year. The house you live in costs more every year to buy and maintain. The cost of the government forced on you goes up every year (whether by taxes hidden, direct, by inflation, etc). About the only place you can get a true genuine bargain is to shop at Wal-Mart, because over time their prices do decrease. Even commodities such as dairy, coffee, wheat or what have you decrease in real terms factoring in inflation or at the very least they are continually cheaper as compared to the

competition. This is due to a small degree by China's huge growth, but the main reason is that they are always improving the means to deliver their product.

Every penny or percentage that can be shaved from the cost of construction or transportation can be passed on to the consumer. And while the back end computers are great at re-ordering what has been sold, one hurdle to greater efficiency is that the inventory in the store is a lot harder to track. It is great to assume that since twenty cases of chocolate covered widgets were shipped to the Dogbreath, Wyoming store and only one was sold, then nineteen must be left. The register told headquarters as much. However, in reality, things are much different. The multi-million dollar distribution center that was so wonderful has a failure rate of scanning cases that might seem great percentage wise, but every failure has repercussions. In actuality your store has fifteen cases and by assuming the higher figure you are going to run out and piss off some customers. The less each one buys, the worse off are your profits. It is all about quantity. The profit margins are thin, the way to make money is to get each customer to buy way more than they planned to. You do this with every cheaper prices and having everything in stock.

The current system requires a lot of wasted human effort. Labor is the costliest component in retail. If you could get a lot more accuracy out of a lot less workers, you could pass a whole lot of savings on to the customer. Cases must be checked in by scanning, sorted by scanning. After an item is placed on the shelf, it can be picked up and moved, bought, or bought and returned. Plus, every item must be counted before another order is made to adjust the automatic re-order, due to theft or that ever lazy customer who decides against purchase and dumps that can of frozen orange juice into a bin of pre-teen underwear. Returned after purchase items must find their way back via labor, not always as easy as it seems amongst a huge retail offering. Now, if you could drastically cut back on the labor needed to perform the above tasks, a huge saving is realized. The way to do this is radio emitting chips.

Radio emitting chips are a tiny chip with a miniature antenna, about a tenth the size of a regular printed bar code. When powered up by a reader, they emit their information about what kind of product they are and where they are. They can be embedded into a product, reducing damage or malicious alteration. In effect, a bar code that talks to you. The main obstacle has been price. A fifty cent product needs a chip that cost five cents, not twenty five. Plus, to work its miracle, it must become universal. The target price is five cents each, and it is almost there. Already, the big guys like Wal-Mart and Target and the like are giving mandatory date that incoming cases must be tagged. Not quite ready for each individual retail product, but it is the start of an irreversible trend. Once you can tell instantly what is in the stockroom, the allure of transporting the technology into retail space cannot be denied.

After full utilization, a pallet is off-loaded from a truck. The pallet only contains like items or if small ordered items, they were all automatically put together by isle location. A pallet in the back room has all known items, even if stacked twelve high and ten deep.

You no longer need to get to each item to know. You will know the true count of every item, those in their place, or those lost and misplaced. No labor hand counting. No labor inventorying repeatedly. Less labor putting lost items away. Less labor ringing up items. A clerk no long must swipe, just bag and take payment. Or, self serve is offered. Items can't hide under shoplifters coats if an item can send a signal to a detector before the exit.

It will be as revolutionary as the bar code, and it will save you a lot more money. Enjoy.
END ARTICLE

MAKESHIFT SHOWER

A few issues back I wrote on primitive living in your home. I suggested that one could live quite easily without, among other things, a hot water heater. One could use a stove top, coffee maker and microwave to heat water and then transport hot water to where ever it was needed such as a bath. This has been my bathing system for over a year. The problem lies in the winter months when a shallow bath is quite unpleasant due to the cold temperatures even in a bathroom with a small space heater running. The crafty devils that designed the travel trailer I live in decided in a flash of true intelligence that they really didn't need insulation on any wall section that had a cupboard in front of it or was used to store anything. The walls under the sink and tub have no insulation. So, if it gets to around zero outside and the sun doesn't come out that day then the inside water pipes freeze unless you open cupboard doors. But, more importantly to our conversation here, the tub always has cold air underneath it due to an access space underneath it to the outside that is only a thin sheet of wood (and no, I can't skirt due to living in a park which is due to needing to work full time which is due to having to pay the ex wife her many pieces of silver [57 pieces a month at current market prices] which is due to living in a society which is rapidly consuming its wealth producers to placate a parasitic welfare class which was foretold by that slightly wacked out but lovable genius Ayn Rand which really is a good survivalist fable if you think about it and I really wish Bush would just hurry up and get it over with already and just turn on the damn printing presses so we could all pay off our debts quicker cause otherwise those housing prices are going kill us but mostly since he is going to destroy the economy anyway let me get some satisfaction by paying off the ex in near worthless paper dollars before the start of apocalypse).

Now, in the summer taking a bath in three inches of water is no big deal. The temperature hovers around 90 and taking a bath cools you down. But as soon as cold weather starts taking a bath is an exercise in masochism. That's when I start taking sponge baths that are less painful. Yet, both ways present a problem. In the end there is always soap residue on your person. Now, better to have soap on your body than dirt and grease, but still it is less than ideal. Bad enough that you have no shower and need to rough it. The least you want to do is make it as easy, cheap and painless as possible. Let me take a moment here to explain why I don't just install a friggin hot water heater and be done with it. One, I don't know if when I move I'm going to take this trailer with me. I bought it in the park and have never moved it. It looks none to sturdy. Two, only having two to five gallons of hot water means I'd have to take quick low pressure showers anyway and that is not

worth $200 plus the electric bill that goes with it (remember my method only costs $2 a month in electric). Three, if I move out to the boonies I can't take the thing with me unless it is propane only and I think a solar shower is a better bet off the grid. Also, I refuse to use the parks shower as they charge extra for it (they already rip me off overcharging for the space) and I don't like communal showers due to the fungal conditions of a lot of peoples feet.

A solar shower is impossible, as there is no way to hang a forty pound weight in the shower (the curtain rod is held up by pressure only). I see Wal-Mart online sells a battery powered shower but it costs a bit much and controlled by a foot pedal (soapy foot, slip, fall) so at this time I don't think I would want to try it. The answer that works for me is to use a hand pump gardening sprayer. You pump the handle then under pressure spray cancer causing herbicides around the swing set to get rid off the weeds and the kids. Buy a new one at Wal-Mart or Lowes for ten bucks (does it really need to be said to only use a new one not used? there are limits to being cheap). You can spend $50 and buy a stainless steel number if you plan on doing this every day for the rest of your life and want quality, but I think the plastic ones will do for most of us. I split up my hot water in two sections, half a gallon into the sprayer, half a gallon in a bucket. Pump the heck out of the sprayer, about 50-60 times to get enough pressure to last you through the whole shower. Then, sponge bathe with the bucket water and rinse off with the sprayer. It removes all soap residue and leaves you feeling much cleaner. The short hoses do present a small hassle (they were designed to spray the ground, not you) but even with my tall skinny frame I can contort myself well enough to rinse off quite well. Also, this method works well for me with short hair. The ladies and hippies out there would need a bit more water to get all that hair clean and well rinsed. Hope this helped.
END ARTICLE

SURVIVAL BAYONETS
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The Germans name nasty lunch meat after their city of origin. The French were a bit cooler and got a rifle mounted knife named after one of theirs. Of course, that was awhile ago and it seems the poor bastards just can't get anything else right for the last two centuries or so. I suppose after almost taking over Europe anything else just pales in comparison. You have to love them, what with the French Foreign Legion, their selling us lots of land cheap, and just the contrary nature of the culture. They thumb their noses at us and everyone else. France doesn't hate America, they hate everyone. Perhaps they even may serve as a lesson to us. You can almost be the worlds superpower, then do everything wrong in politics and economics but yet still hang in there and somehow keep the whole country going despite setbacks. We should be so lucky in the future.

Okay, we go back to yesteryear when the armies of the day decided that the best way to settle their differences was to line up facing each other and shoot at each other on command until the whole area was obscured in gunpowder smoke and then you couldn't see who was about to kill you. And some guy in France says, "Hey, lets fire a couple of times and then run at the other guys with sharp objects and they will crap themselves and run and we shall be victorious and go to our campfires and eat whatever it is we Frenchmen eat besides snails and cheese sauces to celebrate being such superior dandied guys that wear powdered wigs and get to keep mistresses which our wives approve of since they are busy admiring that stocky peasant from the countryside who is delivering whatever it is that French countryside dudes bring into the city since at least he is not a dandy that listens to ballet or opera or some such but rather swills cheap wine and leers at all passing females and will mount them like a farm animal given half the change, even though everyone knows the only reason the wife even got huffy in the first place was because the guys hair looked nicer than hers, but whatever, since the best part was they got to keep mistresses so in your face German guys with that broomstick up your butt acting like you are sooo superior." And thus was born the bayonet. The charcoal burners of the day were slow to reload, and thus another weapon mounted on that now empty weapon made sense.

What would have made more sense was to issue everyone at least two or three pistols and a short sword if they really wanted some serious mayhem going on close quarters, but since life was cheap and manufactured items were dear, the infantryman was lucky he even got the bayonet. I'm sure there was a bunch of bankers and politicians sitting around and bitching about giving the poor bastards adequate tools to get the job done. Why, I have

no idea. The printing press came along at the same time and the greedy SOBs were already turning out worthless money. Hell, that's how we are paying for our MidEast conquest, just turn on the presses and make all that we need. Who cares if the poor get poorer as their money buys less and less? We have a globe to dominate, piss on the poor- what have they done for us lately? They only pay taxes and fight in the wars.

To be effective with the smooth bores of the day, infantry had to stay in ranks and volley fire. The ranks had to stay in formation or they were worthless as a fighting unit, and thus the all-important training of marching and maneuvering in step with everyone else. That was pretty much all they were taught other than reloading by the numbers to ensure everyone was ready to fire again at the same time (and of course military customs to brainwash you into actually wanting to stay and fight when you knew you would most likely die). Thus it followed that bayonet fighting must be in formation and by the numbers. The wall of advancing steel was effective. You knew there was a good chance a small lead ball would miss you, but you were pretty sure that the guy with the bayonet was going to stab you but good.

And then came along the Industrial Revolution and the bayonet was suddenly staked up against a heck of a lot more rifles and they were real rifles with rifled barrels and not muskets with smooth bores and they used percussion caps rather than flintlocks and even worse the artillery got more effective and there was a lot more of that, too. Even if the armies of the day still used slow muzzleloaders and blackpowder the bayonet charge was made obsolete by the increased artillery and the ability to field a much larger force. And fifty years later the military had still fail to realize this. And even worse than still relying on bayonets as a psychological weapon was using them against machineguns and repeating rifles. And then after a war taking a knife to a gunfight while bankrupting several colonial powers of the day and literally slaughtering an entire generation, the bayonet was still retained which might have some marginal purpose but even that was ruined by still teaching bayonet fighting as if the troops were in a mass formation two hundred years ago fighting with muzzleloaders. Parry, thrust. Like the other guy was going to stand still and fight you in a duel with mounted bayonets instead of pulling out his pistol he got from his own officer he had fragged and shooting your sorry butt.

Even today when perhaps a bayonet would be a useful tool since the standard teaching doctrine of warfare is to pray and spray and in remote locations you can run out of ammo quick, the fact that you only have a useless Mattel Toy to mount the bayonet on makes the whole exercise pointless. In the military, the bayonet is useless. But, come the apocalypse, now we have an entirely different story. Now the bayonet becomes a welcome tool of warfare. Or, I should say, survival. Just as a survival rifle is different than a military one, the roles of a bayonet are different in the military and to a survivalist. In the military you run out of ammo and if you are stupid and don't run than at least you can fight with a bayonet (assuming the other guy also ran out of ammo and was stupid enough to also wish to fight the same way, unless all he had was a knife and then at least you had some reach). But 99% of the time it would probably be smarter to just issue the troops a good knife. There are plenty of chores around camp to use them on and in a

worse case scenario they always have a weapon to defend themselves with. But with today's short carbine like assault rifles that are definitely not designed with bayonet fighting in mind it is best to forget military bayonets.

All survivalists that have a suitable rifle should own one or more bayonets. Any social breakdown, post-apocalypse, industrial disruption scenario will bode well for bayonet usage. You are faced with a real possibility of ammo shortages, and the bayonet will see you home so you can reload those carefully salvaged brass cases. There most likely will be a lot of dog packs turned feral as well as wolves migrating down from the wilderness in the winter to find a meal. Any future riot control will be much more effective using deadly force. If your boss should turn dictator you might be intimidating the populace with shiny cold steel (cheaper than bullets). As a determent to violence since a show of force might resolve the situation. And finally, as a silent weapon. Lets briefly review these.

Ammunition shortages are a primary concern to your survivalist. Whether from future political controls such as increased taxes or outright bans, or simply that doomsday occurs before you know it, the fear is that you may end up without enough ammo. And so we endlessly stockpile ammunition. Surplus ammo to practice with, ball ammo to save money, reloading components, there is never enough. The recommendation has usually been 1000 rounds for bolt actions and 10k for semi-autos but even that modest amount could be out of reach for a lot of us. The old ball and chain, the other half, the spouse, they wish to see you die in a cloud of fallout, choking and sputtering, your last pitiful glance towards them imploring with your eyes, why, oh why have you forsaken us with your insistence on those worthless unnecessary trinkets such as cars and houses and college educations you had me buy with my ever shrinking supply of inflation shrunken paper dollars? Do they wish to see you die as a last "In your face" "I get the last word"? Do they hate you so much? Did they find out about the fling with your co-worker? That can be the only explanation as to why you were denied all your survivalist preparation toys. Well, you do the best you can. If you really have a hard time getting survival money budgeted, better get a bayonet sooner rather than later. You might run out of ammo real fast. Just save the last round for the spouse, s/he will make for good eating and then it is you who shall have the last laugh.

Wolves were quit feared by countryside peasants long ago. Here you go, out to chop some wood to heat your gruel with and a damn pack of wolves runs out of the woods and kills you in a gruesome manner. About the only thing you have to fight with is a stick of wood since the ruling king of the day decided him staying in power was much more important than mere poor people being able to defend themselves against predators (such as himself for instance) and thus you went unarmed. Well, ok, you had the ax. But a bow or crossbow would have been much more effective or even a spear. But instead you waited until Igor the neighbor was eaten by wolves and then begged the local chief to do something and maybe they went hunting wolves which was fun for them, not like work at all, and a season or three later the wolves came back and started eating villagers again since they still weren't armed with more than sticks. Kind of like the Federal government that won't allow US citizens to arm themselves on an airplane. A raghead hijacks the thing

for the price of the ticket and a few 59 cent box cutters and then afterwards we invade the country that trained them, spend tens of billions of dollars and kill hundreds of soldiers to extract revenge when all along if you allowed each passenger to carry a $3-500 pistol they paid for themselves and shoot a 20 cent round into a hijacker the problem would have been solved (but that's not the way to keep the military/industrial complex in business, now is it). So wolves are going to be a problem, as are the less talented but still lethal feral dog population. They get hungry and you might become food. This is were semi-autos will come in real handy, and spray and pray is hard to miss at close ranges. However, if semi-auto is not in your budget it might be a good idea to have a bolt action that is capable of mounting a bayonet. Those bastards get too close and you might want to attach your bayonet in case one of them get through between reloading. A gentle reminder of steel sliding into the animals side might convince the critter to back off. But your bigger problem will probably be feral dogs instead of wolves. There will be more of them and they are a lot more stupid and might be prone to attack whereas a wolf might know enough to stay away. Remember, even with semi-auto you can run out of ammo or get a jam. The bayonet is far from ideal for fighting natural predators but better than butt stroking them with an empty light weight assault rifle.

In an apocalyptic future you may be part of the ruling class (or work for one) and the best thing for riot control will be cold steel. In today's politically correct environment rioters are lovingly dissuaded from their erroneous beliefs with tender applications of mace, high pressure water streams or wooden batons. With television cameras rolling nearby it just won't do to rip into the crowd with a squad automatic weapon, blood spraying, internal organs leaking, bowls voiding and other assorted yukkie stuff. It is bad for public image and tends to leave a foul taste in the mouth of a loan officer from the World Bank. Likewise, repeatedly plunging a bayonet into the abdomen of a screaming tree-hugging, socialist, yoga practicing, tofu eating, Greenpeace donating protestor is bad for business, however satisfying an image it may be. But in the future, there will be no such constraints. Forget that pussy riot control gear of today and inspire some real fear in the populace. You want to peaceably assemble and protest just because you're hungry and tired of taxes? Bayonet practicing time. It saves on ammo, and after you get cut you'll think twice before protesting again.

On a related note, bayonets are perfect for keeping the population in line even if no riots should form. During Japans occupation of the Pacific islands and most of (at least coastal) Asia before and at the start of WWII, they used very few soldiers to keep indigenous populations in line. A single soldier was tasked with patrolling a certain area, and any trouble was dealt with by a bayonet. How long was it before the population learned not to step out of line? PDQ. The Japs had a very small industrial base compared with most others, and while it worked miracles, supplies were always dear. Terror backed by steel was the best way to keep order. The Americans would have bombarded a village from the air, sent in several companies to mop up, set up an aid station for the people to treat the wounds they themselves caused, flown in a few cargo planes full of food the local wouldn't even feed their livestock, taught a few troopers the local language in Monterey, flown them out, tried to reason with the locals that Uncle Sam loved them, rigged the

local election to get a mayor in power they liked, seen another insurrection occur and finally give up and went home. Cost- tens of millions of dollars. Cost to the Japanese, several days worth of rice to feed the soldier and about $3 to manufacture the bayonet. And don't forget POW's. Nothing better at keeping them in line than a bayonet, other than a shotgun full of birdshot. It won't kill you but it sure will hurt getting all the shot out (if the infection doesn't kill you first). However, you don't issue the regular troops shotguns, so give them a bayonet to attach to their regular rifle. Any grunt is now a guard in a POW facility.

A bayonet is also great as a show of force. Lets say a hurricane just wiped out the old neighborhood. You could set up a lawn chair and wait for looters with your Mattel Toy AR-15, or you could get out the old Lee-Enfield No.1 with mounted bayonet that is about a foot long and look at the shocked expressions on passerby's faces as they see that whopper of a pig-sticker. How many are going to come back and try to loot your house? Nary a one, I would wager. Or, post-apocalypse, you are the proprietor of Billy Bobs Trading Post Bar Brothel Mercenary Recruitment Center Opium Den & Used Computers Bought And Sold. As a rule your customers are going to be an unruly bunch. You guessed it, bayonet time. And if you had a side agreement with Joe Bobs Butcher Shop And Taxidermy down the street you could sell the stiffening cooling corpse for a little pocket money rather than waste anything. No more future unruly customers.

And as a silent weapon. Now, most other weapons are preferred for silent wet work. A garrote, crossbow, dagger, whatever. However, if you already have a bayonet for other uses, it follows that you at least have the ability to take out a sentry if need be. How many of us carry around a garrote? I usually accidentally leave mine at home. What do you tell a cop? "Why, yes, officer, I am a piano tuner". It's like fighting with the bayonet after all your ammo is gone. It is unwise, but if you have to at least you can. The pig sticker is an all around versatile weapon of terror.

How, what kind of bayonet should you carry? There are two basic types, the pike and the knife. The pike looks like a tent stake, and knife like, well, a knife. The knife type was the most common with turn of the century military bolt action rifles. The Mauser, Enfield, etc. What later showed up as a problem was that a long flat knife would easily snap off when you struck an enemy and then continued to swing the rifle to the side. Or, the blade was so long the enemies flesh acted as a suction and it was hard to extract the blade. As a solution it was proposed pike types be used once again. Most shortened the blade, some went exclusively to pike. It is my opinion that the pike is better if you are in the military and your only action is ramming the bayonet into the enemy, using your momentum and the rifles weight to stab and ram the steel into flesh. That is the militaries one pony show with the bayonet. But as a survival weapon, the knife bayonet is much better if you plan on using the rifle/bayonet as more than just an expensive spear. With a bayonet being used at times as a determent you don't always need to kill someone. If you also use the bayonet to swipe and cut (like a longer reaching sword) rather than just sticking the damn thing into whatever target presents itself, you expand your options. If you practice a bit you could get real good. A POW is acting up, swish, there goes an ear. A slave

gives you lip, swish, cut an artery and laugh like crazy as everyone goes running around trying to stem the gusher. Instead of killing a valuable worker, you just re-establish dominance. Or, psych them out. Go running towards one screaming like mad acting like you are going to stick the bayonet in his stomach, but then suddenly stop, pivot, and hit one of the bystanders with a good swipe across the chest. He didn't see that one coming! Just use your imagination.

Any military rifle is going to be set up for a bayonet unless you bought a recent semi-auto ban rifle that did away with the attachment to be legal. A few only have one type of bayonet, such as Chinese made SKS's with built in pike. Or the Eastern European SKS that has a built in knife bayonet. The WWII Lee-Enfield used the pike type, but if you search around you can find the alternate knife style. The ideal would be a full size round battle rifle (Garand, FN-FAL, HK91, etc) with bayonet. That way you have a sniper rifle, a semi-auto for rapid fire in emergencies, and a sturdy long rifle to mount a bayonet on. The perfect weapons package, if you can afford the $500 and up price tag (not including mags and extra ammo). That is why I stick with the military bolt actions. No magazines, less ammo used, less parts to break. But a compromise. One day I might wish I had more than ten rounds in the mag and they self loaded. But, hey, that's why I have a bayonet.

Beware the one problem of the rifle/bayonet system- the point were the two meet. You usually will have a spring and latch system to lock the bayonet in place. Get a replacement spring. If you have to duct tape the damn thing together you are going to loose the flexibility of two separate weapons systems. And not to mention loosing your credibility. You'll be a laughing stock instead of a menace. Also, be sure to have a scabbard and a way to carry that scabbard. You usually have a "frog" that is attached to a utility belt and the scabbard rests in that. It is better to have the bayonet handy on your belt than left in your pack back at camp.
END

THE ANT AND THE GRASSHOPPER 2
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Once upon a time there was an industrious ant and a rather lazy grasshopper. Now, each was rather unremarkable, as ants will be ants and grasshoppers likewise will be grasshoppers. The ant toiled away and made ready for lean times and the grasshopper took it easy and enjoyed life, trusting that things would always work out in the end as they always had.

If you were to pass by the ants home from time to time you might notice that the lawn was always neat and tidy, the laundry was always waving brightly in the sun (this being Florida were local prohibitions against cloths lines were overturned to encourage solar resources) and even if ant did live in a used mobile home at least it was kept in good repair and was presentable. Grasshopper on the other hand lived in the projects and took to smoking crack, wearing a ball cap with the bill turned sideways on his head, grabbing at his crotch and sneering if a passing car happened to contain a passenger that just might look too long at such a spectacle.

Now, ant was a good little Catholic and spawned a mighty hoard of children, both out of the sheer joy of having the constant patter of feet disturb his few free moments and out of the perhaps subconscious realization that three quarters of the ungrateful bastards would fail to provide for him and misses ant in their later years and so he better have a whole bunch to increase the odds that at least one of his kids would take pity on him and provide a room for them in old age and hopefully even hose them off once in awhile after their bodily functions started to fail on them, although he was having serious misgivings about this form of retirement planning although it wasn't like he had a lot of choices since the government took a third of his wages and you could bet the farm those rotten scum suckers would run Social Security into the ground before he retired and even if they didn't inflation would effectively give him next to nothing not to mention God forbid he ever got sick with the medical costs increasing 15% a year, but ant was taking no changes and so with the mortgage paid off and him renting out the extra rooms that the kids used to live in would pay the bills unless the greedy pig humpers raised the taxes on the house and then he was really screwed, unless all that was disrupted with the kids moving back in after college, and it really all was too much for ant who just knew he was screwed.

Grasshopper on the other hand had no worries. His bitch was on the welfare, and as long as he didn't stay over too much to get that nasty old biddy down the hall talking about his

bitch co-habitating and so ruin the welfare he was okay. He just stayed at different buddies places or even outdoors in good weather. Every once in awhile he had to stage a big fight with his bitch and then leave for a month or two so she would shack up with another guy and get pregnant so she could stay on the welfare, but that was okay cause she usually had food for him and menthols and sometimes gave him cash for some beer so he could hang with his homies. Once in awhile when someone reminded him he went down and voted democrat like the deacon in the church had told them to, so the money kept coming in from Uncle Sugar to compensate his oppressed minority for past transgressions. Grasshopper wasn't going to sell crack and have to go to County, and he wasn't going to be like some of his old homies and go join the Army to go fight in Iran or Syria since that was just purely insane. Grasshopper was pretty smooth with the bitches so he knew he had his meal ticket.

One day ant decided that he was going to start hoarding food (more than just enough to get through the winter) since he was getting worried about potential future supply disruptions what with Middle East pipeline sabotage and terrorists blowing up Texas refineries and all (Homeland Security was about as effective as the Post Office in securing those areas). Plus, with gas prices rising and railroads and trucking services consolidating to secure some kind of profit any mismanagement effected large sectors of the economy. And, with President Jeb Bush in office the federal pension insurance fund had been abolished when too many private sector pension funds had been looted to show quarterly profits so other than a few companies already in the spotlight such as GM that needed to appease current workers no one else was even pretending to run a fiscally sound fund and put all assets into the companies own stock which was about as good as Little Red Riding Hood putting the wolf in charge of the dinner preparations all of which would just put more pressure on Social Security which just had 75 million Baby Boomers join the 50 million already on it before 2008 and nobody even pretended to think that was going to work since we were trying to occupy four countries in the Middle East and there was even talk of going into Saudi Arabia if the Royal family was overthrown and even if there wasn't a draft you didn't have much of a choice if you were poor but to join the Army since it was Welfare (hard to qualify) or the Army, unless you had a college degree. And even that was hard although with the whole country on broadband Internet access it should have been cheap to get an online degree, last year 40 state Governors had petitioned the Feds to abolish online learning since enrollment in their State colleges was starting to go down after they increased rates 10% five years in a row. Now you needed a second mortgage to send junior to college (State only, private colleges required a net worth of at least 5 million to meet financial eligibility).

Grasshopper was also starting to get nervous. His homies were starting to get hassled by the local 5-O after the Department cut the budget again after drug forfeiture laws were relaxed by the Supreme Court and anything the police confiscated they could sell and keep the profits from and so after a big coke bust the city figured the cops had enough operating cash from the coke sale to Canada (just legal and looking for product as it was still illegal to manufacture, but legal to buy from law enforcement agencies) and so cut the regular budget the same amount as the proposed sale value. However, the police

commissioner had lied about the value of the coke to prop up his shaky career (he was retired Army and his LEO status kept him from being recommissioned only as long as he held his job) and now there was not enough cash to keep the Department running and cops were starting to shake down punks on the street for operating capital. And since they just passed a law that made a felony an automatic jail sentence or a tour in the military (discretion of the judge) grasshopper was pretty sure he was going to get set up by the pigs, busted, and forced to join the military "voluntarily". He was damn sure not going to get killed by a booby trap over in Syria, so he figured it was prudent to arm himself in defense. So grasshopper did what any self-respecting hood would do and got himself a 9mm. The finer points of its operation eluded him, but he knew enough to hold it sideways when firing cause it looked real cool that way.

Ant started to peruse the storage food catalogs but failed to see anything cheap enough. Luckily he did happen upon the web site Bison Newsletter were all things frugal survivalist were presented and he started to food shop at the feed and grain store and at restaurant supply houses for #10 food cans. After a short time with a minimum of cash outlay ant had all the food he and his family and a few neighbors would need for several years. To accommodate its storage he merely replaced all bed frames and bedsprings with buckets and cans and re-enforced the flooring under each since it was after all a mobile home. Next ant went to a gun dealer he had looked up on the Shotgun News web site that sold for 15% over cost and bought several surplus military rifles for the family and friends along with about two thousand rounds each of corrosive ammo he got dirt cheap. For less than the cost of a used car ant was now armed and set to eat for years after a calamity.

One day grasshopper was crusin around not doing much of anything, just hanging with his crew. He knew he was big and bad, all that and a bag of chips. Then damn 5-0 tries to pull them over! Holy crap! thinks grasshopper, we have crack rocks and jailbait in here and we are truly screwed, blued and M-Fen tattooed. He tells his slice at the wheel to gun it, and he leans out the window and starts shooting at the pig, hoping to get him to think twice about harassing innocent types such as himself. Grasshopper must have been sitting too long at the Sony Playstation II and his perception was warped (even if his reflexes were great) because despite his expectations, not only did the squad car fail to explode in a great ball of fire, the rounds from his bitchin 9 failed to penetrate the windshield. The fragmenting glass did cause loss of visibility to the cop, however, and he did slow and pull over. Unfortunately for grasshopper and his buddies, the first car had radioed in and soon they had three cars on their butts. Grasshopper tried to fire at them but he only had the one magazine in his weapon. And when the cops saw him trying to shoot at them they really got pissed. Since budget cuts had dwindled the amount of squad cars on the road and the Union had not allowed staff cuts, every patrol car had at least two officers each in them. This allowed one to drive and the other to shoot at grasshopper and his pals with 12 gauges. Some lead did blow out a back tire and other balls found the driver and the two combined suddenly forced the car off the road were it hit a propane tank and there was a huge explosion and the car and the mobile home sitting just off the road with its propane tank caught on fire and in minutes burnt to the ground.

Along with everything in the home (luckily no one was home). It was, of course, ants home.
End Story.
Moral Of The Story- don't store all your survival supplies in one place.
END

SIMPLIFYING YOUR SEPTIC
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If you would like to live more simply, with less work and far less money, you may wish to consider eliminating the need for a conventional septic system. As with most great ideas it is so simple and eloquent that most people after learning of it will gnash their teeth, turn their face skyward, and cry out in anguish that the Gods are indeed unfair to allow another to be forevermore famous as the inventor of said product/idea. Think of another simple and brilliant survival idea, the basic four foods (wheat, milk, salt, honey). Three out of four of those are foods that last forever, literally. Until recently even the honey was cheap (and if on a tight budget you can always substitute sugar). But even with increased prices on all but the salt it is still a dirt cheap way to store food. And as several cookbooks reveal it is the way to a surprisingly varied menu. Who thought of that one? Pure genius. Or, with all modesty, how about my own $500 survival plan? Simple, cheap, and if I do say so myself, somewhat dazzling.

The simple and smart way to eliminate the need for a septic system is: crapping in a bucket. Now, this is not like the little porti-potty were there are toxic chemicals sloshing around ready to spill on the carpet along with a shiny new turd as you try to transport it. No, this is much more sanitary and cheap. Most nuclear shelter material also used that approach- crap in a bag and wade out into the radioactive topside to pelt your adversaries the rubber suited gas masked Soviet infantry with human feces. I suppose the idea was that since the troops were at long last in America they would gladly throw down their AK's and run away to the nearest consulate to defect (too humiliated after being stuck by waste to shoot unarmed civilians). And also the same with traveling in an RV. Toxic liquid in a holding tank with turds sloshing around. You need to hurry up and find an approved tank flushing area (for a fee, of course) to get rid of the nasty stuff. God forbid if Junior has to crap. The next RV park is 100 miles down the road so he had better pinch it off, cause the tank is already full. Even in a park full time, winter causes all kinds of problems eliminating those foul emissions. If you don't have a heavy wattage lamp under your black water tank to keep things unthawed, you could get poop popsicle. There is nothing so special as going to the park dumpster and looking at an RV tank drainage hose full of half thawed sewage that got thrown away as the owner desperately tried to flush frozen crap with kettles of boiling water. Last winter we almost got a full holding tank, luckily it was a mild winter. This year I have a conventional toilet flushing three gallons at a time rather than the RV toilet using several cups of water. A good thing, cause this winter is brutal. At night the park is aglow with undercarriage lamps keeping the tanks from freezing. You almost don't even need street lamps.

Sawdust in a bucket. That's the key. A layer to start, do your business, a layer to cover. Not only is there no smell, but also no water to contaminate (which then needs to be treated). Think about it. A septic system is using a whole bunch of dirt to filter contaminated water. You use water to carry your waste away from your dwelling, then filter the water through tons of dirt to purify it, then years later pay someone to suck out all that built up waste that eventually fills up the septic tank. With sawdust, you cover the odor. Then when a bucket is full you dump into a compost bin (just for this one purpose) and the sawdust as organic material breaks down the harmful waste to beneficial fertilizer. You use no water, no electricity, spend no money other than about $20, and create no waste that must be carted off. Sure, you could go out and spend $1,000. For that you get a commercial crapper that will do all of the above automatically. The bottom section goes in a basement. It is a large holding tank full of organic material (peat moss, straw, whatever). The top part is a toilet. Do your business, wait a year or two, shovel out from the bottom the ready made composted fertilizer. All quite civilized, no need to be part of the whole stinking (get it? a pun) process. But a grand? And a basement? That is a lot of cash. Even the Amish are getting away from outhouses and going to this system (homemade, of course- a permanent structure). But since we can't hold a "crapper raising" were the village pitches in to build a huge composting bin, we can always go to Lowes and buy a $4 plastic bucket.

Other than your standard five gallon polly bucket, you need a seat. Not your standard toilet seat you buy for $5 at Wally World. There is no way (other than duct tape) to attach the seat to the bucket, so when you lean one way to wipe the seat acts like a sled against the bucket and you go flying- the seat one way and your butt the other, a startled expression on your face, a wad of toilet paper in one hand and most likely a skid mark on the floor nearby. You can purchase from Cabela's a "bucket lid toilet seat" for around $15. Also try Lehmans, or just do a Google search. After a little comparison shopping you will be the proud owner of your own composting toilet. Get your sawdust, or if that proves illusive find some other organic material, perhaps straw or hay. I would think it would need to be ground up a bit to be compact (and not poke you in the ass), perhaps put a pile on the floor and use the lawn mower to grind it up. When the full bucket goes to the crapper compost bin, cover with more organic material. After awhile you get safe fertilizer (but perhaps not for root crops) I can't see why one would want to use cat litter, it merely helps mask smell and does not decompose the waste. Although if one was in the desert with little vegetation I could see using dirt. It covers the smell and when the bucket is full dump in a hole (just not a gully-it's rude to flush downstream during a flash flood).

The sawdust composting toilet is for fecal matter only. The act of urination would create a soup that would leach contaminated water into the ground. You want a grey water septic tank, the water from dish sinks and showers (and in this case a urinal). The system is much simpler and can be homemade. A bottomless 55 gallon drum filled with gravel and set at your outsource pipe site would work. You could even take a page from the military and construct piss pipes. A buried 6 inch pipe filled with gravel, and you piss in it. I would mix the urine with other household water to get rid of odors personally. You

could even have a plumbing-less house if you were roughing it in the boonies. A five gallon bucket under the kitchen sink, one under a makeshift shower (perhaps after the morning two or three gallon shower you could use the same bucket to pee in and toss it out that night). But you will need a suitable disposal site that uses the ground to filter the water. The water table can't be too high, or the site uphill from your dwelling. Use common sense here. You might have perhaps a half gallon of urine to twenty gallons of water, but you still don't want to just toss it out the back door and then send the kids out to play on the site where the grass is suddenly greener. Health problems are sure to follow.

Now, for all those that I just saved a few grand now that you don't have to pay to install a septic tank, please thank me later with small gifts and public worship.
END

YET MORE ON WHEAT
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Okay, lets face it. My newsletter is going to go through a few periods of being less than earth shattering. Sometimes there just doesn't seem like a whole lot is going on in my head. You would not be the first to make such an observation. I know there is a whole lot of subjects that survivalism cover, but you will rarely see all of them here. If the subject does not interest me than I won't write about it. For instance, livestock. When I was a teen we had chickens and it was my job to clean and feed them. Chickens are disgusting. They are foul, hideous, retarded pitiful beings. If I ever need to raise animals for meat it is going to be chickens, about the only animal I could slaughter without remorse because they have no redeeming values other than their eggs and meat. I would bet that the domesticated and bred chicken has been made so stupid that if they actually experienced one thought their entire life it would be an accident. So I have little interest in writing about chickens. On alternate energy if you throw into the discussion anything more than a watt, you loose me. I love guns, and know enough about them, but will spare you articles on the most obscure details about them (except perhaps the Lee-Enfield, my mostest favorite). The fields that interest me the most are politics and economics, and yet I try to avoid too many articles on those. I can feel most of your eyes glazing over. So expect a lot on "the big picture" items, frugal preparations, and the inevitable economics/politics. I do not claim to be a specialist in any one thing. I am a generalist and proud of it. I do not want to focus on one issue, I want to sample most of everything. And in doing so if we are lucky I might on occasion piece together something important. Just be prepared for regular topics sometimes. The hard part is not writing, its getting the idea.

Today's topic- two more ways to prepare wheat for storage and a great bargain on a grinder. The lazy way to store wheat is to throw it in a bucket and hope for the best. A smarter way is putting that bucket in the deep freeze for a week, then storing it in a controlled environment (such as a root cellar). That is how you get the stuff to last generations- first by killing all bugs and bug eggs, then by having little temperature fluctuations. I have mine stored in a spare travel trailer (at $25 a month storage it is cheaper than a storage mini-warehouse) and get the freezing effect but certainly not the beneficial temperature constant. I would guess my stockpile is good for under twenty years. I have read to store in the freezer at least four days, I would go a week to be sure. Also noted was to pack in a trash bag in the bucket. One source says avoid trash bags because of the pesticides, another says put everything in bags. Does food contact with the rigid bucket wall cause a problem? Condensation? Outside contaminants being absorbed

by the buckets porous plastic? Is there enough pesticide residue left in trash bags by the manufacture to cause a health problem? I can't say for sure. All I can guess is that perhaps you should use the bags just in case and minimize the danger of the trash bag because that should be the least of your problems. In a situation were you break out the stored wheat, most likely it is TEOTWAWKI and you will probably be killed by renegade government forces, feral dogs, looters or nuclear radiation before a little pesticide will kill you with cancer.

I'm sure I have mentioned freezing before. I bring it up again to introduce the possibility of the need for the trash bag. You could use Mylar, but that adds $2 or $3 to each 33 pounds of wheat. A bucket holds 33 lbs. Three buckets per 100 lbs. At Wal-Mart the bucket and lid are $3.50, yet they almost never have them in stock. So you have to go to Lowes and spend $5 for the set. The wheat is $15-$18 for 100 lbs. I go with the round figure of $12 a bucket total with trash bag. A year supply of food is $120-$150 at the most expensive. Far cheaper to get used buckets at $1 each, then its $6 a bucket total. $60-$75 for a years supply of emergency food. Mylar would add $40 to that. If funds are tight (that would be for 99% of us) it is better to go with trash bags. And if you don't have a deep freezer? I ran across the following way to fumigate.

Miners used to use carbide lamps to see with down in mines. A lump of calcium carbide was introduced to water and a gas was created, then lit for a flame. Not the safest method of illumination in a mine. The lamps are still around and used by cavers. You can use the gas generated, acetylene, to displace oxygen from your container of wheat. This idea is from Miles Stair at www.EndTimesReport.com and his booklet "Civil Defense". I mention the site as a good resource. I had never heard of the calcium carbide method before. Take a used 35mm film canister and drill a small hole in the top lid. Fill half full of water, add four lumps of calcium carbide, place the top on the canister, quickly nestle the canister into the wheat on top to avoid spilling it (but without burying it- the top sticks out), loosely place the lid on the wheat bucket and wait one or two hours while not smoking or having flame around the area (the gas is flammable). Then tie up your trash bag and secure the lid on the bucket (his idea was to use a 55 gallon drum and stack several bags of wheat in it, treating each bag individually- I just prefer 5 gallon polly buckets). When he wrote this almost ten years ago I guess calcium carbide was easier to get, but now it ran into a bunch of haz-mat shipping difficulties (sort of like ammunition primers). The only sources I found on the Web for it cost a lot due to the extra shipping charges. www.calcium-carbide.com will fill your small order of 12 ounces for $14 insured, the way to go if you want to experiment. For a big order it is $70 for 12 pounds and can be ordered at http://store.karstsports/mingradcalca-html. That includes all the bribes to Uncle Sam to allow you to get it shipped.

If one was to go to www.MajorSurplusNSurvival.com you should be able to find a cast iron grain mill for the low, low price of only $17. After shipping mine was only $25. That is less than half the cost of a Corona. I suppose the patent on the Corona expired and now China is making this cheap copy. And that is exactly what you are buying, a cheap copy. A Corona is well made and will last a lifetime. It is the cheapest (for quality), and only

grain grinder I recommend, even over much more expensive models. I would imagine that anyone who poo-pahs the Corona has never used one or expects something more from it. If you have a manual reel lawn mower you don't expect it to be easy to push. Yes, the Corona takes more than one pass to get fine flour. But for the extra labor you get inexpensive and reliable. Just like the SKS. It is dirt cheap and reliable, but it doesn't get 1" MOA. And with all that you save not having to buy magazines you get more ammo or even another gun. Cheap is good if it is a reliable product. You get that with the Corona.

With the generic grinder expect a bit less. All the parts fit together just fine. But the finish looks sloppy. I suppose the finish might give you problems later on, but I am just guessing. This grinder serves two very important purposes even if it is less than perfect. One, it serves as a cheap back-up system for your Corona, should that ever break. Two, it is a darn cheap grinder if you can't afford any other. When wheat serves as the bulk of your calories it is silly to have only one tool to grind it into flour. You need a back-up. And if this is your only grinder (not recommended, but better than nothing) than with used buckets your entire years supply of wheat and a grinder would cost under $100!!! Anyone can afford that. Even if the spouse is a stingy old fool and adamantly refuses preparedness supplies, with $100 for food and another $100 for a surplus rifle and corrosive ammo at least you can achieve a bare bones method of survival. Surely you can stash away $200. Even if you worked two weeks at a second job at 20 hours a week and then quit you would have an additional $200 (if you can't even keep that for your own use then it might be time to find another spouse- if you can't afford to get a divorce than put in for a vacation but tell your spouse you quit and then refuse to work until they allow you some discretionary income from your own paycheck [which should get some results]).

So clear out your freezer and throw in a bag of wheat. You don't need that ice cream cause your butt is big enough as it is, and you can petal that bike of yours from the garage gathering dust down to the market every day and buy single servings of meat for awhile(and while you're there check out servings of pork fat- they are the trimmings from cuts of pork and there is plenty of meat along with the fat, a bargain at 75 cents a pound if you eat the fat). Kill those little weevil bastards and get your wheat storage now. Even at the most expensive you are still paying $12 for a months worth of emergency food, dirt cheap. Get your back-up grain mill, it will encourage the company to continue to carry them and you really shouldn't pass up on a real deal like that. Even one bucket a payday and after a year you have two years supply of wheat and your pocketbook didn't feel a thing. But of course I wouldn't wait that long. Use your tax return for something useful like three years supply of wheat per person in the family. It is real cheap insurance, unlike that overpriced government mandated car insurance. You really will sleep better at night.
END

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REVIEWS

BOOK- Crisis Preparedness Handbook by Jack A Spigarelli. This book was written in 1984 and then spruced up and reprinted in 2002. If you want to order directly the web site is www.cross-current.com. I would say mostly this is a great book. It seems to me a few areas could be updated still, especially the firearms section as it is the old tired Mini 14 and shotgun advice, but that is just nit-picking. This is one of the better food storage books I have seen. Two hundred pages are food, the other 100 everything else. This fits with my prejudice that food is most important in survival. For that alone I enjoyed and recommend this book. But, if you are an old pro it is all information you know already. For the beginner it is a must have. Perhaps you can buy a copy for a fence-sitter.

BOOK- Boston On Surviving Y2K by Boston T Party. www. JavalinPress.com. With the subtitle, And Other Lovely Disasters. I love this guy, he is an interesting writer. Even though Y2K fizzled this book is still very relevant. Any disaster that stopped our technology from working, be it a comet strike or even a Chinese atmospheric nuke causing an EMP it would be quite easy to stop our wonderful tech toyland. Read the Y2K section, it is the best writing on post-crash population response. Most writers concentrated on preparing, and warned of ugly crowds come Jan. 1st. He paints a much grimmer and realistic portrait. But forget the first section. The reason you must get this book is the extensive writing on other matters. The section on energy is worth the price of this book, with the advice on generators priceless. But that's not all!! If you order now as a bonus you get many other sections, to include location, water, food, health, shelter, transportation, money, barter, comm, tools, raising animals, etc. Weapons are touched on satisfactorily, but you really want his other book Guns and Courage which is about the best there is out there on survival guns. I would say that this book is in the top dozen books you must have on survival. Buy it, you will not be disappointed.

MAGAZINE- Best Of The Backwoodsman, Vol. 1,2 & 3. You can subscribe to the magazine for $19 a year, six issues. www.BackwoodsmanMag.com A great publication, and I will never interrupt my subscription like I did 5 years ago. Highly recommended. You could subscribe to the Mother Earth News for six issues for $15, but the only thing I got out of it was a few good classified ads. With the Backwoodsman you get real information. Now, don't expect direct survivalist stuff. This is billed as the Magazine Of The 21st Century Frontiersman. You know, forgotten skills such as Indian craft and blackpowder guns. Woodcraft, primitive shelters, etc. My main interest has always been their articles on war surplus centerfire rifles and frugal tips, but the main focus is 19th century survival tech. The Best Of series is volume 1 & 2 in one 80 page magazine and

the other of same length is volume 3. Number four will be forthcoming. They were $15 each. Jam packed full of info, you really should have this in your survival library for primitive tech. My only complaint was that for the price, you should get a book grade instead of a magazine grade publication. The cover is too soft, the pages too rough. For serious continual reading you need something more durable. Don't get me wrong, I recommend these. I will buy #4 regardless of the package it comes in. I was just a tiny bit disappointed about the durability because this goes into my library. If you are careful, put a vinyl cover on it, perhaps even keep in a manila envelope and it should be fine. Again, a small nit-pick, I still think you should either get the Best Of or at least subscribe to the bi-monthly mag. Vol. 1 & 2 contain Old Time Wood lore, Homesteading, Cutlery, Primitive Weapons, Black Powder, Recipes & Remedies, Misc. Vol. #3 has Primitive Tech, Guns, Homesteading & Wood lore, Recipes.

MOVIE- Post Impact. This movie, and I use the term reluctantly and only because it was comprised of moving pictures, was a horrid and forgettable experience. A buddy had heard of its existence and relayed it to me and so I went to the evil video empire Blockbuster (my usual mom & pop store didn't stock it- they probably don't do straight to video movies). I should have taken the $3.50 and set it on fire to stay warm because it was a waste of money to rent this. Even worse, I actually contributed to the profit of the company that made this foul monstrosity. The movie starts, our hero is introduced as a Marine guard at an embassy, a scientist is wallowing in appreciation for having to do some damn thing with a comet. Suddenly, the comet is impacted with debris or another body or whatever comets run into out in space and changes course towards earth. Immediately some military dude shows up and he and the scientist reveal to the hapless side kick how they have a super secret microwave weapon on a satellite ready to save earth. Of course the super secret weapon was made for another purpose, the scientist had to go along for funding reasons for his cherished project, all very normal as if thousands of scientists do this every year and the government just assumes they will keep their mouth shut. So, the weapon fires after being controlled from a building in Germany since we trust our allies so much after their support in Iraq where we look like idiots making up excuses going in and kicking ass to secure oil supplies for us but also, lets not forget, Europe and the ingrates cry about some blown deal with their companies loosing a contract as if their crappy economy couldn't handle it which they probably can't since its a commie socialist economy and the state companies are run like our post office and the two or three private companies they actually have are run like Enron and so one blown deal does actually mean the whole thing tailspins and unemployment goes up another percent point and more people go on welfare and never work again but instead have plenty of time to go to soccer matches and kill each other and you wonder how this crappy little country ever took over most of the continent and isn't it sad because that is the road we are traveling down.

Okay, so we fire a weapon at the comet from a super secret building in a foreign country and of course we score a hit (despite the fact that NASA needs three tries just to deploy a parachute). Oh, darn, it didn't work. We are all going to die. No one says, hey, it calved into multiple smaller size pieces so at least only Europe is screwed instead of the whole

planet. No, just because it didn't blow up into a zillion pieces like in a special effect in Hollywood everyone gets all mopey and sad even if I have just proved that Europe was overrated anyway. Of course the government evacuates themselves and our hero is forced to leave his wife and kid (this to provide the only lame framework of a storyline available). Three years later and we see a snowy Algiers or Morocco or some such North African nation. It is snowing, after three years, and the palm trees are still standing with their green tropical vegetation covered with snow. The place is renamed something along the lines of Provisional Northern Governance Of Peace And Prosperity or some damn thing. We are lead to believe that the governments of the northern hemisphere were invited to camp down south and set up shop. One guy gripes about being a guest in someone else country. Now, they didn't say, but it seemed to me the provisional government was the Yanks and how they got over to North Africa is beyond me. At the first sign of northern hemispheric freezing the US would move down south and take over any country we wanted, hundreds of thousands of troops and millions of civilians in their cars and RVs everyone armed to the teeth. So, anyway, the government has detected activity up north back in this super secret bunker and it seems the controls of the satellite are now in the hands of a maniac and he threatens to microwave their new capital. So, by change of course, our hero shows up fresh from exploring the frozen carcass of Europe looking for his family and happens to stumble on to the plan to send an expedition up and resecure the super secret control room. Time is of the essence, 48 hours before meltdown. So of course there is time for the troops to freshen up by showering where our hero is met by his new comrade in arms a little blonde number from the SAS who by the way has a really nice rack and is the high light of the whole movie.

The picture rapidly goes down hill after the shower scene which is all too brief anyway, and we are still talking like at least three quarters of the movie to go. It bogs down with a lot of scenes of snow vehicles driving around rooftops which are sticking out of the snow. And this is were it really gets lame. The special effects are video game quality. It literally looks like a video game as a tracked snow vehicle spins around. Then when they cut to live action the vehicle is not moving, they just hop in and out. It was so freakin cheesy it made my teeth itch. Like we weren't going to notice!! Okay, now they get ambushed with automatic weapons like these genius' that managed to survive three years of sub zero temperatures couldn't figure out that ammo was in short supply and by firing they gave away their position. Our team of heroes finds a trap door leading to a series of snow tunnels which lead to a group of civilians leading to a greenhouse for growing food using the old parliament (I think) building that used mirrors to focus sunlight into the chambers. Not that there seemed to be any sunlight for three years, but I'll let that pass since at least they got the part about scavenged supplies right. If the bulk of the population was quick frozen the survivors had plenty of food left over. The team is attacked by the surface attack group who are working for the scientist as security but decided to take this very moment to go independent and there is a modestly retarded gun fight and our heroes win and the scientist is shot and our group of heroes has in it the scientists daughter who just happens to be along because daddy taught her everything and now she is way bummed since he is dead after they reunited like five minutes ago and so she needs consoling and looks to our hero the marine guard guy but he is torn between the

blond SAS gal and her fantastic rack and the scientist with her demure ways and her oh so hot big egg head brain like it would be any contest but it seems our hero is soon to discover his old house and the popsicled bodies of his wife and daughter with a suitable mushy note of goodbye and he had just been befriended by a civilian orphan girl and so maybe our hero is getting ideas of getting a ready made family to replace the frozen one and it looks like the blonde one is not going to work out because in the end trying to secure the control center blondie turns against him and reveals sex was just a way to put him off guard but at least she has the class to admit the romp in the shower was likeable because most chicks would lie and say it sucked just to hurt the guys ego like its not enough to know the guy is now having to go without sex so in my view this was another plus for blondie which shows I can appreciate a class act and don't just focus on a nice rack.

Well, it turns out blondie was working for the Arabs to secure the satellite weapon as a way to ensure they were not attacked when they jacked up the price of oil that now everyone really needed to stay warn. After all, it might not be 50 below in the southern half of the globe but it was still damn cold all the same and without those piggish Americanos running around in the SUVs there was plenty of oil to go around for heating purposes. And she actually quoted a price of $100. I mean, that's it?? We are going to see that price easy just because of inflation. The writer of the script must have no knowledge of economics. The Arabs are going to jack us for a whole $100 a barrel?? That's the best they could come up with?? Okay, sure, it could happen. If the Americans are displaced from the north in theory with the halt of printing money and with the now fixed supply of paper cash on hand (it is now mostly digital- the bulk never sees paper) deflation would make $100 big money again. But with inflation fixed in the mind of viewers and the recent price of $50 a barrel, it seems to me that the price quoted here is just way off the mark. So our hero and blondie fight it out and of course he wins after the obligatory "she looks like she just got killed but she surprises him by getting back up and attacking him from behind again" trick which is really lame like 20 years ago and its embarrassing that anyone would use that one again. I'm not sure but I think the egg head chick helped in some way during the fight, tossing a weapon to our hero at a crucial moment or some such as it would fit into the cliché bag of tricks the writer dipped into. Now to really rub salt into the wound here, the egg head and hero decide to try something daddy suggested was possible. If they widen the microwave beam they can heat up the surface area of Europe enough to change the temperature and end the perpetual winter. The first question that pops into my mind is why didn't daddy do it in the last three years? Egg head daughter and hero punch a few buttons on the computer and the movie ends happily ever after. At this point my whole system had been subjected to so much trauma that I could only stare numbly at the screen and wonder how in the hell I could have sat through this movie. It almost looked like it was made for TV. And even worse probably Eastern European TV on a state sponsored budget. I mean, I'm used to that crap from Britain were it's either public TV rehash of a bunch of Victorian stiffs sitting around trying to discover what to do with a life of leisure ("whom shall we bugger this week, Jeeves?") or modern day teen age homo angst, I don't expect much from them as they have set the bar so low. I mean, how can the home of the Beatles and the Clash turn out such crappy

movies? But I think all in all I would have rather seen Benny Hill reruns than this crappy movie now officially nominated for Worst Post Apocalypse Movie Of All Time.
END

NOTICE- More than one person wrote me to state that last weeks advice on fumigating wheat with calcium carbide was off. They are concerned I did not properly warn of the danger of this method. I said it was flammable, they said VERY FLAMMIBLE. It does pay to be careful, so only use if you know what you are doing. I for one most likely will steer clear of this unless I suddenly need lots of wheat treated fast, and even then probably just go with dry ice even with my misgivings of that method. If you are like me and no rocket scientist, just leave the calcium carbide alone to be on the safe side.

CITY OR COUNTRY?
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One of the enduring myths in survivalism is that you must live in the country to make it in times of crisis. I imagine that this was due to the natural progression of the movement from urban bomb shelter to safety from the welfare masses. The 1960's were a traumatic time for our culture and the younger of us are living with the consequences of the changes they (along with the seventies) brought about. One change was the birth of the welfare state from a fledgling to a full grown beast that will one day devour us all. The riots are to thank for that as we tried to buy off the vote to crush a rebellion, and they were also partly to blame for the death of the urban center as the financial hub of life. The big city used to mean jobs and prosperity, but the trend was away from the city core and suburbs are were the normal folks live and work. The death of factories as our lifeblood meant the big city is an anachronism were only the evolved sub-species dwells and prospers and the suburbs are were the average predominant species lives. The 60's also gave birth to some survivalists who abandoned the urban area to escape the crime and the death spasms of the American dream (remember that?- work hard and your children will be better off than you as you are doing better than your parents) and who did a complete 180 turn and preached that only a country living made any sense and we were all doomed if we failed to become their neighbors. Unfortunately they got published and popular.

And every author after that seemed to parrot the line- flee to the country or perish in either a nuclear mushroom cloud or be torn limb from limb by screaming welfare mobs as their checks fail to arrive in a timely manner. This is good advice as far as it goes. Big cities are full of idiots who will do you harm in a time of crisis. Of course, even your own family will do you harm in a time of crisis as witnessed by the reading of wills or even everyday requirements such as the need for work and their unwillingness to do so and the situation arises were grandparents raise their grandchildren when their worthless kids are lazy or drugged out of their minds. The point is that yes, they are out to get you, and yes, you were correct to be paranoid. You just need to minimize the number of folks who are out to get you. You can't do so in a large city. But you can in a small town. The answer need not be escape to the country but escape to a small town. I am not being original here, this idea has been floating around awhile. My point is that a small town is much more ideal than a place in the country. Under most circumstances, of course. There are always exceptions to every rule. For instance, if you foresee a terrorist biological attack than total isolation is key to survival as you avoid disease carriers. Otherwise instead of sharing in the cost of life support systems you bear the entire load.

When you move to the country you first buy a piece of land. Most often this is beyond your ability to purchase outright due to your expectations of what self sufficiency means. You might have woods for heating fuel, a stream for water and fertile ground for crops. Big bucks. So you take on land payments. Then most likely you have to pave a road or at least improve on one or maintain one. You pay a bribe to the government to leave you alone, commonly called a land tax for schools or what not (but, it's for the children!!). Commonly, a used mobile is there or brought in to minimize your housing cost (after all, the land payments are killing you). You pay the electric company to string in power lines or go completely off the grid to save on that cost. Then, you need at least one dependable vehicle to get you to town. Most often more than one because the nearest mechanic is far away. Phone service is not dependable and costs more, as is electric. Internet connections are costly, cell phones are spotty. Groceries cost a lot more and any replacement item must be purchased new because there are no thrift stores nearby. All your neighbors are poor like you so there are no ways to earn extra money near home. All this so that, in theory, in the next Great Depression you can grow all your own food. An admirable goal, but you need to ask yourself if you are going to be driven to the poor house before that. It is not cheap being self sufficient in food or power or water or anything else. I would argue that in many cases it makes a lot more sense to avoid independence and instead live cheaply by embracing our modern world instead of trying to live in one that died out seventy five years ago.

Farming only pays on a large scale using expensive labor saving machines or a small scale without modern tools and a lot of labor. If you buy a tractor for your five acres chances are it will never pay for itself. If you emulate the Amish and do without modern conveniences you will need a group effort with at least one member working a modern trade to pay land taxes and buying the things unable to be produced because the rest of the group will be working full time on the farm. If only a well funded corporation can economically farm it is in your interest to instead play the role of consumer and buy the grain cheaper than you can grow it. Yes, vegetables are cheaply grown at home, but you don't need a farm for that. Just a patch of ground that you can get in the city or town. The reason you need acreage is for grains and animal fodder that is turned into meat. By buying the grain in bulk and by buying the meat in bulk and freezing it, you negate the need for land. As far as growing food after the collapse, there are better ways of providing your sustenance. A mechanic or gunsmith or doctor or tradesman who has a basic grain supply can then barter for his dairy and meat. Let the farmer toil in the fields and slaughter the animals. You fix his firing pin on his 30-30 and he gives you a huge sausage. Add that to your pantry. The grains you stored in bulk, the vegetables you grow in raised beds. For heat you can salvage wood or barter for it. You don't need your own supply that could burn in the next lightning storm since there is no longer a county fire department after a collapse. Only an urban one because that is were the people are. Even absent that threat you need a working chain saw with spare parts and gas and oil.

In normal times by living in town you can avoid a car. This saves you the cost of insurance and gas and maintenance, even if the car is paid for. You can usually get free

broadcast TV stations saving the cost of cable. You can shop around and compare prices before you buy, unlike a country store that charges out the wazoo. You have ready access to second hand goods that save you cash. A number of grocery stores ensure that your food costs are lower. But most importantly, you pay less for everything since a town population is in effect "bulk purchasing". Everything is subsidized to gain customers. Everyone shares in the cost of the roads, there is no need to maintain your own. With more people in a given area, there is only a nominal charge for power hook up, as well as phone hook up. More companies offer Internet access giving you cheaper choices. With bulk buying a grocery store offers less costly food than a little country store. There is a library for books, no need to buy mail order. Even living in a small hamlet you are closer to a nearby Wal-Mart and at least have ready access to electric and a paved road. Going the "five acres and independence route" was fine thirty years ago but today it is a lot harder to make it on your own. With the skyrocketing cost of litigation adding its price to every product, with taxes out of control and with the usual business practice now being profit through quantity rather than quality you now need to group with others to live cheaply. It is all well and good to being your own food producer, if you can afford it. It costs extra. If you are a poor survivalist you need to live in town.

So, please understand me. If you have the mental drive and the financial means, being mostly independent in the country is great. If you are poor, the only sane way for living is in a town. And the only way to prepare in town is to stockpile. No one thinks that they can be self sufficient in ammunition (although a knowledge in improvised primers and gunpowder would be priceless) and so stockpile a whole lot of reloading supplies. If you are in town just stockpile a whole lot of grain. Even with today's higher prices you could still store ten years worth of grain for under a grand. Four hundred pounds a year for ten years is four thousand pounds. Three buckets per one hundred pounds means you need 120 buckets, at $1 each used. Grain at an average of $7 a fifty pound sack, half wheat and half corn. That's $560 for the grain. Total cost $680. For ten years of food for one person, less than the cost of one years worth of freeze dried food storage. And, if you bought a used ocean cargo container for under a $1,000 for the short 20 footer and buried it you could have a stable temperature environment to store the grain plus a root cellar and storm cellar all in one, as you would only need half the space for the buckets. That assumes a lot in town. If renting other space will be needed. Just keep in mind you need a barrier against cold and moisture. Pallets or wood boards work good to get an air flow under the buckets. Don't set buckets on concrete, and stack no more than four high- the plastic is only so strong. So ballpark it as four feet high, five wide and six long. If you had to rent a 10'x5' storage space that should be enough room. Even buying a junker old van without plates or insurance, just parking the van (and painting the windows to hide the contents) you might be able to get the whole mess into that van to avoid storage fees. So, stockpiling food is cheap and easy. Cheaper than a Mattel toy AR15. Cheaper than a used car.

If you are really poor, consider trailer living. Depending on the area it will either be a mobile home or a travel trailer. In Florida in Daytona Beach the park owners only wanted to rent to vacationers, making more money in several week long events (Bike Week,

Spring Break, Daytona 500 races) renting to tourists than to long term residents. Thus no travel trailer spots were available at discount prices (their price being more than an apartment). But there was a thriving market for used mobile homes. If you tried at all you could find many for under $2,000. And it was easy to find lots under $250 a month. Here in Nevada, mobiles are not so common and the cheapest I have seen are around ten grand. The zoning here discourages them, unlike Florida. So, we live in a travel trailer even though in my area lots are not cheap. But we pay up since I have a good casino job. Down the road we will move to a cheaper area. But stay in a travel trailer. It is nice to know you can take your house to a nicer area. Consider- you may have the ideal survival area scoped out, but land there is too dear. But anyone can afford to rent a trailer space. Problem solved. Lets say I wanted to live in Oregon (I don't, socialist paradise/ tree huggers galore- but lets say I did). The land is expensive, $10k an acre. So I pick the town I like and pull into a trailer lot. In one hour I have power, water, sewer and TV hooked up. Problem solved. If I can't find a job I tow the trailer out and go to another area. No need to be stuck with a piece of land in that area.

But why pay rent, you ask? Better to own. True, if it is cheaper. If I chose to live on my property in Arkansas the taxes are $10 a year. If I keep a trailer on it there is no structure to tax (and I add no improvements- just a bare lot). If I add anything, perhaps even skirting, the tax skyrockets. But just parking a motor vehicle and keeping tags on it should give me almost cost free living as far as rent. But, the vehicle I need to get into town is what costs me. If I live in town I need no vehicle, just a bike. Out of town I need insurance, maintenance and gas. At a minimum $100. If I have an acre worth $10k and even minimal shelter such as a shack, my taxes are still minimal but are $15-$50 bucks a month. If I own a conventional house the taxes are $100 a month. If I rent a trailer lot for $175 it is cheaper than owning a vehicle and living in a house in the country. But even if it were slightly cheaper to own a house and vehicle, the purchase price must be factored in. Renting a trailer space is cheaper than a mortgage. Take the cheapest option here for a conventional dwelling. Out in the boonies you can buy a mobile/land package for $60k. All roads and utilities on site. Without taxes or insurance you are looking at about $600 a month for fifteen years. My lot rent is less than half that. If you factor in car insurance and cost plus gas to get to town to work to pay off that loan, the purchase will never pay for itself (insurance and tax at least $100, car cost $100 a month for a cheap car lasting ten years, car insurance $50 at best, gas $50 at least- without any car repairs the cost is even with my rent). Cheaper to rent in town without a car, other than a trailer on cheap land with no improvements and minimal transportation costs. Also consider that you don't really need to own a car if you have a trailer. If you bought one for $1500 and stay in the area for four years, then rented a U-Haul for $500 to move to the next state over that would still be cheaper than just paying the auto insurance. Leave the trailer there and get another used one (and you could get most of your cost on the trailer back by selling it). The trick is not to move very often. It's just nice knowing you can.

Another big plus in a trailer is that energy self-sufficiency is pretty easy. A PV panel on the roof and an extra battery charging off the grid, along with a full fresh water tank and an extra propane tank all will assure that you can easily ride out the next storm in comfort.

And earthquake proof. You will gently rock on your axle as Mother Nature tears down those fancy Yuppie mansions. Your whole trailer park can emerge victorious from all but tornadoes and hurricanes, gathering together with beer and barbecue to celebrate the virtues of being mobile and free. And, come the Apocalypse, you have close neighbors to band together to help repulse rioting hordes. In the country the neighbors are blocks if not miles away.

As far as food production in a trailer park, get with the owner about your constructing flower beds at your cost. Once in, plant a few flowers but cultivate the soil for growing. Then put in some potatoes in the center with flowers on the edges. The owner gets free beautification, you get almost free spuds. Ask to put beds in the neighbors space. More spuds. Learn gardening, supplement your food supplies, do without a farm. Live cheap, be prepared, live in a small town, have a job in walking distance, have help close by in a crisis. It could be better than a place in the country.
END

HOW TO FINANCE YOUR PREPARATIONS
Including Sneaky And Underhanded Means Of Working Around Your Spouses Objections
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If one was to follow the conventional advice on disaster preparations than the subject of finance would be depressing and near impossible. The average working Joe can barely afford to make ends meet paycheck to paycheck, let alone get a second place in the country stockpiled with all the necessities to survive Armageddon. But if done right most preparations will actually save you big money from your present day average American lifestyle. By living a frugal lifestyle you become more self sufficient while at the same time saving rather then spending money simply to buy more crap to clutter up your life with. I'll get into all that, but also for those wishing no radical life change I'll fit in a few sneaky ways to prepare, even over the objections of the spouse.

The most obvious means to cut consumption and increase sufficiency would be to turn your lawn into a garden. It is amazing the cost of water to keep a lawn in shape out in the arid West. Yet most only see the alternative of a rock garden (which admittedly is ugly as original sin). Simply allowing your lawn to die, tearing it up and preparing the soil for a garden would be a heck of a lot of work- but then so is keeping a lawn. After the one time your labor input falls drastically with the French Intensive method of growing, mulching, etc. Now, I for one am no big vegetable eater and most garden products would be wasted on me. You might be the same, but even so your efforts will still be rewarding. You can produce normal food such as corn and potatoes, plant berry bushes, even turn out salsa and pasta sauce. In other words as strange people salivate over foul creations of Lucifer such as brussel sprouts, peas and broccoli you can avoid these perversions of the plant kingdom and just grow what you want. If you do grow undesirables for benefits other than poisoning yourself such as pest control or companion planting then simply give those away or even just throw them into a compost pile. You can learn as you go because any mistake can be fixed by going to the grocery store and buying the product. Whatever turns out okay saves you money. Even if very little is saved and you achieve little for your efforts you gain two benefits of preparing the soil and experience. Not gardening before the supermarkets close down is like never shooting and buying a gun the day the rioting starts.

The next big thing would be to get out of debt. I hear most scoffing. Like it's so easy. But it really is, if you ask yourself one question. Do you really care about your credit rating? Is it so important to you that you spend thirty years in servitude to a home mortgage, both of you working and never seeing the kids, constant fighting over money

because jobs are insecure even after kissing the boss' backside everyday. Do you really want to work for fifty years, pay on a house for thirty, and then if you are really lucky get a retirement for maybe ten years before you die from a disease brought on by all that stress? If you just say piss on all that, if you just start to take it easy and give up your expensive toys and be less materialistic then life will be a lot less stressful. If you have to give up the house, repo the car and declare bankruptcy, what have you lost except expensive trophy possessions that were grinding away at you through stress trying to keep up the payments. As long as you have shelter (trailer) and transportation (bicycle), give up on the expensive alternatives. If you move to a small town the kids can get around without a car and life is safer than the big city. Take a lesser paying job, you'll live longer in better health. If you are a workaholic, start a part time home business to fill in the hours which might one day actually be a paying proposition. I will cover bankruptcy another day, but look at it this way. If the economy goes bad you will loose all that you have worked for. Your house, your car, everything. If you give it up now you can lose it on your own terms.

You might notice a pattern here. By giving up fancy, you get functional at a vastly reduced cost. For the cost of one SUV you get three Kia's. For the cost of one Kia you get ten mopeds. For the cost of one moped you get ten bicycles. The cost of one SUV is a lot of land, a good used mobile home, a Kia, several thousand pounds of wheat, three SKS rifles with 10k rounds of ammo and a vacation to Disneyland. Instead of a Kia you could be making payments on that land and trailer. In five years you could own a broken down rusting pile of crap, or your own home. Even going from mobile homes to travel trailers saves you money, both in initial cost and utility bills. Giving up a good paying job in a high rent area to go live in an area with dirt cheap land but no jobs might be seen as foolish but just might be the best thing you can do. The important thing should not be how much money you can make, but how little you can live on. If you moved to a mild climate and owned outright a trailer and piece of land and grew some of your own food, plus had no car and biked to town- what expenses would you have? An electric bill of $50 a month, perhaps at most $100 for food (including some for storage). Every year another $100 for a bicycle (so, $10 a month for transport). $10 a month for taxes, $10 for internet access. Even all that might be too high. I spend $100 now for food without a garden. Taxes should be at most $5 a month if you have no permanent structures on the land. In Florida my monthly electric bill was $20 for a trailer under a big tree (no AC was needed), and powered lights, a fridge, a small freezer, and the TV and computer. So, you could get by on about $120 a month total. I know folks who’s cable bill is that much. You could live on $120 a month, spend $80 on preparations, and only need to earn $200 a month which is ten hours a week working a minimum wage job.

OK, so now you are out of debt and own a fifth of an acre with your trailer on it. You live ten miles from town so the bike ride ain't no picnic but it's manageable. You have a good garden going, a cistern set up for water storage and several years of wheat in storage. Next tax return you are going to get a solar panel to offset some of your electric usage but mostly to fill in for electric outages. You are eating healthier than ever out of your garden and the bike ride doesn't hurt anything either. The wife isn't the happiest

without the Suburban and the weekday "Days Of Our Lives" but with the gardening and biking her big ass is shrinking which should make her less neurotic. Trailer living is tight with the two kids but it's summer and they love the woods. Come winter you should be able to have the add on rooms done (the neighbor has some old lumber he's donating which will be enough for a 10x10 and another one has an old camper trailer he will sell for $200 which the oldest kid can live in and be semi-independent). The added propane for the two trailers and the added room is going to add to your bills but you notice a free woodstove down the block to help offset the heating bill. Your minimum wage job is a drag but it is low stress compared to the old office job makes it bearable until you can start selling your widgets on E-Bay. Except for more grain storage and more reloading supplies, your lifestyle provides most of the security from disaster you can ask for. Even if you lost your job you could make it, which is not something most can brag about. But lets say you enjoy the good things in life. You want to live in town and be able to go shopping on a whim and buy the latest electronic do-dads and have high speed internet and have enough left over money to invest in a 401k for a good retirement. In other words you just want to make preparations in case of disaster rather than live like Super Survivalist in case the economy collapses tomorrow (like everyone has forecast since the oil embargo and that was so long ago you could have had a house paid for since then- a valid point although I personally opt for the more paranoid view).

The easiest and lowest pain method of raising extra cash for preparations would be to take on a boarder. Rent juniors room out, turn the garage into a guest house. The increase in the water and electric bill should be negligible and the rest is free money. Set all the rules up front. Rent weekly, not monthly, in case you need to kick them out. Be wary of signing paperwork to prove they live there if you wish to remain off the welfare departments radar, not to mention the notice of the IRS for that undeclared cash (they will go after the easy pickings to justify their existence so never think you are too small to be noticed). Just be wary of any disappearing items- kick them out at the first sign. I used to have renters and in the end their theft made it hard to break even. Remember, they are not a roommate with an equal vote, they are renters boarding a room with written rules. Be firm, as a rule they can be like predators smelling for weakness. I will never get in a situation were I have to rent out rooms again, the pain in the butt factor was too high. But it was the easiest way to get quick cash without paying 10% interest a week to the legal loan sharks doing payday loans.

Garage sales are another way to feel violated and dirty as complete strangers buy your treasured goods for pennies on the dollar (and not even taking into account inflation- the bastards!!). But what better time honored method of clearing out the closets, simplifying your life and raising cash for survival preps? Run an ad, state in the ad a set time to start and write in there "no early birds" or you will have lookie loos two hours before you even set up since this sub-species is absolutely convinced the keys to happiness lie in discovering that hidden treasure first put out at a garage sale. Never mind the fact that they seek the treasures of El Dorado- it is the quest itself that keeps these vile snotty bitter old bags of prunes alive. The other sub-species to be on the lookout for are the cheap bastards. I for one am a total tight-wad and will scour the ends of the earth for a bargain

which most likely was a result of another's misfortune. But to me a free marketplace were this occurs is actually a benefit to the victim. If we all only shopped at Gottschalks, who would buy at the thrift store that benefits charities? If no one shopped at the "dented can" outlet, the remainders and out of date merchandise would just be thrown away. But the one thing I refuse to do is haggle. The stated price is what the cost is to my way of thinking. Pay it or walk away. Haggling is unproductive to buyer or seller alike as it is a giant time waster and an action that sours a transaction with bad feelings. I see a book for fifty cents. I only think it is worth a quarter. If I sit and argue about the price I piss off a neighbor for two bits. The exception would be bulk buying. Ask about a discount on many items (how much for all your books?). This saves time for the seller, so is worthy of a discount. But try to avoid the skin flints who bargain with you because it is a sport. It makes their dull and crappy life whole for a few minutes. Post a sign to the effect that the price in not negotiable if you wish to avoid this spectacle. You will need to point to the sign often even if it is right above your head. People can be rather thick.

Now we have to get to less pleasant ways of raising cash. Giving up toys, moving to a low cost area, simplifying your life, renting out a room, a garage sale, all were harmless ways to get extra cash. But failing all that we are left with only ugly methods. I refer to the three hideous means- giving blood, getting an extra job or picking up cans. They all involve pain and so are to be avoided if possible. The giving blood part is easy to understand- those needles are big and you need to go often to get decent money. This method obviously must be coupled with frugal preparations to minimize the pain needed. Getting a job is also pretty bad. The one job is bad enough, but having to work more is just added torture. The only good part is that the second job won't last long and because you can quit it is less stressful. Employers use golden handcuffs to compel you to give extra. They know you must have money to survive and the threat of losing the job is unstated but surely there. It ain't like the old days where starvation was the threat- no, this is much worse- they threaten your comfort level. Most will work harder to avoid giving up their toys. So they pay you enough to be comfortable. Devious bastards. So imagine the power of being able to quit anytime. When you don't need the job they work around you, not the other way around. Enjoy it while it lasts at your second job because living to work at your first full time job will still turn you into a dependant. The third method of cash creation is picking up cans. This involves no needles and no bosses, but it is long work in the weather for a pittance. On the bright side you can dumpster dive while you look for cans. You could refurbish your place while getting paid (just be prepared to smell like stale beer). Wear old cloths and be careful of harmful things in the dumpster.

Last but not least we have ways to steal from the spouse for survival preps. This is fraught with peril and must be done carefully but it is the easiest and funniest method. If you are in a position were you are forced to sneak preparation supplies this means that your spouse is totally unsupporting of your quest to protect your family from disaster. To me this is rather a short sighted life partner that you are better off without, but I realize that with today's prejudiced court system giving women equal rights only when it benefits them rather than forcing them to assume equal responsibility you will usually be better off financially if you keep them rather than leave them. Now, I realize that a few female

survivalists out there are hindered by male spouses that hog all the household budget, most likely through beer consumption. I am speaking that as a rule it is a female hindering progress. So, if you are forced to abide by their shortsighted ignorant view the only thing you can do is put forth an added effort to buy supplies. Start by trying to reason with them. When this doesn't work try to bargain with them. When I first tried this I was reluctantly allowed to keep any money I made at a gas station full service isle. She kept the seven bucks an hour wage and I got about $3 a day (the richer they are the less they tip, unless its a restaurant and even then its the quantity from high priced meals rather than quality from high percentages- cheap bastards don't even give out much candy on Halloween). Perhaps this would work with a second job where you are allowed to keep that wage for preps. This is the safest approach as everything is aboveboard and no lying is needed.

If you are forced to lie to your spouse in order to gain needed supplies then you are in for a challenge. First off, no supplies must be in evidence. If you are stealthily stockpiling it must be hidden otherwise if you are found out those supplies might be destroyed in a rage. That would not do. A storage room might be needed or other method used to conceal. If you play in the garden you could bury your supplies. If the wife never goes in the garage you could create a false narrow room behind a tool bench- that way it is hidden from the evil one plus looters later on (think about insulation to offset the garages temperature swings). You could even create a large wooden bed frame that is filled with supplies and then screwed shut to prevent peeking. If you are in tornado country you might get the okay for a storm cellar and then add on a hidden area under the floor. You get the idea- combine your love of building with the need to conceal.

To finance your supplies consider the most prevalent item in anyone's household- the credit card. If you go to Wal-Mart to grocery shop you can always add a few prep items to the regular list. Unless the receipt must be surrendered. Better yet get one card with a huge balance and put most of your items on at once. If you have a balance of $5,342 then adding $500 will bring it to $5,842 which is really close and might be overlooked unless your wife is a frustrated would-be accountant and a meticulous record keeper. Then you are going to have to wait until you get a credit card offer and don't tell the wife about your acceptance of it. Then you are going to have to earn chump change to pay it off in secret. Which leads us to chump change.

You might be forced to nickel and dime the whole process. Everyday your Starbucks money is pocketed and you drink instant at work. It is foul and loathsome but that is almost ten bucks a week. Hoard all the coins you get as change. Take lunch money to work and instead of going to lunch buy something from the supermarket. A $5 bill for lunch less $1.50 for a pound of Fig Newton's is a cool profit. If you go to the Laundromat insist that the price is higher than claimed, your wife will love that you are helping with the housework. If you take over the checkbook round all odd amounts to the next dollar, claiming you are building a slush found/forced savings and then withdraw the difference once a month. When the extra fails to materialize claim a lost check. Save old booze bottles, brand name product boxes or bags and refill with cheaper items pocketing

the difference. If the spouse drinks all the savings shop at an expensive convenience stop and save receipts. After awhile go to the Indian nationals/Pakistani owned store that buys near out of date cases and sells them cheap- you can get several bucks a wack this way. Make up events at school for the kids to get money, split it with them and keep the difference. Sell little noticed items to the pawn shop, both hers and yours. Works great in a messy house.

And remember my favorite from the other week. Put in for vacation, and when you take it claim you got laid off and keep that weeks check. Then claim you got rehired. Or say you got fired and refuse to go back to work unless she agrees to a redesigned budget with stockpiling in mind. That's a little dangerous but kills two birds with one stone (gets immediate money and the promise of more). And the game is afoot.
END

PEAK OIL?
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Oil has been drilled and refined in this country for almost 150 years. What started out as a profitable replacement for whale oil for lubricants and illumination has turned into the driving force behind our economy. If tomorrow we all magically started working at home on our computers rather than drove to work to make and sell widgets we would still face the obstacle that our dependence on cheap energy places before us. If the oil stopped flowing we would all starve in our dark cold houses. We have had cheap oil for so long that everything we do is dependant on it. We also had drastic price fluctuations. After the War Of Northern Aggression prices per barrel went from fifty cents a barrel to $12, and back down (as just one example), the equivalent today of $20 to $180. We all huddle around our electric heaters and moan about oil at $50, when in fact adjusted for inflation that's the cheapest in several decades. If inflation is looked upon as the chief culprit of price increases rather than supply, you can make sense of the OPEC troubles in the 1970's (oil adjusted for the decline of the US dollar) and the present day fears of peak oil (China buying oil on an unprecedented scale with less valuable US dollars). Peak oil refers to the projected peak of Middle East oil supplies. It is a valid concern, as US oil production peaked decades ago and there is no reason to think it won't happen in the worlds biggest oil producing region.

The whole mess of global oil supply is complicated. You have existing fields and their estimated yields. You have existing fields and their locations complicated by politics. You have complications of strategic needs. You have currency influence. The complications of renewable energy. Refinery complications. Future use considerations. Co-dependency of entire industries. Peak production is only one facet of the whole complicated quagmire. So lets look at as much as we can on this short journey and determine the future and oils role in it. This article will not set your mind at ease. Perhaps you will worry less about the peak oil issue, but you should start to worry about the extended role oil plays in your life and how to decrease your dependence on it. Look at it this way. Just pretend that Y2K is going to really happen this time. A failed computer chip shutting down the electrical grid is no different in the end than our running out of cheap oil. And I stress the term cheap oil. We may never run out of oil, but will it remain cheap? More importantly, will you as an individual be able to live life largely the same as before current events started to unfold? To rely on outside forces to maintain your standard of living is insane. Be paranoid, for they are out to get you.

Estimated yields on an oil field are just that, estimated. It's like when the meteorologist estimates the chance of sunshine and you fail to bring an umbrella when it ends up raining. Last year a major oil company saw its stock fall after it was revealed the estimated yields

of its holdings were inflated (I think around 25%). The future profits were going to be less than expected. Gee, imagine that. Stockholders getting screwed. Who would have thought. As I never tire of writing, stocks are a suckers game. Stocks reflect ownership in an industrial economy company. Their time has come and gone. In general they are best left alone. I trust cash under the mattress subject to the ravages of inflation over the ownership of stocks where 95% of the companies you invest in make more money manipulating the books and sabotaging the companies future in order to show profit in the next quarter so the current managers can get a fat bonus. Let me give you a little example. General Motors, once the lifeblood of the economy, just had its stock downgraded by whoever rates the value of companies to where it is now on par with the Russian government. You know, the former commies. The guys who defaulted on their loans not six or seven years ago. The ones our government keeps bailing out (meaning you as a taxpayer). GM used to make more money financing cars than building them but then they had their under-funded pension system bite them in the ass and they were forced to keep the sales figures up so after 9-11 they started giving away cars at 0% financing. The company made its profit on financing, but to stay afloat they didn't charge for that service anymore. Does anyone else see a problem here? Anyway, when estimated yields are on the high side everyone thinks they have more time to buy oil at cheap prices, that the field will not decrease production as soon. Future supply and price are figured in by everyone from the homeowner filling his heating oil tanks to the Pentagon planning wars of Middle East conquest, er, I mean liberation for democracy.

Where an oil field is located is very important. The first fields were in Pennsylvania in an area were industry was located. Transport was a critical expense and oil would have played a smaller role if it had been discovered farther away. We can cheaply transport oil to the West coast from Alaska by pipe line (negating its lower quality) because it flows through friendly territory. Try running a pipeline through Latin America. It would be blown up in a week. Venezuela played havoc with our oil supply recently when that countries weekly changing government went hot and cold on supply. It might be a small percent of supply but when demand is 100%, a slight drop panics everybody. In the 1990's oil was in oversupply, we could pay little for it. Latin America was glad to give it to us at any price. The rest of the world was in a recession from the Asian Flu and we were having our last fling as reigning global super-stud. Everybody needed our dollars, especially OPEC. We could, and did, get oil from everybody and they knew they were not as special anymore. Now, we can only pray that we can go back to production as we evacuate the oil fields in Nigeria as a bloody coup starts, or bribe Banana Republic leaders to allow us some imports of oil (the bribe presumably is in Euros or Yen) or invade those countries having the most oil to assure supplies. Now, location is screwing us. The sharks smell Uncle Sam’s blood in the water and the price is increasing.

To wage a modern war (well, a modern Industrial one anyway) you need a steady cheap supply of oil. When some monster piece of armored fighting vehicle get something like 500 feet to the gallon you know you are going to go through a lot of fuel. During WWII we were floating in the stuff. We had all we wanted for ourselves and half the world besides. The Germans had defeated themselves trying to get control of the oil in Russia.

Oil is critical in strategic planning. The Chinese are bullying their way into contested areas just for control of oil. We invaded Iraq for oil even if no one admits it. Without oil on the battlefield you might as well build trenches and remain static, supplying the troops by coal powered railroad. Mobility is key. Oil provides that. If we pulled back to the continental US and relied on nukes to deter invasion, we could easily supply the military from our own production of oil. However, with the bulk of factories now overseas we desperately need a strong military to police the world in order that free trade is available to supply us with the goods we no longer produce. We over- regulate and over- tax industry and then are shocked when production moves overseas. The amazing thing is not that we buy most of our goods from China. Its that the gross stupidity of our government hasn't already killed us all (well, give them time).

Currency influences the supply of oil. When your money is worthless you need something of tangible value to replace it. When the Russian ruble was being inflated daily, the country sold as much of its oil as it could to bring in hard currency. The country has oodles of gold (real money) but anymore gold is just a store of value, not a currency. Credit and to a smaller degree paper money is what is traded, not gold. So, in our Alice In Wonderland world of current economics Russia sells oil and gold to get operating capital. In a perfect world they would have used oil and gold reserves (subject to independent audit) to generate a perfect currency. But, when you are starving wheat imports are more important than oil exports. So, that helped provide low priced oil globally. Today, the US dollar is being inflated beyond acceptable levels. Which is why the Euro is gaining value. In and of itself the Euro is crap. A bunch of protectionist and socialist countries who think in a world of decentralizing economics the only way to prosper is to add an additional layer of control and taxes. What a bunch of jerk-offs. Don't get me wrong. Protectionism serves a purpose. By protecting a certain level of farms and industrial capacity you protect against enemies starving you into submission. You can see why Japan went to war seventy years ago. They can barely feed themselves, let alone light their homes. They have zero natural resources. When France won't allow small farms supplying wheat to be priced out of the market they are of course being inefficient. That is the price of independence. Not many countries have the luxury of the US of being almost totally independent for the basics. We can supply our own food and oil and minerals. So, we are less careful than we should be. We can bully our way around and always just retreat to our fortress if we choose. After half a century of the worlds dominant currency (we took a few years off in the seventies) we feel we can play fast and loose with the printing presses to pry ourselves out of our sticky economic mess. The problem is when we have to pay more because our inflation raises the price. We don't like that. Gas was $1 a gallon not eight years ago. Now it is cheap at $2. You can bet the voting public will okay the invasion of Iraq at that price. What a bunch of jerk-offs.

Renewable energy for us and most of the world means non-oil energy rather than renewable. Sure, there are wind farms near San Francisco and machines using wave power in Europe but aside from hydro-power most countries use nuclear or coal as alternatives to oil imports. Coal causes a lot of the pollution you read about in China. But, the US has more coal reserves than the Middle East has oil reserves. That is the one

bright spot here. As far as electrical generation, between coal and hydropower we could limp along just fine. If we went with the new generation of safer cheaper nuclear power plants like the Chinese plan on doing we could eliminate all oil generation of electric (even if needed with tax breaks) so no one would have to worry about juice being available. With grain alcohol and our own oil, plus perhaps what's available from our two neighbors in an emergency we could get by on our own as a nation. We shouldn't need to worry about the Middle East. Nor about hydrogen. Long term, yes. But short term the government throwing cash at a magical solution to a problem that doesn't exist is not necessary. We don't have an energy shortage, we have a wasteful habit that we depend on foreigners to provide the fix for. For 100 years we have inefficient personal transportation solutions. That is not going to change until the economic incentive is there. In commerce the most efficient transport of goods is sought because it effects the bottom line. In our personal lives we all load up in Winnebago's to go camping, commute to work in huge trucks that rarely see a payload, wave goodbye to the five foot 120 pound wife driving her gigantic SUV she needs a step ladder to get into and pass Grandma on her way to the hairdresser in her huge Cadillac. We are so lazy and wasteful I have seen people fish for their keys, load up their packages, put on their seatbelt, back out the car, drive the quarter block to another store, get out and go shopping. I mean, should we have a wheelchair waiting for them at each store also? Spoiled bastards. But, don't despair. Come a crunch in gas prices we will do whatever it takes to keep the soccer mom vote. The Yuppie Scum must be allowed to herd her spawn to after school activities in comfort. Granting immunity to wetbacks is a great way to get more oil from Mexico and we can always count on Canada, although Lord knows why they put up with our crap. Unless they get chummy with China. Lately China has been taking our evermore worthless dollars we give them to buy ceramic widgets and buying up energy sources everywhere, to include North and South America. If they buy enough Canadian companies we just might all be driving mopeds around that run on grain alcohol.

Refineries are where we are going to run into other problems. You see, oil comes in many varieties. When you hear the term "sweet crude" they are talking about that which has the least contaminants and is the easiest to refine. The Middle East has that kind and that is why the demand is greatest there. Sure, the supply factor is there also, but given a choice most people want the good stuff. The kind of refinery you have dictates what kind of crude you can buy and use. California buys Alaskan crude which is dirty and requires more work to refine. The Gulf Coast refineries are the same way and they use South American crude. The problem is that when a fire takes out an old refinery, they don't get replaced. With all those bastard commies tree hugging sue happy bastards scum suckers out there blocking the construction of new plants, we are facing a dwindling supply of refinery capacity. Between the tree hugging environmentalists wanting us to be more Earth friendly (as they drive to their meetings) and the lawyers waiting to sue for any pollution there are simply going to be no new refineries built unless a genuine emergency happens to block out these idiotic voices. Recently we had a lot of refinery closures. Every time there was a fire in one the gas pump price jumped ten or twenty cents. Suppliers know future deliveries are now going to cost more. Simple economics, lower supply means higher prices. But most of us are rather knee-jerk about the whole thing and

just call the oil companies rip-off artists. Yeh, the government makes more on taxes per gallon of gas than all others combined and we all point the finger of blame at the oil companies. Don't tell me the public school system is a failure because it did its job well. We all became drones repeating the official line- the brainwashing worked. Anyway, another saving grace for us at this time is that in Euroland they just love mass transit (Germany is the size of Oregon, how hard can it be to cover the place with track?) and frown on private transport, what with taxes on gas being so high. So, they use diesel fuel and they ship the regular gas to the US. A source of cheap gas, for now. If the crazy tree huggers really wanted to see us drive less all they would have to do is blow up a few more refineries. After that I guess we could line the south side of the Rio Grande with refineries to get our gasoline.

Future use of oil is also a factor. We sort of got confused about the purpose of our strategic oil reserves, where we stockpile oil to even out future supply disruptions. God forbid a vote should be lost if some welfare bitch has to wait in line to gas up. She just got her check and the party is waiting on her. You go, girl! China has started to do the same, but are doing it a little smarter. They plan on future supply disruptions, but the folks that get the stockpile is industry. You know, the guys that bring in the cash. Piss on the consumer, comrade. Priorities are never to the individual in China. Don't get me wrong, I sure as Hell don't want to live in a society that places the individual second over the collective. But I also would like to see our leaders get their head out of their asses. If we must have government at least it can be less incompetent. In our country the vast majority of officials are lawyers. In China the majority are engineers. Who will govern best? Set aside the kind of government, focus on what kind of profession solves problems. See what I mean? Stockpiling oil to keep industry working is smart. Stockpiling oil for political advantage is not (other than to a limited few).

Co-dependency on cheap oil. Entire industries in the US depend on cheap oil. The automotive. All of the retail sector (via trucking). Farming. Well, everyone. If heating fuel was priced like European or Japanese gasoline northeasterners would all be freezing through the winter. If gas doubled again everything you bought in the stores would increase in price. Everyone to some degree or another now depends on Just In Time stocking, which takes more deliveries which needs plenty of cheap gas. In a country like Japan were distances are much smaller and industries are clustered that makes sense. In the US it takes much more effort and energy. So, we hide the price of gas through the governments military interventions. If our military billed us for the use of force to assure a cheap plentiful petroleum supply our energy prices would be much higher. The entire plastics industry needs cheap stock. The farming sector needs cheap oil for fertilizer and machinery operation. Every worker who lives in suburbia needs cheap oil. We may be less dependant on Middle East oil, and almost everything now is much more energy efficient compared to thirty years ago, but we still need lots of cheap oil. FDR, may his putrid soul rot in the lowest depths of Hell for all time the commie bastard, could have done us a big favor while he was turning us into socialists and slapped a export tax on oil leaving the country. We might not have run out so quick. But change only comes through trauma. When we get low again we will change our wasteful ways.

So, peak oil in the Middle East is a small problem. We are going to screw ourselves from all the other problems relating to oil before we need to worry about one area producing less oil. So the next time someone tells you about peak oil, don't worry. Just go out and buy PV panels, or insulation, or a pellet stove (yes, they do work with batteries if the power goes off and many areas are prohibiting regular wood stove burning anyway) or move down South for more mild winters if you don't mind the two pay scales they have there, minimum wage and professional. Get a more fuel efficient car if you can. I once had a VW Rabbit that got fifty miles to the gallon in town if you like diesel (scarcity is not an issue unless you are way in the boonies and then that applies to regular gas also- after the 70's diesel got a lot more popular and most stations carry it in states that don't try to prohibit the practice). And, stockpile the hell out of supplies. When regular goods reflect the increased price of transport in the future you need to be able to ride out price fluctuations. Install a hot water heater using solar, or go to a tankless heater. Plan now for future increased prices while prices are cheap. If nothing happens you are more self-sufficient which is always a good thing.
END

THE STRANGE AND BIZARRE WORLD OF THE NEW INFLATION

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Minds far greater than mine have made economic forecasts. Millions of trees screamed as they were slaughtered for books predicting what would befall our poor neglected civilization. Oceans of ink told us of ruin to come. Brilliant minds spending hundreds of thousands of man-years researched why chaos was just around the corner. Why were they wrong? What makes me assume that a High School graduate (from California *after* the Howard-Jarvis tax cuts bit into public school education no less) could have a hope of even guessing what was around the corner economically speaking? Well, for one thing, all those other guys were college educated. As Dr. Gary North, one of the few geniuses that went to college and it didn't ruin him, said in a wonderful turn of phrase- colleges are turning out Mandarins. We are not talking about engineers here. Not applied sciences. Mainly what is meant is that those things that could be taught as an apprentice are instead turned into a degree and the accepted wisdom of our masters is spouted by wrought. There are many things that can be self taught, learned through experience or solved by utilizing some common sense. But when a young idiot goes through today's college he is taught how to be a state approved idiot. Teaching is the prime example. It is not allowed to hire a retired practitioner of a course, but someone from a college with a degree in teaching can legally teach that course even with no knowledge of that subject. The exception is private schools were degrees are not required. I personally learned more in eighth grade from a retired navy guy teaching at Catholic school than in the following four years of public High School. The only brilliant teacher there was soon laid off after deviating from the approved curriculum (he taught government and social sciences [and German at which I did miserably] and taught real world versus textbook- it was only through the usual civil servant incompetence of failing to observe his heresy that he lasted as long as he did, which luckily was long enough for me to attend all his courses). In economics the approved reality is through the prism of Keynes. Of course anyone else could have been crowned the prince of economics had he been smart enough to sacrifice the free market at the alter of government intervention. Really, that is all that most economists do. They play with numbers to "prove" that state intervention is a great and wonderful thing and we must all dance around and scream our approval that the masters are oh so great and groovy and we tear off the heads of chickens and make other sacrifices to the new Gods that replaced our old masters the Catholic Church, since in general our economy must specialize and like good little worker drones we stay devoted to one task and ignore all else that surrounds us including how sucky it is being lead around by our nose ring by the governing elite of the Nation State. To return to whatever it was I was babbling about which is a great way to start to prove I'm up to the task of replacing a bunch of geniuses to forecast the next direction of the economy, the rest of those authors were merely a bunch of college educated idiots, so automatically I already have a leg up.

It is only necessary that one reads on a regular basis and gives the matter some thought before you come to a conclusion that the supposed experts can't grasp- economically we are going to be rather screwed. I claim no knowledge as to when this happy event will occur. Almost nobody can claim accurate prediction, and usually its a lucky guess that looks better than it is with 20/20 hindsight. That leaves us in a rather unenviable position. You can't make your preparations too extensive or you might go broke and ruin your life now before anything happens. But if you poke along too slowly you end up screwing yourself in the long run. I wonder how many people quit their jobs and headed for the wilderness in anticipation of Y2K? How embarrassing. And potentially fatal economically speaking. No, the trick is to be prepared now, before anything happens. Even if nothing happens. I still have most items from pre-Y2K. Nothing went to waste, no money was mis-allocated. But since I went all out then preparing, now I just need to buy in a trickle, no large monetary outlays. I think that's the ticket to that balancing act. The problem now for myself is that when I save money for the eventual move to my land I run the risk of leaving cash to the mercy of either inflation or theft (well, same thing- ones just faster than the other). Which is really the whole point here. Our new and strangely improved type of inflation.

In the 1970's when our last batch of severe inflation took place, America was a far different land. We actually manufactured almost everything we needed. Most living generations had only happy memories of the post war years. Sure, the cultural rips were there. Vietnam was giving us a what for. But economically speaking it had been nothing but a gravy train since the commie bastard FDR got us involved in the global war and helped end the Depression the Fed had caused in the first place by in essence putting the entire work force into military production. About the same as the Axis countries were full employment was achieved by first an arms race and then military conquest. My thoughts are that the Depression and WWII was an inevitable event as the world shifted to a pure manufacturing economy from a mechanical farming economy just as the Civil War was a result of manufacturing being introduced into a pure agricultural economy, but that is just my "economy dictates politics" theory. In a conventional government versus the free market scenario, the Depression was ended by massive government spending and the economy after the war was not allowed to flounder. Immediately we introduced the GI Bill to Federalize college education, and started the Cold War. This allowed incredible amounts of military spending with little chance of any casualties. Our economy has been on ever expanding amounts of tax dollars and government control for seventy five years. Eventual it has to end. But, in the 1970's we were used to our command of half the globe. We were the King of the Hill. Whoppie for us. But then Nixon (may his scaly hide rot in the lowest depths of Hell alongside his butt buddy FDR for all of time) decided that since the Vietnam War was costing too much (hey, go figure) he had better remove us from any gold anchor and just let our dollar float free. OPEC was just a consequence of that action. For the first time in almost thirty years our economy took a big dump. We were a land of fat and happy and suddenly we had no choice but to cut back on our consumption. It was akin to a large and rather fat man being thrown off the sofa and being told to jog to the refrigerator where there was no longer any Twinkies and beer but only honey glazed tofu bars and tomato juice. Inflation screwed with every facet of our lives, not only

because our economy was in actual fact a sealed self-sustaining unit but also to a lesser degree the sudden large amount of inflation we were not used to. We built all our own items, and services were secondary to the manufacturing sector. When inflation took hold, every item to sustain life skyrocketed. Every item in the store went up in price because there had been no competition to the countries production. We had been insulated from the world economically and so when the government turned on the printing presses we went into shock. Everybody wants the good old days back but in actuality we have it much better today now that global trade has taken over and everything we buy to live is now open to competition from other folks. Our economy now is getting mean and lean. In the seventies we were too fat and sloppy.

Inflation in the seventies caused several riptides we are still living with. The biggest is that it moved manufacturing overseas. That of course oversimplifies, but in effect it started our looking for cost cutting moves in manufacturing and one way was to farm out production. Today that move is all but complete. In essence we only do high tech manufacturing now, where labor is not a factor in cost. I consider this a good thing but I realize most would not agree with me. And you still get people expressing shock at the local factory moving overseas. Have they been asleep the last quarter of a century? You were lucky they lasted this long. And talk about head-up-ass syndrome, local governments are still trying to attract manufacturing to create jobs. When they get done bribing off the owners it is usually cheaper to just give the unemployed more benefits. Because there is no guarantee the jobs will stay. Do you think Toyota wants to build cars here? Heck no. They would prefer to build in China and ship them over, but if they did that we would jack up tariffs and make the car too expensive for the consumer, so they overpay on Union scale and pass the cost on to the consumer. Without government interference we could have quality cars much cheaper. With it, every Japanese car buyer pays a hidden tax to the local manufacturing plant. If anything changes and government strong arming ends, those local factory jobs end. In a severe recession if car buyers dry up, those factories close. Another big move was away from the economic ladder once available. Before, if one applied oneself and towed the line, one could move up the corporate ladder. You did your time and advanced. Today, jobs are all disposable. But more importantly, there are fewer and fewer mid-level position jobs. You can be on the bottom, or on the top, but every year there are fewer middle jobs. Less opportunity to advance, more to fall.

A big effect of 1970's inflation was the death of the nuclear family. Again, that simplifies as there were other factors, but since the government was the root cause of all of them we can safely focus on inflation as the primary one. When inflation eats away at your purchasing power more money buys less. Remember, the simple economic law of supply and demand- more printed money means each bill is worth less. Soon you get to where there are two incomes needed to equal the same purchasing power of the old type of Mr. Cleaver bringing home the bacon. Without Mom at home raising kids takes a back seat to feeding the Federal Leviathan. And we wonder why society sucks the big one.

We still have inflation. As long as we have an out of control Federal government, we will

have inflation. Just because the money is created out of thin air on computer hard drives as credit instead of being printed up as extra bill does not mean inflation is dead. Just because the government keeps changing the accounting rules it uses to disguise inflation doesn't mean it isn't a problem. Just because productivity increases have systematically reduced the demand for raw materials and thus caused decades of commodity price declines does not mean inflation is dead. But today's inflation is, at least at present, in a relative manner quite tame and benign. Who knows how long that might last. Probably about as long as the current greedy Seniors can suck off the system. When the first wave of the Baby Boomers start retiring then the government will turn up the presses. When the voters are all on the government tit, you don't cut payments. We are involved in the Middle East which we won't leave until the oil runs out. That is a huge outlay. We are trying to keep all the voters alive with Medicare, another huge expense. Most job growth is due directly or indirectly to government spending since 9-11. The government will continue to inflate. But for now, enjoy global competition keeping a lid on inflation. The governments sponsors want global competition to reduce all of our wages, but the flip side is that we see reduced prices as consumers. In the end our economy will have no jobs to offer other than those equaling Third World slave labor, but for now we can happily wallow in a mud puddle of consumer goods.

What you are seeing now in inflated prices are mainly caused by monopoly power, regulation and litigation, and temporary supply and demand price hikes. Monopoly pricing is easy to understand. Your cable bill goes up every year. Why? They aren't stringing along more line, the service just gets worse. It's because they have a monopoly. Their inefficiency and/or gross profits are so high that it pays other companies to launch multiple satellites and offer better service at cheaper prices. The post office is so inefficient that it hides behind monopoly protection for first class mail. Competition forces companies to become lean and mean. Without it the company grows bigger, does less and charges more. Regulation and litigation are merely wealth distribution packages hidden behind the cloak of public benefit. In litigation the "justice" system is the main beneficiary, lawyers swollen with stolen funds. Everything you buy has a hidden cost of past or future litigation being paid for. It has been estimated that a pistol carries a hidden tax of 50% to pay all the lawsuits due to greedy lawyers. Same with a pack of cigarettes. Regulation is the price politicians pay off their money people with. It costs too much to get elected not to have to borrow the money. The payback is dictated regulations that benefit the donor. Without the preceding, prices would be much lower. Really, the only thing that can be blamed on the free market as far as raised prices go is supply and demand price hikes. The price of lumber skyrockets mainly due to many more homes being built (we'll leave aside the government controlled interest rates causing housing demand). The price of eggs double, after the Atkins diet gets popular. A freeze in Columbia causes coffee prices to jump. After a time these correct themselves. That is the reason that the government uses for stripping out food and energy from their inflation calculations. To a degree it is true, but it also, long term, covers up how bad inflation is. When the only reason oil raises in price is because the primary purchasers money is worth less, than energy should be calculated into the inflation rate. But it's not. If you take the official inflation rate and triple it, that is what all factors have caused. But to strip out demand,

just double the official rate for a close ballpark figure. The government says 3%, the gold coin sellers and freeze dried food salesmen want you to believe its 9%, so you are safe to assume about 6%.

Global over-supply give us a lot of breathing room. And not just in electronics (although that is what mainly fuels the information economy) but in everyday necessities. When I was a kid my mother bought shoes two and three sizes too big for me to save on buying new shoes every 6 months. I didn't know I wasn't size 13 until I bought my own pair. Now, shoes are throw away items. It doesn't even pay to repair them. Clothing is now cheaper to buy than the fabric that you could use to make your own. Bicycles cost half what they did twenty years ago, even after inflation (making the true cost even lower). If a Chinaman can make it, it will get a lot cheaper to buy. The downside is that any service that is local will increase along with inflation, and currently even more as housing/property inflation is insane. Joe Blow the barber pays more for the building rental and passes the cost on to you. But the good news is that if you can avoid paying other people to perform services for you, then you can largely avoid inflationary prices. Cut your own hair, get rid of your car to avoid mechanics, reduce rent by carefully picking a slower developing area (areas with closed factories offer lots of possibilities), try not to pay someone else's mortgage by getting them to perform a function you could do or do without. Stock up on anything that is subject to sudden scarcity and thus price spikes. For every lemon there is a way to make lemonade. Use the decline of the US as a way to beat inflation.
END

SURVIVAL PLACES RATED
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If you are like the average American, you are a professional Gypsy. Those quaint buddy movies from Hollywood to the contrary, most of us do not stay in our home town we grew up in our whole lives. We join the military, go to college, or just escape a place where everyone knows our name. At the same time we seek out that one place where we can settle down, never to move again, and to get to know everybody's name. The problem is, once we get to utopia it turns out that it sucks. So we move again. Since the automobile and the mass migration from an agricultural life, we move time and again, looking for a better job or a less aggravating locale. The Okkies going to California was but one famous example. My personal feeling is that I have moved enough in my life (43 times in 40 years) and I want to find one good place and settle down. Granted, a lot of these moves were just across town or with only the contents of a duffel bag, but a move is a move.

For survivalists the quest is more complicated, as we have other considerations than home price, jobs and less crime. When you live a life of paranoia you just know the least likely to happen event will turn around and bite you on the backside if you do not factor it in to your equation. For instance, being in Florida I would say the least likely concern I might have would be global warming and massive land loss to oceans. Yet, as a survivalist it would be silly not to think about that possibility.

And so, my latest and greatest brain-storm is to ask my readers for their input. Following a few guidelines, write to me about your location. I know it is silly to base a move on what you have read about a state or region, but a lot of us do just that. We move based on flimsy evidence and little preparation, but what the heck, we can always move again. If your fellow survivalists are the ones advising you, you will receive much better advice than the guy you work with. I have selfish reasons for this. I would like to move myself. And it is hard to find advice on an areas survivability other than a few old books. Like the old advice to move to coastal Oregon to avoid nuclear war fallout. Great advice, back in the seventies and eighties. Now, from what I hear you are faced with a socialist government and high land prices. But I don't know for sure. Anyone from Oregon?

Write, short or long, and I will post as I get them to the next issue. Multiple entries from the same state are fine. Please address the following concerns:

Weather and potential natural disasters
Real estate prices, type of land. Average prices, town/city lot and country acre (utilities?)

Jobs, type of industry, is any employment available? Main industry in danger of closing?
Crime, type of government (commie, hands-off), taxes
Weapons laws
Other issues (too close to big city, water shortage in future, tax base eroding, population/immigration issues, little known problems, etc.)

These six should sum up today's livability, and tomorrow's potential problems. Also list how long you have lived there. A ten year resident will know more than someone there for a few months. Not that you should let that stop you from writing, you still know more than most. This can be as simple as a short e-mail. No need to think you need to write this newsletter for me. But feel free to go in depth if you wish. Detail can't hurt. For those that take the time, thanks. For those too busy, I understand.
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(this portion was written two years ago when I lived in Florida. Factor in price inflation on land since then)

Florida (central, coast)
Florida was one of those places I swore I would never move to. "Old fogies and swampland." That pretty much sums up living here. Been here about five years.

The weather here is great for one half the year. Spring and fall are very mild and you can run around in shorts and flip-flops if you want. The other half of the time you will swear you are going to leave this cursed place. Humidity off the chart, not moving you will sit in a puddle of your own sweat. Moving is a misery. Yet, this is only sub-tropical. Then, in the winter you get a week here and there were the temperature gets in the forties or below and if you are acclimated to this climate it really feels cold (even if that is T-shirt weather for you Yankees). But overall the great weather the rest of the time makes you forget the worst of it. We are overpopulated for a reason, and it has everything to do with the lack of cold (those old bones need heating up). But you shouldn't discount the other factors here, climate wise. This is the lightning strike capital of the world. Hurricanes love us. You will be sharing your habitat with animals, lots of animals. Mosquitoes, alligators, chiggers, snakes, spiders and if you like camping, panthers and bears. And don't forget sink holes. Build a house, toss the dice, a sink hole might eat it. We are actually doing this place a favor paving it over. Friggin swamp.

Hurricanes here are the biggest concern. Yet, minimal construction will save your house even from the worst of it. Most houses here are cinder block walls, and if you merely fill them in with concrete and get window storm covers the extent of damage might be your roof tiles. The trick is to make sure you are located above the water storm surge line. Water is a concern as far as home damage if you've built up your home to withstand the wind. Tornados can always happen, but in general are very mild here. As I said earlier, if you are concerned about global warming, this is not the place to live. Think of it as one giant sandbar. I think the tallest hill in the state is 300 foot elevation. And flooding is an everyday concern anyway. Lots of rivers, swamps and lakes to overflow during flash floods.

Land prices here are high. Not that they are much higher than elsewhere, but the problem is you can't find land anywhere that is reasonable. The east coast is one long uninterrupted city. If you look at a map you see one right after another. So coastal living is high. We get that nice ocean breeze to take off some of the heat, and prices reflect that. A city lot starts at $20,000. You can go inland a bit and buy an acre for half that, but expect to commute to work. These are central Florida prices, I can't speak for the panhandle or the south. But if you are looking for cheap land I would think the best you are going to do anywhere in the state is about $5,000. Mobile homes are really popular here. Hurricanes have five categories, and the only safe rating for a mobile home is category 1. Category 2 hurricanes might spare your mobile if you are lucky, any higher and it is toast. Authorities here request evacuation automatically if you live in a mobile (but keep in mind you will then be at the mercy of the storm stuck in gridlock). If you are young or have a family you are going to find it harder to get a rental space for a mobile, since the seniors control 90% of the parks. The good thing is that you can buy a used one cheap since the old farts are constantly dying off and the kids up in Yankeeland want to get rid of it. Prices start at $3,000 and you can move it in town pretty cheap. Rents are at least $200 a month. Or, if you can afford it, just buy a lot and for under $40k you can own land and shelter (cheap for the city). In the country an acre, a used mobile and towing cost could get as low as $10k if you shop around and got lucky.

Jobs here are plentiful as long as you don't mind minimum wage part time. The tourism job market complaint here is a little overdone. Yes, the state is dependant on tourism. But that does shield us from the ups and downs of industry. Not many factories here to shut down. Of course the idiots in charge still feel compelled to court owners with tax money. “Oh, come open a plant, it will create 50 jobs, then after my term in office you can lay off half of them- here’s a million dollars.” Shmucks. Still, there are plenty of jobs here. It just might not be what you want. But at least you can work. If you are opening a business, beware the workforce. There is a certain “beach bum” factor here. Plenty of people don't want to work too hard, since it is getting in the way of their going to the beach. Plenty of others have a good work ethic due to the high cost of living, but a certain portion are lazy bastards. The thing to keep in mind about the work situation here is that despite tourism, the economy here will continue to do good here for years to come. Unless we get really bad government at the state level, those Federal dollars paying Social Security will prop up this economy until the fund runs out. The in-flow of population will also help, but the deciding factor keeping us ahead of the game is the old farts checks. When they end the economy here will implode, but until then we are sitting pretty.

Currently we have a pretty decent state government. The conservatives are in power, and while the politicians barely cover up the fact that they are bought and paid for by big business at least they pretty much leave the rank and file alone. I personally have been screwed over by the state, once by sting operations causing me to loose a good paying job (had to take a $5k a year cut) and once when the ex took me back to court to get more child support (an increase of 20%). Yet for all that, there is no overwhelming sense that they are out to screw you like there was in California where new taxes and new laws

restricting your freedoms were introduced like clockwork. Here I have taken more of a financial beating but at least I have much more daily freedom to do as I wish. The next governor race could tilt the power back to the liberals but most things will stay the same. Just keep in mind that the seniors here control finances. If medical needs or other finances are needed that the Feds don't provide, the young and working will get stuck with the tab. A future consideration. There are no state income taxes here, and houses are homestead protected (meaning you can't loose the house to creditors). Overall, the politicians take their cut like any good protection racket and then leave you alone.

One of the good things about this place is the concealed weapons law. Florida was one of the first “shall issue” states. Unless you are proved to be a felon, etc., they have to issue you a permit. Cost for classes and paperwork are under $200. Thus, crime is a lot lower than it could be with our overpopulation, underemployment and heavy illegal population. As long as it is self defense you can shoot up anyone. Even if they are not armed anyone forcing themselves into your house can be shot (within reason). Its not the Wild West here, it is just that citizens are allowed to defend themselves and not be punished for it. Two recent cases demonstrate this. A father goes to pick up his son working at a video store at closing. Two sub-humans try armed robbery, dad pulls his concealed pistol and caps them. Justified. A paramedic pounds on the door of a heart attack victim, no response, breaks the window and crawls in. The homeowner thinks some insane fool is breaking in, shoots the guy. The medic had the wrong address. Justified (sad, but it was the guys fault and the homeowner was asleep and awoke to what appeared to be an attack). This is the kind of common sense weapons laws we need. Not like in California where if you shoot an armed burglar you are the one going to jail.

Like any place, Florida has problems. Mainly overpopulation leading to other problems. For your survival plans, take that into consideration. No where to escape people. There are rural areas, but if immigration continues you will wake up one day to find out you now live in a suburb. The job situation is not likely to improve. The main reasons I moved here are the warm weather (Y2K was coming and I didn't like the thought of winters without electricity) and the lack of state income tax and concealed weapons law. The reason I want to move is the high land prices and overpopulation. Still, if I never move I think I would be reasonably happy. The land is nice and flat, so all I need for transportation is a bicycle. So, even if land is high I can recoup some of that cost by not owning a car. I would not want to go back to paying more taxes or not being able to defend myself. And, unlike the West where I grew up, there is a lot of water here. I like the trees everywhere, even in the city. Not a bad place, overall.
***
Nevada (northern, urban)

I had first moved to Nevada about fifteen years ago, pre-children. It was my first attempt to escape California and not successful. It took me several tries to escape the cultural pull that I had known since birth. California is indeed its own country, as are other areas such as Texas. If you didn't grow up in that certain culture it is a bit alien. I never will move back to what has become a foul socialist welfare state, but I sure do miss it. Anyway, I

moved to Reno, NV way back when and even in an urban setting the whole thing felt different. The attitude was, we are not California and proud of it. The locals bragged that the legislature only met every other year and that way passed less laws. I liked these people. It was what I was looking for. Well, I only stayed about a month as I had been working graveyards at a casino and it was boring as all get out. And, if you didn't work at a casino you didn't get a job. So, I moved back.

Years go by and I find myself stuck in Florida with a low paying job, a trailer payment and bills being paid with the credit card. My reasoning went along the lines that if I was going to rack up the credit cards I might as well just go ahead and move. It would have been smarter to move across town, but at the time I was working for Dollar General. As an assistant manager I was making $7 an hour and doing my job plus the managers (she was a bit of a slacker). Then in yet another bone headed move to further alienate the workers who were there more out of customer loyalty than corporate love the company decided that if you were short on a register three times you were fired. Who needs that kind of pressure? (Dollar General seems to be the typical American Corporate story. Build a great company. Pour your life sweat into it. Your son takes over and "modernizes" it which means moving away from customer satisfaction towards college course management. Then the grandson takes over and uses it strictly as a cash cow and really starts the ball rolling on screwing things up. A board of directors takes over after financial disaster, and then starts to really get the company headed towards mismanagement. The company mostly dwells in the South and Mid West, and by and large a worker base raised in that culture of hospitality and friendliness keep customer satisfaction alive. Lord knows the company can't take much credit for it. You can go far by bulk buying for 6,000 stores and offering super low prices. But after a time if you alienate customers by your bone-head policies you will eventually loose them). We loaded up a van and moved back West. I was tired of the humidity and low wage jobs. We stopped off at Kingman Arizona, our intended destination. After a week of a fruitless job search it was decided to head up to Nevada. I still had fond memories and my father lived in the vicinity. Since I hadn't been near family for five years it seemed like a good idea.

Well, that was a year and a half ago. I found work in the first week, and so far there is little reason to leave. So far. The Nevada I fell in love with fifteen years ago is slowly disappearing, buried under an ocean of former Californians. As with most other western states, Californians move in with cash from their sold homes and jack up the local real estate prices. But here in Nevada that is especially worrisome, as there is very little land available here. Most is under Federal control. The lack of available space makes land cost quite dear. In town a used mobile home on a lot is $120,000. To buy the cheapest new home it is $75k for a mobile/land package and you must commute. Houses are $150k for fixer uppers. Rent is $700 and up for apartments. Travel trailer lot rent is $300 plus, mobile home lots $400 plus. A bit cheaper in the surrounding urban areas but not much and then you must drive on icy roads in winter to get to work.

But rent is not the least of it. Perhaps after the housing bubble deflates things would get a little better. No, the bigger problem is that people move here and want the lower prices

and less taxes and certainly less government meddling, but then they want to start to fine tuning the state to their liking. Nevada started out as a rural area, with very little in the way of government to screw things up. Now, every butthead and his brother want California style control on our lives. More taxes, much more regulation and control. People are trying to get the brothels closed down. They were here before you moved. But now it offends your sensibilities, you Yuppie bastard. The idiots are trying to put more controls on public smoking. The casinos are open 24/7 and allow smoking. Vices are the lifeblood of this state and the jerk-offs are trying to control them. Folks, here in Nevada you are allowed to gamble away your life savings while smoking a cigar and throwing down drinks at 4 a.m. and if you like a limo will pick you up after and take you to a bordello. It is the only place like it in the civilized world. If that offends you, stay the Hell out!!

But they won't. Las Vegas is like L.A. A large metro area has the votes to control the rest of the state. And Vegas is filling up with idiot Californians and their ilk. Before long Nevada will turn into a protectorate of that state, with all the socialist crap that goes with it. Which is why I don't plan on staying here long term. About another five years, if that, and then I'm out of here. You can roll the dice if you wish (gambling is in the air here) and move up north to the areas left alone for now. Elko has about 20k population and you can buy land for about $3k an acre if you commute a bit. Regulations on the land are few. But very cold in the winter. Winnemucca has an economy closely tied to the gold mine, its doing good right now. They are both along Hwy. 80. Near Utah you have a few small towns with cheaper land, but only move there if you can bring a job. Mid state on the east side you have Ely. The main industry there is the prison. Not as dry an area, with cattle ranching. Outside of Vegas, employment is a mixed bag. A casino will pay you well, but the industry is in long term trouble. It will always be around but right now its not the cash cow it once was. In Fernley (30 miles east of Reno) you can work for the Amazon.com distribution center and they start at about $11 an hour. If you think that company has a future that is a good job and real estate right there is cheaper. The point is that here you can find a good paying job if you are picked out of a lot of applicants. Again, the gambling thing. If you win the employee lottery you get a decent paying job, otherwise you are screwed as the jobs are somewhat scarce. I got a $13 an hour job at a casino, worked it a year, got laid off when business suffered, got rehired at a much lower rate doing essentially the same thing but with a title change. And my trailer rent goes up 5% a year regardless of my income. Again, you will be gambling here like it or not.

Nevada has no state income tax. If you own a business the tax burden is rather light. Sales tax is standard at 7%, but if you ignore that the taxes in this state are mild. After Florida and Nevada I am quite spoiled about not paying state income tax. It may only be 5%, but its mine and I want to keep it. Gun controls are mild, permits easy to get. Just beware of future tightening, we are turning liberal. Rent and houses are expensive and there is almost no used mobile home market (some counties prohibit them altogether). Travel trailer living is the cheapest way to go but beware the lack of parks. Some areas (Carson City, were I live) has several trailer parks but they all require the trailers to be later models. If you pull in with a 1976 Winnebago, good luck finding a place to park

long term. It gets cold here in the winter but mostly it is on the mild side. 10 or 15 degrees but when the sun comes out its back to 45. Water is scarce and a big future problem as the population grows. If you want a big rural area that has cowboys, go elsewhere such as Wyoming. That lifestyle is on the decline here. But, for now, a good place to live out of governments way.
END

BANKRUPTCY
or, How To Start All Over Debt Free By Giving The Big Faceless Corporate Bastards A Raspberry
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Sadly, bankruptcy has degenerated into a business strategy. Once upon a time in a magical kingdom called The Good Old Days bankruptcy was only used in the most dire of circumstances. There was a very real stigma attached to it. Or as the folks across the pond say, it simply wasn't done. Of course, in the good old days there was also a very real stigma attached to bringing a bastard into the world. Today out of wedlock child bearing is the glue that holds together the welfare state. We are not in the good old days any longer. We are in the decline of a civilization, or at a minimum in the decline of an economic order. At the end civilized behavior gives way to celebrating those acts that were once forbidden. K-mart, home of Rosie O'Donald and Martha Stewart, used bankruptcy as a means to purchase Sears, a fellow has-been. Why is beyond my feeble comprehension, although the business rags speculate it was for the fact that Sears owned the anchor to so many malls. Not that malls are were the action is anymore, but when was the last time anyone accused either of the two companies with sound business decisions? If I was Sears I would have dumped the clothing store and stayed with the catalog. How long was it that the only profit center was the credit card? If I had been K-Mart I would have gone the discount route. Most stores were lower income urban, the customer base should have been a natural choice for one stop cheap shopping. Not the confused former champ that had no direction, the sections a choice between upscale decor, cheap consumables or items in between. When a chain has the distinction of being the shopping choice because there are no crowds to contend with, its days are numbered. I don't mind contending with a crowd in Wal-Mart, it means bulk purchases lower my prices.

K-Mart closed a large number of stores, stiffed its suppliers, gained no gift but time, then turned around and bought Sears. Sears was a poor choice of acquisition, but the point was that they were able to. After bankruptcy I would think you could show a little better class than blowing another wad of cash on a worthless business. But even they pale in comparison to Donald Trump. Why would anyone loan money to this man? His profit center is bankruptcy. I confess to having no understanding as to the way they do business in Yankeeland. Maybe he launders a lot of Mob money through his casino and thus they keep him open for business. But then, big business is a strange culture anyway. It is not about customer service to most of them but merely the mechanics of building a bigger empire. Look at AT&T, eaten by a cell phone company. Or Time-Warner bought up by the worst Internet Provider out there. A huge media empire bought out by some guy who had the admittedly wonderful idea of saturating each mail box of America with dozens of start-up discs, but overcharged the simpletons after that. And they liked it! A strange culture indeed. But, to the point. If the Donald can cheat his creditors, if K-Mart can use bankruptcy to further its empire, then you to should be able to benefit from this legal

loophole.

And you might want to benefit soon, as the laws they are a'changen. Granted, for at least the last decade or so there has seen the threat of tightening up the bankruptcy laws. It almost seems that the lawyers of the land start whispering in all the right ears. Panic, panic, all is not well!! Rush out and declare bankruptcy now before it all ends! However, this time around the newest bill advocating more stringent laws has a very good chance of passing. Our current president is much kinder to big business, and why not? Both institutions are an anachronism and are fighting for their very lives, they will tend to help one another out. One will not survive without the other. However, even if legislation is not passed very soon (and going into effect within six months) you still need to worry about the future. During this wonderful housing bubble that we are currently experiencing, a large number of otherwise unqualified buyers are using variable rates in order to get loans. Not only is the price of housing getting beyond the means of most folks but now the financial institutions are forcing dangerous loans on the marginally qualified. That gets more people into the game, and drives up costs even more. And when interest rates go up too much then those with loans having variable rates have to walk away from the house (if a mass exodus occurs it is going to be because the bubble is deflating and they will have a negative equity in the house anyway). If this happens bankruptcies will explode and you can bet that tremendous pressure will then be placed on our lawmakers to immediately make it harder to qualify for bankruptcy. Get one now, before the crowd forms.

Right now without many material possessions you can easily declare chapter 7 and wipe out all your debt. If the new law goes into effect, most folks will be forced to declare chapter 13, where a scheduled payment plan is made for your creditors and you pay back most of the loans over five years (most likely without interest, or at least reduced rates). This still destroys your credit rating, but at least you are on solid moral ground for not having screwed over others that loaned you money. The industry that loans money at 25% (while borrowing it at 5%) would love to see this change. Then their default rate will be less. That is why they keep pushing for the changes. You can see their side. If a person gets a loan and knows the interest rate, then even if the rate is usurious they still owe their creditors the money back with the interest. It is not their fault that the person is irresponsible in his finances. I agree with this. However, one the other side of the coin, if you loan people money that is unsecured you are taking a risk. That risk is covered by the others paying high rates to compensate for the defaulters. If you loan 100 people $10 each, and the interest rate is 20% and the default rate is 5%, then you earn $150 a year in interest after loosing $50 on your $1,000 loaned. Even if the deadbeat rate doubles you still make money, and that doesn't even factor in the $30 you got in merchant fees which almost wipes out your loses. Every credit card company factors in non-payment into their prices. Does that justify stiffing your creditors? No. Do we do it anyway? Of course. Those that are opposed to bankruptcy see black and white. Those that take advantage of it see grey areas.

I have declared bankruptcy twice. The first time my job as a gas station manager was

eliminated by the corporate decision not to renew the lease on the station. I lost my job, the station owner lost his business. All because BP bought out Northern California Mobil's and then later decided it was a bad idea and scaled back. We had been doing a booming business on the Interstate highway at the base of an exit. The day after the Mobil sign went down and the BP sign went up our business went down 75%. We held on awhile, long enough for the lease to expire. At the time I was in debt and our first child was on the way (and, I had been living rent free in back of the station in a trailer- now rent was required). With another job paying half, I needed to declare bankruptcy. Or so I thought. Opponents would say I could have restructured my debt and made payments. Obviously they hadn't priced diapers and formula. Now, the second time is where I have less of a moral leg to stand on. With child support payments and credit card bills I was spending half my check. And the bills were from not making enough in Florida to cover living expenses with 65% of my check going to support payments/compulsory insurance/taxes. But I was willing to go along paying the credit cards as I now had a good job. However, then I got six months in on the job and was informed I needed the medical insurance by law. I claimed the clause in the divorce required "reasonable" cost, which their insurance was not. Well, it turns out there is a legal definition to reasonable. If the medical insurance and child support payments are under 50% of gross income you must purchase it. Now I had 70% of my income going out before I got a check, not counting the credit card debt. I would have been able to do it, barely, but would have had no cushion at all, such as for rising prices or equipment failure or emergencies. The law did not allow one to factor in the medical insurance deductible in the cost of the medical insurance. In my case it is $900 a year, on top of the $350 a month cost. I said, screw it, and declared bankruptcy. And a good thing too, as six months later I had to take a big pay cut to keep my job (while still paying insurance). Now the only thing buying groceries is tip money. I feel like a waitress in a hash house.

My point here is that even when you might be able to make things work and can pay your bills, sometimes the smartest thing you can do is to declare bankruptcy and give yourself some breathing room. Future events will then be less trying in the event you earn less but have no debt. Is it morally correct to renege on your debt? No. Is it the correct strategy sometimes so you can survive the coming economic trauma? Yes. And you can bet things will only get worse economically. In a perfect world we would all act correct all the time. That would include paying back ones debt, no matter the circumstances. But in a perfect world there would be no financial incentive to divorce. So, take the world as it is, not as we wish it were. The government is screwing us with taxes, and with its shortsighted policies that will bring pain to us in the future. The corporations buy and sell politicians like they were penny candy, and use government to force through legislation that benefits them at the expense of us. Why do you think we sold grain to the Soviets during the Cold War? Not for humanitarian reasons (although like most habitual liars I'm sure the politicians actually came to believe this), but to profit the mega-corporations selling grain. And why is it that farm aid from the government go predominately to large farms, owned by corporations? Where does a lot of clear cutting occur? National forests. Why did the politicians allow a nuclear power plant to be built literally dozens of yards from an earthquake fault line in central California? I could go on for pages. Big business and big

government are in bed together, and just like two fat things fornicating it is messy and ugly and smaller things nearby tend to get crushed. The free market is a great and glorious thing. The free market tarnished by government is less beautiful. And the free market controlled by government who in turn is controlled by huge corporations is an ugly and perverted thing (huge corporations are by their nature outside the economic control of consumers and derive their income from taxes or other companies, behind the scenes as it were- think defense contractors for one). In the greater scheme of things you are doing nothing outside of business as usual if you choose to file bankruptcy.

If you are okay with the moral issues involved in stiffing your creditors, then you can get down to specifics. As I said, file now. Do not delay, for you may be denied another day, and then you will feel so grey (I couldn't resist). Seriously, do this now. I have a feeling this time it might be your last change to file so painlessly. If money is tight, take what you would normally give the credit card companies and use it for court fees. Do not charge anything on the card at least a month before filing, two would be better. That is why I'm telling you to start now. This is not an overnight process. Give your cards one last use. Hey, you are already screwing over your creditors, one last $1,000 is not going to make a difference. A trip to the gun store (I believe you are allowed to keep one gun in bankruptcy- but the judge might frown on a 50 cal. sniper rifle), and then perhaps a cash advance and a night on the town. Nothing drastic, no doubling your debt, just normal spending from a normal consumer. I would do this shortly before the end of the month, then pay your bills partially. The next month do the same as you are selling all your worldly goods. Then file before the third monthly payments are due. This, and the selling of goods for cash establishes a hardship trail. Your best bet is to not use the cards in the end. If there has been no use on the cards you can file at the first of the month, right after you didn't send in payments to get the needed cash to file.

The court wants to see no tangible goods and bills higher than income. They also want a good reason for granting a bankruptcy. This is an arbitrary process, even if almost all cases are granted. You need to keep in mind that they can, worse case, deny permission to declare. So get rid of what you own and maximize what you spend. Play the lawyer game, where you are not lying even if it is for a short time. In my case, I had very little to my name. I was living in a travel trailer valued under $1500 with a bicycle for transportation. I was pathetic in the eyes of the court. But I also claimed $190 a month in cigarettes, and $300 a month in groceries. Yes, if I bought the most expensive kind instead of making the old lady hand roll her own. Or if I actually ate like I should with a nutritionally balanced diet. I didn't spend that much normally, but there was an average amount you can claim for these things. So maximize them. Even if you spend $150 a month on food, if the average is $300 for two people, claim that. If you were shopping at Safeway instead of Wal-Mart it would cost that much. And if the expensive store is much closer, you would reasonably use that, especially if you now have no dependable transportation (in other words, act normal not like the frugal type you are). You are allowed to keep a car, but it can't be worth much according to blue book. You know my feeling on that- just get rid of the darn thing. But most will want to keep the infernal thing. If you are making payments you can allow them to repo it (call them up and offer

it- no need to wait). Before that happens buy an old clunker to have. Then declare with the new car repoed and driving the old near worthless one.

After you have sold everything worthwhile, repoed any payment items (cars, furniture, etc) and given away to relatives that which you want to later get back "as gifts" such as firearms, then get yourself a paralegal. Not an attorney. They promise the moon but are only good for rich folks with assets to protect. If you are poor and living paycheck to paycheck, you just need a paralegal. The difference is $800 verses $150. The paralegal cannot give legal advice though, only fill out the paperwork. Call around, the $150 should be standard. You may end up spending another $10 for a floppy disc with the names of your creditors put in a certain format that the court uses to print out addresses to notify those you are stiffing. After the paperwork you need a fee for the court. $209. I was thinking there was another fee, but can't find anything else in my paperwork. I had thought I spent a little over $400 total. Anyway, if you do this call first for real, up to date advice. My recommendations and remembrances are not legal advice. I don't want to get you in any trouble. Just use the general guidelines of owning very little, and have believable bills more than your income. And be prepared for the worse. The odds are that no one would look in your house to inventory, but be prepared for an extensive grilling on your finances. Don't assume you can put everything in your girlfriends name and get away with it. In other words, get rid of it all instead of lying to the court. In a worse case scenario you could get caught, and we are talking about the Feds. The whole process usually just involves going before a judge and affirming the accuracy of your paperwork and an automatic granting of bankruptcy, but if you ASSume, you know what happens. Play it straight.

I hope all this helped, and feel free to email me with any specific questions you might have if you go this route. I should mention that not all creditors need to be claimed if you go on paying them. Personally I would not do this. That one credit card "for emergencies" can also get you in trouble again. It is such a feeling of freedom to owe nothing. Just don't ever get into debt again. You will need to learn to save money for those emergencies. Painful, true. But not as painful as owing 80% of your gross income.
END

SOCIAL SECURITY SCREW JOB
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In the news lately there has been a lot of talk about reforming the Social Security retirement system. The word reform should of course immediately send alarm bells ringing in your head. Reform is "1984 Newspeak" for Screw Job. Whenever the government wants to fiscally rape us they pretend to want to help us. As those of you who inexplicably continue to read my ranting through the years know, I am neither a Republican War Monger Cold Warrior nor a Democrat Tree Hugging Red Loving Stalinist Commie Bastard nor even a Libertarian Government-Minimalist-Since-It-Worked-So-Well-Before. No, I am a full blooded Anarchist and proud of it. Absolutely no government at all for me, thanks. So you know that my world-view is clouded by my thinking that any government is too much government. I have no problems being biased in this regard because my thinking harms no one. Government supporters, on the other hand, always want to hurt someone. Their goals are lofty, they truly wish to help others (or at least themselves), but at the end of the day someone gets hurt by the policies they admire. A republican supporting war in a foreign nation supports troops getting killed. Not defending our nation from invasion (the purpose of the military), but for advancing and protecting Empire. A democrat wants to pull back the troops, bring them home and use them all to kill fellow citizens if they refuse to give up their guns. Well, the last time I looked the Bill Of Rights was not a license from government but only a recognition from government of a human beings existing rights. Not that we need a piece of paper to tell us we own our own bodies and have the God given right to defend it. Even Libertarians fail to realize that when you open the door a crack the beast will soon shoulder its way in. Two hundred years ago we tried to limit government. Now look at us. So, when I speak to you on an issue, it is non-partisan. My only ax to grind is to see that everyone gains more of their freedom back. To keep more of the money you make. And what is my gain? Everybody is motivated by self gain. If everyone else starts to get their nose out of my business and my wallet, I win. They win. It is a win/win situation. Only government is a win/loose situation. Christ, I can hear the whining now. "But, Jim, what about the starving children living in poverty. After all, its for the children, our future." Okay, bastards, I have kids myself. I would like to see them live in a prosperous society, not toiling a lifetime to pay taxes on a debt that will never be paid and to pay for an old geezers vacation. And, really!! Kids don't starve in this country. Even if there were not Food Stamps, if the Welfare bitches would disconnect the TV cable and get rid of the cell phone they would have enough money to pay for groceries. Have you ever seen one Welfare bitch without a cell phone? Go to the Food Stamp office and sit for 15 minutes. You will see a sight to enrage Buddha himself.

I'm from the government and I'm here to help. Run. Granted, at one time there were a lot of helpful civil servants, genuinely motivated to help their fellow citizen. That was a long time ago. Now, it is the paycheck or the power. Neither motivation is helpful to you.

When Bush says he wants to save Social Security the only thoughts running through my mind are Tax Increase. Even if that doesn't happen, I only think ill of his motives. Does he want to help some buddies on Wall Street by channeling funds into a struggling financial sector to keep the housing bubble going? Does he realize that other nations are soon going to stop buying our Treasury Bonds and he needs the cash flow to keep our debt running up to finance our own Evil Empire? Whatever he secretly has in mind, it can't be good for us. In fact, whatever the true reason, you can bet that saving the national retirement system is the last thing on his mind. Remember, this is the guy that said raiding Iraq was for stopping weapons of mass destruction even though North Korea admits to having them and we do nothing. But they don't have oil. Believe nothing this man says. The only difference between him and Clinton was that one has less of a libido. And, even if he does want to save the retirement system it can only be to gain the senior vote. I realize he is a lame duck president, but his handlers surely have a reason for wanting to "reform". When the government goes from totally ignoring a problem for generations and then suddenly sees the light, we have to ask ourselves why. What's in it for them? It's like when they want to "help" us simplify our tax returns by eliminating mortgage interest payments as a deduction after that was the deciding factor in the purchase of an overpriced home, or when a national sales tax would takes the place of the income tax and you just know they would add to rather than eliminate so we would be paying double, or when a new chemical is mandated to be added to gasoline to cut air pollution but instead it adds ten cents to a gallon of gas and later it is found to cause cancer, or when a state deregulates electricity to save us money and then the rates double because deregulate meant no controls rather than competition, or when a temporary tax is placed on the rich on a device almost nobody has (the telephone) to pay for a war (Spanish-American) that now applies to everyone and is still in effect over 100 years later. The government is the dominant criminal gang in power and they are here to collect tribute, not to help. Learn to see through the propaganda.

FDR was a crafty little bastard. He got a country almost unique in the history of world, one that was largely run by a free market (largely, though the exceptions could fill a book) and had the lowest percentage of interference from the government, and used the excuse of the Depression (which had been caused by the government through credit expansion) to turn the entire population into welfare junkies. Perhaps his motives were pure, but I have serious doubts. At the very least he wanted to rule the emerging American empire. I am more inclined to believe he was just an evil SOB who wanted to rule the world. He was probably secretly jealous of Stalin and Hitler that they had the means to kill millions and he didn't. In fact, I'll wager that had he been around at the end he probably would have tested out the A-bomb on a Japanese internment camp just out of spite. Anyway, our little friend the Commie loving bastard FDR that everyone just adores because he was such a wonderful guy getting Grandpa killed in a war that we didn't need to be involved in (but even if we had wanted to we should have let the idiots get around to weakening themselves first and then gone in and taken over everything- with less cost of the Cold War and with less causalities). So, how do you get everybody to stop distrusting and hating the Federal government and get them to start worshiping the very ground they control with a velvet lined iron fist? You get them to work their entire life as wage

drones, structure the tax system to reward consumption only rather than savings, and then at the end provide for their retirement. What a wonderful and beautiful system. We are programmed to perform like hoop jumping dogs our entire lives. We bitch and moan like little girls all our lives about how unfair taxes are, but in the end we gladly go along because Uncle Sugar is going to pay for our retirement in Florida. What a fantastic system the government uses to control us. Testosterone pumped patriots declare that only when they are dead will they give up their guns, but in reality most will give up all but a few inefficient short range weapons in exchange for a paid for vacation at age sixty five. Is it any coincidence that the true fighting weapons that could defeat armies were outlawed to private citizens just when the government started to tax and control us to a degree never seen before on such a massive and prolonged scale?

Okay, so we know that Social Security is the bell that controls us like Pavlov's dogs. We can surmise that the system will stay around unless the government can find another hook to control us. That means that Bush is setting us up. The government has a standard tactic of creating a problem and then fixing it. Bush is letting us know that Social Security needs to be changed to ensure its longevity. Why? The "fix" means a change. Higher taxes? Lower premiums? Higher retirement age? Means testing to disqualify? I might guess higher taxes, if only a percentage point or two. From six percent to seven might not be seen as too bad, as long as the media plays all this up to such a massive degree that most people would rather see a one percent tax increase than a privatization (remember, schools have taught us that profit is bad so the majority equate private with greed and public with compassion). Get everyone lathered up over one fix so you can implement the real intended fix. Smart. Remember, we had a similar dog and pony show under Reagan in order to raise the tax then to "save" the system. Lower premiums will not be proposed. There is no need for that because it has already been implemented. The real rate of inflation is hidden, and the official rate is used to tabulate the cost of living allowance that sees an annual rise in the SS payments. This inflation index is supposed to eliminate the effects of inflation, but only pays it lip service. They claim a 3% inflation and raise payments that much at the end of the year. But several accounting tricks mask the true rate. Energy and food costs are not factored in. Ten years ago gas at the pump could be had as low as $1. Now try finding it under $2. Not factored into the inflation rate. Remember, its not just at the pump. Energy prices effect everything in society. All raw material must have energy added to it to produce anything. And has anyone priced meat lately? Chicken has doubled in the last ten years, at least. Not factored in. Yet we all need to eat every day. And, housing costs are based on house rates, not rental rates. But not everybody owns a house, especially not those very seniors that need SS the most financially. And my personal favorite, productivity increases. A computer, say, actually costs less because you are getting such a better more powerful machine than last year. So they count the cost as less. Same with a car, they claim it costs less because you are getting more safety features. A neat way to mask the increased costs caused by inflation. But, if costs are still going up after increased productivity should have lowered costs in a free market, that means the difference is increased inflation. If a entry level computer cost $2,000 twenty years ago and it now cost $500, then at three percent inflation that computer would have cost us only $275 now at zero inflation taking into account the

natural trend of increased power at lower cost for any technological advance. And these are only the accounting tricks widely known. At a minimum, double the amount of the official rate of inflation to get the true rate. Higher retirement ages are already in effect and will gradually be introduced for each new generation. Expect to see an eventual fudging of those numbers also (playing with the death statistics to get a higher age of death to get a higher age of retirement). Means testing might be a last resort, we wouldn't want to keep anyone out of the system. However, once the new drug program starts to cost way too much expect to see the SS being means tested in relation to the drug program, i.e., if you make too much money with a private pension and SS then the drug benefits are reduced. Something to that effect. In fact, the drug program might be a back door to introduce SS means testing. With drugs being so dear a lot of seniors might be more than happy to forego the one check for free life saving drugs.

So, what we have here after you strip all the bells and whistles away, after the propaganda is done away with, is that we are going to see further changes in Social Security. And as usual the change will hardly be in your favor, in reality if not as promised. You can delude yourself into thinking you are owed this money ("I paid into it my whole life") or you can delude yourself into thinking you shouldn't have to pay ("I'll never see it anyway") but the truth is that one way or another most of us are going to get screwed with the system eventually. This is just another tax used by our masters to control us. The question before us is not how we will benefit from our own screwing, but how bad that screwing will be. It is not, will we be screwed? It is, will it be KY jelly or a hand full of sand? END of article.

SURVIVALISTS ON WELFARE

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A long time ago in a galaxy far away, when this country still wore a thin shell of its former Republican self, there was a widely spread virtue called pride. Pride meant that even though you would die with little more than what you started with, you had provided for your children and the morning before you died you could have easily looked at yourself in the mirror to shave and been satisfied at what you saw. Not that life was so straight-forward and simplistic. Everyone has those moments were it was quite the temptation to chuck all your responsibilities and go live amongst the hoboes off the railroads. Pride is when you let that moment pass and carry on despite the hardships. There are still a lot of prideful cultures here in the U.S. The tribe you belong to demands it in many cases, whether they be Mexican-Americans raising a large family here and sending cash home to Mexico on minimum wage, Mormons striving for self-sufficiency within their own community, or some of the few remaining small farmers clinging to a vanishing lifestyle in the face of unfair competition from Big Ag that controls government policy. In many cases pride demanded that one avoid government welfare no matter the situation. And brother, there are a lot of situations that drive folks to the government with hat in hand.

The trials and tribulations of life are not a mystery to most of us, other than a few folks growing up with a silver spoon in their mouths or those taken in early in life and sheltered such as in the Ivory Tower of a college. Facing the cruel challenge of work lay-offs or prolonged unemployment is not an experience one would volunteer for, but to be honest it is only the first time that the shock of the unexpected event is problematic whereas thereafter one can grow increasingly nonchalant about repeats of that situation. You really must feel sorrow of those leading a sheltered life, as soon they will be in for the shock of their life as the country slowly fads into insignificance while facing increasingly hostile economic competition. Those already used to economic shock from everyday life shall be able to shelter the storm with minimal preparation, experiencing very little mental anguish as compared to the Yuppie trophy wife stranded in her Range Rover with the cruel sound of a non-service signal on her cell phone as the ghettos burn to the ground and service stations snub her plastic and instead demand silver or canned goods or at least a quickie in the rest room since the broad ain't half bad for someone her age even if the rack is fake and she doesn't have a single stray thought rattling around in her brain pan and you can bet not one of the minimum wage earning slobs there could give two damns about her personal problems since they all know she is a pampered spoiled little bitch that normally doesn't even acknowledge their very existence most days and she'll be lucky if one of them doesn't get a tire iron and brain her just out of spite because even if it is the Apocalypse they always did want a pimp'en ride like this and since they control the gas with attitude and a 12 gauge they can use the last of the refined gas on Earth to go joy riding and maybe go see their Homies and give them some what-for in their new wheels, yeh buddy.

Lay-offs and unemployment should be in most of our futures as big business joyfully sends every possible job overseas to avoid increasing Social Security taxes, Medicare taxes and inflationary wage hikes. And we as consumers happily go along for the ride by demanding lower prices at the store while at the same time demanding higher paychecks, and all the while getting under a parasitic home mortgage that insists that both adults in the house work at higher wage jobs that are going to be sent overseas at the first opportunity as soon as some smart boy writes a computer code to achieve that possibility and sells it to Super Conglomerate Mega-Business XYZ for enough money to retire himself and to say piss on ya you desperate pathetic wage grubbing soulless bastards. So, as depressing as our future looks, it seems that it is actually going to get worse, and soon. Small business is the backbone of this country, where most innovations take place. It is also the last refuge for those of us that want to survive economically because the corporation provides no security anymore. But the one thing that small businesses are not, and that is job providers. Yes, more jobs are created everyday by small businesses, but are they the kind of jobs that pay for the mortgage on a median priced home of half a million dollars in California? When they reach corporation size, sure, but not before. Small businesses provide an income for owners and low wage service jobs, not the wages the middle class was dependant on. So, government steps in to create civil service jobs or private corporate jobs directly dependant on government money to function. And as more and more of the economy is driven into three tiers, corporate subject to lay-off/ public payroll/ self-employed, you can see the increase in the welfare rolls. Small businesses close down, corporate lay-offs occur, more and more inflation and other taxes are needed to pay for the socialist job provider state, and the economically marginal are forced to ask for some sort of government help.

Now, look around you and ask yourself, who isn't on the public teat? Forgive me if my numbers are off a bit, but to ballpark the figures out of a population of 300 million you have about one third working, about 120 million. At least 20 million are working for the state at whatever level directly. And twice that number are partially dependant on government, either through contracts (defense companies) or through legislation creating their job (tax accountants) or monopoly grants (cable, power company). Then you have around 40 million on Social Security, many of those still working. So for every working slob that holds a private sector job NOT dependant on the government you have one person suckling at the public teat. A one to one ratio. Half of working age adults are dependant on welfare, under all its subtle disguises.

So a natural resentment arises. Those of us who work for a living under the harsh discipline of the free market are just a little perturbed by all those slackers living on easy street doing pretty much nothing to earn their daily bread. This is understandable. Who wants a hairy, unwashed, slovenly overweight welfare bastard parasitically attached to their wallet? None of us. And yet, let us be painfully unemotional about all this. Let us be strictly rational. The government is the cause of these ills. They sucked the essence out of our economy, and have replaced it with something less wholesome. The socialist welfare state. As such, it is not the people that take advantage of the situation that are to be blamed. It is the people that created that opportunity in the first place. The

government screwed us over by trying to kill the private sector, the one place that for its very survival must advance the condition of mankind. The free market by its very existence helps others. The government advances itself off the sweat of others. Yet, when a parasitic organism fails to limit its activity and allow the host to live then both will die. The socialist welfare state cannot by its very nature allow the host to survive. It is a parasite that will kill the host in time, as it can only grow if it wants to survive. A fat man must continue to consume Twinkies if he wishes to provide enough energy to propel his ever widening mass, but in the end those frosty filled delicious yellow cakes will kill him no matter the enjoyment he had in eating them. Do not blame those that feed off the parasite, blame the parasite itself.

The government wants a kind of class warfare between those feeding at the public trough and those not. If the looters give away TV sets to the poor kids in the ghetto, don't hate the kids for it. Blame the looters. Yet, we always want to blame the kids. Don't fall into the trap of those causing the problem. They want to deflect attention from themselves. If you look at it another way, do you hate your parents for being on Social Security? Of course not. So why hate someone else's parents? And the welfare bitches popping out kids and talking all day on a cell phone like she has something to say. Why hate her? It is easy, I do it too. But if it wasn't for the government in the first place she would need to look for honest work. Don't hate her for her greed. Greed is a natural emotion. In a free marketplace greed provides the motive to do more than is needed just to survive. Greed forces us to advance ourselves. Ego alone does not turn out these pages of writing I do. Greed tells me one day I might earn a living at it and I can stop being a wage drone. I'm greedy to keep more of my time. So when government gets involved our natural greed is sated by "free money". It is natural most will take it.

Why not chuck it all and go on welfare? Well, one pays a price for free money. One must give up control of a sort. If the government holds the purse strings they can dictate to you some of your life, just like a boss does at work. Work dictates how long your hair is, what you wear, how your facial hair is removed or retained, how your money is spent (lunches, phone at home for communication with work, etc.), how much free time is spent preparing for work or retaining your job (such as continuing education) and a host of other unpleasant activities that don't per se effect your job performance but are part of the price you spend to keep your job. My feelings are that mostly the level of control extracted by your boss reflect the amount you are overpaid. Subconsciously the man signing the paycheck wants his moneys worth. If you earn $6 an hour ringing up retail sales you can pretty much look scruffy and give the boss no more than eight hours a day. Yet, if you earn $15 an hour shuffling paperwork you are going to be expected to jump through hoops off the clock to justify your paycheck. Well, having the state as your paycheck signer is not much different. The man signing the check wants to see activity to justify the money. Welfare checks are paid for by your time. Meetings, and waiting in line to fill out all the paperwork needed to keep an army of civil servants at a job. Never mind that it would be cheaper to give money directly to everybody than it would be to pay the civil servants to decide which few deserved extra help, the point is that the army of civil servants must be employed and even added to. That is how the game is played. So

welfare recipients must wait around in long lines and fill out unnecessary paperwork all in order to make it look like our public workers are not only needed but are also overworked and are only there in order to serve us. I would spew my coffee at the thought but it would ruin my keyboard and I can't put a new computer on the tab to the taxpayer.

Also involved in most welfare transactions is a loss of control on your activities. Section eight housing will dictate where you live, food stamps where you shop. I'm sure some types dictate that social workers are allowed to inspect your home. If you decide or are forced to except welfare, keep all this in mind. But, should you be on welfare? That is the question. For the longest time I would have said no, under no circumstances. To not be part of the problem, that is what you should do. But, things change. In my case I was giving 70% of my income to taxes, child support and mandatory insurance. So I swallowed my pride and applied for food stamps. Not that I got them, but I did try. The court orders I live on $5k a year and still thinks I earn too much for food stamps. Well, the important thing for them was I was broken mentally and gave in to temptation and tried to suckle at the public teat. If they can just do that to everyone then their utopian dream of Communism will be achieved. Never mind that the system will crush itself before then, these people don't think rationally (the part about being utopian dreamers should have been a clue). So, they will try to crush you. Think you're immune? The government has a finger in every pie, you can be screwed with. Even if you are employed in one of the few fields left unregulated by big daddy government, that could always change with the stroke of a pen.

The government is controlling more and more and taxing more and more and meddling in more and more with each passing day. The goal of a socialist welfare state will only die with the government. If you become a Federal worker, if you accept a Social Security check, if you sign up for a VA loan on your home, if you get assistance for growing crops, or get a business loan from the government, or if you go on food stamps, or accept section eight housing, or put your kids in free after school programs, none of that is going to matter. The state has reached a point where it will grow no matter what. It has taken over more and more of the economy and now must grow to survive. If you reach out your hand for a little of that free money, it doesn't matter. The government goes into debt almost two billion dollars a day, every day, no holidays off and you getting a check for three hundred dollars a month food stamps is not going to add to that in any harmful way. Even if everyone had a moral dilemma with the whole process and suddenly stopped cashing those free checks, it would not matter. The government needs to grow and they would spend it themselves. Perhaps the price of a toilet seat would go from $300 to three grand, I don't know, but they would spend it somehow. You or anyone else getting a check just spreads the spending around a little more.

Look at it this way. The system is going to crash. I know it, you know it, and if he's as smart as I think he is, Ross Perot knows it. You must prepare now because no one has any idea how long this is going to take. If you get on some kind of government assistance then you free up some of your own money to lay in supplies, move to a better location, learn survival skills, etc. In my case, by getting food stamps I would be able to live out in

the boonies on my own land and have the ability to survive on only $100 to $150 a month (this after my children turn 18), since I have no rent to pay or groceries to buy (I wouldn't own a car either). I would be out of harms way in the city and learn how to provide my own food production so when the checks stopped coming I wouldn't miss much. And a lot of those food stamps could be going towards storage food. Then, I could rotate the food items and donate them to private charity. Hey, everybody wins. The ship is going to sink, so plan ahead and lay some supplies into your life raft. If Uncle Sam gives you the supplies, so what. Your body won't care where the food came from when it's hungry. Remember, forty years ago when the welfare state started building up steam was when the moral high ground should have been held. That ground long ago was washed away in a flood. The system is dying, do what you need to do to survive and still look at yourself in the mirror every morning. You are not robbing liqueur stores to buy supplies, or hijacking semi-truck trailers full of canned goods. You are only taking some newly minted counterfeit money and spending it to supply yourself for times of trouble. The money was not from someone's paycheck, it was created out of thin air to keep the whole system afloat. Enjoy it while it lasts.
END

MORE ON MAKESHIFT SHOWERS
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On two previous occasions I have written in length on how to stay sanitary without a water heater. In the first paragraph I am going to quickly recap that and then I shall endeavor to expand on those peals of wisdom that for some inexplicable reason just seem to gush from my person whenever I take electric pen to digital paper. You may all bow in my general direction at a later date. As I had said, my previous encounters with plumbers were unsatisfactory. Actually in general any encounter with any tradesman usually leaves me feeling somewhat violated, but perhaps that's just me sending out subconscious signals that I wish others to financially abuse me. Over the years the only luck I ever had paying to get anything fixed was from a self taught part time fixer-upper that only did it for spare change. I guess the lack of a business to support meant there was no need to screw everybody. Or, the city was too big for gossip to put the others out of business. Whatever the reasons, I was not going to hire another plumber to screw me. So, instead of worrying about installing a heater I just heat the needed water in the microwave and coffee maker and carry the water to the bathroom for a shower (the dishes get cleaned right next to the hot water in a small tub placed in the sink). In the summer I take shallow baths, as I only get a little over one gallon of hot water from running a pot full through the coffee maker and heating a bowl full of water in the nuker. It takes ten minutes to heat the water at a cost of $2 a month electric use for two baths a day and one load of dishes plus me shaving five days a week. The problems started when the freezing air under my travel trailer made the bath tub way too cold for a bath, so I ended up taking a sponge bath every day which works okay but left me feeling gross from washing off with my own filth even if it was just washed off soap. My solution was to use a new (old ones have chemicals) pump up weed sprayer that uses pressure to spray off the soap and to leave the skin feeling much cleaner. The problem with that was not the added cost which was only $10. It wasn't even so much the need to pump the bastard almost 100 times to deliver a whole gallon. Mostly it was the very fine spray which worked so well to clean me off was very cold as soon as the air hit it, even with a space heater running. The pressure was great but the spray too fine. It worked like a spray bottle in the summer cooling you off by the mist being hit with air. So I was back to the same problem of being cold with the added cost plus extra effort of pumping. The only plus was the extra cleanliness. Now for a better solution.

Well, so I thought. I went ahead and splurged and ordered the battery powered camping shower from Wal-Mart on-line. After shipping and tax the $25 item cost $33. Add in $2 for the 'D' batteries I needed and I was in business for $35 even. I read the instructions carefully, kept the packaging neat and orderly, and tried to take a shower. The motor strained and wheezed and bless it's little pea-picken heart it tried, oh how it tried to pump

water up hill a whole six feet. Realizing that I needed to help this little engine that could, I placed the water bucket with shower unit on the toilet which was next to the bath, thus relieving the poor little guy of a foot of height it needed to pump. Still no good. The pressure coming out of the end was less than if I just spit out a mouth full of water. Just as I was about to run screaming wet and soapy from the bath for a pair of scissors to cut the hose, thinking the length was somehow responsible for lack of any discernable pressure, surely frightening everyone in the place including the cats who are so cock-sure of themselves that they would look at you like you were stupid if you were screaming with your hair on fire since very little perturbed them, I realized I couldn't return modified items. So, I just squatted in the tub next to my new and unimproved camp shower and glumly hosed off with a slightly better pressure now that the little bastard didn't have to work at pumping water up hill but could instead just meekly push the water along at the same level. Oh, how I wanted to fling the offending item to the nearest wall, watching it break into several pieces of shattered plastic. But I remembered the last time I did that and lost $80. In the early 90's I finally ended my failed experiment of growing a beard (it actually looked good but too high maintenance) and treated myself to an electric razor. And, at the time pre-children and thus having disposable income I figured I would get the best and bought a Braun. Surely German quality would assure me that this was the last razor I needed. Well, Hans was hung over that work day plus extra wages do not translate into better workers because the second or third time I used that Kraut piece of crap the metal guard covering the blades somehow for some very strange reason broke open as I was shaving and cut the crap out of my face. I was so enraged I flung the shaver against the wall and had a moment of satisfaction watching it disintegrate. I should have taken it back busted up with my blood on it and got a replacement plus my money back, but it was a good lesson on reacting instead of thinking. So I didn't want to repeat that mistake. The next day after mostly drying out the hose I pedaled the 15 mile round trip to return the shower to the local Wal-Mart. But it was worth it, as they even refunded the shipping cost since the item was defective. Bless their hearts, I was out time but at least not any money. Well, that still left me without a satisfactory shower solution.

I had said that I couldn't use a solar shower due to the weight of five gallons of water. There was really no place to hang it in the shower as the curtain rod was held up only by pressure. Well, at times desperation is the mother of invention. After several months of inactivity my brain woke up and I suddenly had a flash of inspiration. By only filling the solar shower with two gallons of water I could hang it up in the shower stall by a hook from the ceiling vent. The weight was manageable and only lasted a few minutes. So, I took my black plastic bag solar shower and filled it with hot water (it might be spring officially but we have been getting a lot of overcast cold days here lately, the actual heating by solar would have to wait). I hung it up and tried it. It almost worked except that the hose was too long and pointed at the ground, and I wanted a more realistic shower experience that was actually hands free, so I shortened the hose from 12 inches to about three. Also, the nozzle was at chest level to my 6' 2" height and I had to bend way over to wash my hair, but I had to in most conventional showers anyway so that was no big deal. At first I tried my usual gallon plus (3 quart microwave bowl and 2 quart coffee pot) but that water ran off much too quickly. So, I heated the microwave water 15

minutes instead of the usual ten and the extra heat allowed me to add a whole coffee pot of cold water to the mix to get extra water at just the right temperature for a total of two gallons of water. That was just enough to wash my hair and face, rinse off, do my whole body and then wash off everything one more time to get all the soap off before the water ran out. Just make sure to wet down quickly, turn off the flow to soap up, and rinse quickly. This is a rapid operation to get clean, not a leisurely soak. With two gallons to work with you do not have the luxury of time. But you get oh so clean at very little cost with a good flow of water that you can fool yourself into thinking is a real shower (long hairs will most likely need one unit full just for hair washing as I did this, barely, with a crew cut). Plus, in the summer when the sun is out your cost go to zero.

The biggest problem with the solar shower is were to hang it in a conventional shower stall. Sure, in the summer you can use the tree outdoors or put a hook on the garage roof overhang or whatever, but what do you do in the cold months? Better just to find a way to hang it indoors and stay there year round. Most travel trailers have a vent over the shower for hanging the bag, but what of a house shower stall? Mostly not living in anything other than trailers for most of my adult life I am at a loss here. Does the stall have a hanging glass door with an opposite protrusion on the wall to place a dowel? Hang the bag on that. If the stall is a one piece fiberglass unit with a flimsy shower curtain rod the only option would seem to be the shower head itself, not a recommended hanging spot if it still functions. If you wanted to discontinue the use of your hot water heater that could work. Or if you just wanted to use the solar bag in the summer to cut back on your electric bill, you could set up a PVC frame that rested on your tub and held up the bag, ready to be disassembled after summer was over.

So, to finally shield you from any further discussion of this topic, you hope, the definitive word on alternate frugal showers is as follows. The free method of sponge bathing- workable but labor intensive and inefficient rinse off. The most expensive at $35 a battery powered camp shower- one of Coleman's few failures and totally worthless, do not even try. The method needing no modification to your bathroom, the pump up pressure garden sprayer- works good cleaning you off but demands much pumping and constant holding and contortion to use the long wand with short hose. And the winner for most shower like substitute, the solar shower bag at a few bucks cheaper than the sprayer at $7-$8 with the need to somehow hang it up indoors weighing from 8 to 40 pounds with water. May your showers be free, and may your hot water heaters be turned into meat smokers.
END ARTICLE

REVIEW OF "COLLAPSE"

A long time ago I had gotten a hold of Jared Diamond's "Guns, Germs and Steel" which was a fascinating book, if you love history, on how those three factors influence the formation of societies. I had only read a few chapters but it was enough to leave a great impression and when I ran across another of his books I knew it would be good. Through Amazon.com I was given a recommendation for "Collapse" and when I read the author I knew it was a possibility. As I rarely read newspapers (other than scanning headlines)

because of the slanted sparse coverage and usually ignore TV news as they have tunnel vision on only a few events and cover that one way too much, my awareness is down a few notches on current events. If a new book comes out I'm usually the last to know and that's why I love Amazon.com. They do the work for me, and charge less for it. One of the few businesses that figured out what a computer could be used for other than lunch break Doom games.

"Collapse" is not a book on why civilizations collapse. We all have a fundamental grasp on that. Institutions in power over reach and the whole ball of wax comes undone. Diamond studies how societies either collapse or save themselves. And this is not a book on environmental depletion, although that factors in strongly. He studies several different societies and why they disappeared (Easter Island, Mayan, Southwest Indian) and how several saved themselves, such as Japan, the Incas. He shows the contrast of neighbors and how their actions doomed them (Greenland Norse, Haitians) or saved them (Intuit, Dominicans). Now, I'm no tree hugging environmental wacko, but only because I favor market solutions to government solutions whereas the wackos like big government. But I still realize that we need to preserve top soil, keep our water pure, rejuvenate the soil, not clear cut the forests, etc. It is all just common sense, and that is the same view point that Diamond has. He is not an environmental wack job, he is a scientist that is rational and follows a chain of reasoning to place the environment in its proper perspective. To him it is not a religion but a source of needed resources and economic stimulus. He looks from all perspectives, from rich and poor, from business and from government. He covers environmental damage, climate change, population growth, unstable trading partners, and enemy pressures. This is a balanced book, worthy of serious study. But written in a style that is easy to read and enjoyable. I can find nothing wrong, and everything right, about this one.

Contents include modern Montana, covering its economic history with mining, forests, its soil and water, introduced harmful species, the differing attitudes toward regulation, and how agriculture was economically marginalized. Easter Island, its geography and history, the foods available, the religion and those big statues, the vanishing forests, why the island was so fragile. Pitcairn and Henderson Islands and how trading partners and their problems had a big impact on others survival. The Southwest desert Anasazi and how their strategies to live in the harsh land ended. The Mayans and their lost cities, their environment and agriculture, the wars caused by drought. The Vikings and how they prospered in some areas and failed in others. A history of the Greenland Norse and how they fared at first and then failed, due to both wasteful religious practices and climate change. The ones that succeeded, New Guinea highlands, certain Pacific islands, Japan and others. Modern societies, the genocide in Rwanda, the contrasts in one island between Haiti and the Dominican Republic. China and her huge problems (and possible solutions). Australia, its history of mining resources rather than husbandry, salinity in the soil, introduced rabbits and foxes decimate local populations, the signs of hope. And almost 100 pages devoted to practical lessons and solutions to our own modern problems.

This book is highly recommended for those of you that enjoy reading, especially about

history and about interconnected problems and their case studies. You will need to read over 500 pages before you get to the notes, so this is a project not light reading. Don't expect much from a survivalist viewpoint, its not written as a doom and gloom. The author is one of those that believes that a rational fellow warning others will avert disaster. I applaud his optimism even if I fail to agree with it. So, I can't fault the lack of certain subjects I would have liked to see covered, such as the US and its dependency on other countries oil supply. As I said, it is not that kind of book. It is mostly history with a few modern societies thrown in for comparison. The focus is on people, not global in perspective. That is as it should be, for readers to connect to the problems they face. But Diamond does a bang-up job on giving us a history of the problem. Asking him to throw into the mix all our current disasters-in-waiting would be asking too much from one book. There are plenty of specific problem books out there, this is an overview book.
END

AUXILARY PLANNING
or, Back-Up Plans to Insure Against The Unknown
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A back-up plan to insure against life's little unpleasantries for most people comprise the sum total of a credit card (with actual credit on it, not maxed out), two quarters stuck in the wallet for a pay phone call or a cell phone, and almost nothing else. The really paranoid stick a folded up twenty dollar bill into a hidden compartment of the wallet and might even have a spare set of shoe laces for the pair of shoes used the most. And that is about it for the sheeple. They are herded into their pens every night from work through the freeways and into the suburbs, occasionally bleating at the sight of a shiny trinket, their whole lives under the watchful eye of the sheepdog our Federal Overlords, content to be protected and led, never frightened of wolves. When the occasional sheeple is mauled by a stray wolf, the cell phone failing to protect, frantic calls to get help unanswered, the rest are assured that, really, it was the fault of that one sheeple for straying from the protection of the flock and the rest of the herd is going to be all right. The Federal Overlord just throws a few chunks of meat to the circling wolves every night and they usually are content to leave everyone alone. If not, it must have been the steeple's fault for provoking them in some manner. Silly, mindless sheep. Domesticated to the point of utter helplessness. And all it took was the promise of trinkets, produced by the sheep themselves. Oh, yes, cling to that cell phone, as you cling to the utopian dream that your house will rise in value all your life and you and your spouse can always be employed to pay that mortgage and that Social Security will always be there for you and that the dollar will always have some value and that you will never end up on the table of your herder as dinner but instead only be sheared once a year.

But, for a second at least, back to the subject on hand- auxiliary planning. We all need to become extremely paranoid here for just a few minutes, not very long, won't take but a small portion of your extremely busy day. What if they are out to get you? Even if that is not true, what if Murphy's Law is? You really should start thinking about what could happen, even under absurd circumstances. The smallest events can really screw up your life. For want of a nail, the kingdom was lost. I understand that many were burned by the lack of social collapse in the 1960's, the failure of Industrial Society to crash in the 1970's, the economy recovering in the 1980's, the lack of a Clinton dictatorship in the 1990's or the continuation of computers in the 2000's. Not to even mention the lack of nuclear war in four decades time. Hey, I get it, its been a tough time to be a survivalist these last fifty years. That means we should stop being prepared? The collapse of the Roman Empire took a long time and the West collapsed for a thousand years. Be patient, our time to survive and rule the post-Apocalyptic landscape will come soon enough. Just stay paranoid. Keep the faith. We will soon enough be living in a tub of crap. In the mean time, try to fail-safe your life as much as possible by over planning for every event

possible. And I don't mean with spending lots of cash. Life's problems are easily solved with money. If you don't have enough then sweat and time are your only currency to solve problems.

What are your contingency plans for- income, food, shelter, transportation? Retirement, inflation, banditry, climate change? Theft, fire, drought, natural disaster? Do you have any plans to combat these problems other than your saved money, your credit, or other peoples money (taxes to welfare- and yes, Social Security is welfare)? Most of us don't. Even with survival stashes, do you have a back-up plan for your stash? Do you have a plan for when your stash runs out? When your wheat is eaten and your SKS no longer has any more non-reloadable Eastern European produced ammunition, what do you plan on doing? It used to be said that if you planned for a nuclear war, than any other event (being of less severity) was easily handled. Yes, if you plan for a world wide nuclear war with corresponding absence of industrial output or government help, you most likely will have planned for anything that might happen to our cozy little office job working Sony Play Station playing overweight butts. In general, as a society, we have it so easy it almost makes my teeth itch. We are just asking for the barbarian hoards to crash through the gates and poke a sword into our soft and gooey lazy bellies. Weak, worthless, and clueless. Enjoy it now, plan for it to end. If it doesn't, you've slept easier at night. If it does, you become king of your desolate stretch of fallout drifting, mutant dwelling, no crop growing neighborhood.

Now, before I get into the particulars here on back up plans, let me clue you in here. I am not perfect. There, I said it. I know it shocks you, dear reader. How could I say such a thing? I was your god!! Well, I hang my head in shame. I tried. I really did. And I came oh so very close. I am almost perfect. Not totally, you understand, just mostly. I have failed to do as I preach. I am not to the promised land. I have failed to reach the total Nirvana of paranoia, the triple back up plan for every known contingency. But I am trying, and that has got to count for something. I just know it does. As long as I keep trying, always busy looking about in a wary manner, always knowing I will be screwed if events conspire against me, always aware of the enemies lurking near, ready to pounce. The paranoid will win, if they survive their ulcers!!

I think the number one concern for most of us is employment. It pays the bills, like groceries and shelter. If we stay employed, if we continue to be productive and obedient little wage drones, then all will be well. So, what are you doing to increase your chances of continual employment? What are you doing to ensure a paycheck if your job is sent over to India? Let me spout off with my two cents here. My strategy is to bottom feed. I stay one step above minimum wage, and offer experience, reliability and low wage expectation. For a paltry $6.50 to $8 an hour wage I offer twenty years experience and I'm never calling in sick and will work almost any shift. It may sound pathetic now, but that is the future for the marginally educated. I can find employment almost anywhere, just with low expectations. By living below my income I have wonderful flexibility. But, I realize this is not the desire of most normal folks. They aspire to climb the ladder, to work hard and marry well and have a nice home in the burbs with 2.5 children and a dog which

craps on the lawn you will be mowing every weekend. So, don't mind me when I try to throw a wet blanket on your dreams by pointing out that your job is not secure because the pension fund was used to boost the bottom line to pay a really fat bonus to the CEO that is now living in a non-extraditing country living large with a mistress half his age and drinking exotic fruit drinks every night as you go home after training an Indian guy who you have a nagging feeling is going to be your replacement to your wife who is probably cheating on you with a better looking guy since he works out in the gym after working only about six hours a day at a cushy government job while you work behind a desk nine hours a day and eat take-out and then sit behind the wheel in traffic another two hours a day and so, okay, you're a little out of shape so its hard to kick the ass of your snotty nose teenage son who's getting lots of tattoos and has spiked hair and is most likely doing crack because your wife is never home to take care of the problems since she is out porking someone else but you can't leave the dirty little whore since she will take the house and the SUV but you'll still be making payments on both and if you think it was hard making ends meet now just wait until you have to pay a mortgage and apartment rent and pay to keep your new girlfriend in Jack Daniel's since its slim pickings out there for divorced guys with alimony and child support and so you pick up the first skeezer you can in a bar and keep pouring whisky down her throat hoping the little ingrate won't leave you also.

So what's your back up plan? Mine is to write a crappy little pretentious survivalist newsletter and knowing ain't nobody going to pay to read the damn thing give it away for free and hope some day a real company will throw a little pity advertising money my way and I can survive on a pittance. And in the mean time try to live on as little as possible so when the day comes college graduates are trying to compete for my minimum wage job I can suck up to the boss and at least keep a few pity hours a week to keep me feed. If you are aspiring to middle class or above you are going to have to do a lot better than that. You will need to train yourself to be better than your co-workers. Better than your wage. Better than your company. If you are a bargain at twice the price you will always have a job. And I don't mean sucking up and putting in extra hours. I mean being over qualified and happy in your rut. Being a threat to your bosses job is a good way to get fired. Being a bargain even if paid more to keep you from the competition, that's the only way to stay hired. If your employer goes under you need to be wanted by other companies. A hilarious example is Dan Aykroid in the movie "Spies Like Us". And, if you do go with being self employed as a consultant, keep in mind this. You need to offer your services cheaper than the companies salaried drones receive in cash and perks, or you need to be very good at what you do. A tough row to hoe. I would say the best way of having something to fall back on in case of job loss is to live below your income. But, again, I know most folks can't do that. The old lady and kids are the loves of your life, but they also represent a high cost/high risk payment. They chain you to your income. What is your back up plan for that income? Try sitting down with the wife and talking about the very real possibility of future economic problems. Perhaps she will volunteer to reduce costs. Moving to a cheaper house, trading down on the SUV, getting a part time job to pay off the house faster, whatever. It might be worth a shot. Your other alternative is to constantly study to improve your education and increase your worth at work. It is easier to live cheaper.

Another income possibility is self employment other than consulting. Being self employed is scarier than being a wage drone, but the risk factor shrinks all the time as jobs keep disappearing from the economy and companies are being run less well all the time. But, if you can look at it another way, that is just opportunity knocking. Why stay employed if you could loose your job, and why not take advantage of poorly run corporations by offering something much better to customers. It is like the jobs I take. They are paid poorly, so few want them. Those that pretend to want them have such poor work habits I can easily look much better without trying too hard- I just show up every day and do a little bit more than is asked. If the only thing you do as a new business is offer a little bit more consistency, you are doing better than most corporations. That does not mean that you won't fail, it just means your chances improve. It is all about the proper mind set. Be under paid and give extra. That puts you ahead of the curve now, but you also need to have a back-up plan when there is no employment. That is when you need to have no bills and the homestead paid for. Have you declared bankruptcy yet? Avoid the rush, it's coming.

Assuming you have a back up plan for an income (even if you start small and build up to it), you need to fit into your schedule back up plans for everything else in your life. Best to throw out the television set. Or at least cut out cable. Treat yourself to few movies a week and a few favorite shows. The average person watches five or six hours of TV a night. Make your viewing that much a week, and free up a lot of time. I know it is hard. After a hard day at the salt mine, you really only want to plop down in front of the tube and let your mind turn itself off. And you know that's what it does, because after several hours of watching like a zombie you barely can remember what you saw other than a few highlights. Use the mind numbing set watching as a special treat, not as a nightly habit. I'm still working at cutting back my own viewing, but even a small step in that direction frees up a lot of time. And the reward of accomplishment does reduce stress as well if not better than turning off your mind. Give it a try, no need to go cold turkey. That just leaves you with too much free time and nothing to do. It took a lifetime of TV watching to get you into the endless rut of work/TV/sleep, it might take awhile to break the habit. Baby steps.

Most of us have a back-up plan for food, our stockpile. Even if it is only several hundred pounds of wheat we are better off than most folks. But, you need to do more. Much more. Anyone can survive without an income, few without food. Wheat and corn are so cheap it is silly not to overstock it. Do it now while those silly Asians are still actually taking our ever more worthless Greenbacks and giving us real goods in return. Do it now before a global war is started over the last drops of oil. Before our economy implodes with a giant sucking sound as the last non-governmental jobs are taken overseas and the real rate of inflation reaches double digits even as the official rate never goes over five percent so all welfare is paid off cheaply and gold goes over $1,000 (although it would be silly to sell it for dollars even if you did buy it for $300 an once pre-Y2K) and the Dow is magically always 10k as the last of the fools pays thirty times earnings in vane hopes that perhaps the Chinese will buy the company and can get their money back if you just ignore

inflation, fees and taxes eating away the paper profits but at least they didn't buy too much real estate since the bubble popped and you can pick up a nice house now for ten cents on the dollar almost anywhere and for a nickel on the dollar in California. Buy wheat, more than you think you'll need as most likely you will be feeding a neighbor or two rather than fighting them. Then make a stash away from your home for more wheat. Pity if a fire took out all your food supplies. And tear out your lawn and start growing a garden. You can always grow sprouts for greens, but a garden will grow potatoes and corn and beans, staples to supplement your wheat. With other stashes of grains and a garden your food prospects look a lot better than if you just had a dozen buckets of wheat in the basement along with some cases of tuna. What about fire, what about bandits, what about government confiscation? Your sole source of food would be gone. Have a back up stash. And, you do have more than one grain grinder, right? And non-hybrid seeds?

The municipal water shuts down, you use up all the water in the toilet tank and water bed and your gallon jugs are starting to consumed. And you are in the dry season. You really should have had a rain catchments system installed on your home roof. It is cheaper than a well and more of a guaranteed supply, as neighbors (individuals and municipalities) tend to draw down your supply from a well. For every 100 square feet of roof you get 60 gallons of water per inch of rain. You might need a huge roof in the desert just for a enough water for the bare essentials, but a well will be competing for the same water as the nearest retirement city where the old farts are busy watering their grass, washing their RV's and going to go play golf on the thirstiest lawn this side of the Mississippi. In the arid West, a well in not always the best, I say not in jest, oh what a mess. And of course you have your camping gear all loaded if you need to relocate close to a reliable natural water source.

Shelter back up plans are as easy as a tent, or even a tarp and some rope. But where are you going to pitch that tent? If you say the nearby National or State park, what about all the other fools that will also be going there? Don't you think it might be a little crowded? Better yet, think about an old pick up truck with a cab over camper. You can get the combo as cheap as $1,000. Now, you have an alternate shelter, an alternate food storage site, and even a limited amount of escape potential. If you loose your job you will not be homeless. Just keep in the back of your mind the possibility (if not the probability) that oil prices will at least match inflation if not add on a little more because of supply difficulties. $3 a gallon looks certain (I discount some states like California which add the third component of government regulation to jack up price- I'm going with the average) in the near future and I would not be surprised to see it go way above that. It is said that corn from Iowa costs two thirds of its price in petroleum, directly and indirectly. A good indicator of the cost of oil on our food supply. But, if you own a gas guzzler you need to factor in the cost of transporting that vehicle. If I choose to move to my land in Arkansas my fuel cost would be more, at today’s prices, than the cost of the U-Haul truck rental ($900 verses $700). Not a cheap prospect, less so in the future. Rather than camping on my own land it would be far cheaper to head down to Arizona way and camp near Lake Mead for warmth and water. Plan all this before hand. Where will you go when you loose your home. And don't stash cash and try to buy a used RV after the crap hits the

fan. That will be the new shanty town shelter and they will be hard to come by as now they are toys for recreation, in the future they will be cheap houses (I'm talking real old ones, not the new fancy ones- cheap verses a rip off)

Transportation is one of the easiest things to factor in a back up plan for. Get a bicycle, or two. Get a few spare tubes, tires, axle grease and a chain. Get a strong lock to keep your investment. In the future your bike will look mighty fine to those bastards who failed to plan ahead for OPEC Embargo II. If longer distances are in store for you because you refused to move out of the burbs closer to a job and away from the big city death trap, then get a moped. They are sure to make a comeback. But I would strongly suggest being in a situation where you only need a bike, then get rid of the car now. It is a money black hole. The government long ago figured out most people need a car, and the taxes on vehicles as well as gasoline reflects this sad truth. Take a huge chunk out of governments revenue and refuse to own a car. At the least get an old used one and rarely drive it. That greatly diminishes taxes into your jailers pocket. As we speak, Wal-Mart carries $50 mountain bikes and $60 beach cruiser bikes. I have used the mountain bike type now for a year, and yes you do get what you pay for. I have no gears (stuck in one) and tire rot, I've replaced the inner tubes and brake pads, and the pedals only lasted two months before replacement. But, for under $100 I've had transportation for a year. It is a throw away item. Next I'll try the beach cruiser type (no gears, pedal brake) and let you know how that turns out. My guess is that in a year my back wheel gears will be shot and it'll be cheaper to replace the whole bike than the back tire. We'll see. My point here is that sometimes it is cheaper to buy disposable. Of course in the long run you might consider buying higher quality, but beware- you might just be buying the independent bike shop higher operating costs.

Do you have a back up plan for retirement? Even if the clouds part and Baby Jesus himself smiles down on us, I seriously doubt that Social Security will be around for most of us. Unless it is paid for with seriously devalued amounts (my best guess). If the government calculates by their rates of inflation then everyone only gets half the cost of living increase needed to keep pace with inflation. In my case, in 27 years if I actually do see social security I will only see half my promised benefits if inflation stays at the present lows. The government says inflation is only 3%. I say they are damn liars and the real rate is at least 6% (they discount food and energy, plus fudge the real cost of housing, so I just double the claimed rate for the real one which should be about right). The difference between the two figures is 3%. In the next quarter of a century 3% a year will halve the real purchasing power of promised benefits. It is not the dollar amount, it is what those amounts will buy. So what are you going to do without a retirement check? My suggestion is to have a low tax piece of property paid for with a huge garden and an alternate power source. If your monthly bills are close to zero, it doesn't matter if SS falls through. And you had better start taking care of yourself now with a healthy diet and exercise, because Medicare will die before Social Insecurity (health care inflation is only surpassed by housing price inflation). Divest yourself away from the system now, before you get disappointed and dead. An old person in an apartment with SS checks so low they don't buy their medicine and eat cat food is not the way you want to go. Better to die

with dignity clutching a shotgun as marauding Hells Angels try to steal your crops out in the country than curled up in the fetal position in a cold Chicago apartment in winter with your last sterno can vainly trying to heat your tomb.

How are you going to deal with inflation? It ain't going to be from raises at work. Actually you had better count on the threat of lay offs to get you to take a wage cut . Even if that doesn't happen and you get a token raise it will never match the rate of inflation. How to cope with ever rising prices? My answer is not to earn more, but to spend less. Always find ways to cut corners. Always look for ways to slash your costs. You can't win in the inflation war, but you can strategically retreat on the best terms available. If we experience another deflation and there is no money and no jobs you need a safe place to stay without bills and a source of food. If we experience ever increasing inflation you can't meet your bills on your income. In the 1970's it made sense to buy a house and pay it off with cheap money. In the future I see housing prices at twice the inflation rate, if the housing bubble pops I see massive unemployment. Hell, we most likely will see massive unemployment anyway. Serious economic trauma is not the time to be in debt. Sell off your overpriced gum and glue house to another sucker before the bubble pops and relocate to a safer cheaper area and buy shelter outright. Then get busy planting that garden.

Expect crime to soar as the unemployment rate increases. Have a handgun, and a real rifle (not that crap assault rifle, a 30 caliber). Move to a state that will allow you to carry a concealed weapon and won't prosecute you if you protect yourself. And plan on your pistol to jam, so carry a good knife. And expect your rifle to malfunction, so don't buy just one expensive one but two cheaper ones. Stash a rifle and some ammo where it can't be found.

And what about natural disasters? I moved from Florida partly in anticipation of global warming. With Florida coastlines go underwater? I have no idea. Do I want to buy a lot and then see it become the new beach in thirty years? Best to plan on the unexpected or the improbable. Will my lot in Arizona be part of Mexico soon? I can move over to Arkansas (drought in one, tornados in the other- what can you ask for at $300 each?). Will weather patterns change and dry up our wheat basket region? You did already buy your grain stash, right?

I realize everyone has unique situations, and all plans will be different. But you do need back up plans for every life threatening situation. How else to secure food than the grocery store? Where is long term water coming from besides my pipes? If my rifle breaks how else do I defend myself? If my country land turns into the next growth area and taxes get too high, where do I go on a limited income? What if a 20% rain decrease increases chances of forest fire nearby? What if I loose my job and the only replacement is at half my old income? If they repo the car how do I get to work? Just remember, paranoia has a place in your plans.
END

STAYING OUT OF HARMS WAY WITH A .30 CALIBER
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Before the commie bastard Clinton revealed that he was indeed a pawn of Lucifer and decided that high capacity magazines were much too dangerous to Big Daddy Government, the gun media was always presenting articles on .45 versus 9mm. To my way of thinking this was akin to arguing how many angels could (assuming they wanted to) dance on the head of a pin. The merits of the .45 are obvious, it is a man stopper. The problem with a 9mm is that it is a wimpy Euro-trash piece of crap suitable only for shooting prisoners in the back of the head while the gas chambers were getting annual maintenance. I mean, what were they thinking with the Lugar? My only answer would be that those members of the Nazi party that were a little on the swishy side, if you know what I mean, couldn't handle their delicate girly-man wrists being shocked by firing a real pistol round and so they insisted on the 9mm to spare them any trauma. But that is only my guess, I could be wrong here. Perhaps they had the same argument that the modern day gun media came up with. Namely, the 9mm was such a small round that the magazine could hold a butt load of them without requiring a fat grip and so those with oh so very sensitive wrists could fire the pistol pretty much all week long without reloading which was a good thing because most likely they couldn't hit a friggin thing so they just had to keep firing away and hope to Hell to hit something. I can see the need for the small pistol and round for our fairer sex. Frankly I would be a little put off by any broad with hands big enough to handle a .45 without any effort. I can only picture a bull dyke, motorcycle club colors flying, spiked hair with multiple day-glow, greasy jeans stretched to the limit by a huge ass straining to be free, and looking for some guy to wail on so she can impress her new girlfriend with her bulging muscles. Yuck!! I'm not saying only macho men can use a real gun, or should, only that pussy guns should only be used if you can't handle anything else and that high capacity anemic rounds are no substitute for a hand full of man stoppers with some recoil. But such is the military mindset.

The military preaches mass firing of high velocity, low weight rounds. When facts prove this doctrine is unsound, such as in Somalia when multiple hits were required to put down a target in far too many cases, they are ignored. When special forces use 45's, the bulk of fighting forces are still issued 9mm (one presumes since most accidental firings will prove non-fatal). The military clings to the .223 like a bachelor computer nerd clings to his blow up doll, against all reason when there is something better out there. I can't see this changing anytime soon. When the law enforcement rejects in the BATF storm grandpas house in suburbia they want to lay down a curtain of lead to cover their retreat if anyone fights back, and they do NOT wish to do so having to worry about recoil or aiming. The CAR-15 is great for that. Now, get them into the woods and fire a few shots at them, they go diving for dirt and gum up that gun action and you are next targeting fish in a barrel, since the M16 family is one of the worst firearm designs outside Italy. One speck

of dirt is all that's needed to clam them up faster then a virgin on prom night with a bible and no beer. But one governments total disregard for the lives of its soldiers is another freedom fighters window of opportunity. By arming themselves with thirty caliber rifles, insurgents can remain out of harms way while picking off the enemy at an amusing and leisurely pace. The Afghanistan freedom fighters did not so much defeat the Soviets with bolt action rifles as defeat assault rifle soldiers with .30 caliber battle rifles. If one was to stretch the definition of battle rifle from semi-auto only, of course. My point being that an inferior rag-tag of an army can defeat a well organized well armed enemy if they can step safely back and fire from a distance, out of harms way of that mass of high velocity low weight rounds. An insurgent arming himself with an assault rifle is asking to fight the enemy on their terms, not his. 30 caliber equals distance and safety and in the long term victory. Any militia member going to the fight with an AR15, an SKS or a Rugar is soon going to be dead.

Now, there are a lot of gun writers out there that I admire that have a blind spot to the need for frugality. The standard line is that your life is worth the extra money to be armed with the best. That is not a bad argument as far as it goes, 'cause I know my own life is worth a heck of a lot more than the price of an HK91, plus mags and ammo and great scope with replacement parts. They miss the point that a battle rifle arsenal is only one small piece of the puzzle. We need groceries in the cupboard, transportation to work, job skills, a place to live out of the ghetto, a whole slew of items that help us survive daily life. Then we need a bunch of other stuff to prepare for survival of Armageddon. Then you need to factor in the wife and kids. When you write about guns for a living then buying the best makes economic sense, if nothing else it's a tax write-off. Even if you could give two shakes about the business end, your world revolves around guns and naturally they take precedence over other items. Out in the real world were survivalists can't buy all the toys one would like, the economics of firepower are one of the most important factors, not the least. Fact is, battle rifles are mostly damn expensive. The cheapest is $500, and they go up from there to $1500. After magazines are factored in you can add another $200 to $400. And if you add optics you double the price. This is a rich boys fantasy. Lets get back to redneck reality. We could afford the Cadillac of rifles, but most of us won't spend that kind of cash. As such, a Wal-Mart $300 bolt action already with scope is top of the line for most of us, perhaps even only a surplus Enfield or Mauser.

Lets start at the top of the price list and work our way down. Prices are imperfect, some taken from a January 2005 Shotgun News, some from the 2002 Boston’s Gun Bible (a great reference book, wonderful bargain at Amazon for $20- I'll review at another time) and some is just from memory but should be somewhat close. A genuine H&K 91 is going to easily be over a grand, most likely $1200 to $1500. I'm not saying that it isn't worth it, as this is the premier battle rifle and best crafted weapon to see you through the crash of the Industrial sector come the Apocalypse as they are nearly indestructible. But as I have said before, you place all your firearm eggs into one basket by owning an overpriced rifle. If that is damaged, where are you then? My criteria is that if you can't afford two rifles, one as a back-up, then you shouldn't buy one. Will H&K prices come down to old price of $700-$900 retail? I couldn't tell you. I have found no articles on

what we can expect now that Komrade Klintons semi-auto ban was not renewed. Are imports still banned? Are those old rules concerning mixing and matching prohibited items such as flash suppressors and bayonet lugs still in effect or are they done away with? Do new rifles still need to be a certain percentage made in the US? If one of you gun nuts out there have some answers please send me a short summery for publication so we all know. The M1A (M14) is about in the same price range, perhaps a few hundred less. And, at this high price pre-ban foreign made FN-FAL's might make this list although it would be beyond me why you would pay so much just because of that.

Dropping from high end $1200 to the middle of the road price wise is the $700 FN-FAL clones. Clones are where only the experts should tread, as you need to know what you avoid and how to fix poorly made parts. If you don't want to deal with that and wish a turn-key operation where you oil 'er down, load 'er up and go shoot, avoid the clones. Another option in this category might be the Dragunov, the Soviet sniper rifle. Just do your research. You are getting the reliability, but is the accuracy acceptable (for a battle rifle if not for sniper caliber) and how rare/expensive are the optics and mounts? Are the metallic sights okay? $600 dealer cost. Once we get down to the $500 mark, we can breath a little easier. Now the outlay is not so dangerous. This is the most you are going to pay at Wal-Mart for a bolt action/scope combo most likely in 30-06 (really the best for long distance knock down power). You can also get a Garand if you join the Civilian Marksmanship Program for about $500. You could do a lot worse than that, just make sure to stock up on spare parts and clips as this is an old system. The longer you wait the less that's available and at higher prices. But, again, know that its right for you before buying. It has its idiosyncrasies. Also for $500 retail is the H&K clone the CETME. I have been told by a gun store clerk that they are roughly finished and Boston’s says that the metallic sights are misaligned (also only get the steel receiver, avoid aluminum). It seems the sight problem is the only problem with the CETME, as otherwise it is rugged and sturdy- but it seems it is a huge problem, such as a 24" MOA. My personal solution would be to buy a claw mount for $100 to mount a scope and use it just with optics rather than metallic sights, but that does reduce any close work. If that is not a factor, the CETME shines over the genuine H&K in two important areas- it has less severe recoil due to a buffer in the stock and parts kits are dirt cheap, negating the worry of damaging your rifle (well, three areas, the much cheaper price).

Down at the $300 level we have some more bolt action hunting rifles from Wal-Mart, some with a scope already attached. Also there is the possibility of building your own clone of the FN-FAL or the G3 (HK91). The parts kits are under $200, and if you can find a receiver for $100, you are in business. If you visit the web site of AmericanGunSmith.com you should find lots of handy DVD's, to include "build your own rifle from parts kits" for $45, $40 for VHS (also for the same price they sell armoire’s courses for lots of rifles, to include the Enfield). A bonus of going this route is that later it is going to be a lot easier to fix problems on your own, as you did more than the normal field-strip-only most of us do. The next step down the price ladder would be the under $150 range, for war surplus Mausers or Enfields in good condition, or even the newer Indian Enfield in .308 with 12 round magazine. If you don't want to hassle with a gun

dealer that works at cost plus 10%, you can go down to a Big 5 sporting goods store and buy a No.4 Enfield for $169. Now, your retail price for a Eastern European SKS is about the same price, new. You will be tempted to buy that instead. Beware the call.

Under $100 your cost is Soviet bolt actions from the Great War. They seen okay, but if I wouldn't buy a car from the Commies, why would I get a rifle from them to stake my life on? However, that being said, if $80 retail is all you can afford, go with it. Beware the problem of mounting a scope on it. The ammo is cheap and plentiful, and the price is right. Plus, if they ever invade us you can shoot them with their own rifle from afar as they meekly fire at nearby brushes with anemic AK 74 rounds in 5.45x39. This is the mass military firepower myth that prevails. The raghead's in Afghanistan defeated the Soviet infantry with bolt action Enfields, and you want to buy an SKS? Even a bolt action in 30 cal is better than semi-auto in a cut down round. If you need three rounds of .223 to down a man, then the weight savings over .308 is just a cruel myth. Let the Commie bastards that choose to fight against fellow Americans learn the hard way about fighting with an M16. Shoot them from afar with a real rifle.
END ARTICLE, scroll down for more.
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For those of you getting up there in years, and counting on Social Security, I have another little surprise for you. I have harped on the fact that you can't count on benefits, that Medicare is in three times worse shape than SS, that Bush's new prescription plan will bankrupt the system quicker, that half again as many retirees are going to be added to the system in a few short years, that inflation will be used to pay less in real terms. And does anyone listen to me? Hell, no. Do they listen to people sounding the alarm that actually went to college and learned something, unlike myself? Perhaps. But here is another little tidbit for you. The Wall Street Journal reminds us that in 1960 the Supreme Court ruled in Flemming v. Nestor that the American people have no ownership rights to the money they put into Social Security, that it is a social program of congress with absolutely no contractual obligations. I don't think it can get any clearer than that. You will be screwed, and Uncle Sam it is legal (ruled that way by judges bought and paid for by the Federal government). I myself had no idea, so I thought this might be worth mentioning.
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Are you unemployed or otherwise have way too much time on your hands? Get in on the ground floor now if you wish to bet on commodities. Collect pennies now that contain copper and you can cash in on China's industrialization (or get screwed when they follow us into Depression). Pennies 1981 and earlier have 3.11 grams of 95% copper, or 2.95 grams of pure copper per penny. It takes 153.5 old pennies to equal a pound of copper so if copper gets over $1.54 you are making money. You would most likely make more collecting aluminum cans, but this way you can put the family to work sorting coins in air conditioned comfort.
****
Bush signed into law the new screw-you-poor-white-trash bankruptcy bill. You now have six months (minus two days) to declare under the old laws. Of course for now the new law won't be too bad. It only effects you if you make under the median wage in your state, and then you only have to pay $5k over five years. It could be worse, and probably

will get that way after all the middle class are locked into servitude and the big corporations that are immune themselves go after easier pickings (the poor have a hard time affording lawyers).

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END

TO SCOPE OR NOT TO SCOPE

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Most gun makers go to considerable lengths to shield the metallic sights on rifles. As it is hard enough to hit anything at all rather than the broad side of a barn with the sights, imagine the difficulty if the sights are damaged at all. Now place a thin aluminum tube full of glass on top of the rifle attached by two thin pieces of steel and see how long it is before you have damaged those optical sights. Thirty minutes after the balloon goes up, every deer within two days walk will have been shot and half the optical sights on hunting rifles will have been dropped and damaged. Murphy's Law dictates that more than likely you will damage your scope right before you really need it, such as when a game animal crosses your path or an enemy could be easily dispatched. This would bolster the argument to only use metal sights, and in a long term post-Apocalypse environment this almost makes sense. Except to hit someone you must first see them, and if you can see them they can see you. And then it once again comes down to volume of firepower, and that will surely get you into trouble as you spray and pray your last thirty round magazine you possess in a post-Industrial resourceless wasteland.

I have been quick to criticize war surplus rifles that had inadequate metallic sights. My thinking being that if you were so dirt poor that you could only afford a crappy WWII bolt action rifle than surely you were too poor to install an after market rear sight on it. Which is why only the American Springfield or the English Enfield (no.4 only) will do if you want a peep sight factory installed. It is hard to beat the peep sight as far as metallic sights go, and it would take a very strange and freak accident to damage them. If you are looking at crawling around in fallout laced dirt after Armageddon fighting other rag wearing scarecrows for the last can of beets, this is the only rifle sights you are going to want. They will in all probability not fail you in time of need. And of course it must be said that my love of the peep sight is just a preference. If you love Mausers, or just prefer traditional metallic sights, it opens up a lot of other options as far as war surplus rifles go. Don't go out and buy an Enfield just because I said it has better sights. I love them, but they aren't as accurate as Mausers (I prefer to trade accuracy for tolerance to dirt) and they are very hard on brass (the trade off for an action that reloads twice as fast). Plus care must be taken when loading a stripper clip, so as to smoothly load the rimmed cases. So why do I bother with the Enfield when the Mauser is more accurate and saves its brass? Well, everything is a trade-off. I look on a TEOTWAWKI situation and see no resupply, the Mauser gently handling its brass means I can reload many more times. That is a plus. But in the dirty and filthy conditions you are bound to find yourself, the Mauser action and its intolerance to dirt means you will have a rifle that fails on you at a critical time. The Enfield will handle dirt much easier. Plus it carries twice the rounds in a mag. At a critical time you may not be able to reload. But, again, just my personal preference. Oh, did I mention that the Enfield is much easier to scope?

Knowing that metallic sights are going to be needed and having the ones you are comfortable using is all well and good, but it doesn't solve the problem of distance. If you are smart enough to be using a good 30 caliber rifle than you avoid going head to head with the troopers using high capacity carbine round assault weapons. Yet, with metallic sights you are stretching to see at distances that are out of lethal range for those enemies weapons. To get out of harms way and fight back you are going to need optical sights to see and hit your enemy unless you are one of those freaks that can see well at distances unaided. If that is the case, just stay with metallics. For the rest of us however, we are going to need a little help seeing clearly past three hundred yards. So, yes, you do need a scope for that. But, you know, you just know that you are going to drop that rifle and hurt your pretty little scope that cost as much as the rifle it is attached to. You need help seeing, but why go through the trouble and cost of installing a scope when you know you are going to break the damned thing sooner or later?

Well, why do you drive your car knowing the wear and tear on parts will cause needed repairs down the road at the most inopportune time? Because you need to get places, mostly work. The cost of transportation is inconvenient and costly repairs. So if you install a scope you can see at a distance, which will help hit your target. The cost of long distance shooting (thus staying out of harms way) is the cost and inconvenience of replacing damaged scopes. So, if you are arming on a budget you have no choice but to buy bargain basement scopes. I would get a minimum of three, plus an additional gun mount and just in case a bare bones gunsmith tool kit (which you need anyway, if only for cannibalizing for parts). The scopes will go for $30-$50 as will the mount. Now, I feel a great wail and gnashing of teeth in the general audience as they begin to shout about fogging lenses and shifting reticules and other arcane technical matter. Yes, you do get what you pay for. The cheaper the scope the crappier it will be. But if that is all you can afford, it is still an improvement over iron sights. The crowd that harps on quality over quantity lives in their comfortable Yuppie lifestyle never imagining that the lifestyle will not carry over into a post-Apocalyptic setting. They may parrot the line that thing will get worse, that sacrifices will need to be made, but deep down they truly believe in their hearts that it won't get too God awful bad, that their expensive toys will see them through. That is why American Survival Guide did so well as a fashion magazine to the Yuppies, why all the survivalist fiction of the 1970's and 80's was a romp in the park picking up spare parts and ammo and never going hungry. They were essentially Western gunslingers transported into the future after a sanitized nuclear exchange. What utter drivel. If I stuck a pencil up my butt it could write a better story line, but nobody would read it because it would be too depressing. Survival preparations are a sideline, it does not get the lions share of the operating budget. What little is left over is not enough to buy the best toys.

So, if you can't afford the best, get several of the not so good. It is better to have several bolt action WWII rifles than one SKS (without a spare parts kit). Even if your one gun has a parts kit, what if some strange accident breaks a part on there that is not in that kit? You only have one gun, because "I needed to buy quality" or even "my life is worth the extra money" or perhaps if you are honest with yourself "my buddies at the gun range

were impressed with it and since I am middle aged with little hair and a small penis I felt I needed to compensate somehow". You had a big and bad, mighty and righteous evil black assault rifle. Now you only have a pile of junk because you broke a critical part. And so it is with scopes. You can get one for $500, but why would you? Do you really think you are a sniper? Of course not. At best most of us are going to advance to better than average shots. At best. Most will stay in the average hunter category. And as such less than perfect rifles and scopes will do just fine. So get them cheaper and get more than one, three would be better. Three scopes from Wal-Mart will still be far cheaper than one from a catalog selling dreams. You need to scope because you are an average shot and need to stay out of harms way. You need more than one because you will break yours in the field. And you most likely will buy cheaper scopes because of budgetary considerations. Welcome to reality verses fantasy. Reality bites. But fantasy can get you killed. Stay with reality.
END ARTICLE
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Would you like to put the Federal governments budget into proper perspective? And don't give me the tired argument about all governments being in debt and ours being average when used as a percentage of GNP. When our government goes broke we are the ones that will suffer, so it doesn't really matter the fiscal habits of the nations of Europe. At present, the government is in debt for $7.5 trillion dollars. No big deal, right? That's only about six or seven times the annual government budget, perhaps akin to the man making $50k a year and buying a $350k house. At the billions and trillions, the numbers are hard to put into perspective. So how about this. Put the numbers into tangible assets. If you took all the projected reserves of oil left in the Middle East you would get a value of half the Federal debt. Only half. But since no one really knows the oil left to be drilled, try this one. If you took all the gold ever mined, all the gold now above ground, the debt we must pay back as taxpayers is fifteen times larger than all that gold. Do you still think the Federal debt is no big deal?
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How is the economy doing? It will depend on who you ask, and when. If you ask a democrat when the republicans are in power, the survey says the economy is doing poorly. If you ask a republican when the democrats are in power, you get the same answer. It matters not about employment figures or the inflation rate, or whatnot. It is all about pork. If you as a voter see your party throwing tax money your way, all is right and just in your universe. Ask an older democrat about the early Reagan years and they will have a coronary. It didn't matter that inflation was brought under control, but that the Unions were not catered to then. It also goes a long way toward explaining Clinton. He made everyone believe the economy was doing great (at the expense of the military, being paid back now) and stayed in power while flaunting his corruption. Send them pork, and the economy is doing great. Schmucks.
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Due to green tree huggers this country will most likely never see another oil refinery built. Yet one seems to blow up every few months. How soon until we have no refinery capacity left? In the last twenty five years this country has lost half its refineries, from 308 down to 146. The easy solution has been to build on to existing plants (no new permit

needed), but as more plants age the percentage of accidents will increase. Also, as a home security issue, it makes little sense to have only a few mega-plants. Better to keep things decentralized. And, the capacity at each plant is being increased. The plants were running at 85% capacity, and that has risen to 95%. Not much leeway there. So, every plant fire has a real effect on the price at the pump. Enjoy that SUV, suckers.

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WONDER BREAD SURVIVALIST
White Flour Food Storage
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Now, I'm not stupid. I know most people will read my advice and immediately turn to denial. After one invests in a bad idea, no one is going to tell them they are an idiot. When I proclaim that the AR15 is one of the worst rifle designs ever as far as reliability in a survivalist situation, they will immediately scoff. Oh, how accurate it is! Oh, how light it is!! Oh, what a low recoil it has!! The fact that I did not dispute these qualities is ignored because, really, they over spent on a piece of crap and now they are not going to own up to that fact. This is just human nature. We want to think we are smart, and facts will not stand in our way. Look at us. We live our lives working at meaningless jobs and are chained to a life of servitude through debt. How smart are we? We stay in a crime ridden over-regulated socialist government area just because our wages are high. Yet, the cost of living is so high it cancels out the higher pay. So why were we living in this hell hole? You live in the Bay area of California because you make $100k a year. Setting aside the issues of really high crime and awful commutes, you are paying a half a million dollars for your home. Granted, even with house payments at 30k as well as taxes being the same you still see a lot of money for your effort. But you are one of the rats in a cage. If the balloon goes up you are going to be trapped behind enemy lines. You think crime is bad now? Just wait. Money can't buy nice neighbors, peace of mind, low population density, etc. But, people bought into that mess and they are loath to admit they made a mistake. Why, the real estate will always go up in California (remember the rice on the chess board, doubling every square- there isn't enough rice in the kingdom). My job will never be out-sourced. My spouse will never leave me, I'm so friggin special. Friends, as wonderful as you all are, there are actually people out there who will think nothing of ruining your life to better theirs. The cop who sends a non-violent drug user to jail. His gain is working for $40k a year, verses his old job at $30k in the private sector. An innocent is rotting in jail so Joe Blow can have an extra ten grand a year (granted, you need to increase that by including the judge, his jailers, the lawyer, etc. so really when that poor schmuck goes to prison he has generated hundreds of thousands of dollars in previously unneeded tax dollars). Do you really think an IRS agent cares that your entire life is ruined by his audit? You're his meal ticket. The wife you always treated fairly will latch onto any excuse to leave you and get half your income. Then she shacks up with another guy who gets free beer and sex on your dime. The system has deteriorated to the point where many unscrupulous people make their living off the sweat of others. And they are not a benevolent parasite. They will drain the host until both are dead.

Okay, so people invest in bad ideas and will not change their behavior to save their lives because it is not in human nature to do so other than in a few instances where the lucky individual actually wakes up and smells the dangers. Most of us, even survivalists, roll the dice and hope nothing bad happens. I am not some super survival man who eats and breaths this life style. I own no semi-autos or cases of freeze dried foods. Just a normal

guy taking a few extra precautions. I also take chances and roll the dice, hoping the whole ball of wax lasts until my kids turn eighteen before I can retreat to the country. So even I fail to follow sound advice. But sound advice is only wasted if it is ignored. If put on the back burner and followed later, that is going to have to be good enough for most of us. So my whole point of this article is in one area, food, most of us are ignoring the common sense precaution of stockpiling mass amounts of grains. The cost, the hassle, and the storage space consideration conspire against the needed several ton grain storage plan. Most of us at most store about three to five hundred pounds of wheat and call it good. Hell, I have a vacant travel trailer in storage I could stuff with buckets of wheat, as well as the funds, and I hold back because if I move I can only take about 500 pounds with me. Why waste more if it gets thrown away? Well, simple, really. If the world ends tomorrow I will need that food here, not in the future at another location. But I have "bought into" the idea of a simple lifestyle with owning little more than what I can take with me when leaving. I am a prisoner of that mind set, even though it would be smart to over stock now (in a purely survivalist point of view). I "bought into" the idea of not having a car own me, so moving is harder than for most. I "bought into" the idea of travel trailer living so I have little room for storage, limiting my storage food. My investments dictate my mind set, and even if I made a bad investment I pretend it is all for the best.

Also, many of us don't even stockpile any grain at all. The common reaction is that whole grain taste like cardboard. I will be the last to argue with that. It does. Frankly, it taste like crap and I've been eating it most of my life. Processed grain is light and fluffy and kisses the taste buds. Whole grain is heavy and chewy and bland. We eat it for the health benefits mostly. As far as survival food, whole grain wheat is perfect for long term storage. It lasts forever and still retains its nutrients. But, still, some people will refuse to go along with this. It is a pain to store, a pain to grind, and a pain to eat. If your outlook is to survive a situation of limited severity, if you don't buy into the idea of TEOTWAWKI, if your idea of survival preps is short term only, whole wheat is not on your radar. There is nothing wrong with this. The sad fact is that the Apocalypse is a far out bizarre idea that only a few of us go with (myself included). I acknowledge that preparing for it is extremely paranoid and most likely will never come to pass. Not that the facts will stand in my way. I want to be supreme overlord of my domain in a post industrial wasteland and probability will not diminish my fantasy. So I think whole grain for long term storage is a good thing. As is a bolt action because of future ammunition availability problems. But I could be wrong. You may only wish to have six months of storage food on hand. If you are preparing for short term supply disruptions, that is all you need. Which brings us to the title of this article. The wonder bread survivalist. He is a white flour consumer. No bland whole wheat for him. He's a white bread boy.

I do not recommend white flour. It is merely the starch removed from a wheat kernel, leaving behind the nutrients and fiber. However, that being said, it will not hurt you and it is still wheat flour. It will fill you up and provide calories, enough to keep you going when you need energy. Supplement a mostly white flour diet with vitamin pills and drink a lot of water to somewhat compensate for the lack of fiber and you should be okay. I know the standard argument for a survival diet is that stress will strip the body of energy

and you need healthy food to replenish vitamins and minerals. Well, you need healthy food all the time and a high stress situation is not the time to switch your dietary foods. If you have not switched prior to that over to whole wheat you sure don't want to do it then. I have lots of wheat berries stored but I also stockpile white flour. In an emergency I want quick food and possibly comfort food (ever tried a whole wheat donut?-yuck) in which white flour shines over whole wheat. And remember, we are talking about folks who just want to prepare short term. Admitting that white flour is less nutritious and stores less well does not change the fact that it is quick to prepare, easy to keep and is the type of flour we are used to and mostly prefer. If you only want a few months of food and wish to save money on your preparations then white flour means you don't need a grain grinder, saving you $50 at least.

Let's say that you wanted a meal out of flour. I would go with flat bread, my favorite. Using whole wheat we would open a bucket, get some kernels, grind them several times to get a fine flour, then prepare and cook. Using white flour we open a bag, prepare and cook. Which would you rather do while screaming welfare mobs were outside with pitchforks and torches, hollering for a free handout? You need to hurry up and get back to manning the walls, least a breach develop. And then there is storage. Now, granted white flour is only good for a few years on the shelf (I would guess no more than three) but if you only are stocking, say, one months worth, then at the end of each year you could replace the storage flour and use the old for daily use and spoilage should not be a problem. If quantities are higher you will most likely be throwing some away, but you are looking at a minimal loss. You could try giving some away to the homeless shelter, although I have no idea their policy towards trying to kill off bums with spoiled food. And let's not forget the obvious reasons we use white flour. It taste better (to most of us, other than a few tree hugging tofu swilling broccoli eating crochet hat wearing weirdos). Familiar, tasty food is very important in an emergency. Which is why being stocked up on your normal foods is important. Granted, most of us will not have that much disposable income, but for the really poor at least you can have a minimum to include white flour.

When talking to most normal people (you know, the ones that buy a house on a thirty year note which both spouses must work to afford) you can usually safely bring up the idea of storage food, if it is based on white flour. As soon as you say wheat berries their eyes glaze over as they envision hayseeds gathered around a feed store, wearing overalls and spitting tobacco. But white flour they can relate to, most likely remembering mom baking a cake or some such Leave It To Beaver moment. If talk centers around the economy and inevitably turns to possible problems, you can question their food storage. I usually just casually mention that $10 can feed them and their spouse for a month if they buy two bags of flour, just in case of supply disruptions. In a small group of people I can most often get follow up questions, giving me hope that perhaps a few people out there are at least thinking about filling their cupboards.

To store white flour I would first ask how much I wanted to have. If you only want 60 pounds, a small chest freezer will store five pound sacks two deep, double row of three each for twelve bags right under the basket area over the motor area. There you can

safely ignore them for a long time (each wrapped in a plastic grocery sack). In my trailer I have one under-the-seat-compartment for the "dining room" table filled with plastic wrapped bags, a total of seventy five pounds of white flour. It would have been over a hundred but they share the space with a wheel well, an inverter and several cans of coffee (to my way of thinking a survival necessity). I replace these every other year. In the opposite seat I store white rice, canned goods and various other foods. In two spaces each 2 by 3 feet I have enough food for two people for two months and I could double that if I used those spaces just for grains and flours. You can store a lot of food in a small area if you want to, and to my mind the white flour stash is perfect for those folks living in apartments or other areas not suitable for buckets of wheat berries. If I were lazy and only marginally concerned with food storage I could buy two 25 pound sacks of flour and just prop them up in the corner of my food pantry and call it good for a few years. If infestation is a concern, wrap them in garbage bags (they contain pesticides). You won't be eating the outer paper wrap so the flour should not get contaminated. If mice are a concern and you have a garage, get a galvanized trash can, set it up on two pieces of wood, and fill with plastic wrapped bags of flour. I'm not sure if condensation would be an issue if plastic wrapped but if you had some spare pieces of insulation you could lay them on the exposed metal on the inside of the can before placing the flour in. If you are concerned about the flour arriving with bugs and you are only buying the five pound sacks, throw them in the freezer for three days after bringing them home. If you buy at a cheap market turn over should preclude such a problem. If you buy from Wal-Mart shelf time would be minimal. If you buy from Joe Bobs market the bags could have been on the shelf since before Y2K and he just now marked them down to get rid of them.

And don't forget about all those neat white flour items you use besides plain flour. Top Ramen noodles are foul but a perfect instant food item. Just crumble up in the package, add the seasoning if you want a weeks worth of sodium in five minutes, and eat uncooked if needed. And only ten cents a package. Macaroni and cheese is a quarter a package. Also heavy on salt but a taste treat compared to plain white flour. Cup Of Noodles are bulky and (relatively) expensive but a good change of pace. Regular pasta is fifty cents a pound but requires some kind of added sauce. The point is that you can stockpile more than just white flour, and for just a little more money. You will want variety, trust me on this. One time between jobs I ate nothing but potatoes for a month and didn't touch another one for five years afterwards. Another time I ate nothing but rice for a week and was quite traumatized. If you are short on money and you buy basics only, vary your food item each meal to avoid lack of variety. The human mind is wired to need variety in food, a survival trait built into us to ensure we can eat anything. Believe me, I envy my cats who can eat their dry food all day, every day. If I could just eat one cheap food item every day it sure would simplify my life.

Give some thought to a white flour survival stash. If nothing else you could barter it or give it to the in-laws. But it could be a good way to get more folks interested in preparations, and that means one less person trying to steal your food.
END

REVOLVER VERSUS THE AUTO
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Back when I was a young lad, still dumb as dirt and wet behind the ears, I enlisted in the Army thinking there was nothing short of endless alcohol consumption and orgies that could possible be better in life than running around the woods with real guns of a high cyclic nature and playing John Wayne (although without the lung cancer and the broomstick up my butt). Despite pleas to the contrary from those older and wiser I pretty much neglected all serious study through High School, knowing that a career in the military was exactly what I wanted. So of course when I enlisted one month after graduating I was crushingly disappointed. Not right away, for despite the trauma basic training was not what discouraged me for at least that had a purpose and was a worthwhile achievement. No, it was my first duty station when the horrible reality hit me that this is what they meant by politics in the workplace. I was not part of a professional military that was tasked with guarding against the Evil Empire. No, I was but a mere pawn in the game were officers did whatever was necessary to advance up into the ranks (along with the willing help of plenty of career NCO's). As I was later to discover this was the product of the policy after WWII keeping extra officers from the war in the theory that in event of another war there would be plenty of combat experienced officers to lead. Fine in theory, in practice it left too few slots to advance and gave into practice back stabbing and office politics (usually with the ranks to suffer petty BS). Also, the mandatory end service if a certain rank was not achieved after X amount of years and the end of Specialists ranks meant any idiot in the enlisted ranks could get promoted instead of just the natural leaders. So needless to say I was primed to get the heck out of the service. The last thing I wanted to be was a corpse in an elaborate test to see if some jerk-off rear area desk jockey knew sound tactics or if it was all just a plan that looked good on paper and had got him promoted. But for all that there was a lot of good that the Army did, the one that will always warm my heart and that was their giving me a 45 caliber automatic pistol to wear and shoot. Not as often as I would have liked, but enough that me and that old slab of iron bonded in a deep meaningful, spiritual and wonderful manner. If they had let me I would have slept with it under my pillow, caressed it and even talked to it in a disturbing manner.

My love affair with the greatest personal side arm ever devised has lasted over twenty years. Now, granted, I have yet to even pick up a Glock which others swear is much better. But until I have the money to even think about experimenting with another pistol, I will stand by the classic, battle tested tried and true .45 auto. John Browning was a true American and a friggin genius and it will be awhile before I can even think about replacing his brilliant design with a Euro gun. How the heck can a friggin Socialist Commie Welfare State even come up with a better gun design than an American? A sorry state of affairs!! Of course, I guess one could say the same thing about our once proud car company

General Motors and them getting their sorry butts kicked by Toyota. I tell you, if another country ever starts putting out better movies than Hollywood we are in big trouble, cause that won't leave us with much we can do better than anyone else. But getting back on tract, my indecent admiration of the 45 auto. I have owned three of these classics, and never regretted the money spent on them. One ended up with wife number three, and two ended up sold to finance my move away from Florida. I got back all but $25 each from retail, but gave away all the ammo and magazines. And that was a loss of about $300. The ammo was one thing, I didn't need it without the guns. But seeing all those magazines (at up to $7 each) go was a different matter. It seemed such a waste of money. Nobody was interested in more than the clip that came with the pistol, and we were days away from the end of the month and rent being due. I gave them away with regret since time was short. However, I didn't sell my .357 revolver. That sucker didn't need clips and so took up less room in the move.

After I got established, a curious thing happened. Instead of my normal replacement of those weapons sold, I bought no new firearms. I actually began to question the wisdom of more consumption. Was it enough, what I already had? I realize that with the brave new American economy being 85% consumption post-tech wreak and post 9/11 I was treading on dangerous ground here. Would Bush send out a hit team if I wasn't doing my part to stimulate the economy? Would angry mobs form, driven to my trailer in 0% financed SUV's while wearing Gap clothing and waving Asian electronic gadgets? Of what heresy did I dabble in? Save money, when patriotic flag waving Americans went to the mall and helped increase the money supply by using credit from their home equity? Okay, I realize saving money is a bit silly when the Feds are warming up the printing presses, but you can only invest so much in material goods or iffy business ventures. One needs cash on hand for rainy days and even better, buying pennies on the dollar when the economy goes to crap. Every once in a blue moon, I'll gaze on my 357 revolver, sitting on my closet shelf minding its own business, ready to go in an instant. No clips to change monthly, no round needing to be jacked into the chamber. And the loss of those 45's doesn't seem so bad. Here I have a headache free item, no maintenance required. One less thing to worry about.

I recognize the advantages of autos over revolvers. Speed of reload, easier to conceal, less complicated mechanical nature, easier for the layman to fix in the field. But as always one must pay a price. There is no free lunch. My biggest problem with autos is not the price (although severe) but the clips. For a survivalist, three clips ain't enough. We are talking the end of the world, after all. I think at a minimum one should have 15-20 clips. And that can add 25% to the cost of the pistol. With a revolver, one can get away with just buying the pistol and ammo. If you can't hit anything with five or six rounds you might not have to worry about reloading anyway. Remember, a pistol is only what you always carry, ready to use, just so you can get to your rifle. You are not a cop or a cowboy that only has his pistol and must master it. You are a regular Shmoe that needs the firepower of a shotgun or rifle to compensate for the lack of skill you have with pistols. Be realistic with yourself. There is no shame in being mediocre. Actually, there is no getting around the fact that most of us suck at most things. Who can fly a plane, do

taxes without software, research the DNA of grubworms, present a case in court, or any of the hundreds of other things people do everyday in this modern world? We must by necessity specialize in one area if we wish to earn a living. So in the few free minutes you have every week, what makes you think you can become a pistolaro, a master sniper, read maps, survey land, build houses, master auto mechanics, learn strategy and tactics, or any of the other hundreds of tasks survivalists are supposed to know? At best you might know a little bit about most things. Forget mastering the pistol, thinking you are Wyatt Earp. Do what you can, be prepared to fight your way to the scatter gun. Even a single shot break open shotgun $89 from Wal-Mart should inspire fear into your opponent, even if they have an eighteen shot Glock 9mm with fancy laser sights. And if your opponent has an SKS, run like hell, fire wildly with your revolver to keep his head down, grab your crappy WWII bolt action and pick him off from far away where his rounds can't touch you. It is not about having the best of each weapon, but having the right weapon when you need it. I would feel quite comfortable if my arsenal only had a revolver, single shot shotgun and bolt action 30 caliber rifle. Total, under $500. Much better than modern black assault rifles and high capacity 9mm.

I guess I should have made it clear from the start that mainly I am speaking to the person not already owning a pistol. If you are comfortable with what you have, stick with it. A single shot hunting rifle in bizarre caliber that you have mastered and are comfortable with is always better than an H&K91 with all the bells and whistles if you can't use it as well. A crappy little 380 auto pistol you know and love is better than a huge revolver you never fired. But if you don't have a pistol, think about revolvers. They are loaded and safe, ready to shoot by a total novice. They can be left around for long periods of time, still ready to go. There are no magazine springs to weaken, no sore thumbs loading clips, no wondering if a round is in the chamber or not. A weapon for the less trained. Many come in heavy duty calibers. You can even scope one if you want. If you already have an auto pistol but never use it or are not happy with it, think about trading it in. Revolvers are the lazy survivalists pistol. And I take no shame in that label. I have books to read, articles to write, a job to work at, an old lady to spend time with, cats to take care of. Anything in my life I can make easier, I'll do. Why work harder if you can work smarter? Sure, revolvers are not the ideal selection for a self defense weapon. But they work well enough. Better than a knife, or no pistol at all, and cheap revolvers are much better than cheap autos. Another way to uncomplicate your life.

In fact, your entire survivalist preparations should be based on ease of use, little maintenance, and longevity. Once you treat and seal buckets of wheat they can be forgotten for long periods of time (check once in awhile for rodents nosing around). With freeze dried, MRE, or cans you must rotate and replace. Make wheat the bulk of your food storage. With lighting if you have kerosene or propane you have questionable fuel replacement. If you have conventional flashlights you must worry about bulb replacement and limited battery life. Far better to own LED lights. They are cheap, have 100-200 hour battery life, never need bulb replacement and with several lights and a solar recharger with needed batteries you will have electric light years after the Apocalypse. If you want a bicycle for fuel free transportation, going with a coaster brake bike means

there are no gears to break, no wires to snap. A far less complicated mechanism than mountain or racing bikes. And far safer in the rain. Try braking with wet pads. In weapons, try to forgo detachable magazines if possible. The major difference between an AK47 and an SKS is the detachable magazine. That makes prone firing difficult, and buying the mags gets expensive. If you go with an SKS, the stripper clips usually come with the ammo and so there is nothing more to buy with the carbine (and the price is half that of the AK). And with revolvers, you buy the pistol and the ammo. That is all. The only maintenance is cleaning and oiling on a regular basis, no clips to change to save the springs. Simple is good. It may not be the best (or tastiest, or brightest, or the highest firepower) but it is close enough. If it works, is simple, is cheap, why bother with more? Keep it simple, silly.
END ARTICLE

ESCAPING THE REAL ESTATE BUBBLE
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Everyone has heard all the horror stories about the current real estate bubble. Of course California is the bell weather state and always leads the way with the newest stupid idea and from there and worse statistics emerge. Less than half the population can afford a home, the median price is over half a million dollars, over 60% of all mortgages are Interest Only (no other way to qualify), etc. My personal favorite is from a new co-worker who had bought a new mobile home for about forty grand and just sold it for $170,000 *IN A TRAILER PARK- WITHOUT ITS OWN LAND*. Then he bought on the Nevada side which is really bad, but no where near those levels, a new house with just a five year note and has money in the bank to boot. Buying a mobile home alone without land for a fifth of a million dollars is so indicative of a bubble that if no one else sees this I can only stop breathing as my eyes bug out, my jaw drops as low as physically possible and I am struck speechless. Not as bad as during the Japanese bubble when there was multi-generational mortgages (son takes over the payments from dad), but still and all a bubble none the less. Now, my advice is to just ride this puppy out. There is no sense in trying to buy at the top of a bubble or even anywhere near the top. If Japanese real estate dropped 80% and California sees the same thing your life savings get wiped out real quick.

Even without a Japanese style implosion (our resulting depression would be without the 30% savings rate of the Japanese to soften the blow) we can still face plenty of problems with real estate being so high. Every time the interest rate goes up, and the Fed seems to be signaling quite clearly that they will inch up steadily, more and more folks who took interest only loans are seeing their monthly payments increase. The great thing about interest only loans is that they reduce the initial payments letting more folks qualify for a loan. The bad part is when rates rise. Granted, there is a cap on how high the homeowner will pay that interest, but a range of only four to eight percent will still double the amount of interest paid over time. And if it took low interest to get the owner qualified, how are they still supposed to continue payments after a rise of several percentage points? Or start paying the principle, plus increased rates, after the first five years of interest only? Do they think their job will give them a 30% raise? My only guess is that the lenders are thinking one of three things. One, they are giving out loans that are almost guaranteed to fail, but in the mean time their company does a brisk business and the CEO's make a killing in bonuses and the future is not their problem. Two, the companies know something we don't and are betting we will see inflation so high that cost of living increases will cover the difference. Three, they are just as blinded by the bubble as are consumers and think the insanely high prices will last forever. Even if only the two coasts see such high real estate and subsequent bubble popping, the rest of the economy could see a recession due to the sudden halt of spending associated with the bubble. Even assuming that the bubble is localized and the fall of prices leaves the rest of the economy untouched, a flock of citizens from the coasts searching for a better local economy could provide sudden job

competition and eventual local real estate increases not due to too much money being brought in as has been the case throughout the West from California, but just from the sheer number of new folks moving into the area.

For decades, the Federal government and California have been in cahoots to screw over the entire Western region. The Feds grabbed almost all the land for itself and created a shortage of private land thus lifting the prices automatically. Then they pumped so much money into the defense industry that California land prices went crazier than normal. Then Californians made a fortune selling their homes and moving to other Western states and drastically jacking up the costs to locals by their increased demand and (by local standards) limitless bank accounts. Now, in the greater scheme of things this was good for the other states, as it transferred money out of California and put it elsewhere. But for regular folks that didn't work for the government this created an undo hardship. Regular working stiffs were being forced out of the market in real estate. Joe Blow gets drafted, serves a tour in Germany during the Vietnam era, gets out and gets free college and earns a degree needed in the defense industry, then moves to California and buys a home with a VA loan. He works for a company that lives off the government tit, almost pays off his mortgage before being laid off. He sells his house for five times what he bought it for, pays off the mortgage, moves to another Western state and buys property with cash and still has enough in the bank to retire. Meanwhile, in that same area, a local born and raised working a real job such as a mechanic or waitress or lumber mill worker sees the once reasonable housing costs go far beyond their means as plenty of Joe Blows move into the area. Then they see their taxes go up as the Joe Blows lobby for more services like they had in the big city (soon they can see the same amount of crime as they drive more people into unemployment and into crime). This is one effect of the shrinking middle class. We see the well off (usually due to government cash) and the really struggling. As the government puts more and more cash into the economy in order to keep it from tanking, more and more only those connected with tax money are doing well.

So even if you plan on riding out the bubble and elect not to buy real estate, you are still faced with the problem of rising rents. As more and more low life bastard pukes take your tax dollars and live a life of Riley as you eat Top Ramen until your next paycheck, the harder they are going to squeeze you. It is not the low life trash on welfare who pose the biggest threat to you economically. It is those higher on the food chain that pull the levers of government (through campaign donations) that make your life the hardest. Those so worried about property values pass an ordinance prohibiting travel trailers older than twenty years to be lived in inside the city limits. Yet they go to convenience stores and buy from a guy making minimum wage. I guess the clerk can afford a newer trailer plus lot rent on $5 an hour. Or zoning out mobile homes for the whole county. I suppose our hapless clerk can get four other roommates to pay the apartment rent that is higher than his entire take home pay. If you want your boots licked by minimum wage lackeys you need to give them a cheap place to live on their off time. Give them enough money left over from rent so they can raise the next generation of poor to serve their masters.

If rent is so high in an area that you are paying most of your check just to squat, it may be

time to move out of the area. No one can predict if this bubble will suddenly pop causing maximum damage, just slow down and wait for inflation to catch up (when bread is $5 a loaf and minimum wage is $10 starter homes at a quarter mil won't seem so bad), or just slowly deflate and cause minimal disruption. So you could be making the wrong decision no matter what you do. If things collapse tomorrow you shouldn't have bought at any price. If the bubble lasts another five years the insane price you paid today could make you a fortune. So to minimize your personal danger, look at this from a personal rather than an investment viewpoint. If you buy, will you be happy there the rest of your life? To invest in real estate (factoring into your decision selling down the road) is mighty silly right now. Remember the Tech Wreck? Everybody and his brother just knew they could make money in stocks and everybody lost money. The same is now happening in real estate. When the masses are convinced about a sure thing, cover your wallet and run. We may not have shoeshine boys buying stocks like we did in the 1920's (remember how that one turned out) or hamburger flippers playing the day-trades as in the 1990's, but today we have taxi drivers talking about real estate. The masses are sure about this one, abort! abort! If you have already bought, try selling (assuming you wish to move to a lower priced area). My personal feeling is the bubble is slowing, so if I had real estate I was paying off I would sell now while I could find another sucker. Schools about up, a perfect time to think about moving if you have kids. Now move to an area that has reasonable real estate costs. Remember, even if only renting your costs are going to roughly move in line with buyers. Right now you are still better off renting than buying and it does give you flexibility to bail on a crappy area. But your costs will still be higher in some areas than others. Why throw away money if you don't have to?

Right now I pay twice the lot rent for a trailer as I should be. Nevada prices are directly effected by California (at least near the border- Las Vegas is a mega bubble in class by itself) Yet in my case it is worth it (barely) as I make slightly over double minimum wage. If I moved I would pay less but make even less. Actually if I loose my current job I will have to move, ready or not. I found one of the few well paying ones. Granted, the area starts at around $7 an hour, even at McDonalds which is better than Florida was when $7 was the ceiling rather than the floor. But prices for rent are insane. But what about you normal folks, those making $25k and up a year? Is it worth it to move? If you work in an area where houses start at $200k and make $50k a year, your mortgage is four times your earnings. If you took a pay cut of half and prices were half, you would still be in the same boat. You would actually be in worse shape with less to pay your other bills. $50k, $12k in taxes, $12k in mortgage, $26k left for other bills. At $25k, $6k taxes, $6k mortgage, $13k left over. Even if property taxes double every five years due to skyrocketing values it would take awhile to feel that pinch ($2k a year, then $4k, still $24k left over for the expensive property). So, no wonder plenty of folks take on the higher mortgage. Unless. Unless you are worried about your future. Will you stay employed at $50k a year? Are you sure? Thirty years is a long time to be betting on that. If, on the other hand, you assumed half the risk, it would be easier to meet the mortgage in a bad economy. If things go to hell, one person making such a high salary is a target for the bean counters. Remember the old saying, you can be replaced by a button? I keep it in mind every time I want to spend money, then I usually save it. If minimum wage brings

in about $9k a year, you shouldn't be spending more than that a year. At most $18k if you plan on putting the wife to work. If things get so bad that those jobs are hard to get, you will be living out of your car, so at least make sure that is paid off.

I would not recommend a mortgage for anyone, what with the economy being balanced on a cliff and all. But if you are going to, at least plan on future disruptions. Do not max out your resources to buy. Build in a little cushion. Plan on pay cuts or going from two in the household working to just one. A funny story in the Sacramento, CA paper last week was a civil servant crying about her mortgage payments. "I have to work overtime now to pay the increased monthly payments (she had an adjustable rate, interest only loan), I don't know what I'm going to do when the principle comes due." Or words to that effect. Oh, boo friggin hoo. The bitch has an almost guaranteed job with COLA and most likely subsidized medical costs and she was so stupid she thought interest rates would never go up and the taxpayers are already carrying her sorry ass and she wants more and I hope to hell I am never in Sacramento, CA and have to call 9-11 and get some stupid ass jerk off like her since I might die from her incompetence and then I would really be pissed about the whole situation. The point is that you really need to look at all future possible financial problems before you sign on the dotted line. It is easy to get into debt and much harder to get out other than just walking away, but that brings its own hassles. If your job could be sent overseas, or automated, move to a lower real estate cost area. Do not play the bubble game unless you have a serious guarantee on your job. We are in serious economic doo-doo here, folks. Between the Tech Wreck and 9-11 we should have been in a major recession, but the Fed turned the credit taps wide open to stimulate the economy. That is all the real estate bubble is about, and all bubbles end. Do not play the sucker and get involved in this mania. If you want the lifestyle, rent. That gives you leeway. If you own and have an impossible mortgage, sell while you can. Even if things don't get worse, they should. Take sensible precautions.
END

NATIONAL I.D. CARD
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It seems the usual reporting style is crazed fear shouted from the rooftops. Environmentalists took a page from the government sponsored press, and create problems that need to be solved immediately. The problem is of course nothing of the sort, but it helps to further an agenda. For instance, the South and North had been able to compromise for decades over slavery (mostly through the Southern political dominance). In time the institution would have died on its own as it should have, but with Lincoln political compromise would not have led to a cozy dictatorship. He was very much responsible for pushing for war (and even if it was mostly the fault of the South for overreacting, he sure took advantage of opportunity). And then he set a terrible precedence of ignoring the Constitution, shredding the Bill of Rights, and making a mockery of civil rights (at one point approving reprisal killings of civilians, a page adapted by the Nazis later on). He created a problem, suddenly slavery must end now, then solved it by pushing us into war and slaughtering a generation of young men. All for his glory and power, with a place in history. Environmentalists scream of all life on earth perishing if we continue to use DDT to control mosquitoes. We wipe out malaria, but since we might wipe out some birds we have to stop. We wipe out the economic livelihood of entire states, but we save some owls. The problem is not if the environmentalists are right or wrong, they always have general issue correct, but their scare tactics to push an agenda. DDT should have been used still, but just not as indiscriminately. We should be able to save both endangered animals and jobs. But compromise and rational thinking do not fit into the tactics of profiting off fear. The tree hugging wackos want us all crammed into cities with 90% of land as one big park, and I suppose a lot less of cities and people. The liberals of course want a perfect society with no fear (and they are willing to use scare tactics to get it- I'm sure they fail to see an irony). No society can have a hope of being that out of touch with reality, for if nothing else the Mongol hoard will crash the gates of any soft and lazy society. But liberals are only book smart, and have no common sense. They are even unaware of cause and effect. But, hey, it's their world and we are only living in it.

So don't kid yourself. You and I might wish for the society were self reliance and self responsibility were the cornerstones, but instead we are living in a socialist dream world were nothing is quite real. Sure, responsibility can be pulled out of the back cupboard, dusted off and presented as it suits our rulers, but it is only allowed to be used under their supervision. It is the responsibility of the father to provide financial assistance to his family, but he has no control over whether or not they live with him. That is up to the mother. Criminals have no responsibility over their behavior, but the taxpayers have a responsibility to house prisoners in modern, spacious and pampered living conditions. Landlords have no control over tenants bringing drugs into their apartments, but bear the responsibility if drugs are found. And we are trapped between a rock and a hard place, as only an expensive lawyer can protect you from jail but if you have wealth you are a target

of a multitude of wealth redistributors. It is indeed Alice through the looking glass out here in the Land Of The Free. And one strange sight is the effect of what fear mongering has done to us lately.

Today, no matter what the government wants, it gets. Immediately and usually without much of a fuss. Clinton set the stage, wiped out the last of whatever resistance we had by getting away with barbecuing a few kids in Waco and then oversaw the Federal Building "terrorist bombing" to silence the militia (I'm not giving the militia too much credit, they were easy targets, but they were symbolic of resistance). And make no mistake. Clinton may have been a liberal, but he was solidly in the pocket of his corporate masters just as much as Bush is now. Look at how well global free trade advanced under his watch. We went from raping the Third World then to now battling it. The corporations that control the government (as much as they can- there still must be some control given to the drones who keep the wheels turning) profit from the governments activities, be they trade encouragement or by warfare. So, obviously, keeping the populace under control gets some priority. This benefits our corporate handlers, who profit by pulling the strings, and those living off the fat of the government. It is a rich parasitic symbiosis. The idiots in government get power and glory. The idiots controlling the purse strings in the corporate structure get power and glory. The idiots getting the shaft (me and you) get very slowly screwed, slow enough were we don't even notice. One little inconvenience after another eventually lead to economic servitude. Under a nobility/serf relationship, the serf is under no illusion who the controller is, and gives 25% of his crops to the noble (worse than it sounds as yields were pitiful back in the day). But under capitalism, money is used as a pair of golden handcuffs with the added benefit that the victims don't even know who their controllers are (nor do they realize up to 75% of their buying power is given to the master). It is a much more beneficial system to the powers that be.

When the powers that be wanted gun control, they got it- without a fuss. When they wanted a retroactive tax, they got it. When they wanted control of the press (remember Paladin Press and "The Hit Man"?) they got it. They start wars when desired, increase inflation when needed. Well, now they want a national identification card. And they are going to get it. It easily passed through the government stoolies "debating society". In three years it goes into effect. The details are still unclear, most likely you will see the same state ID but with Federal controlled features. And when the Feds control the blueprints of a technology they can use it to their advantage. And forget about three years. Expect to see the states jumping through hoops for extra funds to bring this about sooner. The three years was camouflage to give the sheeple time to forget about the whole thing. Just like the semi-auto magazine ban. Give some time to circumvent restrictions, thereby defusing any anger. It helps compliance and frees agents from enforcing the actual laws on a widespread basis (they don't have the manpower to do anything else except bully a few as examples to others). Why do they suddenly need a national ID now? Why not ten years ago? Fighting terrorism is merely an excuse (just as drugs are an excuse). I can't say. I think only time will tell. Not that it will matter in the long run what they use it for. Just another way to screw and control us. It would be nice to know, in order to circumvent it now. But the only thing I can come up with is it is a

way to track cash spending. Think of the things the government could do if they could track cash.

One day Joe Blow goes into the local coin shop and wants to buy an once silver coin. No big deal, not exactly a profitable way to turn Greenbacks into real money as there is a 20% dealer mark up plus sales tax for a loss of 25%. If any black marketer laundered his money that way he would be an idiot- opening a business that uses a large amount of cash is more profitable. Even buying gold with its only 10% mark up does not work, if you buy too much there is already laws to prohibit "structuring" where retailers are supposed to keep track of your cash spending if it adds up to over $10k. Yet laundering is the excuse the government will use to require ID to buy any gold or silver. No laws prohibiting your owning gold or silver, just show your ID (oh, and don't worry, we would never confiscate your gold again, really, honest injun).

Whether or not the Feds cheated and started a national database on firearms or not, if they didn't they soon will. Since you already need an ID to buy a firearm and since the Federal forms will stay in the local gun shop undisturbed by the Feds there will be no difference between now and after the Feds wire into the new ID's. From a legal standpoint. From a practical standpoint the Feds can then get a much better idea of the guns you actually have, even if you bought them private party. Even if you only buy powder, you must show ID for that (its a bomb building component you know). Now they will know how much powder you buy and when the time is right they can pull up your sales records and "prove" you made a bomb. If you buy any brass that will "prove" you have a semi-auto, even if the same ammo type has a bolt action gun to fire it. But why ban semis again when they can keep track of who owns what? And tracking in real time is much better than old paper forms. Now they know were you live, not were you lived when you bought a gun. And its all legal, cause we know how well the government abides by its own rules.

You decide to stroll on down to Billy Bobs Track and Feed to purchase a few hundred pounds of wheat for storage. You are astounded when they ask for your ID to make the purchase (why are you still astounded at how the government acts?). Now they need ID because they must track all food from farm to kitchen because either of terrorists (the terrorist excuse is so much more flexible than drugs, isn't it?) contaminating the food supply or something like Mad Cow Disease or other excuse. They can come up with a million of these reasons, they have lots of overpaid under worked professionals on the payroll. Heck, they even have the willing media to jump on that bandwagon. And while they are tracking any food that can be hoarded (already laws are on the books to confiscate food during an emergency- have been for decades) they will go ahead and track your junk food purchases for your own good since your lard ass needs a few less Twinkies. Will it be easier to sue Sara Lee or Frito Lay if there is a purchase history, or will the information be turned over to corporate control for marketing reasons? Who knows, but this might be a concern just because the Feds have already started sniffing around the obesity issue. Remember the tobacco litigation fiasco? The tobacco companies did not get hurt as we are led to believe, they are making more per pack of cigarettes than ever before even after turning over some profits to the states (makes you

wonder if they didn't bring up the idea themselves). The price increases went above what was needed to pay off the lawsuit.

And why worry about mining the credit card companies records for information? Just proclaim your worry about ID theft and require an ID swipe along with each credit card purchase. And cash, so easy to counterfeit, should also be accompanied by an ID swipe so we can be sure the money is real. Those evil black marketers are ruining the economy you know. Or those bastards the underground workers not reporting income and costing you the taxpayer more than your "fair share" must be found out and punished. We had better require an ID swipe for all cash purchases for everything. Even at garage sales, if it gets that ridiculous I would imagine. So instead of requiring a National ID, just require an accepted form of identification for a purchase of one of life's little necessities. Oh, right, that is the National ID Card. But, hey, it is strictly voluntary.

And about the only way I can see getting around it all is to hoard precious metal now to buy black market later, and drop out of the rat race soon. The less you rely on the market economy the less they can track you. And the more insulated you are from the economy going bad. But now, buy all guns and supplies, food storage and silver and gold. Just pretend in two years it's Y2K all over again. With a concrete deadline you can do wonders to circumvent more control over your life and future. Stock up now on what the government wants to control or confiscate later. Welcome to our own little police state.
END ARTICLE

When I wrote the other week on Interest Only Loans, I failed to give a very good example of how these worked. By doing that I failed to show how bad these loans were. You can see from the example below that the figures are very frightening, and could easily cause a severe number of defaults and a real estate bubble pop. In the Bay Area of California (San Francisco, Oakland, etc.) fully 66% of new loans are interest only loans. Take the median price of half a million for a regular house. A thirty year fixed rate is $2,900 a month payment on a 5.75% loan. If you went with a interest only loan the monthly payment is only $2,000. Now, after five years you will need to start paying on the principle and your payments shoot up. If interest rates stay the same your payment goes to the same cost as a 30 year fixed. However, if rates go up only a fraction over one percent, to 7%, your payment is now over $3,500 a month. OUCH!! If you are a speculator and never intend to see a house through those first five years you had better hope prices only keep going up. And if you are a home buyer and intend to stay in that house you had better hope you never need to take a pay cut at work. Were do the working class live in the Bay Area?
END

UPHOLDING STANDARDS DURING THE COLLAPSE OF CIVILIZATION

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Taking a little extra time to groom yourself before you go out and die is an outdated feature of a more civilized time. It's old school. Actually it is most likely a myth encouraged by fiction just as the myth of the noble and self-sacrificing cowboy was most likely a stereotype, much more fiction than fact. Most cowboys were probably illiterate crude smelly and unmannered. And most well groomed persons are entirely selfish in their actions, looking to land a husband or better position at work or get laid or just displaying an anal compulsive attitude. But despite these unwelcome realities, we must admit that myths do play an important part in society. They highlight desirable characteristics. They set a goal for us. The noble Western sheriff standing alone against the criminal rabble is just so much B.S. as most of our boys behind the star were petty criminals themselves. But society needs brave individuals to stand against the outlaw, so the myth endures as it should. Despite common knowledge that war is just a racket by the state that only helps those in power, war fiction endures of the brave young man knowing he will die still fights on. We still cover up such statistics as the high numbers of deserters in the European theatre during WWII. That is not part of the myth. Despite open defiance by some Guard units the troops in Iraq are still shown to be cheerful and gung ho. And there is a reason for that- most really believe what they are doing. They accept the myth of the brave young man sacrificing all for his country. Even the more cynical and jaded of us old farts need to recognize that the belief, however tragic on an individual basis, serves a higher purpose. The tribe must be protected. And even when the protectors turn to usurpers, the natural end of the national power quest, the tribe must still be protected. What did the British youth die for in WWI? It was the battle that ended an empire, but family and tribe needed to be protected. Standards must be upheld even if faced with idiotic examples of themselves.

So on the face of it, many practices look silly, out of date, unnecessary and plain ignorant. But never if you dig below the surface. There is always a darn good reason people act the way they do. They may be acting on old information, but that doesn't mean they are acting ignorantly. It is easy to Monday morning quarterback, to have perfect hindsight, but people act on what they know today, not tomorrow. Given an average intelligence, and outside the negative influences of mob psychology, most folks are acting out those characteristics that society demands for its survival. No matter how individualistic we are, we are still just a monkey in a tribe, needing the support of the group for survival and willing to sacrifice for it. All of us, it is hard wired into us. Even if you have a few loose screws, you still need others in a market economy to help you survive. No man an island and all that. Even when we are turned against each other to deflect attention from a corrupt power structure we still subconsciously support those others if they are identified as part of the tribe. Until the powers that be collapse and then we seek the smaller tribes as they are the only ones capable of offering a support system and we turn against old friends if they no longer belong to our new tribe. Do you wonder why family members

fought each other during The War Of Northern Aggression? The economic support structure was split between agrarian and industrial and whatever side you belonged to you fought for. Blood is not thicker than survival. Whatever tribe supports our survival we sacrifice to support. Obviously dying for the tribe is a last resort, but with the willingness to do so we are capable of great things. This is something to keep in mind if our society fails. We are willing to support our large tribe now (the nation) even supporting an empire since it helps us to survive. Sure, we know we need oil to eat, stay warm, and get to work for our livelihood. That's why Iraq doesn't bother us emotionally, even if it does intellectually. We need it, we'll take it. Now, when our nation fails because we over extended economically to support that empire, we will no longer have the nation to provide for us and cease to support it. Our new local tribe will provide and get the support. No one knows along what lines these tribes will be drawn, but know it could happen. For instance, a good possibility is along racial lines. It doesn't matter what color your skin is, its just evolution and natural defense. But if you belong to the other tribe, then it matters. So even if you are not racist it still makes sense to relocate to an area predominantly of your race under this eventuality.

So what tribe do you want to belong to? Your actions now can help determine that. Lets take an old example, back in the day before doctors and lawyers and other Yuppie scum bought their way to bad boy status, and the old style Harley Davidson riders were by and large just criminals. The Hells Angels. A tribe apart if their ever was one. You were expected to perform in a certain fashion in order to belong. And to believe. Today what passes for motorcycle riders using domestic machines is a mere gentleman’s club of weekend upper middle class participants. Back in the day they were merely another gang, but mobile. And there was fear from the public, a useful reaction encouraged by the gangs. Nevada, in a fit of wisdom, passed helmet laws thinking the bikers would refuse to wear them and so stay in California. I don't know if it worked or not. And I'm sure there are still some motorcycle clubs that keep to their criminal class. But by and large the aura of danger has been commercialized and adapted by the wealthy white boys, about the same as the urban underclass rappers were. But regardless of the economic status, all tribes have their mannerisms that must be followed. The old bikers were filthy and crude, proved their machismo by fabulous bouts of drug use and alcohol consumption. Those in the military are clean cut to a ridiculous degree, stay fit, party too much and worship the idea of death. The average worker without a college degree doomed to the lower class might use sports as a tribal marker. Those young people who think they are smart but merely have parents with too much money go to liberal arts colleges and join the tribe of tree huggers. Their mannerisms are political correctness, and while ridiculous to the rest of us, no stranger than a gaggle of bald guys marching in unison and screaming at the top of their lungs to "kill a Commie for Mommy" (okay, that's what I did, I don't know if they still do after the collapse of the Soviet Union).

So, how do you want to act now, knowing you are showing the colors of your tribe? If you dress and act ghetto you will of course gravitate towards that tribe come the collapse of current day Empire America. Are you a redneck? Do you really want to fight for the Confederacy again? What is your tribes destiny? At the first sign of structural weakness

to our nation state, the militia members will attack, the Black Power types most likely the same, as will the Mexican Nationalist types and the loud Confederate type. I would not wish to belong to any of those tribes. I'll just hide out and emerge when the dust settles, thank you very much. And my tribe? The anarcho-survivalist. Survivalists willing to start an anarchist society after the collapse. I'm sure there is at least three other members out there out of a population of almost 300 million. So in the meantime I am an honorary member of the Frugal Living tribe. Much greater numbers and better support groups.

The beginning of the article referring to being well dressed was the mannerisms of several tribes, the British society member as well as professional military and para-military (LEO's) or even certain economic classes. Fictional types were meticulous in their dress and grooming habits, I'm sure mirroring if not the actual events at least the expected norm of those tribal members. Always wearing a tie, or a suit even in hot climes, or the dress for females. The military stressing parade ground uniforms even in the field. The insistence of physical fitness even in winter conditions. The fanatical adherence to a clean shaven face even in the boonies. All these are merely a showing of the tribal flag. How one dresses is an indicator of how one thinks, which mirrors the tribe one belongs to. So when the Limey in Africa polishes his boots despite the dust and shaves every morning despite the shortage of water and dresses like a dandy even if it is hot, what he is doing is behaving in a civilized manner. And his civilized tribe is there to exploit Africa for its own good and that of the Empire, of course. He strictly adheres to these grooming standards because they are what is simply done in his tribe. That is how he fits in. The tribe dresses as it thinks, which shows the world what it stands for. In that case that the Empire is Civilization and civilized folks dress in the shown manner. It was the uniform for advanced thinking peoples. And of course it showed one had money, which one got by being educated, which only happens in advanced countries, etc, etc. A nicely closed loop, that.

It is never too late to change bad habits, and if you are dressed like a hood from the ghetto it might be time to change your allegiance and uniform. Pants three sizes too large in the waist and showing half your butt crack is the uniform of a looser mentality, a welfare tribe. Slacks and a golf shirt from Wal-Mart are under $20, even with a few razors and a pair of scissors thrown in. Even if you just shop at several thrift stores and buy the same color slacks (black is better than tan hiding stains) in the same size and buy buttoned shirts you can have cloths in less than perfect shape but they will be clean and present a better appearance than torn jeans and T-shirts. It is cheap to show your allegiance to the middle class (an attitude, not a financial condition). If you uphold standards in appearance you will uphold a discipline that will carry through into other aspects of your life, from work habits to relationship standards. And when society bites the big one in the next Super Depression you will have a nice set of standards to carry you through further than most folks.
END

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BOOK REVIEW: THE LONG EMERGENCY

The Long Emergency, by James Howard Kunstler, about $16 from Amazon.com in hardback 300 pages. First off let me say that this was a great read. I had a hard time putting this one down and spent most of my one day off finishing it. I thought it was money well spent. However, I must share some reservations with you. First and foremost, Mr. Kunstler is a Commie. He is a great author, very talented, but that is all the more insidious in that his socialist tendencies reach a broader audience. He is even quite subtle about it. I had to go to the library and get his earlier book, The Geography To Nowhere (that's turning out to be just as interesting of a read), to confirm my lingering doubts after I had finished Long Emergency. He was not so polite about his sarcasm towards the free market in his earlier book. I think he confuses Mercantilism with Capitalism, but politics only play a small role in the writing. It is just that his worldview is important in his conclusions, and being such a fan of Big Daddy Government gives his bias against any market action to correct the coming problems. I am not saying he is wrong, it could very well be the case that the market will be unable to provide a substitute for oil in the years ahead. I am saying that by dismissing the miracle of greed through free market capitalism he might be missing a piece of the puzzle. That being said, it is to the authors credit that I can really find very little else wrong with his argument. He is a Yankee, a Commie and probably even on Social Security to boot, but I still find his argument persuasive and compelling. And entertaining, just in case he is wrong you didn't waste your time.

Now, if you find the idea of Peak Oil totally impossible to buy you might wish to save your money on this book. And if you think Global Warming is bogus, do not read this book (I said global warming, not global warming caused by man). If you think Peak Oil combined with Global Warming is so much horse hockey, then you will not want to even spend the $1 in gas going to the library and checking out this book. He does not really spend much time trying to convince you that these two converging trends are true, he just takes them as a given and plunges right in to spell out our dismal future. There is enough background to guide the novice through the two trends, but expect little pleading from the author. He is convinced about where things are going and feels little need to bring the reader over to his way of thinking. We will have Global Warming, and we will experience Peak Oil, and then things will go to Hell in a handbasket. He then fills in the blanks as to what this means in practical terms. This is really where the book shines through. He spends a lot of time filling in the blanks about what happens after we start to run out of cheap oil. This is a book looking into the future, but not about how to survive it. There are enough pieces of advice, but no nuts and bolts how-to. No matter. The purpose of the book was to say, hey, wake up and smell the petroleum powered electric brewed coffee.

We depend on cheap oil. Even nuclear power plants, from their construction to the extraction of their fuel take cheap plentiful oil. Natural gas is the feedstock of nitrogen

fertilizer, and after prices of that gas rose and supplies declined in this country we exported about half of our manufacture of agricultural fertilizer to other countries (if we ever needed government subsidies to keep an industry domestic that should have been one- hard to feed people without fertilizing fields first). Construction of suburbia is about the only economic activity we have right now, yet if cheap oil ends we will have an uninhabitable housing area (can't commute to them, or heat and cool them). Worldwide discovery of crude peaked in the 60's and has declined since. The U.S. peak of production was 1970, and we are pumping half what we were. We now use 25% of daily world production, but be sure that not only will China want some of that but that they will be in a better position to pay for it. The problems of alternate fuels are discussed, with most being net energy losers (it takes more to produce than it gives). Climate change, epidemic diseases, water scarcity and pollution are all discussed. When enough ice melts on the poles, the salinity of the sea is decreased and the Gulf Stream effect stops. Europe is now 20 degrees colder. France might be glad it has no car culture, 80% of its power in nukes and a decentralized farm economy. Free market globalism will end as soon as it becomes too expensive to ship ceramic doo-dads from China. And finally, life is imagined with the suburbs being too expensive to live in without cheap oil. Small towns will revive, those with compact centers surrounded by farm land. Trades will start again to replace factory goods from China (or it is presumed anywhere without a hydro powered factory). Regions of the nation are discussed. The Pacific states being targets of pirates along coastal areas, the Rocky Mountain region being too arid. The plains having a depleted aquifer. The South being too car dependant, and of course the North East being juuuust right (I told you he was a Yankee). The abundance of hydro power and neglected but still standing small towns plus the history of abundant agriculture attract him to the area, but one could conclude he never lived out of the region. But no matter, most of us know where to live when the oil economy goes bust (the same as for Y2K).

If you have an old twenty dollar bill laying around gathering dust, this is a great read to stir one to action to prepare. If you are poor, just research peak oil and global warming on the Internet. The strength of this book is that it does the research for you and puts it all together in a very readable package. But it is not a book you just have to get. Nice if you can, but not critical. The author's a great warning alarm, but if the money is better spent on food supplies just do the leg work yourself.
END ARTICLE

LOVING WAL-MART, ONE KEY TO SURVIVAL

Wal-Mart has become everybody's favorite bad guy. Oh, they pay their help low wages. Oh, they force companies out of business. Oh, they only buy Chinese goods. But it is my view that if it wasn't for Wal-Mart we would be living through a second inflationary period to rival the 1970's. Wal-Mart built its market niche by being the low price seller and the reason they have grown is because there are a whole lot of folks out there desperately needing low prices. Please read on and I will show why all the bad press is misdirected and how Wal-Mart is really here to help.

While Nixon was a slimy politician and worthy of our scorn and everlasting contempt it must be said in all fairness that he was just the wrong person at the wrong time in the White House. After Kennedy and Johnson started overspending on both guns and butter Nixon felt he had no choice but to cut the dollar from its gold standard (as thin a thread as it might have been) and let the currency float freely. The economy was a far different animal back in those days and our economy was not only totally self-sufficient but also dependant on exporting. Free floating the dollar changed all that, not overnight but it started a trend we are living today. After near twenty percent inflation in some years the wisdom of shipping jobs overseas was seen by most business leaders. And not only was labor cheaper but over the years companies have saved a bundle on pollution prevention expenses and litigation costs, not to mention Social Security costs, workman's compensation and other assorted nonsense. After a factory is built and starts running 24/7, labor is the one factor you can really count one to screw up your profit margins. Just look at Germany with its outrageous labor costs. If the product is not high quality fewer and fewer people want it due to the high price mostly because of the labor cost. Volkswagen is a good example. They turn out mediocre products at high cost. What a wonderful strategy for success.

Today, by and large, the only factories we have left are here to avoid tariffs (such as Toyota) or hold overs that have yet to be put out of business but don't have long (such as Ford or GM). The factories left might be holding on because they still hold a slight advantage, but by and large the day of Made In America are over. We are not in an Industrial Age anymore and factories are better off elsewhere, if only economically. From a strategic viewpoint it might be silly to be dependant on others, but if we don't subsidize companies to stay here they will follow the profit trail. So, what drives our economy? Services. Not that this is a bad thing, I would much rather be behind a retail counter than alongside an assembly line. Nor is it impossible. People scoff at services thinking we can all flip burgers for each other, or greet each other at the front door of our Super Store. Only real economies make goods. But think about it. Only one hundred and fifty years ago most of us farmed. The viewpoint was that only farming the land created wealth. Buying from a factory a good that you could make yourself with money you didn't have was considered silly. Recently it was thought the same that an economy could run on anything but factories. But we all just made stuff for each other. At one time it was estimated that the automobile alone was responsible for something in the neighborhood of a third of our economic activity. Building cars and providing services for them and entertainment around them was most of the economy and so the car replaced God for most of our focal point daily. Now, we focus our economy around services (the goods we sell being secondary) and it is just as sustainable as factory output. The only problem now is that the services paying the most are financial with the rest being government created. Neither is a good long term employer since both are subject to manipulation and exploitation. The problem is not that the economy depends on services, but that it depends on the wrong kind of services.

Did Wal-Mart close all our factories and buy from overseas? Did they refuse to do business with American firms thus forcing them to close their doors? No. Wal-Mart came

in at the end of the game, taking advantage of the first moves from China to jump start its economy relying on its one advantage of cheap labor. And Clinton was responsible for NAFTA, not Wal-Mart. Just because Mexican products were much cheaper is no reason to blame the companies selling them. If you are the low price leader, you could care less were you buy your product from, be it China, Mexico or Alabama. Why is it your social responsibility to buy from factories in the states if they are selling at twice the necessary price? It's not enough that you provide jobs every time you open a retail store? It was not until computer chips became cheap enough to create the information system that increased productivity at Wal-Mart that they took off economically. K-Mart could have done the same. It is not Chinese goods that give Wal-Mart an advantage over its competitors, but its home grown computer smarts that was created by American service workers using American computers with imported chips (and the chips are the only low profit margin component). So how is this hurting our economy? Wal-Mart can sell cheaper because its costs of buying and moving goods are cheaper. Anyone can buy from China at the same price. How much it costs to ship it to your stores is the question. So a company figures out how to slash the cost of delivering a product to the shelf, and we are supposed to believe that is a bad thing?

Mom and Pop stores are faced with ever increasing costs, from rent because of the real estate bubble, from health care costs rising 10-15% a year, to suppliers rising delivery cost because of gasoline. Wal-Mart has beaten all these obstacles and managed to deliver decreasing prices over time. Sure, to be honest, the price cuts were mainly due to the Chinese currency being pegged to a declining dollar value but by now their bulk buying power and Asian competition would accomplish the same thing just at a slower rate. And even if prices do rise over time, mainly in the food section, they raise much slower than everybody else. Half of the cars sold today are foreign (and soon I would wager Ford and GM will be gone or under foreign control) so buying at cheaper prices from Asia is not a problem to at least half of Americans. So why is buying Chinese goods from Wal-Mart considered a bad thing? Wal-Mart takes advantage of others misfortune to get a leg up in competition. There is nothing wrong with that. Sears and Montgomery Wards used the cut throat competition between railroads over one hundred years ago to offer cheaper shipping rates to consumers, undercutting retail sales. The consumer benefited. We might all love to hate Microsoft, but because of Bill Gates being a ruthless competitor I as a consumer can buy computer hardware much cheaper than if I still had an Apple. If your competition is charging too much and you undersell him, the consumer wins. If your competitor is going out of business or suffering from poor business decisions and you take advantage of his pain, the consumer wins. If you get greedy and try to force the consumer to pay for your inefficiency and a competitor steals your business away, the consumer ends up winning and the other business looses. This is as it should be. In a pure capitalistic system (which I know we don't have but at least are close in some aspects) only the efficient win long term and the consumer sees ever lower prices. Even under the supposed monopoly of Standard Oil, the consumer only saw a price stability and not price gouging as is widely reported under the Socialist monopoly public schools. Kerosene prices had fluctuated so wildly that Standards monopoly only benefited consumers.

Wal-Mart profits from volume, and it only profits from volume by offering as much as possible to as many as possible at the cheapest possible price. Do people who work there expect high wages if every aspect of the business is run as cheaply and efficient as possible? I suppose they do if they are freakin morons and have no sense at all. Just who I want ringing me up. The government chases away jobs through inflation, regulation and litigation. Then people complain the jobs that are left pay badly. But that is the fault of the government, not the corporations that are left. If jobs paid too much the company would go out of business. Just ask about any Unionized company from the steel industry to the airlines that are bankrupt.

There are a lot of things wrong with our economy that is not the fault of any one company, no matter how large they are. Factories long ago went overseas. Inflation is a permanent tax on us all. Real estate bubbles in every state can only cause trouble in the end. The only jobs being created are those in the building industries (and paying for them and living in them requires low oil prices of which we may never see again), or in government (ask pensioners from the Soviet Union how well their civil servant jobs worked out). Life is like a crap sandwich. The more bread you have, the less crap you have to eat. Most of us have too little bread, and its a good thing we have Wal-Mart saving us literally up to half on everything we need. When you were losing the family farm or your factory shut down, it must have been nice to have a neighborhood Mom and Pop small business you could go and find a sympathetic shoulder to lean on. Those friendly folk cared about their friendly town members. But they couldn't give you a decent price on groceries, because they bought them at a price above what Wal-Mart sells them for at retail. Economic hardship created by government does not give us the luxury of keeping small town America, we are stuck with the mega-stores. And the discount stores help poor people get more for their money. I have to subsidize welfare bitches and Big Ag business and the military industrial complex (to subsidize SUV drivers with cheaper oil) with my tax money, and an ex-wife with half that is left over after taxes, so pardon me if I do NOT wish to take what little is left and subsidize inefficient ancient business practices such as the corner Mom & Pop Store. Like the horse and buggy (with manure on the streets) and slavery and the draft and kerosene lighting and black powder arms and woolen shirts and quill ink pens and all other such out of date practices and devices, Mom and Pop businesses belong in the past. And remembering them fondly just means you forgot the negative aspects of their existence. The society in which they existed is gone, so now they are too. Good or bad, time to move on.
END

CONSUMING YOUR WAY TO DOOMSDAY

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America is a consumer society. We have been for some time. Right now we have reached the pinnacle of consumerism, it being the only thing keeping the economy afloat. There are several reasons we are here. Tax policies discourage saving, unlike in most countries. Here, where corporations buy and sell politicians, it was in their interests to encourage consumption. Financing was not a problem when WWII ended and American Empire started, we had the free world by the balls with the dollar. What they needed was customers, and after a Depression and a world war the public was more than happy to go along with the plan.

We have been on the House Building and Car Driving Economy for over half a century. The ultimate consumption is ones house and car, being high dollar items and taking many years of interest to pay off. Cars are getting to where a five year note is almost never long enough to pay the darn thing off, so even at lower interest rates the bankers make enough profit to finance any warm corpse. My father just lost his ten year old Toyota with just shy of 400,000 miles on it. The little guy gave him such faithful service but finally just gave up the ghost. Imagine a six and a half foot giant in a Tercel, it was a strange love affair. But when he went to get favorable financing on a used car he signed a six year note at $150 a month. Not bad for today, but twenty years ago that was a five year payment for a new car at higher interest. Another example of how our pay has gone up 50%-75% in twenty years but the basics cost at least 200% or 300% more. I am not some old guy begrudging the babysitter a quarter for an hour of labor. I understand inflation, and hold no love for prices of yore. If I make more I don't cars if prices rise. What irritates me is when they rise so much more than my wages. I remember when a candy bar cost a nickel, now I am tickled when I can find one for a quarter. My pay increased no where near five times in the same period.

It is amazing the hoops people jump through to pay off a house, essentially screwing themselves financially for most of their working life. At this point in the game houses are under such a price increase that every year it gets harder to find the average thirty year fixed loan. Now most loans are speculative and so risky that the bottom feeders are clearly taking over. Now houses are taking the place of tech stocks six years ago. I feel sorry for the average person just trying to get shelter and wanting a nice place to raise a family. The sharks swimming alongside them are going to make it very expensive. I would never own a house. One, I make crap. Even the lowest cost house would be two or three times my wages. Two, I get tired of jobs and move every two to four years so even a five year mobile home note is something I have yet to see paid off. Three, I hate the concept of working all week and giving most of my pay to a mortgage and then taking the weekend to keep repairing the monster. If a car cost three times my wage I would expect that sucker to last a long time without much more than lubricants. Yet the quality

of workmanship has fallen faster than prices have risen and nowadays most home owners need to work on their new houses as soon as they move into them. Why? A house has few moving parts. Why does it need to fall apart so quick? Crap labor and crap material sold at a kings ransom. I guess I shouldn't judge so harshly. When I find myself employed at a company that shows incompetence I too find it hard to keep from getting a bad attitude and ceasing to care. Another reason the American economy is going down the toilet. Corporations and the government are screwing us to desperately stay in power as the economy gets worse and worse. Workers are caring less and less as they feel the pinch every payday, falling further behind and reading in every mornings paper (if they still subscribe- they are terrible anymore) how they are going to get screwed in a new and novel way. No wonder we have bad attitudes.

Now, I have always maintained that the One True Path To Survival was no debt, a stash of wheat and a surplus rifle. But if most of the population owns a house it stands to reason that most of us are in debt, at least a mortgage. And after you reach a certain point of debt there is no way you can pay it off faster. To some degree it might make sense to get a little further in debt. Not a huge amount, perhaps ten grand to add to your already huge mortgage. You might even refinance for a longer period of time and end up paying less every month. You then take that amount and build a cheapo country retreat and fill it with survival items, all off the books to avoid repossession when you loose your job and then your house after your company merges with another and they lay off 25% of the peons and increase the workload of those remaining. Now, obviously, this is a lame plan if your house is almost paid off. Unless you live in an area where the appraised value doubles every five years and soon just the property taxes alone cost more than rent. You can figure out on the back of a napkin your financial position regarding your home. But thirty years is a long time. Most should have awhile to go. Or just sell now at the top of the bubble and use the difference to finance a debt free survival retreat. Either way, use the coming real estate collapse to your advantage. Sell out now for much more than the house is worth and live well on a reduced life style, or use it to finance your preparations and plan on losing the old money pit down the road.

And if you don't own your own home, there are always those wonderful credit cards. Even if you are paying an additional ten percent annual interest rate, a bit more debt may be just the ticket to survival. If you use the card to pay everyday bills and then use your cash from the paycheck to purchase land and supplies, your possessions can't be repossessed since they were not directly purchased on the credit cards. Of course, come bankruptcy, make sure your assets are well hidden or are allowed (owning your country lot would be allowed if it was your only land, so make sure the house is repoed before you declare). But this article is not really about going into debt to get a survival retreat. That is a personal calculation anyone with a modest intelligence should be able to do. If in a year or ten we see peak oil, global warming, a depression, and an end to Empire with a collapsed dollar it is going to matter little about your credit rating, but your place in the country out of the way of city folk will gain importance. More important than using debt to your advantage is using the last of these twilight years in our economy to stock up on necessary survival goods. We are in our heyday of the consumer society, use it quickly

while you can.

The Chinese seem to have become our manufacturer of choice. It was not too long ago that various countries competed for our business and were only too happy to pick up whatever work was available. You used to see from a products label Made in Mexico, Jamaica, Columbia, whatever. Now, it is almost all from China. We use the South American countries for year round fruit, Canada for petroleum and wood products, and everything else comes from China. For the most part this has to do with better quality and a friendlier business climate, but also because China has a wonderful vender credit system. We buy from them and they keep buying our worthless government debt. If the American credit society continues, China keeps her economy growing, thus keeping everyone fed and happy and allowing the Communists to stay in power with a minimum of effort. Personally I find it strategically idiotic that we are allowing a potential enemy to control such a huge block of our debt and most of our manufacturing. Any other time in history that a single country has reigned supreme militarily, other countries step up to challenge them. Anytime China chooses to they could cripple us economically by cashing in their debt holdings or even just by stopping the purchase of more (if they got Japan to go along that would really work). They do not have to challenge us militarily, and would have no reason to. We have placed ourselves into a difficult situation and they need only take advantage of it. But for now our business helps them, so they will help us. Expect further disruptions, such as automobile imports hurting Detroit even more. But right now the container ships are off-loading as quick as Wal-Mart can stock the shelves. Now is the time to stockpile as much as you can, while the country still retains a decent credit rating. The idiots in government think consuming can save the economy, since by some strange fantasy Americans no longer need to save or build but can just buy from China and thrive. Well, the economy can go down the tubes, but you can postpone the inevitable by consuming survival goods.

Do you own a piece of land debt free? Even a lot will do for a trailer, garden and greenhouse. E-Bay still has plenty of land under a grand. A lot of land, a used trailer or even a junked bus or commercial van for a few hundred bucks, a solar system under $500, a woodstove, a five year stash of wheat, reloading supplies and ammo, cold weather gear, all can be had for just a few thousand dollars. Even without a house to re-mortgage or credit cards to use almost anyone with the will power can set up a debt free retreat site. Now, by retreat I do not mean the usual place you desperately try to flee to when nuclear bombs start to fall and you must use clogged freeways to travel. Most likely any future troubles we encounter will be economic, and so I see more of a homestead in the making here rather than just a retreat. If you need to buy a lot half way across the nation because that is were the cheaper land is, then your only long term concern is going to be if you can move there before gas prices get out of control or shortages appear. I have an old bread truck that was converted to an RV. It only cost $800, with repairs done as could be afforded for another $700. It sits in storage, taken out periodically to charge the battery and keep the tires from rotting. I still rely exclusively on a bicycle for transportation, but my trusty Hippy Van awaits me when I choose to flee my overpopulated under-watered desert city dwelling for greener climes. And, being an old Chevy V6 with manual

transmission I get twice the gas mileage of an old motor home with a much more dependable mechanical package. Then, when I arrive at my destination I have a place to live if nothing else presents itself. At the time I find the insurance cost and storage fees worth the peace of mind, knowing I can flee drought and cold winter if needed (plus if I lose my casino job the cost of living here is too much to take lesser paying work). It would have been better to be able to buy acreage closer to home and be able to visit on weekends and prepare the soil for growing, build a shack, etc., but Nevada is too costly for that. My lot in Texas, my van, and the gas to get there, all were cheaper than buying an acre of land a few hours drive from here to the boonies (plus being very cold in the winters and having only one river nearby to depend on for water supplies). If you can find work, you usually can't afford to live there. So plan on moving.

At this point credit has never been more abundant, interest rates have rarely been lower, manufactured items as cheap. Adjusted for inflation oil is still cheap (but for how long?) and even gold is cheaper than it should be. Unemployment is a lot lower than it should be. It all feels like a convergence of false-positive factors. Like it is all too unreal. The calm before the storm. We are quickly reaching the point of a trillion dollar yearly deficit. Inflation has been with us, but as of yet the monetary inflation has been checked by deflationary forces. Expect that to change. Oil becomes dearer as China needs what we use in SUV's to power their factories. If we experience another shock in petroleum supply like we did in the 1970's you want to already be prepared. A stash of wheat (more than one year supply) as the mega-farms are dependant on natural gas for fertilizer and diesel for equipment use and product transportation. A collection of non-hybrid seeds. A bicycle in good working order with you in good enough shape to use it. Some solar power generation, if only a few rechargeable battery units for $20 each. Solar hot water heaters, if only the solar shower bag. Passive solar heating for your house can be had for a few panes of glass for window solar boxes. Some thermal underwear to turn the thermostat way down. And of course a few more boxes of ammo to repel the unruly mobs that are now jobless hungry and cold. You know the most likely time of year to have disruptions is going to be winter (as in, just our luck).

Let us not be distracted by the bread and circuses. While we are waving the flag for our troops in the Middle East and watching reality shows that only get more idiotic, as we go to a job dependant on house refi easy money or dependant on tax dollars, as our easy and wasteful lifestyle is about to end, we are being sold down the river by the naked greed of government and the huge conglomerates. In the end they will think nothing of leaving us to die in a dark and unheated under insulated suburban house miles from nowhere, our gas guzzling cars tank dry, the cash in our pocket good only for toilet paper, and angry armed welfare mobs out looking for revenge when the entitlement ends. Wouldn't you rather be in the country, even if it is only a 5,000 square foot lot with a travel trailer and garden plot, your trickle charge solar panel taking a week to give you any power, your cardboard and tinfoil solar oven backing bread and your wash being done in the creek with a scrub-board. If you wait for the perfect country retreat, you will still be in the city when it all comes apart. Try to escape in the next few years, even if you can't have the twenty acres or the whole house solar system, or the hybrid vehicle. Think small and immediate. Get it

now, cheaply, while you can. And escape, while you can. Even if things only slowly get worse, better way too early than a little too late.
END

WINNING ENEMIES AND INFLUENCING NO ONE
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When Paul Kennedy came out in the late 1980's with his book "The Rise And Fall Of The Great Powers" he created quite a controversy with an ending cautioning the US that it might be in trouble by overextending militarily without the economic base to sustain it. Good ol' Ronny Reagan had been in charge for awhile and we as a nation were once again feeling pretty cocky about ourselves and in no mood to listen to some historian tell us we were doing something wrong. We had an Evil Empire to subdue and the 70's to recover from, and the cost was gladly born by all. After all, how hard was it to just say, "charge it"? Oil from Alaska and the North Sea put behind us the dreaded shortages of oil, and we had someone that knew how to tell the rest of the world, especially the Soviets, to bugger off. The collective response was to not give two hoots if we had to run massive deficits to pay for it all. And in all fairness, what else could have been done? The only other option out of the economic quagmire of the 70's would have been drastically slashing the size of the government and both political parties would have none of that. The people would not have stood for tax hikes and it only would have made the economy worse. And inflation had been much too high and was drastically reduced. Going into debt paid the bills and increased defense spending stimulated the economy.

As most of the developing countries imploded in the late 90's our country experienced a flood of money from the wealthy abroad looking for a safe haven. A temporary boom gave us that giddy feeling of Christmas and for a few short years the economy seemed a miracle. Then the Tech Wreak came along and reminded us that not only did we not manufacture goods anymore but we really couldn't build dreams very well anymore either. Which brought us to 9-11. Did the terrorist attacks stop the economy as planned, or were the attacks the excuse needed to jump start the economy hurt by the Tech Wreak with government spending? I am not one for conspiracy theories (much, anyway) but one has to admit the timing was really good. It almost makes you want to believe the government was behind the destruction (with, once again, explosive characteristics pointing to internal structure damage rather than external damage and, once again, the quick disposal of the evidence). Be that as it may, the response to the attacks was simply amazing. After a short bank holiday and trading holiday (one might imagine to get everyone calmed done and on the same sheet of music- Greenspan at the head of the class, " Now, class, this is what is known as the printing press") the economy started humming along, almost like it was 1999 again. But of course the bill for paying that piper is already due.

Greenspan is in essence a one pony show. He lowers interest rates to stimulate the economy. It worked great for the stock market crash of 1987, so why mess with success? It worked in the 90's in conjunction with Clintons economic stimulus. So why not go whole hog after 9-11 and just tank rates? It worked great, with one little problem. After taxes and inflation, there was no where to park massive piles of money without getting a negative return. So the money flowed to housing. An instant housing bubble that will pop

one day to the displeasure of about everyone. And that is not all. Just to make sure he didn't put all his eggs in the interest rate basket, Bush decided to go with a hot war economy. Just the ticket to keep things humming along, as a cold war economy was just too problematic. After all, there was only so many tanks or jets you could buy and park. We had been doing that for twenty years. The only way to further stimulate the economy was to blow up those tanks and jets so we had to replace them. Does anyone hear something familiar here? Does this remind you of the 60's with its new welfare programs spending and war in Vietnam? Do you remember it ended in the gold standard being revoked? This time around we have much more invested in the stimulus program, and thus father to fall when it ends.

But wait!! If you order this screwball economic stimulus package now, we will send you at no charge worldwide discontent at your military adventurism. And as a bonus, domestic unrest at your total disregard toward the Constitution. But quick, you must order now, time is limited!! It is one thing to be the 800 pound economic gorilla, it is quite another to be the biggest nuclear bully around. Pretty soon other folks are going to start noticing and take offense, and if you make enough folks feel unsafe they will strike back eventually. Not militarily, most likely. As massive as our military is, it is only good for striking at large known targets such as other nation states armed forces. So other nation states would do well to avoid our wraith. The Chinese, who forgot more about tactics than we ever knew, are quite capable of screwing us behind our back if they so desire. And why shouldn't they? An impartial observer could only conclude that we are foolish and undeserving of global power. We get ride of our manufacturing base (time will tell if we can make it as an information economy without an adequate schooling system) and must borrow heavily from foreign nations to continue to get into more debt. We sell off our precious metal reserves to flood the markets to fool others that our currency is not being debased. We invade other nations to keep the price of oil low enough to keep the soccer moms voting for whoever wants in power. We over-regulate every facet of the economy except were it might do some good such as mandating energy efficient homes and alternate energy. We spend more on the military than most other first world countries combined yet can't subdue a small country such as Iraq. We take a functioning Republic and turn it into an inefficient welfare state cum bungling empire. We are corrupt and soft, and if you need a preview of the future just look back a few hundred years at the empires of Spain, Ottoman or the Habsburg's. Others will conspire to check our out of control military advances. Even if we never actually go to war over dwindling oil supplies (against other consumers, not producers) other countries see us eyeballing Iran and Syria and wonder if they are next. Wouldn't you try to preserve your independence also?

The cheapest way to strike at this country is of course through terrorism. That seems to work pretty good. Even if the 9/11 attacks were US government sponsored (assuming one believes the conspiracy angle), I'm sure the anthrax attacks were genuine as was the DC sniper attacks. The anthrax attacks were pure genius as they completely immobilized the administrative section of the government. It showed the powerful just how cowardly they were (as did the purely accidental small plane flying into restricted airspace where

whole sections of frightened Yuppie scum ran hither and yon looking quite foolish). The sniper attacks were played up as merely criminal rather than Moslem sponsored (or at least inspired) terrorism but two losers with an $800 rifle and a few boxes of ammo were able to terrorize a metropolis for weeks. Being so easy to get the sheeple to cower, the question begs to be asked, why isn't there more terrorist acts against us? If it is difficult to get agents into this country and assimilate them, why not just recruit locals? I'm sure that is what the Soviets had done many times. Why not other countries? I don't know who has it in their best interest to see us fall, although China has the resources and the cunning. But I'm sure in the end most everyone will be surprised at the new world order after it has taken place. I can't see the US taking anything other than a secondary role in the decades to come, as we have screwed ourselves too many ways to Sunday, but perhaps that is just my paranoia and in the end attacks against us will only be harassment rather than destabilizing events. Time will tell.

More expensive than terrorism but less destabilizing than a war would be economic reprisals. If China keeps buying our debt they then have the ability to cash it in all at once rather than slowly were we could afford repayment. Even better would be to get with Japan and force them to play along as they hold a bigger portion of debt. Threaten them with something and then promise them the reward of open Chinese markets. Together that debt could conceivably paralyze our economy. The Asians would also be hurt by the action, but could minimize that by planning ahead for it. And as stated, it is cheaper than military conflict. At this time perhaps the Chinese need our purchasing power to build their economy but if the day comes where we can't buy enough from them than we are useless to them and can be disposed of. The Asians must know the dollar will become useless. Hell, most Americans know that (why do you think they buy any overpriced asset- to get rid of dollars) and they are just barbarians. And if sooner or later the currency is going to be worthless, why not take the loss and use it as a weapon. Right now loans keep us buying, but we are screwing over others kind enough to loan us money by inflating the currency so why wouldn't they feel justified by screwing us back?

Or how about a resource war? If oil does become scarce, who is in a better position to weather that storm? The US that uses most of the world's produced oil (per capita) and has legions of SUV's to power and who must ship the stuff across thousands of miles of ocean and relies mostly on natural gas to fertilize our crops and oil to ship foodstuffs nationwide? Or the Chinese who (for the most part despite urbanization and pollution) still rely on sustainable practices for food growing, or plan on using safe and efficient newer pebble bed nuclear power generation with no environmentalist worries or who mostly still relies on bicycles and public transport for mobility and who are a lot closer to the sources of oil than we are? The Chinese can let their citizens starve and freeze, we will face a rebellion at the first sign of discomfort. Don't get me wrong, I am not saying a dictatorship is the way to assure a rosy future with enough energy sources to keep us alive. Human life is too disposable in China, a commodity. I am saying that by virtue of being less industrialized and especially by virtue of being mostly automobile poor China can easily stand a fall in their energy consumption especially as it is mostly used to power ceramic do-dad factories unlike ourselves where we have too many bare necessities for life

tied up in oil consumption. Having free market forces and abundant resources in oil early in the Industrial Revolution helped us out economically but it did have the unhelpful side effect of getting us hooked on the cheap oil. If we can switch to something else like hydrogen we will be good to go, but energy equals economic power as well as life itself.

EMP weapon anyone? I thought James Cameron had a good plot going for his short lived Fox series when he had an electro-magnetic pulse weapon cripple the US economy (before he got bogged down with his super feminist fantasies-hey, it only worked with Linda Hamilton in Terminator, dude). I'm not sure exactly how one would light the fuse on this one without being detected as the source of origin. I would imagine we still are monitoring the sky for incoming ICBM's. So how does one detonate an atmospheric bomb stealthily? I would think you could us the old "falling satellite" trick. A commercial satellite "accidentally" malfunctions and falls towards the US. And then an EMP pulse of suitable size detonates in the middle of the continent and wipes out the entire commercial economy. Only specially hardened military gear still functions (which is why you want to protect the source of the launch- to avoid retaliation). Or, even better yet is to launch from another country and let them get the blame. North Korea is a perfect patsy for China. They could even launch from inside the actual land area, and China would act all upset and prissy, maybe even offer to help wipe out the bastards for us. Perfect. Or, a little fancier, they launch close offshore from Japan and fix the blame on those evil Japs that messed them up in the 30's finally getting revenge (and we would play along since we still are pissed about Pearl Harbor and cheap auto imports wiping out Detroit). They could even jack a Jap sub, sail it around to the Atlantic, nuke DC and launch that EMP to wipe out the rest of the nation. Any spy sat images later would reveal a Jap sub. Again, we would buy into it since we never really forgave the bastards. This is such a juicy scenario I can only imagine it has not already been done due to some tech glitch I overlooked, or perhaps they still want us as a market for their goods. We had better not fail to keep acting as a customer, so lets hope the coming housing bubble popping is only local and not nationwide.

I hope I am wrong on others being bent on our destruction. I know I can be a little paranoid. Lets hope we emulate the Netherlands and focus mostly on finance and business with less focus on military mis-adventures, rather than Spain that overextended by trying to control whole other continents and then had to pay for the occupation in an economy of inflation and a system of corruption. A few costly attempts at Empire before we realize what stupidity it is, then back to the business of making money. Perhaps we will bring back a little of the Constitution while we are at it. Our economy is not necessarily doomed if we can scale back the monster of Federalism, and enemies will not conspire against us if we stop acting the bully. It could easily happen, the public is capable of rational choices even if they happen mostly by mistake. Once again, the lives of millions of us are in the hands of idiots in Washington. They managed not to get us nuked by the Soviets, lets see if they can pull off the same stunt with others. Now that's a comforting thought.
END

FATS AND SUGAR IN YOUR STORAGE PLAN

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I think I can be labeled the typical survivalist. Not the fanatical type that burrows under his homes foundation to build concrete reinforced escape tunnels. And not the militia type that has twelve different rifles and ammo for each but for food only has one case each of MRE's and Beef Ravioli. I try to stock a lot more ammo than I think I need and my food storage is in the years rather than months. I will eventually grow a lot of my food and try to fit into the Armed Homesteader mode. To me that seems most typical, not too paranoid, but well prepared with food the primary consideration. The average wage earner can easily afford a modestly priced military rifle with several thousand rounds of ammunition and a pantry full of whole grains. One thousand dollars is most generous in this regard and anyone getting a tax return in March can get at least that, or anyone getting several dollars an hour more than minimum wage can set aside $20 a week and in one year have more than enough for a basic preparedness kit. One could even squeak by on just $300, as I have written about before. Then, after a basic kit has been accumulated you can weekly buy any other desired items, add-ons, or toys. A wheat only diet will keep you alive but it is far better to prepare now to have more than just wheat berries. And the cost is far cheaper than most other hobbies. Actually, the discipline of budgeting the extra to spend is harder than actually earning the money in the first place. Once you've got that figured out it is falling-down easy to painlessly and cheaply stock a huge pile of goodies to supplement your basics. One area I paid attention to pre-Y2K but neglected prior to and since was cooking oil.

At the time I was in Florida and had little fears of freezing and so felt the need for only a small amount of liquid vegetable oil. I think I had somewhere around five gallons. Within one year after the non-event I had donated the oil to others since the two year shelf life mark was near (and I had inadequate storage facilities to ensure a longer life). If I had been further up into the cold regions I would have wanted more oil for winter fat consumption. We give it little thought now, what with French fries and KFC and all, but a higher fat content in diets is needed in the winter to help the body warm itself. Plus, anything lower than 10% of fat in your everyday diet is unhealthy. Contrary to what pasty, anemic, waxy looking vegetarian tree huggers tell you. Animal protein and fat in a diet are healthy and a necessary part of your daily food consumption. The "health writer" will look at a fat greasy tub of lard who eats McDonalds five times a week and Krispy Kream almost as much and conclude that fat will kill you and is unhealthy. No, eating 60% of your dietary calories in fat will kill you, eventually. Anything to excess is unhealthy for you, even oxygen or water. Any required food item that can kill you in excess can harm you if you neglect it all together. Moderation and balance are the key to all things, from your diet to your relationships to your work habits. The so called health experts lack balance or perspective and will kill you with excess trying to save you. Just

try to use some common sense, as painful as it may be to most of us. Forget about all the experts and just balance your diet. Complex carbohydrates to fill up on, with fat and meat to give you complete proteins. Fruits and vegetables to provide the needed vitamins. We are not bunnies who eat vegetables all day long, nor are we carnivores who only eat meat. We eat it all, and that plus a big brain and opposable thumbs mean we can live anywhere and rule our domain over the others. Do not try to be something other than what Mother Nature intended us to be.

So while one can survive for a period of time just on wheat, by adding oil to that you are doing your body a great service. And, if for reasons of frugality that oil just happens to be less healthy than other types it should matter none at all. Your body will be burning more calories than usual and your diet will be mostly complex carbohydrates and so whatever kind of fat your body can have with that should be totally consumed. So forget about olive oil or whatever grain oil is most popular with the dietary consultants this fiscal quarter and just stock up on the cheapest which has a reasonable shelf life. And that means hydrogenated oils. I have always felt butter was healthier for you than margarine, and when affordable I always used that. However, when butter cost more per pound than a gallon of gas I switch to margarine. I know it is less than healthy, but then so is half of what I eat from potato chips to candy bars (okay, it's usually less than half for the junk food- especially as I get older and my body starts to complain about mistreatment). But life is too short to give more than a fraction of my attention to worrying about what I eat. I try to eat healthy, taking baby steps towards a constantly improving diet, and I have yet to worry about consuming hydrogenated oils since I don't eat all that much of it. And in a survival situation I will gladly deep fry everything in the stuff if I have enough of it. Whatever claims there are against the oil will certainly not be proven by me, since in a TEOTWAWKI situation something else will kill me before my diet will. And in a short term survival situation the quantities consumed will matter little. So stock up on room temperature stored lard and shortening. You have greater things to worry about than the process used to shelf stabilize your oil. Two pounds for about $1.50.

Sugar is a different animal altogether. Common sense tells you there is really nothing wrong with it. Other than damage to teeth and the issue with diabetics, table sugar is only a sugar beet. Processed and cleaned. It is not some poison invented by Corporate America to kill off its youth and brainwash the rest of us as one would assume by reading the preaching of the health press. Again, large quantities are not good for you, as in most things. But in moderation there is little wrong with sugar. Your body loves it. Instant energy with less digestion. People groove on fruit, yet think processed beets are somehow so much less healthy. Perhaps they are to a degree, as most processed food is not as healthy as fresh and raw foods. But your body will treat both sugars the same, as quick energy. With fruit you get the vitamins and minerals, but then you are not eating the sugar for its vitamins, now are you? Eat your daily fruit, but don't stress over eating some sugar. When it is hot out I can easily drink a gallon of water in an afternoon. But like most of us I can't stand plain old water. So, I spruce it up with Kool Aid. One gallon water to one half cup sugar and a package of the generic Kool Aid. At that low level of sugar (most folks add one to two cups sugar per two quarts) I don't worry about the cost

or the consumption of sweets, it is so diluted I barely taste it. But much better than just water, so I tend to drink a lot of it. And cheaper than air conditioning.

Have you priced honey lately? I love nothing more than hot fresh bread out of the oven with butter melting off it, other than perhaps the next day toasting a piece of that bread and putting butter AND honey on it. Honey taste great. But, oy, the price lately is out of control. I still use the stuff on occasion, but for a storage item, forget about it!! I will stay with regular sugar. If I stored just a few gallons of honey it would cost more than my years supply of wheat berries. But sugar, in quantity, gets down to around two bits a pound. Much easier on a budget. And again, even if it is less healthy than honey that is the last thing you need to worry about in a survival diet. You are going to be using it as a comfort food. Sweeten up coffee (especially if you only have generic instant coffee- that putrid crap will need it), use it in cooking, but rarely are you going to use it to actually make candy, so the quantities used are not an issue.

Storage life is really not an issue. Like canned goods, the industry pretty much guesses and probably uses a conservative number to avoid its customers dying off on them. The figure for sugar is pretty much infinite and for oil you should have a minimum of two years for liquid oil kept dark and cool. With hardened oils I would guess much more, at least three years in less than optimal storage conditions. Five years in a dark and cool area. With shortening it is easy to tell when things go bad. If the color is no longer white and/or it smells, get rid of it. Otherwise it should be good. Hell, let the dog have some. If the mongrel keels over, throw it away. You could get more than five years out of it. However, unlike your wheat and sugar that is a one time purchase, you should buy oil at least every few years and either rotate it or give it away to assure you always have some. Only buying a stash every five years might be a mistake, as we can only guess how long the stuff is going to last.

There is a reason your body craves oil and sweets. Listen to your body. In times of stress it will need quick energy and fat to burn. Stock up on shortening and sugar. It's cheap and your body will thank you by not falling apart so fast.
END ARTICLE

ANOTHER CONSTITUTIONAL AMMENDMENT DOWN IN FLAMES

Back in the last century, even though our Republican form of government was all but dead, civil servants did at least give lip service to the Constitution. They even pretended that the Bill of Rights still kept the people out of Corporate slavery. But Reagan was about the last president to give a care about that document, and even his Democratic House and Congress took more care from pillaging our rights than the Republicans do today. Even if Clinton sold us down the Corporate Controlled Global Economic river at least he wasn't so blatant about it. He did have enough class to hide his screw job. Today’s Federal government is way too busy creating a Middle East Empire for corporate profit (and of course its own survivability) to worry about something as silly and archaic as citizens rights. One of the most important laws concerning our freedom, the Fed

controlled National I.D. Card, was not even debated. The bastards just tucked it into a budget bill and voted unanimously to pass it. Obviously they have big plans for that one since they wouldn't even debate on it or even deny it was evil.

This weeks move towards the Peoples State was the removal of our property rights. The Supreme Court ruled that higher taxes is a good enough reason to seize private property. And not for a public use such as a highway, or even a much weaker excuse of combating blight (not a public use but at least in the ball park). No, this time a perfectly good middle class neighborhood was going to be seized and turned over to a corporation to "create jobs and improve the cities economy" or some such crap. The city will most likely see less taxes because of generous tax breaks than they got from the private homes, but the drug company wanted to build a facility for whatever reason and they pressed the issue. Now, if a firearms company had used this excuse it might not have worked. But this was a drug company and with Seniors a big voting block you can bet Greg and Gracie Geriatric were sitting their Depends wrapped ass into their rockers and smiling to each other in their gummy way as they now knew in their hearts that once again the Constitution was being used to keep them comfortable and alive much longer than usual. When all is said and done their grandchildren will be living in a Fascist gulag, but it matters little as long as their every comfort is assured (to include next to free drugs). My only comfort in all this is that the insane debt the government takes on just might crash the whole system and hopefully when it does so it will take the bulk of the Boomers On Welfare down with it (I have repeatedly warned my own father on this and the danger to his own government checks, but of course to his generation the government can do no wrong).

So now any local or state government can declare that by taking property they will see more property taxes being paid and seize whatever they want. They then compensate the victim (partially with the very taxes he already paid). As long as there is compensation it is said to be constitutional. Constitutional would be holding property rights as sacred, but we all know that has not been the case for years (when you can't cut down your own tree or fill in your own swamp you are only leasing your property, not owning it). We already knew we didn't truly own our own land, but now we also know it can be taken under any pretext. The new ruling will be used like the old Interstate Commerce clause, an excuse to seize more and more power. The most obvious ploy will be for a business to make a campaign contribution and then collect on it by having the city boot out the troublesome occupant. No longer will you see that one old property right next to a high rise, the owners having lived there 80 years. Now, the skyscraper owners can throw a few bucks at the home owners and bulldoze the house under. And under just compensation they pay less than they have to because of homeowners for years fighting property tax increases by not improving the appearance of the property. So you are screwed either way. You keep the house in great shape and maybe get enough to buy a newer building, but take the risk of going bankrupt because property taxes rise so much (in Nevada they tripled in five years) or you let the old dump fall apart to keep taxes low enough to afford and then when they seize the place you don't get enough compensation to replace that property with anything else.

Just at the very time that the housing bubble is making it hard for most folks to afford shelter, this little doozy comes along and tells us we now take the chance of the government stealing our property for the highest bidder. It used to be that we needed to fear our government. Now we need to fear our government doing the bidding of greedy corporations seeking profit not from offering superior goods and services but from screwing over anyone and everyone for a few bucks. I am 100% for the free market and an end to government. But I am pro-business in a free market context, not pro-business that uses government to its advantage. The robber barons were pussies compared to today's government controlling corporations.
END

SAFE STASH AWAY FROM THE HOME
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I don't know if most folks are like me in this respect, but I have always kept my survival supplies at my domicile. It just makes sense. I have my storage stash right by my side where I need it. If the bombs started to fall tomorrow, I would not want to have to drive around the clogged streets trying to get a storage unit that had my emergency food in it. Well, in the last two years all that has started to change for me, be it against my better wishes. First off, I moved to my current location in Carson City, Nevada. I immediately secured a great paying job (itself a shock as Florida had plenty of low paying ones only) and so decided to stay here for awhile. The original plan had been to stay in northern Arizona but the job situation was weak there. There must be something about retirement areas where the young that still have use of their bowels are expected to literally starve to death to work low paying service jobs to give the seniors whatever they want, paid for by the taxes of the young. While it would mean the destruction of the economy has arrived, I would still love to see the end of the geriatric welfare state. Anyway, good paying jobs mean high cost of living, and the only shelter I can afford here is a trailer in a park. And because of the Yuppie scum from California jacking up the real estate cost here and trying to protect their artificial investment by zoning restrictions, there are only so many trailer parks here. And only one that accepted older trailers (past tense, they also now prohibit the older affordable trailers). So I am stuck in this park, for to move would mean spending at least five grand on a newer used trailer. Or pay twice the amount for an apartment. And my park really sucks. The landlord is a real jack-off. So there can be no modifications. No tarp over your roof if it is leaking, no way to shield from the sun (it was 100 degrees yesterday) but more importantly to our discussion here, no storage sheds allowed. I even offered to buy a brand new nice looking plastic type tool shed, and even that was not allowed. Well, not for me, anyway. Other spots, since they are 1990 or newer trailers rather than my tired looking caulking encrusted '88 trailer, are allowed to get away with their spots looking like a garage sale was going on. The poor are not loved in this park. So my storage is entirely internal. Which means I only have about 200 pounds of wheat immediately available to me. The other 700 pounds is at my stepmothers house 30 miles from here, and that is parked outdoors along the house under a tarp (one can only guess as to its longevity).

Another factor was my owning a second trailer. It had proved much too small for both myself and the old lady to live in (it was an eighteen footer, which meant only 16 feet of internal space) and I replaced it when my current trailer came up for sale for a song. Twice as big at one third the price. The only sacrifice was all creature comforts such as water or space heat or oven or working toilet, etc. But after the move we were stuck with a trailer (the smaller one) we didn't need but that I didn't want to give away for much less than I had bought it for (I didn't have a clue when the dealer immediately dropped it from $5k to three when I offered cash, but it is not saleable in this area- I see trailers 15 years older getting a higher price than what ours was offered for). So, rather than put money

into it to try to resell it for half of what I bought it for, I just pay $25 a month for storage and use it as a storage shed about four miles from where I live. Until I get serious and start putting more money into storage food (right now it has 400 pounds of wheat in buckets) it stays under utilized with twelve buckets and a bunch of paperback books I will never read but bought when they were five cents each. But the potential is there for more storage if I desire it. Anything to get my $25 storage fee paying for itself.

The other two events that got me pondering the location of emergency storage were a local fire and the recent Supreme Court decision. Last summer we had a big fire close by on the mountain. No big deal, my stepdaughter came over to watch it with her son and we could have evacuated in her car had the need arisen. I didn't think anything of that one, but just last month a propane bottle in this park exploded and burned down a trailer. And then it suddenly clicked. Fire. My trailer. My trailer burning. All my supplies burning. Not a huge financial loss, only a few thousand to replace, but I then was vulnerable to any emergency that happened while I was restocking. Remember, famous people die in threes. And good or bad luck mostly comes along in threes. It would be my luck that the Gods would have great fun at my expense and burn down my trailer, close my work down and cut the supply of oil from the Mid East all in the same week. So, just so as to not tempt fate, it is best to plan for the worst. As far as the Supreme Court decision, one could conclude that the local government stealing your property and giving it to private investors under the lame excuse that higher tax revenue was for the public good has nothing to do with the items in your home, but if you concluded that you would only be proving that you are not paranoid enough.

Before, private property was regarded as sacred. We all know you could get screwed anyway, from environmental regulations or what not. But the principle of private property was given lip service. Now, the Supreme Court is making such a broad rule exemption away from public-use-only that any level of government anywhere can steal your property and legally pay you less than you need to get another one. So, with this mind-set, how far away from blind acceptance to all government seizures is the public? How soon are the contents of your house going to be up for auction? (and for that matter, how soon before the threat of seizure is used to keep people in line?) The obvious first target will be guns. No one is going to seize your house over them, but right now in some areas there already is a climate in which the brainwashed sheeple will readily accept the government passing a law allowing random searches of homes for recently deemed illegal items. And if anybody resists I would imagine the rest of his fellow citizens would make clucking sounds and condemn the stupid dead bastard for resisting. And while on their way to finding semi-autos, if they just happened onto a stash of freeze dried foods, well then you would be branded a survivalist and painted with that smear-jobbed term (if they had to arrest you, otherwise I'm sure someone would just make a note for future reference). And have you noticed whenever an anti-social type is taken down they tape his "arsenal", and as of late they have really been stretching trying to maximize the appearance of being well armed? The guy had four guns, so they line up a long row of .22 rounds trying to fill the table top up. It's almost embarrassing for they the poor LEO's. Here they are trying to make a political career for themselves and the new criminal was so poor he could only afford a

few rimfire rifles and a nickel bag of pot. Hard to win brownie points taking him down. That about describes anyone not voting Democrat. But the point is that it is going to be a lot easier now to pass such once un-Constitutional seizure laws and get away with it. At this point in time it really does seem to me that the powers that be seem to think they must strike while the iron is hot and pass as many police state regulations as possible before we forget about 9/11. It's either that or the Mega-Corporations really are taking over the government and this all has nothing to do with terrorism and everything to do with controlling the populace as our country and economy is sold out and plundered for the profit of a few. Neither one sounds too much fun to me.

Now, I can hear most of you out there, moaning and groaning about what an idiot I am and what a stupid paranoid bastard I am. And that is okay. I would rather be too paranoid and see the worst, and then be proven wrong. So, how about this. What about theft or natural disaster? Common occurrences. Does having only one stash make sense in the face of a likelihood of fires/tornados/hurricanes/earthquakes? If you are gone for long periods of time from your home, couldn't others try to steal your stuff? Even bored teenagers looking to vandalize for fun might be a problem for your run down crappy trailer home. And natural disasters happen in every part of the country. You see, that is not being paranoid at all, just prudent. It makes perfect sense to put some of your survival supplies in another area to increase the odds that you will not lose all in one foul swoop. If one misfortune befalls you, do you really want to lose all your preparation supplies? Of course not. Wheat might be easy to replace, but even cheap war surplus rifles are not. Nor the reloading gear, ammo, grain grinders, etc. And even wheat might be hard to replace if there is a bad harvest, or a surge in gas prices see a decline in truckers, or even a bad winter storm in your neck of the woods. Or even the replacement of the poly buckets. I have seen Wal Mart out of buckets several visits in a row. Of course you need to prepare ahead of time, and that includes alternate storage areas.

If you are worried enough about theft and fire to start another emergency storage elsewhere then it also stands to reason that you are concerned even more about theft and damage at a location where you can't keep an eye on it. It therefore would be prudent to minimize your financial loss should that occur. You need enough to replace your gear at home, but as cheap as possible. Do not store another AR15 at your alternate site, just a $100 Mauser bolt action war surplus rifle. Store wheat, not MRE's or freeze dried food. Corrosive ammo rather than modern manufacture. A hand grain grinder, not electronic. A $50 water filter, not a $250 one. A few ounces of silver, not of gold. Copies of your legal documents, not your originals. If something happens to your wonderful super-duper survival stash at home, your arsenal of big bad mighty and righteous semi-auto assault rifles, your stockpile of dried gourmet meals, your shelf bending boxes of perfected hand loaded ammunition, your solar hot water heater and PV panels, the diesel generator and storage tank of fuel, the woodstove with twenty cords of wood, if all that and more is suddenly unavailable to you, what would you do after you got done crying? Any serious survivalist worth their salt should see the movie Tremors. When giant underground worms destroy your perfect survival retreat, what is your back-up plan? You need an alternate stash at another location, and a minimal cost of $300-$500 will assure that even

the poor can apply. Even $200 would get you a used .22 rifle for $75, 2k rounds of ammo at $25, $20 for a cheapo grain grinder, 300 pounds of wheat for $45 and the buckets to store it for $30 and some water purification tablets for the last $5.

The location of your back-up stash is of course going to vary by each person. If you have no family within reasonable distance, or no friends who would sacrifice a corner of their garage, then you are going to need to pay for storage. The smallest closet space is going to be sufficient and could be had for as little as $10 a month, unless land costs in your area are insane and/or there is little competition to lower the cost amongst the storage providers. While it might seem stupid to pay more for a storage unit over a short period of time than the actual stored items are worth, if they are going to potentially save your life one day then you are merely paying an insurance fee. People who store a bunch of worthless widgets at $100 a month are silly, they just own way too much stuff. You are going to be storing items to keep you alive in the event of an emergency. My advice would be to avoid a storage unit and instead store an RV with your items in it. If you have a pick-up truck, buy a cheap $500 cab-over camper and store your supplies in it while storing the camper in a storage yard for a few bucks a month. In an emergency you have supplies, and in a situation where you must flee you have a mobile living area. I would much rather camp in a trailer than a tent if there are bears and cats roaming around. If you instead have a car and it is powerful enough to tow, just get a small travel trailer. The smaller they are the cheaper (for the older ones). And if you spend some money on them they could provide a solar powered home to camp out of if needed. Even a van would be cheap to buy (cheaper and cheaper as the cost of gas goes up) and store filled with supplies. Have a solar trickle charger attached to it to keep the battery charged up and drive it at least once a month to keep the tires from rotting. If you keep the tank filled it might be a good idea to add fuel preservative. Another alternate to camping out of a flimsy leaking $30 Wal Mart tent in a survival situation.

I have made no mention of buried caches, as I believe that is a separate issue. Because of space limitations you can only bury small items. It would be a little hard to bury a years supply of food. Also, once you bury it you can forget about adding anything to it. And they are used mainly for hiding guns from the Feds, not for keeping you alive for months. A worthwhile addition to your storage strategy, but not for discussion here. For now, just think about having an alternate, away from your home, cheap but complete survival stash. END

THE GOOD, THE BAD AND THE CHICKEN LITTLES

Any potential disaster is good enough to motivate preparation.

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I like to think of myself as a cheerful pessimist. So much can go wrong, and just might, and yet I hold out for hoping for a much better tomorrow. This is obviously silly on my part, as the probabilities are not in my favor. I am like the idiot at the slot machine, knowledgeable only in the fact that the machine is the "loosest in town", unmindful that a 94.5% payback still means I lose on average five cents on the dollar. I just know I can be that one person that beats the odds favoring the house- as does every other person in the building (sadly, even most of the employees). The house always wins. Over the long term. That should caution all of us. The US is like that problem gambler who beat the house several times, losing a pile of chips in the 70's and then ten years latter getting them all back plus a few extra, throwing the dice in Desert Storm and winning big, placing an insurance bet for Y2K and breezing by that one, and now betting that we can win another Vietnam and at the same time beat the odds of winning in a housing bubble even though it didn't work for Japan who had a much stronger economy. But, the house always wins over time. The longer it is, the better the odds facing the house. This country has been winning for so long against bad odds we think we are immune from losing. Idiots. I assume (in itself a dangerous practice) we may continue to avoid serious danger, not from any rational logical thinking but from past experience that perhaps we are blessed, destined to muddle through despite ourselves. But the odds are against it, no matter how optimistic I am. So, the prudent ones prepare and scream at every opportunity that the sky is, indeed, falling. Common sense tells us this is true even if so much in the past tells us we can muddle through another stupid bout of behavior with minimal consequences.

While it is okay to be optimistic as long as one is prepared, so too is it fine to rant and rave that the end is near as long as it serves a purpose. If fear starts a fire under your lazy butt to do something positive about that perceived problem, then there is nothing wrong with it. Fear is a natural response, but one needs to be smart about the gifts that Mother Nature gave us. If one huddles in the back of a cave, whimpering and cowering at any outside noise, little has been accomplished other than irritating your cave mates. However, knowing there are creepy crawly slithery things going bump in the night, and doing something positive about it, will surely help you sleep better at night and score you big time brownie points with the cave babes. Who's going to get the good looking girl, the whimpering guy or the one who invented fire? Sure, I'm sure cave chicks were pretty ugly, what with no teeth and no understanding of water being used to wash those nasty pits, as well as other body parts even more in need of a good scrub, but the whole thing being subjective our hero got to pick the least ugly woman which in those days was pretty close to dating the prom queen, so as one can see actually doing something about a problem was really worth your time trying to arrange your few brain cells into firing up into an actual thought which brought about the whole advancement of mankind by pairing up the nerds with the hotties which after a few years break where the muscle guys thought

they were hot stuff being poster boys for the workers proletariat in our now disappeared Industrial Economy is now coming back into fashion when the good looking babes once again start to realize that hooking up with nerd boy is what is going to buy the BMW now that the bucks are gravitating to those thinking instead of sweating and so the natural order of things is once again safely underway and the universe is set right. Motivation is needed to solve problems, and in this instance the ends do justify the means so whatever is that motivating factor, use it. What starts a fire under your butt?

Fears of Y2K? Peak Oil? Magnetic Pole Realignment? Hyperinflation? Economic depression? American dictatorship? Global Warming? How do you focus your fears? Watching movies such as Day After Tomorrow or War Of The Worlds? Reading post-apocalypse science fiction? Cruising the Internet for scary stuff? Reading any non-fiction that promises doom and gloom? In one aspect, the event you fear matters not at all. Even if the only thing in life you are worried about is that an alien invasion will wipe out mankind, even though you are most likely delusional, just being afraid AND preparing for it is enough. Now, having a vision from Red Bear the Native American that the magnetic poles of the earth will shift and so making yourself at one with the universe and clearing your mind and selling all your material goods is not doing much to prepare yourself. Nor is studying the Old Testament three hours a day until you have figured out the exact hour of Rapture. Please don't misunderstand me. Even if I'm not religious I do understand that most folks are and that they are helped in their lives by their faith. I have no problem with that. All I'm saying is that spiritual well being is not enough without material plans to help you survive. If God helps those that help themselves, He is going to be awful pissed that His followers who lived in the most abundant society in history were unwilling to prepare for hard times for themselves and others. If I am willing to prepare now to help feed others in an emergency, but others who are much more religious are busy paying off an SUV to go to church with, who has his heart in the right place, the evil agnostic or the Jesus Freak? Enough said about religion (with apologies to any I might offend).

In several random moments of trying to figure out the universe, I have often wondered why Y2K amounted to nothing. I mean, every other disaster that we dodged has a very good reason. We can understand that the old Soviet Union broke up because their economy could no longer function under serious outdated manufacturing methods (and even if the conspiracy nuts are right and the old power structure of the Soviets just slid behind the scenes and they will one day resurface to crush the decadent capitalistic West the fact still remains that we don't have to worry about massive nuclear war for awhile). We can see how Greenspan avoided two economic depressions by flooding the market with cash and credit after the stock market crash in '87 and after 9/11 (or even if it really was about the Tech Wreak instead). The fact that our Financial Reckoning Day was merely postponed matters little here for our discussion. We understood the threat and how it was diverted. But, what in the hell happened to Y2K? If the reports previous to the events were true, such as computer controlled sewage spills from processing plants, how was it possible that when the clock turned over not one incident occurred, not even in nations that had not spent one thin dime on reprogramming? How is that possible? It boggles the mind that we spent billions to avert disaster and did so (which brings into

question how could those agencies that spent next to nothing still have no problems?) yet those that spent very little experienced no glitches. Did the rest of the world have nothing hooked up to computers like we did (in our pathetic attempts to remove labor costs from practically everything)? Was it all an elaborate government conspiracy to gain employment in the Tech Industry and stimulate the economy (possible given their recent moves away from paying civil servants to paying private contractors- then they stimulate employment without adding to tax roles)? Was one lone hacker jacked up on Twinkies and Jolt Cola (I love that stuff- anyone know who still sells it?) and smoking a bowl just having a bit of a joke and stared a meme that succeeded beyond his wildest dreams? Was it all just a wacky idea that way too many of us bought into?

And after Y2K, does it make sense anymore to find a brilliant future disaster and run with it? I mean, I'm pretty excited about the potential of Peak Oil and I'm a latecomer to that party. National Geographic did a cover story a year ago (June 2004) about running out of cheap oil so as a survivalist writer it is a bit embarrassing to have just caught on to the idea. Was it because of fear of repeating Y2K? Was I embarrassed having devoted two years to preparing for a non-event and wishing to avoid a repeat? I say no, but subconsciously I very well could have been gun-shy. But I think Peak Oil is the perfect next disaster. You have, once again, a disaster that can effect the entire globe, our whole economy. So does a fall of the dollar and a U.S. economic depression, but that is no where near as sexy as Peak Oil. Peak Oil is a survivalists wet dream, even better than Y2K. The former promises a new dark ages, the latter only a return to the early twentieth century. With Y2K, just yank the computer chip out of the tractor, or even use the old one sitting in the garage. You can still farm. You can still pump oil, you can still run railroads, just on a slower and more labor-dependant fashion. With Peak Oil, our whole economy stops because there is no oil (well, its all being fought over in the Middle East). After a time, there is no more advanced economy, just subsistence farming and trading. It is going to be a nation of Soccer Moms fighting over the last barrel of Texan crude. For awhile it is going to be fun being a citizen of Texas or Wyoming, seeing your valuable resources being bought at dear terms. Then the whole oil dependency explodes in everyone's face and its no more fun and games. If it happens.

Are survivalists just like the government, always needing a nemesis to give meaning to their existence? Hey, it works like a charm for government. They invent wars to help themselves down the road of keeping power, war only destroys what the market can create or what pain the civilians must endure. The government merely steals the means of production for war and forces the people to bleed in them. Those in power only benefit. I mean, can anyone tell me, really, what war did we need to ever get in? When was the country ever in danger? We have two huge oceans protecting us and the nations in our hemisphere are tame. We might have been invaded by a token force in 1812 but even then that was our fault for getting greedy and trying to steal Canada while Britain was busy fighting in Europe. Japan attacking us was mostly in self defense, as FDR knew what he was doing and was trying to get us into a war. We could have easily avoided backing Japan into a corner by not contesting control of the Pacific. At first, going to war had a noble purpose for the nation, we wanted land, lots of it, and we were willing to take it.

One must admire Jefferson if for nothing else than his Louisiana Purchase, but after that (and before of course) it was all naked greed and might making right. We had the power and the numbers and they had land, so we took it. That is what nations do. And just what the heck are all the Mexicans so pissed about? They went to war with Spain to get all their land, so why turn around and get all pissy when we go to war and take a big chunk of it. Turn-about is fair play. And its not like we took valuable land. Without a massive economic investment the whole area would still be one big desert, and it ain't like Mexico would have ever poured any money into the area. Look how they wasted all the oil revenue. Anyway, our wars now are only about helping out the government staying in power. The people receive little benefit but all of the economic pain to pay for them.

So if war keeps the government healthy, paranoia and the next best thing in disasters helps survivalists thrive. It even adds to our ranks. Without the fear of nuclear war, or Y2K or Peak Oil, there would be no survivalists. And then there would be no survival supply businesses. And without a lot of supplies, our hobby would be a lot less fun or interesting. Take for instance a solar powered battery charger. It is hard to conceive of a regular, day to day, non-emergency use for this device. A regular 110v charger works in a few hours and uses almost no electricity. A solar recharger can take several days to charge a set of batteries and the additional cost over the household current charger will most likely never be paid back in electric savings. So, it only has a use for disaster preparations. And would anyone knowingly eat freeze dried foods outside of camping if there never was any possibility our food supplies could be interrupted? That stuff is just not right.

So stop worrying if the next big disaster is going to happen. Just prepare for it like it is going to. And don't worry about those that scoff. One day you will be right, and prepared.
END

THE TOP FIVE MUST HAVE SURVIVAL BOOKS
Books you need even on a budget
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All of us have hobbies. Even those on strict budgets have enough money left over from necessities to pursue some sort of hobby, thanks to the wonders of the free market (the portion we have left after government interference, anyway). Imagine, we are the leading Empire headed towards collapse and our economy after 50% taxation, after the bulk of the worlds lawyers get done fighting over most profits, after an army of civil servants gets done adding new regulations every work day (thank goodness for Federal holidays), even after all that and an inflation rate that doubles prices every generation, we still have an economy that allows the undereducated worker drones to buy all their needs and still have money left over to have hobbies that take up a good portion of their free time. If we still had a free market economy rather than an Empire with a Welfare State, you could live even cheaper. If you removed the 50% taxes and the 50% cost of lawyers and regulations and inflation, your costs would be half and your wages would double. And that could even be conservative. If you were really lazy and frugal you could live on one tenth the wages you now need. Believe me, I've had plenty of time at boring jobs to figure this one out. Even at the current situation we are in, I could live on $200 a month easily. $100 for all my food, $30 for phone and Internet, $20 for electric and all repairs/cloths/incidentals at $50 a month. This is living in a trailer on my own land with a bicycle for transportation. At an entry level job paying $6 an hour I would need to work 10 hours a week to earn that after taxes. Not too much of an imposition on my time. Without our wonderful State extracting its tribute I could get the same buying power by working four or five hours a week. I would actually be happy at work, it would be a break from being at home. Oh well. For now I will continue to escape reality by pursuing my hobbies. My primary one being reading.

And after reading so many books, I felt I might want to share with you what I thought were the best books on survivalism. This is of course highly subjective. Favorite books are just like favorite guns or best religions, they vary by person. My line of reasoning was that I wished to present what I thought were the best books, with the understanding that all our budgets and time was limited. My top five will cover most areas of the field and only set you back $60 with three being new and two used (assuming one bought at Amazon). I got mine for $50, as the two used were available to me locally at thrift stores for pocket change. The other books not listed were good in their way but were not good enough to spend the time reading, or not worth the money, or both. Please feel free to email me and disagree with my selection, I could even have forgotten some contenders. Remember, my address is the jimd303 you see at the start of this newsletter, not the administration address given by my re-mailing service.

The books are:
BOSTON ON SURVIVING Y2K

BOSTON T PARTY'S GUN BIBLE
BACK TO BASICS
THE GREAT RECKONING
HOWARD RUFFS HOW TO SURVIVE THE COMING BAD YEARS

Now that I have introduced my list, feel free to scoff and chortle at my amazingly feeble choices. After wiping the spittle off your chins, please allow me to explain my choices. I will review each book in a moment, but allow me to say first that $50 is a small price to pay to educate yourself, or more likely a friend or relative who needs convincing to start preparations. None of these books lend to the rumor that survivalists are wackos. They do not assume you have the means to buy twenty acres and farm the land. They point to the wisdom of preparations and give the education to do so. I'll even show you know to put together a paperback gift package under $5 to hopefully awaken someone's interest in preparations. To the reviews.

BOSTON ON SURVIVING Y2K
Boston T Party, despite a name that makes you think of authors from Paladin Press like Rex Feral or Uncle Fester, is a good author. Now, our tastes do not match exactly as he is heavily into the patriot/militia/gun fag scene, but I've bought about a third of his books and like them. His biggest sin is that he is not frugal, looking at all solutions through his wallet. But, hey, so do 90% of Americans so I can't be too critical. My first exposure to him was through Boston On Guns And Courage, the modern (and much better) version of Survival Guns. I resisted buying his Gun Bible (an updated an extended version of On Guns & Courage) for the longest time, but once I reached that rare state of affairs where I had more money than sense I gave in and bought it. And since then I was hooked. Boston, despite his bent towards expensive solutions, is a darn good writer. It was only natural that I then buy his book on Y2K five years after the event. The reviews assured me that there was a mother lode of tasty information on survival, not just a warning for computer crashes (and the sub-title did say "and other lovely disasters"). Surprisingly little space in the book is devoted to the threat of Y2K with the bulk applicable to survival preparations of any nature. Chapters are: Why Disaster Looms, Y2K Countdown, Location, Weapons, Water, Food, Health, Energy, Shelter, Transportation, Money, Barter, Communications, Security, Tools/Implements/Cloths, People, Services During Y2K, Raising Animals, Recreation, If I Were A Looter, If I Were A Govt. Official, Rules For Y2K, Get Going Now!, Tiny Answers, and Resources. This is one of those books that will keep you turning pages in anticipation, OR you can randomly pick a section and start to read and you have a hard time putting it down. The best all-purpose survivalist how-to.

BOSTON'S GUN BIBLE
This is a door-stopper of a book. Boston uses his own page numbering system (i.e. 10-16 is the tenth chapter, page 16 of that chapter) so I am guessing 6-800 pages. His system is excellent for quick searching, much better than the straight numbering which everyone else uses. Hey, it's tough being a pioneer. For the longest time I resisted buying his book ($20 is, after all, $20) since I had its baby brother On Guns And Courage. But, after much

procrastination I splurged and I'm glad I did. If you want almost any gun you can use for survival tested and evaluated, he's your boy. To find the true capability of the many guns tested, he devised several techniques to get a true performance out of each one, and then shares with you all the mind-numbing details. This is the kind of stuff we die for, I mean reading my last sentence I realize I understated the facts. You will never need another source for the firearms he covers (as far as capabilities go). In On Guns he does the usual 'got the gun and went shooting with it' but in the Gun Bible he puts the guns through simulated battle use and the differences are surprising. Plus, he covers all the other stuff about guns, from legal issues to ammo characteristics. He does devote a chapter each to the AR15 and AK47, plus one for all other carbines, but he is squarely in the battle rifle camp and makes no bones about it. I like his thinking on the argument for the low weight of 223 rounds. You can carry twice the ammo, but you will need twice the rounds to take down a target, and that argument carried to its logical conclusion means you should carry a Rugar 10/22 and 5,000 rounds of .22's. Exactly. And why carry a carbine and be in range of the other guys pop gun? Stay over 300 yards away and use a real round. He even has nice things to say about the Lee-Enfield, so this guys okay in my book. Remember, if most of us are poor and need a cheaper battle rifle, the old WWII bolt actions are the way to go. Get this book for an indispensable gun reference guide.

MAKING THE BEST OF BASICS

If you had no other information on preparedness food other than this book, you would do just fine. My copy is almost ten years old and other than the retail guide being out of date, the tenth edition is perfect. James Stevens is the author, and has updated and kept fresh this classic. I had no idea it was first published in 1974, and you can't tell because of the reworking. It does not look or feel like an old moldy, unlike a lot of the preparedness books out there that got a new preface after 9/11 but still retain the original text (check the firearms section on some of them- it dates them instantly). This is primarily a book on wheat, but everything is covered. In short, this book is everything you need for food storage, and is up to date. Retailers carry it if you wish to avoid Amazon (if you are concerned about ID theft or fraud, just buy a pre-paid debit card). What can I say, its a classic, it's perfect, and it's the only book on food you will need.

That sums up the three new books you must have. Just the three will suffice, and will make a fine $50-60 investment. Not an expense, but an investment. If you are looking to buy a survival firearm, or a generator, the first two books will save you hundreds to thousands or dollars. If you ever need to subsist primarily on stored wheat and milk, the third book will keep you sane with its many recipes (but get it just for its instructions on all aspects of food storage). Even if you have your battle rifle already and have little need for a generator or knowledge of raising animals or need to know how to store wheat, they still carry plenty of advice that can save your life or at least some money or time. The next two books are used, old but not tired advice. They have aged well. They are not strictly necessary but I find they offer needed coverage of politics, economics and a overall view of the workings of the world. You need that as much as you need supplies. And the price is right. I got mine for a quarter apiece, but this area has some great thrift stores with good selections. Most areas do not. But even buying them through the mail you should

be able to score both for $5 after shipping (order soon before gas prices and shipping rates soar again).

HOW TO PROSPER DURING THE COMING BAD YEARS
The classic by Howard J Ruff, with about a few million used paperback copies floating around out there. Buy a few for yourself, reread this every few years, buy copies to give to friends and fence sitters. This is really only a book that was written to cash in on the authors popularity after he got a smash newsletter and TV show, but the commercialization lives on today in the form of a dated cheap commodity, and we can use that to our advantage. This is an outstanding introduction to survivalism. The first of the book is laughable in as far as the government debt figures go, they are so insignificant. But also a truer gauge to real inflation over twenty five years than what the Feds give. But the reason you still read this book is that it is timeless advice. Twenty five years ago perpetual double digit inflation looked a sure bet, and riots were a recent reminder of social unrest. So best to move out of the big cities. Tomorrow it might be Peak Oil, but it still pays to get out of the cities. His advice is simple for the newcomer to understand, and event-unspecific enough for the old timer to still appreciate.

THE GREAT RECKONING
Subtitled, Protect Yourself In The Coming Depression, by James Dale Davidson & Lord William Rees-Mogg. If you are bored with history, politics and economics then this book may not be for you. Myself, having little aptitude for things mechanical or any of the hard sciences, just adore the heck out of the social sciences and this book is almost porn to me. It has it all, from the rise and fall of Empires to the workings of the world economy to the history of religious practices. It is all big picture, how we got here and where we are going kind of thing. An almost air tight case is made for the reasons we are headed for disaster. Okay, to a degree they were off in their predictions, the US did not enter a Depression in the 1990's. A case can be made that the rest of the world did, but even that is not important. All their groundwork studies are more important than their timing. To get the gist of how history moves, how organizations rise and fall, how economies work over long periods of time, even where the direction of the rise of an information economy will take us, this is the one book you want to read. If you are unsure if this book, because of the subject matter, will appeal to you, get it from the library first. Unless your reading tastes stop at mass market paperbacks, you should like this. It is educational, easy to understand and entertaining. Best big picture book.

Okay, that's it. The five books you should have in your survival library. I'm not saying you shouldn't have such books as companion vegetable planting or a gunsmithing book. What I am saying is that these five books are good for everyone regardless of location, skills or preferences. The detail books are up to you according to those criteria, the generalized books I have just covered. One other book I wish to mention is not to buy for yourself (you most likely already have a copy, or just go to the library) but to get as a gift for others. The ones you like enough to care about their future, the ones you hope to get to "see the light". Buy a used copy of Lucifer's Hammer. That and Ruffs used paperback should cost you under $5 and the fiction can be read as motivation with the follow up of

the how to book for guidance. My father became interested in survivalism through Lucifer's Hammer, although despite my prodding he never followed through with any preparations (hell, he even sold his M1 carbine to get money for his last Old Lady who is still draining his wallet- poor bastard). But perhaps others can. Work on them, a few paperbacks are cheaper than buying preps for them. And you are doing a good deed by trying to help others help themselves.
END ARTICLE

CAMPING OUT FOR SURVIVAL
When there's no where else to go, go camping
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Let's just say, for the sake of argument, that several unlikely events occur more or less at the same time. The government, is a desperate attempt to keep the economy from taking an unsightly nose dive, continues to inflate the money supply, borrow massively from other nations to keep spending up, goes from being the job producer of last resort to being the only job producer, and encourages asset bubbles to allow the illusion of prosperity. Oh, wait, all these are already happening. Now, add in another unlikely event such as terrorist attack or a huge block of retirees suddenly overloading the already weak Social Security system or the oil supply not keeping up with demand or, oh, I don't know, how about the strongest emerging economy suddenly not being as interested in propping up our rapidly eroding currency. Oh yeah, all that is already happening. Do you think this could spell trouble of any kind? I know, we've all been down this road before, nothing new to see here folks, just keep moving along, go about your business, all is well. Back in the old days, a long time ago when Big Daddy Government wasn't as interested to micro-managing ever facet of every waking moment, before you were forced to buckle up (you know, back when you were free to kill yourself if you were an idiot be it by lack of seat belts or helmets or playing with fireworks or whatever) you still either did this yourself or saw other people do it. When you passed a wreak on the side of the road, and some poor fool was half way through the windshield, wasn't the first response to buckle up if you weren't already, seeing as how the thought of flying through safety glass at high velocity was less than appealing? Even if an accident never happened to you, at least for a time you practiced being a little safer after witnessing tragedy. All these emerging factors may not spell the end, but perhaps you should do just a little extra to prepare, just in case.

And of course, many of us are "cash free" poor. The usual suspect is your other half, the spouse, the ol ball and chain. They actually think that the money you earn is theirs. Did they go to school to learn a skill? Do they stay in traffic two hours a day to commute to some crap job that is beyond loathing just to make an overpriced mortgage payment for a junky gum and glue structure that will fall at the slightest opposition from Mother Nature? No, they do not. However, they still think it is their money. And we let them. It is our own fault, we let them talk us into believing this crap. I used to be that way. Even when I was putting wife number two through school, being the sole breadwinner, watching our two infants when I wasn't working at night while she went to school, she still thought it was okay to spend all my money. I finally paid the price to free myself of that (not of course voluntarily, there is little you can do when your spouse meets someone else and wants to screw around on you), and since then allow no one else to control what little I bring home from a paycheck. But most of you are going to stay whipped. I'm not judging, having done the same myself. To free yourself you pay the price of loosing your kids and most of your earnings and must drastically lower your standard of living. The courts are 90% on the side of the female and Boy Howdy do they know it. They hold all

the cards. So I understand why we all just go along unless forced to do otherwise. But that still leaves us with the problem of having little disposable cash to spend. Preparedness cost money. We might have the time and willingness, but lack the cash.

No matter how many frugal tips I may give you, without at least some cash to invest you are unable to do much. I can point out you may buy land for only $500 a lot as a retreat, but without that cash it doesn't matter if that is dirt cheap (ha, get it?). If the spouse doesn't approve the purchase, who cares if a trailer is only $600? Hell, I was once offered a free travel trailer and wife #2 screamed and bitched until I turned the guy down. It seemed it would look unsightly in the yard (I told you she was Devil Spawn- hey, what can I say, she had a nice rack & I was young and let the little brain do all the thinking). I mean, this is all really a control issue. Ladies, I also am aware the beer swilling unemployed husband is just as much at fault as the shrill harpy of a wife, but many more females than males do this but mostly there are a lot less female survivalists out there, so bear with me on my seemingly chauvinistic attacks here. I have written before on appropriating funds for preparations. Here I would give you the cheapest route to survival, the camp out. When it is near impossible to get approval for funds, the camping disguise is near perfect (and/or the only practical way of survival). If you can't afford a piece of land in the country, or a structure to put on it, or even a whole lot of storage food or even guns and ammo, then preparing for camping is a good alternative. Even if you found a life partner/soul mate instead of just a spouse, and the budget is not under their control you might be in a situation where you have no choice but to prepare at a severe minimum. We have all been in very tight financial positions before. Some of us never get out of them. If you are normal, you have so much debt living day to day then you have very little spare cash after the bills.

And if you are normal, you have a car. Chaining you down in debt, the biggest monthly expense after your mortgage, you are buying into the American dream of supporting three classes of parasites- auto Unions, the government (a huge percentage of the sticker price is taxes) and the automobile corporations/big oil monopoly. At one time all sectors of the economy connected to the infernal combustion engine made up a significant percentage of the Gross National Product. We were basing the economy on the hobby of driving. The creation of suburbia and its care and feeding were due to the car and our love affair with it. It is not necessary to commute, other than the fact that we created our jobs around the car. Come Peak Oil, that will bite us on the butt, hard. However, for now, you might as well take advantage of its ownership and use it to your survival. If you own a station wagon, a van or even a truck (put a camper shell on it) you are in possession of a natural mobile enclosure that will be quite comfortable for yourself and/or your family for a long stay away from the burning ghettos. Even a small compact is going to be better than nothing, as it will carry quite a bit of food and you can always tilt back the seats for an uncomfortable sleep if needed.

If you own a truck it is not unusual to find free or near free cab-over trailers. The lack of space and top heavy characteristics of the cab-over make them very much NOT in demand on the used market and many owners just want to get rid of them. I have seen very few

for sale over $500 (other than near new ones) and more than a few free for the hauling. If you can score a free one, then perhaps the spouse will consent to its presence in the yard or drive for fifty weeks of the year (if needed, use the "free storage for our junk" argument). The other two it can be used for camping trips (perhaps a good excuse for buying a generator) and will be there if needed. If not, being patient and on the look out you will eventual find a shell for your truck for under $50-100. You could even build a false floor over all or some of the truck bed for storage with the top for sleeping. A van will give you plenty of room. Even an old VW van that is fuel efficient can hold a large mattress in the back built on a platform. For our move from FL to NV we had an old telephone company van that was bare in the back (so no seats to remove). I put all my buckets of wheat in the back, threw a sheet of plywood over them and a mattress over that. Instant bed and storage. With a station wagon most likely the only way you will be able to sleep in it would be by removing all your gear every night and folding down the seats. A pain, but doable if needed. Even a small Subaru wagon will have enough room to sleep in. Regular passenger vehicles are not noted for their interior space, but you can use the trunk for storage and tilt down the seats to sleep. It's either the hard ground with insects and predators outside or sleeping half sitting up on the inside.

Childhood is a fun and carefree time. Why shouldn't it be? We have other people doing the worrying for us. When we were young, we carelessly threw ourselves into the embrace of Mother Nature, poking around logs with sticks, carelessly drinking from streams, building huge bonfires under dead trees and sleeping under the stars. What idiots. After growing up and being forced into the embrace of the brutal corporate world, the dubious union with a spouse and the harsh responsibility of being a breadwinner, camping out in the wild just didn't seem to be as much fun. So many things to worry about. Bubonic plague carrying rodents, ticks, spiders that rotted your flesh, snakes, freezing storms, lions and tigers and bears, oh my!! Better to go camping in the car, it brings civilization to the wilds. The mosquitoes stay out, you can use an indoor heater if needed, and the large predators are discouraged by metal and strong glass. When Yogi the bear is outside licking the pot with dinner leftovers and looking mighty pissed about having nothing more to eat, better in the car than out in a tent. A tent is false security, and anybody who has ever watched any movie with campers and butcher knifes in it knows not to stay in a tent. Unless there is a larger group of you and you can post guards. But, in that case you would have most likely driven to a rendezvous point anyway. The only reason it makes sense to not bring along a car is if you don't own one, or you biked or hiked to a location where you had already stashed supplies. The downside to that is the hassle of building a cache, but on the upside you can escape even if the roads are gridlocked or gas is unavailable.

Not only is lack of funds the only reason you may be forced to camp. It is the main one. If you keep the tank full, and buy a little at a time you will only need spend about $100 for cold weather gear (two cheap sleeping bags each per person) and perhaps not even that much for food (25 pound bags of flour are $5 each, and rice and beans are not much more than that). The other reason you might end up living in your car is simply lack of time. You might have the cash but events happened before you could act on buying

preparations. You could get laid off (and most of us live paycheck to paycheck). And if there are no other jobs available, it is only a matter of time before you lose your shelter. Or, the housing bubble pops and you realize you have more debt than the house is now worth, so you decide to walk away from it. Of course I am talking about a nationwide calamity here, not just a personal tragedy. If things keep humming along it makes little sense to evacuate the city and live in a National Park. But if everybody starts losing work, then it makes sense. Why go broke fighting the inevitable? But if you think this is what is going to happen to you, for goodness sack buy your supplies now, not later. It isn't just winter storms that see a run on the grocery store shelves. If a dirty nuke was detonated in just one major city, even if it was far away from you, I don't think you would find one item of camping gear or one sack of non-perishable food on store shelves within a few hours. Or if a power grid went down for a few days, the same scarcity would present itself. The problem is that normally these kinds of items are not in huge demand, so little is offered. Wal-Mart might have a total of six to ten 25 pound sacks of flour on the shelves, perhaps a dozen of twenty pound rice bags. If you come back in a few days they are replenished, but in a rush they are wiped out in seconds. Just-in-time inventory is not the survivalists best friend.

You may not even need to spend any money for this kind of preparation. If you own a surplus of blankets and can goods, this might be as easy as just getting all your supplies together. If you are going to a temperate area, several blankets each are good enough. Fill cardboard boxes with canned goods. Throw in some matches and candles (along with the car repair kit you already have in the car) and ideally a tarp for sun and rain protection and you have the makings of a camping trip. I would stay with small cans of food, rather than the restaurant size to prevent spoilage and taste fatigue. A starch (potatoes, corn) and a meat (chili, tuna, corned beef) together should make a meal, and a few cases of Top Ramen should help fill the gut (ten cents each and they can be eaten raw). Even two or three five pound sacks of white flour will bring a great variety to the diet. You would be better off with home made camping food such as beef jerky, pemmican, parched corn, and hard tack, but we are talking about the unprepared here, not the walking talking super stud survivalist.

The ideal situation for a survivalist is of course to live on a plot of land in the country (not too far from neighbors, not too close to the city), earning a living from there as he prepares the soil for a huge garden, which supplements stored grain. You can even do this for as little as $1500, assuming you have a trade to earn a living. A lot, $500 in any impoverished area in the South, a trailer (also $500), and ten years of grain stored for another $500. You can grow open pollinated, non-hybrid corn, and seed potatoes along with chickens to supply a good portion of your survival diet. The next best thing would be to own that land and live near by while earning a living. Then you can get to the land when it all falls apart. The worst thing you can do is have no destination, just a car full of supplies that will run out some time. You at least need a plan on where to go and what you are going to do. Everyone and his brother is going to be in the same boat. What is going to make you different? Are you a doctor, that can offer his services to an entrenched group? A chemist that can make weapons? Or are you a former McDonalds

hamburger flipper in a beat up old Honda with two hundred miles to go before the tank is dry and a case of sardines to eat? What are your prospects? Even if you are the rugged outdoors type that has a good hunting and fishing spot all picked out, don't you think other hunters will be in competition with you for the few deer there are? You might have a great rifle and plenty of ammo, but you just might end up eating the other hunters. A better bet would be to arm yourself with a .22 rimfire and subsist on smaller game (less competition and more numerous). My point here is that the camping option is great to get you out of harms way, but before you run out of your limited supplies, you had better have a plan on long term food acquisition.

For those without a car, your only option is to actually spend some money on decent hiking gear. It doesn't have to be that expensive, but a comfortable pair of shoes is a must, as is a comfortable back pack and some compact food and gear. If I was on foot, I would definitely go with the rimfire arsenal. This is all just food for thought. Everyone's situation will vary. Just start planning ahead now. Planning can replace an orgy of cash spending, but plans must be made concrete.
END

THE NEW FEUDAL SYSTEM

Ruling the unworthy after the collapse

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Feu'dal-ism noun. the economic and social system in medieval Europe, in which land, worked by serfs, was held by vassals in exchange for military and other services to overlords. Webster's

If one is intellectually honest with oneself, it must be admitted that feudalism was pretty cool, at least as long as one was not a serf (and even that was better than dying of starvation). And really, even if it might be considered a cop-out, there has to be something to be said for the natural order of things in which some are meant to rule while others are meant to be ruled. Look at 90% of the population. One 5% block is busy ruling the masses, another five percent is fighting to be free and a full 90% are friggin sheep without a clue in the world and are quite content to be looked after as if they were children. You wonder why there hasn't been a revolution in this country after our Federal government grew to be the size of the former Soviet Union (FDR that devil spawn butt humping foul bastard was a big fan of Communism) it's because only ten percent of the population cares enough to try, one way or another. Your fellow citizen is going to be more than happy to narc on you and get you sent to a secret prison camp (they don't look like conspiracy nut job wet dreams anymore, do they?) for life even if your only crime is sedation, since that alone will endanger his nice middle class existence. Strip away all the propaganda and almost everybody is busy screwing over somebody else for a bigger slice of the pie. Everybody just loves the Unions. Oh, they fight for the workers! Or they love the Corporation. Private enterprise is more efficient than government! While there are truths in each statement, the plain fact is that Unions extort the consumers and companies, and the corporations profit from government protection at the expense of the public. The only real winner is the government who plays both sides against the middle. People justify beggar-thy-neighbor policies thinking it puts money in their pocket, not noticing Uncle Sugar behind them transferring their own wallet from one pocket to another (and keeping a percentage for himself).

To my way of thinking there is only one natural system of social order that can work, and that is anarchy. Most folks hate the thought of thinking for themselves, so that wouldn't work for most of the population. And that leaves us with rule of the masses. Depressing, but true. If folks would just take responsibility for themselves and not try to take what wasn't theirs, we could live without others governing us. Until we are free to form a society of like minded individuals strong enough to resist rule, an anarchist society is just a dream (but at one time not too long ago Socialism was just a dream). But until our current society and its rulers are swept away, we can only dream. Once our economy self-destructs then we can try to carve out an enclave in the ruins. Right now, we are given little choice, we must be ruled. In the future, if given a choice between being ruled, being a leader, or going free, I'll pick being free of any government. However, if the choice

comes down to being ruled again or becoming a ruler, I'll grab that crown and rule with an iron fist. It gets tiring being told what to do, especially when the other guy is an idiot and when I know being ruled is just to enrich the other guy. If I am going to have little control over my own life at least make it to where I benefit from that. Don't just screw me to fill your piggy bank. At one time a little personal sacrifice was for the common good, now it just helps out a few twisted and greedy bastards.

However, baring the possibility of an anarchist society, we get back to a situation where you are one of two things. The ruled, or the ruler. I say, piss on being ruled. I want control again. It sucks sitting around waiting for the powers that be to screw us. They control the money, we are just waiting for the hyper-inflation to wipe out whatever value our bank account has. If they don't close down the banks and just steal it all. We sit around waiting for terrorist attacks because we are invading half the globe trying to control the remaining oil and that naturally pisses folks off. I mean, how would you like it if France invaded this country because it thought the elections were rigged? We wait around for China to take over the last factory from this country because our government was too busy playing private enterprise against the voters to care if the jobs went overseas. We sit around waiting for the coming age wars as the seniors vote for more and more of what is left of our paychecks. We just sit around waiting to see the next surprise big oil has for us, whether it be from the guy who stole the election with the financing of the cartel or from Peak Oil after the industry gets rich after strip-mining the earth for all the black gold it can as fast as it can (one can guess they also own the means of nuclear power generation so in the future they can profit while we glow in the dark). Or we just sit around and wait for all the jobs to be sent overseas so all the CEO's get a bigger bonus. Being a survivalist sucks. It beats waiting around to be screwed, but it sure is a pain in the butt trying to second guess those in power and figure out counter-measures. Oh, well.

But enough for now about justifying our coming role as ruling the oppressed masses. Let's talk about how the new feudalism is going to come about. In a word, lack of oil to fuel our consumer society. After our entire economy collapses, land once again will be the primary unit of wealth. Allow me to demonstrate. Many sources could destroy our national economy and send us back to subsistence agriculture, be it nuclear war, an economic depression, an asteroid strike, even a super volcano at Yellowstone. I use Peak Oil only because it is happening now, whereas Wyoming spewing magma seems farfetched. The effects of Peak Oil are debatable, as is the timetable, but we are ending the age of cheap and abundant oil. Not that we will run out soon, if ever. Only that we are running out of enough inexpensive oil that we might soon have problems growing cheap food with petroleum or moving around Soccer Mom clans for needless recreation activities. Or shipping goods across the Pacific so cheaply that transportation is not factored into cost analysis. Or sending everyone to live in the suburbs and leaving cities without mass transit or even sidewalks. I disagree with tree hugging Commie mandated tax subsidized social programs for transportation (some places like Oregon are so bad they want to force people into bee-hive like habitation zones with shops and work next door with all other land being green zones), I am just saying that depending on cheap gas to earn a living might hurt you one day. And I am not necessarily saying that Peak Oil will

collapse our empire. It might, but more likely it will combine with our other problems (such as out of control warfare and welfare spending, inflation, dearth of private sector jobs, etc) to seriously wreak our economy. It will only take one perceived problem before people blow all the rest out of proportion. For instance, houses are in a bubble and the only reason the bubble doesn't pop is that the idiots are banking on prices rising even more. If oil suddenly went to $100 a barrel, people would tie together the house price bubble, the scarcity of jobs, the cost of commuting and the hidden cost of inflation. Then the lack of confidence in the Fed backed credit expansion would send houses prices downward. People are blind to the bubble until it pops and then panic. You will see as much overreaction and flight as you did greed fueled over consumption. And cheap credit is as responsible for keeping the economy together as is cheap energy. Make both more expensive and it is doubtful our economy can avoid a severe slump.

Once we enter a Depression, you can bet that the government will not be here to help. That is not in their nature. They are too addicted to endless money and endless power, and like all addicts are quite unaware of the cost of their actions to others. The only important thing is to keep their crack fix coming. They will be there with their greedy little paws out, demanding once again we share with them the very substance of our being, the bread out of our mouth and the blanket off of our newborn, with a billyclub in the other to enforce their desires. One can only hope that enough people get pissed off enough that the very same government now demanding more blood and sweat was the one that caused them to be hungry and cold in the first place, and rise up and retaliate. Our government has almost all its power in place overseas. Very little is needed to pacify the masses, that is done with bribery at the tax trough. When money loses its value and taxes dry up, the bribery ends and the revolution starts. And out of chaos shall rise a new power base, as it always does, and this time based on the value of food. It has always been thus, and thus it shall always be. Land grows food, and food is needed by all. Land will be the new base of power and tax, for we always have bandits willing to steal what isn't theirs. The reason we will go back to this structure is that our current economy is based on petroleum. It started out as coal, and it is now oil. Humans survived solely on a solar based economy up until the use of coal. Then prosperity bloomed as we mined the hidden buried solar energy that was millions of years in the making, concentrated in such a wonderful form, giving us the capacity to perform economic miracles, and now at about the point where we have used most of the easily removed reserves. At some point it takes more energy to remove the remaining hydrocarbons than the energy they will yield. We might desperately need that remaining oil, but if it takes two gallons of oil to pump up one gallon, why would you do it? Would you plant two seeds to get one back or would you just eat the seed?

This is the easily defended argument that says we as a species have been living a happy and carefree lifestyle by mining rather than growing. When you mine a resource, it runs out. When you grow a resource, you give some back to continue the growing cycle. Oil made possible the Green Revolution that feeds so many people. Oil feeds the cities and suburbs as well as our bellies. Without oil as a cheap and freely flowing energy source, how do we survive? How do you heat your home? How do you ship food half way

across the continent? We won't run out of oil, it will just get too expensive to run our current system, and it is the collapse of our system and its wealth creation and its resource distribution that will throw us into a depression, not the end of oil. You can sit on an ocean of wealth, but without the wealth and the distribution system to get to it, you starve. This is what Africa faces today. They are very wealthy in resources, but no one can safely utilize those resources and so the population starves, kills each other or dies of disease. Do you think we are immune from that? If we run out of cheap oil our system freezes up and we could revert to the state of current day Africa. And you can bet our clan fighting will rival that of Africa also. The government has spent so much time and energy turning us against each other to keep the focus away from its own misdeeds that come crunch time we will try to kill off others we have come to hate. Forced political correctness has the intended consequence of increasing resentment. The voting welfare class creates resentment from the few remaining workers. We might turn against those in power, but certainly the innocent will suffer as the dependants steal from whomever owns any wealth. They shamelessly steal now using the government as a middleman, it is only a small step towards taking it directly.

Do not expect the whole medieval scene to once again unfold. I seriously doubt we will once again see kings and dukes and earls and jousting and ale and skin tight pants. What we will see is a new class that owns the land and one that works it. Feudalism worked because there was no medium of exchange, per se. The knights served as both managers to the serfs and as a ready standing army. The nobility thus had no expense of growing food or keeping an army, a pretty damn sweet deal, you must admit. The king says, in effect, here, take this land. In return, give me 10% of the food crop and if need be you can fight for me in wars. It costs the king nothing but a land grant There really was no other way to do things, given the scarcity of money. The issue of the invention of the stirrup and the rise of the mounted knight also factors in, but in my view the scarcity of commerce was the deciding factor. We had our own serfs at one time, called sharecroppers, but there lacked that top layer of control (before that we had indentured servants, but there at least there was freedom after a period of time). The landowner bought the land and then did no work, money in the bank. In the future, when the economy contracts due to lack of affordable transportation we will see all commerce shrink to a local level. Subsistence agriculture will be the basis of that and it is not inconceivable that there will be fighting to see who controls each area. After control is established, why would that reigning individual bother himself with managing the farmers? I see perhaps a military structure (it goes with our culture far better than royalty) where the management is conducted by a specialist. There is really no cost to the ruler, as the "pay" to his troops most likely is in looted items and seized food. Then, as the serfs turn in a portion of crops his troops are fed and housed. With life a choice of working the land or fighting, there will be plenty of willing volunteers to keep the army full, as will there be plenty of willing volunteers from the female serfs be serve as military prostitutes (another free form of troop payment). In either case, the alternatives are worse, so what is laughingly referred to as voluntary isn't really. Only the most skilled in crafts would be exempted from military or farming (the arms industry must be maintained). And of course we would not call the workers serfs. A fiction must be kept that they are not

slaves (and speaking of which, there will be plenty of those through war- but of course they will be called POW's). Military retirement should also cost nothing to the ruler, as one can just throw the old crippled guys into a teaching position or a craftsman role, and keep feeding them. Grain and other foodstuffs most likely will be the new money, and with today's know-how on intensive growing with organics there will be no starvation as there was in the Middle Ages. Well, not as much per person with the same amount of arable land. We do still have the problem of overpopulation and inhospitable growing regions. I would not want to be in the San Joaquin Valley area, water supply notwithstanding, just because of the huge population to feed. Starvation, vicious fighting (too many ethnic groups and most on welfare) bloated corpses, buzzards- the whole thing looks like too much work. If you are a local military achieving some success, wait awhile before moving into California. Let the millions kill themselves off first. Except for the coast, most of the West should revert back to cattle ranching. Without energy to pump water, agriculture should die not too far west of the Mississippi.

This is a dismal future, and it is hard to reconcile with the American cultural icon of the small landholder, free to farm his land and live as he sees fit. However, myths aside, the farmers of old either stole the land from the Indians or was given it through a government welfare program. Or earned it from fighting in a war that was all about stealing the land in the first place. As a culture we have little problem justifying theft for our livelihood, so don't be surprised if it happens again. Land will be "appropriated" and put to use with almost free labor. Some will own land, a few will manage the land or defend it (or fight for more) and most will work it just to eat. If land creates food, and food is the new currency, others will fight to steal the new money. Something to keep in mind after you work like a dog saving and sweating for years to buy that fancy retreat. It would suck if an army came around to take your tillable land and tended forests. We are so used to a system that leaves our land alone as long as we pay tribute that it is hard to wrap our brains around the concept that land can easily be taken, regardless of the work we have put into it (another reason the Supreme Court decision on the new land grab has yet to alert people- the concept is alien to our experience and we don't "compute"). Look at Zimbabwe. The new regime is telling white farmers to leave their family farms without compensation, giving it to blacks who couldn't plow a sandbox, and the economy is imploding. All to win votes. As they do in South America. When the new kid on the block wants to be El Presidente, he tells the voters he will take the land from the rich and give it to the peasants. Granted, the rich most likely stole it themselves, but it still leaves one unsure if your land is really yours to keep. Not a good way to husband the land for future generations. The point being, land theft is a way of life in many places. There is no reason why it couldn't happen even here, the land of milk, honey and SUV's. And after our land is gone, perhaps the only way to eat is to be a serf on our former land. It most likely will not be called a feudal system, but in effect that is what it will be. Oh what happiness.
END ARTICLE

THE $300 SOLAR POWERED HOME
Letting the sun power almost everything, cheap
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Over a year ago, I gave way to temptation and subscribed to Mother Earth News. Let me tell you, that is one worthless rag. In fact, they are so bad that for a ego-mag they should be ashamed they are even using paper. They should close their doors, doing good for the Earth and us. I felt violated even reading their drivel. This is nothing new, we all knew after the first ten years until 1980 were the only true MEN, it was just that I had no idea it was going to be so God-awful bad. Take the $15 subscription price, add a five spot to that and order the CD-ROM that has the first ten years of articles, then you'll get your money's worth. They think nothing of doubling someone's house cost to make it more green. Actually, they think nothing of recommending the costliest, most Yuppie-type solution to any problem. This is "slap an expensive product on your wasteful ways to sooth your conscious, you earth raper" type of eco-trash. They don't even pretend to anything other than affluent middle class consumers that just might, on occasion, accidentally, do something that might be considered less wasteful than the average American with more money than sense, stopping by the dump on his way to Wal-Mart to make room for more ceramic doo-dads, unconcerned that the low price leader just shaved three quarters of a cent off its cost of another Chinese made plastic monstrosity and so has an extra five cargo container ships coming in to unload several dozen illegal immigrants who will immediately go on welfare, close the last factory down in the Rust Belt who almost had the contract for those products, and waste some of the last oil on earth to transport the junk half way across the globe. But as long as our happy consumer buys a Prius instead of a Hummer (and of course subscribes to MEN) then all is well and good in the world, where it is not even remotely possible that anything can go wrong as long as you can make car payments of $500 a month to save $150 in gas, and pay off the loan of solar PV panels costing $30,000 all to save $85 a month on your electric bill, why then all the Gods will smile down on you and you will live forever more in eternal happiness (you better at least live 40 more years to pay back the cost of the PV system).

The key to eternal happiness and bliss is not to consume more to live on less, but just to live on less. The three thousand square foot home with a roof filled with solar panels, the electric hybrid that is only fuel efficient compared to SUV's (the 80's saw 50 MPG diesel cars, the 90's had 50 MPG 3 cylinder mini cars, the hybrids only get 30-40 MPG), the small garden for herbs, this is all over consumption and unneeded. Buy a smaller house, a small used car, and the most efficient electrical appliances (and do without others such as dishwashers), replace the lawn with a garden, and you have done more for the environment than the idiot with $30k worth of PV on the roof of his McMansion. Don't get me wrong, I don't know anyone with that kind of bread, but this is the ideal that MEN is writing about almost every issue. And every ad is for really expensive tools (why buy a tiller to use every year on a conventional garden when you can rent one once and grow in raised beds?). Backwoods Home Magazine carries all helpful, practical advice articles

with almost no ads, and even if it costs $10 more a year than MEN, at least you get a periodical that helps you instead of just a eco-consumerist (we should even have such a term- the hippies are turning in their graves) glossy coffee table mag. Thirty friggin thousand bucks to get electric power. I wouldn't pay thirty grand for my land, my house, my car, alternate power systems, a survival food stash, an arsenal, a small business start-up, a library, and a savings cache of gold, all combined. Maybe ten grand. And I would feel a lot more secure about my future than the guy who only insured against grid failure. MEN is by no stretch of the imagination a survivalist orientated publication, but their "buy your way to a solution" philosophy reminds me of the books from the 1970's and 80's that insisted that only the rich could survive, since at a minimum so much was required (second house in country, alternate power, arsenal of at least ten guns, food storage all freeze dried, etc., etc.). That was true, if only to survive in middle class comfort after Armageddon. MEN wants you to survive in middle class comfort after Peak Oil, and they're not afraid to have you spend your money to do it. Middle class lifestyles are too friggin expensive, and too stressful. Just lower your expectations, learn to live with a minimal level of discomfort or inconvenience, and you can get by on a lot less.

A more realistic cost to supplement your home with solar power is from $300-$1200 (the higher figure with using little free or salvaged material- and probably too high). Instead of using the same electricity as the typical middle class family and trying to supply all that through PV panels, you want to minimize the power needed so you only need to buy a minimum of PV panels. Even if PV panels are a lot cheaper than they used to be they are still way too expensive for the frugal person to be using that many of them. By just getting a panel or two and relying on passive solar energy for most of your needs you spend almost nothing on having your entire house on emergency solar power. A trailer is even better, as it can be moved to get better southern exposure, can be heated all day by solar (with only a few southern windows, it's hard to heat the typical house) and needs little electricity. But even with a large house, even if you don't have a woodstove, you could at least heat a few rooms with concentrated solar (a sheet of plastic and some aluminum foil will work much better than just opening the curtains- more on that below). Now, I am not an expert on solar energy. My experience ends with a solar battery charger for LED lights, a solar camp shower, and a cloths line. But as soon as I started to convince myself that we were headed for Peak Oil (I prefer the specific timed event such as Peak Oil or Y2K to motivate me rather than other threats such as nuclear war) I realized solar was the only answer to a long term energy supply. Even if I was "off the grid" my propane refrigerator would one day be useless (I'm more concerned with the end of cheap oil crashing our economy rather than us ever actually running out of oil, but unemployed and cash-less is the same as running out of oil to survive on). Luckily I only needed a few published resources to learn how cheap and easy it is to set up a solar dwelling. Not perfect, not middle class comfortable, but practical (few can build from scratch a perfect solar house) and easy enough for someone such as myself who is not very handy with tools. The one booklet you really should get is "Sunshine To Dollars" which is a treasure full of great stuff such as free sources of PV panels, free glass for solar water heaters and ovens, freezing ice at under 100 watts of power, solar hot air heat, sanitizing water, desalination, etc. You can get another booklet, Basic Solar Power,

which explains the way to set up a cheap PV electrical system. The other book does not do this (95% focus on passive solar), but only buy Basic if you have no knowledge of wiring and other electrical know-how. It cost almost a buck a page for a twenty page, stapled booklet. Sunshine cost a bit more, $23 after shipping for a 40 page booklet, but it is spiral bound and has lots of color pictures and has information you can get nowhere else. Well worth the cost (and I usually won't spend that much for a professionally printed non-fiction book). Sunshine To Dollars is available at
www.KnowledgePublications.com
Basic Solar Power is available at
PowerFromSun.com

To supply lighting, I would forgo all fossil fuel based sources. This includes candles as paraffin wax is from oil, not because oil will dry up as a supply so much as why even bother with such primitive lighting sources as kerosene or candles? We all have a drawer with some candles waiting for that inevitable power outages during a storm, but the light output is sufficient to sit around the living room and get drunk and not much else (plus when you get drunk you can all have fun knocking over the candle and trying to catch the place on fire). The glass on oil lamps is fragile, the candles melt during the summer and the oil containers eventually leak. It is far better to stock up on some cheap LED flashlights from Wal-Mart. The five dollar red bike lights supply diffuse light, the ten dollar (or less) white light flashlights direct light. The bulbs will last your lifetime, a set of batteries last 50-100 hours, and now that China is churning them out by the millions the cost is low enough for every household to get several without causing a ripple in the budget. You can buy a cheap white LED flashlight with a few batteries for the same cost as a kerosene lamp and a few containers of scented oil. I don't know the comparison in light output, but even if the LED is less it is so much more practical than a smelly smoking glass chimney that I see little opposition to my view other than the one or two that will inevitably argue with me on this one just for the sack of argument, and the secret thrill of being a rebel without a clue. But you know I'm right.

For emergencies, you can always have a few sets of disposable batteries to keep those LED lights burning for some time, and with name brand disposables still dirt cheap at any dollar store it would be silly not to do so. But for long term, after the Apocalypse electrical lighting, you are going to need to get a solar battery charger and some rechargeable batteries. Neither is cheap, but the expense is not unreasonable considering the alternative is to sit in the dark feeling stupid that you didn't spend the price of a few boxes of ammo to supply a lighting system. A solar recharger not much bigger than a large paperback book costs about $25. The most common battery you are going to need is AA, and Wal-Mart carries four packs of rechargeables for about $10. That is the only size they carry unfortunately, so you must buy other sizes either at Radio Shack (very expensive, bring along your first born) or shop online where there are plenty of companies selling that product. I need D's only because I bought several lanterns that use that size, but the low cost of the store bought lantern even with the cost of rechargeables is still the same cost of an online lantern using AA sizes (AA lantern $30, store bought D $10, batteries $7 each D/$2 each AA- total cost each $38) and I get more light out of the unit.

However, because of the cost of the D rechargeable you might wish to just stay with AA, and perhaps AAA. Unless you get two sets of rechargeables you will be without light for a day or two when there is insufficient sunlight to recharge (somewhat offset by buying the new rechargeables that do not develop a memory like the old NiCad, so you can just partially charge in one day- probably the best bet as you never know when the sun is going to be out). I prefer the flashlight lighting to the conventional solar panel on the roof charging an auto battery to run the trailer lights on 12v. It is cheaper, folks in houses can't wire 12v lights, and the LED uses so much less energy than the tail-light bulbs you use in travel trailers. Save the panel to juice the battery for other electrical appliances, you just need to figure out novel ways to attach the flashlight for overhead light, hands free (put away the duct tape, you need to detach the unit when its time to change batteries).

Heating can be as simple as hanging black plastic sheets from the curtain hangers, set away from the window so that the sunlight hits the plastic and rises up and into the room. This acts to heat the room much more efficiently, and if you put a reflector outside it works even better. An aluminum foiled covered piece of cardboard will do the trick, but as with all homemade designs you would be wise to get more permanent material to avoid damage from the elements (you can easily hoard tinfoil, but not cardboard without infestation). A black box with glass covering it set at an angle with air intakes is a nice hot air device, with a solar powered fan to blow in the air it should really help heat at least a room. And with that, as well as ovens and water heaters, I would endeavor to make your own rather than buying store bought if possible. If you can buy reasonable priced items, if you thought they would be long lasting, then by all means purchase these devices. But from what I've seen this would be fool-hardy. I have seen solar ovens for $200 and hot air heaters for over one grand (and that is grand larceny for glass, a black box and a fan). Far cheaper to make your own. We are talking passive solar energy here, not rocket science. It's not like you are going to make your own PV panel and receive 1% efficiency verses factory built that gets 15%. Heck, you could replace plastic sheets with metal or even fiberglass and buy the glass new instead of used/damaged and use all new wood and still make these things cheaper than you can buy them from an alternate energy source.

In Sunshine To Dollars the author took a used interior metal box from an old refrigerator, painted the inside black, insulated the outside (he also talks about getting free insulation) put a sheet of glass (free safety glass- buy his friggin book, it's worth twice the price for what you save from his advice) on top, added a reflector and baked several loaves of bread one sunny winter afternoon in his northern state (Michigan, Minnesota, some damn Yankee state). With this monster of an oven you can bake up a whole passel of bread and then not sweat it with a few overcast days, and the whole thing only cost a few bucks. You can make smaller ovens for daily batches, mostly with boxes and tinfoil. Check out the Web for plenty of instructions. Plus, keep in mind dryers. I have seen pictures of long glass covered troughs at a slant with a box on top. The air heats in the trough, rises to the box which is filled with produce or meat to be dried, sort of an industrial size dryer. I'm sure you can find plans on making these. And there is the possibility of wood stove, wood just being a storage device for the suns energy, but we aren't really focused on that here (

just as we didn't bring it up for heating). It has its place, but for now its all about free energy from the sun without needing a chainsaw. Cooking with solar is simple as can be, just plan around those cloudy days and weeks.

Hot water from the sun can be as easy as a $10 camp shower from Wal-Mart, but it would be better to use that money and build a bigger heater as we need shower water and dish and cloths water also, everyday. A sheet of wood with raised edges, covered in plastic and with a glass sheet on top will heat plenty of water nicely. There are other more permanent designs, and well worth the cost of mostly scrap to make. You can have a hot shower, wash your cloths, wash the dishes, and get purified water all from the same unit. A much better way to go then even a tank-less hot water heater as you have no fuel cost. Some folks just use a hose left in the sun all day for a hot bath at night, about the lowest cost way I've heard of. Also, if you have a piece of sheet metal, paint it black, angle it towards the sun and put some water filled 2-liter bottles on it for next to no cost. More than one way to skin this cat.

Cloths washing stumped me for awhile, as far as doing it cheaply. A James washer is several hundred dollars, a high price to pay to agitate cloths manually and wring them out. I imagined I could hook up a few poly buckets in some kind of frame and rock them back and forth in a kind of swing, but it seemed unlikely as I am no handyman. But how to wring the cloths? Then one day I was surfing and came across a post on a discussion board where a lady listed needed items for the next hurricane, one being a mop wringer to wring the washed cloths with. Of course!! I felt stupid not thinking about that, they are about $30 at Wal-Mart. Then, get yourself one of those vacuum washers that were all the rage pre-Y2K, the ones that take a small amount of laundry, add hot water, and then use a pump to create a vacuum so water and soap is forced through the cloths to clean them. If they are still available, they were about $50. Some folks used them to make beef jerky, as the marinade was forced through the meat rather than just coating it. Anyway, with a solar hot water heater and the vacuum washer you can do cloths washing everyday, then hang them to dry on the line for free solar drying. In wet and rainy Florida I had a clothesline hung up in the carport or the porch and even with daily rains we always used the clothesline and never a dryer. I imagine in Alaska in the winter it might be a little tough using this method, but ask how your grandpappy did it before dryers, I'm sure he managed somehow. Cloths dryers are for spoiled Yuppie scum, not hardy survivalist redneck types!

Okay, that's about it for next to free solar energy for all your needs. With a PV panel or two and an RV battery for about $200 you can power up some small appliances like a laptop computer or a b&w TV and not feel so primitive (and get more entertainment than that of a deck of cards). Also, if you want to freeze ice to cool an old fashion ice box to replace your refrigerator you will need a little juice from panels. The parts are easy, an insulated box full of salt water and some junk parts, but the 100 watts you need are going to need some PV panels. Well worth the cost to get rid of the fridge, and much cheaper than a propane fridge. An ice box should present little problem, but let me know if you find any plans so I can pass it on. And you can make the ice on a sunny day, no need for

batteries on this one (unless you don't have enough panels for the initial power surge when the compressor turns on). If you really felt like telling the power company to screw off and didn't mind living a little primitive (or had no choice as you were too far from a line) you could spend under $1,000 as a one time only expense and be forever power independent. Understanding of course you would need a wood stove (use the solar heat to cut down on your wood usage) and once in awhile the batteries would need to be replaced, but the expense would be easily manageable by even the hermit picking up aluminum cans for a living. And once you have eliminated another monthly expense, you are that much closer to financial independence. Or, just a little safer in case energy prices get out of control. But do it now, before everyone else panics and you pay a lot more for your supplies. It is an investment that will begin paying back immediately.
END

GUN FAGS, YUPPIE SURVIVALISTS AND ISOLATIONISTS
Too much money and not enough sense can get you killed
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There's a new survivalist blog in town, and there ain't room enough for both of us. Actually, I'm sure in one week the subscriber count will surpass the Bison's after two years. So the one leaving town with his tail between his legs is going to be me. The sad fact is that survivalism has always been about owning the biggest toys and spending the most money to get them, and the two biggest boys each pissing in a boot to see who fills it up faster. A macho contest based on consumerism, over-achievers earn as much as possible in the city and then turn it into post-apocalypse toys and middle class lifestyle imitation retreats. Kurt Saxon fought against this whole concept, but early fame seems to have cut his writing short and given him illusions of being am information empire mogul, so while he still has some fine books out there he could have done so much more and been that much more influential. I try to follow in his footsteps without making his mistakes. But it is hard when others achieve success by following the same standard advice handed out since "Surviving Doomsday". Well, most likely the whole sorry affair probably started as soon as the Soviet Union detonated its first atomic weapon and the citizens here not exactly thrilled with "duck and cover" to save them decided bomb shelters were needed to survive. After the affluent constructed steel reinforced concrete blast shelters the standard was set and nothing else was going to be seen as adequate after that. Only the affluent and/or rich need apply to survive Armageddon, to rise from the ashes and rule the brave new world. Only they were worthy. For was not money the new yardstick by which the new ruling class was measured? Since the Fed was created and took over our lives almost 100 years ago, the little men have tried to seek favor from our rulers by emulating their masters and trying to play on a small scale the money master game. Monopoly the game was the perfect toy for the poor to admire their rulers with. Poor schmucks.

The new blog I sneer at is written by Jim Rawles (but with a name like Jim, he can't be all bad-see below), the gentleman that brought us the book "Patriots". His was a story we all cherish, a Web published novel that got picked up and printed with real dead trees. A rags to riches tale, wherein our struggling author breaks into the spotlight and receives his just dues. Now, just as I admire Boston T Party and his writing, along with his financial success, I also admire our new blogster. He can write well, and he has plenty of good ideas. He has mastered the art of expensive survival. I am not as critical of him as I am his message. Only the rich need apply to survive. I of course mean the affluent, the middle class, but I say rich to encompass those with a heck of a lot of disposable wealth (or most likely lots of credit). By all means go to his site, he updates everyday and he just got started. You can read back to the start. Go to www.SurvivalBlog.com As I said, he has plenty of good ideas. So all my nit-picking is really just trying to get you to take what he says and balance it with some horse sense about doing it cheaper with less reliance on expensive solutions. An example of great advice that is too expensive- have a reliable water supply. Very practical advice, but it

runs into his other advice of living in a low population density out West. West of the Mississippi almost all land is very expensive (except those states bordering the eastern part of this section, Texas/Arkansas/Oklahoma, etc). Those expensive areas (due to government "owning" the land) are really expensive next to water. Remote location near water equals big bucks. My solution is to live close to the East, getting plenty of rainfall with less of a population as the actual coastal area, such as the states listed above (or further north if you love freezing winters). The coastal region of North California, Oregon or Washington would of course be much better with the rainfall but without the population, but they are socialist countries and the prices are insane (and with low job prospects most likely).

Another nugget of great advice is to live at your retreat. Warning are issued about the problems of getting there after the balloon goes up. But surely he realizes most of his readers are living in cities with good paying jobs because their yuppie survivalist lifestyle is so friggin expensive they need $50k plus a year just to qualify for this elitist position? He gives great advice most readers will ignore, because of other advice he gave them about needing an expensive set of gear. Night vision is given as an example. Sure, great to have, but expensive. And it turns you into an equipment junkie, like the foes you will encounter. Just go and buy a ten dollar book, or download it for free, based on the Japanese teaching of night fighting. "Night Movements". Loompanics has it, or search the Web. Skill rather than equipment. It will last you longer. And on the subject of retreats, do you really want one? It is a big target. Your castle, even with fences, moats, barbed wire, and defensive positions, puts you in, you guessed it, a defensive position. Even with steel reinforced concrete and earth, an enemy all around you with an improvised black powder mortar will eventually defeat you, if by nothing else just inflicting casualties even without breaching your walls. Look at the problems we had in Vietnam in defensive positions, and that was with air supply and artillery back-up. You will have none of this. Of course stealth is a requirement, but even if you manage not to tell anybody about your existence, what about those around you with lose lips? Small towns are great for watching your back, but the price you pay is them being in your business. You need to shop far away out of your area to avoid gossip about what you have at your retreat. More expense. My idea of better security is to look too poor to bother with, before or after TSHTF. Owning fifty acres with the areas water supply on your land, ponds, outbuildings, four wheel drive newer vehicles, all is not how you blend in to an economically depressed area. If on the other hand I lived in a trailer with a bolt action rather than a semi-auto, my redneck hunting buddies would form up with me in times of trouble. Without anyone trying to storm my house walls. And it wouldn't hurt if I shared some of my food with them (another virtue taught on this blog, but with less danger of blowback since it doesn't look like I have much else to offer). Like I said, Mr. Rawles is at the top of his game here. He is not an idiot by far. His retreat is camouflaged, I'm sure. Looks like a normal country home. No one is going to put up a sign advertising their retreat. I'm just saying that stuff happens. Security could be breached. People could find out. Appear poor, live near other poor people (working poor, not slums). Isolation may not be your best bet.

Gun fag is a negative term given by law enforcement personnel to anyone who has more guns than sense. Arsenals are what gun fags own. Not a few guns. Not just a shotgun, a pistol, a .22 and a long gun, oh no. They own multitudes of each. And add more all the time. If you don't have more guns than windows on your home, you ain't a gun fag. There used to be a magazine put out in the early 90's by that same name, by a gentleman in California. It was hilarious, a real sense of humor (articles such as hunting while drunk) but sadly didn't last very long. That is were I learned the term, and if anyone deserves the term, it's people who read Patriots and follow the advice to arm themselves as if they were going to be the last army on earth. On the blog site, go to profiles. It examines separate retreats and lists what equipment they have, where they live, etc. Everyone spent on guns to food a ratio something like 100 to 1 or even 200 to 1. They list a six month supply of food, yet own twenty semi autos. It is insane, they couldn't even carry all the guns at one time, even with holsters and slings. They are going to defend a retreat that contains only one season of food. Your life is worth 300 pounds of food if that is all you have to eat, I agree. But they pour ten to twenty grand into guns and can't buy more than $100 worth of wheat? If you are going to risk your life for a food stash, make it at least several to five years worth of food storage. It is almost as if they are planning to defend an arsenal rather than a food stash. But maybe that's just me being a cynic. Perhaps everyone needs more guns than they could clean on a weekend. Nothing wrong with having extra guns to share, just as there is nothing wrong with extra food to share. It is just that the guns need not be so friggin expensive. A buddy needing a gun can do just as good with a military surplus as he can with a current military issue. Price difference, at least $300 per gun. $300 saved per gun equals almost a ton of wheat. One could make an argument that buying guns now is an investment of inflating dollars and it presupposes another government gun grab. Fine, I'll buy that. But invest more in food at the same time.

The great thing about keeping your preparations on a tight budget is that while you will never really be done, it is all just refinements after a certain period of time. After a bolt action rifle and two thousand rounds of ammo, after three years worth of wheat and a grinder, after some LED's and batteries for lighting and a solar oven for cooking, after a water filter, after all the basic needs are meet then the "heavy lifting" is done and you can relax. Anything else is just tinkering. It is a fun hobby that you can indulge in without undo stress. Work on a small hobby to turn into a micro-business to insure against a bad economy, add to your library, learn minor gunsmithing or gardening or whatever you enjoy that adds to your sense of security. But when you start out to undertake a middle class yuppie survivalist lifestyle you have entered a very expensive, never ending money pit. You always need more semi-auto rifles, or magazines, or scopes or accessories. A back-up well pump, more PV panels, bigger diesel fuel tanks, another four wheel drive, more spare tires, stored auto parts. More military uniforms, more MRE's, more web gear, newer generation night gear. You need to enlarge the pond, grade the road, install the ham radio antenna, add to the nuclear fallout shelter. You are not financially independent no matter how high your income is. You are dependant on a high paying job to stock and maintain a fantasyland castle that is away from any support system other than whoever can travel hundreds of miles to get there, perhaps with no prior warning so that the traveling is though hostile territory. You are dependant on a high tech society with a fully functioning

economy to fulfill your dreams of total security through purchasing power. I am not saying that it will not work, because it very well could. No neighbors to be aware of your preparations means you live comfortable through the coming troubles with no disruption of your lifestyle. You watch DVD's and eat microwave popcorn in a large secure house, while I watch the paint dry by candlelight in a trailer after the power grid goes down for good after terrorist attacks. Then I will send a carrier pigeon to message you that you were right and I was wrong. Until then, I think a minimalist, frugal, limited approach to survival is more rational, obtained easily by anyone of limited financial means, and most of all fun and less stressful.
END

GUN RIGHTS STATE BY STATE
A relocation guide to protect your rights
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Being an anarchist, I don't hold much validity with the Constitution or any other legal document. I say we are all born free with rights no one should be able to take away and no one can grant or withhold. That being said, the Constitution was a fine document and should have been a fool-proof way of informing the public of their God given (or natural, if you prefer) rights. That of course was before that little bastard lawyer Yankee came along and wiped his ass with the document after goading the Southern states into seceding. That wiped out states rights, transferring it mostly to the Federales. Then the bankers bribed enough Congress Critters to take over the country by creating the Fed. And the frosting on the cake, the mopping up action, the point of no return, FDR came along and gave us our current form of democracy after he wiped out the Republic. Those better read than I can debate if he was instructed by the bankers (the gold confiscation and the inflation could clue you in) or whether he was just another power hungry dictator (again, the clues- goading Japan into war/ bribing the Brits into transferring navel domination to us) that the Depression spawned (caused by the inflation of the Central banks). We have not seen true freedom in this country since our gold and guns were taken from us in the 1930's. Now of course the government is going crazy, invading any country it wants, jacking up inflation to levels not seen since the 70's, transferring the money to the mega-corporations (surely you've been paying attention- imminent domain power to the highest bidder, inability of credit card holders to declare bankruptcy, ruining foreign countries infrastructure with weapons from company A and rebuilding same with help from company B courtesy of our tax dollars, withholding oil in Iraq from the market to hold down supply and rise prices to help out the oil companies reap huge profits) and in general trying to make as much profit before the country is ruined. Which is all pretty depressing until you look at in a long term view. Let the Federales kill the economy and then both foreign and domestic enemies will tear it apart. As long as you prepare for lack of outside help, it will just be gravy to you. And by the by, we can all band together for protection to replace law enforcement personnel, but I would be wary of living in an area that depended on armies of firefighters and airborne units to battle forest fires. The Feds let the forests get overcrowded and too dry and when they step back after lack of funding Mother Nature is going to thin them out and return them to a natural state. I hope your fancy retreat is not in the middle of that.

But back to my main point, which is we should have a natural right to bear arms. That we don't is a travesty but one that can be partially offset by playing by the legal rules and living in a less oppressive area. Choose a state now that allows you to keep most of your Constitutional freedoms and in the long run you will be much better off in all aspects. You will lose some money but gain freedoms, make friends who see the world as you do, and have a nice stash of paper free firearms in which to one day rise up and smite the unholy with. History has taught us that we are steadily losing our legal rights to own and

carry firearms and it would be foolish to assume another Clinton won't come along and without much opposition impose Draconian laws once again. Living now in a state that is close to zero tolerance on guns means you are very close to losing them. Starting in a high tolerance state means you have plenty of leeway to protect yourself. Move now. Now is the perfect time, sell your house at the top of the real estate bubble. Move to another state and use some of the house sale cash to buy private sale guns. Keep one or two registered guns for eventual confiscation, sell the rest and buy unregistered guns. Do it now while you can before housing prices fall and before we have to start using the "new" ID which will bypass paper trails and put you directly into electronic data bases. I realize you are were you are because of your job. It pays the bills, and helps buy beans and bullets for your preparations. It would be hard to replace your income. Or it would be hard to even move if you are poor. But you can do it if you wish. You have done it before when suddenly forced to because of circumstances beyond your control. You should do it now while it is under your control. Not only to enhance your firearms freedoms, but to get out of the big city, get away from a non-farm area, leave an arid region, relax your dependency on our high-tech society. Firearm confiscation is not your only danger. Our economy might crash, peak oil might happen, hyperinflation might start. Cities mean riots, arid regions mean water shortages (and no crops), electrical grids might shut down and end your electric heat at a critical moment (like in winter). There are many reasons to move and enhance your chances of survival. Money only works in a functioning economy. Learn to decrease your dependency on it now before that is forced on you. Take the pay cut now. And, either give it all up and declare bankruptcy now, before the laws change in October, or sell out now while real estate is high and finance your move. Now is the perfect time to take that chance and move to a better area. If you are poor and working minimum wage you can easily replace your income in another area, so wait until February when you get your tax return and move then. See my articles on E-Bay land/cheap trailer living to stop renting.

If you want to stay near family, if you won't leave your job, if you must keep your location for whatever reason, at least take a vacation. Take a vacation, move out of state, say for a month. Move to a gun friendly state, trade in your drivers license for a new one to become a legal resident, and then buy your guns. Then, you move back to your old state and become a resident there again. If you own property leave it with your spouse to "sell" while you go to "get a job" in the new area. Beware some states taking weeks to mail you the license, such as Texas, but most give it to you right there in the DMV. Call and ask first (don't make it obvious you are in a hurry to leave, try to be subtle). If you must register your new guns to be legal, you are living in the wrong state, but then that is your problem, ain't it? I would not advise you to break the law, but if registered why bother with this gambit in the first place? Your call. Now, assuming you have off the books guns, sell most of your registered ones and bury the clean ones. You now should be able to stay armed after the jack booted thugs take them away. And forget about semi-auto's already, would you. They are too expensive, especially on the private market, and most of us don't have the cash to spend on ones to bury. Just get some bolt actions in common caliber, then buy the ammo without a paper trail (if not you defeat the purpose). This is not the time to save money buying in bulk by mail, unless your kept registered weapon

uses the same ammo as your buried guns and then you can say you shot it all up if asked. Then bury with your guns. Also, casual friends can be utilized here. Have them buy retail for you then pay them more for the gun then it is worth in a private sale. This for guns not normally seen on the private market. Say you want a cheap war surplus rifle. Your greedy alcoholic buddy buys the gun retail for $100, you buy it from him for $125, then buy ammo retail, with cash, and hide the whole package until further need. If your buddy then narcs on you just claim you sold it later (we won't get into concentration camps for suspected gun owners, a problem for everybody no matter where they live). These are just some ideas for those refusing to live in better states. Another would be black powder arms (buy under assumed name with mail drop if you buy mail order). None of this is breaking current law, just future ones. Of course, when the lawyers are on the government payroll they can charge and convict you of anything. That is why I put little faith in paper documents, they can be altered at will to suit our rulers. Another reason not to waste time "fighting for your rights" in court. It's mostly Kangaroo Kourt anymore.

The following is not legal advice. They are guidelines. I'm not a lawyer, legal or jailhouse variety. I research what I write and you are in charge of interpretation and implementation. Laws change to suit our handlers, so beware. But this will give you an idea of where and where not to live if you wish to maximize your firearms freedoms.

States to avoid at all costs, Commie Puck Bastard Socialists Peoples Parties States. California, Connecticut, D.C., Hawaii, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, Ohio. I'll give details below.

Three other states to be wary if you believe in Constitutions. Besides the above that ignore rights, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin have no gun rights in their constitution (the others are CA,MD,NJ,NY)

States that require a permit to own a rifle. D.C., Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, New Jersey. Places that pretty much outlaw assault rifles are California, D.C. and New Jersey. Ohio requires a permit for them in the city, while Hawaii, Illinois, Mass. And Minnesota need a permit for them statewide.

The only states not requiring you to register transferred guns into their state are Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming. I would not consider any other state to live in if you are complying with the law and don't wish for confiscation (assuming you moved to another state).

Very importantly, the states that allow unrecorded off the books private firearms sales. Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia, Wyoming.

What I consider important, having a long gun available. On foot & loaded, Georgia, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Nevada, New Mexico, North Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Wisconsin, Wyoming. As important, open carry in a vehicle & loaded. Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Montana, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, Wyoming. If you want a full mag but with the chamber empty for vehicle carry you can add Colorado, Nevada and North Dakota. Others allow local prohibition or require an empty gun.

If you want to be a gun slinger, states that allow open carry of loaded pistols. Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, New Mexico, North Carolina, South Dakota, Vermont and Wyoming. Others, such as the famous example of Arizona allow local exceptions. No good.

If you are concerned that local politicians will weaken state laws, you want a state that has strict preemption laws, i.e., the locals must abide by state law with no exceptions. Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Idaho, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Washington, Wyoming. This is important if you want to just fight one set of government to maintain your rights.

I don't know if you want to be on record and carry a concealed pistol, but if you place importance on carry concealed- no license required in Vermont or Alaska. None offered in Ohio or Wisconsin, they don't even pretend to care. Too many allow discretionary permits, meaning only those with political clout are issued permits. Those states which have "must issue" permits are Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, North Dakota, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wyoming. If you are not a felon, dishonorable dischargee, mental patient or wife beater, you must be issued a concealed carry permit by those states. Most should even have a time limit before they must issue you a permit. Imperfect, but better than nothing. The only alternatives are living in butt cold Alaska or expensive and otherwise Socialist Vermont.

Now, I know it might seem odd, but here is a list of states with no state income tax. Alaska, Florida, Nevada, South Dakota, Texas, Washington and Wyoming. I list these because I for one wish to live in a state that takes less money from me up front. But you may look at it differently. You may want lower auto insurance rates, or lower property tax or if you are trying to kill yourself quicker, lower taxes on beer and cigarettes. But I bought land unimproved close to small towns to do away with most property taxes and the need to own a car. My major concern is what I get to keep on payday. If I earn under the Federal "poverty" line I pay no Federal taxes (I believe it is $7,000 a person right now, plenty for me to live on). And without state income tax, my only penalty is Social Security. Double if I'm self employed, but even 15% is better than 25%. This to me is just a matter of principle, to most it will not matter a whole lot. I just want to finish out my years denying as much help to an oppressive regime as possible. And if you really

wanted to get crazy you could just shop in those states without state sales tax. Alaska, Delaware, Montana, New Hampshire and Oregon. Another thing to consider is state sales tax on food. A lot of my purchases are at grocery stores or thrift shops, neither are taxable. I pay tax on silver and wheat, but at least the bulk of my discretionary spending is spared the 7% hit. States taxing food purchases- Alabama, Arkansas, Idaho, Hawaii, Illinois, Kansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Virginia and West Virginia. Arizona, Colorado, Georgia and South Carolina themselves have no food sales tax but counties and towns can tax it (one imagines at less than full amount). I am not just splitting hairs here. You may not think taxable food is not a big deal now as you make $50k a year, but when you are dirt poor, paying up to 10% tax on food is a big deal. When I lived in Oklahoma in the early to late 90's, all food was taxed and the cheapest county was 7%. The highest was 10%. When you have two young ones, each in diapers and needing formula, stopping at $90 to buy your $100 worth of groceries was hard to do. That was a can and a half of formula I couldn't buy my kids (they got the formula, obviously, but that is the way I looked at it). In the future I plan on living on very little, so at that time I imagine my food bill will take up to a third of my income. I don't want that taxed.

Now what you want to do is find the criteria that is important to you and see which states you are interested in. I realize there are other factors. But harder to list. For example, unemployment rates vary by town and county. I can't list whole states and be very accurate. As a general guide to employment, look where the seniors are moving. The last of the Federal money is going to go to defense and retirees. Until the whole system crashes, those areas will be the last to lose employment opportunities (even if they are only minimum wage jobs). Of course you need a cheap place to live if you settle there, as the seniors moving there jacked up the price. Climate will be another criteria, one easier to check on, but one I can't list by state. I can say I disagree with others on their survival regions they prefer. Why dismiss the South as too crowded or lacking employment when the moderate winters and good rainfall make it an attractive place to survive grid failure or Peak Oil? Most survival writers tell you to go West. True, it is uncrowded. Very uncrowded. And very, very dry. Without modern cheap petroleum power, the region reverts to a wasteland very quickly. I would love to stay here, but the long term survival prospects here without high tech and without knowing the long term weather patterns are too risky. In the South I know I can survive nicely with a roof rain water system. And grow crops. And survive winters without much fuel. And have a support system of conservative gun owners around me. True, I hate the humidity- with a passion. But I also hate fighting over meager water supplies. The terrorists lack imagination. They could deny Las Angeles water supplies without too much trouble and cause a world of hurt to millions of people.

I could go on about other factors in your decision on where to relocate, but I feel we are off topic. Much more than I usually am (I love to ramble). If you have questions, feel free to write. I haven't lived in every state, just six of them, but perhaps I can guide you in a general direction. I realize there are more criteria than guns and taxes when moving, but they are biggies and I hope this guide helped.

END ARTICLE

BETTER THAN NOTHING
Learning to love to live with less
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Guys are pigs. We are crude, rough, unrefined and rude. And proud of it. I mean, we are talking about a species survival trait here. Just imagine if our forefathers in the caves were too sensitive. "Klaus, come, look at these fabulous flowers. The colors blend so well, and the fragrance is just to die for!!" "Shouldn't we be hunting?" "Don't be such a party pooper! I'm am just sooo tired of killing those poor animals! What have they done to us? We really need to just go pick some berries. I can't stand the thought of butchering another carcass. The blood and intestines, why, yuck!! Come on Klaus, lets just go smell flowers and pick berries, okay." "Well, okay. To tell you the truth, I cry every time I have to kill something. My, your hair looks shiny today, did you use cream rinse?" Do you see what I mean? We had to be desensitized to the necessities of early life. The next time your spouse yells at you for scratching your crotch, shoving Cheetos into your mouth and then belching, just tell her that the cave men had to be rude to survive. Now, being female, most likely she will be unable to apply logic to that statement and so just throw something at you (being too emotional). Not that she can help that. Emotionalism is also a survival trait, just one the guys have a hard time appreciating.

Now, being pigs, we have no problem glossing over others pain and suffering. When a fat and ugly girl goes out to drink to forget her problems and is (most likely subconsciously) willing to jump into the sack to boost her suffering ego, we have no problem taking advantage of that situation. We even have a name for it, Pig Party, and bets are placed to see who brings home the worst offender in the butt ugly and hippo fat category. Now, admittedly these antics are offensive and involve youth and beer consumption, but they do serve as an example of how rude us guys are. Again, this is not an apology. We are proud of who we are and make little pretense of change other than perhaps to refine off the sharper edges. My guess is one of the reasons we are willing to trade freedom for the heavy yoke of marriage is that after a certain point being drunk every night and looking for new ways to be rude and crude becomes a rather hard job of keeping up. We are willing to settle down and let the old lady pop out a few spawn so we have an excuse to avoid too many hang-overs and waking up with some coyote ugly broad leeched onto us like we really meant it when we said she was anything other than 2 a.m. beautiful. But, I digress. To my point, being rude, offensive and socially unacceptable, we have another phrase sure to warm the hearts of the ladies. Better Than Nothing, or more commonly known as BTN. As in, you haven't had sex in a few months so you go looking for a BTN. BTN's are the uglies, the fats, the less-than-Playboy looking. Many guys are ashamed that they need BTN's, and only resort to them as urgently needed and then with stealth and cunning so as to hide from their buddies their shame. The Trophy Wife is the opposite effect, but still the same coin but on the other side. With a trophy wife you have extremely high maintenance and incur outrageous costs. They need trophy wife cars and trophy wife houses, and you better have a trophy wife salary. Me, I embrace life as a bottom feeder.

A bottom feeder rarely exerts himself, swimming around and snatching whatever falls to the bottom (being unwanted by most others). Which is not to say you are going to marry an undesirable. Far from it. It just means you get to pick from the less than perfect. And why not? I myself am far from perfect, and I don't want a high maintenance wife. I have an old lady now that could leave me anytime for another guy, but she herself is far from perfect. The fool stays with me because she loves me, and I her, but I only got involved with her because she asked me out in the first place. I exerted no effort in the courtship other than being funny in her presence. Bottom feeding. I would not say she is BTN material, being very sexy. But she is not Playboy material either, and since I am not chained by that ego need, I scored a perfectly good wife. I applied the concept of BTN. Not out of desperation, not grabbing the first thing in a skirt that walked by, but by being perfectly happy to settle for less than perfection. Less than perfect is 95% of the time just as acceptable and you put so much less effort into procuring it that most of your needs are met and you can be perfectly happy having it. If you can wrap your mind around the concept. Most can't. The ego must always be addressed. Money must replace pride. The values and judgments of others are considered. To which I say Bull-Crap. Get out of that trap. Stop impressing others. Strive to impress yourself. Make yourself happy, without caring what others think. Get out of the herd, do your own thing. Do I sound like a Hippie? Despite being Commie Tree Hugging Bastards, they were onto a lot of smart ideas. Throw out the bad, and embrace their good ideas. Stop being so materialistic, live simple, stick it to The Man. Groovy, dude.

Who do you think had the hardest time during the economic crunch of the 1970's- the Hippie living in an old school bus growing organic carrots in a weed patch (along with weed, one must assume) or the middle class suburban commuter working a middle management job with IBM? Did the hippie have a mortgage to pay off, or a car, or even a job to worry about? Okay, most likely he was on welfare, but the point is that his lifestyle was much easier to maintain come a severe recession regardless of his financial source. If you are not on land bought and paid for, without a mortgage for your shelter, without an alternate means of transportation, without a food garden, how are you going to survive the next economic downturn? Most of us are two or three months from losing the house without a job, most mortgages take two bread winners to pay on it, most good paying jobs are being outsourced, and yet a record number of folks are rushing into home ownership. If this is not the perfect example of full blown optimists, I don't know what is. I have written repeatedly on cheap homesteading, affordable by all, even the minimum wage earner. Go to e-bay for land under $1k, buy a lot in any area with sufficient rainfall, buy a used travel trailer for $500. As time and money allow, add solar energy equipment such as ovens and heaters, some bulk wheat (if buckets are out of your price range get a trashed refrigerator and replace the seal, then fill with wheat- BTN). Anyone can homestead for one or two grand. Now you only need a casual income. Use it as a retreat if you need to maintain your current lifestyle, at least you have a place to live rent free without the cops hassling you as they would if you were living in a car trying to find a spot to park every night. Without the worry of the cost of gas or insurance. Despite what everyone seems to think, you do not need a car to live. Even in the boonies. You can

make 15 miles an hour on a bicycle without trying too hard if you are in shape, so a once a week trek into town 30 miles away is only a four hour round trip. Staring out at 6 a.m. you can get back after grocery shopping before it gets too hot for the day. A beach cruiser bike (the coaster brake type) with its wide handle bars can hold a weeks worth of food in plastic bags, or invest in a bike trailer (under $80 if you buy the baby carrier type). If you put forth a minimum amount of preparation and money, your frugal homestead will provide all your needs except groceries (meat and condiments, grain and veggies you will have). If you can't eat on $15 per week per person shopping at a discount market, you just ain't trying.

But you don't need to live off the grid out in the sticks just yet if you don't want to. Just apply the principles of BTN to all aspects of your life to live cheaper, with less stress and more free time. Until we enter another Depression, money is relatively easy to get. You can always earn more. Time, on the other hand, is a precious gift that once used or misused, can never be replaced. Try to not waste any. Especially trading it for more money than you really need. Money is just a tool, not a way of life. Go buy a shovel, not a backhoe. And learn to live with a smaller hole in the ground. Besides spouses, how can you apply BTN to ease your life and the stress of modern living? Houses. Do you really need a house? Or would a home do? I know most of you spit on trailers. I can understand, even I, supreme advocate of trailer living, sometimes tire of the tin cans. But I always remind myself that it beats a thirty year mortgage. But you can build your own home. Even a straw bale home, log home, stone wall home, etc can be built cheaply if you minimize the space and modern conveniences. Think Hippie, once again. They built without regard to convention, as should you. The point is not to duplicate a conventional house but to erect a cheap insulated spacious structure (well, more spacious than a trailer anyway). Even pallets could make a home, free but for the foundation and roof. Think outside the box, a home is cheaper than a house and can be any shape or size made of anything. When you live in town only conventional structures are allowed, since we can't devalue Joe Blows property by putting a straw bale home near it. He has a thirty year mortgage to protect, and he's not afraid to turn the zoning police loose to do it. Move to a small town or to the country, where zoning is more relaxed, then build your funky dwelling. You only have economic shackles to lose.

A subject we are all familiar with is computers. The shiny new fast and sexy models are barely over $500 anymore. Ten years ago it was hard to find a starter model under $1000. So why should you even be concerned with saving money on a computer, even a new one? Well, every buck you save is either one you don't have to earn, or one you can use towards survival preparations. And computers are also an area that BTN really shines. You can save a lot of money and still get most of the performance. You do not need a new computer unless you earn your living on it, and even then only if you need it for certain things such as DVD burning or high speed computations or graphics. I finally bought a newer used computer after months of deliberations just so I could burn CD's in the hope that one day it might earn me a few bucks. But I did it cheap. No $500 new computer (I wouldn't actually buy an E-Machines brand, even at discounted price), but a used machine that had one quarter the processor speed but all the functions needed for all

but the most demanding tasks. I could even add a DVD burner if I wanted to wait forever at each burn since the machine is at the minimum requirement. But rather than drool over a two gigabyte processor new at $500, I bought a used $150 with a 800 megabyte engine. It has a USB plug and a fast CD burner. It is going to do everything I want at a reasonable speed. And it is not an E-machine brand (everyone I know that had one had break downs, everyone). Although if you must go new, Wal-Mart has $450 Compaq. But most of the time you can just buy used and sacrifice only bragging rights. Anything Windows 98 and above, over 500 megs, and preferably with a USB plug (try buying a printer or scanner with an old school plug) will serve you well. As with cars, let depreciation be your friend, not the other guys.

I'm pretty sure that even with my pleading and begging and pointing urgently and with sincere facial expressions at the approaching black clouds of Peak Oil, you are still going to keep buying cars. Not that they are a bad thing if used very sparingly and with escape in mind (park it on your work days, bike to work, drive a few miles each weekend to keep the thing running) only, not as a commuter vehicle. Commuting is an evil I avoid by staying out of big cities, staying away from any job that requires a resume' and in general shunning any job I would have to devote my life to. I know, I know, back to country types and retreat types commute also. I'm speaking in generalities. So, you insist on living far away and commuting to work. Gas is already $3 a gallon for the most part. Three years ago it was $1.50 and at that rate in two more we are going to see $5 a gallon (with absolutely positively zero growth in most of our wages to go along with that). I don't care if you think that was caused by inflation or Peak Oil, it still hurts like hell to pay that kind of price unless you drive a moped, a motorcycle or an old Chevy Metro. But in the end most of you will keep driving. Fine. Just apply BTN, 'cause at those gas prices you can't afford a car payment also. Buy a used vehicle. Class, all repeat with me, Depreciation Is My Friend! Most people have little problem with car BTN. There is even that bumper sticker, don't laugh at least it's paid for. Go ahead, choke in the clogged freeway's along with everyone else, just do it cheaply. And remember, ease of repair and asking price are more important than gas mileage even with oil at $100 a barrel. I can see repair shops killing us on labor as demand for them sores when less and less new cars are affordable as our wages stagnate. Try to get what you can work on if possible. Or you can always just buy a friggin bike and change jobs to one closer. A new car payment to commute an hour each way at gas $3 a gallon equals a big pay cut you can take without hurting your take home pay. But I'm probably farting in the wind here. Hey, I tried.

You all know my thoughts on semi-auto's. Don't have them, except perhaps a .22 and an SKS. Bolt action only. We are survivalists, not militia members or soldiers. We buy cheaper rifles, a lot of ammo, and then hide and run and try to never use those guns except when out of range of the enemies short range assault rifles and we can pick off the stupid bastards. I believe that most of you can easily adapt to car BTN, perhaps shelter BTN, in a stretch even wife BTN, but never to gun BTN. Guns are our toys and we love them. We fondly caress them when others aren't looking, we dream over the gun store counter of more and better, we never have enough of guns, preferably semi-auto with really big magazines and laser sights. Well, get over it. The only good semi-auto's, those in 308,

are too expensive anymore for most of us. Because you can't forget to factor in magazine costs. And extra ammo. No, that FN-FAL does not cost $700. It costs $1700 after factoring in mags and extra ammo. How much did my Lee-Enfield cost, even with half again as expensive ammo (for comparison I grade semi's as needing three times the ammo, so 10k instead of 3k)? About $400. With a Russian bolt action, the new manufacture ammo costs about the same as 308. And the gun half the cost of a Mauser or an Enfield. For the truly financially challenged, that would be the way to go. It ain't a H&K 91, it is only BTN. It might even be better. Semi-auto can get you killed after you waste too much of your ammo. The bolt gun users will by necessity make every shot count.

BTN should be an entire lifestyle. When you see how little you need new, how much you can do without or cheaply use a replacement for, your money needs shrink and your options blossom. You can ease yourself into this now, or you can be forced into it later. And remember, there is a perverse pride in getting things done cheaply and with some imagination. Drunken credit card use is a new thing. Most of our history is the working poor being frugal and thrifty. Not getting into an unbreakable debt cycle, working their whole lives for the banks, paying for two types of shiny trinkets- the house and car. The money is for saving and investing, not for toys. It is only recently after inflation got serious that we started getting rid of dollars as quick as we could. Well, go buy silver or wheat or ammo instead. Consumption can be savings. And buy a cheap retreat instead of throwing away your cash into a 401k (even if the company doesn't go under and you lose their contribution, they will spend their part and then declare bankruptcy-don't trust the bastards). Only buy crap covered gold, not gold plated crap. Functional, not pretty. Get what you can afford now, not what you can pay off in twenty years. Between Peak Oil and the coming Boomer cash out in Social Security, I would not give our economy 20 years. The perfect rural acreage with meadows for grazing and woodland for fuel is great for self sufficiency until the bank repo's it when your job is sent overseas. Better to buy a single lot with a tent and a garden now, for cash. It can't be taken away by the bank, it is close to town for biking and you have a support network close by. And it can be bought with the average workers tax return check. Even if you cruise EBay now for land and put a down payment on it and pay it off in February, that is BTN. And BTN is what you most likely will see, what you will get. Learn to love it. It can save you a lot of headache.
END

LESSONS FROM THE HURRICANE
On Not Making The Same Mistakes In A Disaster
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Hurricane Katrina was an unexpected tragedy. I would have hated to be there. Yet, the unbroken chain of idiocy did not help matters, making what should have been just another big wind/lots of water situation into an unacceptable loss of life hopeless tragedy. In this article I would like to set aside the issue of the personal suffering, as bad as it was, to focus on lessons the rest of us should be learning from all this. I do not mean to minimize the suffering of those involved, but the world is too big with too many people in it and it would be impossible to feel much compassion for every single person in all the disasters that take place in it daily. I am perhaps a bit too unfeeling, but if every event involving human stupidity caused me to stop and worry, I would be a basket case huddled under the table whimpering and jerking my head back and forth staring at any noise with big doe eyes, useless for any task including watering or wiping myself. At work others express shock at my attitude when I ask why people didn't empty a few soda bottles and fill with water or put a few canned goods in a plastic bag two days before the hurricane struck. Is it uncaring to assume that people can take care of themselves better than the Red Cross can? Where were my co-workers almost a year ago for the Indonesian tsunami? Since it didn't effect Americans it is okay to be less compassionate? If you are going to worry over loss of live it shouldn't have borders. So where were they when Africans were chopping each other up with machetes? Don't be a hypocrite. Either care for everybody, or nobody but your family and friends, but be consistent.

Now that we are done with that, what are the lessons we should be learning from Hurricane Katrina? The number one, above all else, the thing you should remember if nothing else is:
1)Don't Trust The Government. I shouldn't have to elaborate on this one, but the widespread worshiping of Uncle Sugar compels me to. More on all these below.
2)Respect Mother Nature. Hopefully this disaster will reinforce what you always should have known.
3)Stay Out Of Big Cities. Terrorists got nothing on the incompetence of big city government and their danger to you, plus the damage your fellow citizen can cause.
4)This Is A Taste Of Peak Oil-enjoy.
5)Plan On Disruptions Of All Services. Those Y2K minded could have foreseen these complications, had anyone wanted to listen to them.
Now, to elaborate.

First and foremost, don't trust government. To a degree, local government is somewhat under your control if your town is relatively small and the threat of negative votes compels something of an adequate performance. The same is true for rural counties. After that, at big city level, at state or Federal level, the government is going to screw you. The

individuals, perhaps not, but they are under orders (and as we learned from the Nazis, it's now okay since we are now conquering the world to just blindly follow orders). Government is a scam, a protection racket, and helping the citizens is just window dressing to help the medicine go down smooth and sugary. The government is there to help itself, you and your welfare are down the list in priorities. The line on the side of the squad car might say "to protect and serve", but they really mean their masters, the guy that writes the checks, the government, as in protect the interests and to serve the government against its enemy the people. The government may fight other governments, or at least the innocent civilians of other nations, but war is just its economic health. The real enemy of governments is the people they rule. Those are the plain hard facts and you need to get rid of any fantasy you may have that the government is any longer here to serve us the people. As another great and misunderstood Jim once said, "they have the guns but we have the numbers". A simple truth saying we could rule the government if we chose to. But we don't. People suck at the government trough and think they are getting one over on their rulers, but it is just playing into their hands. They want you to be dependant. You think you are getting a gravy paycheck at others expense, without much effort, but now they own you because you need the money after a short period of time. You become dependant, and then you follow orders. And you don't even know it. You just act in your own best interest to continue with the aid and that alone serves their cause of divide and conquer.

Let's set aside the fact that the wonderful Feds didn't even show up for four or five days (at least for the moment). The main concern in the Big unEasy was not the winds, they did minor damage, just like other hurricanes. The standing water, with nowhere to go, is causing the problems. And why is there too much water in the city? Because the levy(s) broke. And why did the levy give way? Could it have anything to do with the maintenance budget being drastically reduced because of money being diverted towards Iraq and the internal suppression, I mean security, budget? People were complaining about this before the hurricane. Just as Clinton gave the Chinese better electronics to vaporize the American people with nuclear ICBMs just to get re-elected, so has Bush diverted life saving preventive maintenance funds to enrich his buddies at private corporations that got him re-elected. People rush to the defense of their favorite candidate, but the fact is that whoever is in office has, and will, sell this country down the river to enrich themselves. It doesn't matter if they are republican or democrat or fundamental Christian preacher or Texas computer tycoon. We are past the point of no return, so enjoy the ride down.

After the big auto-makers bribed the Feds into subsidizing the paving of America to boost car sales and in essence killing public transport (I am against taxpayer transportation but statistically it is stupid not using rail for most of our needs, i.e. 70's oil embargo and Peak Oil) we were left with a situation where the poor have no transportation. As the affluent fled the city, the poor were left back in their bowl shaped city under sea level. Since this was New Orleans that meant the majority left were Blacks. Heck, I could get into the whole mess about the unintended consequences of race segregation by economics but I might digress too far. Suffice it to say that if our government and culture was not so car-

centric there might have been a suitable public transportation system to take them away in plenty of time. We should have used tax incentives to keep the railways alive and well, not diverted our national wealth towards the highway system. The Feds gave up on public fallout shelters and instead planned on relocation from big cities, but had the same plan as what we just saw. Only the automotive owners may survive. Rail wouldn't even have cost the government any cash out of pocket, they just needed to withhold taxing profits from private enterprise doing the job. And competition could have been ensured by regulating the fair use of one rail by multiple companies. And we could have used nuclear power to fuel the cars (indirectly through power lines), thus leaving material and personnel to be transported without petroleum from overseas. In war, troops could use the lines. In a disaster, the civilians could get out of the city quickly. Friggin idiots, the chickens are really coming home to roost on this one.

And once people became refugees, it looked like a repeat of an ethnic cleansing in Eastern Europe. Search people and deny them self defense or self medication, then lock them in an enclosed area without cooling or water or sewer, and then refuse to let them leave as they slowly die from unsanitary conditions and lack of water. I can only guess it was idiots in city government who oversaw that one, otherwise why else hasn't the Black community elsewhere started rioting in protest over that one? What a way to go. I can feel for the people in the stadium, even if some of it was their own damn fault for asking for help from the government in the first place. You bitch about my grandpappy who was too poor to own slaves but was white, and complain about the oppression of your people, but then you ask for help from the government. Even if the local government was run by blacks, they ain't here to help you. You are their meal ticket. And even if they genuinely care about your plight, they still are partially funded by Whitey in D.C. It is one thing to take money from Washington, they are on the fast track towards bankruptcy. But you need to do it with your eyes wide open. The hand that giveth also taketh away. A wise word to you folks on Social Security.

Do not become a refugee!! You can be homeless, and hungry, but do not rely on government to feed you or house you or anything else. Once you step into their camp, you are under their control and can't even leave if you want to. A bugout bag can be had for the family for under $100, to include a gasoline stove and a water filter. For $200 you can buy a new bicycle (assuming you are carless) with 100 pound carrying capacity bike trailer, with the stove, several gallons of fuel, food stocks, some water and a water filter, and even pedaling slow in one day you can be over 100 miles away (and not stuck in traffic). Camping is a good hobby that can save your butt down the road. Get the gear now and practice. If you can't get away, camp in the back yard. Being at the mercy of a Socialist camp run by an idiot with a degree in Political Correctness is my idea of a nightmare. It is far cheaper to invest in camping gear and run away on your own rather than be at the mercy of government that allows refugees to wallow in their own filth and die of diseases instead of losing control over them. Look at it this way. If you become a refugee, you could be killed by incompetence. And don't think it won't happen again. The government does NOT learn from its mistakes, as that would mean they had to admit to making one in the first place. Handing control of your fate over to the government will

get you killed. Anyone can afford a few bucks for used camping gear at a thrift store and some basic food such as flour. No need to buy a fuel stove if you learn how to ignite wet wood. If you live in an area with plenty of fuel you can boil water to sanitize it. Go to the library to read up on woodcraft and survival skills. No need to spend that much if you don't have it. But learn some camping skills and have a bugout bag, even a cheap one. A used backpack from the thrift store for a quarter, a few old tuna cans full of wax and paper to ignite a wood fire, some Bic lighters for two bucks (do not buy the cheap ones), a thrift store pan for fifty cents, a used 2 liter soda bottle for water, five pounds of flour and some Cup O Noodles, hot chocolate packets and some hard candy, a knife and sharpener, a walking stick. All for under $10. Anything else you throw in such as band-aids and fish hooks and a bit of duct tape and plastic sheeting shouldn't effect the price much. A bugout bag is cheap insurance. Being a refugee is a death sentence.

The second lesson to be learned is really easy. We already know the government will get you killed, so lets move on to Mother Nature. Mom can be a real bitch. Once in a lifetime (or so it seems, sometimes more, sometimes less) she really throws you for a loop and gives you "the storm of the century". The unexpected always happens with Mom. That is why she is a female, calm on the surface until she blows up for no damn good reason (and don't think I don't hear you girls giggling about that, either). But, honestly, doesn't she play fair after all? There are usually warning of what is to come. Man is too stubborn to listen and then faces Moms fury. But he should be blaming himself for failing to heed the warnings. Do not volcanoes rumble and smoke before they blow? You could say that earthquakes give no warning, but they only harm those that place heavy objects over their heads and then express surprise when the earth moving topples them over on their heads. As far as falling into the earth, all the rage in Hollywood earthquake movies, don't stand on that big depressed earthen line Mom put up as a big sign of warning. Other disasters are obvious hazards and man chooses to take his changes by living in the region. You live on a beach on the earthquake zone, then wonder why you get tsunamis. You live on the Gulf Coast and express surprise your fishing village got flooded in a hurricane. You live in a forest where the government (oh, that guy again- he sure shows up a lot) doesn't let Mom weed the undergrowth out through small fires and then get your home destroyed from the "fire of the century". We are not indigenous peoples ignorant of a new area, without warnings in place of a given areas hazards. We know what we are getting into when we build. Don't blame Mom when she does her thing. Respect what she is capable of doing and plan for it.

Our next lesson is Stay Out Of Big Cities. Small towns might have been totally wiped out in the hurricane, but you didn't have to face Mother Natures wraith and then worry about your fellow humans killing you. In the big city, urban ghetto dwelling gangs will roam freely and take supplies from you by force. And you will be lucky to survive the encounter. In small towns, where everyone knows your name, everybody must band together. If not from the goodness of their hearts than from fear of prosecution from those that know their names and addresses. There is danger in big cities everyday from crime, from terrorist threats, from extra levels of government, even from pollution. In the small town everybody might be in your business, but at least they also have your back. If

you must live in a big city at least have the means of rapid egress. And the predetermined will to leave at the drop of a hat. Don't have a job that will fire you if you leave even without an evacuation order. A motorcycle would be better than a car, as roads bog down to about five or ten miles an hour out of town. Have all your supplies, and savings to pay hotels and meals (and to restart a life if there is nothing to come back to). Even if you were carless and had to walk, a hiker could get sixty miles away in two days. But far better to have at least a bike with trailer for your supplies (five times to seven times as much as on foot, with three times the distance). But whatever method you choose, you must practice beforehand. As the winds start tearing down on you is not the time to start developing those unused muscles needed for peddling a bike nor the time to discover that your seat chaffs your ass. Or find out that a bike sitting in the garage will lose air out of its tires. Or that you don't have an air pump (the gas station doesn't have electricity to power their air compressor). And have a rifle scabbard attached to the bike frame, assuming you are not silly enough to live in a state that prohibits firearm ownership. But the best bet would just be to get the hell out of the big city right friggin now and never move back. Big city equals bad people out to get you. Even without a disaster, but especially in one. And cities are also where government sets up shop to pluck its golden gooses. Stay away from those bastards. Again with the government...

The next lesson is my favorite, but one most of you will scoff at. I can hear the catcalls, the hoots and the hollering. But I still say we are in for Peak Oil (every other region besides the Middle East has seen a peak of production and then a decline, with global discovery stagnant for decades- you do the math). And this little episode was just a taste of what is to come. You can scoff, pointing out the steady repairs being made on our pumping and refinery facilities. I still say, wait for it. The economic impact of thirty percent of our supply of distilled petroleum product being withheld and a city of half a million being sent elsewhere to overload the welfare, school, and jobs sectors might not be felt right away, or covered up by the Feds as they (once again) pump credit into the system to form a economic bubble to cover up the last printing press orgy and its negative effects. Gasoline went from $2.75 to $3.50 in less than a week and even if it is slowly coming back down I would be very surprised if we ever see under $3 again. I would expect to see the new minimum at $3.50 to $4 if we had a 30% decrease in supply, but the Feds will do their magic manipulation to supply to disguise the true increase (sort of like gold and silver which should be a lot higher to reflect the true inflation). But in the end it will all catch up to us, from the artificial high of housing, to the manipulation of inflation. The birds always come back to roost. Now, when I say this is a preview of Peak Oil, I do not mean to imply gas going up a few bits is a foretaste of what is to come. The increase of gas prices to $6 a gallon in the Gulf region is more of what I had in mind. The cost of aviation fuel jumping 22% in two days is what I am using as an example. Do not be surprised if we have fuel related price increases in shipping all items. In anticipation of that eventuality I took 10% of my savings and bought all items mail order I had planned to buy sometime in the future but was putting off. How-to books from Amazon, more LED lighting and the rechargeable batteries for them, camping supplies, etc. I also got some more wheat for storage. It may not happen that we experience a profound hike in shipping costs, but I figured it would be better not to gamble.

And finally, last but not least, the lesson of being extra special paranoid. Plan on a disaster disrupting all supplies. Water, food, gas, medical supplies, ATM's and credit cards. No resupply, no Red Cross. You need to plan on being all alone with what you have in your own supply stash. No need to have a major expense here, anyone can improvise and settle for better than nothing type supplies (see the above $10 bug-out bag). Make plans now to get no outside help for at least two weeks. Act as if when you are involved in a natural disaster that will be the same time as the terrorists attack another place and the aid is extra slow in coming. Plan as if you are on your own, try to plan on helping some others, be wary of those you can't help and be well armed. Plan for the worse you can think of. And then be prepared to mentally shift gears when the reality is even worse. And be flexible. Overcome, adapt, improvise. It usually happens that when it hits the fan, it is always a double load. Enjoy.
END

THE BENEFITS OF PATIENCE
Good things come to those that wait
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I've never been involved in sales, nor in advertising, but it would seem to me that one of the ways to sell product other than sex or insecurity would be impatience. At least in our culture. The French can sit at a cafe all morning and relax, one reason being the ability to skip the morning shower, but Americans can't even get out of their car to grab a quadruple mocha latte' for their morning java fix. I don't know what we are in a hurry for. Perhaps we have no spare time from trying to rule the world, even when we can't administer a fleet of school buses to evacuate a flood area. But even I, yours truly, find myself always in a hurry. No loafing in bed this morning, time to get up to write. Hurry up and leave for work, need that extra time since I'm on a bike and then at work I can't wait for my breaks so I can read (and I try to rush that to get more read). Then at home my mind wanders on what I should be accomplishing tonight or tomorrow or even next year. I don't necessarily have all that much to accomplish in my life, as I could care less about a career, but I also find it difficult to relax much. I know some of that is the mid life age when I know the clock is ticking, looking back shows a marked lack of accomplishment but a part must be the cultural quickening we as an urban society have faced over the last few generations.

But whatever the reasons for our hurry through life, in some instances it might behoove us to slow down. Some areas demand swiftness, but we act as if our whole lives are a speed race and perhaps we need to relax a little more. You can't show up for work late too many times without being fired, but most things in life don't need to be hurried. For instance the rearing of children. Just as turning off the television and minimizing your work hours really free up a lot of time in your life, so does taking your kids out of school if at all possible. You can teach the same or better material in less than half the time and spend time with your kids doing rather than talking as the other part of their education. Even without that luxury of home school, setting aside family time that is not interrupted for any reason is a great way to connect. Setting aside the whole issue of whether we should even keep kids at home as long as we do, come their teenage years that weekly family gathering might be the only time you see the socially active little tikes. Another area you might want to slow down in is your spouse. If you both work it is hard for quality time during the week and the weekend seems to be devoted to chores. It might be a good idea to agree upon an activity you both enjoy and force yourself to set aside time for it come Hell or high water. My old lady doesn't work, but I have so much I want to do sometimes I find myself ignoring her for awhile. So we take at least one half hour a day to play a game of cards to spend time together.

But I'm not just talking about quality of life here. While it is important to slow down and to smell the roses, I can't possibly know the circumstances of any of your lives and so I can't give you very good advice on enriching them through abandoning materialism as a

life goal. What I can do is offer advice on saving a whole lot of money by being patient. Our (relatively) free market is a great way for every Tom, Dick or Harry to offer up his invention for profit so he can work for himself rather than a corporation. If you build a better mousetrap, and advertise it, and have enough monthly expenses put by, and don't run afoul of any Federal environmental regulations, and pay your taxes on time, and bribe the local building inspector, why then, they will buy it. So here we have a situation where most folks are using their time at work to desperately think of any product or service idea that will free them of the evil clutches of their boss and corporate bonds. Is it any wonder productivity at the workplace is so low? Once they have the means, the boss is told to take a long leap off a short peer, a new company is started, a new product offered, the product fails and our once high flying corporate peon becomes a door greeter at Wal-Mart. But because one hundred people are willing to fail for every one that succeeds, we have a market overflowing with products and ideas. And a lot of those products or ideas promise to perform a task for you in exchange for your money. This is where you must be wary. Who outside an 80 year old arthritic geriatric cripple needs an automatic jar lid opener? But they sold like hotcakes for awhile so I can only guess the younger crowd bought them for some inexplicable reason. Wait a bit, those will show up in droves at garage sales as an overpriced, unused, waste of counter space item now selling for pennies on the dollar. Convenience items could also be described as those things serving the impatience of the consumer.

Allow me to tell you about a very annoying habit of mine. I over analyze everything. Everything must be thought through. Before I buy a dollar item, I'm wandering the store thinking about whether I should go back and buy it or not. Before I leave work I'm thinking of what chores I should or should not do on the way home. I think on future actions I can't possibly take for years. The downside to that is I could have already been retired from law enforcement, the career I started in, but pondering is no substitute for action when it comes to saving your life, so I gave that up early. The up side is I regret almost nothing in my life (other than relationships when hormones got in the way of rational thinking). Almost all decisions I have made leave no disappointment or regret as I made sound decisions using all available information. And this glacier decision making process has the benefit of avoiding almost all impulse purchases. But more importantly, I dig myself into few financial traps, such as car loans or mortgages. I will live under a tarp on a shipping pallet before I enslave myself to the banks for almost half my life, but I realize that is a bizarre view and most folks don't share my outlook. In their own way, mortgage holders are acting rationally as they put inflating paper currencies into a tangible asset and provide shelter in their otherwise under funded retirement. I just disagree that all that is necessary, but what the Hell do I know? However, even if I make no impulsive decisions, one must be ready to buy at the drop of a hat when the opportunity presents itself at a whopper of a bargain price.

A quick word on economics here. My natural inclination here is to plan on inflation. For the last thirty five years it has been the number one means of revenue for our darlings the Feds. A dollar under the mattress loses an average of five percent a year. This might seem tame compared to the low income tax of ten percent or the obscene tax of 15% to

buy the geriatric vote, but the problem with a "tax" on savings like this is that the closer to retirement you get the less these dollars are worth, just at a time when you are the least able to work and are relying on savings to buy such frivolous items as food or heating oil. And you don't "just" lose five percent a year as it is compounded (the second year you lose value on the original dollars 95 cents, the third year you lose value on 90 cents, etc). Even at a tame "official" three percent you lose half your purchasing power every twenty years. And that is just monetary inflation. On top of that you can also look forward to price inflation as the continual rise of oil prices will influence all prices. But don't exclude the possibility of deflation, as our economy will one day finally sink under the weight of its multiple problems. No jobs causes lower prices, not higher ones. The immediate threat is of course inflation, and so you want to turn your dollars into assets now while the cheap credit spigot is turned on full bore, rather than waiting for later when real job compensation in inflation adjusted value is so low you can't buy anything. That being said, if it is possible to stash some greenbacks, do that also. Not only will the possibility of deflation be covered, but more importantly for the immediate future is the need for a savings to cover unexpected bargains as they become available through others financial misfortune. Katrina was the perfect excuse for the Fed to stop rate hikes and create even more credit to prop up the housing and stock market bubble. We are buying time now, but beware when those bubbles break. It is going to create a huge problem (when your house shrinks in value to below your loan, you walk away from it if possible- lots of non performing home loans on the books create bank bankruptcies).

As I have advised before, get into the practice of visiting all your areas discount stores at least on a weekly basis if not more often. This would be a great time to ride your bicycle. Any large items can be picked up later in the car. I avoid garage sales as a waste of time, but good for those in the market for furniture, cloths or bric-a-brac. Always get your weekly free newspaper with all the classified ads. Just keep looking. Times are not economically poor just yet for mass bargains, just individual tales of woe forcing sales. You will need to be patient. The bargains are there, but only for those willing to be patient and weather disappointment. That is why I'm saying to take your bike around town to shop at the thrift stores and the discount stores. No need to waste gas if nothing is found.

Allow me to share some of my bargains, accomplished by a lot of looking and by being so frugal I waited for these bargains while passing on other items just as good or better but slightly more expensive. I looked for four months, and finally found a bigger home. My thirty five foot fifth wheel travel trailer, twenty years old, at a low low price of $700. It has a lot of internal problems, absolutely no self-contained features, but perfect for park living. I will have had it for two years this January, so after repairs my cost per month for purchase was only $50. And this is in a high cost location, not in some economically depressed region of high unemployment. I knew I needed a chest freezer. I couldn't buy meat bargains without one, as my regular refrigerator has no freezer (a three foot high model). Now, add in the difficulty of trying to fit a freezer into a small travel trailer. I was willing to buy a new one if I had to, just to cut my meat cost in half. It would have paid for itself in two months. But finding room for it was my main concern. Then, out of

the blue, I was offered a unit for $15, plus five bucks to deliver it to me. At that point I didn't care where I was going to put it, at that price I couldn't pass it up. It was being given away as it had ugly rusty scratches on the front and made a lot of noise running, but I had no problem putting this nasty looking loud bastard in my living room (the only space available). Books are one of the few items I have no problem paying near full price on. I still shop at Amazon to get incredible bargains, and I refuse to pay over a buck for fiction (I mostly read non-fiction). For non-fiction I will gladly pay twenty bucks for a book, this is my informal education. For fiction I shop around for bargains. By always shopping around and being patient, in two years of looking I have bought every single Steven King book (except the whole Gunslinger series) for a whole quarter each. And every Tom Clancy. And the Dune series. Two bits each. And books I may or may not ever read, five to ten cents each. I have boxes of paperbacks in storage at the average costing a nickel each. I'm all set for unemployment, should it come.

For the last year I have been collecting old VHS tapes. With everyone all wet over DVD movies it is easy finding factory dubbed movies on VHS at around a dollar each. Some I paid $2 for if they were really good and I knew I would watch them more than once. I even paid $3 for the Terminator 3, but that was the exception to complete the set. Some I even got at fifty cents on half day sales at the thrift store. After I bought about two hundred of them I had two used racks full and movies overflowing everywhere I finally went through and got rid of about fifty of the hopeless ones just to reclaim some room. As I have books overflowing everywhere I sure didn't want the same with movies. But now I have a nice collection of dirt cheap movies I will watch over and over again, and now I can move on to the next collection project. Collecting original PlayStation games took some time a few years back as I got the consul free but after I bought a few the old lady liked and could entertain herself with I quit that as it really wasn't my thing. But the point being that I bought the used games cheap as I was willing to use the older generation consul rather than the new one. For the price of two new games for the second gen, I got the old consul and almost twenty old games. Just as I already covered with computers, new is not necessarily always best. Depreciation- used it to work for you, not against you.

Purchasing meat can be a fun and happy activity, rather than a sordid and depressing one. After you get your chest freezer that uses less than two bucks a month in electricity, you can now buy all your meat on sale. I only buy the family packs at Wally World, or the out of date sales at my local discount grocery. The family packs cost two bucks a pound beef or pork, the chicken one buck per. At the discount grocery I buy bacon for 50 to 70 cents a one pound pack, baloney and other lunch meats for a quarter each or so. Just yesterday the all beef one pound sausages (polish, I think) were 50 cents each. I try to keep the consumption down on the processed meats because of the nitrates in them, but as they are sealed in heavy plastic I can throw them into the freezer and forget about them, so they are handy to have for lean financial times. If you want to eat more than just stew meat (the family pack beef for $2 a pound), or if you don't have a discount grocer in your area, just check the local markets for the weekly meat sales. I just saw tri-tip beef at $3 a pound a few weeks ago, pork tri-tip at a buck, skinless and boneless breast chicken at $2,

and all these are the expensive markets where you need one of those damn plastic cards to get a discount. But it certainly is worth it to check your paper every Wednesday and plan on one trip to all the stores with good deals and fill that freezer with super cheap meat. It may not be exactly what you want, but if you can at least get the animal you like to consume, it's close enough. For instance, I can only eat stew so often, so even if it is a little on the tough side, I'll just throw that stew meat on the grill just so I can have grilled beef. Better than too much pork. Eventually your favorite cut will come on sale and you can buy a dozen pounds of it and you can dole that out to yourself one a week as a treat.

It should go without saying, but you do need to save money for this. What if Wal-Mart discontinues their old style bikes like they did last year and sells them at half price, do you have the saving to buy everyone a new bike? When your co-worker needs his crack fix and tries to sell you his car for $500 and you know it's worth at least two grand, do you have the savings to buy it before he changes his mind? What about unexpected bargains? I am still kicking myself over the gun show last year. A guy had a private sale Lee Enfield with the nicest metal or wood I ever saw, for only $100. I hemmed and hayed for a bit and then decided to buy it but I didn't have a car, and I wasn't going to pay $10 for a taxi, so I passed on it. What an idiot. I had originally gone to the show just for accessories, and I did buy a good knife bayonet for the Enfield for only $10 (and I've never seen one under $15), but I shouldn't have been so "pound foolish". I still kick myself, not because I didn't have the savings, but because I wouldn't part with it. Sometimes you can be a little too frugal (I know, I know, it is rare). But always have a slush fund to operate with. It would also be good for such times as when, oh I don't know, one third of the nations refining capacity is off line and you want to stock up on petroleum products pronto before prices skyrocket (if you haven't already filled up your winter tanks for heating you most likely will be in for a big surprise). I know prices are slowly inching down, but it is not crude price we are worried about here but refined product availability- two different things right now. A word to the wise.

So really it all just boils down to being patient. If you try this, after your first "holy crap I can't believe I got THIS soooo cheap!!!" you will see what I mean, and rush to embrace this practice. It does get addicting being a tightwad, I mean frugal.
END

FRUGAL HOMESTEADING
Cheap living and cheap preparations
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Previously I have written articles on cheap land, cheap retreats, cheap housing, cheap transportation and cheap utilities. E-Bay is a great place to buy things cheap, including land. Just yesterday five acres in west Texas went for under $800, and it was only ten miles from a town of about three thousand people (providing provisions and perhaps even a job within biking distance). Your only concern would have been water, and with conservation a roof and cistern system would have sufficed. I have a lot in both Arizona and Arkansas far from everyone and everything if I desire to retreat, and they both cost me only $400 each. I prefer the practicality of small town living, even if the notion of retreats are more romantic. But I refuse to spend much cash either way. Cheap housing can be a cabin, yurt, tipi, or even a tent (Cabela's has a huge tent, almost a small house, for under a grand-check it out), but I advocate used travel trailers just from preference as it is usually a very cheap "turn-key" solution. And my favorite pet peeve of cars (even before I found out about Peak Oil- before it was just a cost issue) is done away with by having a bicycle. They are much cheaper than they used to be, so cheap it is almost better to replace them than to fix them. My Wal-Mart beach cruiser bike (no gears, pedal brake) cost $60, and after a car backing up clipped my rear tire I called about replacing it at the bike shop. $35 plus tax, $50 if I used their labor. Just for the rear rim. For a $60 bike. Needless to say, just out of principle I didn't replace the wheel. I just keep riding with as is. Sure, it looks a little funny with the rear wheel wobbling as I ride, but I am bound and determined to get my years worth of use from that thing. That's $5 a month for transportation. Cheap utilities are provided by solar and wood. Long term, with the way that petroleum is moving up in price (even pre-Katrina) it makes little sense to rely on gasoline, propane or even kerosene for the bulk of your utility needs (emergency use is quite another matter) if you wish to be self sufficient and/or frugal.

But today I wanted to talk about homesteading. We need to tie everything together to become both frugal and as self sufficient as possible. Yesteryear from advice from Mother Earth News, and today from advice from Backwoods Home Magazine, the same advice and dreams are published. You need a large tract of land to homestead. You need pasture and a woodlot and a pond and a barn, etc. They cater to the fantasy of the pre-Depression farm life. All well and good, I have no problem with that and if finances allowed I would have my forty acres and a mule. I like life in the country, and lived most of my childhood in rural areas with a garden and livestock and woods to play in. But that was with my father working for the state with a good paycheck. We didn't have to pay a quarter of a million bucks for equipment to harvest grain that sold for two dollars a bushel or face any of the financial problems farmers contend with. We didn't need the land to pay for itself (although it usually did to some degree, but that was without mortgages). We didn't need to work dawn to dusk to earn a living. Again, nothing wrong with that. Post

Peak Oil we will all be working the land again. But in today's climate of regulation and taxes and low commodity prices, no one can afford to just be a farmer. If you didn't use machinery and could drastically reduce your tax bill, sure, then you could, but good luck with that. But you can homestead without a big piece of land and the mortgage that goes with it. You can live in a shack and garden. By using intensive raised bed gardening anyone with a lot can grow most of their own grain and produce. You will still need a grain supply stashed for emergencies, but with solar and wood providing your energy and a relatively easy garden to maintain for most of your food and chickens and fish for most of your protein, life should be pretty darn care free financially. Your tax bill should stay under $50-$75 a year, with cloths a few bucks from thrift stores and a bicycle under $100 brand new, you could live on $1,000 a year or less even if you still spent half the money you used to at the grocery store.

Having a retreat is all well and good, it is better than nothing. But I would really be hesitant about putting my life on the line by assuming I could even get to the retreat in a timely manner. Again, it is better than nothing. If you are stuck in one dangerous area due to circumstances, by all means get a retreat elsewhere. I stay in dry, cold northern Nevada due to the wages and proximity to family, but it is extremely foolhardy of me as my land is thousands of miles away. Obviously I rely on a smooth functioning economy to see my way there. At this point in time it is strictly better than nothing. If gold and oil continue in the same price range it is going to cost me two ounces of gold just in gasoline to move there. Unfortunately with the real estate wealthy Californians flocking to the state the cheapest land here is five times that much, so a local retreat makes no sense financially. But retreats should strictly be short time events. The land should become your homestead ASAP. Plan on making sacrifices in income and comfort level to do so. Otherwise you allow yourself to be at the whims of the economy and the politicians. And as we see constantly that is a very dangerous practice. It still constantly amazes me when I see people confused when the government "lets them down". Just the other day at work, one dumbass was commenting on the tropical storm (Rita, yet to become a hurricane) that could hit the same area as Katrina, or near about. "I hope the government is going to do something before it hits". Okay, the government already gave the Weather Channel its free services as forecasters, the public has already been warned. What this stupid bitch expects the powers that be to do is beyond me. Does she think they can magically evacuate everybody at the snap of their fingers to that extra empty city they keep for just such a purpose? And I'll bet she thinks it's going to be free, at no cost to the taxpayers. I would hate her for being a mindless drone that helps to enslave the rest of us by their idiocy, but she is just part of the majority that took her public education at face value and never questions anything. How can you get mad at lemmings, they're so cute even as they are running off the cliff.

Retreats are a strong temptation. We all wish to escape from the rat race, to be safe from the idiots out there. By having a retreat we can still participate in the money economy and have an escape plan. It is the hardest thing in the world to give up the security of the paycheck. We have been raised all our lives to equate our paychecks with food, shelter, life itself. Yet, by participating in the money economy we leave ourselves wide open to

the rip-off artists that dwell there. First and foremost is a mortgage. If you work and slave half your life for a house, then you are only renting from a bank and from the government. Look, if you work from the age of eighteen and retire at 68, you spend almost your entire work life paying rent. From 18 to say, 30, you rent an apartment and save for the mortgage down payment. From age 30 to age 60 you pay the mortgage. You still need to work to get your pension (nobody outside of government can work just one job anymore from college to retirement) and then, even by getting a reverse mortgage to live in style in retirement, you are dead soon. You see maybe fifteen years rent free in your life. And, since you got a conventional house that is taxed heavily by the government by the end of your life inflation has made the homes value artificially increase to where your taxes are higher than an apartments rent was when you first started working. And speaking of inflation, another game played against the suckers playing by the rules. Property taxes constantly going up is one example, while wage taxes increasing is another. Today with wage competition from elsewhere in the world, no one sees wage increases above the rate of inflation anymore, but even those with cost of living increases only see the rise with the official rate, not the actually rate. That is about a three percent rate a year, meaning that your wages are not keeping pace with the true rate of inflation and in about twenty years if all stays equal you will have lost half your purchasing power from your wages. This seems one way the market will bring about wage equality to compensate against jobs going overseas, our wages shrink over time.

One area in which a retreat makes sense is when you loose your job in the city due to layoffs and they repo your house and car and you have nowhere to live so you go to your retreat and live off wheat berries and MRE's. But why pay on two properties? If the retreat property is paid off, why not live there? If you are making payments on both you are way over your head financially. And why even think about paying a mortgage on a retreat or a homestead? You are not self sufficient if you pay the bank. Period, end of story. You do not need forty acres and a mule to be self sufficient. Self sufficiency is not being able to grow all your own food if you must pay a mortgage on the land you grow the food on. Buy a piece of dirt and park a trailer and grow a garden. In today's climate of uncertain jobs and corporate bankruptcy as a strategy to avoid paying pensions, not having a mortgage is the smartest thing you can possibly do to ensure your financial future. No ones job is secure, not even those bastards eating at the public trough (come the governments bankruptcy, even civil servants will see layoffs or at least wage degradation such as the private sector sees now). If you insist on having a retreat, at least don't owe any money on it. I think retreats are a poor idea, but at least if you must have one let it be debt free. Otherwise you could lose it in a Depression when you join the unemployed. I would much rather have a lot of dirt I bought for $500 in the South with tornadoes and humidity and put a used trailer on than a quarter million dollar home in weather perfect southern California I need to pay thirty years on and get reamed on taxes every year (plus have few rights 2nd Amendment wise).

But you need to get to your land. Sooner rather than later you need to be on the land safe and snug, away from the big city and the worry about layoffs. If your home has no mortgage, and you give up your car (or truck or any motor vehicle except insurance

exempt mopeds perhaps) and you produce your own utilities and grow a good portion of your own food, then a job is just something to put that extra food on the table and buy more ammo with. Then a minimum wage job is more than enough. And you can find those anywhere. They are no where near as hard to replace as a corporate management job, and they cause very little stress. You no longer need to work to support a house and a car and the expensive suburban lifestyle. If you want to move to the country and be self sufficient, then this is the way poor people can do it without any debt whatsoever. You will not be able to stop working in the money economy, but you sure can radically minimize the amount you need, and that will reduce your stress and always leave you open for options. What are our options now? We live in town or the city, and with rents being the way they are now we are just a few paychecks away from being evicted. We are no better off than the working poor three centuries ago that paid fifty percent of his wages for his food. As rough as that was, we are no better off by paying half our wages towards shelter and getting cheap subsidized food. The only difference is we will starve a lot slower. For all the wonders we see around us today, really the only difference is we understand about germs so we live longer (and most other aspects of modern medicine are mainly guesswork) and we are depleting our petroleum "mines" as fast as possible to keep as many folks from working as possible as we fill up the planet beyond its carrying capacity as quickly as we can.

If you are like most folks and have a spouse that wouldn't know the difference between a need and a want if it bit them on the ass and doesn't allow a single dollar to be saved, then your work is cut out for you. If you agree that things will only get worse and you need a radical life change now, not sometime in the future, then put your foot down. We either move to our own land in a rural area living in a cabin and raising corn and potatoes and she works at a local hooters (did she think the boob job was free?), or you do it alone. You don't need a spouse that doesn't support a self sufficient lifestyle, and you don't need to spend your last day on earth slaving away to buy her an SUV and hair perms. Get with the program or get out!! Now, just disregard all that if you are only a minimal survivalist. If just preparing for natural disasters is all you're worried about, you can do that in the city. If you just want to prepare for short term disruptions, or want to minimize your expenses by being less dependant on others, all that is just fine. Nothing wrong with that. I am just speaking to the total paranoid who envisions society being evaporated by some event such as Peak Oil, Chinese Economic Warfare Forcing Us Into A Depression Of Unimaginable Severity, Wyoming Super Volcano, Global Warming On Steroids or any other such event. And yes, I am one of those paranoids. Remember, it isn't paranoid if they really are out to get you. Any household can radically change lifestyles if they so desire to get to their country home. All you need is the will. It only seems hard because you slowly crept into your present lifestyle, one luxury at a time. Now it will take invasive surgery to free up capital. Sacrifice now, under your own control, or sacrifice later when forced to. Flee the city now under your own terms with your own supplies, or wait until the levee breaks and you are forced into an evacuee center, your weapons are stolen from you and you die of dehydration.

Get on E-Bay and find your land. Who cares if it takes six months of looking to find it

looking everyday. In the mean time save up cash, buy gold or at least silver, stock up on grain and solar panels, sell everything of value, and prepare for your big move. Plan on everything to go wrong and have a financial cushion. You won't find a job right away, your land will flood every rainfall (one good thing about that trailer is it's off the ground), your solar panels will only produce half the anticipated load, your first and second garden crop fails, etc. You are in for a learning curve. Be prepared for it, it is only a mind set. Remember, even in normal society any move to another location is full of upsets and set backs. Unexpected adventures. The only difference is the lack of luxuries to cushion the blow. Hey, get used to it. What doesn't kill you only makes you stronger. Do not give up when striving to prepare for your move. It is all going to be compromise, nothing is going to be exactly as you want it. Instead of a twenty acre retreat with a shallow well and fertile soil you are going to get a 25' by 100' lot with a few scrawny trees where it is too hot in summer and too cold in winter, where you must capture rainwater that tastes like your roof, in a town that has 15% unemployment and you had better publish your Next Great Novel real quick or your savings will run out. Instead of paying the power company $500 to hook up your leaking trailer with juice you are going to light by kerosene, buy your perishables daily for lack of a refrigerator and heat with discarded lumber in the winter in a sheet metal stove and sponge bath with a half gallon of water you heated on your gasoline stove since the sun hasn't been out for two weeks to heat your water. And that is before you go to work at McDonalds or the local plastics factory to get minimum wage to buy your food at the local dented can outlet. But, hey, it is better than paying that mortgage for the next thirty years, and things will get better. You don't have a house to pay off, you don't have a car payment, you are ahead of the game. 95% of the population is worse off than you as far as long term finances go. It just won't seem like it at first, and remember that all their bright shiny toys are all financed. They will work until they die at a good paying but miserable job paying off one finance company or another. After your roof is fixed and your garden produces, you can work one day a week and still have money to burn, living the life of Riley. You can go fishing six days a week, and they will be lucky to get out once a month. Even if it is in a fancy new motorboat, they have to make payments on the thing, hook it up to the car, gas it up at $3 or $4 a gallon, drive through traffic to get to the lake, launch the beast, curse it when the motor dies, and repeat the whole process that evening. You just take your bike to the lake, catch dinner, and go home. Gee, aren't you envious of the middle class guy in his boat?

Buy your land, under a grand. Buy or build a shelter on it, another grand. Have a grand in gold for unknown emergencies, if at all possible. If your trailer is lost in a tornado, you will be glad you had the finances to get another one. You will be living on the edge financially, have a cushion for the unexpected. I would caution against money in the bank, better to bury a few bucks in the back yard. No one saw the bank closures coming in the 1930's, the banks would have been useless if Y2K had occurred, and I don't trust financial institutions to safeguard my money past a few hundred bucks. Plus, gold is a guarantee against inflation. But by whatever method, have some savings safely put back. Then, you need some immediate expense money, the bills needing payment until you can earn some casual income. Plus your tools such as solar panels and batteries, gas or propane stoves, a woodstove, etc. Plan at least a grand for that. All told, without even trying hard you need

at most five thousand bucks to get set up at your own small town homestead. You can cut corners and do it for a lot less of course. If you get a tax return this winter for two thousand bucks, you could do it on that alone with a little luck. Five hundred dollars for a lot of land, three hundred for a used cab-over camper set up on blocks to live in, under a hundred for a bicycle for transportation, a few hundred for a bus ticket to get there if not close by to your present location, and a few hundred for tools and supplies, total $1500. Lets break it on down to see how little you need.

Land, trailer, and transportation are already covered. For heat a used woodstove under a hundred bucks. Scavenge lumber scraps and transport in your bicycle trailer for wood. For lighting, $50 for the solar battery charger, batteries and LED lights. For cooking a Duel Fuel stove at Wal-Mart for $35 (uses gasoline or white gas) and cast iron pan for $5 and a gas can for the same amount. For your garden have a shovel and pick and a rake. Some wood pallets will build a compost heap. You can build a roof over your trailer to catch rainwater, say $100 in building material and $50 for a food grade 55 gallon water barrel. Or just haul water, but only for the short term until you build the catchments system as city water may not always be available. A solar panel and battery and inverter for your computer and (compact B&W) television for about $300. A solar shower to wash with, $7 in the Wal-Mart camping section. $15 for a sawdust toilet. It might be tough not having a phone if you are hooked on the Internet, but you can always use the local library a half hour a day if needed. You are now ready to be a glorified camper the rest of your life. After your garden starts producing potatoes and corn you can supplement your diet with fish freshly caught and your grocery bills can be as little as $5 or $10 a week. A few chickens will give you a few eggs every day, and your stored grain will see you through lean food times. Even if your garden produces nothing of use by having your wild fish catch and your fresh eggs you would only need to get "store bought" grain and potatoes at a few bucks a week for groceries and a few bucks to cook that (assuming you didn't make yourself a coffee can wood stove to cook with). In a really lean period you can eat on $5 a week and in a SHTF scenario you can live off what you grow and catch (have the chickens if the fish catch dwindles). You only need cash for the yearly tax bill, some cloths and shoes, a bike for transport and a few incidentals such as ammo or batteries or postage stamps.

Now aren't you glad you gave up the middle class lifestyle to be an independent self sufficient small town homesteader? Live on next to nothing and be prepared for a reduced employment economy, and for almost no investment you get most of the security of a conventional homestead that costs ten of thousands of dollars.
END

FOXFIRE BOOK SERIES
Reviewing the classic books on old time skills
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Recently I was giving some thought as to what this issue was going to be. The one hundredth issue should be something a little extra special. And of course I didn't have a clue. I almost did a two part episode on Peak Oil but decided that for a lot of you this was just a marginal worry and not worthy of the extra effort. In the near future I'll just do a regular length article on it. Then I thought about reviewing the Foxfire series I had recently bought. And it even fit, being $100 for the one hundredth article. Well, okay, it was $110 actually with the postage from the several different dealers, but close enough for this government work. At present I have a good paying job. It won't last, nor do I expect it to, but while it does I am a busy little beaver. I am making hay while the sun shines. I still live as frugally as possible and so I put some money in savings and some in investments. Silver, land, and reference books being the biggies. I have a very good selection now. Actually too much. Land I will never see, silver you can never have enough of, and reference books- lets just say many are way over rated. And I don't just buy things on a spur of the moment. I deliberate long and hard. But my decision making process is only as good as the information I receive. So here is my gift to you. I spent the money buying the whole set of Foxfire books and now I am going to tell you which were great and which are not worth your hard earned money. The whole series was not created equal.

The Foxfire Book- number one in the series, printed in 1971 based on the magazine put out in the late 60's. The purpose of the magazine was to give a High School class a project a little more interesting than reading textbooks and to preserve the lifestyle of their community. So the chronicle of hillbillies began. The Appalachia back country lifestyle was written about to record a lifestyle. So, some of the writing is great for self-reliant folk seeking the old ways of doing things but others are of interest mainly to sociologists. Something to keep in mind in every book of the series. Book one has faith healing, for goodness sakes. But it also has the following. Building a log cabin. Chimney building. Chair making. Quilt making. Making soap. Cooking on a wood stove. Preserving fruit and vegetables. Churning butter. Slaughtering, curing, smoking hogs. Moonshining. There's some other articles, but those are the juicy ones. Well worth the $5 from a used book dealer. The entire series I bought at Amazon.com, about half from them and about half in ones and twos from their affiliated dealers. Meaning that you only order through Amazon and they collect the money and do the ordering for you. All very easy and deliveries by others are guaranteed by Amazon.

Foxfire Two- this one is just choke full of portraits. Some old lady and her mule of thirty years, etc. Of interest is beekeeping, wagon wheel making, from sheep to cloth, midwifery and an article on a foot powered lathe. That is about it. The wild food section is only good for that region. Worth the $5 used book price, but just. The one long article on

wool really does pay for the book here. Not many regions are known for cotton growing and where else are you going to get cloths from than wool? From sheering to weaving into cloth and looms, this is a detailed article. But, if you have no plans on wool, wagon wheels or honey, skip this one.

Foxfire Three- this one is more like it. Lots of filler, but also hide tanning, making butter churns, making a lumber kiln, building a smokehouse, cattle raising and animal care. It even has a very detailed article on how to make a banjo. I can't imagine why you would ever use this, but who knows. It might be nice to have anyway. I found this book worth the money, but if you already have instructions on tanning and smokehouse building you might want to just save your cash. Remember my advice on buying a scanner? Look around for a scanner under $50 and use it to scan books from the library to build a cheap collection of knowledge. Most books, even good ones, have a lot of fluff to justify the price tag. You can scan the useful parts, save to disc, and with a used laptop, auto battery and solar panel you will always have a reference library. Foxfire 3 can be instructive, but there are other books in the library that cover much the same thing. My local library of a town of fifty thousand has "Tan Your Hide" so I could have saved my cash on this one. A butter churn is for those folks with lots of milk to sell, small amounts can be shaken in a glass jar to make butter. Of course, where else can you get plans on making a butter churn?

Foxfire Four- some marginally interesting articles such as making tar and how to horse trade, spring houses and digging wells. Even a section on making knives and wood carving. But nothing you can't get out of library books or off the Internet. I am sure that at the time of print this was hot information, but by now its half life has expired and you can safely pass on this volume without much worries on missing anything. Sure, the series is great for telling how grandpappy whittled and spit tabaccee, but already in book four we are getting slim pickings on survival related information. But take heart, some good stuff coming up.

Foxfire Five- this is the first book in the series that would be criminal for you not to own! If you are at all interested in low tech survival, this book is a must have. How to make your own blackpowder AND your own flintlock rifle. There is a 100 plus page article on iron making and blacksmithing which sweetens the pot, but the blackpowder rifle section of 220 pages is the gold mine here. Granted, a lot of that space is given to craftsmen profiles, their views on things, etc, and you won't learn how to make all parts (i.e. the barrel) but this would be a great starting point on building an entire flintlock from scratch. If nothing else, the section on making your own powder and flints is well worth the ten bucks they want for this book.

Foxfire Six- this one has a large section on toy making, of dubious value unless you plan on making a living with hand made crafts. However, there is also a thirty page article on shoe making. As in readying the leather, the patterns to cut to, the tools needed, etc. This is the only place I have seen instructions on old time shoe manufacture. If you believe that society will revert back a few centuries due to our high tech system breaking down, than

this information will be priceless. There will be no more composite materials or high tech glues to make modern shoes and someone will need to be able to make shoes the old school way. So for the shoe making article alone (for low tech survival practitioners) this $10 is a must buy.

Foxfire Seven- run away from this one flailing and screaming in horror. It is all about religion, churches, gospel singing, camp meetings and the like. Total waste of good trees for those looking for survivalist info. Very depressing waste of $12.

Foxfire Eight- only two types of articles, pottery and cockfighting. If pottery interests you, there is over three hundred pages of it from the perspective of many different families and businesses. This could be helpful, but I'm sure there are plenty of how to books out there on making pottery, without the profiles the Foxfire series excels at. This would be a very cautious $12 purchase for those wanting to get into the post-apocalypse container business.

Foxfire Nine- you can skip this one. The general store, scary stories. Useless. One look at log cabins, another at quilting, but nothing earth shaking. Leave this one alone.

Foxfire Ten- of little interest to survivalists. If you like history, this one is mainly on the economic conditions of the mountain area. Nothing on self sufficient living other than that, and that is information you can get on the Net on frugal living. You might get some unique insight here on living through hard times, but you can only get this one full price at around $12, so if you want to read through a lot of rambling to get to a few nuggets of information (kind of like you have to do with this newsletter) and you have the money burning a hole in your pocket, then get this volume. Otherwise you can pass on it.

Foxfire Eleven- little of any use. Anything in here is available in other sources, such as preserving foods, and wild plants uses. Don't waste your money at all, nothing to see here you can't see in other places.

Foxfire Twelve- the last of them, at least for now. I hope the last of them for good. These were groundbreaking in their day, but as interest in self sufficiency has grown, so has the reference libraries for it. The Foxfire series has a place in history, but they now need to stop beating this dead horse. War veterans stories, Cherokee stories, summer camps. Not only have they run out of self sufficiency how-to's, they also seem to be running out of old timers to talk to. You chronicled the disappearing Appalachian culture in the mid sixties. Forty years later your story tellers are all dead. Give this one up, already. Oh, if you can't tell, don't buy this volume either.

Well, there you have it. In general, the first book is good for general information on self sufficiency if you don't already have it in any other form. The volume five and six have priceless information for the low tech survivalist. The rest of the books you can ignore, other than if you see a particular article you must have. These books kind of remind me of the books by Mel Tappan. In their day they were the only books of their kind and rather

invaluable. Today bigger and better have eclipsed them and if anyone recommends them it was on nostalgia only. I want to give the devil his due. Thirty years ago Foxfire series was the best there was on the subject. As was Survival Guns by Tappan. Today, almost any subject in Foxfire now has an entire book written elsewhere about it, and the only survival gun book you need today is Boston's Gun Bible. The classics have there place, I do not argue that. Just make sure you are buying needed information rather than buying an old reputation. And that is what you are doing buying most of Foxfire, paying for what it used to be. But comparatively it ain't no more. Sorry to slay this sacred cow. And sorry to spend $100. I would have liked to know more before I bought, but I was in part buying the reputation. But at least you don't have to.
END ARTICLE

HOUSING BUBBLE AS THE ECONOMY
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The other day on an online financial website (FinancialSense.com) an article described our current situation. We had inflation, but it was in essence "soaked up" by the housing sector. Most of the excess credit being created by the banks is going into housing, not retail goods or basics such as food as was the case in the 1970's. This makes sense, because we all know inflation is not really only 3% as the feral bastards the Federales claim. Inflation in housing, medical and college is all running about 10%, and areas of the country with more access to the middle class welfare trough are seeing much higher gains in housing. Some areas such as California are at a point where the late comers to the housing bubble game are paying such an inflated price without any extra income to pay for those gains that they must play finance games just to be able to afford house payments. Interest only mortgages are a hard way to actually own a house when the interest rate goes up constantly (as is the case now- not even Katrina with permanent 25% petroleum price hikes was enough to stop the Fed from its quarterly hike). Of course the economy as a whole is hard to read. We have had zero real employment growth since 9-11. The banks create credit to pump liquidity into the system to goose the housing sector, so all things financial, housing, construction, etc see an artificial employment gain. As does anything public payroll wise as the War On Anyone Terrorizing Our Government has put much demand on increasing the civil service sector. But corporations continue to downsize payroll as a bizarre means of making a profit, bankruptcies are the perfect tool to get rid of those pesky retirement pensions the Unions forced on them years ago, and in general we almost no longer seem to actually produce anything as an economy other than houses and financial services. Kind of hard to export the former and the latter will become impossible once the dollar is no longer the global standard currency.

China continues to sell us everything we need at a low price. This confuses the inflation issue to a degree, but more importantly she uses our own dollars against us in a strategically brilliant money game. China in effect allows the population to work for just-above-starvation wages, with constant repopulation of the cities from the countryside to apply a constant pressure against wage increases, sells to the rest of the world at prices they can't match, takes the dollars received and invests for the countries future. Where ever there is an oil well without our name on it China is buying the company. She is investing in pebble bed nuclear technology while we still use the same plants we've had for 30-50 years. China plans to go into space, and just might make a profit at it, where we just used the program as a tax money pit. And you can bet China is engaged in all kinds of covert semi-military adventures against us. China might not survive as a free market economy, but she will survive long after we do using our own money against us she made by cornering the market on everything retail. As we barely tread water with an economy based on selling real estate to each other. We refinance our homes to buy Chinese made DVD players and zero percent SUV's that get ten miles to the gallon. At a time when gas

will continue to increase forever more.

Peak Oil is not about running out of oil. It is about paying more and more for a dwindling supply of petroleum. We have not had a major oil field discovery in over thirty years globally, yet with China and India moving up from Third World status the demand for oil continues to climb. And almost every nation outside the Middle East has seen its production peak and begin to fall. No one will run out of oil, they will still produce the stuff, just less of it as time goes on. The US still has oil production, but we decrease as time goes on. The same for the rest of the world, including the Middle East. When they start to decline in production, we will look back at $3 a gallon in envy. And when oil becomes less and less affordable, our suburbs are less a nice place to live than a trap we can't leave and one we can't afford to commute to. When new suburbs spring up to finance the housing boom, what happens when less and less people can afford to commute? Is the government going to put every civil servant on a gas debit card at no cost to create demand for the suburbs so the taxpayers can subsidize the continuation of our crazy scheme to scatter our workers to the wind in a time of gas shortages? Right after Katrina the idiots were trying to pass a new homesteading act so the taxpayers could supply a hundred thousand new homes to displaced persons. Can I move to a region vulnerable to natural disaster so I can get a free home from Uncle Sugar?

But let's not get started on Peak Oil. Back to our housing bubble. And history. Remember the Texas/Oklahoma real estate crash? I wasn't there, of course. I don't know the details. But in broad terms it might prove instrumental in a lesson we could all learn to our advantage. After the 1970's oil shocks, oil exploration went crazy. Some say Reagan talked Thatcher into dumping North Sea oil onto the market to financially ruin the Soviet Union which relied on its oil exports for hard currency. But whatever the reason, oil flooded the market and the price of oil dropped like a brick (or, one supposes, like a barrel of oil which should weigh quite a bit) and the economies of Texas and Oklahoma suffered for it. And the local real estate market went with the economy, as did the Savings and Loan industry that helped finance it. Sound familiar? But now it is national in scope, at least to a degree. Sure, the Mid West is less effected by the real estate boom. Utah has seen the least increase (if you are in the market for a reasonably priced house) and I'm sure there are plenty of areas in the deep South that will always be mired in poverty (thanks to the bastard Yankees) and parts of the old Rust Belt still having problems. But I am talking about a general trend here. In general, the national real estate bubble is out of control. Prices are insane. Not that the bubble will pop any time soon. Or, I should say, not that the bubble will necessarily pop any time. It could all implode on us tomorrow, or it could take another three to five years. At which time the Boomer seniors flood the retirement market and the Feds really have a funding problem on their hands.

I think we all can agree that prices are too insane to continue forever. The bubble is going to have to pop. When, is one question. How fast, another. If the thing slowly loses air, spectators are going to get hurt, the taxpayer will take a hit with bailing out Fannie Mae, the banks stupid enough to have failed to resell their mortgage debt to third parties will face huge book loses. If the bubble suddenly pops, the economy could go with it. I am

not saying that it will, just that if it does it will cause severe problems. But everything points to a gradual correction. The constant interest rate hikes, slow enough to bleed the consumer of houses without killing him. Slow enough for the market to reabsorb whatever houses are repossessed. The disaster of Katrina and the addition of credit and tax money to give another surge to the construction market (but not with lower interest). The slow down in price increases in the hotter market areas such as California. The interest hikes putting a brake on the pure spectators who alone were responsible for a lot of the price increases. The resistance of petroleum products to go down in price also slows things down. The price of oil touches every product and service in our economy. Especially housing. Who wants to pay a new mortgage AND a natural gas bill twice what they paid last year? Or heat a bigger place, or commute to a house farther out in the suburbs. Sure, plenty of folks still will. They are still buying SUV's. But the numbers are shrinking. How many of you out there still think there is no connection in the looming bankruptcy of Ford and GM, their dependence on SUV sales, and the permanent rise in oil prices?

As I have written before, a housing bubble that does not pop is possible. Sure, highly unlikely as most of us can't keep up income wise to the increase in houses. Not impossible of course. Few can see other than by accident in which direction the one event comes that sends us over the top into an economic crash. The housing bubble, inflation, China buying so much of our debt, a terrorist dirty bomb, the Middle East suddenly running out of excess inventory, a major Wyoming volcano or a Mississippi Valley earthquake, Habeeb setting off a backpack nuke on Wall Street, almost anything could topple our Empire of massive debt, foreign occupation and inflated dollars. We all talked about the possibility of terrorists crippling the refineries at the Gulf Coast, few saw their destruction by wind and water. Nature did Bin Alden’s work for him. More straws on the back of the camel and who knows which one is the one too many. No one needs to keep their pile of greenbacks that might one day inflate like the Argentina Peso or the German Mark in a bank , vulnerable to the whims of inflation. But there is also no need to put those dollars in a gum and glue stick built home overpriced beyond reason. Houses are not worth the prices they are selling for. For the cost of a typical house you could rent a decent apartment and buy an once gold coin every month and still pay less. And end up with a much better investment. A house dependant on cheap oil, a functioning economy and the whims of politicians, or a pile of gold. Gee, what a choice. Luckily, most folks out there have no idea of the difference between price and value so few see the downside in houses and thus are not bidding up the price of gold. More for us. It is no longer the screaming bargain it was just weeks ago (why do I have that feeling "Katrina" is going to be a new time reference just as "9/11" is?) but even at $475, after fee and tax you can still pick up an once gold coin from your local coin shop for about $525.

So even if the housing bubble doesn't pop and ruin the economy, another event could mess us up and the housing bubble will just be another financial problem helping to drag us down off our high horse. We spend like mad to prop up financially weak corporations by giving them contracts, or at least change the rules for them to benefit. We have two wars going on now and we are eyeballing Iran and North Korea. If you think invading Iraq

pissed off most other folks, just wait until we use nukes to make up for a lack of troops. That would surely tip off a lot of rich but militarily weak folks that we are totally out of control and must be stopped. Then the money will flow to terrorists to dirty nuke a city or two. If we use nukes, so will they. Or as an international protest, the money from foreigners will dry up. Or any number of possibilities. We used to be the lender to the world, and the worlds workshop. Now we are not even the world policeman, but just the biggest bully on the block, the biggest debtor, and have almost no manufacturing capability left. Our only use to the rest of the world is we are consuming so much crap we are the choice of customer to every factory out there. But that use will dry up if our economy goes in the toilet, or if we go too far pushing other countries around. It may seem that foreigners are at our mercy by our consuming patterns, but we are also at the mercy of foreign banks for loans to keep buying, and to foreigners to continue to accept our worthless Greenbacks. We think we are in a superior position, but we are in a vulnerable one just as they are. When others figure out an end run around the American consumer, we as a nation are screwed. Something to look forward to.

Will we see massive inflation if the credit increase fails to channel itself into houses? Most likely not. Home owners have been tapping into home equity as an ATM machine for awhile now and the extra cash failed to inflate retail prices. But the Fed uses that money creation based on houses to stimulate the economy. Remember the housing jobs being created? And the equity loans put money into retail that otherwise would not exist. Not inflating that sector, but keeping it alive as workers would otherwise see a shrinking paycheck in real terms. This was a freebie to the government. Non inflating credit (ok, houses inflated but the average buyer considers this inflation as asset appreciation even if it is illusionary for all but those buying at the ground floor). If the housing bubble pops, the government still needs to stimulate the economy to keep it alive, since that is all that is left of our economy- government manipulation of the money. We are on borrowed time as the bulk of the economy is merely on redistribution mode, but the band plays on as the Titanic takes on water and the passengers are oblivious. So how will the government keep going? Jack up inflation far beyond what it does now. Claims are made of 3% a year inflation but we all know prices are rising higher than that. Ignore rents which are part of the housing bubble, gas prices are a sign of dwindling supplies, and so we are left with inflation being held in check by China and Wal-Mart. So inflation is mostly hidden by profit loss. But the government is printing up more money, and creating more debt, and changing the laws to allow the banks to create more credit. Subtract the housing sector and we will see pure money inflation as the printing presses go wild. The government will have little choice if it wants to stay in business. Then you will see inflating prices everywhere. What can you do? Buy what you need now. As much as possible, stock up on consumer goods and get out of debt. Interest rates should continue to increase, as should commodity prices.

Buying a house does not protect you from inflation. It traps you in a lifetime of debt. Being out of debt is the only way to weather economic hard times. Jobs are no longer secure, and you need your current high paying job to make the mortgage payment. Yet I do not think we have seen anything as far as corporate failures. As the economy gets worse, more and more businesses will fail. Even if the company survives by being bought

up, layoffs will kill your job anyway. Plan ahead for your eventual layoff as part of your survival plans. To drift through life assuming you will always have a good paying job is just a fantasy. You will lose your job. Make your plans accordingly. And if you are dirt poor now? Start downloading from the Internet on how to live off the consumer grid. Making your own soap. Grinding wheat kernels for bread and baking in a homemade solar oven. Insulating your home to cut back on heating. Wood heat. Trade in your car for a moped. Recipes for using less meat in a meal. Etc. Plan on prices rising. Be pleasantly surprised if they don't. But plan on everything but your wage to increase.
END

SURVIVAL LOCATIONS
Better places to relocate for survivalism
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First off, let me tell you I am not going to give you the perfect place to live to survive the coming SHTF. There is no such thing. The folks who moved to southwest Oregon in the 1970's to avoid most nuclear war fallout patterns now face a rabid Socialist state government that in some ways is so liberal that they would not be elected in Santa Cruz (for you left coasters, it would be the same as too liberal for Massachusetts). Taxes are also sky high to pay for the welfare programs. Even if Oregon has a great climate and other desirable features, it is trying to outdo California in big governments race to political correctness and a 100% Fascist government. I think. What do I know? I visited once mid 80's to visit my sister in college and was really impressed by Eugene. My only "facts" are heresy. If you are a citizen of that fair state you might disagree with my assessment. But since most of us haven't lived in all fifty states, my gun guide a few issues back should be a good general guide. The worse the gun laws, the less desirable the place is to live. That is not a perfect guide either, but as with most things I preach falls into the "better than nothing" category. Nevada is not one of the best states for gun freedoms, but close enough. There is no open carry. But concealable is easy enough. There is no open vehicle carry, unless the chamber is empty. Easy enough to jack a round into the chamber, especially if it is not a semi-auto and you train yourself to work with a bolt rather than try to hate the thing as most "pray and sprayers" do. The state is easy to live in even with a bunch of jackass rules. Like most places by avoiding the cities you avoid most idiots in government. A classic example. I have a 1968 Chevy one ton step van (looks like a UPS van). One seat, one seat belt. Are adults allowed in the back without seatbelts? The law is explicit about minors, shoulder belts only regardless of the year of the vehicle. Most states are getting tougher on this, so no big deal. But what about adults? We called the DMV, the local Sheriffs office, the Highway Patrol and I searched online for an answer. The short answer after much runaround was it was up to the discretion of the patrol officer citing you. So without consulting a lawyer no one knows the exact law concerning seatbelts for adults in older cars. I bought a belt from Kragen for $15 and bolted it in as well as I could and we will just hope for the best. This is the result of a state that wants to be a cow-county, good-ol-boy state but is also trying to absorb part of the Golden Glob from next door California that is tired of paying taxes but at the same time wants Big Daddy Government to hold their hand as they cross the road. This state is far from perfect, but then most are the same. The one state that allows unlicensed concealed carry is far Socialist in every other aspect. Go figure.

Firearm freedoms are one guide to states, as is rumor and word-of-mouth. No matter the research you do on a location, it is all a leap of faith to move. After you get there you always discover some strange laws governing you. California is one of the worse firearms

states and the worse taxes and anti-business states, one of the biggest welfare states. Yet under a certain weight you can carry and use marijuana almost without penalty. Alaska is conservative and individual minded, but they also have one of the biggest welfare programs around with the oil tax refund paying residents part of the revenues from drilling. Wyoming is touted as the best free place, but from a cursory glance I detect a lot of zoning controls. Nevada allows prostitution in rural counties, but in those counties where it is outlawed vice squads control it as well as any Socialist Nanny State around. There is no perfect place, just what appeals to you. And what pertains to your views of the coming "difficulties".

What lies ahead for our intrepid survivalists? Do we see Global Warming ahead? Stay out of Florida. Do you see a coming Depression? Stay in Florida, the states with the Social Security checks coming in will stay afloat financially the longest. Want firearms freedoms? Florida is one of the better ones. Want to avoid crowds for fear of epidemics? Stay out of Florida, way too many people. Do you want to avoid other races for fear of race wars in the future? Stay out of Florida, a proverbial melting pot. Think the Grid will go down and wish to avoid deadly cold? Florida is perfect for that. Each state is perfect for one reason and the worst for other reasons. What is important to you? Or, more to the point, what is the MOST important aspect of survivalism to you? You can't have it all your way. This ain't Burger King. Chances are that you are going to compromise in a lot of areas. You will pick a state based on acceptability rather than perfection. If you are a one issue survivalist than it becomes quite easy. Militia types will pick the states based on ease of assault rifle ownership. Those jailhouse lawyer types documenting the Dictatorship arrival will pick the least intrusive government. Tax protestors the cheapest tax state. Tree huggers the state with the most protected land areas from development. Global warmers will stay away from the coasts. But rarely is life as simple as a one issue choice. Even choosing politicians based only on the gun issue got us in trouble with Bush as he sells the country to the highest bidding Mega-Corporation (of course to be fair at least he didn't auction it off to China like Clinton did). Life is nowhere near as simple as it used to be. We only had a short period of "work forty years for the corporation and retire after trusting the government the whole time". That contract was dead when I was just finished soiling my diapers. My father still believes in it, which is okay. We can pull his trailer up to my land and he doesn't eat much. He can have his delusions. If you are preparing for hard times you had better not delude yourself. You will be screwed over. Period. The only question is how and when.

We have already talked about living where you want now rather than having a retreat elsewhere. Retreats are great, but they had better not be too far away or you are in trouble. Look at the recent hurricanes. Those folks only needed to get away a few hundred miles and it took them a long time moving five to ten miles an hour down packed highways. Not that you might necessarily face such gridlock. If you are fleeing a Depression with massive unemployment the freeways should be pretty clear as few can afford $4-$5 gas. Or it could be jammed as everybody uses their last cash to flee out of the dark and unheated suburbs. Who knows? What if travel is regulated under new government fuel conservation measures? Unlikely, but it could happen. What if a dirty

nuke went off and posed little danger to you but everyone panicked thinking another one could target them and everyone left the city? What if power was off in your area for a time longer than usual and no gas could be pumped and you needed to get to your retreat? What if? Too many of them. Live at the retreat now, or at least really close. One realistic scenario if your retreat was too far from work might be to live close to work renting an apartment or trailer space and working the land on weekends. Then, worse comes to worse you bike to your retreat. And we also talked about retreats being a homestead instead of a bunker. The poorest amongst us could buy a $500 lot from E-Bay and build a cabin or park a trailer on it, catch rainwater and grow a garden. Wait for next years tax return in March and move to your own rent free land. Come Peak Oil, the Depression and Massive Inflation, a paid for lot within biking distance of town growing your own corn and potatoes is a better bet than 40 acres with a mortgage and a massive tax bill.

But where is your mini-homestead going to be? Moving there is not a problem. We all move a lot, we all have experience. Rent a U-Haul and drive, or if that is more expensive than the value of our possessions we sell everything and bus or fly to the new location. Or pack up the car with the most valuable items and drive. The hard part is deciding where to go. You could be like me and pick a state based on where the cheapest land is. I did that for two years and now own four lots of land in four different areas. And have yet to move. But more on that later. For you to decide, list the important aspects for yourself. Affordable land, climate, gun laws, zoning, population numbers, politics, taxes, a job, future threats, supplies, ethnic population and natural disasters. There might be other considerations such as home schooling, or proximity to foreign invaders or whatever you consider other threats but I think my list should cover most problems. But of course each individual will have different priorities. And that is a good thing. We can't all be happy moving to the same area, if nothing else most of us don't like too many neighbors.

Affordable land is a criteria for most of us. I know few Lottery winners who went and bought a retreat on the top of a mountain with their own grain silo and water supply. Most of us can't afford a bunch of land or at least not very good land. Now, my definition of cheap land might be different than yours. I bought three eighth acre lots for about $400 each. If I never live there it is an acceptable loss, and taxes are under $10 each. I first bought a lot in northeastern Arizona when I had little disposable income and despite its drawbacks I looked on it as a cheap place to hang my hat if I was ever unemployed. I figured it was cheaper than a years worth of auto insurance while living out of a car. The next two lots were trying to improve on the AZ land. One in north central Arkansas, a nice wooded lot ten miles from town. The other a lot in east Texas by a lake and five miles from town. The trend was towards a warmer climate and closer to town, but in the end after observing the masses of refugees during two hurricanes I decided on staying out West where the land is more expensive but there are a heck of a lot less people out here. I really am not a people person and don't wish to be surrounded by them (a quick count placed 7 million of them within 200 miles of my TX land-yuck!). So I wisely decided to stay put and paid 3/5's of my savings for an acre of land out of the way in Elko NV. They were worthless Greenbacks anyway, might as well get something tangible for them while I can. Now, I'm still 300 miles away from my land but that is a far

cry from the 2000 plus trying to move out to Texas. With gas at $3 a gallon moving costs went from $600 down to $90. And no need for motels or eating out, at least another $300 saved (it's hard to find any space to park and sleep on the Interstates). If I ever wean myself from my worthless but well paying job I can move up north with little effort and either move to the land rent free or live in town renting a lot and be ten miles away working it on the weekends (the question still remains if buying and maintaining a 4x4 and heating in winter is cheaper than renting a lot in town- the land is mainly for unemployment when I can bike into town and stay put during winter snows).

Gun laws we have already covered in another issue. The research is pretty easy, and we all know which states to stay away from. California, New Jersey, Massachusetts, etc. If you are concerned about a future gun grab only go to a state that allows unregulated private sales. I would be wary of states that don't allow concealed carry, but not totally adverse to them. If that is their only anti-gun law, is it a problem for you? I have lived in four states in a row that allowed concealed carry and I have yet to apply for a permit. I am more comfortable having a rifle nearby, and by living in a low crime area I can relax and not worry about going heeled all the time. If you live in a big city, then it should be a big deal for you. If you live in rural Nebraska, is it really a concern? I know, it is indicative of the general gun attitude of the state. But sometimes it doesn't matter. Weigh the pros and cons of your prospective state. The point is, are there enough firearms freedoms for you. Not a gun writer publishing a ratings guide. If you still live in California (I'm a native and shudder at the thought of ever going back- I escaped 12 years ago) you can still own a gun, you just can't do much with it like defend yourself legally. But you can still have one for the future Unraveling as long as it doesn't look threatening or is semi-auto or has any one of a hundred prohibited features such as a trigger. Okay, I'm being sarcastic. Leave California if you can, but please don't move to Nevada. If you don't have any money from a house sale, you're invited. Otherwise, go to Oregon please.

Zoning is a big deal for me, but I like to live in travel trailers. They can generally be bought very cheap, they already contain 12 volt and propane appliances and in a pinch you can take your home with you when you move. Most folks want a real house, but then they are picky Yuppie bastards. Fine, be spoiled. But if you plan on living in a trailer while you build your Unabomber cabin, wouldn't it be nice to not be hassled by the zoning cops while you build? Texas is great for most counties lacking zoning outside the city limits. Missouri is not. They even demand a minimum square footage house. Bastards. I saw some land in Wyoming that was zoned for no occupation at all. What is the deal with that? Do they think folks are rushing to live in the path of the arctic winds? I guess they only want rich cowboys there. If zoning is a concern to you, make sure you get an area that is not too demanding on your pocketbook. Comrade Building Inspector must not be trifled with, his ego demands we adhere to his petty dictates. Communist bastards.

Climate is pretty important. Natural gas doubled this year, as did heating oil. One must ask oneself if future prices and availability of petrochemical heat will allow one to live in a cold climate. Is wood widely available? In the future, a lot more people will be using it to heat with. Can your area supply that? My humble lot in Elko Nevada is close to some

wood sources, but future supplies are in question. My best bet would be to build underground and the lack of rainfall and abundant desert sunshine help in this aspect. I can bury a cargo container cheaply and only use wood as a supplement rather than my main source of heat. I can also build dirt filled tire walls and put my trailer inside if I'm really poor. But at least solar will fill most of my needs. So a cold climate is less of a problem. Other than transportation into town. And what about water? It is hard to garden in the desert. It can be done, expensively. But if you are close to a natural year round source you can do away with an expensive well. Hauling water is undesirable in an emergency situation, but storage and a cistern can help with that. Understand what needs to be down in your new climate before you move. In tornado country you can live in a trailer, but have a storm shelter with your vital supplies in it. The changes of one hitting you are slight, but it can happen. The South is great for rainfall, gardening and mild winters, but beware future racial problems, natural disasters and overpopulation. Your best bet for dealing with adverse climate is not to move to southern California (future water supplies are in question) but to provide yourself with a source of water and heat not dependant on electricity, oil supplies or society in general. Think Y2K. How do you provide yourself with the basics on your own or with local low tech help?

Population numbers are something you want to think about. If you are worried about screaming mutant welfare hoards you want isolation. Not too much isolation, as a single family is easy pickings. But were you can pick a few buddies you will feed and possibly arm to help out around the place with security. Small towns are good for security, but if you are the only survivalist there they might turn on you for your supplies. Make sure your town has a feed store as an emergency town cupboard. If you are near town you can always invite some of your unprepared hunting buddies over for an extended stay. Have provisions for them and their significant others. But what about the surrounding population? They are your enemy. Even an upright pillar of the community will turn on you for heat and food. Perhaps not by themselves, but possibly in a mob. The mind can justify anything to itself, including murder. You must ask yourself the following question. How much population can I shoot to secure my supplies? Expect at least 1% to stumble on to you. Ten percent of those with fight you for supplies. Even at only one round per, are there too many people surrounding your area? Will your small town close down your roads and commonly defend against outsiders? If this is a concern to you, live in low population density areas. Or, conversely, high population areas also have more doctors per square mile, as they do engineers and other persons with skills to help rebuild to 19th century non-petroleum specs after social collapse. There are also potentially more jobs available in high population areas. Only you can decide what is best. East of the Mississippi is crowded, for good or bad. As are the West coast areas. Your call.

Politics fall along the lines of gun control. And taxes are easy to research. You know only a few states don't have income tax, or sales tax. I've already covered states that tax food in the gun issue. Property taxes are a main concern, as states are cashing in on wildly appreciating real estate values. Find out before you move. Jobs are something each of us must research individually. Our jobs are our lifeline, and we know which areas are good or not for our specialty. Non professionals can move almost anywhere, giving them

mobility if not security. www.city-data.com lists unemployment figures for everywhere. Anything above the average of 5% spells trouble for the non professional (they can be hired from their present location) unless you transfer within a national chain store. Also consider supplies. In a rural area, if there is no Super Wal-Mart nearby, you are going to pay way too much for groceries. Without a nearby Lowes, too much for construction supplies. Add that to your calculations. All my land is within 30 miles of a Super Wal-Mart for just this reason. The ethnic makeup of the population you live in is important. West Texas has $200 an acre land but no Super Stores and the Mexican population is in the 75% range. Bad in case of future race problems. Same with the big cities and blacks. Rioting. I am not being racist, but practical. Coming conflicts will be tribal in nature, and tribes mostly follow color. Be in an area predominately of your own race. I'm being politically incorrect out of practicality here, folks. Economic downturns will inflame racial conflict. When folks are starving they will turn of those outside their tribe. Our reptilian brain will revert to survival mode which stipulates strangers of the tribe are the enemy. Ignore at your own risk. Last but not least, natural disasters. Be aware of all the unlikely but possible dangers of your area. New Madrid quake, super quake in SoCal, volcanoes in Wyoming, tsunami on the west coast, etc. Plan for them. Plan on lack of support, such as no fire crews out West, no relief efforts on the Gulf Coast, no insurance coverage after hurricanes. System collapse or economic collapse might dry up outside help. Plan on it.

Now that I have given you all new problems and no solutions, have fun deciding on where you want to move to for survival. Or just make the best of where you are, since each potential location has the best and worse of everything. There is no magical retreat location. Living in the suburbs could be worse, just have space blankets to cover the windows in winter, longjohn underwear, a wood camp stove for emergency heat (with ventilation, dumbass) and a few extra blankets and comforters when the power goes out. Better than nothing if you can't move to a warmer climate. Move while you can, or learn to adjust to emergencies where you are. Chances are where you are now is not so bad. Just supply yourself now for Grid failure, no food resupply, etc., now while times are semi normal economically speaking. I hope I got your thinking caps turned on here, and feel free to write with any questions.
END

LOSING THE FINANCIAL WAR ON TERRORISM
Exhausting ourselves with the bill for war
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When you decide to become an Empire, it does pay to at least glance at history. History will tell you the way how not to run your budding enterprise. But then, I suppose if you knew history you knew that all empires sow the seeds of their own destruction both militarily and economically. And then what fun would starting your own be? The U.S. could be said to have started its imperial drive a little over a hundred years ago picking a fight with the power least able to defend itself, Spain. But hadn't we started much earlier than that, marching toward the Pacific taking land from whoever owned it? Stealing land is what made this country. It is in our blood. Cheap land gave us resources and attracted the immigrants bold enough to move over here. Now rather than harsh land singing to be farmed we have the cry of the welfare check drawing the not so best or brightest to our shores, or the seasonal lettuce needing to be picked. But no matter, now that all our factories are polluting safely out of sight over in China, other than picking lettuce the only other jobs out there are supporting the empire. Patriotism is not so much love of country as fear of being poor and jobless so the masses support our occupation overseas. Now you either directly work in Uncle Sammie's army, work for a "private" mercenary army under his direction, work as a civil servant to keep the wheels moving on the whole mess, or as a last resort due to poor pay you work in an industry supported by the paychecks of government workers.

Most private sector jobs can be said to be dependant on the dictates and finance of government. Two issues back I talked about the housing sector being the creation of government. The Federales tell the banks to lower their reserve requirements and the interest rate is lowered. Suddenly every warm body silly enough to take out a loan can qualify for a life of servitude and buy a gum and glue structure for a quarter of a million dollars. The housing sector goes wild creating jobs from re-fi agents to construction workers, real estate agents to bankers assistants. This is entirely a creation of government. We are not seeing a population boom needing all the new houses. With the coming scarcity of oil supplies and more importantly our coming inability to pay for or control those supplies, the last thing we need are more poorly insulated houses built way the hell out and gone in more suburbs. And what about your job? Are you dependant on the government teet? Most likely indirectly, but you shouldn't have to dig far. Anyone in Florida is most likely in danger. Between constructing new suburbs in former swamps drained by the Corp of Engineers, the welfare checks being sent to all the old farts, the military bases and the drug trafficking money (only being lucrative because of their being outlawed) the state is awash in government funding. Take away all that and the state shrivels up and blows away. Las Vegas could have only gotten so big by having a government project to build at taxpayer expense a cheap source of water and electricity. Towns everywhere are solely dependant on the nearby military base, and those are in danger of being closed so we can open new ones near the source of oil overseas. Just as

factory closings killed the Rust Belt areas, shortages of funds to the government could close down vast areas dependant on money from the government. Most likely your area qualifies as being on the welfare trough. In an economically depressed area can any business other than Super Wal-Mart survive? Look at Idaho, one of the darlings of the survivalist crowd. Between local, county, state or Federal money creating jobs for the various government owned land, is there any job available locally not created by the government? Very few. You bring a job with you selling ceramics on E-Bay, you work directly for the government, a few lucky ones can work at a private sector service industry for a bit above minimum wage, or you go on welfare. And land ain't cheap.

Look at where I live, Carson City Nevada. It is the state capital and despite its proximity to the Sierra Nevada mountains with its skiing and tree hugger summer activity it is not a tourist destination. Reno with the big casinos and hotels draws that crowd. Local businesses are mainly drawing off the business of government in a state capital. Once the local lumber played out here, and the mint stopped stamping out silver coins, there wasn't much to feed the local economy besides government. After gambling was allowed, the whole state bloomed economically. Now with almost every state in the Union allowing gambling in one form or another the industry is in decline. We depend on house sellers from California to bring in massive amounts of cash to infuse into the economy. Once that dies off the only industry here will once again be catering to the functioning of government and I foresee a lot of businesses closing, most likely to include the casino I now work at. The city is getting too big to function on the limited good economic circumstances we now enjoy. Others will welcome the collapse of the California real estate bubble because it means the local real estate market will come back down to a more rational price level, but I think it means the town will at least partially die. Does your location fit into this mold? If government stopped spending tomorrow would your location survive? This is a question you should ask yourself, as sooner or later the Federal government is going to be broke and with that your local government will lose a lot of funding. Even with hyper-inflation in the works, eventually the economy will collapse. Later rather than sooner, but nothing lasts forever, especially governments. In my case, I can leave Carson City for my land up in Elko which is near a gold mine. That should keep some jobs in the local economy unless it ceases production, unlikely due to world wide demand as governments everywhere debase their currencies.

To my main point this article: the financial consequences of our war on terror. The price is not just a half a trillion dollars spent each year on the military budget, or that same amount again for two years in Iraq and Afghanistan. After the World Trade Center collapse we should have seen an economic collapse. Our main area of finance was attacked. It has recently been estimated that London's equivalent to Wall Street produces twenty five percent of England's entire economic activity. I have no problem believing that our financial center in New York City plays a role in our economy just as large. Would we have entered a Depression with a quarter of our economy crippled, our military headquarters attacked as well as our center of government? Certainly that was a logical hope for the terrorists (at this point we will leave aside the possibility we did this to ourselves to stimulate the economy after the Tech Wreak and consolidate Federal power

and also to reward those that elected Bush with another war and high gas prices through shutting down Iraq production- even though we all can guess the OKC bombing was the work of Clinton). Our only recourse to the 9/11 attacks was to flood the market with cheap credit to stimulate the economy, go to war to get corporations producing again, start up the printing presses (Banana Republics re-issue currency after debasing the old one, we just issue new Greenbacks to "foil counterfeiting"- and if you believe that one...) to pay the bills, and sell as much debt as our potential Asian enemies are willing to buy. Each of these actions carries a price tag.

The housing market bubble created a lot of jobs. It redistributed a lot of funds to economically depressed areas. It also created a glut of houses. When the easy credit dries up, a heck of a lot of houses are going to be sitting vacant. Even if the bubble only slowly loses air rather than pops, a lot of capital was misallocated. Money spent on an overpriced house can't be spent on retail which until recently was the bulk of our economy outside government. After the houses stop being built, what drives the economy if the retail sector was gutted in our house frenzy? Just look at the damage a housing bubble did to Japan, and their economy was a lot healthier than ours is. And while starting wars used to be a dandy way to stimulate the economy in times past (FDR pushed us into war to recover from a Depression the government started by inflation) right now we really are in no way capable financially of conducting an overseas military campaign, let alone two of them or perhaps more if the Hawks in the administration get their way. We are broke as a country, our population saves nothing, our industry is mainly overseas. Our economy hangs by a thread of extorted governments elsewhere being forced to uphold the Dollar Standard. Mainly because no government can afford to be on a gold standard, all are on the Fiat Currency Standard, and since we were the dominant power after World War Two we dictated the economic standards to the rest of the world. Our time of money manipulation to the rest of the globe is clearly past, but others still remain true to our once great standard only through lack of a better choice. Once that choice is given, once it is less painful to abandon the dollar than it is to keep it, other countries and corporations will run from the worthless dollar as if it was just used to wipe Uncle Sam's butt. Waging war both militarily and with a printing press has worked so far to secure our vital interests, but just as students on the playground detest a bully so do other countries hate being bossed around by us. They will strike back. Such is the ways of empire building and collapses.

Right now Russia has resources and nuclear weapons (plus a lot of other useful conventional weapons such as deep water navel vessels), Iran has oil and China has a lot of money. Together they would make a good start as a counterpoint to US power. This is not my suggestion, but one theory put forth (where else?) on the Web. It makes a lot of sense. Empires always have their enemies willing to gang up and overthrow them. After the enemy is gone, those from the temporary alliance go back to fighting amongst themselves. But why shouldn't they gang up on us? We are clearly intent on taking as much Mid East oil militarily as we can. We buy off any country close to oil with inflated dollars as we can. We close domestic military bases and reopen them with different names overseas on the Caspian. We force other countries to try to counter us. The Romans never had enough economic means to duplicate our feat of global domination and the

British tried to rule the world using a sound currency backed by actual silver/gold. Foolish amateurs!! The US has ruled by fiat currency its entire try at empire and we have succeeded beyond our wildest dreams or control. We sell our future enemies the rope that will hang us. The more of our debt foreigners own the firmer they control us. If things continue as before and they amass enough of our debt they can call in their marker and send our economy into a tailspin. Unless we first make our money so worthless it will have little effect. Who will destroy our economy first- foreigners or our own government through the printing press? After all our other suppliers reach Peak Oil production (Canada and the North Sea are already there) and in a few years the Middle East once again controls our imported oil, after China buys more and more of our debt, after the Baby Boomers start to retire in droves, what will stop the massive economic shocks to our system? Oil will skyrocket (and alternatives will not be developed due to lack of funds), our T-bills will be cashed in rather than be rolled over by other Central Banks, and the Seniors will suddenly start creating a huge drain on the government (above and beyond what they already do). That should be something to look forward to.

Another unintended cost is local. After 9/11 we are over-paranoid. Everything looks like a threat. The airline industry is pretty much in the toilet due to high fuel prices, and the deadline for ending the old style bankruptcy pushed things along, but without the total paranoia of security at airports customers as a whole wouldn't have been pushed away. That started the decline for most companies. Katrina and the October bankruptcy law just finished it off. After subway bombings in London, now New York City sees anyone with a backpack as a bomber. Never mind that NYC is the one place that almost no one owns a car and thus need things such as backpacks to carry shopping items. Forget about every locale suddenly needing emergency response equipment now that grants are available from the Feds. That is handled by inflation. But what about all the local expenditures we don't have the money for? NYC spending for the extra manpower to patrol the subways, which takes a lot more cops than the few extra standing around an airport. Every high profile event means the SWAT team needs to be deployed, standing around with full auto carbines itching under full body Ninja suits, waiting to blow away somebody for locker room bragging rights. And can you imagine the bonanza in consulting fees? Every paranoid with an impressive degree can dream up a new scare and get paid to present it. That has got to be costing us some scratch.

Energy prices are somewhat the result of our inflation and keeping Iraq oil off the market. This could be intentional, to pay back Bush campaign costs (every election has a hidden cost in patronage to corporations or special interests) or it could just be the vulnerability of the oil infrastructure to insurgents. Either way the oil is not getting to market, and consumers are getting screwed. We pay more at the pump, will pay half again as much this winter to heat the house, and all domestic products based on oil will increase in cost. Carpeting, plastics, household products. What won't be increased in price because of oil? Everything we do, everything we make is based on cheap and abundant oil. The only reason grain hasn't gone up in price is because of a backlog in shipping from barges after Katrina. Rail and truck are too expensive compared to water transportation and the price paid for grain slumped when supplies started backing up. If this situation hasn't resolved

itself already, it soon will, and grain prices should shoot up, taking retail food prices with it. Now would be a good time to stock up on any major purchase of wheat we might want to make. Not only can a small increase add up quick (at fifteen cents a pound now, doubling would mean another $60 per years supply) but you can be sure that the plastic buckets you need will also increase in price. And start to look for a lot more companies going out of business. Some are obvious such as independent truckers paying out of pocket for diesel. Or the airlines. But anyone dependent on shipping and operating on thin margins could be in trouble. A florist already doing a poor business might not survive a doubling of the cost of shipping the flowers to their door, especially if they were far removed from the fields. How cheap is your surplus rifle at $59 if you pay an extra $10 for shipping it? Perhaps you don't buy it, hurting the gun dealer. Any increase in the cost of shipping ammunition means that much less we buy. Walton Feed might see a decrease in grain shipments if shipping costs go up too much. We all pay more for everything, yet our pay stays the same (the threat of layoffs keeps us docile).

Another peek at Peak Oil. Do you have your dwelling converted at least partially to solar power yet? A big solar oven to cook with? All it takes is some glass and elbow grease and the cost is minimal. Every south facing window on the house having a box covered in glass venting into the house collects free heat during the day. Have you bought several pairs of thermal underwear yet? The difference could be twenty degrees on the thermostat setting and it cost $12 a pair at Wal-Mart. Stock up on firewood. It is a great insurance policy against the electric grid going down. The one thing you shouldn't do is rush out to buy a hybrid vehicle. A new car payment costs a lot more than the gas to run an older vehicle already paid for. Now a moped on the other hand...

The war on terror is governments excuse to stay in power. I hope you all enjoy the bill for it.
END

TEN OTHER DISASTERS TO WORRY ABOUT
Something else to keep you up at night.
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I love Wired magazine. They are the Popular Mechanics for Geeks. The articles are not just tech orientated but also mix in some futurism. And all written for the layperson. But best of all as low as ten bucks a year on special for twelve issues. The November issue had the usual- the biggest porn DVD rental company, robot jockeys for camel races, bomb disposal going high tech in Iraq. And the atlas of Danger Zones, Ten Trouble Spots You Aren't Already Worried About. Well, that the usual Wired reader is not worried about. Us paranoid survivalist readers are aware of most of them, perhaps unconcerned with others. But it is nice to see newsstand magazines are doing their part to scare the crap out of readers. Fear is a great tool for getting the couch potatoes up and filling soda bottles with water and dusting off a can of Raviolis. Unless they can't believe Uncle Sugar would ever abandon them in a natural disaster. They do teach math for a reason. Three thousand firefighters and cops, plus a few hundred National Guardsmen, divided by a population of three million. Equals timely rescue after I didn't get my ass out of here. Okay, sure. Go back to the Price Is Right and we'll send you another Welfare check, jerkoff. Even given the usual complaints of lack of a car, even if you lack a bicycle, you can still walk thirty miles a day if you hustle. Twenty if you are out of shape. Get out. You stay there to begin with for little good reason. You can be on Welfare outside a flood zone. And what is our excuse? We have jobs, or are retired. Why are we still living in a location prone to disasters? In the big cities? Look at it this way. If someone put a gun to your head and asked for twenty thousand dollars, would you give it to them? Of course you would. So, if you lower your income the same amount to move to another area to avoid a dangerous area, that would also save your life. I will list the ten disasters from Wired magazine below, with my charming comments. Then precede to list some more, just because I can't help myself. And give you some food for thought on where you live.

Rupture in the Alaska Oil Pipeline. Built quit rugged, the Alaskan oil pipeline was anchored in permafrost. Oops, no one predicted global warming. Now up to a third of the upright supports are out of alignment and more could follow with further thawing. With something like 15% of our national production, the flow ceasing would cause a price hike of Katrina proportions, perhaps by a third, more on the West coast. I believe their data is a bit outdated on this one. For one, they don't pump a billion barrels a day from Alaska. So unless we add Canadian purchased oil to the flow, they give too high a number. Perhaps it was a typo and they meant yearly. Still, it would be bad for supply and prices. They also don't add in that sections of the permafrost are being frozen by us to avoid this problem. So, we don't need Mother Nature to warm the planet, we just need a serious electrical outage to stop our re-freezing process to rupture the pipeline and stop the flow of our black plasma. Or a terrorist planting a few bricks of C4. Or if Iraq fails to employ the nation we could sabotage it ourselves, blame Greenpeace, and send in

Halliburton to reconstruct the line at a reasonable price measured in the hundreds of billions, then keep the oil off the market for several years to enrich the oil companies.

Landslide at Mount Rainier. Once or twice every thousand years Mt. Rainier erupts. And it has been 550 years since the last one. The eruption melts the glacier and half a mountain rolls down towards Puget Sound. Goodbye Tacoma and Seattle and assorted burgs nearby. Remember all the news stories about South American towns and cities being buried under a wall of mud from the mountain above? Picture that, but with a lot of Starbucks coffee shops thrown in. And another of our ports out of commission. Remember, ports are how we unload all our imports from China. They may sell us a lot of ceramic junk, but China also supplies almost all of our vital supplies like laptop computers, clothing and shoes, and even in ten years all our cars. I don't feel like paying triple the price for a pair of whitey tightees if we lose the use of a major port. And the folks buried under a few dozen feet of mud and ash most likely will not be too thrilled either. Really, if we are going to waste a whole city, why a port town. Couldn't it be a useful target like Washington D.C.? This threat is kind of like an asteroid strike. It could hit now, or so far in the future it doesn't matter since we are either living in huts eating each other or out colonizing other planets. And almost no city is built on a really safe site. Trade and proximity to raw materials dictates location, not safety. But still, near a volcano?

Levee Failure in Sacramento. Here's a fact I didn't know and I used to live thirty miles outside of Sacramento. Sacramento is built on the banks of a river, most of the city being up to twenty feet below water level. Outside of New Orleans it is the city most dependant of levees. Levee failure is projected by mid century although it does not give details as to why. Old age? But, the water supplies to not a few Californians are then in danger. Would you like to live in LA without water? Think it's violent now, just wait. And there goes farming for awhile. Produce prices through the roof. It is bad enough that we need to ship produce from California to the rest of the nation, but what if that source dries up? And for any of these disasters, think of the financial lose to the rest of the country. Katrina alone added a huge cost not counting the Fed debt. Petroleum products more dear in price, perhaps resulting in companies failing such as airlines, car manufacturers, perhaps an insurance company or two. Construction supplies should rise even more. But mainly outside of temporary price increases, the burden of more Federal debt to pay the price of rescue and rebuilding is what is going to be problematic. When you add and add, and then increase some more, at one point in the future a national debt becomes unmanageable. Right now it is a painless way to pay the bills, but the piper will be paid sooner or later, and you will share the pain. No tax increases now, hyper inflation later. I would hold very little in paper wealth, be it currency, stocks, insurance policies or pensions. Promises to pay are not the same as the ability to pay.

Eruption at Yellowstone. And here I thought all the hoopla over a Super Volcano was just uber-paranoia. But if Wired Magazine is worried... Actually, since Yellowstone has one of the worlds most active volcanic systems it makes sense that she is going to blow sometime soon. Previous eruptions piled ash up from Arkansas to Oregon and from Canada to Mexico. But I would imagine that was extreme case only. Smaller eruptions

won't take out the entire Rocky Mountain region with the grain belt as a bonus. I'm sure it would block out most of the sun for a time, so even areas far away lose their crops at least for the season. The likelihood of Wyoming erupting is good. It is just a question of when. Again, in five hundred years, who cares? In twenty years as we are making adjustments for the lack of oil supplies by becoming more reliant on solar power it would really be bad timing on the part of Mother Nature. But since Yellowstone has a potential to be more than just an ordinary eruption, something to worry about. I would be leery of only having one years supply of food on hand. Better three to five per person. Even if a wheat only diet is an incomplete diet, it is so cheap to buy right now that it is better than nothing come crop loses. $100 a year per person is a darn cheap price to pay to feed yourself, loved ones and neighbors helping to defend the homestead. Even less if you buy in bulk and find a cheaper source of storage than poly buckets. Stored grain is a much better short term food solution than farming in any number of circumstances. One being a huge volcanic eruption disrupting crop growing. In the long run the ash helps the soil. Short term you starve. Intensive gardening is going to be a must, but so is grain storage. Do both.

Flooding in the Upper Mississippi. Not a huge deal for the rest of us, except grain prices go up, the Fed debt goes up and we all pay more in the long run. As if the inflation to come isn't going to be enough. The Mississippi gives us a huge flood about once every twenty years and there's not much we can do about it other than clean up and go on. The last flood was thirteen years ago, so get ready for another one. And I would not be surprised to see it soon to compliment the screwy weather we have had as of late. Which most likely means it turns into a "perfect storm" or a "hundred year storm". Bad even for a river that normally floods. Just me being paranoid, but we seem to be getting the worse luck disaster wise and our infra-structure is very old and neglected which just amplifies any problem. So, say about 2008-2012 when the Grey Hairs start retiring en masse would be a great time to have a few more mega-disasters to really screw the budget up. We don't even really know the financial ramifications of Katrina yet, but you can be sure it will hurt us in ways yet unknown. One can easily predict Houston and the Dallas area will see a surge in crime due to the increased low life’s from New Orleans ghettoes settling into their new homes. Or the increase in building holding up the housing bubble just a bit longer to make the final consequences much worse. Or the increase in any product using natural gas. But there will be others we can't see just yet.

Tornadoes in Dallas. This is a strange one. Potential for a tornado cluster over Dallas during a rush hour could trap tens of thousands in their cars and cause a few billion dollars in damage. I can't see much of a worry here for non-residents, other than us picking up the tab. But, the National Weather Service seems quite concerned so area residents might want to check out the danger a little closer.

Earthquake in Missouri. This one ain't too hard to predict. There is a fault line that would hit St. Louis and Memphis especially hard as they lack building codes for tremors. In 1811 New Madrid Missouri saw the biggest earthquake to hit the continental US. The likelihood of another is 90% in the next fifty years. And even if it does take the entire

fifty, we still won't be ready by then with safer buildings. We put all our money into keeping our bloated governments functioning and there just isn't money left over for anything else. So unless the Greater Depression hits and they recreate the CCC and have make-work construction programs while the remaining 10% of the population not on government assistance (the resisters to turning us into the National Socialist Welfare State will be starved into submission- see Stalin for instructions) sees 10% inflation per week to pay for all the new government jobs, we won't see any earthquake safe buildings in this region. BTW, travel trailers are great for riding out an earthquake as long as nothing heavy is overhead.

Massive Power Failure in Boston. NIMBY is alive and well in New England and they don't seem to be building any new power plants there even as population grows. A summer heat wave could cause blackouts, similar to Chicago in 95. Projected to occur by 2008. Another Damn Yankeeland problem could be...

Indian Point Meltdown. Like any nuclear power plant, the odds are good nothing will happen. But if anything goes wrong, this reactor is just 35 miles from Manhattan. As if there weren't enough reasons to not live in NYC. And did we mention the plant is fifty friggin years old? Mother Nature is the perfect planner, but after fifty years the human body is prone to massive failure. A power plant using nuclear power is designed by man, and they aren't one tenth the good planner that Mom is. But perhaps the whole issue will be rendered obsolete by...

Tsunami on the Eastern Seaboard. There is a small volcanic island in the Canary's that could cause trouble for the East Coast. In 1949 an eruption caused a slip into the Atlantic. A bigger event could cause a huge tsunami that impacts the Eastern seaboard. Could happen tomorrow, or never (in human terms anyway). Kind of like the Wyoming volcano. But that isn't the only reason to stay off the East Coast. Asteroids hitting the Atlantic, Arabs nuking DC, global warming pushing up the sea level, even lowly hurricanes all tell you to stay off the edge. Get a bit inland for goodness sake.

That is the list from Wired Magazine. Again, not the most breathtakingly earth shattering news. We all are aware of most of the items on the list. But we should take note about our areas potential dangers. Sure, Wyoming erupting in our lifetimes most likely won't happen, but I still wouldn't live too close to it anyway. We know the West Coast has the potential for volcanoes, earthquakes, tsunamis and forest fires. Don't build on the slop of an "extinct" volcano or on the waters edge. Global warming is a natural event, so there is no stopping it. Don't live near sea level on the coast. Most Western states are drawing down the aquifers for farming and golf courses. Have an alternate water supply. Peak Oil doesn't mean we run out of oil, it means we've run out of cheap abundant oil. Prepare to live close to work and have a renewable source of winter heat (I strongly recommend solar since wood will be scarce once everyone starts using it- glass is still cheap right now). The government will screw up the economy (a disaster for all of us- store wealth in precious metal now) and potentially our sons and daughters may be drafted as cannon fodder (a disaster for most of us- plan on "disappearing" them). However improbable,

events that could happen should be planned for.
END ARTICLE, scroll down for more

I wrote the following article awhile ago. As soon as I wrote it, the item was discontinued. Now it is back at the larger stores at 25 pounds for $10. Please follow the advice to avoid another disappearing act (I changed no info, substitute the size and price of the smaller items for the bigger now offered).
WAL-MART WHEAT

Awhile back I wrote a booklet on doing all your shopping for survival products at Super Wal-Marts. Quite a stirring piece, if I do say so myself. Now, other than a notable lack of assault rifles, my only other problem with this simple approach towards self-sufficiency supplies was that Wal-Mart did not carry wheat berries. The minority groups could comfortable stock up on giant bags of rice and pinto beans but the only concession towards an European staple was white flour. Quite economical for bulk buying, it did have a role in the survivalists cupboard. Most of us still mix whole wheat flour with white flower to make flour ingredients less dense and, honestly, less in a cardboard flavor. Now, I love whole wheat flour. Each addicting food item usually starts out with a negative flavor, such as coffee and beer. Then, we come to crave that taste. Even if whole wheat flour does go down like thick mud and tastes of blandness I still love the stuff. But my mostest wonderful store, Wal-Mart, did not carry wheat berries. Oh, the shame.

But now, now the clouds have parted and the sun shines on us as the chosen, for The Low Price Leader now carries whole wheat berries. Granted, it is spring wheat, not winter. And the price does not compare to the Feed & Grain store down the street. A five pound bag sells for $2, verses less than a dollar in bulk at the F&G. However, be that as it may, we can now rejoice. We can buy whole wheat berries at Wal-Mart. Do it now. Buy a lot. If we all buy the wheat berries, then not only will they keep carrying them but perhaps they might even get bigger bags. Oh, but to dream of fifty pound sacks, nestled amongst our other favorites, beckoning in our time of need. I dare not even suggest Mylar packed poly buckets, but would be content with mere paper sacked fifty pounders of The Staff Of Life.

Do not hesitate in this endeavor. If we fail to purchase this item in bulk, if we do not spread the gospel to our brethren imploring them to do likewise, then alas, all will be lost. Lack of sales will force our otherwise smiling and friendly Suits to yank this item from the shelves faster than a factory owner closes shop to produce his widgets over in China. I am on my knees begging here. If I can pedal my bike seven miles one way in the summer heat to buy several bags of wheat kernels, then surely you can hop into your Middle Eastern oil guzzling SUV, turn on your air conditioning and mosey on down to the Super Center and spend a lousy twelve bucks for a months supply of survival food. If you spend another $4 you can even buy a poly bucket and lid in the paint section and have a fairly safe place to store it. For under $20 you will eat for thirty days while the starving masses around you wither and die, glancing up in dismay at your smirking face, begging for the spittle encrusted crumb that landed between your feet. And all because you spent the twenty

bucks at Wal-Mart on whole wheat instead of that stupid DVD of some teen age pervert looking at augmented female mammary glands uncovered with fabric (although a case can be made for such a purchase, just not until after you have plenty of food supplies).

Purchasing wheat this way does seem expensive. At twice the price of a feed and grain, it would seem foolish to buy from Wal-Mart. However, some places do not have a F&G, or one so far away that gas and vehicle wear and tear do not justify driving to one. In this case you need to shop at Wal-Mart anyway. Still, the above argument should carry the day. We as consumers dictate what a store sells, by our actions. If we love that they carry an item but fail to purchase it, then that item will cease to be offered. Paying twice the price for an otherwise cheap item seems to me a small price to pay. If it were a high price item I could see no justification. We all need to save money. But the price of a bucket of wheat from Wal-Mart is $16. At the feed and grain it is $10. Not a big difference. Especially seeing as how at the feed and seed you play hit and miss that you are buying people food. I have never met a salesman or clerk at the feed store that knew for sure that the grain was really untreated. Plus, the feed store grain is never totally cleaned. And, you are forced to buy fifty pounds at a time. Usually this is great, but sometimes you only want a little due to finances or storage space issues. With five pound sacks you have a little more flexibility.

I have spoken. Now go buy some darn Wal-Mart whole wheat.
END

CLOTH DIAPERS
An overlooked survival item for more than just babies
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If you think about the whole plastic disposable diaper business, it is rather disgusting. You take a ball of crap, wrap it up, and throw it in the trash. Even if the offensive item is not sitting in your kitchen but instead in a trash can on the porch, most of the time while away from home you put the used diaper in a public waste receptacle. Then, the little bundle of joy is sent to a dump where the thing stinks up the joint, seagulls inspect the contents for undigested food (okay, I really don't know if they are THAT disgusting of creatures, but they could be), and if you are in a typical dump they take up more landfill space than any other item. To include newspaper, the item all the tree huggers save and then burn three gallons of imported Middle East oil driving their Saab's over to the recycling center to drop off when they should have gotten their lazy Gap covered butts on a bicycle and pedaled over to the center with the paper on a bike trailer if they really cared about the environment, which obviously they do not but only care about going through college which daddy the corporate lawyer paid for and then got hired by a non-profit environmental consulting firm paid for 80% by government grants and driving to their cushy non-physical-labor job in same said Saab (bought to show solidarity with the Socialist Welfare State) living in a typical energy inefficient suburban house and if they can actually get a mate with their snobbish Politically Correct leftwing politics attitude (strange, but possible) then they breed and spawn little Birkenstock wearing tree-hugging clones of themselves who most likely will NOT be wearing reusable cloth diapers because the parents are just too darn busy trying to save the planet by filling out government grant requests and in the evenings trying to fornicate to keep the movement alive which is really friggin difficult even if you really, really do love Mother Earth because the bitch has armpit hair and a lot of leg hair also, but at least you recycle your newspapers.

Lord knows how our Mom found the time to change our fury little butts with cloth diapers. Oh, I know, she didn't have to work out of the house. Government didn't eat out of our very souls as they do now. Mom was not forced to be a breadwinner. She could be a full time nurturer. Dad was the only provider. Divorce was so rare, as was popping out bastards, that it was a disease. Do you know why there used to be no divorces, and why Grandpa helped raise the kids? No, it ain't because they were the Walton’s. Most likely, you couldn't stand your spouse or your snotty kids. You hated each other's ways, even if you loved each other, but you couldn't leave each other. The husband was an alcoholic and beat you, the wife was ugly as sin and harped on you all the time, Grandma was a real bitch. But you had no other economic safety net. You relied on the extended family to keep each other alive. There was no Welfare. If the wife died in childbirth, you got another wife real fast. Someone had to tend to the little critters as you plowed the fields. You got remarried and love had little to do with it. If you were a woman you happily searched for a husband of a suitably employed kind, love not required, or tried to find work as a teacher. It was hard for single females to provide for themselves outside prostitution. To speak nothing of the human urge to procreate (those little bastard DNA

screwing with our heads getting us to think spawning is a good thing by using chemical warfare against us so they can survive). The continuation of the species is wonderful in theory, in the field it gets a little untidy. We worked hard and died early and passed on our genes. Enjoying ourselves at the same time was not required.

Well my friends, the last hundred years since industry was motorized and human muscle was replaced by carbon fuel were a very sweet deal for mankind. We got lazy and fat. But, what is that you hear? The end of our addiction? The oil fields running dry? The globe supporting more than solar energy could feed, each person needing some of the dwindling fuel stocks? Why, yes, that is exactly what you are hearing. The beginning of the end of our opulent lifestyles. Doomsday not by nuclear disaster, but by overuse of our finite resources. The oil is not a self generating fuel, it was formed by shallow seas and plant life and solar energy eons ago and once we use up the supply it is gone. Oil only forms under certain circumstances in certain locations, and you can't wish more of it into existence. It is not that we will technically run out but that we will run out of the supplies that are easily tapped. When it takes the same energy to find and process an amount of energy it no longer makes sense to mine that energy. We are going to reach that point very soon. Already North America is in production decline, to include Mexico and Canada. They might find more, granted. But with so many more economies becoming dependant on oil we are using far more than we are finding. It is end game for our oil dependant economies. And the US consumes what the rest of the world produces as we are nearly bone dry on our oil reserves/production (in relation to what we consume). Coal and nuclear are abundant but even if we find the political will to use them we might fast approach net energy loss (takes more to process then the energy it provides) with them in the future if we rely exclusively on them. And we are the most explored region on Earth. There will be little more for US oil production. Even if the price skyrockets enough to justify tapping low yield fields that might be enough to tank the economy anyway and then it wouldn't matter anyway. Out last economic Depression we were on the gold standard and we had a good amount of the population on small farms. Today we have a Welfare class waiting to loot and a banking system needing to hyper-inflate to survive a downturn. It will be total anarchy out there this time.

And if our consumerist, throwaway lifestyle is about to end, what kind of goods do we need beforehand to ease the transition? Reusables, obviously. Today in many items it makes economic sense to discard and re-buy rather than to repair. Many items are cheaper to replace by buying from the Chinese than getting an American to repair. A lot of items ask for more money to send in for replacement than the item costs new. Almost any item under $5 is a throw away item. Any electronic item not brand new is just thrown away and a new item replaces it. When it is cheaper to get a factory made part shipped across half the globe than it is to pay a local to fix an item, it tells you two things. One, local guys are paid too much (even if over half goes to taxes and regulations, not their fault) to compete with everyone else, and two, our oil supplies will not last long enough to support this kind of waste. Prices will come down one way or another, and most likely because of a global depression. Most likely caused by dear oil and a mega-flood of hyper-inflated US dollars. Right now the price of oil reflects a very weak dollar. Every country

inflates their money supply. No one uses a currency pegged to precious metals. So if our currency is weak compared to everyone else, it means we are inflating a lot more than they are as well as borrowing a lot more than everyone else is to make ends meet. Not sustainable long term. No, the theory of Peak Oil is on very few radars right now. Or, no one cares about it. They figure they will just pump the wells dry and then turn to nuclear power for electricity. Only the US has such a car-centric economy, so very few other folks are worried about transportation and the oil that it requires. They can use trains. In the US, on the other hand, we won't be able to get to work or go buy groceries as we are marooned in the suburbs. It all ties together in how vulnerable our economy is to imported oil. More than in the 1970's when we had more of our own. Now we need a military to compel others to sell us cheap oil.

But, back to reusables. You really need to break into your piggy bank now and stock up on as many items as you can to reduce your dependence on throw away items. Rechargeable batteries are a good example. They pay for themselves very quickly. If you can recharge a battery 1000 times (the new generation without the memory problem) and a cheap Dollar Store battery costs 50 cents, the rechargeable will pay for itself after ten times charged. Using a solar charger (which pays for itself after fifty charges), the rechargeables will give you over nine hundred "free" batteries. Cost of 1000 uses, $30. Cost of 1000 throw away batteries, $500. Even using 110v power, ballpark the reusable cost at only $50. And that is for D cells. The smaller batteries are even more effective. Or a straight razor rather than disposables. Not that I would use one now. There is a reason they called its replacement "safety razors". Not that I would slice my neck open, but I prefer nicks to open wounds. However, having a straight razor set aside for when the stores close is a great idea. At the most you will pay $50 for a quality razor of excellent metal and craftsmanship. Or just buy stainless steel for about ten bucks. The downside being less of an edge and the need to sharpen more. But few of us can afford $50 for an item we may never use. Nonetheless, let's take the expensive one as an example. Disposable double bladed blades are twenty cents each. Even not shaving everyday you will need at least two a month, and that is using them after they dull. $5 a year for a few disposables means you can use a straight razor ten years before it pays for itself. But, if you project your life-span of more than that and you buy a cheaper straight razor, you will save a lot of storage space and have a closer shave, and the payback will only take two years. So the straight razor does still make sense.

With cloth diapers the economics make sense, but not enough to justify the labor involved. After Wal-Mart reared its big beautiful head and introduced price competition to that sector of the economy, disposable diapers really came down in price (as compared to buying for my kids twelve years ago anyway). Now you only spend twenty bucks every other week or so for name brand diapers. In two years of changes that is about a thousand bucks for disposable diapers. Ten times the cost of cloth, but on par for what cheap auto insurance costs each month, so almost everyone could care less about the cost savings. It is a natural preference to avoid cleaning crap stained cloth for such a low cost of labor. But as I just said, we are quit spoiled. There should come a time where a savings of $500 a year (actually, the inflation adjusted equivalent- right now we are at a

real rate of 7-10% a year) could make all the difference in groceries or other critical need. Either way stocking up on cloth diapers now will pay for itself in any kind of downturn. In an economic depression you won't have the money to buy disposables. In a society crash scenario they won't be available at any price because they just aren't available for trade. In a hyper inflation scenario you will need to part with your precious metal to afford them. Under Peak Oil they won't be shipped from overseas where most of our clothing now comes from (all the oil will be used for the military to fight over the last productive fields). As with your rechargeable batteries, or straight razor, or other non-Disposable, this is yet another item you will need to buy beforehand. They are only made and offered now in our consumerist economy, and quite cheap in relative terms. Buy now.

And I hear the inevitable question, what if I'm not going to have any rugrats. If I fail to spawn, just what in the name of all that is holy and just will I do with a stack of cloth diapers? Easy as pie. Unless the females of the group are too old, they will need sanitary napkins. It is a lot cheaper stocking up on cloth diapers (cut up for this use, they won't need the whole thing) than pads and tampons. If you are a good little survivalist you buy in bulk and have a stockpile of everything, but the disposable pads will run out soon enough. And, unless you stockpile condoms or other birth control devices, you just might end up pregnant anyway. Or, you can trade or barter some of your diapers. Not all, but some of them, and they should fetch a pretty penny. And how about a field dressing? A cloth pad to cover a wound? A cloth diaper should work just fine for that. Now, I almost hesitate to suggest this use, but you could use the cloth as toilet paper. After your rolls run out (remember, shop at a janitor supply business and buy the big rolls wrapped really tight, like they have at gas stations to get more in your storage space), and after you have used up your telephone book pages (suggested by www.survivalblog.com) what do you have left other than leaves, sand, water, or cottage industry TP just made and offered at a high price? If you take a small wad of your precious limited supply of paper and wipe with it first, one time to eliminate any remaining solids, then use the cloth diaper to get your butt sparkling clean you will not have to use any abrasives or use your hand in aiding the process. The diapers have minimal soiling and are easily cleaned. To me this makes much more sense than trying to scrounge up replacements in the forest.

How many will you need, and what will they cost? If you plan on popping out any curtain climbers, I would buy at least seventy, or better yet 100 cloth diapers. If just using for the adults, make it about twenty or so. You need to plan on an average use for Junior, then double it for periods of intense intestinal discomfort, then plan on wash day and drying on a clothesline. So the more you have, the better the safety margin. If the sun doesn't shine for a week, how do you get hot water to wash with? You need enough cloth diapers (as well as regular clothes) to work around the weather. And this is just for personal use. If you plan on barter (or even a diaper service) you need a lot more. As cloth diapers are $1 each at Wal-Mart it might make sense to check out what kind of material is used here and go buy the fabric in bulk and make your own. But that is for the ambitious. For the average user, a buck each for several dozen, and then a few vinyl over-pants to protect the surroundings from nasty leaks. $1 each for the pants. Then, buy plenty of safety pins. You will lose them and never find them, and small sewing pins are not big enough to

work. 5 for $1 for the pins. And that is all you need to buy except cleaning supplies.

For long term use, instead of liquid bleach buy a bag or three of calcium hypochlorite. This is pool cleaner. Over time liquid bleach separates and is unusable, just like gasoline. Buy the powder and use as needed. Use one heaping teaspoon to two gallons of water to make bleach. A splash of that in a tub of water will disinfect your cloth after soaking. If you take a cloth diaper just used, have a separate tub that you dunk in and out of several times to remove the solid waste (then pour that water down the privy) then have a soak pail, the clean up process will go easily. After the soaking pail comes the bleach bath and then regular washing. Not as hard as you think once you get a schedule going. Baby soils, change it. Take the cloth to the cleaning tub, dunk in and out and remove solids. Throw in a bucket of water to soak. After a batch has accumulated, throw the water down the outhouse and place the diapers in a tub of bleach water. After soaking for a suitable time period, process as regular wash, but separately. You may find a better way, but those are the basics.

Cloth diapers, more than just an old fashion way of diapering Junior. An economic way of doing things. And better for Mother Earth than disposables. Think about your need for them. It might just make sense.
END

CORONA GRAIN MILL
Still the best and the cheapest
Contents copyrighted 2005 James M Dakin

Placing people into categories can at times be dangerous, but the reason we do it so often is that most of the time it works out well for our purposes. After we categorize an individual we know the danger/safety level and the needed energy to deal socially with him. If someone is introduced to us as a lawyer, we are immediately on guard and assume danger is near (unless of course we are wanting to screw someone else and so can enter the otherwise unsafe relationship as a co-conspirator). If we know someone is a Liberal we can automatically assume they will narc on our stash of semi-automatic rifles, turn our kid into a Ritalin junkie as they are teaching them non-white history at school, agitate to increase our taxes and try to take our 4x4 pickup away by introducing stronger smog standards into law. We know they are dangerous and so avoid them so if nothing else we can decrease our odds of a heart attack being so near them yet legally unable to strangle them. By the same token, a dog lover and cat hater can in general be assumed to wish to be a dominant individual and so must be approached cautiously (cats are independent and just want someone to feed them, dogs are in a pack and need a place in the power structure). People from a certain generation are more inclined towards big government and fascism. Sure, a few know history and realize government itself was responsible for the Great Depression and thus their solution of nationalizing everything was just part of an evil process, but in general most folks from that era think Big Daddy Government is just the best thing since sliced white bread. Beware these people as the ones to turn you into the thought police if they feel you are a threat to their Social Security, Medicare or Prescription Drug freebie plan. And so it goes. Categorizing may occasionally backfire on you, but mostly protects you from the Bad People out there. My litmus test for survivalist writers is the Corona grain mill. If they do not recommend it it usually means they are Yuppie Survivalists, only steering you towards the most expensive solution rather than the one that makes the most sense.

The same people that insist only an electric/hand power hybrid at $300 will do for a grain grinder are also the people that are going to insist you buy only an AR15 as your primary battle weapon. Most likely these writers went from a middle class lifestyle growing up to college to a cushy well paying job. Their mind-set is alien to me and I fail to understand what they are trying to teach if it is not Yuppie Survivalism (the belief that only the rich and well-off need apply to survive a social collapse, or that the poor are unworthy of survival). Frugal Survivalism is getting what you can even if the it is not the perfect tool. As long as ingenuity and elbow grease can help the imperfect tool perform its job, close enough is good enough. How many rednecks do you see with AR15s? Those that have too much money and not enough knowledge of guns, sure. But not those who understand both weapons and economics, they most likely carry an SKS. Surviving the battlefield is far more important than minute-of-angle, and any feeding system that fouls itself and is over-engineered is not what you want to bet your life on. And when that M16 lover

insists that only ten acres or more is sufficient to survive on, they forget that in a economic downturn no one will buy your gourmet vegetables that pays your high mortgage and equally high tax bill. But the guy living in a trailer on a patch of weeds will struggle through just fine. So when you read that you need an expensive grain mill to grind your wheat stash, take a moment to ask yourself if this isn't the advice from the Perfect Tool Guy. We can't all afford Craftsman tools. Some of us need to be content with some Chinese made tools. We know they are not the best, but they are what you get if you are poor, or if you need to first save money at the repair shop before you invest in better tools. The perfect tool is a goal or a guide, not a requirement.

The Corona grain mill is not the perfect tool. It is a simple, rugged ugly tool that works well forever. It is cheap. The intent was for poor Third World markets. It was not designed for spoiled rich fat out of shape guys playing at Walter Mitty fantasies of surviving a nuclear holocaust but for desperately poor farmers needing to grind their own corn. The mill is not even designed for grinding wheat, but for corn. Corn is what grows well in tropical Central and Southern America, not wheat. And all those poor bastards south of the border (those not dealing drugs to increase Uncle Sam's unwilling economic aid) are going to be growing corn for subsidence, and the Corona is made for them. Some Hippie brought one back with a load of weed and started using it to grind up wheat and it did the job but not very well. With corn the mill turns out flour in no time, as with coffee beans or soybeans. But not wheat. With wheat you must start on the coarse setting and grind your kernels. Then tighten the setting and run through again. And again. And most of the time again. It usually takes four runs to get store quality fine flour, and even then you still need to have a screen to separate a few husks that refused to grind. This is where the Corona gets a bad rap, the extra amount of work involved in grinding wheat into flour. But the Corona will last a lifetime. Literally. A one time purchase and you never have to worry about it again (although a back-up is never a bad idea if the purpose is to eat mostly wheat in your diet). One time, $50, and you never have to buy store bought whole wheat flour again. Or a coffee grinder, or corn meal. You can buy other brands for about the same price for a manual grinder. The Back To Basics mill comes to mind. Smaller, lighter, much easier grinding. But it is not heavy duty. It most definitely will not last a lifetime. Even on the first use the small plastic washer it uses starts to wear. If you use wheat for your survival food stash, you need to first use wheat every day to assure yourself you can eat it, plus your body can handle it. So you need more than a part time grinder unless you just buy it for barter. That way it takes up much less room and is lighter, and one should bring a very pretty penny after a collapse.

A healthy diet now will not only strengthen your immune system for times of stress or epidemic outbreaks (one thing to keep in mind about the current government panic about the bird flu virus is that Donald Rumsfeld holds a lot of stock in the company that makes Tamiflu) but gets your body used to whole grains and legumes. I stress a wheat survival stash as a Better Than Nothing solution. If you are poor, wheat is only fifteen cents a pound at the feed store. But to get a complete protein, you need to also eat legumes with whole grains. I don't stress their importance because of their higher economic cost (fifty

cents a pound at the grocery store), as well as their limited shelf life compared to wheat, but after you stock enough wheat you really should try to put aside enough legumes (pinto beans, white beans, etc.) to provide a better balanced nutrition than wheat alone provides. At least a six month supply to get you through isolation periods or until the garden produces or wild game is available. Don't stockpile five years worth if beans aren't normally in your diet, but buy enough super sized bags to provide balance in your diet. Even if you hate beans (although must of us like pork & beans or Boston baked beans) you can still grind up both beans and grains, boil as a porridge, or even let the gruel sit overnight until hard and then slice and fry up for a very tasty, cheap, filling and healthy breakfast. And the Corona grain mill is perfect for oily beans. Grinds them up just fine. If you invest in a mill and have grain and beans stockpiled and in regular daily use, you will never starve for lack of money. A bean and grain and potato diet (of course with some of the grain sprouted) will keep you alive and healthy very cheap. You can eat for pennies a day (or less if you have a garden). Even if prices double due to the increase in fertilizer and fuel costs you can still feed the family under a dollar a day in an economic meltdown scenario (assuming little bulk buying, or little purchasing now while it is still very cheap). In that case a grinder bought now for under $50 would be a life preserver to your family.

Right now, after fuel costs have come down from Katrina shortages, shipping costs are still reasonable. Shipping a grain mill will run you from six to twelve dollars on average, depending on the company you buy from. The best buy I have seen for a Corona is $45 after shipping from WiseMenTrading.com. I would strongly recommend you search their Web site and seriously consider buying the mill. Even if all you ever do is prepare the grain/ bean fried mush breakfast the money you save, the energy you feel and the health benefits of one meal a day of whole food with fiber you get will more than pay for your grinder purpose. Then, if trouble ever lurks on the horizon, you can haul butt down to your local feed store and buy every sack of edible grain they carry and not only be prepared for whatever emergency might happen but you will then also actually have a means of preparing that grain. Two rocks are not a good improvised grain grinder, they are just a good way of breaking your teeth. Buy a grinder now, before any panic sends the lemmings into cyberspace where they strip the proverbial walls in seconds. There are other Corona mills out there for sale and they are at much more reasonable prices than they were pre Y2K. Just do a Google search for "corona grain mill" and you will find plenty of sites selling the item. Half of these will not tell you the cost until after you complete the order form so as to compute the shipping costs, but just assume up to about $12 to get a ballpark figure when shopping around.

If you are still too strapped for cash (and you married guys know who I'm talking about) you can buy a Corona generic version for only $25 after shipping. If you go to the Web site MajorSurplusNSurvival.com you will find their grinder for a mere $17 plus shipping. My cost to ship from their warehouse in California to Nevada was about $8. But I have had clothing shipped from Yankeeland which was bulkier but lighter for about the same amount, so your cost might be higher or not but not by much. The order calculator will tell you how much shipping will be. I recommend these guys. I ordered from them for Y2K, and recently, and never did I have one problem (one time they even called my house

to get instructions about an order they couldn't ship as I didn't have an email address at the time). Another source for a generic mill is NorthernTool.com at about the same price after shipping, and a great source for inexpensive tools for you Tim Taylor's out there. If you don't want to be bothered with the bulk and weight of a Corona (and the heavy duty grinding) you can order a Back To Basic mill from Emergency Essentials. I do not recommend this mill for heavy use post-Apocalypse, but it is fine for a functioning economy with mail order so you can replace the washers it uses. It really is much easier to use than the Corona, it's just no where near as robust a design (There Ain't No Free Lunch- it lasts forever and is hard to use, or it's easy to use and won't last long). The cost is somewhere around $60. Emergency Essentials (BePrepared.com) is a great company, another one I have always had great service from. They use a flat rate shipping even for their grains. It is really nice to know the final cost of a product and not have to wait for the semi to pull up out front and present a bill to you (although to be fair, anything over a few hundred pounds needs to be shipped by freight).

If at all possible, get yourself a Corona Mill. If you can't, get a generic version. If you can afford it, get a back-up generic version or just two of the generics and stash one elsewhere in case something happens to one such as theft. You could buy four generic mills for less than the cost of a surplus rifle, keep two for yourself and save two for trading. In a scenario where trade is disrupted seriously and the economy implodes, a grain mill could easily go for an once of gold. By buying today at $25 with gold going for over $450, your investment goes up almost twenty times. Try getting that on the stock market. Lets face it, if you are stockpiling years of wheat you are gambling on a long shot to begin with. Might as well stockpile grinders as trade goods for after the last ship sales from China since we shipped all our factories and expertise over there years ago and have nothing to fall back on. Some goods we stockpile are toys and can be improvised by low tech, such as LED lights taking the place of candles. Others we can improvise, such as using corrosive primer material after the store bought primers are all used up. Some tools we need to buy now for lack of any other option. A grain grinder is one of those. Buy it now while you can painlessly and cheaply.
END ARTICLE

A Note From Last Weeks Article. An astute reader said of buying cloth diapers, go to the diaper service and ask to purchase the old diapers. After a certain number of washings the edges begin to fray. The cloth is washed and cleaned, but the fraying may mean they will dispose of the items cheaply. This is a great idea to cheaply pick up a bunch of cloth diapers. A tip of the propeller beanie cap to this bright boy, I'm embarrassed I didn't think up that one. But it goes to show several hundred heads are better than one. Send in your thoughts and comments to fine tune any ideas I throw your way.
END

THE MOSIN-NAGANT RIFLE
The perfect cheap surplus rifle but for one dangerous flaw
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I have mentioned in passing before the Mosin-Nagant rifle. A very cheap full power bolt action rifle. I also mentioned I wasn't sure I would buy one just because the Commies made them. I wouldn't hesitate to buy another SKS, a fine design even using substandard materials such as from the Chinese, if I ever moved to an area with heavy woods which would call for a carbine. But I was always leery of the Mosin-Nagant only because I really knew next to nothing about it. One gentleman was kind enough to send me a photocopied article on the rifle and I learned all I needed to know about it. For one, the round used is a rimmed cartridge. Everybody moans and whines about the 303 British being rimmed. Oh, it will jam on loading. Lord above, the Krauts introduced the rimless ammunition, why can't the Limey's? Blah, blah. Yet it seems everybody is oh so happy to use a rimmed round not only in the Russian turn-bolt but also in the latter semi-auto sniper from the Commies which uses the same round. A semi-auto using a rimmed round. OK, that shouldn't cause any troubles at all.

Everybody I talk to loves their Mosin-Nagant. It is disgustingly cheap and very robust. The ammo is cheap for what you are getting, a full size battle rifle cartridge. It really is designed to be used "out of the box" as the after-market accessories are about zero. Putting a scope on it most likely would cost more than what you paid for the rifle. The sights are post and leaf, an old design I hate to use. I much prefer the peep sight or better yet a scope. But post-apocalypse you most likely will break any scope and need to use the metal sights anyway and at least the one thing post and leaf have going for them is they are more robust than peep sights. You can bang around the rifle more and not worry as much about losing your sights, such as when you are butt-stroking the enemy across his head. If you are practicing what I preach, getting the rifle that you can afford and getting cheap enough ammo to practice with regularly, then perhaps this is the way to go as the M-N is half the price or less than an Enfield or a Mauser. If you are willing to pay a premium on ammunition at this time the Swiss K31 straight pull bolt gun (reputed to be the most accurate military rifle ever) is not selling for much more than the M-N's are, but due to their small production numbers this would be a specialists rifle. Lack of replacement parts, perhaps. The 1938 Turkish Mauser is still out there for around $50 wholesale along with the corrosive ammo being about $75 per 1000 rounds. With a buddy giving you a good price on a mark-up or if you owned a C&R license you could have a rifle and a thousand rounds of ammo for under $150 your price. But there were rumors about a mechanical problem on the Turkish Mausers. I think excessive head space but I am not sure. Check into this before you buy. So unless you are willing to buy a Mauser everyone has warned against or want an accurate rare rifle that shoots $1 a round ammo (for the factory loads before you can reload), your choice basically boils down to the Mosin-Nagant if you want a dirt cheap military surplus bolt gun.

But it seems our handy little proletariat rifle has a small flaw in it. If you experience a pierced primer or a ruptured case head, the gases are not vented away from you the shooter. Primer gas is less dangerous, directing through the bolt head and bolt connection sleeve but in the event of a case rupture the gases would vent through the ejector grove and up directly towards the poor bastards forehead. The article states that ruptured cases are rare especially with newer ammunition, but I have my doubts about this whole safety issue. The older model Mausers are warned against for the exact same problems. And even if you buy ammunition less than thirty years old by the time you get around to using it if stored improperly isn't there a chance it could develop problems? I'm not saying anything will go wrong, just raising the possibility that it could. If you buy brand spanking new ammo, what is to say there is no factory defect that would cause a faulty metal section on a cartridge. This seems a significant design problem and I would seriously consider it before you buy this rifle. If you already own one, take this under consideration. You might buy new factory ammo from Eastern Europe, but consider the quality control issues. With an SKS or an AK, a failed round can cause inconvenience if the round had sub-par construction. With the Mossin-Nagant a failed round could fry your face. Your call.
END ARTICLE, scroll down for more

PREPARING FOR POSSIBLE EPIDEMIC

I have my doubts about the seriousness of the Asian bird flu. Not that it couldn't happen, because it could, but because the government is telling us to worry. The same idiots who are more of a terrorizing force at airports than the alleged hijackers they are protecting us against. The same idiots who invade a country with our superior army and then allow politics to queer the whole process and don't allow the military to do their job, again in the same country and taking the same script from Vietnam. The same government that took as long to respond to Louisiana as they did to Pakistan half the globe away for disaster response. The morons who play politics to keep the price of oil down for a decade so as to stop most domestic production and to freeze research into renewables but then want to charge the oil companies with a windfall tax as soon as they make a profit (I understand the oil companies are screwing us, but you can't stifle profit incentive if you want future production). The same government that lectures about the evil of latchkey kids but then encourages divorce by making it financially prudent to be a single mom. The same government that subsidizes big agri-business so most small farms are driven out of business, then fails to subsidize nitrogen fertilizer production so that we are dependant on half our artificial fertilizer from overseas. Why is food security not a priority to these people? Is hunger going to be used as a weapon against us just as Stalin starved the Ukrainians into submission? All this, and more, and we are supposed to believe our government when they tell us to be worried about a Super Flu. This shopper ain't buying their product. Of course, I would not be surprised if our loving compassionate government didn't mutate the flu towards their own ends (does Waco, OKC bombings, or 100,000 dead Iraqi civilians tell you how much the Feds hold dear human life?) and infect us on purpose. It is just the natural mutation I am not convinced about. But, regardless, how does one prepare just in case? Remember, paranoia is our friend.

My primary answer is vitamin C. Mega-dose vitamin C all day, everyday, for the rest of your life. The vitamin is water soluble and thus will not accumulate in your body to any level of danger. If it doesn't want it, your body will eliminate it. Actually, your body won't absorb all of the vitamin in many cases anyway due to pills being a rather inefficient delivery system, so "overdosing" is a good idea. The pills are cheap at this time and I would stock up on as many as possible in case of future shortage. In nature outside of citrus you are stuck with rose hips as about the only ready source of vitamin C, although sprouts will do in a pinch. Wal-Mart recently carried 500mg tabs at about a penny each, but I'm sure any heath orientated magazine will have ads aimed at your need for really cheap vitamins (or just Google a search). I take one tab in the morning and one at night and most times during the day I drink generic Tang either as a hot drink or to flavor my water so I drink more of it. Other vitamins will depend on you, but everyone needs C. I take one multivitamin, one calcium and twice a day a saw palmetto for preventive maintenance on the old prostate (just in case). Vitamin C will help you fight off colds. You might still get them, but your body is stronger fighting them off and you will not feel as bad and recover quicker with a daily C intact. The time to take C is not after you come down with a cold, that is like slamming the barn door shut after the horse gets out. Take several times a day, preferably with food, as much as you can stand. One source recommends increasing the C amount until your stools start to loosen and then back off slightly and that is your personal mega dose amount. I don't know if I would get that crazy about the whole thing, but whatever works for you. I just stick with two 500mg tablets a day plus drinking Tang. Also be advised that a better way might be vitamins in an oral spray. Supposedly they are much better absorbing than from the stomach. Do some research if interested, I know there used to be several companies pre-Y2K selling this.

My second strategy for maintaining my health is my attitude. I realize I am overly-paranoid and stress over all the idiots out there, but luckily I am no where as high strung as I could be. I try to enjoy each day as if it were my last. I try to stay optimistic even as I frantically prepare for apocalypse. Alone, just your preparations are going to help your mental health quite a bit as you are doing something positive to alleviate the source of possible life threatening events. The old fight or flight syndrome. We can't fight the bastards setting us up for an economic depression or war, but we can run away to a small town and stockpile guns and grain. It is the inability to either fight or flight that causes a lot of stress. So do one at least to settle your mind. However, that being said, mental outlook has a lot to do with you. You can get up in the morning and be a bitch, or force yourself to smile and have a good day. It ain't easy at times but after a time you have a better outlook, you begin to see the good in things, life begins to be much more enjoyable. You alone can decide what kind of life you are going to have. Others can make it much harder but they ultimately have no say in the matter. With a happy outlook you not only enjoy the one and only life you get but (the point here) you stay a lot healthier. Health is 80-90% mental things being equal (hard to stay healthy if the water supply is tainted). So do yourself a favor and force yourself to be happy. After a time the habit of looking at the bright side will become second nature and it won't be so hard. I have been through it

all, so I know. I could have easily been a sour nasty alcoholic. But now I am a sarcastic and happy paranoid optimist.

Some minor items you might wish to procure are dust masks and sanitary hand wash. I believe the dollar stores still sell five dust masks for a buck, otherwise Wal-Mart sells them for $2 in the paint section. They are good for being in public and reducing the amount of airborne particles you suck in. Not the perfect answer, they won't filter the air you breath but they will reduce your risk. And come forest fire season you can reduce the amount of smoke you breath in. A good item to stockpile cheaply as supplies will disappear come crunch time. Not a cure-all but one of several steps to reduce your chances of infection. The water-less anti-biotic lotions are cheap, stock up now. Not the perfect answer either as being in public is a risk. You might even stock up on gloves but everything you touch even with gloves is later going to be a source of contamination. You put your coins from your change anywhere and they have cooties. How many folks touched your groceries prior to yourself? Your best bet for gloves, anti-bacterial lotion and face masks is to use them for your one time travel to your retreat to avoid all people in the event of an epidemic.

In the event of an epidemic you need to isolate yourself from all other people. Have your plans cemented before any of this happens. You must decide before hand how important your job is to you. Do you leave at the first rumors of flu, or stick it out to make sure it is the real thing? Where are you going to stay? Your own house, a retreat, friends in the country? Do you have spending cash on you? Don't wait for all the ATM's to run out on the weekend and expect the possibility merchants won't except credit cards. Even expect the likelihood of gas supplies running out. Is your tank kept full at all times? Are all your supplies (for several months stay minimum) in place where you are going? If you bug out, can you leave early enough to avoid gridlock? Would it be better to stay secluded at home? Have all of these things worked out beforehand. Even if this scenario is not on your radar, shouldn't you give it some thought anyway? Have a just-in-case plan thought up (and better yet, written up).
END

WHAT IF THEY HAD THE APOCALYPSE AND NOBODY CAME?
What to do if nothing bad ever happens.
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Survivalism is much like a religion, cause brother, you got to have faith. Without the firm conviction that all is going to Hell in a handbasket, preparations just don't make a lot of sense. Even the poorest amounts us spend a considerable percentage of our disposable income and a lot of our time worrying about and preparing for some kind of system crash. Even those who only have a few months of food in the pantry and a few extra cords of firewood set by, with perhaps a few extra boxes of ammo rather than getting all crazy about the whole thing and having five years worth of wheat berries and a proverbial arsenal with twenty thousand rounds set by and a rural retreat, even those opting for a minimalist approach must still go out of their way in time and money. In fact, those with minimal fears often have to work harder at the whole exercise since funds are limited. When your spouse does not support you but instead tolerates a certain expenditure of funds to amuse you and keep you out of her hair it is a lot harder to have a meaningful stockpile of post-apocalypse necessities. Not that it takes much. You can still buy surplus rifles under $100 retail with their surplus ammo under $5 a box, and wheat is still in the $7-8 per fifty pound sack at the feed store. Mail order grain mills are $25 after shipping costs from survivalNsurplus.com. LED lights are now sold quite cheaply at Wal-Mart and they are cheaper than kerosene lanterns after fuel costs are factored in. If you already own a firearm, just buying several sacks of white flour and a few LED's while making sure you have enough ammo might be enough and cost you nothing more than a few bucks each payday. Throw in a few extra canned goods every time you encounter a sale and pretty soon you have a serious pantry. It is more willpower and creativeness than purchasing power that you need.

Don't get me wrong, you will spend a considerable amount of cash. Once you convince yourself of the righteousness of preparing for disasters, even the most careful and prudent minimalist approach will see you investing into a lot of different ideas. Solar panels are three hundred dollars each (emergency blackout power), four wheel drives trucks are usually twice the cost of other used cars so figure at least an extra thousand there (to get to a retreat or through a snow storm) and pellet stoves are much cheaper to operate in wood scarce areas but the cost initially at $1200 and up are unreal (you see the cost of natural gas double this winter it might not be such a bad idea). And that is just a "normal" household that lacks an arsenal. If you buy into global warming you need to relocate (thousands of dollars) and take a pay cut (thousands per year). If you buy into Peak Oil by retrofitting the house to solar can run thousands. Buying and hoarding gold and silver coins is never a bad investment as if nothing else the metal content will protect you against inflation, but you will still spend thousands on them and it is cash that is tied up and can't be withdrawn without a penalty (5 to 10% buying and selling and taxes buying for a total of 25% loss for your greenbacks). Come time for barter you gain purchasing power as

there will be a scarcity of precious metal out there but today just switching around back and forth to paper money you take a big loss. But how else do you combat inflation? Housing has shown itself to be a suckers game except for the lucky few who timed it just right.

You will also spend a lot of your time and effort. When you go out of your way to get healthy by eating better and exercising you benefit by feeling better, having more energy, etc. But if you are doing it to avoid doctors visits because of future disruptions and lack of care this counts as a "survivalist cost". As does researching for hours on the Internet about alternate medicines and herbal treatments. And learning new hobbies is both rewarding intellectually and financially but when you are directed by necessity rather than by desire (mechanics to do your own repairs, electrician work to wire your own 12v system, etc) it is another cost of self-sufficiency. And going to the shooting range, don't get me started. What a chore!! Okay, obviously we wouldn't be doing any of this if we didn't want to. We could chuck the whole thing and say Screw It. There is no one holding our feet to the fire. No one forcing us to invest most of our disposable income and a good part of our spare time into survivalists goods and activities. No, it is totally self inflicted. Why do we do this to ourselves? What makes us go out into the wilderness on a canoe trip with our buddies, the faint whisper of banjo music in the breeze, freezing at night and getting eaten alive by mosquitoes? The copious amounts of beer at the end of each night are just for rehydrating, not relaxing you understand. So why do it? Are we trying to connect to our true selves the hunter/gatherers? In mans' entire existence the majority of it was not spent in front of a machine or a plow but wandering around killing wild animals. Do we still contain a shared memory of our "natural" state of being? Is it considered a healthier environment than living alongside a pigpen? Did the human species give up freedom for security? Most likely, but since hunter/gatherers each needed dozens of square miles per person to survive off of natures bounty it seems silly to assume you or I would be here at all without the advancement of agriculture and the population explosion it allowed.

No, we do all this because a little knowledge is a very dangerous thing, and you can't put a Genie back into his bottle until he is ready. Once you learn about all the Bad People out there and the pain they wish to cause you, plus once you have learned that there are other folks out there that know how to prepare to survive calamities, it starts you down a one way road. Once you learn that our country went from a three week supply of grain in its stockpiles but sold that off and we are down to a few days supply, it makes it a little difficult to sleep soundly at night if your food cupboard is not well stocked (incidentally that example may or may not be true as I only read it from one source). Once you know that almost every nation outside the Middle East has seen a peak in its oil production (and there are rumors even they are flat on their output) and that there has been no major oil field discovery globally in 40 years and that new finds are less every year than usage, well then it is just a little harder to be content relying on non-renewable fuels to heat your winter abode. Once Katrina showed how little the FedGov cared about the welfare of its citizens it is hard to think they might be around to help in any disaster (at the same time as Katrina, a local Indian tribe had a wildfire destroy most of their towns homes and the

stored up winters wood supply- no one was interested helping them out). Once you realize that the Federales have resorted to inflation to pay their bills (remember our national debt is bigger than the value of all remaining oil in the Middle East or the value of the total amount of gold in the world) it makes it hard to keep all your assets in paper rather than tangible goods. When more money is spent in a few days in Afghanistan than in the whole year manning the border to Mexico it is hard not to believe that Bad Weapons From Bad People will be smuggled in quite easily. When the only job growth is in the public sector or in those areas affected by a credit bubble, it can only mean our economy is doing a lot worse than we know and it is only prudent to stockpile food and ammo. When the ratio of Social Security beneficiaries to workers is only one to three and in five years time we will see a huge wave of Baby Boomers retire (followed by many more waves of helpless humanity) it is hard to believe our economy can take that kind of sudden expense. For all this, and many other reasons, it just seems impossible to believe that it will be business as usual at the ol Uncle Sam ranch. The need to prepare for survival just seems quite natural. A foregone conclusion. Money in the bank.

But what if it isn't? Everything we have discussed here was a big deal in the 1970's. I even have an old copy of a passive solar book that talks about the coming peak in US oil production-written twelve years before the fact and what we are just now getting around to worrying about. Precious metals were jumping in price, gasoline prices went to historic highs, there was talk of truckers strikes stopping the shipment of food, inflation was the highest since the War Of Northern Aggression, there was the real possibility of nuclear destruction. We have been there and done that. This is all a repeat. Peak Oil globally has replaced domestic run down of supply. Dirty nukes have replaced Soviet ICBM's. China with either its military or its economy threatening us has replaced the threat of Soviet global dominance. Running out of oil has replaced OPEC refusing to sell us any. Invading the Middle East for oil using nukes was popular back then, now we use conventional forces. Ten percent inflation thirty years ago caused panic, now we just hide the real rate of ten percent and call it three and Wal-Mart backs up the fiction with cheaper goods from overseas. Reagan used scare tactics of Social Security insolvency to increase its withholding tax, now we invent fantasy birth rates or immigration rates to stretch out the time remaining before the next insolvency. The coming American Dictatorship was all the rage back when Tricky Dick ruled by intimidation and trickery and a five o'clock shadow gave his features the required demonic image. We complain about Arab unjust imprisonment now, back then the FBI were busy sending American Indian activists to jail for life using doctored evidence by planting M16's at crime scenes. Back then parents were literally being killed if they wished to home school their children, now they are set up and killed in "self defense" in 3am raids in order to finance the War On Drugs through asset forfeiture. This is all old school. No one is rewriting any scenarios on civilization being flushed down the toilet. Even Y2K was merely a rewrite of an atmospheric EMP pulse wiping out the nations electronics. Nothing new, just reruns.

So, we pulled through the seventies. What is to say we can't do it again? I for one don't believe we can. All Empires collapse, all paper money becomes worthless, all throughout history and without any exceptions. But what if I am wrong? What if we muddle through

yet once again? It is not really like any other country isn't worse off than we are. Even China relies on our consumption to continue its growth. Even Switzerland, that last bastion of conservatism, inflates its money. Why should we be worried about our funny money when everybody else is using Monopoly money also? If our whole economy is reliant of financial services, why be concerned with massive credit expansion and a derivatives market approaching fifty times our GNP? Is it really different this time? Again, I think we are in for a world of hurt. Looking long term there is no way we can continue milking our former global dominance (even our military strength is dependant on borrowing money from foreigners) to prop up our economy. But I am just stating the obvious here. Why else would you be reading this gloom and doom report if I didn't believe the sky is falling? But, I have been wrong before. Things haven't gone into Mad Max Mode. What if we are destined to continue to muddle through? There is still a lot of nationalizing the FedGov can do to prop up the economy. Still a lot of areas we can throw a credit bubble at. Still a lot of pork barrel projects we can try. We could go into hyperinflation mode to keep things going awhile. Lots of tricks up Uncle Sammie's sleeve.

Don't stop preparing, don't stop panicking. Don't allow your paranoia to dull. But just ask yourself the question, what if we never have a system collapse? What do you do with all your supplies, and have you wasted your time and money, or not? Before we get to the brass tacks here, allow me to wax philosophically. Life is a journey, and the journey is more important than the destination. Enjoy it. Take enjoyment from stimulating your mind to a knew challenge. Enjoy meeting that challenge, of thinking up new and brilliant ways of solving a problem. And then hope like Hell you never need any of your survival gear. I dread the day my investment pays off, don't you? I mean, I play a good game and brag on wanting to be a king among men come the collapse of civilization. But I really don't mean that, per se. I joke around, but I really would like to see society remain intact all things considered. Survivalism is a hobby, not a death wish. What do you do with all your supplies if nothing happens? Easy, you give them to whatever child or family member seems interested in facing future threats better prepared. Wheat sealed in Mylar and tucked away in plastic buckets should remain edible forever baring extreme temperature fluctuations. Firearms kept oiled should last centuries, its ammo will degrade in time but sealed in cans has a good chance of lasting decades (and should be rotated with target practice anyway). A homestead in the country can be passed down generations. Nothing is going to go to waste unless your descendants sell, mutilate, neglect or use up your supplies. And unless you can visit them from the grave you have no control over that, so just consider who you pick for inheritance carefully and don't worry about it too much. So you won't waste your money, how about your time? As I said, the journey is the important part, not the destination. You did something useful by preparing. You gave yourself restful sleep by eliminating worry, you provided for your family and you gave yourself the means to avoid seeking charity from others which is a very neighborly thing to do. You were a good person. That should be enough to ease your mind. Survival supplies are an insurance policy, worthy enough in itself, but it also helps other people. Hell, lets face it, we are so freakin pure of heart here we should be getting an instant pass to heaven here. Well, on second thought probably not. Actually,

self sufficiency is most likely just one of those thing everybody is supposed to do and only a few of us do. So at the very least we are a great bunch of people. I knew there was a reason I loved myself so.
END

OFF THE GRID

Staying unhooked, before or after doomsday, and emergency living without utility juice

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Back in the late eighties I had gone to visit a friends house out in the country. It wasn't really "out in the country" as much as it was a bit from the outskirt of town, but being a very small town it didn't take long to get into the middle of nowhere. And it wasn't even really his house, he just had squatting rights in exchange for his labor fixing up the place. But the great thing about it was that it didn't have electrical. No grid power lines were close enough. The dwelling had propane plumbed to wall lamps in every room (except the bathroom, you had to light a candle every visit) as well as the oven but no fridge. Heat was from a wood stove and this being the mountains wood was cheap and used by all the less economically advantaged. I was working minimum wage taking home $500 a month, but my lot rent was $125 and that included electric so I was able to heat with electric at no extra charge (the good ol affordable days). But the point here is, that visit was the most peaceful and relaxing time I had had for a long time. Even in the service previously working a guard post in the middle of the night you had distant traffic and the hum of street lights nearby. Being without electricity was as peaceful as you could get outside of a camping trip to the wilderness. Now, since then solar power has gotten cheaper and a lot more electrical items have gotten portable so you have the potential to really increase the noise level at your retreat, but you can still choose quiet if you wish. You can still work at home on a computer if you wish, using solar charged batteries, but you might find the peace and quite addicting and keep our your own noise pollution to a minimum. I don't really want to give up my own addiction to the Internet and (some) television, but the chance to get away from the distractions of the city is compelling.

Aside from the spiritual healing you might wish for by disconnecting from the grid, there is the matter of money. Land away from the electric grid is a sight cheaper, not to mention the cost of hooking up to the power pole even if it is available. Or the cost of wiring an owner built home to code. Just going with a minimum of solar powered 12v for a cabin or small home should run you under a thousand bucks, with no outages to worry yourself about. Of course, life without 110 plug in power is annoying. It is far from simple. Life has evolved for almost 100 years to wire our houses and our appliances to grid power. The modern legal drug Television is not designed to be of much dependable use without a grid connection for power. Most of us have no idea how to wash clothes without a wall socket. The microwave oven is one of the most used kitchen appliances I own, how about you? I use electric for heat because it is still cheaper than other alternatives, but most of you still rely on the juice to power heating oil furnaces, propane heaters, or even pellet stoves. Very few people have a pure wood heat system with a source of cheap firewood. Some locales are even banning older woodstoves because of the emissions (at worse you need to buy a newer wood burner). We have become addicted to cheap reliable electrical

power, but anymore few places have hydro power and most live close to coal, gas or atom plants. Only hydro is renewable and dependable (baring terrorist attack of course) and all other sources are subject to disruption. But still we live our happy 110v lives oblivious to the future supply problems to the local power plant as Peak Oil creeps up on as, as does government insolvency and with that potential civil upheaval. And, as bad as government oversight is, can you imagine Big Business in charge of our electrical supply as it is down in some South American countries with water supplies (hint, the poor get screwed)? Of course I am speaking of big business in cahoots with government here, not a free market business which is a totally different thing.

Which is the real reason you should not be dependant on the grid. Potential problems down the road. Even a week long power outage due to ice storms or blackout due to old infrastructure breakdowns (which you will see more and more as we allow all of our old systems to disintegrate as we move into a more dysfunctional economy) is going to be enough of a life threatening problem you should plan ahead for them and take precautions. But have back ups. One of the few areas where a house is better than a trailer (if you are renting) is you have room to store wood for your stove. Right now I have enough propane for heat for only two weeks of severe cold. This only covers normal grid failure, nothing more catastrophic. Sure, it is better than nothing, but one day my country land will carry enough wood storage for at least two years usage. I hate being reliant on propane but at least it is a step in the right direction towards being free of the utility umbilical. Just don't be totally dependant on propane, have eventual plans to move beyond gas. Look where natural gas got a lot of people. It was so cheap and abundant and then suddenly supply peaked, and that was before Katrina. Natural gas wells tend to produce abundantly but then quickly run out of product, much quicker than oil wells. This country (and Canada and Mexico as well I believe) is rapidly running out of cheap abundant natural gas, just as so many homes were piped for it and so many utilities switched from coal to use it also. Half of our artificial fertilizer plants have moved overseas to follow the trail of cheaper natural gas which is their basic feedstock. While propane used to be dirt cheap, it now seems to follow the price of gasoline at the pump rather closely and that sure ain't cheap anymore. In fact, as hard as it is to believe this fall I bought new propane tanks and they were cheaper than filling them up. Metal cylinders requiring mining and smelting and engineering cost less than some gas. True, it was right after Katrina and I'm sure the price had been bumped up immediately, but still hard to fathom. The point being, if you think gasoline is on the way up, count on propane being jacked up also. Emergency supplies for cooking is great, but plan on something else for heat long term. Even planning on having a back up for cooking might not be a bad idea. The Zip stove is back (camping stove that uses a battery to blow on the combustibles to get a really hot fire going and will burn anything such as pine cones) and about $60. Replacement motors are under $20, an adapter to upgrade from AA batteries to D (cooking time 30plus hours) about $15. Not cheap, but great for long term grid-down emergency cooking. Even emergency heating, as the stove can throw off some serious BTU's. The web site is: www.zzstove.com

So the basic game plan should be as follows. First, back up everything essential from

electric to propane. Then, back up everything from propane to renewable. For most of us that is going to be wood and solar, as I doubt few of you are going to build your own methane plant. And of course we are not talking about a lot of money here. Propane camping stoves are only $20 at Wal-Mart. Or just make an improvised wood stove out of a large coffee can for about $3.50 which includes the cost of a week or two of coffee consumption. I have two different books with plans for these, I'm not sure if any are on the Web. Perhaps one day I'll try writing up some plans, not that it seems too difficult. But with LED lights for illumination, an improvised stove for both cooking and heating (assuming you already have long johns and good cold weather gear to bundle up) and some water storage and a sawdust toilet arrangement I can't imagine not being able to get through a severe winter storm without electric. You would need to "camp out" in one room because of the small amount of heat you generate with only a small wood stove (WITH PROPER VENTILATION, DUMBASS). With an emergency propane heater you might get by with a bigger room and need be less concerned with carbon monoxide poisoning with the proper heater, but it would still be a hassle. I bought a "Mr. Buddy" (designed to be used indoors) propane heater at Lowes for about $100, but I didn't mind spending the money as my trailer is 100% electric. I needed the peace of mind for the emergency back-up. Another $60 to buy two five gallon tanks and fill them up. I already had the cook stoves from pre-Y2K. The smaller disposable propane tanks I just buy once a month when visiting Wally World so I have a good size collection. And I have the coupler to refill the smaller from the bigger tanks. After I get an adapter hose I can do away with the smaller bottles altogether. Now, I didn't buy all this at once, just one item at a time. I know it is a bit much for one component of my survival supplies (I only spent $325 total for my three Lee-Enfield rifles some years back) but since I am now living in a cold climate instead of sunny Florida I need a heat source for emergencies plus if I ever do get my lazy butt moved out to the country I will need all appliances non-electric. So not only am I buying for emergencies but also for country living. If I lived in a wooded area it would have been cheaper to buy a used wood stove for $100, covered a corner of my trailer with suitable fire proof material and put a stove pipe through a window. Then got at least a cord of wood. Of course being in a wood scarce area, such as in Northern Nevada desert, or the plains states, or even in an urban area, you can also go with kerosene. The indoor heaters are about $100. Again, at Lowes. But I have only seen kerosene cook stoves through the mail or online, and they are not too cheap, about $75. But you can buy by the 55 gallon drum if you so wish, and the fuel is long lasting and not too flammable. And less in demand in an emergency than propane, something to seriously consider. Just make sure to have plenty of back-up wicks and know how to do required maintenance.

However, long term you will need wood for at least some heating and cooking. You can go underground, or with solar heating through a glassed in porch (doesn't need to be new glass, a collection of used windows would work) with flat black painted metal water filled containers to act as a heat sink, or even just enclosing a porch with plastic wrap (but not long term without replacement plastic) for winter heat during the day. Have a good comforter and blankets for at night. But when the sun is not out for days at a time you need the woodstove burning. And even your solar oven is going to be out of commission

with the sun hiding behind clouds. I read about survival retreats having 5,000 gallon propane tanks, and think, great, that is a lot of cooking gas. But eventually you will run out of propane or kerosene. And then you need solar and wood. So why invest so much in such a massive tank? Just get a few Zip stoves, with replacement motors of course, and plan on doing your "stove top" cooking on camping stoves. Two Zip stoves, several replacement motors, a solar battery charger and batteries, all for under the cost of about five small 5 gallon propane tanks filled along with a propane cooker. And the Zip stove will go longer without breaking than the propane will last. Long term, Apocalypse living you will run out of propane and kerosene. Period. You don't need more of that than you will need for a normal emergency. Just have enough for one month usage, for severe emergencies. Any longer period of time just have solar and wood options. And again, this does not need to cost much of anything. You do not need a Zip stove, it is just more efficient than a regular wood burner. You do not need a propane or kerosene heater or cooker, they are just more convenient. You do not even need LED lights if you have a source of non-petroleum wax for candles (assuming you are concerned with long term lighting). Just buy a dollars worth of long tapered candles whenever you go to the dollar store and after a time you have plenty for lighting. Make your own coffee can wood stove for cooking and heating. Make your own metal drum wood stove if you wish. Caulking all your windows and otherwise better weather proofing your dwelling might be better than buying another bottle of propane. Collect wood from construction sites for free wood burning. You can do this as cheap as you need to.

Water storage is important as most delivery depends on electric (as does many non-traditional farming areas for crop growing). At the very least have several days worth of water in plastic jugs, the type of plastic which will last awhile such as is used in soda bottles rather than the milk jug type. Even getting a few dozen two liter soda bottles from the trash and cleaning them and filling with water along with about four drops of bleach (changed annually) is a great cost free way to store water. In dry areas it is a good idea to have a cistern (rain catchments), even if nothing else a few galvanized or plastic trash cans under the rain gutter run off. Would I want to drink from them? No. But if you kept them covered and out of direct sunlight to discourage both insects and algae it would be better than having no water at all come grid down time (food grade barrels would be ideal if you can buy them cheap enough- I would be leery of the plastic garbage pails leaching chemicals into the water- try nearby cola bottling plants for cheap barrels). Unless all your water storage was discarded two liter cola bottles, and you had a bunch of them, it is cheaper to buy used food grade barrels and to hook them up to rain gutters (or even just store filled in the garage) than to buy all your storage in one gallon bottles. Even at Wal-Mart the cost is over a buck each (for the proper plastic ones). But mainly, where would you store 100 containers of water? Two hundred if used cola bottles? The large 55 gallon drums make storage much simpler even if you also need a hand pump. But again, if you want to start out free, storage in discarded pop bottles is better than nothing. If you are only storing up for a few people for a few days, by all means forego the larger containers and their cost. My future plans rely on a cistern, but a cheap one, barrel storage, hauling water from town, hauling from the river, snow melt, everything but a well. But I will continue to rely on soda bottle storage as it is free and convenient.

Whenever the temperature here gets below about twenty five degrees our water hose freezes up and we go to the storage water. So it might only last for the morning until the sun shines bright enough, but we use storage water several times a month every winter. Not great fun, but you get used to it.

Freezing your meat is a lot easier than canning. And although I read conflicting views, if in fact it is impossible to pressure can from a wood stove, how do you preserve your meat without an electrical freezer or a propane stove? Obviously in normal times you will have propane and will be able to can if the juice stops powering your freezer. In winter meat will keep outside in the shade in a protective metal box (such as your old freezer) and in summer you can dry all your meat if you construct an industrial size solar dryer (the long glass topped trough tilted up to the box full of trays) so I can see no need for canning if you feel there will be no more propane available long term. You need a lot of propane to can meat, so if you envision a civilization collapse either produce your own methane or do away with canning altogether. A root cellar is required of course, as will be drying and smoking, but canning might be out of the question long term Mad Max scenario. Either slaughter livestock as needed for a large group or only raise chickens and rabbits for a small family (although sheep are needed for wool) if you are going to be eating fresh rather than storing. It is a lot easier to store hay and grain feed and eat the animals fresh than try to preserve the meat itself. And before you panic about the Asian Bird Flu, research both sides of the scare. I have my doubts about the reality of the threat, just as I dread most things the government tells me not to worry about (such as itself). As for refrigeration, ask yourself what you really use the thing for. If you only store leftovers and condiments (remember, the produce belongs in the root cellar) than your only need for refrigeration is dairy products. Do you really want to buy a $1200 propane refrigerator to store your butter and milk? If you need daily milk, go buy a smaller container and drink it all at once. Butter and cheese are a little tougher. How about the ice box method I outlined in my solar article? You quickly freeze a block of ice by using a brine solution and a 100 watt motor. Then use the ice in an old fashion ice box. Your dairy is kept cold as well as your produce and leftovers. I'm still stumped on the construction of the box. Eventually I'll figure that one out (its got to be cheap and easy since I'm frugal and all thumbs).

I am all for LED lighting, and not that thrilled about kerosene anymore (unless you already have the heaters and stoves in kerosene). LEDs are now dirt cheap, and with a solar charger and rechargeable batteries I think one is really well set up in the illumination department. Now, the new rechargeables are better than the old, getting 1000 charges rather than 500, but I have learned that the "no memory" claim is really just a myth. They are more resistant to developing a memory but not totally immune. Unfortunately this means you are still better off draining all the juice and then fully recharging them rather than partial use or charges. Bummer. Still and all, rechargeable batteries and a solar charger are better for long term emergency lighting than carbon fuels if you envision resupply issues. A propane light might light up the night AND boil water at the same time but post-Apocalypse supplies might be scarce. Of course, the sun might hide behind volcanic ash for a few seasons and totally screw everyone so have plenty of food stores

plus store bought batteries (one LED lantern getting 100 hours from a bucks worth of batteries at the dollar store can light up a few months worth of evenings) and wood enough for heat and cooking.

All this you can do for dirt cheap. A few candles, a few LED flashlights, some dollar store batteries, a scavenged motor from an old refrigerator, a bag of salt, a used chest freezer, a few old metal cans for a stove. Old lumber and used glass. The only need for electricity might just be our addiction to electric do-dads. I plan on getting solar panels, but just for my laptop computer. A portable TV can run on the solar juice, but I think without cheap plug in juice TV will not be as desirable as now. I have a wind up/battery/solar radio if we need the news. Just remember that the utility made electricity a convenience. We made it a necessity ourselves, and we can be free if we wish.
END ARTICLE

PRIORITIZING DECISIONS
Making the best possible choices within budget
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Opposable thumbs are great to have as a species, as is a large brain. You can manipulate the environment to suit your needs. And you survive and prosper and work your way to the top of the food chain. Then, you have two choices. Prosper your way to resource depletion, or let natural tendencies balance the population through wars and their resulting calamities of famine and disease. And, you can even do both if you get real lucky. I could argue that Peak Oil could end the high population numbers we have since the Green Revolution in agriculture is dependant mostly on petroleum inputs, but I will save that for another day and try to speak in generalities here. We always seem to do too well and prosper too much and then must pay the piper later on down the line. The natural pendulum swinging from surplus to disaster seems to plague human history. Why must we have war, naive hippies ask. It is natures way of restoring balance, and our DNA's way of surviving. It is really a win/win for the species however much it sucks for the individual participants. Heck, one could argue that the two nuclear weapons we used against Japan turned its future generations into the wealthiest tribe on the globe. Sure, other factors were involved, but to start the horror of war did turn the country on a market path rather than a military one. Of course, one could argue that Uncle Sam gave its fledgling steel industry subsidies to keep the country from going commie at the cost to our own industry which later died. And losing an entire generation of youth in no way dampened the martial spirit of Germany after 1918. So who the Hell knows?

Of course, the flip side of using intelligence as a survival tool is that the very brain you depend on is a merry little prankster. It likes to play tricks, one can only imagine for its own amusement. And one really neat trick (from the point of view of that big grey glob of goo anyway) is that once the basic necessities of life such as food and shelter are secured, then it is time to start wanting non-essentials. Well, as you can imagine, non-essentials are pretty much non-ending. We are never satisfied. The cruel injustice of it all- you collectively invent agriculture and then you are still not satisfied with your life. You need to accomplish more. So you invent government to protect you from nomadic bandits (you know, the guys who didn't want to settle down and farm) which must have worked out pretty good at first, but now just a few years latter that same set of once wonderful guys is sending you a tax bill saying they will take your land to settle your tax bill since you can no longer farm due to the land being declared wet lands and you better send your kids to public school to get brainwashed so instead of working on your farm they will go to work at Wal-Mart and earn some serious money that can be taxed every week instead of the poor overworked civil servants having to fight to get you to pay your taxes once a year and don't piss them off otherwise they are going to sell your land to a big ag outfit which they can now do under the new and improved laws on imminent domain which in

effect lets the highest bidder take your land so what is the incentive to even try very hard so stop farming to get your crop subsidies and just live in town off of welfare while big ag buys all their supplies to pump some kind of artificial fertilizer into your dead and depleted land from big oil which is pumping out the last of the good stuff as quick as they can so they can retire their CEO's with big bucks before inflation jacks their fortune.

If you think about it, non-essentials are rather a large and burdensome problem for just about any of us. Even a homeless bum can be overwhelmed by a proverbial cornucopia of provisions as he is faced with the daunting decision as to what food establishments dumpster to root through for each meal of the day. Day old bread, or donuts? Dried out chicken from the local greasery, or half eaten steaks from the country club? And he can even choose his free entertainment. Library for reading, or the electronics store for his free TV viewing? Always so many choices. The bum we can almost be envious of. Your toughest choices are where to freeze in the winter, which dirty shirt to wear on the outside of the other shirts, and which rotting food to eat. The rest of us have a much better life, to be sure, but our very affluence also generates its own problems. We have the means to provide extra above and beyond mere subsidence, and the infinite choices in themselves provide no end of painful choices. It started out small. What toy do I play with? I'm so bored, what do I do with all my free time? What basket weaving classes do I take once I take all my required classes? Who do I date? Which car can I afford? What do I major in with this free college education? But then things started getting tougher. Your decisions started to have lasting consequences. What career do I choose? Do I get married, and if so, to whom? Do I have kids? What car do I buy since gas costs and my need to drive every day dictate this is no longer just a leisure activity? Where do I live? Will it turn into a ghetto in thirty years? Should I save for retirement if I already have a pension? You get my point here. Most every decision past basic food and shelter is really only a question of leisure or entertainment, not of survival. "What do I do for a career?" is really asking how you wish to entertain yourself eight hours a day. Many folks could care less where they live as long as it sheltered them from the elements, yet we not only fret over it endlessly we also devote much of our resources to it. In the abstract we observe all of this and agree with it, but our brain is in charge here and it makes it all seem like life and death. We are hardwired to desire always more, and there is no escaping it. An evolutionary trick to ensure we always advance as a species. If you always desire better and more, the species in the long run advances by each individuals hard work improving every facet of being. What else would drive a species which relied on their intelligence to survive? Your DNA will survive regardless of what the individual must suffer.

Now, as a survivalist, you enter a new equation into the above. Now, not only do you desire more and better but you also desire to acquire the means to survive calamity. You need to furnish the condo AND stock up on ammunition. Really, we are faced with a double burden here. Most schmoes out there are content to better their standard of living materially and better mankind through work by improving a good or service. We must also do so, but at the same time divert scarce funds and time towards ensuring our clans survival after Doomsday. Again, Mother Nature, the cruel bitch, has decided that some of the gene pool is going to diversify skills so in the unlikely event of system wide destruction

the species will survive. All of nature inhabits niches, so as to not only reduce competition amongst resources but also to ensure species survival when the inevitable occurs and disaster removes those resources. If all the birds ate at one fishing hole, and algae growth wiping out the fish would eliminate all the birds at one time. Then lack of birds would lead to fish overpopulation, leading to plant die off, leading to oxygen run down , etc. etc. So, one type of bird eats fish, one insects, one plants, or whatever. Everything diversifies and inhabits a niche. One day a disaster wipes out all but one niche and the species survives. Survivalists are merely one niche among humans. We are driven by irrational fears so we strive harder than most to squirrel away supplies and learn survival skills most could care less about. Just as a science type spends his whole life obsessing about arcane matter of math to solve one problem (one piece of the puzzle in one area of species advancement) so to do survivalists devote all their time to ensuring they can survive a nuclear war. One niche develops nuclear weapons to protect the clan, the other uses the same technology to get energy from the process, a third strives to protect themselves from the negative consequences. Our minds are both tool and weapon and there will always be a niche to exploit, benefit from and protect against the products our intellect produces. As long as there are guns (hunting, protection) there will be gun protestors to balance the threat of those tools being misused (war, murder). Its all about DNA survival.

But understanding why we are driven to understand the shelf life of Twinkies does not help in the cost of actually hoarding them. I leave the earning of extra cash to each individual. Here, I am going to focus on decision making. You want to make the best possible choices out of all offered possibilities. You need to decide what is most important, what to get first, what to do without, when you have enough, and even your timing. And it would also be nice to avoid burn-out, cost over runs, and wasting both money and time. All arcane matters, so let me jump right in and muddy the waters. The best possible choices of equipment, skills, location and actions are what largely occupies the survivalist press. You can argue over the merits of 9mm verses 45 all day and people will subscribe to your magazine to do so. I will every once in awhile write yet another article telling anyone who will listen to abandon any carbine caliber and arm yourself only with a full size thirty caliber battle rifle, my version of the 9 vs. 45 debate, but I also have pointed out the merits of both an SKS and a .22 caliber defense system. There is no perfect tool. Singular. Just several tools, each one performing each task. So not only must you decide what task awaits you, you must decide which tools can perform as many tasks as possible since you don't have the funds to buy all the tools you need. Yet more decision making that is forced on you. The only service I can perform is to offer your choices in a logical manner and try to make your choice easier. If I made a blanket pronouncement that the H&K 91 was the one and only true survival rifle out there and you must buy it now, before Doomsday, within months, yesterday if possible, then several things would happen. Several of you would go out and buy one. The guy living in the wide open spaces of Arizona would be well served by his weapon system. The poor guy living in the swamps of Florida would have too much gun, his wife would leave him for spending two grand on a flashy semi-auto boy toy, and he would blame me when he had to hock it to pay child support. He should have bought a SKS for $175 retail. I can't make up your mind for you, just give you all your choices and guide you to the logical choice. I

print the menu and suggest the special of the day.

What are your best possible choices for guns? If you live in another Anglo country where they are outlawed you will be constructing crossbows from wheel springs, or spears from butcher knifes, but here in good old Fascist America we still get to own guns. The Feds know they own us economically, they realize guns will only be used amongst ourselves and so there is no need to disarm the populace. At least yet. At one time I would have been leery about our chances of keeping our guns, but as the trend towards home schooling grows at least there is a slim possibility that some children will remain undamaged by brainwashing. Well, at least others brainwashing. If the parents do it, it is okay. Anyway, how does one decide which gun to own? And it usually will only be one or two as all of our budgets are stretched rather thin. Where do you live? Dense brush and jungle is perfect for carbines. The SKS is best both for affordability and extreme reliability. More rugged than the AK47, with no mags to buy, and can be used lying prone. Live in prairie or desert? You need a full size round, thirty caliber. Semi or bolt action doesn't matter as long as you have a distance round. And buy a common caliber. 8mm or 303 British is pushing things, make sure to stock up. But avoid the truly difficult to find such as 7.5 Swiss or something along those lines. A rifle or a pistol? Rifles are best, but if you stay in the city, go with a pistol as rifles will only mark you as a target. If you are preparing for Industrial Meltdown, only a .22 system will do as you can easily buy tens of thousands of rounds cheaply.

Where is the best place to live for survival? If you are preparing for total grid failure or Peak Oil most likely you want the South for warm mild winters. If you fear ravenous starving mutant hoards of refugees, only the open West will do. If you want to produce all of your own crops when the grocery stores close, you need lots of natural rain fall. Only the North West and East Coast will do. If you want hills and abundant rainfall, both for hydro power and crop growing, go to the North East. Do you want isolation and abundant water? Good luck, other than high priced land or just pockets in otherwise over settled areas. Is your only criteria cheap land to escape the cities now? E-Bay has lots of land under a grand. Mostly in the desert by the Mexican border or in the empty west Utah area. But you can find some in the South if you look awhile. Want to avoid race wars? Go to west Texas if you are Hispanic, the South if you are Black, the northwest if you are White. Remember, it is not racist to avoid hostile tribes. If you are black and live amongst blacks you are merely decreasing your odds of some ignorant trailer park inbred white trash cracker from hurting you just because of your skin color. My view of other races (I'm white) is merely that their ancestors lived in an area that favored genetic mutation to favor their environment (as did mine). It is only about the body optimizing or minimizing sun exposure. But that sure as heck doesn't make me want to live in Watts. I believe other tribes are hostile, and a lot of folks categorize tribes by skin color. Okay, that out of the way (my, aren't we all a little sensitive), back to location. What if you have conflicting needs. You want to live in isolation, need rainfall for crop growing, and are poor. Well, the short answer is that you are screwed. The long answer is that you must compromise. I wanted crops, cheap land and warm weather. And so I bought east Texas land. But post-Katrina I saw the fallacy of living in too crowded of an area. So I

had to compromise. I got my isolation in north Nevada, but I had to spend more than I wanted (three grand, chump change to some, a bit much for me), the climate is cold and water is a near by river rather than rainfall. But as a bonus I can live in an economically more robust area than would have been the case, and the solar potential is great. There is no perfect place, but plenty of tolerable ones (and with the need to earn a living, you must factor in jobs which limits our perfect choices).

If you are ever lucky enough to get enough food and ammo stocked up then you can invest in whatever strikes your fancy. I don't really have enough wheat stored or enough ammunition but as I fear an economic meltdown more than I do most other disasters I have diverted some paper money into silver. I don't look at it as much an investment as a necessity, but it ain't food or protection so really it is a luxury investment. Some who place greater faith in the longevity of our financial institutions then I do would cut corners and pinch pennies to add to their 401k or other retirement options. There is nothing wrong with that, at least they are doing something constructive to prepare for coming hard times (I love that new commercial about the kid who starts saving for retirement really young, foregoing candy and such). But investments are what is important to you as a future use. Land falls under this category. As does an education. There is no wrong choice (except perhaps mine of investing in a non-paying newsletter, chuckle) for investing as you are investing your time and money now for future gain. That makes almost any investment worthwhile. Sure, some investments can backfire on you. You could have bought land for pennies an acre a hundred years ago, improved it, poured your sweat into it, willed it to your children and then they gave it to their children, and then the tax man stole all your land after the county jacked up taxes to the point where honest hard working lower middle class workers couldn't afford taxes on anything other than a twentieth of an acre and a run down shack. But, you could also buy a hoard of gold and if you live long enough a private company could actually mine an asteroid and the influx of gold into the global economy could send your wealth plummeting drastically (what do you think happened to gold in Europe after the New World gold mines started producing?). With gold being about the safest long term stable money, these things are rare. But the point is that no money or investment is safe. A college education in computer programming went from golden (pre-Y2K) to useless (outsourcing to India) or close enough in about five years. But at least the education put your foot in the door to branch off into another career. Investments are never wasted, just unlucky sometimes.

Even deciding which food to store for survival is never an easy one. I advocate wheat alone. Not because that is a perfect survival diet. It isn't. It is a perfect survival food. You need to add others to get a complete protein in your diet. I stress getting several years of wheat because it is dirt cheap. It stores forever. And it will keep you alive if you didn't have time to store anything else (just make sure to sprout some for your veggies). But after wheat you need to start worrying about what to buy and store. Canned meat is the obvious answer to get your protein, but then you run into the problem of taste and nutrition. There are not that many canned meats. Tuna, the best bang for your buck. Spam or its generic equivalent. Nasty without condiments. Corned beef which is expensive. Most others are mixed with carbs such as corned beef hash (with potatoes) or

chili beans (beans and hamburger). Unless you buy #10 cans from restaurant supply houses, you don't have many choices in meat. Or spend a heck of a lot on freeze dried or mail order specialty stores. Should you can your own? It is cheaper and healthier in the long run as store bought is usually heavy on salts and nitrates (other than the tuna). Again with the choices. Store bought cans are relatively cheap and easy. Home canned is cheaper and healthier but then you need to buy the whole canning supply and infrastructure such as propane storage, boxes full of replacement lids, etc. The extra money spent on freeze dried now to save space, or the canning equipment to always ensure meat preservation that is bulky to store? Another decision. Or just supplement the grain with beans (and going vegan brings its own set of issues and problems)?

And then there is the decision making process itself. You need to decide what is most important. What disaster are you preparing for? That dictates location and choice of tools. What do you get first? Weapons or food? Or a little of each? What can you do without? When is your hoard of one item enough? How is your timing? The situation you are preparing for is a personal decision. There is no correct answer. You follow the basics, stockpile food and guns, try to grow some of your own food, get out of debt, etc. But where do you live? Wherever your projected disaster is least severe, obviously. Again, there is no correct answer. As long as you are preparing for what you consider a threat, you are doing the correct thing. What to buy first? The extreme basics. A bit of food, any kind of weapon, the minimum of gear. You need a solid base to start out from. I started with a year of wheat with grinder, a supply of bleach, and a 45 with a few boxes of ammo. After a few divorces, I started over with a supply of wheat, a water filter and a $100 surplus Lee Enfield rifle. I built from there, since I had by base to fall back on. The basics first, then the luxuries. I added propane later, as well as canned meat, and gasoline stores, etc. Even a few twenty-five pound sacks of white flour and a single shot 12 gauge to start for under a hundred bucks is much better than nothing. Then add on to that. What to do without? Not so much as doing without what you need as doing without what is unaffordable. In example, I stuck with my war surplus bolt actions rather than buying any semi-autos and as a result I was able to buy my land I will eventually live on rent free ten miles from a town offering plentiful jobs, and I paid cash for a twenty percent discount. If I had bought my perfect survival rifle with all needed accessories all that money would be tied up in an HK91, dozens of mags and thousands of rounds of ammunition. Did I make the correct choice? It depends. If the economy keeps going smoothly I will have paid back the cost of the land in one year of saved rent. If the economy goes off the cliff I might be at a severe disadvantage come a firefight with screaming welfare hoards of hungry mutants. My point is not that I did make the correct decision, only that by choosing to do without one thing, I was able to do another. So what you decide to do without is important. Going without a farm in the country means you could buy an RV and travel to where the jobs are and where the crime isn't, and you wouldn't be subject to property tax and land use restrictions. Not saying that is the perfect choice, just that it is another example of doing without one to get another. As far as when do you stop. There is no stopping. Once you see the problem, there is never enough money for all the supplies you need, nor enough time to learn all the skills you must have. Welcome to the treadmill, suckers!!

Which brings us to burn-out, cost overruns and wasting time and money. If you burn out on survivalism, there is only one thing to do. Pack up all your gear in the corner of the garage, go about the average American consumer lifestyle, and turn off the news. Bury your head in the sand and forget there are troubling times out there. If you won't take steps to counter the negative trend, just put on a happy face and pretend all is well out in the big bad world. That is your only option, as starting to worry again will only put you back on the treadmill. As far as spending too much money, don't even worry about it. We all waste money everyday, the US economy depends on it. Our whole working lives are devoted to buying overpriced crap, from out inflated gum and glue houses to our overpriced infernal combustion engine driven car. We buy expensive coffee instead of brewing it at home. We eat out and spend twice what it would cost at home. We go to the movies instead of renting a video. We carry a $50 a month cell phone instead of making a pay phone call for fifty cents. Etc., etc. Who can fret over an overabundance of guns, ammo or food when most of us waste money in the above manner? At least prep supplies can help save your life. And wasting your time? Who doesn't if they watch several hours of TV a night? Just devote that time to survival concerns and you will be ahead of the evolutionary game of 90% of the population.

Bottom line? You can't make any perfect decisions. Not unless you have a crystal ball. So don't fret over it too much. You will still worry about every decision you make unless you just react in a knee jerk fashion, but that is just figuring the odds and weighing the pros and cons. There is really no cure for it. Deal with it. It is normal to concern yourself if the choices you make are correct or not. Not that it is easy. Was life supposed to be? Seriously, I recall a promise of some sort sometime long ago. Someone promised me an easy life if I towed the line. Lying bastards!! Enjoy.
END ARTICLE

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REVIEWS

BOOK-DIES THE FIRE

Did you ever wonder what a post industrial, civilization collapsing, excess population culling, total crap hits the fan scenario would be like? Of course you have. Ever wonder what the same without firearms would be like? Up North in harsh winters? With only a few areas suitable for farming? Farming without machinery? Without modern machines of any kind? You haven't? Aren't you a true paranoid survivalist? Well, lucky for you we have at our disposal an author who takes such things as the absence of computer chips and gunpowder seriously. S.M. Sterling is a fine science fiction writer who churns out quite readable books on time travel/alternate history and other more conventional sci/fi subjects. In this one, an unknown event somewhat like an EMP occurs. As you can imagine there is running around and screaming as airlines come crashing down making pancakes of passengers, cars lose power and crash, all electrical power fails, etc. Now, what our powerless people don't realize yet is that this was no ordinary EMP that just fries computer chips, but it also reduces the power of high explosives down to a fizzle. No ammunition fires, let alone TNT or whatnot. Instant regress back to bladed weapons. Now, as it happens in stories such as this, at one scene of our new Apocalypse there awaits characters who are skilled in areas which are uniquely suited to these new circumstances. Ever hear if the SCA, Society Of Creative Anachronism? These folks have a serious crush on Medieval life (oh, to be wallowing in cow pies, Black Plague wiping out whole populations while the king tortures for amusement) and dress up in appropriate period fashion, hold fairs and conduct mock combat with rattan swords. In this story a few members of that organization not only have metal swords, but are skilled in their use (a very hard skill to learn good enough to stay alive).

Now, before you scoff at such an outlandish story plot as I did, take a moment to think about it. There might be other ways to throw our heroes back further in time than 500 years, but how else do you instantly render firearms useless. In a normal, run of the mill, everyday Industrial collapse you will run out of ammunition quickly, sure. But not before those with guns already wipe out opposing groups and take over agriculturally rich areas with sufficient rainfall. And then most likely someone will be able to reproduce primers and smokeless powders. If you run short of brass you could even use aluminum as cartridge cases. Early primer material was corrosive, but by not reloading the new aluminum cases (melting and recasting?) you alleviate the brittle cases caused by that primer chemistry. Or you could go back to paper cartridges with just a metal base. With line and rank single shot breech loaders are nothing to sneeze at and would work wonderfully against all but armor. And, smokeless powder should be doable in the future with cottage industry manufacturing if we were able to do it over one hundred years ago. In any society invention is the mother of necessity, regardless of motivation or circumstance and I am pretty sure we could reinvent the old post-black powder pre-1900's

weapons systems even if it wasn't possible to get anything more modern. So how else could our author have wiped out firearms other than a mysterious outer world caused event? There is speculation amongst the characters that a "alien space bat" (going from memory here, something real close) caused the event for its own purposes. Planet take over? Eliminate a threat from a fellow space traveling race? Whatever. The causes are given little attention as our heroes have to survive amongst chaos and confusion, as well as get medieval on evil doers. Not much time to ponder life's little mysteries.

What I love about S.M. Stirling is not his wild plot ideas but his attention to details as far as how a society works without a high tech Industrial petroleum fueled industry backing it up. You know, what we all depend on to eat. He not only has a great head for details of destruction and suffering, but also (more importantly) the details on how to use old tech/low tech to solve any problems caused by the lack of modern technology. Not that this is necessarily a how to manual as it is a richly detailed idea book. He imagines what a post Industrial society looks like and suggests ideas for doing without certain tools or techniques. This is an invaluable tool for those of us pretty much stuck in the never ending consumer phase of survival preparations. Reading this book leaves one wondering if one should stop buying so much crap and at least get a few books on 19th century technology. Well, actually, 19th century industry. We need to know how to build cottage industry style, but with all the up to date information. Joining old and new. You wouldn't farm like they did two hundred years ago, you would use the French Intensive deep bed companion planting method. You need metal from a small furnace but you need the modern, stronger metals. Plastics are out of the question, does anyone know how barrels are made anymore? A combination of the old stuff that worked, with a smidgen of new tech thrown in. Because, really, just how improbable is it to assume civilization could collapse? Any time an asteroid of sufficient size can hit us. If the oil did really run out fairly quickly. A super volcano in Yellowstone blowing up (it does like clockwork, last blow out 640k years ago-usually occurs from 600 to 650k years, so between tomorrow and ten thousand years from now) and its particles clouding the earth for years wiping out most plant life and most of us. And just because Russia is now socialist and nationalist and not too happy we are noising around middle east oil since they suck at exploration and extraction since their idea of a profit windfall tax is to nationalize the company rather than being the official communists that they used to be does not mean they are no longer a nuclear threat. And just because China knows it needs capitalism to feed its own people and just because it poisons them to do this through pollution does not mean she needs us as consumer for her to be capitalist. As soon as we are not the consumer of choice any more we had better not continue to be a military threat to them or they can bury us economically (no, it is not suicide to buy half of our government debt-it is a military weapon and the Japanese are going along short term for markets but long term to make the Chinese happy and secure that market since in the future our economy is toast and everyone knows it). So the question is, do we go quietly into that good night, or do we get stupid and start a war that goes nuke down the road? If our leadership doesn't care about a city the size of New Orleans being sacrificed so that the oil will continue to flow, or about 15,000 servicemen being wounded in the same battle (some terribly, for life), or about tens of thousands of children dying from a embargo on a country making food and

medicine scarce, do you really think they care if a city or three is nuked eventually in a world war as long as they can keep themselves in the lifestyle they have grown accustomed to? You are crazy if you think otherwise. I have no problem envisioning our own country being responsible for a nuclear exchange in the future as we grow increasingly desperate as our economy implodes. Unintended consequences either isn't in the Federal dictionary, or in its place is acceptable collateral damage.

This novel is also a good primer for those planning on retreating up Oregon way, as far as suitable agricultural area not dependant on powered wells, and it gives a good idea of the refugee population problem (natural barriers, line of flow, etc). Now, personally, I oppose including these areas in my own survival plans if only because they are such an obvious target. If your state has five million people in it and only one percent are familiar with its history and know what areas attracted farmers to which areas in the first place, you know you will have a potential of at least 5,000 refugees wanted to farm the area and taking your land in the process (not to mention the bandits to follow after crops start coming in). But a lot of detail on just such problems are also given in the book. One ruthless overlord dude starts a pure medieval power structure with subservient dukes as military muscle as he sits on the throne up in the city crushing dissent with his former criminal gang members as his army (the guy was a professor of history of that period). One Idaho area has town members and an Indian tribe forming together for protection, and the main group as Wiccan proto-Scott/Irish Druid warriors. Stirling obviously has some great fun with the cultural aspects here, but at times it does get tedious with the folk music/tree hugging God beseeching nonsense between battles. And a bit unrealistic with the women folk being such wonderful warriors underneath half their body weight of body armor. But these are just me being picky. This really is a great book, a great story, a wonderful idea book on how you too can survive a total system collapse. See if your library has it, honestly you must separate a lot of chaff here to get to the wheat if you only want to pick out the survival nuggets. Otherwise go ahead and buy it if you want that part and a good read as well. And while you are at it, read his other book...

BOOK-ISLAND IN THE SEA OF TIME

S.M. Stilings first attempt at modern man surviving in a primitive time. Followed by at least two others in this series. An "occurrence" sends the island of Nantucket back in time several thousand years. A Coast Guard ship near its shores was also involved. The town folk are faced with surviving on an island without much productive farmland, only a little fuel left for power generation and just a few firearms. The Indians on the mainland are hostile, hunter-gatherers rather than farmers so can't trade food. This novel is mainly about a turn coat Guard officer who defects to set up his own kingdom after the ship visits the British island (the early primitive version) for grain and livestock trading and sees what a great life slaves and harems can provide rather than staying on the island and being stoop labor on farms, and the islands attempts to battle his ambitions. But the journey there is interesting. The former town police chief is true to his Yankee roots and turns to communism to get everyone organized after the Event. The dumbass even confiscates everybody’s firearms after one murder/suicide, and locks them up in one place. So of

course a fire later wipes out most of them. I really think the author has issues with guns (or most likely with liberal types he has issues with free citizens having the freedom to have guns) but for our purposes here as survivalists learning how to rebuild civilization from small scale skills, we shall forgive him this bias. Heck, you should be able to learn from your enemies as well as your friends. Again, try to get this one from the library rather than buying it. It has great nuggets of info, but a lot of searching is required. Great book on how a small group survives without the industrial society on petroleum steroids to supply it.

BOOK-EMPIRE OF DEBT

By Bill Bonner and Addison Wiggin
From the same happy jesters that brought you Financial Reckoning Day (basically telling you we will emulate Japans slow stagnant slide). Writing in the same smart-ass style brought to you daily in The Daily Reckoning, this book, while excellent, will repeat a lot of what you read in that daily e-mail newsletter. That being said, nothing in life is free and if you enjoy their sarcastic wit daily, buy this book to help pay for your free subscription. I read their first book from the library but I also bought a copy of that book. If you want to keep reading their daily economic reports, political insight and especially the Mogombo Report, buy this book. Is it worth $20 to learn we are now an empire in attitude as well as fact? To find we now willingly embrace our role as World Boss-man, draining our treasury to protect the trade of other nations just so we can play with lots of weapons that produce really big explosions? If you are new to the authors, this is an excellent book to bring you up to date on all the details on our imminent death by empire. If this is really just old hat to you, it still is worth buying the book not only to support the authors but also the history section of this book detailing how we started down this road is well worth the read. If you are too darn poor to spend $20, just subscribe to their newsletter. A few months reading should get you up to speed.

MOVIE-WAR OF THE WORLDS

Boy, what a stinker. I almost went to see this in the movies but waited for DVD. I suppose I should have gone to the theatre to at least enjoy the special effects from it, because that was about there was to this waste of film. The movie, from a survivalist standpoint, was pure horse hocky. You have society crumbling around you as big ass alien dudes zap everybody with ray guns, so naturally your first course of action is to take a vehicle (with replaced solenoid to get it working again after electrical pulses from alien dudes kill all the cars) and head towards the city where your children's mother is visiting after she dropped off the tykes with you for the weekend. Heading towards the city!! The center of population where the aliens can shoot fish in a barrel. Good thinking on that one. Well, our main idiot in the film, I'll call him Pretty Boy in honor of Tom Cruise playing the role, is just your average Joe, working the late night shift at Union wages unloading cargo containers. Here is a job a trained monkey can perform and he's doing it at Union scale which is, last time I looked, about twenty or thirty dollars more than he should be making. So, hey, this guy has Mr. Friggin Clueless stenciled on the back of his

jacket which might actually be the same one he wore in Top Gun, but since I wasn't going to watch this abortion a second time just to check facts or give more details to further convince you not to spend money watching this disaster of a disaster movie, I can't be really sure. But, Pretty Boy was true to character playing the usual surly loser with attitude he takes to all his films which I'm sure is what makes him so lovable to audiences. The ladies love his attitude, the guys wish they were also short and surly. Anyway, Pretty Boy (PB) knows a car will call attention to himself (his only smart call the whole movie) so he goes to back roads towards the city. I imagine there is a lot less competition for food in the city than in the country, but pay attention to detail here, dude. Wait for the Tall Alien Tower People to wipe out the population first, dumbass. But, no, PB has to get to the city to shut up his crying daughter. Yeh, that's a good reason to be fried by Aliens or mobbed by pedestrian hoards for the One Working Vehicle In Existence.

So what happens? You guessed it, a mob fights over the vehicle. PB drives into the mob slowly so as not to crush anyone rather than doing the smart thing and driving over them like he was playing a video game and building up points for high score. They smash the windows and pull them out, blah blah. PB is now on foot which means it's going to take longer to get to the city where he can be swiftly dispatched by Alien Evil Dudes after he has been probed. I think all aliens like to probe, except for perhaps Alf. Alf never did strike me as a probing type. He just didn't seem to have an anal fetish. Okay, so PB takes his kids (you know they are his, surly and stupid) and tries to take a ferry across the river to get to the city. And of course, nobody could have predicted, the Alien Robot Killer People hear all the hooten and holleren and see all the lights (the electrical disturbances were localized) and lumber on over to start ray gunning everybody. The ferry boat overturns and PB goes into the water and then gets out none the worse for wear. It is at least Fall now, everyone wearing coats, but a swim in the water was no adverse effects on PB. I guess his bad attitude prohibits naturals wraith.

And then the really annoying part of the movie, our idiot savant PB meets a true blue dyed in the wool survivalist and the jerk-off kills him!!! Here is the one guy who doesn't have his head up his ass and PB has to go and kill him, just because he wants to off a few Alien Mechanical Snake Dudes. Here is PB, running around in the only vehicle which should have gotten the aliens attention, plus he gets on a ferry lit up like a friggin Christmas tree which does attract the aliens attention which is why I think PB does these stupid things because I really think he does want to get probed by the aliens, and he gets all huffy when survival guy wants to shoot a few of the bastards. Okay, not the smartest thing to do, but at least a Hell of a lot smarter than what probe happy PB has been doing. I'm really surprised Steven Spielberg didn't paint the survivalist guy as a white supremacist and put a Nazi uniform on him, the guy has such a hard on for Israel and for disarming the free populace just like all liberal commie puke bastards do. Here is a famous director who throws his support behind a good cause, but wants to repeat the totalitarian practices of the former enemy. Hey, nothing evil happened when German Jews were disarmed. Why should anything bad happen when we disarm Americans. And I put money in this guys wallet by renting his film. I am aiding and abetting the enemy of freedom here. What a schmuck I am. Okay, from now on no more money for evil Spielberg and his Jewish

Nazi's. Be careful the money you spend least it be royalty money to the merchants of Communism. Bastards.
END ARTICLE

ARE YOU PREPRED FOR AN ELECTRONICS FAILURE?
Electromagnetic pulse, nuclear winter, and our dependence on electricity
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Most of us good little survivalists are no doubt aware of the need to plan on blackouts and other electrical failures. Besides the traditional flashlight in the "junk" drawer and a few spare candles, how prepared are you for lack of electricity? I can light my trailer for weeks just with candles, but my primary source of light is going to be LED's. I have enough store bought batteries to make it through any short term or "Katrina" term emergency and I have enough solar powered ones to last the rest of my life after the whole system shuts down. Dependant on two factors. One, we don't have a Super Volcano blow or a nuclear winter and shut out the sunshine for a few years. And two, an EMP strike doesn't fry all the computer chips that power my LED lights. Obviously both needs must be addressed. The only cheap answer I can come up with at this time for a non-solar, non gasoline generator is the units that depend on a source of heat to generate a flow of electricity (advertised at one time as being able to provide power from your campfire). I could pick up a really cheap generator for under $200, but the lack of long life on those is a definite drawback. I believe the high cyclic nature of the cheap generators has them delivering something around the lines of a thousand hours of use before they give out. You mechanics out there could rebuild, perhaps. But I would be out of luck. And even assuming one achieved some wonderful performance such as one fourth a gallon per hour you would still need to store at least two hundred fifty gallons of gasoline and treat for storage. Not that that amount of gas would be a bad thing to have on hand should we experience another period of shortages and 50% price hikes. But the storage costs would need to be factored in (would it be cheaper to buy a moped than store gas for a vehicle?). Myself, personally, prefer to do away with the whole gasoline use issue and depend on a bicycle for transportation and use propane as my combustible fuel. Gasoline really is a weak spot in any survivalists plan. Food can be stored easily. Water can be stored. Food can be grown, water can be gathered from a roof. Transportation can be muscle powered. Ammunition can be stored or improvised. Vitamins can be substituted with garden grown herbs, etc. You can even make homemade toilet paper. But gasoline is a high tech item (well, not high tech like plastic, but it does require a lot of industrial infrastructure) that can not be easily stored in the amounts needed. It is a highly perishable item that needs constant replacement. If you want transportation and power generation after a system collapse, far better to go with diesel engines. You invest a lot more up front but the fuel can be substituted with vegetable oil, and more importantly (you can power gas engines with alcohol, after all) the life span of the engine is much better. A low RPM gas or diesel generator can easily last for ten to fifteen thousand hours of use (we set aside the minimum cost of $1500 for now).

But while a generator answers the need to generate electricity during a period of no sunlight, you still leave yourself open to the effects of EMP. You spend $1500 for a

generator, store 300 gallons of diesel for another $1500 (tank and fuel) and while running your unit to power up the homestead during grid failure, an EMP hits as the Russians figure it is payback time for the US hogging up all the control of the globe and decide to strike while the US is busy with rioting and looting because of the blackouts brought on by infrastructure deterioration brought on by a failing economy and there goes your three grand investment melting down by electronic burst. I don't plan on boring you with technical details here. I have not done extensive reading on the effects of EMP. This is for you to do depending on your situation. Diesels might only require you to replace one part to continue running. My point here in this article is merely to point out the threat and suggest ways to cheaply prepare and cope afterwards. Is your generator in danger from EMP? Almost all electronic gear is. My LED's can be stored in a small metal box (and not touching the inside metal I believe) and should escape harm (a Faraday [spelling?] cage to protect from surge). As with my shortwave radio. I am not really dependant on any other critical electronic item. If the computers fry, I only have myself to blame if a critical piece of data was not on a hard copy. For those of you that have extensive data on computer storage media, better have a back up computer protected against pulse. Anything plugged in is extremely vulnerable (the wire between the poles and to your electronic item act as a natural line of travel). Off grid homes would actually have an advantage here. Also, any vehicle pre-electric fuel injection should be okay (in general). But then you are back to the gasoline storage issue.

Obviously very few of my readers, or very few survivalists in general are going to be worried about a total system collapse. Where we revert back to 19th century technology. Kurt Saxon thought it was a foregone conclusion and wasted no time explaining why (or that scenario was handy for him to use out of copyright reprints to fluff up his books if one is really cynical) but I on the other hand just love to ponder how this could come about. If Peak Oil is happening and we quickly lose production of petroleum our entire world wide economy is in trouble as it is so entirely dependant on the black gold to survive and function. This would quickly put us in a worldwide Depression and certain locales could easily be without outside help. Just because Texas still has oil production doesn't mean Idaho will get any as there is highway banditry impeding delivery and I would even guess a real possibility of states seceding after the FedGoons get into financial trouble. Certainly Idaho would have silver to trade for Texas gold but several newly sovereign nations might be in the middle of the two trading. If Texas was silly enough to trade. We might reach a point where oil is much more valuable. Again, this is a "far out" scenario to some folks. We are too used to thinking of everything in terms of dollars, as if all the dollars we can print will create more oil than there is. Even if gold is now $525 compared to $275 just a few short years ago, it is still a screaming bargain compared to what the FedBastards plan on doing to the dollar through hyper-inflation. Buy gold now, or at least silver. Buy as much petroleum product as you can. Buy any tangible asset other than a house, now (farmland for your own use is another matter). We can only inflate. It is the only solution the Feds know. Taxes won't pay for the coming Baby Boomer retirement, or the new prescription drug giveaways, or the occupation of the middle east, or any new welfare program to placate the people, pay back the campaign contributors or stimulate an otherwise dead economy, but inflation of the dollar will pay

for all these and more. And in the end you will feel the pain. Our wages will stagnate to lower levels to become more in line with overseas labor (their wages will rise for all but mindless scut work) but all domestic non imported goods and services will rise in price as the dollar is inflated (primarily through credit creation rather than actual bills being printed-we are in the digital age after all). As less and less is affordable such as food or shelter, you will feel the pain.

With a economy in crises, the whole system of trust breaks down and things don't get traded. Such as labor, or shipment of goods such as food. Does the utility company still send you power if inflation is doubling costs monthly? Would they trust you to still have a job in thirty days and be able to pay them? We might see payments up front of several months worth of electricity as is the case now with apartment rentals, yet with frequent brown outs or black outs as the coal supply becomes unpredictable and more households turn to electric rather than natural gas (we are rapidly running out of domestic production) so demand skyrockets. Do the states that regulate utilities give in to voter anger to maintain rates or company bribes to raise rates constantly? And what about gasoline? Is your job dependant on long commutes? Is that wise? Even if Peak Oil doesn't effect you too badly at first we are already feeling the price of oil being effected by the decline of the dollar. Now conjure up that nightmare vision of reduced supplies and inflation at the same time. Higher prices everyday, but with less to sell. Still glad you bought that SUV? Still want to commute to work to pay for that overvalued home and pay for that trophy wife as your hair falls out and your body fails you under the stress of trying to maintain a disappearing lifestyle? One way or another our system is going to fail. Our economy used to be the most productive in the world as we cashed in our hydrocarbon riches of coal and oil to replace free labor from slavery to almost free labor of mechanical machines. We played out that gold mine until it wasn't nearly as free as it used to be, then moved on to mining the nearly free resource of owning the control of the worlds leading fiat currency. We have been living off the riches that the dollar gave us, but now that is almost done with and so now are cashing in one of our last chips in the poker game for global control and are now playing our military card. We have gotten to the point where our natural resources are exhausted, we no longer have the strongest currency or economy, so now we turn towards taking what we want. Such are the nature of Empires, and such is the nature of Empires that they all fail. Always. Without exception. We lived through the good times nearly free energy and resources gave us, soon it will be time to live through the bad times as the rest of the world grows strong enough to oppose us. W. Bush is really the perfect president for the times. He really believes we have a right bestowed by destiny to control the worlds riches. Good luck with that.

So, if our system is going to collapse, how do you plan on power generation long term? I am merely going to rely on small amounts of generation for lighting purposes. By being too poor now to buy farmland, I drastically reduce my needs for power later. I have no need to run power tools, no need to pump well water, no need to light a large barn full of livestock. I just need to provide illumination in my trailer and heat it with wood. Cooking will be with propane as long as it is readily available, wood thereafter. I can bike to work. I can manage to haul water from the river (although it won't be easy) if needed. My only

weak link is food production, but it is doable with hauled water and drip irrigation. Grain storage really is a must in my case, trading security by dwelling in barren desert rather than living amongst the teeming masses in productive farmland. It might be the wrong choice long term, but when you are poor you don't get to make all the right choices. But what about your situation now, or where you plan on being in a few years? Is power generation an absolute must? Is a well the only source of your water, and by extension your food supply? If your well is powered by solar, do you have a back-up to that power supply? If it is a generator, do you have enough fuel? Even if we never see a prolonged outage of the sun due to volcanic activity, what about damage to your solar cells either through vandalism or the forces of nature? It could happen, right? And if you have a good enough or big enough generator to power your well, how long will it last? How long can you run your generator with the fuel on hand assuming no more supply is coming through? What if Avian Bird Flu really is something other than a government panic? What if you needed to quarantine yourself at the ranch? For a long time. Taking into account pandemics, Peak Oil, and the decline of our economy, I would say fuel supplies in the future are going to be suspect. Get a windmill if you must have a well (leaving aside the issue of compromised security a tall metal tower presents). For the rest of us, learn to cope without much power.

EMP is a threat, but the threat is minimal as far as taking place. At least for now. If we get stupid enough to outright challenge China she could easily lobe over a nuke (remember, Clinton gave them much better guidance technology just to get re-elected just to get more interns to do his sexual bidding) and give us a country wide EMP pulse to fry all of our electronics. Instant and total social meltdown. If we are stupid enough. That is a big if. Perhaps they will drop all pretense and just pay a terrorist group to nuke one of our cities. God knows what will happen as our wonderful and fearless leaders grasp for power as our nation looses control and our economy free falls. Whatever scenario unfolds it might be prudent to just keep in mind the possibility of an EMP strike and at least protect some of your electronics. As far as solar being ineffective due to sun blockage, that might be of less concern to you. If we have a nuclear winter, or an asteroid strike, or a super volcano erupt, our main problem is going to be plant death, not our ability to generate power from our solar cells. But, if you have sufficient food stores perhaps you may wish to invest in a at least a book on generating steam power. And having some stored batteries. You will need electric light if we have 2-5 years of near sunlight blockage. Realistically, building a steam engine just to recharge a handful of AA batteries for some LED lights is a bit much. You could use it for other things. Power saws, electric wood splitter, electric heat for food canning, etc. If your area has a plentiful wood supply. Otherwise windmills and hydroelectric power are best. They are not cheaper as far as initial cost to start small scale, but they are much cheaper per watt of power generated. And should alleviate the problem of solar inefficiency and mostly the problem of EMP (if no chips are used). If you are in the desert you really have little choice but to go solar as you have no water, wood or natural screen to hide a tower. A small power generator from a heat source would be best. I had no luck finding one online, so if any reader has a source for these please let me know.

An EMP can also be generated in a localized manner. If Mohammed wants to nuke a city from an airliner he could detonate from the airlines maximum height and produce an EMP effect about two hundred miles across. Why would he want to do so rather than just blasting the city? Perhaps he doesn't want to see us waste every city in the middle east in retaliation (I think we would be pissed enough and just crazy enough to do so). Bush would air burst every city in the region, send Halliburton in to rebuild and Chevron in to pump all the oil out (if there is much left-lots of speculation Saudi is pumping a lot of seawater into wells to keep the oil flowing out, not sustainable long term). By turning a city into a powerless location the terrorists could test the effectiveness of a small EMP weapon, tie up a lot of Federal resources, and invite a more minimal response from us (what are we going to do, turn off the power in Iraq? It already has minimal power with plenty of brown outs). So by living no where close to the largest US cities you avoid the danger of this. New York, LA, Houston, Chicago. And of course DC. That is always target number one. I would be leery of Miami just because of the Jewish population there. Arabs are not their biggest fans. So, just stay out of big cities, period. I would not even do any business there. We have a thing called a fax now. And FedEx. And computers. I wouldn't consider any business worth going to any huge city. Seas of humanity crawling with the dregs of society teeming with the potential of evil. A crowd as a whole is as stupid as its least intelligent member, and while in general this is only true of a mob I believe it can also manifest itself at other odd and unpredictable times. A mass of people is a dangerous thing (such as in a democracy). I don't even like to go to a movie theatre if it is over half full. In a crowd individuals feel free to participate in unwholesome behavior as their identity is masked. Stay away from those on the dark side.

So, for now, few solutions for you. My main point here is that even after you become self sufficient you still have things to worry about. Your power supply is vulnerable even if you are off the grid. Plan on doing something about it. Protect against EMP, and have more than one source of power for critical functions just in case something total unexpected happens such as a super volcano blowing (one regular explosion can throw enough crap into the atmosphere to effects crops for a year or two and delivery screwy weather). I know EMP's and super volcanoes are not every day concerns, but just one can screw up your self sufficient energy plans. Not a bad idea to always have a back up plan.
END

SLAVE LABOR, PEAK OIL AND A FRAGILE ECONOMY
Our dependence on cheap oil and the end of Easy Street
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Whenever I hear a delightful phrase that rings musically in my ears I feel compelled to repeat it. Last week I said that our good fortune as a nation had a long history of being dependant on near free labor. First through slavery, then cheap coal and petroleum powered machines, then the advantage our globally dominant currency gave us, and now rigging the markets to our advantage through military intervention. I should have added freshly arriving immigrant labor also, but I didn't think about it at the time and it might not be totally correct as there was the safety valve of free land out West to counteract miserable slum life working for crap wages in unsafe factories. The Yankee version of slave labor. One could even argue that the first mechanization of farming allowed the North to free up a lot of farm labor for the War Of Aggression effort thus allowing machines to be farm slaves so that former farmers could become cannon fodder and crush once and for all states rights for the new age of Federalism, which is what the war was really all about, but I won't wander too far into left field just yet and just say that for most of our rise to our current position in the global scheme of things we have been dependant on labor saving devices to goose our economy. Not that it is a bad thing in the over all scheme of things. Slavery was an evil institution, don't get me wrong. But it did produce enough cotton to enrich our country, which allowed us to invest in mechanizing factories rather quickly. After that machines did a lot of our work. Also a good thing. We have always been dependant on our machines in this country and that might be one reason we have always done so well economically. But behind that wonder of efficiency is our dangerous dependence on carbon fuels to power those machines. Ying and Yang, opposing forces. For every good there is a bad. And we have been too focused on the good and ignored the bad. We reaped the wealth of near free labor but never focused the proper amount of energy on protecting ourselves against our dependencies. Instead we move on to the next easy source of "free money", itself proof that we are no longer focused on production (a source of wealth) but rather just wealth. We took advantage of our dominant fiat currency and milked it like it was a cow and turned our economy from a factory to a stock market. Don't get me wrong, there is nothing wrong with a service or information economy. We don't need to be a manufacturing economy any longer. The problem comes when you just manipulate the financial sector to produce wealth. You haven't created anything to produce that wealth, you just adjusted and manipulated figures to get false wealth. A perfect example on the micro scale is home equity loans. Your house rises in value in a bubble market. You take out an equity loan and take a vacation. False wealth, it doesn't exist outside of a bankers credit creation. Now if you had rented out a room, you would have created a service and earned real wealth. We had a few good years manipulating the books to create unreal wealth, soon to end in an overvalued real estate market near you. In the end we will turn to our last free money machine the

military. Create free money through inflation, keep the largest military on earth in pretty machines of destruction, and unleash them wherever wealth is hiding.

Energy input into a system creates wealth. The more energy, and the cheaper it is, the more wealth is created. Energy input is absolutely critical to human life itself. Most of human history was fueled with solar energy. The sun created plants, for farming, or for animal feed to produce meat. The sun was renewable, something you didn't need to worry about running out of. But since that big fusion generator was so far away and was diffused by a planetary atmosphere the energy given was weak. You traded quality for quantity, as it were. Trees were a form of stored energy, as was rivers and lakes for hydro power. Animal power as well. But all rather weak forms of energy. There was little enough extra energy to free up human labor. Free up humans from manual labor and they can employ their brains. The brain is like a muscle and it needs to be exercised or it gets flabby and pathetic looking and stronger brains come along and kick sand in its face, or rather the intellectual equivalent to that which is talking a lot of crap that the weak and sickly flabby brain take as a gem of truth and actually believe rather than doing the heavy lifting and thinking for themselves. Then you have such unworkable systems as communism, socialism or democracy. The muscle rippled strong brains speaking in funny Austrian accents then get the free wealth and the limp brains do all the work. That is the down side of a species using their brains to survive. The up side is that we start to do things a heck of a lot smarter. You know, "smarter, not harder". Sweet, placid and peaceful concept. Working with brains rather than with sweat. Who wouldn't rather sit at an office cubical all day and then go to the gym rather than work in a coal mine? Or have a tank of nitrogen fertilizer and a tractor produce 80 bushels of corn per acre rather than have twenty farmers using stoop labor to get twenty bushels from that same acre? Or use one computer programmer to replace twelve artists to animate a movie? But the dark side of that is energy dependency.

Petroleum is such a wonderful condensed form of energy. One gallon of gasoline has the same energy as does a load of wood many times its size in volume. And as few of us wish to cart around a load of wood to fire up a steam engine car, petroleum is wonderful for personal transportation. But if lack of cars in the future was all we had to worry about we would be able to muddle through. However, our entire economy is totally dependant on petroleum. Natural gas is used to make nitrogen fertilizer, farming is totally mechanized, energy is used to process, transport, store and cook our food. One can argue that our coal reserves will provide enough of our electric to do the processing, storing and cooking part. And we do have a great store of coal in this country. We won't starve in the cold and freeze to death. If we can keep our jobs and can afford to pay our utility bills. We are not exactly in danger of running out of oil or natural gas or coal (or even uranium). The supply is being used up, true. And all our exploration is producing less than what we are using year after year for decades now. And the US has seen a decline of production for thirty years now. As have over half of all the other oil producing nations (not the same amount of years, but they have seen the peak of their production and it is all a declining slope after that). Peak Oil is a bell shape production model. You produce more and more, then it levels off, then it declines. Hubbert predicted the US peak in the 1950's to

be in 1970, and it happened. He predicted global peak at 2000, and he was only off by one half to one decade. I believe the middle east will peak any day if it hasn't already. Remember, we discover less than we pump. Every year. For decades now. The chances of another major find are too slim, hasn't happened in nearly forty years. Renewables are in the single percentile. We may never run out of oil, but we are running out of an abundant supply that is affordable. And we are as hooked on cheap oil as a junkie is hooked on heroin. We would rather die than give up our junk. Well, actually, we would rather the children of economically disadvantaged families go fight our wars and die for us rather than give up our fix. We won't bring home the last soldier until our suburbs are overgrown with grass to feed our oxen we use to pull our cart of vegetables (we'll all be eating organic then) to the local farmers market to trade for some wood we will use to heat and cook with (and perhaps barter some .22 rounds to protect ourselves with against marauding bands from Mexico trying to reclaim the Southwest).

It is not a question of running out of oil. Despite the paranoid proclamations, it never was about actually running out of the black gold. It is about our economy being unable to function without a secure, abundant, cheap source of oil. Our near free slave labor of a combination of machines and petroleum power has been our true bread and circus'. The population of this country is not docile and content because of TV and welfare. They are content because we can feed them so cheap they are fat and pasty. Food has never been so cheap in history outside of banditry or resource depletion (i.e., running a herd off a cliff or stealing your neighbors groceries). The village idiot can sweep a floor for twelve minutes and earn enough to buy several days of food (assuming he just ate flour). In Germany several hundred years ago the average household spent twice as much of food as shelter (hard to imagine with a mortgage payment of $1200, isn't it?). Petroleum mining has spoiled us with near free food. Most of our other production in this country is just "make work". We sit around and shuffle paper or entertain those that do. The welfare state is just using some of that excess production to placate the slum dwellers. They won't starve, but they are bored- reason enough to riot, so we make sure they have TV and enough spending cash for crack. The problem in this country is we had the first petroleum economy and we got really spoiled and now we don't want to give it up without a fight. Unfortunately, since we were one of the first to see peak oil production and we were the most spoiled by our affluent lifestyle, that is exactly what we are prepared to do to keep our affluence- go out and fight for it. We will steal all the oil we can to keep up the lifestyle we are accustomed to. Our country reminds me of an ex wife. By an accident of nature (big boobs for the ex, plentiful oil for the US) they are pampered beyond what they deserve and when it is in danger of ending (divorce, peak production) they steal what they need (alimony, Iraq invasion) and justify it to themselves however they can ("I gave him my best years", " We need democracy in the middle east"). Never mentioned are the facts that the husband gave his best years supporting her, or that perhaps those in the middle east themselves don't want democracy but would like to keep their own oil.

It really is hard to see the point of view of those disputing Peak Oil. How can they ignore the simple facts? More and more countries are industrializing to lift their economies out of poverty. They are now no longer where we were in the early 1900's, a rural population

mostly farming for their own food production, using petroleum for just a few tasks, still dependant on solar energy to feed the populace. Now everyone lives in the cities or suburbs, totally dependant on carbon fuels (mostly petroleum) not only to eat and stay warm or to transport to work, but the very jobs they work at a creation of a hydrocarbon mining society. We are self sufficient at nothing as even our crops are dependant on imported natural gas. And nothing we do is self sustaining as we are merely drawing down our non-renewable natural resources. Quit a change from one hundred years ago, and the rest of the developing world wants to do the same thing that we did. But there just ain't enough oil in the world to do it. We are at national peak levels in almost every country. The Alaskan reserves are drawing down, the North Sea reserves are starting to draw down (the two areas that got us past the 70's slump). And those were the last major finds globally. We still find oil, but the fields are small and deplete quicker. And there is about a forty year window from peak oil discovery to peak oil production in a country or region. US oil discovery peaked in the thirties, production in 1970. Global discovery peaked in the late 1960's, we are now seeing peak production. A major field in Kuwait has now reached peak according to some reports. Saudi fields have major problems as massive amounts of sea water are injected to force the oil up. They will play out soon if they haven't already (politically the ruling Saud family needs oil wealth to buy off a dissenting populace so they are reluctant to admit any production problems). The middle east is our last major oil producer. There ain't any more. Oil sands in Canada are a minor solution that at best will produce about what the Alaskan field does now, or close enough (globally insignificant). Coal gasification/liquidification will work as we have plenty of coal. But our three hundred year supply is based on current production. About 25-50% of our electricity can be generated by coal, so to replace all our natural gas and oil fired generation plants with coal means our supply is halved to about 75 years. And that is just electricity. If we start to use it to replace gasoline we run out in just a few decades. But all this is not the main point. Yes, we will run out of cheap and easily extracted petroleum. But it will be hard to ever run out of oil. We will have electricity (much higher priced) and some gasoline supplies (really high priced). The point is that our economy will not survive a disruption in supply at cheap prices. Period.

I don't think many of us will dispute our economy is in trouble. We have economic figures that are manipulated by the Feds to halve inflation. We have an economic time bomb waiting in Social Security, Medicare and the Prescription Drug Freebie Package. The housing bubble (and the war) masked the economic troubles after 9/11, but they themselves will hurt us in the end. The dollar is falling in relation to most other currencies (itself not new, but harmful to a weak economy). New Orleans is going to be a black hole in future budgets (money is drawn to and disappears). There is talk of permanent off line status for some Gulf Coast oil platforms (as though it is not economically feasible to buy new equipment which can only mean that areas oil is in decline). Our new Fed chairman is noted for bragging we will use printing press inflation (in a question on deflation he answered we have printing presses- hello, hyperinflation). If we add in oil depletion to this equation it can only mean big trouble for us and our economy. For instance, oil stays high and rises above the point of inflation yearly. Less and less trips to the mall spell trouble for the retail sector. The high cost of commuting means the value of

suburban land decreases as the masses strive to move closer to work. The inflated prices from the housing bubble start to tumble as the outlaying houses are abandoned as high oil combine with higher interest rates. Detroit never learns its lesson and bankrupts itself trying to sell SUV's. The banking sector implodes as up to 75% of its loans were tied up in the housing boom. New loans dry up as banks get into trouble, but inflation rages as the government gets desperate for revenue as unemployment skyrockets as firms go belly up due to inflation, bad performing investments (also tied to real estate) and the lack of credit. The economy is addicted to growth through credit as it long ago gave up on growth through investment and production. Growth depended on cheap energy. We have goosed our economy through car sales and housing growth for over 50 years, but since companies started outsourcing factories in the mid 70's we have less and less to offer the world in trade other than Hollywood films and agriculture products. Although the real money maker in trade had been military protection. We protected them, they sold us manufactured goods for our worthless paper. But we killed that golden goose by turning rouge and stealing oil. Now the rest of the world might not be so wild about us "protecting" them anymore. We protected the sea lanes and kept the peace to allow global trade. But when we got desperate and stole what we should have been protecting we pretty much crapped on that unwritten agreement. Watch for it to end badly as the rest of the world tries to align against us.

When an economy such as ours is already in trouble through massive trade deficits and obscene borrowing (as well as hideous credit creation) it will not take long to topple as there are already too many weak points. And Peak Oil is a big weak point. The oil disruption in the 1970's was something like 5% of our supply being cut off. All it takes to almost wreak our economy is a single digit reduction in our supply of oil. If most of the world has already seen their oil production peak and now is seeing a decline, how much longer until we see a permanent decline in our supply? As soon as the dollar is weakened enough to be unattractive to foreign sellers of crude? As soon as oil is used in retaliation against us attacking our next enemy such as Iran (Israel is said to be readying for an air strike against the Iran nuke reactor)? As others see our weakness as the real estate bubble pops and our economy implodes? Or just sit on the sidelines and wait, because sooner or later there won't be enough extra crude to sell us no matter what the price. We will see our supply cut, most likely sooner rather than later. And then our economy will see a Depression. All of our economic growth and all our governmental make work jobs, all of our credit creation and leisure activities are all tied to petroleum mining. To create growth to pay back interest on business loans, we must have an ever expanding economy. Each child leaving home must have their own car, their own apartment, their own job in the service economy (shuffling paperwork to process our growth economy). We are fat and lazy and pasty and weak. We are at the pinnacle of our leisure economy. Machines have done all the work for us, and all those machines were fed by petroleum which is a non renewable resource (despite claims from those looking at one source of a refillable oil field- if just one reservoir refills it is just seepage from another, if other fields elsewhere did it then it would be a renewable). Look, nobody is a bigger fan of capitalism than me, but capitalism itself will not make a resource become magical. If we use it all up, no amount of trading is going to bring it back. The market is a wonderful mechanism for

rationally allocating resources and ushering in new sources through greed and innovation, but with capitalism you can't repeal the laws of nature. Millions of years were involved in turning plant life in shallow water into carbon fuels. There are only so many geological locations where this happened. We know where almost all of them are. We are using them up. And currently there are no alternatives. We could use a lot of our already near useless land in our arid West and build solar farms and pipe in water and pipe out hydrogen. But that would require a massive infrastructure project. Bigger than the interstate freeway system, big as the last fifty years of growth building a national system for our automobile. And I'm not just talking about the roads, but all the buildings too. We just don't have the wealth or the will to do so. We can't keep our bridges repaired (or our levees) that we have, we certainly won't build a whole new fuel dispensing structure nationally. We built our whole country on gasoline and it doesn't translate to other fuels. And we don't have enough farmland to turn it all over to alcohol. Remember, it took just double digit inflation and single digit fuel shortage to almost throw us into another Depression in the 1970's. We still have the printing presses, but we don't have the Alaskan or North Sea oil to refuel us.

One could make the case for Rome's fall being the lack of slaves after no new territories were conquered, leading to labor shortages, and in combination with inflation the economy imploded. And hundreds of years of backwards growth followed in which most technology was abandoned and forgotten and most men scratched in the dirt and starved while a few pillaged what little wealth was left. We could do it again, as our oil dries up faster than we care to contemplate and our slaves of nearly free labor die from lack of food. Our machines do all our work, and they are fed by petroleum. When the feed is gone so are our machines. When the machines stop working so does our economy. We can't even transport ourselves by bicycle a few miles anymore. We are utterly dependant on petroleum even to move our fat asses. And what is going to happen when Wendy's no longer has triple square burger meals? We will starve, cause no one farms anymore. And good luck turning tracks of artificially fertilized land into productive organic farm land as the soil is depleted of all nutrients. If you can even get enough water to the crops without petroleum powered irrigation. So, if the middle east has started to peak in production and we are at the start of less supply and we are going to seriously start fighting over the remainder, what can you as an individual do now to avert being a casualty later? Same advice for most other disasters. Get out of the big cities, get an affordable chunk of land the bank can't take away as you lose your job. Stockpile wheat, more than you think you will ever need. Get a means to protect yourself, even if it is a bolt action war surplus rifle. With plenty of ammo. Get energy independent. Which means solar and wood, not stockpiled gas (which will run out too quick). Any paper wealth turn into silver or gold (although at this point I would opt for ammo and beans for wealth). But do it now. Forget about saving up for the perfect retreat. Forget about the perfect job. Forget about the perfect arsenal. Get out of harms way now, as cheaply as possible. Better too early than too late. If nothing bad happens you are on your own land out of a stressful job in the city, with supplies to see you through any natural disasters.

Buy a piece of land on E-Bay for anywhere from $500 to $2,000 for cash. Buy a travel

trailer for $500 to $2,000 and put it on the land. Live in it as you build a shack from discarded material (making use of the last of the frenzied building from the housing bubble). Buy an old gas guzzling truck for a few bucks. It is cheaper than buying a new one that gets double the mileage. Use it to haul free building material and firewood (perhaps water if your land is arid) and get to your minimum wage job. But also ride your bicycle as much as you can, cause soon you will need it. Once you can't afford gas any longer the economy will have crashed and your job won't exist anymore anyway so motor transport will no longer matter. And Wal-Mart most likely won't be around by then. It is all going to be you and what you farm and what you can build yourself. Hunker down and enjoy life, cause it won't be over in our lifespan. You had better already have wood heat as well as passive solar since natural gas and heating oil are going to be rich boy fuels. We don't have to run out of oil to suffer, it just has to be too expensive to afford by the working class. Remember, a recession is when your neighbor loses his job, a depression is when you lose yours. Have a concrete slab under your trailer to soak up heat (trailer enclosed with south facing windows) and you will need minimum wood to keep warm. Use LED lights for minimal money illumination. Stockpile the heck out of grain, double that if your area is not farmland. A ten year supply of wheat is $600. That is what most of us spend in one year for auto insurance. Buy it now while everything is normal. At the first sign of trouble, it all disappears. Be smart and beat the crowd. Even if it is all a panic, even if nothing happens, even if it is Y2K all over again, you still made a minimal investment (as low as $3,000) for a lifetime of security. And you can give it to your kids when you are gone. Or you can always use it when the alien green hoards invade. Either way, it is an investment not a waste.
END

WHAT WILL WE LOOK LIKE AS A THIRD WORLD COUNTRY?
After the next economic collapse, life in the sewer
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As I was wondering just what the heck I knew about Third World living conditions and if I should even write on this subject, it hit me. This was an easy one. I mean, I can't even believe how it clicked (and this at 6am while the coffee was still brewing). We are already living in a Third World country. We are a Banana Republic, but without the nice winter weather or the Republic part. We have been a Fascist Democracy since the 1930's and our economy has been going Third World since the 1970's. The process is almost complete. Bush The Younger has stripped the Constitution of any teeth so quick in this new century and raised so little opposition I can only conclude 9-11 was orchestrated as well as his little Nazi buddies pulled off their anti-Jewish campaign. And almost as quickly reduced our economy to role of equal parts beggar, bully and printing press junkie. In just five years more damage was done to this economy and this country than the last several decades. This could go back to last weeks issue on peak oil (five years oil goes up 400% a barrel but that couldn't be a peak, could it? Could it?) and all that follows our running out of oil (or running out of cheap abundant oil, that is) is what you have seen. The desperate schemes of those in charge trying to keep the system responsible for their wealth and comfort going as long as possible. You don't think men in power endanger their countrymen for personal pleasure? You really didn't pay attention in history class, did you? Monarchs would deplete their treasury for their own worldly pleasures, and what followed killed his countrymen. Little in the treasury, the military suffered, the military declined, the enemies attacked and killed and looted and raped. Come a drought or flood or other natural disaster there was not enough gold to buy outside grain for the populace. Or attacking neighboring countries to enlarge the treasury killed off the soldiers. But forget about all that. Go back ten years. We had a president who loved juicy young interns so much he sold military technology to the enemy to get re-elected. You really think Clinton could be sexually attractive to younger women without the badge of office to sway them. He looks like a fat hick salesman. If he didn't stay in politics he would never get any sex. Not that you can blame him for getting it anywhere but from Hillary, the bitch is so frigid your organ would get frost bite. Oops, sorry, I might be talking about our next supreme leader, Hail Hillary!! If all that was just for sex, imagine what they would do to us for money and power. We are screwed.

Take any scenario you want, and we are screwed. The end of empire, peak oil, lack of a manufacturing base, global warming, hyper-inflation, coming dictatorship, other countries eclipsing our power, whatever. We are a has been, and we won't be a will be. China could be a will be. They could have done so many times in the past and chose to retreat. But our days of power will end soon. All empires end. Every one. Those charts the John Birchers used to show (they were way ahead of their time) where a Republic went to a

Dictatorship in easily predictable steps. I think we are at the end of our historical role. And as an Empire as well as a Republic. That end could be tied into the other problems. Peak Oil is the end of our economy, and you need a strong economy to have a strong Empire. To put off the negative effects of running low on oil we crank up the printing presses and pump up our credit machine. They are the only things keeping our economy going. The housing bubble is just a result of the credit machine going full bore (as is our inflated stock market- 20 times earnings on sick companies as if they will be around in two years). Gasoline prices rise 300% while inflation is at most 100% in ten years but Detroit still turns out gas guzzlers for all their profit. Houses sell for insane prices in terms of what the best paid buyers earn yet more and more are built every year and more and more marginal buyers are tricked into buying. Interest rates rise to defuse the bubble the Fed created in the first place. Natural gas prices only decline when a really warm winter sets in. Not that global warming could have anything to do with that, oh no. Almost every recorded glacier has lost all or almost all of its ice in 100 years and we are not seeing global warming (no, not man made-most likely, just nature going in cycles)? It couldn't be, we are too special to get bad weather. Oops, did we use up all the oil? That might not work out so good when the Ice Age follows the global warming suddenly (as a lot of scientists speculate). You don't live near the cost, do you? Even if you aren't close enough to sea level to be effected by its rise there will be the refugee problem as a large percentile of the population lives near the oceans.

But let's focus on how the politicians will screw you and how your fellow man will follow their lead. You are going to get screwed, so make arrangements now to make it more difficult for them and also to minimize the effects. Your wealth is a target, but mostly the screw job will be indirect as the powers that be help the economy crash as fast as they can suck wealth out of it. Four to eight years is not very long to run a country so at best thinking is short term. Of course you have senators and congressmen in office for thirty years and longer and they do nothing but eat out of the special interest trough and cause nothing but harm, so it must be something about being an American politician (the Swiss president only serves one year and doesn't get bribed by the Chinese nor does he invade middle east countries). Does it have to do with our abandoning the gold standard in 1971? Or hitting our Peak Oil about the same time? As we lost the Vietnam War. Are all three related? We lost our solid currency, our economic base and our empire thirty five years ago. It really has been all down hill since. Our politicians might hide it better under legal window dressing, but they are as corrupt as any Third World politician openly holding out their hand for a bribe. Day to day business in this country might not seem to require kick-backs, bribes or greasing palms but it is all there under fees and taxes. We might move a bit quicker on granting licensing and permissions but that is only better efficiency not a more business friendly atmosphere. If it wasn't for media circus' outrage on an otherwise slow news day, small children and their lemonade stand would have been forcibly closed due to lack of official permission to operate. Anyone can open a business in this country, but by God and all that is good you had better have official permission and pay 23 different taxes before opening (and ask for permission every time you want to crap during construction- and every time thereafter). And forget about the media claiming that our economy is so wonderful because of respect for property rights. Bullhocky. Any

regulatory agency that wishes can send in a ninja team to raid you, confiscate your records and bankrupt you through lawyers fees after ten years in court. And any business that bribes the local politicians can now steal your house under eminent domain. And if you own something the cops want, welcome to asset forfeiture (keep this in mind yuppie survivalists with a super retreat). Our system is corrupt. To the core. No better than a fly blown one runway airport in the jungle, AK47 toting immigration official taking half your luggage as a bribe Third World crap hole in Africa. The only difference is we have marginally better sanitation and our officials at airports have nicer looking uniforms due to air conditioning. And since we are in a better position to live off our past accomplishments the whole place looks wealthy on the surface.

But only on the surface. Our infrastructure is rotting. And, no, not just our levees (although that is a great poster boy right now). Most of our water pipes and sewers are so old they should be condemned. Not our new suburban pipes of course. Not that they will work as well in one hundred years as the older ones do now due to shoddy workmanship we now take as normal. But if the suburbs are due to collapse after global oil peak, we have invested in new unusable pipes. The old ones built to support city cores surrounded by farmland are decaying. As are our roads that we keep pouring money into. Most of our freight is by semi truck, most of us eat out of a semi truck due to lack of local farming, and our highways are in need of more repair than they will ever get. As are our bridges. As are most of our cities. City are in certain locations for a reason, usually a good one. Water transportation being an excellent reason (cheapest bulk transport there is) but most of our canals are rotting away. But in our quest to goose the economy into growth over the last fifty years we have mostly ignored building and maintaining our infrastructure and instead concentrated on our autos and our houses in the suburbs. Neither of which will survive the end of cheap oil. We did nothing to save our family farms and sold out to Big Ag. Now we only have soil depleting mono culture using artificial inputs. Outside of the Amish and some homesteaders, but they can't feed the rest of the nation, can they? Our farming is obsolete without cheap abundant oil. Our transportation system to distribute our crops is obsolete. Our housing is unmanageable without cheap transportation. Our economy will collapse without cheap oil. Yet we spend so much of our tax money growing the apparatus of government there isn't enough left over to repair what we built up long ago. It is all falling apart. There will be no hydrogen economy. There will be no alternate energy replacements built. There will be no replacement of our cheap oil economy. But there will be a corrupt government that drives the economy through inflation and civil service to keep the unemployment rates from getting too high (or welfare if the city service roles are all taken). Our roads and bridges and cities will continue to fall apart. Big business will screw over more and more of its pensioners by eliminating retirements in one way or another. Our government will continue down the road to a Fascist police state. And every day the average citizen will hurt a little more and suffer just a bit more, and think that the system will not collapse since we have survived so much in the past. Not realizing we are already on the road to ruin. There is no turning back. We are a Third World nation with a thin and peeling veneer of First World grandeur.

Where to from here? More of the same, but worse. More abuses, more theft, more crime, less rights, more diseases get out of control, more water contamination, less help during and after disasters, less economic growth, more unemployment, more inflation. But the good news is most likely it will all be a slow slide rather than a large crash. The clear direction of our country is more and bigger government doing less and providing less services, while demanding more from us and making it harder and harder for us to go into business for ourselves to escape the increasingly insecure future of corporate employment. As our structures supporting the basics of life fall apart through half ass maintenance, combined with Mother Nature getting nastier all the time and throwing bizarre weather at us and complicating the picture. As our social structure is increasingly dysfunctional as competing groups are encouraged to battle each other to remove suspicion from our fearless leaders incompetence. Our elders used to be the source of wisdom, helping to raise the grandchildren in a multi-family house or farm. Now they are lavished with wealth and given any drug needed to keep them alive, the target for tax soaked younger workers to vent their frustration on rather than the bloated idiotic government in charge of their children's future which is mortgaged beyond the ability of anyone to pay. Criminals are coddled with cable TV to encourage the poor to give crime a try, while law abiding citizens are harassed and threatened with jail and innocents are sent to prison for victimless crimes. Our entire economy is dependant on government spending now. And the entire apparatus of government is hungry for power and budget increases. You, your livelihood, and your wealth and freedom are legitimate targets to that machine of greed. Either hide yourself well, be too poor to bother with, or have enough cash to buy your freedom. OJ Simpson was a perfect example. The starting price to buy yourself a piece of the legal system is ten million dollars.

We all know the end result of a system crash. Complete lawlessness, young bucks running around the streets with fully automatic weapons, the economy in shambles as the incentives for investment are gone. Kind of like South Central Los Angeles. Or the city core in all our large cities. If you want a look at our future, there it is. All our major cities have a Third World zone. This is one of the legacies of our war on poverty and our war of inflation. We herded the poor from rural communities to make way for corporate farming (they went willingly enough with the false promise of Union jobs in the soon to be Rust Belt) and then chased all the jobs overseas by ruining our currency. Not that anything is by accident. Big Ag took over our nations farming through no fault of its own but through the perverse policies of government. The economic incentives were there in the form of subsidies, and the ruination of the dollar meant that economics of scale had to be practiced to make a profit. The same reason the Mom and Pop store was forced to close down. The only profits available in today’s economic climate are through mass sales and it takes a lot more capital to purchase bulk cargo containers of merchandise from China than a one store owner has. One used to be able to buy in this country, now it all comes from nations that don't have to pay each worker twenty bucks an hour. Sure, a lot of that was the greed of the Unions. But a lot of blame must be laid at the feet of government for artificially jacking up the cost of living through all its taxes and regulations and forcing a lot of folks to agitate for higher wages. And, gee, we get even more of government in the future. How fun. Be very careful in the future if you plan on opening a

business. On the one hand you have the megastores that can sell retail cheaper than you can buy jobber. On the other hand you have the government stuck up your butt trying to micro-manage everything and then taxing any profit (or perceived profit) at a minimum of a third. Don't make the mistake of pouring your life savings into a scheme that only makes others being a parasite off the system rich rather than you. In effect, don't use your savings to "earn a living" for a few years all the while putting in eighteen hour days. Then you are broke, have nothing and must go back to working for the man. Only invest what you can lose and start any business part time while keeping your day job. The hours suck, but otherwise the cards are stacked against you. Our economy is in full bore, 100% parasitic, desperation mode. The system is falling apart and everyone is more than willing to screw somebody over to survive. Don't be a victim, and for goodness sake don't be a willing participant. Screwing over your fellow human being might buy a McMansion in the burbs and a plasma TV, but it will not buy you a place as a decent person. Your mug on the list of good guys might not be financially rewarding but that is way it should be done, dam nit.

Crime will continue to increase as the economy gets worse. We may not be in the 1970's anymore where a lot of the crime was lashing out against a dying system (in case you missed it that was the Industrial Age/American Independence coming to an end) but instead we will see a lot more crime tied in to folks trying to make a living as first, local businesses dry up and then, second, the corporations that replaced them take sick and them wipe out the last jobs. Government steps in to provide make work but that is never enough. The underground economy is growing in strength, and just as in a regular economy you have lazy people that cheat and are dishonest so too in the black market you are going to have those that turn to crime to earn an easier living. Pedro the lawn mower is in the black market, but so is some dumb ass cracker cooking batches of meth in his bathtub. Meth labs are the new centuries version of the old pot patch in the woods. But the new guys are too damn lazy to go hiking up in the boonies so they just do their home based business a few steps away in the tub. Not that they really ever use the running water for sanitation so a fresh batch can always be brewing. A generation raised playing video games cannot be expected to be motivated to do much of anything away from the couch. So why is the meth lab problem growing? Is it LEO paranoia and desire for job security? Or is it that the economy is getting worse and unemployment is higher than claimed? A person gets laid off and then his unemployment ends. Now he is unemployed but no longer counted since he can't be tracked. Or how about seasonal adjustments that include farm labor (but those jobs all go to illegals)? Those on welfare aren't counted as unemployed. I'm sure there are as many ways as disguising unemployment as there are inflation and I'm sure the government uses them all to mask the underlying sickness of our economy. But folks still need an income, and in a lot of cases I suppose crime does pay the bills. If the first girl in high school you got lucky with ends up pregnant and you marry her, after the mill closes you need money to buy Jack D and it is an easy step towards selling drugs, especially if you don't care if you go to prison as her food is worse than theirs and you could use a vacation from her bitching.

Things will get worse. One, become as independent as you can. This might only mean a

basement full of barrels of wheat (with a cheap grinder), a small PV panel on the roof and a car battery, an outhouse in the back yard by a small garden, a rain catchment system, and a 30-06 Mauser bolt action with 300 rounds of ammo, but it is certainly better than nothing and much better than most folks have. Cheap and minimal is better than saving increasingly worthless Greenbacks in the hopes of buying fancy and expensive. Even six months worth of white flour and a $75 Russian war surplus rifle with ten gallons of bottled water put you in a better position to survive than most of the population, and that costs only $150 after you get some ammo for the gun. But don't forget to have a place to stay after the economy crashes and you lose your job. Even a tent and sleeping bag is going to work, but have it before the rest of the population wakes up and strips the stores of all survival supplies. Better to have a $20 Wal-Mart special only rated to forty degrees than waiting for the mob to form at a camping store that sells super duper bags that protect you even in the Arctic. Buy now, even if it is crap. Better than none at all. Two, expect basic services to be interrupted. Sewer, water, power. As the underlying structures supporting these services are allowed to be maintained at best superficially, both due to incompetence and greed, your life may rest on your ability to supply your own services. Have back ups for all that you need. Have a pantry, a wood pile, a water store, a drawer full of batteries and candles, a form of waste disposal, and a form of wealth (some currency set aside, but also barter items and at least a roll of pre-65 silver dimes). Arm yourself, and know you must be your own protection. Be aware of fire dangers in case the areas fire department is unable to help for whatever reason. Most of all, have a plan for when you lose your job and there are no others. It can happen, just as it did seventy five years ago. But it will be a lot worse this time. Especially crime. If things fall apart, you had better get into a totally paranoid mindset immediately. We are no longer farmers. We don't even have as much food in the distribution pipeline as we used to due to "just in time inventory". What is the percentage out there that stock up on food? Five percent? Ten? One? Almost everybody is going to be starving. And a just man will turn to crime to feed his family. And it will be violent crime. Expect a war zone out there. There are those that claim the starving masses will sit and idle away the hours as they wilt away to nothing. I'm more paranoid than that and see starving Welfare hoards assaulting my position to steal my wheat (and not knowing what to do with it so they eat my body). Be prepared for the worse, be happy when it doesn't.

And remember, not just the criminals are out to steal the last crust of bread from your mouth. The government wants whatever you have, and all it takes is one buzz word to their trained attack dog ninja teams and you suddenly have multiple sucking chest wounds at three a.m. and lacking whatever wealth or family pets you may have had. And your neighbors will narc on you in a heartbeat, if your family didn't already. Welcome to the jungle. So be very paranoid, or be dead or starving. Either way, your call. Be a chest puffed macho man and loudly shout your independence and hatred of government, while secretly hoping FEMA and Social Security will be around to save your ass. Or be a sneaky squirrel and stash away for a rainy day, all the while preparing for widespread riots and total governmental collapse. If the guy with twenty guns but no shelter outside his mortgaged home is wrong, he starves and freezes. If the total paranoid is wrong, things are better than expected. Paranoia is a warm and fuzzy feeling.

END

WHY SURVIVALISTS SHOULDN'T HAVE SEMI-AUTOS
Survival Rifles (and even pistols) should be low-tech
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In almost any Major Crap Storm Scenario you can envision, resupply is going to be an issue. In any minor emergency situation you can come up with, firearms might be necessary but almost any will do and certainly it is not going to require massed firepower. Even in situations where massed evil mutant zombie hoards are attacking your position to acquire your last hoarded Twinkie, only a squad automatic weapon will suffice and a semi-auto is just going to be a pale imitation. And while it is true that in World War Two our semi-auto Garands did hold a tactical advantage over the Mauser bolt action the Germans used, you are not in the military. You want to fight like the military, go ahead and dress in cammo, buy a AR15 and read Field Manuals. I can later strip your stiffening corpse of useful gear (I can even find some other sucker to trade for the rifle). Folks, we are going to survive a coming social collapse. We are not trying to join the Armageddon Army. The military fights differently. They fight to win a war, regardless of casualties. Survivalists should avoid casualties (cause that means you!!) and fight a guerilla warfare. Booby traps and sniping are more effective against invading armies, and self defense is just a matter of running away and discouraging pursuit rather than participating in pitched battles at your camp. Any firearm that keeps your attackers head down will allow you to escape and then that same firearm can harass them from afar. And harassment conserves ammo. Pitched battles waste ammunition much faster than you will ever be able to replace it. Remember, society just collapsed. There are no more ammunition factories, no more corner store, no more credit cards or paper currency accepted as trade down at Joe Bobs Hunting Shack (and Cappuccino Bar). Look, semi-autos are a great tool. So is a 10,000KW Diesel generator. But both tools have associated costs. Nothing in life is free. Especially lunches. Semi-autos pour a lot of lead down range at the bad guys very fast and if all is right in the universe, the bad guys go away. In any fight, all things being equal, semi-autos are better than manually reloaded firearms. But, the costs. Semi-autos foster poor fire discipline. They are high in monetary cost, in both the firearm itself and its accessories. There are more parts to fail. They waste ammunition, almost sure to be in short supply. They usually have poor bayonets. They weigh more. And they give you a false sense of security. Lets address these issues, shall we?

First off, allow me to state that I personally love semi-autos all to pieces. I am as much in love with high tech weaponry as I am with the latest Playboy Bunny. I can't afford either one, but that of course never stopped a love affair. In my not quite humble opinion, the 45 auto 1911A1 is the best pistol ever made. Robust enough to help dig a foxhole then fire, using a good enough round to take down the hardiest enemy, weighing enough to club a skull into slimy mush. What more could you ask for in a last ditch weapon on your person at all times? And I would love to own an H&K 91, the best rifle ever designed for

a survivalist. A spring operated recycling action keeps fouling down to a minimum (i.e., it doesn't soil itself by gas operation) and it is quite accurate. In most weapons systems you have one of two choices, accuracy or robustness. In the HK you get them both. And rumor has it that the parts are nearly indestructible. Plus it fires a real thirty caliber round rather than a pathetic girly-man assault rifle round. And it has a scope mounting system you can re-attach without losing zero. All around near perfect. But you pay for perfection. Even if a South American made 1911 auto costs about the same as the same countries 357 revolver, in the long run the auto pistol is going to cost you more. Perhaps more than just money when you run out of ammunition due to your wasteful ways. Again, I grant you that semi-autos are superior in a gun fight when both opponents are fighting with the same tactics. However, by using different tactics you can nullify any disadvantage you have by not being in possession of a high firepower weapon. Here I am just saying that we all love a good semi-auto, but loving something is not an excuse you should use to buy into the wrong arsenal. I might love to acquire that Playboy Bunny, but she would be high maintenance and then leave me for Hector the bronzed pool guy and I would be paying alimony the rest of my life. The best is not necessarily what you need or even want, should all the true costs be apparent.

Qualifying at a military firing range breeds a false sense of security in a military semi auto assault rifle. You have a number of pop up targets that you must fire at and hit in a very short time. At the end of your qualification you walk away feeling that your brand new Mattel plastic rifle is the next best thing to sliced white bread. However, all you really did was learn to drive a race car using a Sony Playstation. It wasn't real training. It didn't really train you to do anything other than mow down targets that don't shoot back. And they weren't really teaching you marksmanship. You were learning how to fire away until you hit something. Instead of arming a team with a water cooled belt feed machine gun and putting them in a trench, they put individual soldiers in foxholes and have them fire a few hundred rounds, thirty rounds at a time. Warfare sure has advanced in ninety years. I can't say how well private firearm courses teach realistic shooting, but in the military they are teaching you the wrong skills. Anyone can waste ammunition. If our wives gave us an unlimited budget we could all go out and waste a heck of a lot of ammo over the weekend at the shooting range. But ammunition will in a lot of cases be limited to what you have on hand, come a major disaster. Semi-autos use a lot of ammunition, and when all you have to do is squeeze the trigger, you will waste ammunition. When a feral dog pack attacks, when a criminal gang is assaulting your house, when your in-laws are trying to force their way into your shelter, you will lay on that trigger out of sheer terror. And there goes thirty rounds. Then you must reload. Do you have time to reload? If so, you must have time to work a bolt to chamber another round, right? I can hear the arguments that with thirty rounds you can end any fight and then reload at your leisure. A good point, if you made every round hit. I contend that with a semi-auto you are going to lack fire control and will madly spray and pray. Remember, you are scared shatless. Your quiet suburban lifestyle has suddenly been interrupted by an emergency of some nature that forced your fat ass to get up from in front of the TV and drag your emergency gear out of the closet. You take up your handy dandy AR15 that cost the equivalent of three ounces of gold and are trying on your Clint Eastwood impression to try to scare any

looters off. Well, Jim Bob the cracker from the yonder trailer park just took up a concealed position five hundred yards away and is trying to zero his new hunting rifle on you. You look around wildly as you soil yourself and lay down suppressing fire as you dive behind some bushes. There goes thirty rounds. To bad you only stockpiled a thousand. And what are you doing staying in suburbia, anyway? There will be no electricity, so your dwelling is next to useless. Modern houses are built to cheaply bilk you out of a quarter of a million dollars, not to be well insulated. Better bug out to your Uncles house in the country. Go ahead and pack up your remaining 970 rounds of .223 along with your plastic toy rifle and your four magazines. Uncle Albert only shoots thirty caliber, but I'm sure your rifle will be so useful as you stand guard duty and are able to fire a few warning shots. But I shan't digress into the uselessness of assault rifles. We are talking about wasting ammunition. Unless you are well trained, you will not practice fire discipline. And few of us are trained at all let alone well. At most we train to conserve ammunition as our wives keep us on a tight financial leash. So get a rifle that conserves ammunition, not one that wastes it. And don't fool yourself into thinking you can force yourself to conserve ammo when you need to. You won't. In times of stress we fall back on habit. Semi-auto habits are wasteful. Just stick with a bolt action to train yourself to limit your shots. Cheap ammo is a thing of the Industrial economy past, not the resource scarce future. You might as well get used to it now. Save of fuel now before gas gets to $5 a gallon permanently, save on ammo now before it becomes unavailable.

Even after the high capacity gun mag ban was allowed to die, semi autos are still not coming down in price. I'm not real clear on what laws are in effect, but it seems to me that whatever import restrictions remain do the most to limit cheap imports and push the local crap. Or if it isn't crap it sure is priced high. I wouldn't mind buying American if the price fell below a monthly mortgage payment or three months of car payments. Why be so greedy and try to protect 17 jobs in one of the smaller political districts? I'm sorry, but you all know how I feel about Unions. At once necessary to survive unsafe working conditions (the miners in WV can tell you how well that went), now it is just another racket for the undeserving to steal more of my money. I got Uncle Sam, then the ex-wife, then lawyers, all lining up to steal my paycheck. I need another bastard in line to take what is left? What do these guys do that is worth twenty or thirty bucks an hour? It's all I can do to earn $8 an hour and even then my boss begrudges me any tips I might earn. God forbid I might earn enough not to need to grovel at his loafers (I have enough saved up to move to the boonies if I forgo electricity or running water- I'm sure that's got him real worried). So, why do I want to enrich greedy bastards? If I can work around it, I'm not going to. I buy my books at Amazon or the thrift store. But not Borders or Waldenbooks. I mostly shop at Wal-Mart for food, almost never Safeway or Albertsons. If you want to make pennies of profit off me, fine. When you get greedy and want to make dollars, forget it. Make a profit selling the lowest price, but to lots of people. Then watch your costs and you will get along fine. And even worse than greed is inefficiency. Some companies sell for the highest price but don't make a profit anyway (how is this our problem? Didn't they go to college rather than us poor customers?). I will not subsidize stupidity or greed. Springfield Armory can keep their overpriced Garands and M14's. And the government ain't going to get more of my money through import fees on an HK.

Or those bastard Unions over in Germany. German quality my leaking ass. Every new VW car has gasket leaks and electrical problems, yet they are not cheap. And their Braun shaver tried to kill me. Piss on those damn Krauts and their inferior goods. Let their imported Arabs outbreed them and overwhelm them one day. Okay, sorry, got a little carried away yet again over Unions. Outside of an SKS or even a Mini-14, you are going to be hard pressed to be able to afford a semi-auto. And those are assault rifle crap. The cheapest battle rifle is a moldy Garand, and parts for those ain't cheap. It's about a grand and up for anything else.

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You are not just buying a rifle. You are also buying ammunition, spare parts, and magazines. And with a semi-auto you need a minimum of five times the ammunition. So saving money by using a common caliber is just shaving off a nickel from your dollar purchase. To save four bits off each dollar, go with a bolt action. Lets say you bought a generic FN-FAL, about $800. Add another $200 for a spare parts kit. $200 for twenty mags. $700 for around five thousand rounds. Two grand and that is without a scope. Now buy a Russian war surplus bolt action and two thousand rounds of ammo. Actually, buy two rifles as insurance against parts breakage (don't fret, they are $80 each retail). Get the ammo surplus sealed in metal cans. Pay a gunsmith to drill and tap for a scope mount. Buy a cheap but decent scope. Total cost, $500. Without scope about $300. Three hundred bucks versus two grand. Hold on. I am not a college educated idiot but rather a member of the working class, it might take a second to figure this one out. Oh, I got it. The semi-auto would cost more than my house, I think I'll take a Commie rifle and some corrosive non-reloadable ammo. For about two hundred bucks you have enough firepower to lasts for years after a social collapse. Another hundred and you have a spare parts gun. Now, I understand that there are plenty of doctors out there (God, please don't allow any lawyers to be survivalists!!!), plenty of computer programmers, or what not, all of you are swimming in gross income. Not that you have too much to spend. You are busy keeping up with the Jones'. House in the burbs. BMW car. SUV for the winter commuting 100 miles to work. Gasoline bill every month higher than my lot rent on my trailer (paid for in cash, suckers). Natural gas bill at least two hundred a month as you need to heat something like two thousand square feet of space. In short, you are living large and have about as much disposable income as the rest of us poor schmucks earning chump change. So you need to save money on your arsenal also. The last thing you need is another bill for several grand (the same with food- a year supply of freeze dried or ten years of wheat, same price). Of course, being a Yuppie survivalist you can't be seen at the gun range in a shiny new SUV but with a crappy old surplus rifle, so go to Wal-Mart and buy a new bolt action- they look prettier. But still cheaper than paying the big bucks for semi-auto (or do any Yuppies even read this rag?).

The more complicated an item is, the more likely it will fail. Take the old military jeep and

compare it to a new Hummer. When I was in Korea our collection of Hummers was able to be fixed by one guy. Only he knew how to do anything to the huge pieces of over complicated crap. One would hope he never got killed and we needed transportation before next week. With the old jeeps, any shade tree mechanic could have got that old mule running again. Less parts to fail, and anyone could fix them. The Soviet Union's strategy was to use the least complicated equipment. They had to. Even with compulsory education there were still too many ignorant peasants in the military who barely knew how to speak Russian. But they also designed one of the worlds most robust assault rifles the AK47. A group of monkeys could hit each other with the parts, play with them in the mud, put them together in a matter of seconds and then go fire a few thousand rounds. Try that with an M16. But even the most robust machine will have parts failure. The less parts there are, the less likely there will be a breakage. A bolt action rifle has far fewer parts than a semi-auto. You don't have to worry about magazines being damages, nor about as many parts working against each other to reload. Really, it is the difference between a shovel and a Roto-Tiller. One gets the soil turned easier, the other never breaks. Which do you want come the Apocalypse?

For the most part, semi-autos have really crappy bayonets. Near useless. I have written an article on the importance of the survival bayonet (it is on my Web site for you newbies). Not only did I impress myself on the articles style and wit, I think I made some darn good points. I think a bayonet is a much needed item. Allow me to demonstrate. Prior to Katrina pointing out the inadvisability of living amongst something like eight million strangers I had planned on moving to East Texas. As the terrain is mostly heavily treed I thought it might be best to trade in my Enfields for an SKS or two. I went to the local gun store and was impressed with the low retail price of $160. I liked the Eastern European design much better than my Chinese copies I used to own. But the fold out bayonet looked like a plastic knife I had to go along with my old GI Joe doll many moons ago. It was so thin you could move it back and forth as it was mounted. What a disappointment!! You couldn't stick a pig with that wimpy piece of junk, let alone a starving Zombie, a JBT, a lawyer, or a Congressman. Because of the bayonet alone I passed on updating my arsenal. Even at reloadable 303 going for fifty cents each I'll just stay with my SMLE's. I have almost two thousand rounds of corrosive, getting reloadable ammo that I can reuse maybe three/four times is a lower priority right now. But I have two bayonets right now for my rifle. One is that ugly tent peg that they give free with purchase, but the other is the actual knife type (a bit expensive for the No.4) which is way cool and will allow me to stick pigs and politicians with equal ease come the Apocalypse and pig sticking time. A survival rifle without a bayonet is like a room full of wheat kernels without a grain grinder. A one legged man without a crutch. A government without a printing press (ha-ha!! California). A cat without claws. A writer without a last witty remark to close a paragraph.

The last two items...too much weight to carry, and having a false sense of security. An old wooden stocked war surplus rifle is not really going to be much lighter than a semi-auto battle rifle. That is actually good, as the extra weight can be used not only to help advance the path of your bayonet but also to butt stroke your victim upside his worthless

cranial cavity. But you can't really butt stroke anyone with a semi-auto. I mean, you can. But you won't-the damn thing cost too much, and the plastic stock just doesn't do as good a job as wood. And you will damage the poor sensitive dear. They just are not made for turning skulls to mush (come on, if you can watch Fear Factor you can brain some guy). They are made for throwing lead down range, period. Bayoneting and braining are not really doable other than by luck and determination. But back to weight. Just by ammunition alone you must carry extra weight. And the magazines. If you need five times the ammunition in a semi-auto as opposed to a bolt action, all that extra ammo will weigh you down. With a bolt action I would feel comfortable carrying only fifty rounds. With a semi-auto I would feel vulnerable at only two hundred. The rifles weigh the same. The extra ammunition will really make a difference though. Try humping the extra equivalent weight around and see how long you last. Last but not least we have that false sense of security. With a semi-auto you feel like Rambo. You can kill anything!! Thirty rounds of hot lead raining down on an unsuspecting enemy, shattering moral and you the super stud warrior emerging victorious as you smite the Godless heathen and impress the Hell out of the young nubile female bystanders. Ahhh....no. What happens really is you fire off your whole magazine and as you try to reload the squad you just shot at returns fire and their three hundred rounds cut you to pieces. Dumbass. Now, if you stayed about three hundred yards away and shot one guy, then did that again another time, after each shot scampering off into the woods and hiding, well, then you have got something going for you. We are not back in the Middle Ages where a display of courage counts for anything. A fair fight will get you killed. If you are moral and decent it is okay to back stab the evil enemy. Sound tactics. Be afraid, be scared, be timid rather than bold. Go into combat trying to kill the enemy without him ever seeing you. Do not engage others at short range with assault rifles. Silly rabbit, semi's are for the military. You are a survivor not a warrior. Don't act like one. A bolt action rifle will keep the fear of God in you to make every shot count, to keep from exposing yourself, to run away after a shot rather than engaging an enemy head on. Lack of firepower will keep you alive. Now, on the other hand, if you have a semi-auto you will do stupid things. One, obviously, you waste irreplaceable ammunition. Two, you think your firepower gives you an advantage. Three, you think you should fight more often. Seven guys pull up to your retreat on Harleys to loot and pillage. You are super stub survival dude with a FN-FAL and decide to take them on. A full scale battle erupts. Do you survive? Me, I'm running away at the first sign of trouble with a canteen and a bolt action rifle. They can rummage through my stuff. I buried most of the good stuff. So while they fight over one pail of wheat and a can of Spam I can snipe at them if I choose, or just wait out their departure. If I am surprised and holed up and can't escape there is little tactical advantage I can see if I did have semi-autos. A bolt action rifle keeps you focused on hitting what you aim at. A semi-auto keeps you focused on hosing down an area. And we have all seen way too much TV and think spraying down an area leads to victory.

Do the smart thing and stay away from semi auto if you can. Or at least train yourself better with the damn thing. If you can afford the ammo for that. You may not call my trailer a home, but it is paid for and the furniture comes with it. And you may not call a bolt action a real battle rifle, but it is cheap to buy and operate and it will force you into

good habits that just might save your life. Sometimes settling for second best makes a lot of sense.
END

WORLD WAR THREE HAS ALREADY STARTED
And those Commies are out to get us
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At the end of the 19th century or the beginning of the 20th there was a book published in England speculating that Germany was going to usurp the worlds dominant Superpower with its growing industrial economy. I wish I could remember where I saw that mentioned. I would love to read it. History repeats itself, not a carbon copy of course, but all the coaches use the same general game plan. Folks know that history repeats itself and can clearly see the handwriting on the wall. They know what general trends are going to take place. It's just the details that can trip you up. Well, we know that there will be a time when the US is going to be surpassed. We are only a superpower due to past accomplishments, but surely not because we've done anything too impressive recently. We have dropped the ball so many times it is a wonder we haven't wiped ourselves off the map. Let's go back a few decades. Our second oil supply shock is happening in the late seventies. This is when things really start to fall apart. One country declares us the Devils Handmaiden and cuts off our oil. A cut in supply of only a single percentile really screws up the economy. We are still recovering from the first OPEC shock and the free float of the dollar (and the defeat in Vietnam) and this is the last thing we need. Some years inflation is in the double digits. Mother Earth News and the Foxfire books do a barn stormer business as folks try to drop out of the rat race in a desperate attempt to flee the downward swirling waters of the toilet bowl of Western Civilization. But we had an economy that was really playing by the rules. Our politicians tried to balance the budget and were honest in reporting the effects of inflated money and the end of affordable oil. Carter was most likely one of the most unlucky presidents we ever had. He might have been seen as weak, or ignorant, but at least he was in fact one of the few honest leaders we ever had. His heart was in the right place. I admire him for his integrity. He was also the last president that gave of an honest government. Ronald Reagan came charging to our rescue on a horse, twirling his white hat and promising the moon. And he did deliver, bless his little pea picking heart. Don't get me wrong, I love Reagan. The last great president. He did what needed to be done. He helped wipe out the Soviets. He played the oil game to our advantage. He took crap from nobody. But he also started a large trend that couldn't be undone. He used debt to run the show. He took out a big brand new Visa card and went shopping. In two terms he doubled our national debt from the accumulated total of almost seventy five years of reckless but manageable debt, to a new system of irresponsible unpayable debt. That is our bill for escaping the 1970's. We can never pay that bill. Literally. There is not enough wealth to pay back what the national debt is. Let' play with some numbers.

Our GNP, the total of all activity we do in our economy is anywhere from 11 to 12 trillion

dollars a year. Direct spending from all levels of government, what we borrow as national debt, and the cost to private business and individuals imposed by government is easily half at 5 to 6 trillion. Half our economy is government. Half. Now, pay the rent and buy some groceries and with what is left, try to pay off the national debt of eight trillion. Don't bother with your own credit cards, just try to pay off the national debt. And hurry, because in a few years a whole lot of Baby Boomers are going to retire and really increase the cost to government as Social Security never, from day one, actually set aside any money for retirements but just spent the cash on, most likely, military domination of the globe. Gee, sorry Grandpa, we can't pay you any retirement, but isn't it nice to know we made the seas safe for China to ship over ceramic porcelain bric-a-brac? So, naturally Gramps is a little pissed. And so am I, I have to pay a heck of a lot more as a percentage of my income to keep Gramps in Depends, while I get zero when I get older. And most likely am forced to provide for my own parents as their benefits are cut by politicians and the remainder ravaged by inflation. So what does all this have to do with World War Three? Well, remember our last global super power, England? She was already in trouble economically with competition from Germany when she entered into a seemingly small conflict later called World War One. The first global war, the first war that utilized Industrial Economies and their power to use total mobilization (the War Of Northern Aggression pitted a merging Industrial power against a agrarian economy so it doesn't count) of all manpower and all economic activity as well as mass armament production. No one knew what they were getting into. An entire generation was killed or maimed. The economy of the worlds super power was destroyed (unknowingly at the time). The other nations of the conflict either saw their monarchs replaced with mobs or saw their own empires come crashing down. A few nations wiped away their war debts through hyper-inflation. What was the conflict about? Competing economies and replacing Kings with Democracies. Economies will always be in conflict, and kings could have run things just as badly as the masses, so the whole thing was rather pointless. But it is important as far as seeing where we are headed now. Remember, history repeats.

We have economic competition now. Many other nations wish to be on top of the economic food chain. This time, as last time, oil is the fuel we need to power the economic engine. Churchill wanted to convert the Royal fleet prior to the war, and Middle East oil played a role. A small one, to be sure, compared to today. But the role of agricultural land as war booty was over before World War One even started. It was about fuel supplies. Primarily coal back then, but whether coal or oil it has been about carbon based fuel for quit a while now. Coal powered factories back then. Now oil grows our crops and powers our factories (at least in nations that have them such as China). Oil is the economy. Period. Forget my harping on Peak Oil. Forget for a moment we have most likely already hit global peak and we are screwed. Just focus on oil as the fuel that powers our economy and everyone else's. World War Two was about oil, and only about oil, period. It was our first global resource war. Even if oil was never to run out, current production is not enough for current global needs. Not enough shortages to go to a hot war, yet. But a grand chess game is being played now amongst the worlds nations for control of oil. You as a doubting Thomas refuse to believe in Peak Oil. You have enough to worry about with the housing bubble and your overpriced SUV payment. You refuse

to look at US peak production (peak in 1970, production now way down) and think it could happen to Saudi Arabia. You don't think over half the worlds oil producing nations having already hit their production peak is a big deal. Nor do you care that we have had global declining field discoveries for forty years. You have other concerns like your wife bitching at you to mow the lawn. Well, guess what. The leaders of the globes nations are concerned. They know the reality and they are planning for it. They are using us as pawns in their chess game so you had better pay attention.

China is doing okay. A lot better than us. They may have unbearable levels of pollution and their best and brightest city might have a severe housing bubble right now. Unemployed hoards may be gushing into cities as farmland is paved over for factories and corruption may be extreme as the central government loses some control over the allowed free economy. But it doesn't matter. China has always allowed the individual to suffer to better the masses. If thousands die in a chemical spill it doesn't matter as long as the economy is doing okay. And the chances of a mass uprising are as good as our government going back to a gold standard. Not happening. The central government might change in ideology but it will always be a strong central government. And right now they have plenty of dollars. The dollar might be a bit bruised right now but the world still wants them for lack of a better alternative. China has swallowed whole industries from the US and for all intents and purposes is our outsourced factory. They will even be ready to ship over cheap cars to us as soon as GM and Ford go bankrupt. And what is China doing with all the dollars they get from us? They are mainly buying energy. A side bet is stockpiling our debt. One, it keeps our economy and its customers afloat and two, it can be used as a non-military weapon against us at a time of their choosing. And also a bit of gold to help their currency. But mostly energy stores. Unlike the current strategy of the US which is to invade any oil producer we can, China trades for her energy. It makes more sense to befriend those countries that fear the US and its military and buy their energy on the cheap. China sees the problems Japan had trying to steal its oil, as it sees the US and its theft problem (I suppose since we forced Japan into war it was hard for us to learn the same lesson). China is increasing its oil stockpile. It has enough uranium stored to continue current production for a long time. It completed a pipeline from the Caspian region that bypassed the US controlled line. It has a lot more African nations in its pocket than we do such as Nigeria and its off shore reserves. It has bought into Canada and some of its oil sand production and made good inroads into South America (that is quickly leaning towards quasi-communism in a lot of countries disappointed by the "free market" as defined by the big corporations and their plunder). China sees the problem of energy supplies in the future and is solving the problem now. The US may or may not see a problem, but they can't scare the voters and there ain't enough cash left over from bribing them to do anything anyway. So in the future our young men die in wars and our old folks freeze in the dark. So enjoy the welfare checks while you can.

Russia went through some hard times. They were up and down, defaulted on some international debts, hung on by the old illegal black market economy. But now they are back. After oil prices tripled in just a few years, the Russian coffers suddenly started filling up. All thanks to the US and our need to drive SUV's and our refusal to become

energy independent. Kiss ass to half the worlds countries, bully the other half, in our quest for cheap oil. So we are selling the Commies that rope that will hang us. Ronnie Reagan killed the old Soviet Union by him and Thatcher flooding the world with cheap oil (North Sea reserves on her part, using our dollar to trade with marginal producers to get OPEC to open the spigot on our part) and depriving the Russians of oil revenue. But instead of using the new wealth given to us as by once again cheap oil to buy an energy independence future, we squandered it and once again took cheap oil for granted. So now that oil is disappearing we have given back to the Russians the economic weapon they need to use against us. My goodness, we are indeed dumbasses. Russia does not play the same game as the Chinese. They don't smile all pretty like and hold out a hand in friendship. Russians are basically your brute force. They will not crush you if you are the enemy of their enemy. They will leave you alone if you return the favor. But they sure as Hell don't pretend to play nice. Subtle they ain't. And right now they are pretending to play nice to the US. That scares me. The US has orchestrated peaceful revolutions in a lot of Russian bordering countries. That is their backyard, we shouldn't be meddling. The Russians are so paranoid it makes me look like a trusting naive schoolboy in short pants. They most likely think eventually we are going to invade them for their oil (hey, we did invade Siberia once before remember). So they have a point. And we are screwing around with the countries all around them.

Let me tell you a little story about the Russian mindset. We have all been exposed to the Cold War propaganda, see fictional films of Russian mob dudes. But never exposed to the actual workings of their minds. I got just a glimpse and it was weird. The casino I work in pays companies to bus in people and gives the people some free gambling money. In effect, you bribe folks to come here and hope they spend some of their own money. For the most part it works. Some folks just play the angle and get cheap entertainment. One of our busiest guests are the friggin Russians. As near as I can tell there is a section of the Bay Area in California that was settled by Russians some time ago and they never bothered to assimilate into the decadent capitalist society. I don't know what they do, most likely just on welfare. Why else are you bored enough and have enough time to visit our casino every damn week? And these people just love to come in and disrupt the whole place. Picture fifty people screaming at the slot attendants and cocktail girls all at once in some damn Slavic language in a belligerent manner and you get the picture. Well, after some months of these assholes I got tired of that and started getting mean back at them. I snarled and raised my voice and glared. And suddenly, all the Russians were nice and polite and smiling. It is almost as if they were a dog pack and positioning for Alpha Male position. The polite ones were the weaker members, in essence nice only to appease the leader. As soon as I was perceived to be in charge of the pack, the roles reversed. I realize this is just pop psychology on my part and could be way off the mark. But if I figured it right, Russians will only be your friend if they fear you. And I'm sure revenge will be utmost in their minds at all times. Smile and wag your tail and slobber like a fool until the leader trips and then kill him and take over. And I don't even know if revenge is even correct. I don't think dogs have any shame from being subservient. It is the natural order of things. So you are not seeking revenge for being on the bottom, but neither do you waste any time taking over dominance when the time is right. And of course you

always play the game trying to get on top. Is it any wonder these guys love chess? It fits their thinking. Oh, look, I'm just a little pawn, so helpless. Oh, look, my powerful pieces are way in back, unable to be a threat to you. Oh, look I've killed your King you sorry bastard, hahaha!!

Russia is in a very good place right now. Their oil production peaked a long time ago, but they also have put very little effort into finding new fields (in comparison with some other regions). They can export for quite a time without a fear of running out of oil, all they will need to do is open exploration to private companies. And, they are one of the globes top producers of natural gas. The little tiff with the Ukraine this month over shutting down their supply for a few days was mostly about politics (and very little about ratcheting up the old subsidized price). Russia was flexing its oil supplier muscle. Look, former Soviet satellites, don't get too cozy with the Americans. And you too, Europe. We supply a lot of your natural gas, don't piss us off. The Russians also have a lot of gold. Not that they will create a gold standard currency, but it just makes them a little less vulnerable to the power of the dollar (or its destruction for that matter). And Russia does not have to play global politics with its military any longer. That is a huge burden lifted from its economy. They can sit behind a nuclear umbrella and just use conventional forces to combat insurrections and terrorists (plus use the technology to sell to middle east countries the weapons they want). They are actually in a much more advantages economic position now than they were before the Berlin Wall fell. Sure, it hasn't been all that easy. They actually had to reform the economy to work rather than living off pillaging East European countries. But it seems they are back to being a contender. Not a contender for global policeman, or economic superpower, but they will be able to easily have their say in their own neighborhood. Plus right now they are making major brownie points by selling Iran a missile defense for the upcoming attempt to wipe out their nuclear power capacity by either the US or Israel (if they haven't already just sold them some nuclear bombs as they did to the North Koreans and as we did to the Israelis).

Military might rests with economic might. The Chinese are getting rich selling us our consumables such as underwear while the Russians are getting rich selling us petroleum consumables. We are getting poorer buying them. If China and Japan did not buy our debt it is likely we would already be in a Depression. And if Russia and others did not sell us oil cheap we would be in even worse shape. You think oil is expensive at $60 a barrel just wait until Saudi Arabia admits to hitting peak production (in one form or another, even if we will all know the excuse is a lie) or we start inflating more. The fact that our economy did not implode when gas went up 35-40% after Katrina tells me it hasn't adjusted upward enough to compensate for inflation. It might mean government manipulation, true. But I still think oil can go a lot higher from inflation without even entering scarcity into the equation. But from whatever angle you look at it, the US is in economic trouble. Nothing but problems, from the national debt to the coming Baby Boomers en masse retirement to our dwindling oil supplies to our factories moving overseas and our service jobs being outsourced to the complete sell off of our government to big corporations. While our enemies seem to be doing okay economically. A lot of it has to do with no welfare state, a lot to do with less of a burden on the budget for their

militaries. They have roads and railways to maintain mainly for food transportation and military movement while we must maintain one of the densest road networks anywhere and mostly for the benefit of gas guzzling SUV drivers getting to work from the suburbs. That places quite a burden on our public budget without returning any benefit economically or strategically. But mostly by not having our massive conventional military or our massive welfare state (social security is just geriatric welfare and most of our job creation of late is job welfare) other countries, our potential enemies, are much more stable economically than we are. Ours is a burden we won't give up and one that will bankrupt us in the end.

But forget about our domestic problems. We have enough globally. Russia and China may agree on a few things and one is we are the enemy. They know that each other is the long term enemy, but for now Uncle Sam is the biggest threat to both of them. So they won't get in each others way to try to thwart the US and our military threat. We try to steal all the oil, but not if they can do so first. They may not be as dependant on oil as we are to a degree (Russia has its own and China has enough to buy what she needs) but they see oil as a strategic necessity. If they control it not only do they get to use it but also deny it to the enemy (that's us). Russia plays to deny, China plays mostly to get. They feed each other only to hurt us. Everything is very low key right now, but the cards are on the table. China only needs the oil to keep its factory doors open to sell us the junk that brings in dollars. Russia really deep down is defensive and wishes to secure its borders. But neither will go along with the US controlling the oil in the middle east. The Caspian region may not produce that much, but better they control it than allowing the US to do so. That is the Russians Bears backyard. And the Saudi's may be nearing peak but that is still where most of our future oil is going to come from. And Iran can control the shipping of oil from the region so don't think others will allow the US to run roughshod over that country. Myself I see this coming March or April as a tripping point. Iran and other countries have been talking about selling oil for Euro's. Remember that we talked about this some time ago. Iraq pulled the same crap and got invaded after talk of weapons of mass destruction from us. Now, we are pulling out the same propaganda against Iran right before she plans on replacing the dollar with the Euro. If a country accepts a dollar for a good, we print up an extra dollar. If a country accepts only Euro's we have to buy another currency in order to buy the good. Too much inflation and the dollar amounts needed to buy Euro's goes up. Rather than exporting inflation as we have been doing, it will stay at home and really start to hurt. So the US tries to keep the dollar the primary currency in order to mask inflation at home as well as get something for nothing abroad. If Iran goes Euro we start to lose the economic game. But will China and Russia allow Iran to be invaded? Will they retaliate with economic might? Will they supply the Iranians with more than defense missiles as they have already done? Will they give them some nukes?

Not too many folks really cared about Iraq. True, they have a lot of oil. But by keeping all the troops tied up in Iraq we not only can't respond very well elsewhere but also we drain ourselves economically. It is a win/win for other power players. But Iran might be another matter. They don't have much oil, but they can control the sea lanes that most of

the worlds oil is shipped through. Remember, China can hurt us economically by either selling off our Treasury debt or even stopping future purchases. And Russia can put pressure on us by stopping the sale of natural gas to Europe, forcing them to compete with our gas suppliers and hurting us economically with a bidding war. And anyone else can go from dollar backed national currencies to Euro backed and hurt us economically. No one has to even attack us militarily since we have given them so many weapons to use against us. Idiots. There are some folks who think Russia is a direct threat against us and are planning and plotting against us wishing to wipe us off the map. See the crazed paranoia (I love it!!) of www.jrnyquist.com. Myself, I see them as enough of an economic threat (along with the Chinese) that I don't believe they will need to get into a shooting war with us, but who knows for sure. I do know that I am worried about this coming spring and what happens with Iran. A good time to move to a more rural area, stockpile more food and get some more ammo. As well as anything that helps me become less dependant on any outside supplies. I plan on getting a camping stove that uses wood rather than propane, I've already stored most of my LED's in their Faraday cages (a cookie tin from Christmas with the lights wrapped in old socks) and I'm going to convert most of my savings into my move up north and use the rest to buy the heck out of wheat. Our dirt cheap stocks of grain can only go up in price. As can everything else when our dollar starts to go to Hell. Tax return time is almost here. Buy your escape pod now (fully stocked with wheat and 7.62x54R rounds of course). Two grand can get you safe as you escape from the rat race. A grand for a lot of land from EBay, $500 for a used cab-over camper, $200 for a Russian bolt gun and 1600 rounds of ammo and three hundred bucks for enough to feed yourself for five years on wheat. The land should be under a grand so be sure to buy a grain grinder for $25 delivered from www.surplusNsurvival.com.

I know you need a few more odds and ends to help you survive the collapse of our economy, but for two grand anyone can move to the country, have a store of food and defend themselves. What are you waiting for? Prices to go up? Buy now, it will be the cheapest insurance policy you ever bought. And keep your eye on the news in March. It will be interesting to see our enemies interact with our survival struggles.

END

THE REFUGEE PROBLEM

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The refugee problem, when hoards of unwanted unprepared guests show up at your door in numbers far exceeding your stored rounds of ammunition, should be given some thought. The refugee problem is why I will be settling in cold dry North Nevada instead of wet and warm East Texas as I originally planned. Had I actually drawn a circle around all population centers surrounding the land I would realized about my unwanted 8 to 10 million neighbors before rather than after I bought the land. A $700 mistake. Take an old atlas and draw lines around your retreat area at several intervals. One, two and three hundred miles. See what kind of population density you are looking at. It used to be a few hundred miles was sufficient to keep you safe from the screaming city hoards. Then cars got more fuel efficient and you needed three hundred miles of cushion. Now you really only need one to two hundred miles as the SUV craze really crushed the average fuel efficiency in cars, folks on welfare drive gas guzzlers as they are cheaper to buy, and almost nobody keeps their tanks full anymore since they all just love stopping at convenience stores with their super high prices but short lines and high percentage of junk foods. Take a few extra minutes looking around you in several different C-stores. The junky ones have half an empty store filed with soap and auto parts and canned goods. No one goes into these isles unless they are walking around a group to get to either the beer, the coffee or the chips. The modern successful chains have made better use of their floor space and have almost nothing except impulse and junk food items. They are not going to let a two inch square space on the shelf be taken up by a jar of baby food gathering dust if a display of Slim Jims will sell better. It used to be that your poor and ignorant would shop at the gas station since, one, they took credit cards and two, they didn't want to walk too far from their section eight paid for apartment. Now section eight scatters recipients around to avoid the slum effect and these gems of productive society can shop at working class supermarkets that coincidentally now take credit cards. Now to survive gas stations are marvels of poor impulse control shopping as shoppers can load up on every available stimulant as they drive. Modern convenience stores might actually be making the roads safer as they spit out customers saturating their bodies with massive amounts of sugar, hydrogenated oils, caffeine and preservatives that more than not can wake up their three brain cells left that usually shut off as soon as the Playstation shuts down. Bravo to modern chemistry. The dregs of society eat daily at gas stations and as a justification they tend to keep less than a full tank of gas (always the excuse of procuring more), hence less of a danger to those more deserving of survival and passing on our genes.

Now, the world as we all too sadly know, is full of ignorant stupid piss-ants. Even if you live in a small town out in the middle of Dogfart Wyoming, you will have your share of them. However, a problem you know of can more easily be handled. Refugees are a total

unknown. They could be gang bangers, or world renown brain surgeons. If you live in a town at the bottom of an Interstate off-ramp you are going to have a huge refugee problem that will require a lot of man power to process the undesirables from the useful. Good luck coordinating that one. Far better to be away from the lines of travel and be prepared to deal with stragglers rather than mobs. You will not eliminate refugees totally unless you own the top of a mountain in the middle of the Rocky Mountains. So plan on moving to an area that minimizes the problem rather than encourages it. The farming belt up the middle of California is a perfect example of a place you don't want to be. Forget for a moment that without power for water and artificial fertilizer from natural gas the place will be a barren wasteland. The nearby residents of the ten million plus metropolis of L.A. won't be thinking rationally. They will be thinking either the mountains (Big Bear) or the farming land. You can be two hundred miles north of the metro area but then you have Fresno and Bakersfield to worry about as well as the Bay Area. You are surrounded by potential refugees. And the Sierra mountains will be crawling with wannabe outdoorsmen who fancy themselves mountain men of 150 years ago but who will be in serious trouble as soon as their last freeze dried meal is eaten. The whole place will be rotten with idiots tripping over each other as they hunt the last squirrel with a home made slingshots using the elastic from their underwear. California is a big place and it has a lot of folks in it, something like thirty million. If you can't leave that Socialists paradise you should at least be in the extreme northern part of the state with a lot less people and cold winters that will keep the idiots from L.A. away (plus not need imported water). I don't feel comfortable so close to the state myself, but at least I have the mountain range (containing severe winters) blocking their way.

Any farm land is going to be a potential problem. If city folks know about it, they will get to it. That is mainly why I don't concern myself with the fact that I can't own any due to finances. I would love to be self sufficient in food and animal production, but I'll be damned if I'm going to get a mortgage to do it as that rather defeats the whole purpose of working your ass off on the land. With the recent national trade of worthless future Greenbacks (and BTW, a Greenback was the worthless currency printed up by the Great Socialist Bastard Lincoln) for real estate, land prices escalated to the point where property taxes are now almost as bad as rent (and nobody will blame the government even though they lowered the interest rate and ramped up inflation to cause the real estate bubble). So even if you own land outright you still need to commute to the city for a regular job just to pay the property tax (and the tax riddled overpriced Union built vehicle to get to work in). I think it is a lose/win situation, lose for me and win for the parasitic scum sucking government. I will garden and store grain. And after the government makes mandatory farm animal registration I'll fish and raise earthworms for protein (dried and ground- the reader who gave me this suggestion please contact me so I can get more details, please). But I would buy your grain now, as much as possible. North American natural gas production is in peak decline. In the future its use as a fertilizer and as a power producer and a home heater are going to come into conflict and the prices will rise quite a bit. Farm goods should go up in price. And oil will continue to increase in price as the dollar loses global purchasing power (we only produce 25% of our own oil) so the transportation end will see price increases. Has anyone seen the price of the twenty five

pound bag of cat litter at Wal-Mart (generic version)? Increased about 11%. If I am not mistaken natural gas is used in the drying process of liter. Plus the trucking cost. If wheat goes up for the same reason, it goes up from $7.30 to eight bucks a fifty pound sack. Not a huge deal but with the screwy weather we have been having a bad harvest might add another ten percent. In one year. Next year could be the same. My rent and utilities are increasing at ten percent annually. My wages at two percent. The time to buy is now, especially on heavy items that will soon have increased shipping charges (it is conceivable that shipping could cost more than some items). I just bought some ammo through the mail. Shipping was twenty percent of the item, and gasoline prices are still catching up to crude oil prices. Buy all heavy items ASAP.

If you are not in farm land, are you close to a highway? I would think that every highway listed on a national map will be heavily traveled. Your locals might know the smaller roads, but out of starters will only have a national map with the major roads listed. Your truly clueless and helpless will be on these routes. I own land by I-80, but it is far enough from the interstate to comfort me. Currently I live off a state highway and no one should be interested in coming here as it is only the state capitol. No industry, no farming or ranching, nothing. The freaks who live north thirty miles in Reno will most likely head for the Sierra mountains and wooded Northern California. I feel pretty safe here other than sharing the town with fifty thousand other people. But it can't really be helped. Twenty years ago you could work in a small town at a Mom and Pop. Now, everything is corporate and you need to live in larger towns to find a job. Bummer. But at least pick a town not in the direct path of refugees from a nearby city. Or in the middle of farmland. Look, prior to petroleum a solar fueled economy supported about a billion people on Earth. We are over populated by five hundred percent. So in any area there will be at least five times too many people that can't be supported by a low tech farming economy. After a collapse you will have way too many mouths to feed. Think seriously about the people problem. I just can't see the majority of the population that have been pampered all their lives meekly slink away to starve. They will want to kill you for your food. And you can't stop all of them. So avoid most of them in the first place. I think that off all your survival preparations the most important is going to be to get away from crowds. At the very least get out of large cities. Size is arbitrary. Twenty thousand is great but anything over that is not necessarily bad, such as thirty thousand. I would say anything over fifty to seventy five thousand population most likely is too many people, but again the main point of picking population numbers is for current behavior. Right now, no disaster, normal living, these numbers reflect crime and population density only. Quality of living now. If you live in a city of half million your odds of being a victim of crime are high enough that you might not live to see an Apocalypse. And the crowds. Because any town over a population of 30 people you won't know everybody and certainly can't feed them for even the shortest time. In larger cities not everybody is going to be in your business and you are somewhat anonymous. But in times of crisis that means more potential crime.

Fighting manageable numbers is really what all the fuss is about. In a city you are likely to be at the mercy of criminals, in a smaller town you are known and left alone. After a collapse any crowd at all is hostile if they know you have food. I would advise buying

your grain a few towns over at the feed store. Have a few giant bags of rice and flour you donate to show your good will if others expect you to chip in, but keep the grain stash a secret. What will feed you for three years will feed a small town for one day and then everyone is screwed. And don't accept the cries for sharing supplies and labor. Communism never works except for the lazy or those in charge. You had better be in a town of rugged independent types rather than one of tree hugger socialist college types. It sucks we need other people, no man an island and all that crap. But needing others should not include being their slave. Better to move from the area than accept socialist schemes of survival. Survival fiction inevitably has the survivors grouping together to farm. Does Jamestown ring a bell? Communist farming led to crop failure and starvation, private owned and operated lots produced a surplus. There is nothing wrong with "barn raising" types of activity. Your labor is paid back in kind. You still reap what you sow. If your neighbor wants to reap what you sow shoot the bastard and eat him. That should stop talk of communist schemes. Our society of sheep is so indoctrinated in socialist brainwashing it will take a good global disaster to kill off the lazy non-workers and get the economy back to good old fashion unregulated untaxed free market activity. The only reason business gets a bad name is because the spineless pricks use government as a weapon against their competition (or their customers, or workers, etc.). Do not waste a perfect chance to get a more perfect society when ours collapses. It won't happen that often.

The people that don't think they will need to survive is going to be overwhelming. I would say survivalism is on the minds of at a most one percent of the population. The other 99% get everything they need to know from TV and the movies. Whatever concept imprinted on them they will follow. Remember that movie back in the seventies where a family goes to live way out in the boonies to escape all the modern problems? Or how about Grizzly Adams on TV? Or the recent show where the participants lived with Colonial tools and shelter and such? Or the children's book where a kid runs away up into the mountains? People will instinctively head for the mountains, not realizing anything in the West is arid and short on game. The eastern "mountains" will be as crowded as a Wal-Mart the day after Thanksgiving. Any known farmland will be over-run. No one farms anymore, just as no one makes shoes anymore, or knows how to fix their own car anymore without a diagnostic computer. We are all so utterly dependant upon others to feed and cloth us and provide basic life support systems for us such as heating our homes or disposing of our sewage or shipping over our gasoline from half way across the globe. Even your Super Survivalist can't manufacture his own smokeless powder or keep his computer running without parts from China. Since it takes such a colossal effort to minimize our dependence on others, most folks never bother and come crunch time they will revert back to a child like state of utter dependence on someone else. If you are on a farm, watch out. I would imagine most will beg, some will rob, others will be very imaginative and resort to something like kidnapping the farmers children to ensure the crop coming in will go to them. I can see gangs fighting over food producing areas for the privilege of "taxing" at a minimum of 25-50% each crop. A self sufficient food grower now will be a serf right after a crash. Don't live in that area.

As oil and natural gas become unavailable after a crash, expect the warmer regions of the southern states to be over run. Any place in the warm south of the west with a river or lake will be mobbed. We worry about southern regions being fought over by Mexicans to reclaim their land, but also consider that Anglos might just start pushing south again if global warming turns to an Ice Age as might happen. Do you want to be in that path? You will be a lone plant in the way of a hungry cloud of locusts. If you are in a large city, move out of it. If you are between a large city and a mountain range, beware. If you are in an arid region and close to water, be careful. If you are on a farm you had better have others to help you defend your crops. Better to feed a small army every day than marauders once a year. They might not let you live. If you are in a naturally year round warm area, move. One, you are already too crowded and two, others will move your way rather than freeze in the winter. Do you live in a sea port? Does piracy concern you? Shouldn't it? Study the historical economy of your area. What drove the economy a hundred years ago? You most likely will revert to that if the town survives at all. That might bring its own set of new problems. If you are on a river that was a strategic choke point for trade goods or in a mountain pass that is a natural flow of traffic toward a fertile valley, or on a bay that supported fishing, might that happen again? Plan on it. If you are in Wyoming out in the middle of nowhere but have year round wind, could you lose your land to a windmill farm come Peak Oil? Remember we don't own our land anymore. The government does. We buy it and bribe the government to allow us to live on it, but they tell us what we can do on it and even if we are allowed to stay, so beware of potential future reasons for eminent domain. Hide your storage foods well, and don't let others know about it because at the end of our long slide while the government is still in business they will steal everything you own to help others in one big welfare redistribution scheme and they could care less if it kills you. So in essence you must fear everyone. The government, future governments, refugees, neighbors, even potential family members showing up uninvited. Needless to say, the less that know about storage food the better. And any crop production make sure it is low key low volume to dissuade others from robbing you (small gardens are okay, everyone will be doing that-avoid large farming activity). And beware the upcoming farm animal registration program as it becomes mandatory. In an emergency it becomes the governments grocery list. Unlike gun registration where you can move later and confuse the issue, animal registration has GPS coordinates for each animal. Ah, the joys of putting up with envy from others who won't work. Interesting times, indeed.
END ARTICLE

A LONG SLOW DECLINE
Civilization collapse over generations rather than sudden failure
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Being a child of the Cold War and living under the threat of nuclear war, and having read "Lucifer's Hammer" as my first survivalist book, I have always assumed that the collapse of civilization was going to be sudden. Prepare now because when you wake up one morning there will have been a nuclear exchange or an asteroid will have hit earth. This was the assumption I have been living with. Y2K was a sudden collapse of civilization, if it had happened. Most preparations assume a total collapse. That is why we try to duplicate all of societies functions ourselves, protection against criminals, fire control, food production, water supply, etc. And today it is even more difficult to prepare as all of this countries manufacturing is sent over to China. There won't be any factories here to use for hard to produce items after global trade is cut off. So one must stockpile everything and be prepared to revert to ancient technology when it is all gone. If one can develop the skills needed. Being the savior of civilization is not going to be easy, but then few worthwhile goals ever are. But will it all end suddenly? As I said, that was the assumption I had been living under. But is it correct? Being a daily reader of SurvivalBlog.com I occasionally come across a real gem of information (not a bad site at all, just the wrong kind of advice-mostly-for myself as it is geared towards the big spenders) and the other day was posted a link to http://anthropik.com a great site dedicated towards total system meltdown but lasting generations/centuries and slowly moving towards collapse as all of the energy inputs become less and less. They take the long view, to say the least. Anyone interested in social collapse should check it out, far better writing than I can ever hope to produce (although, alas, with a total lack of humor-you would think the decline of Western civilization was something to take seriously). So I spent several hours reading yet another brand of paranoia and I came away rather impressed. These folks were not only totally paranoid (thus qualified to be my teacher) but they were on to something. I know, slow collapse is nothing new. But the way it was presented made total sense. They made it seem obvious that nothing else could possibly happen, that slow collapse was the new standard by which all other disasters would here after be measured against. And since it fits in perfectly with my "coming disaster of the week" Peak Oil, I really paid attention.

As a society uses up its resources, it starts to decline and will eventually die off. One must measure all past collapsed societies in terms of food production, since until 200 years ago agriculture alone was the economy in any advanced society. It was the resource that mattered. No other came close. Granted, metal played a very important part. Not only is it impossible to plow with a stone blade, but metal meant weapons used to conquer your neighbors crop production. But ultimately it came back to food production. If you were

in harmony with nature and only produced enough to take the surplus from the land, your society can last thousands of years (such as the Chinese). If you mined the land and stripped the nutrients from the soil and didn't replace them (almost everywhere, notably cotton growing here in the South) then in the long term your society collapsed. You faced resource depletion. The Romans built up a large segment of society not tied down to the land. They did this by living off the plunder of conquered land surrounding them. In effect, they came across a surplus of energy, both in slaves for labor and ever increasing farm land for the slaves to work. By putting their labors into military conquest they freed their need to labor on the land. After a time most of their population was in the military, in the bureaucracy, or on welfare. After the Romans reached the limits of their expansion the land and slaves started to contract in supply, leading to resource depletion and eventually to the slow decline of the Empire. After a point, whatever system lead to the success of a society reaches a point of diminishing returns. More energy must be put into the system to maintain the same level of return. When the needed energy starts to fall, the system enters into a point of decline. Eventually the total system fails. The Romans faced a point of diminishing returns in their military conquest at the same time more of their population was non-producing and demanding more energy input (more and more on welfare, more to be feed). The city crowds that had no income had to be pacified and so the famous "bread and circus"' were employed to pacify the crowds that could participate in rebellion. I am sure that plenty of leaders saw the pitfalls of the system and wanted to change it so that it would not collapse. But the past system locked them into the destructive behavior. The system initially proves successful, a power elite arises on that success, the behavior of that elite that allowed them to take power will later lock them into a system going into decline. Just as we have currently in all capitalist countries right now (and those not capitalist are mostly already in terminal decline anyway). But more on our present situation later.

The Roman Empire arose not because of the superior sword its soldiers used as some have suggested, nor its tactics on the battlefield, but simply because of the revolutionary social organization that freed itself from the need to produce food and allowed the majority to direct its energies elsewhere. In this case the conquest of other food producing regions. In effect they were the first nation state, where the entire energies of a population are brought to bear on an enemy to enrich those in the homeland. Our present states owe a lot of their ideas to Rome's organizational methods. The Romans may have had a superior weapon to go along with their new organization, and to duplicate it mankind required one thousand years of backwards technological development and the invention of gunpowder before we were able to again organize an effective super state again to rival them. A lot less is known about the Mayan culture and its rise and fall, but in a nutshell an empire arose in Central America that was fueled by intensive corn planting. Despite appearances that climate did not have the kind of soil suitable for it. And as importantly, a weather change could disrupt the rainfall pattern. So after a point when too many mouths were being fed yet no more labor could be devoted to planting, the crop yields began to decrease to the point where less and less corn was available to feed the population. This led to the usual wars and famines and in the end the Mayans died off a lot quicker than the Romans ever did since they had less of an Empire to die off and there was less booty

nearby the state could plunder to survive. Island societies are in a particularly precarious position if resource depletion kicks in as there is nobody next door they can wage war on to survive a little longer. So, yes Virginia, there will always be war since one society will always be unable to sustain itself and need to steal from its neighbor to survive. And most societies will thrive under models that are in the long run unsustainable since whatever fostered success initially will be unable to be undone in the long term as too much of society benefits from the old model and to abandon the old model would collapse that society even sooner so in the end the choice is between collapse now or later. As we are facing currently with Peak Oil and Global Warming and the American Empire.

Western civilization right now is dependant on cheap abundant oil. The extreme specialization of labor is only possible because oil and machinery produce all of our food. Only three percent of the population in the U.S. work the farms and mainly that is a role of caretaker to the machines. Without oil, our country starves. You may think we will always have enough oil to produce our own food and that is true, but the rest of our economy will be non-functional without cheap abundant oil to fuel the economy. Oil is the slavery of our current society. And it is cheap, despite what you may think when you fill up the tank. Look, last year we imported 75% of our oil. And last year we borrowed about $600 billion from foreigners. About the same amount that oil was sold for. In effect, we are getting our overseas oil with a credit card payment- at this time at no cost other than interest payments. And that is why it is vitally important for the oil markets to stay denominated in dollars and for us to control the shipping lanes (one could make the case that most of our military cost is the true cost of oil, so then we are getting oil at half cost with foreign borrowing- still a good deal). Bush is an idiot, I'm sure we can all agree. But his masters know how to run things. War in the middle east might eventually bring about nuclear war here at home, but then the alternative is our nation in a massive Depression since we have passed the point of our resource depletion peak thirty years ago. It is only by war that we steal enough resources to survive. But other nations also want those resources. Right now they may not have the military capability to fight us but they do have the economic weapons they can use against us. If I realize this, a high school graduate with average intelligence that just reads a lot, then surely the leadership of other nations know about it and will use it. Iraq tried to escape our dominance of the dollar by offering to sell it's oil for Euro's but the time was too soon and they had few friends. Iran is now going to try it, with the US tied up in and weak from the Iraq war and with a few buddies named Russia and China. Lets see if that one works out any better. With our country militarily powerful but economically as weak as a kitten, it is only a matter of time.

So oil is our resource that is being depleted and which will cause our civilization to collapse. All the pesky little details we are witnessing now are just the drama that goes along with the end of civilization. Not that I will tire of reporting those details to you almost on a weekly basis. Someone has to keep you worried enough to go out and buy ammo and till the ground for an organic garden. Oil is running out, the earth's population is getting bigger. More and more mouths needing more and more food that is grown with oil based fertilizer and harvested by machine. Our soils used in large scale agriculture are

all depleted of nutrients and require artificial inputs from oil, there is no going back to organic inputs other than on small scale individual plots. But manage your soil now, as in the near future there won't be enough plant waste to fertilize everyone's soil as oil products get too expensive. Right now everyone throws away plant waste and starting out an organic plot requires a lot of imported plant waste. Even if you fail to plant a garden, at least condition your soil now before everyone else jumps on the bandwagon. Free books on organic gardening are at the library, and tearing out your lawn will save you money in the long run. If you can't garden because of zoning laws it might behoove you to move if possible. If you can scavenge near free glass, build a greenhouse on to your house. You can then extend your growing season and help heat your house in the winter with free solar energy. I would be leery about using plastics that need replacing rather than glass as they may not always be available cheaply. Remember, we are talking about a long slow collapse here. It is not like oil will suddenly disappear tomorrow. My guess is that there will still be oil in the ground long after we are wearing animal skins and worshipping the moon again. But the economy is just going to get sicker, so prices will climb as your wages stagnate or your job is outsourced to another country. The time to invest in your independence is now. Organic gardening and a greenhouse that help heats your house are very cheap right now yet priceless in the future. Go around to businesses that sell glass and offer to buy blemished glass at a discount. I would stick with safety glass if you can. Or what about the glass out of cars? A few front windows should cost next to nothing and you can build a greenhouse that is unconventional looking. No need to get expensive. But even if you bought those big sliding glass doors and built a glass wall on to a porch that faced south the cost should be minimal and pay for itself in one winter as you turned down your thermostat (remember you need thermal mass to capture the heat so build a cement floor or line up water filled metal drums painted black).

The good news is we are in a long slow collapse. That gives us time to adapt and learn new skills that are independent of oil. We still have time to stockpile. The bad news is we are in a long slow collapse. There is nothing that can be done to reverse the process. Our resource base is below the population base. Right now it is all about fighting over the spoils. So don't waste your chance here. Learn a few new skills now, free of import needs and oil inputs. Stockpile enough to get you through the transition period (or, mass die off), but have the skills to see you through and make you important enough to allow to live. Anyone can steal your supplies, but not your knowledge. The Chinese saying about teaching a man to fish should tell you a lot. The Chinese have a long history of living through strife, upheavals, wars and famines. They are a good example to learn from as far as surviving social chaos. And earth husbandry. Some ass-munch local bandit might come along and steal half their rice, but at least the soil they left is still productive enough to plant a new crop in. Some soil in China has seen literally thousands of years of use and is still able to produce healthy plants without artificial fertilizers. The Chinese leadership has seen fit to pave over a lot of that land for polluting factories, but the knowledge won't be lost and long after the factories have lost their customer base after the U.S. has gone broke the land can be returned to food production. As much as I rag on tree huggers, they do have a lot of great things to teach us. I disagree with their attempts to socialize our FedGov in order to save the planet, but they sure know how to grow an

organic garden. We will soon need their knowledge. Not that the knowledge is hard to come by. I regularly see organic gardening books in the local thrift store. I got "Square Foot Gardening" for a quarter. I got one book on passive solar heating for five cents. And then there is always the library. Most information can be condensed, notes taken, even some pages copied. There is no need to spend that much money. If any. But you should gather this information now. And if possible practice it. If gardening ain't your thing, find an interesting craft that duplicates a skill pre-petroleum and practice it. You may not need it in your lifetime, but then again you might. As we sit back and enjoy the slow collapse of western civilization, we just might get an unexpected nuclear exchange from a few disgruntled politicians.

Your life will be far from tranquil in the absence of a major overnight collapse, however. If you think things will remain peaceful just because we will continue to muddle along and adapt to new circumstances, think again. Think about Africa. Their new mode of adaptation involves hacking each others limbs off with machetes. We are still going to see crime out of control, an economy that is going to get a heck of a lot worse, civil war (that should please the militia/gun nut segment), famine, natural disasters without relief aid, massive unemployment, reduced life spans, etc. Any economic backwards region of the globe right now serves as a model to what we can expect. And don't think we can't be victims of a poor economy. Mega-corporations can move factories overseas at will, outsource white collar jobs on a whim, and when they tire of meeting the obligations they made to their workers decades ago they either declare bankruptcy and wipe the slate clean as they screw over those they are obligated to or they move their corporate offices overseas to avoid paying our outrageous taxes and "lawyer lotteries" (another reason why I am not against personal bankruptcy-screw the bastards before they screw you). Our economy will just move more and more towards government make work jobs (as just seen in the home building industry with the government created boom), massive inflation to pay for it all and more and more corporations making a profit by screwing over their workers. Do you think most corporations give a crap where they are headquartered? Does a suit have to sacrifice that much if he has to relocate to the Caribbean? So the government is going to play their game under threat of relocation and allow pensions to be picked up by the taxpayer (more likely just paid for by the printing presses) as the recipients of those pensions are to be paid dimes on the dollar if anything, which means that when means testing is introduced that is more pressure on the social security system as they are no longer able to be supported by a private retirement plan but must be supported by the taxpayer (again, more likely through inflation). When foreigners stop buying our debt which accounts for a large portion of the governments pocket money, inflation is going to get a lot worse as the printing presses really start spitting out serious money. Inflation like Germany in the 1920's, the Confederacy at the end of the War Of Northern Aggression, or the end of the Revolutionary War when the delightful term "not worth a Continental" was invented as the governments only way of paying bills was to hyper-inflate (a practice approved by Ben Franklin, surprisingly).

By some calculations our slow decline started in 1978. That was the year human population numbers started going up beyond energy use numbers. In effect, each human

being has had less energy to live on since that time. And even if population was to freeze or decline, the energy numbers are worse. Of course, every human gets an unequal share of energy. The US controls a quarter of the earth's energy use with less than 300 million out of six billion people. But that will change, soon. It is a wonder looking back at the British Empire and seeing how such a small island controlled most of the globe. In the near future others will look back at the US and smile at the fact that we were able to siphon most of the oil from the globe for our own use but later declined to a has-been after our economy self destructed and we could steal no more resources or even rely much on our own as we had used them up fighting the rest of the world. Any country that has a GNP of $12 trillion dollars yet can barely support 150,000 troops in a small mid eastern country has a dysfunction economy. Any country that wants to use money it doesn't have to rebuild a city below sea level as we experience global warming and rising sea levels and severe storms due to warming seas has its priorities in an old failing control system. Any country that refuses to become energy self-sufficient after an oil supply shock and has two decades to do so yet squanders the time on pursuits of pleasure and meaningless consumption, that society is clearly on the downward path to collapse. We will see a long slow collapse with each passing year things getting a little worse. Until, and who can say when that will be, the end where we or our decedents are back in the seventeenth century if not the Stone Age. You could die suddenly through your fellow human trying to steal your wealth, or you could live to see a very different society than the one that surrounds you now. And unless a new, more condensed form of energy is found and exploited, it won't be the George Jetson future. Something to look forward to.

Perhaps this is why I feel so strongly against the Yuppie Survivalists: any wealth you have will be stolen. Either the government or regular criminals will want some or all of your wealth. Do not display it!! Right now while everybody can get credit and waste money before the real estate bubble gets mean and visible, anyone can drive a new SUV super-duper four wheel drive. When a gallon of gas starts selling for what an once of silver does, that car will be a neon sign pointing to wealth. Your house should look like what any other poor person can afford. My trailer might look like a duct tape and caulking special but few will envy me as I live in it, nor think I possess any wealth as I pedal my way to work on a Wal-Mart bike. Even my cloths are stained (but clean) and my shoes are worn down on the heel or obviously cheap to start with. I camouflage everything. Not that I necessarily have much wealth. But I do live cheap so it takes little stored wealth to keep me well off. Sell your visible wealth, hide what you have, live below your means. And don't stop stockpiling survival supplies. Wheat, corn, rice and beans cost very little and do not invite theft as would cans or MRE's (to a degree). You can solar cook them and in a crisis if that is all you could afford you could live off them for years with only a few dollars a week going for groceries. Even with a stockpile, strain your budget or sell your valuables to continue buying groceries every week in a crisis. Do not allow others to know of your stockpile. And you can teach others how to cook with grain and beans for brownie points. But they need to think you strain every week to buy even the basics, otherwise they will rob you to find your food stash. This in a still functioning economy, of course. After famine sets in, seclude yourself. Less than a lean stumbling frame will invite disaster. Can a living skeleton be a threat to you? Want to find out?

One last burst of energy can still fire a gun and then they eat your Spam and, eventually, you. Enjoy the long slow ride of decline. END

AN ALMOST FREE ELECTRICAL GENERATOR
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If you could have an almost free electrical generating system, would you drastically reduce your electrical needs to get it? If you could forego the purchase of an expensive gas or diesel generator, would that cost savings be worth the hassle of doing without convenience in electronics? If you knew a one time investment of around $20 would freely charge your battery, would it be worth restricting your electric use to just a few items? In other words, can you rough it a little bit and give up your big TV and electric juicer and chest freezer if it cost you nothing to provide electric power on a small scale to your hovel in the boonies? If so, you can cut that rather expensive umbilical cord to the utility company for a lot less than the cost of solar panels or the cheapest gas generator. Not that there is anything wrong with a generator. When building in the country you will need to run power tools. And for a long term electrical generator, it only makes sense to have a solar panel. Even if you only bought one solar panel for $200 for a 50 watt unit, that is rather cheap Peak Oil insurance. But for now, while you must commute to work, while gasoline is still cheap enough to buy to get to a crappy job that only pays $6 an hour, there is a great solution to your electrical power needs. Not that it will last forever. But once gas is too expensive to commute to work than most likely the economy will be in a full blown Depression and not being able to get to work at a job you won't have anymore will be the least of your problems. Then it will behoove you to stay at home and guard your one pathetic solar panel working valiantly to keep enough juice in your battery for a few light bulbs while at the same time you look after your patch of wilting vegetables and beseech the Gods at your folly of failing to listen to me and stockpiling enough wheat or for having bought a carbine of anemic power rather than a good bolt action surplus rifle and hoping against hope that any marauders that happen along are armed with nothing more powerful than a twelve gauge shotgun so that your Chinese pea shooter has a chance against then (while at the same time another corner of your brain wonders why in the heck you didn't buy a few damn LED lights as they are sooooo friggin cheap and suck up sooooo much less juice than regular lights). But in the mean time, you can use a second battery in your car that is charged while driving to power your homestead.

Your only cost is some wiring and a holder for a second battery. I don't count the cost of the second battery as any alternate power set up is going to need batteries and here we are talking about free power generation rather than storage. So now I can be like our politicians who talk about how wonderful hydrogen is and throw a few billion at research even though one guy in his work shop 150 years ago knew how to generate hydrogen but that won't stop the Feds from waving one hand in front of us with magical visions of hydrogen even though it is only a storage medium not a way to generate power or ethanol which is from corn in this country and no where near as efficient as sugar cane in Brazil (

which is now 100% self sufficient in energy since they learned their lesson from the 70's and strove for that status over the years rather than waste the opportunity like we did and as a result are now only 25% self sufficient in energy- a rather sad state for the worlds military super power) while with the other hand hidden behind their backs they direct a campaign of lies and propaganda to involve us in wars to steal oil and force others to accept our worthless Greenbacks. In case you didn't get that bit of sarcasm, I hid the total cost of the system from you by semantics. So my point still stands that by gum, the power generated by your automotive is nearly free and you would be silly not to tap into it. If it is your main means of power. If you live on the grid it will be easier for you to just use house current. If you live on the grid and wish to have an emergency power back up, just go to a mechanic and have them charge up a battery and then stick a $30 solar trickle charger on it and forget about it for awhile or if you want to spend a few more bucks just buy one of those sealed units that can jump start your car AND be used as a home power source. But if you wish to use more power than you can get from a solar panel in a shorter period of time, and if you live a distance from town where you commute, you really should look into an auto generator. The gas you use powers your transportation. You are just tapping into the extra power generated. Even if your gas mileage suffers a bit the cost of operation will be nothing compared to a stand alone generator.

If you were to buy a marine battery from Wal-Mart you are looking at about $60 or so for a 600 amp battery. If you never use more than half that to prolong the battery life than you have about 300 amps at your disposal. Take an appliance and find the wattage used. Say 50 watts of power for a laptop computer. You are using a 12 volt battery. The formula is watts divided by volts equals amps so 50 by 12 equals about 4 (4 amps is 48 watts, close enough, or 4.17 so every 6 hours of use add another amp used). If I used my laptop three hours a day it would take 12.5 amps a day. After a week I used almost 88 amps. In three weeks 263, almost my total use allowed from my battery. If I cut back my use to 6 days a week I would be able to squeak by for a whole month of use of my laptop on just one charge of a battery. So, if I wanted to I could be charging one battery as I used another and use whatever means of charging I wanted. Even a solar panel should suffice if that is your only use. But, alas, other means of electric will be desired. I plan of manual water movement as I use a hand pump to get water from a holding tank, others might wish for an electric pump. I plan on using LED lights when I move off grid, most will want wiring and regular lamps. I might have a TV but it will be a small black and white that uses almost no juice, others might desire a color TV used more each day. To each his own, whatever you plan on doing is whatever you plan on paying for. I have no desire to buy a generator and one solar panel is enough at today’s prices if I even buy that. I have rechargeable batteries and small solar chargers from them and after it all falls apart if I just have lights and no other electric I will be happy. A solar panel might be nice so I can make ice and have an ice box but that also depends on a supply of salt so that might not last forever. And with food drying an ice box is just a luxury after the apocalypse unless you have dairy to keep. But lights you need. Of course I am happy without most things such as a house as long as I have a book to read and the light to read it by. My computer is only as good as civilization hanging in there. It has little survival application. So I really don't want to spend money for electrical power I don't really need. One battery

for my computer, one for the wife and a small TV for her. One charging in the car. Three batteries to buy, under two hundred bucks. And no other cost except hooking up some wires in the car. Which brings up how long it will take to charge your battery.

Most alternators today are around 60 to 80 amps. The old ones were smaller, but take a figure of 60 amps. If you drove one hour the total amp hours delivered would be 60 amps. Anything above about ten miles an hour is going to put out extra power, so stop and start commutes don't count but actually moving time. If you have depleted your battery by half you need 300 amps to top it off. You have your regular car battery and hooked up to that your marine battery. After you have driven 15 minutes you have recharged your car battery from starting the car. Now it is all free juice. Say you drive thirty minutes each way to work. That means you get a free 30 amps of power each day of driving a round trip to work. In a week you have 150 amps. In a month 600 amps. So if you used 300 in your computer you could only use another 300 in a TV. Per month. By today's standards this is almost no juice at all. If you were hooked up to the grid that juice would cost you about a buck. But on a generator it would be extra fuel. And with a generator you have a lot of noise even muffled and repair bills. Plus, my mechanically inclined buddy at work informs me that even though my math is correct he feels my numbers might be on the low side. You might get more juice than I allow. And it is all essentially free after installing wires and a holder for that extra battery. The total cost of the system is what I worry about. A generator is at least two hundred dollars for a 1200 watt. At half power you use a quart of fuel an hour. So you are working with 600 watts. So an hour a day is 50 amp hours or almost twice what the car battery gives you. The fuel cost is under a buck, the generator will last at least five years doing this. Total cost per year is about $250. Cost for half that juice in a car is zero. A solar panel at fifty watts at six hours of direct sun a day gives you 20+ amp hours a day, almost as much as the car system. Actually, about 24 amps assuming full sun those six hours and when you drive five days a week the sun works seven so you come out about even for the week IF you get all the hours of sun. By using the car system now, then later adding a solar panel when you can afford it in some months you can double the amount of juice you put out. But at $200-300 the solar panel has the up front cost. Only about $10 a year operating cost if you get thirty years out of it, much better than the generator cost. But the up front cost!

Assuming you move to the boonies, money is going to be very tight. Even if you have no mortgage (strongly recommended with today's corporate behavior of screwing over their workers at the slightest hint of extra profit to pad the bonus checks of the management) you also more than likely have very little savings. An unwanted piece of dirt useless for anything other than a trailer spot, a used battered 4x4 truck twenty years past its prime, a sawdust toilet rather than a sewer, hauled water rather than a well, even after all your saving and roughing it, money will still be tight. Why have another bill to worry about by buying several solar panels or a generator bigger than what you need for some power tools? Charge a battery while using those tools, charge another battery on your trips to town. Learn to live with almost no electrical appliances or toys. The electric utility company made electric so very attractive by selling each kilowatt hour so cheap. Even at 15 cents each if you heat and cook with carbon fuel and plant shade trees rather than buy

an air conditioner your electric bill is still rather cheap. But, one, you need to live in town and two, the power will only continue to get more expensive as time goes on due to both government inflation and oil running down in supply. You need to wean yourself from grid dependence now while you still have the buying power to purchase alternatives. Buy the solar panels and the generator now. Store gas now, even if it is only in five gallon containers and you dig a hole for their storage rather than buying an expensive tank. Buy your batteries now and store them dry. Batteries will wear out and need to be replaced. But by learning to live with almost no electrical tools or toys you drastically cut the cost of what you do need. $300 solar panels instead of $10,000. A $200 generator instead of $5,000. It is amazing what self sufficiency expects are advising you to spend on alternate power. Learn to need a lot less. Then you spend pennies rather than dollars. Just as learning to live simply means you can live on $5k a year instead of needing $50k as most people do (and then still feeling the pinch).

I look at it this way. We are spoiled. We know this. We revel in it. Yet, it will all soon end. Hell, the process has already started. Look at how well your parents had it compared to the raw deal you are getting. Now guess how bad things are going to be for your kids. You can live a life of luxury and laziness now and be forced to tighten your belt later in a half assed way, or you can learn to do more with less now. Do you think I enjoy riding a bicycle in the winter in ten degrees with a biting wind? Do I enjoy foregoing an enjoyable restaurant meal for more leftovers at home? Do I like living in a 280 square foot travel trailer rather than almost any other kind of shelter? Of course not. But I don't have to worry about the cost of gas at the pump (other than indirectly at its macro-economic impact) or mechanical repairs (I am a mechanical retard and I can fix most things on a coaster brake bike), I can lose a job and replace it with another cheaper one with minimal hassle, my home is paid for and my yearly lot rent for living in town close to work is less than what most of you pay for property taxes on your houses (or at least taxes and insurance) and with all the money I don't spend on luxury I can prepare for hard times ahead. Power use falls into this category. I enjoy all the juice now at almost no cost. Microwave oven, coffee maker, color TV, DVD, large desk top computer, multiple lights in each room, a chest freezer. All for under $20 a month in electrical use. But as soon as I move to my land in the boonies (one of these days) it all goes away. That is the price I gladly pay to be done with rent. To have storage space, no landlord, no other trailer mere feet away. All for less than what one years lot rent costs me. I'll still be living in a trailer, but I will be free of greedy vicious bastards yearly raising the cost of essentials. I will only be held hostage to the grocery store and the tax man. If I want I can do away with a motor vehicle and just use a bike or a moped as the land is only ten miles away from town. A car will be a luxury rather than a necessity however. I bought the land I did with that in mind. I am trying to meet a harder future on my terms. And what if the future doesn't get any worse? Hard to believe, I know, but as we are echoing the 70's it seems a prudent question to ask. Well, by living as cheap and frugal as possible you free up your need to earn as much money and so you can then enjoy life rather than just devoting your life to the pursuit of enriching others. A worthy goal.

Just in case you need more info on charging an auto battery for your power use, the

source I used was an old book called "How to be your own power company" by Jim Cullen. I bought mine through Amazon.com for about $5 after shipping charges. Just keep in mind that the prices are wrong, the alternators used are underpowered by half and the batteries back then had less amp hours. We have come a long way in 25 years in that regard. The book would be most helpful to you as far as showing you how to wire up the batteries and even your home to 12v if you are so inclined. Perhaps cheaper than paying a mechanic to wire up your car?
END

LIVING IN THE MIDST OF DANGER
Surviving where you live now/Your home as your retreat
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Retreat survivalists have it all figured out. They know exactly where to live to survive the greatest dangers. Assuming they get to the retreat, and even assuming they ever know when danger is present. If civilization is doing the slow decline they may never live in their retreats as no serious danger is ever boldly presented. Does Peak Oil or Global Warming come as a danger signal or are they just an intensification of problems? Is inflation hidden at 7-10% and reported at 3% enough reason to move to the retreat? Why not? You lose half your purchasing power of saved dollars in not much more time than it takes to pay for that fancy gas guzzler you bought to make it to your retreat. Inflation is very dangerous. You too can figure out how short of a time period your dollars have before inflation wipes them out by employing the Rule Of 72. Take the percentage rate of inflation (double govt. figures from Clinton onward to get the true rate), divide by 72 and you get the number of years until your money is worth only half its buying power. For instance, 7% annual inflation (what I feel is correct now) will wipe out 50 cents of every saved dollar under your mattress in just ten years. Now don't get me wrong. Retreat living is great if you actually live there. My lot three hundred miles north where I have plans to move to some day to save on rent isn't even a retreat as I have no supplies stored there or even the land surveyed yet. But it still poses the same problem as big money retreats. I don't live there. Assuming no gas disruption, I could pack up my supplies and be up there by the afternoon. But what about gas supply disruptions? Due to the Liberal scum sucking Socialist Bastard Commie puck anti-liberty anti-American Pinkos in power at the moment (our moment of liberation after hyper inflation and Iranian/North Korean nukes destroy the current regime will be bitter sweet as there will be little left to enjoy) refuse to allow the free market to operate without interference and so gas stations can't raise prices due to shortages. Bravo, you are all chanting as the good little indoctrinated Socialists from public school you are, the greedy bastards can't make a profit off our suffering. Well, the only problem now is that since the gas prices can't be raised there are people filling up who don't really need the gas (just as I will be at the grocery store in an emergency stocking up even if I don't need the supplies) and longer lines whereas if the owners were allowed to sell their gas for the prices they wished, the prices would raise to discourage all but the truly needy from filling up and the gas would last longer. What is better, the poor paying triple, or the poor not having any gas at all because others filled up first? You never hear it much because it doesn't fit in very well in our Fascist system, but the free market works very well if allowed to. The Mega-Corporation marriage to our FedGov wreaking havoc in our country as well as the Third World is not the free market although it is sold to the public that way so everyone wants more socialism which is easily controlled by business. In a true free market goods would be allocated in a much fairer method than at present where those with pull in the government benefit while the poor and politically disadvantaged are ignored or taken advantage of.

In fact, if one was to just spend the money at home where you are now by the same amount that retreaters spent on a 4x4 SUV to get to that retreat, your home would be rather energy efficient and secure from mobs. You could work on it on the weekends just by rolling out of bed instead of driving half the day out to the boonies. The retreat survivalist is working under the assumption that crowds are bad. I have no problem agreeing. The retreat survivalist is operating with a large bank account or unlimited credit from the bank. Most of us are not. Or are unwilling as it is a dangerous practice to allow the bank to hold the keys to your dreams. We might have to hold a mortgage (and hopefully you have a low one or will move to an area that is cheaper even if you take a pay cut to be less vulnerable to high mortgages and an unstable economy that employs you) but it is silly to pay on a house AND a retreat (which will get sacrificed first in times of job loss?) or to move to the country with few jobs but a full mortgage. There are worse things than living in a crowd, in other words. Living in the boonies is rather a luxury. Do not think of it as a need. A house lot with a garden and an attached greenhouse will get you just as secured in food production as five acres in the country (assuming a store of grains and meat to supplement). In the country you have as much of a security concern as you do in the city, the only difference is that in the city they find you quicker. But in the city (more likely suburbs, I use the two interchangeably) at least you have ready neighbors that can be bribed to help you. In the country, they are too far away and are busy at their own place. And even if both were willing to help, the city one is much closer (feet, not miles). In the city, fire is a concern, but then so it is the country. Law enforcement is just as corrupt or just as available in either place. In the country you are paying for piece and quiet and a food production area. I am in favor of both, but one must ask what the price is. Thousands of dollars (most likely tens of thousands) to buy a noise buffer zone. And that price is rather high to produce your own food. You can prepare for hard times by stocking up on beans and grains now, very cheaply (don't wait, the prices will just go up as we are effected by Peak Oil). Much more cheaply than by buying the land to grow it. I understand that you can't store a lifetime of food. But can you pay for twenty to thirty years on that farm in the form of a mortgage? Productive farmland in wet areas are expensive. Will the economy stay afloat long enough that you keep enough income coming in to pay the mortgage on that farm? The same applies in the city home of course, which is why I think everyone should buy that cheap lot of land from E-Bay for under $1,000. A legal, paid for place to live in case you lose everything to the repo man after your job gets imported.

Do not expect that you can live in your home if you lose your job. In a sudden economic and civilization collapse, sure. Y2K, asteroid strike, super volcano blowing, alien invasion. In most other cases, the economy will limp along good enough for the banks to take your home. You might get a reprieve of six months at the most (three more likely). Perhaps the government extends it to twelve months to get votes. Or hyper-inflation allows you to pay off the house working one year at McDonalds (and a waiting list to work there where they have a $100 Value Menu). But I think most likely you and millions of others will lose the houses to creditors as the economy enters tough times. No miracles will save you. So, how do you save your home? Do you even want to? Wasn't the whole point in living there your job? Once that is gone, why stay? But assuming the

house is already paid for or can easily be paid off (for instance, a government job is relatively secure for a period of time), the other question you have to ask yourself is, do you really want to move? There is a certain comfort level in staying put. You know the local economy, the job prospects, job contacts, the terrain, the weather, roads around traffic, the crime areas, etc. You don't get that information very fast moving to a new area. And locals will have an advantage over refugees (in other words, don't expect anything other than problems if you move after TSHTF). So if you are hopelessly in debt over your comfort level now and your job prospects look dim, you might as well move now. Most likely to another city. But the whole question here is not "is the city bad?", but "is my economic position such that I am going to have to survive where I am because of my job?" All this talk about paying off your mortgage or losing your house or what not is just dancing around the issue. Those are details only you are aware of and can answer. The main point is that almost every one of us lives paycheck to paycheck and there will be no retreat in the plans. Plan on surviving where you live, and for most of us that means in the city/suburbs.

You could do a lot worse than surviving in the city. Such as isolated in the country. If your expected relatives or friends don't arrive to your place then you are seriously understaffed to guard the place. After your big expensive propane tank runs out of fuel then you need to switch to wood leaving a smoke signal to the roaming zombie biker gangs. In the city, signs of occupation are only dangerous if you are the only house showing signs of life. If there are others you should be okay. And remember, yours is the only house with fertile soil and a greenhouse. Share your produce and others will help you protect it (and if you have non-hybrid seeds they will "pay" for your expertise so you can expand the growing area). If you grow corn and beans and potatoes you should be able to feed a few neighbors. If you had a few war surplus rifles and surplus ammo they could be a serious determent to trouble makers (just don't forget the threat of local gangs- it might be necessary to give them a tax from your crop). A city can't feed itself, true. But it can feed a fraction of itself. That is you and your buddies. And a suburb can feed quite a few. Will it feed you enough? The $64 question. Do some serious calculations on the back of an envelope. Factor in space needed to feed so many people, minus crop failures and local criminals taxing you. With intensive gardening, companion planting, loose beds, etc., you can grow quite a bit in a small space. Just make sure it is enough. Old car windshields can be used for greenhouses. There will be plenty of junk nearby to scavenge such as metal barrels to heat the greenhouse using solar energy. It won't be as easy to starve as it was for our ancestors given our modern knowledge of food production and the leftover junk from our Industrial Age. It doesn't cost money to prepare for post-crash agriculture, just time. Read up on French Intensive gardening, start a compost bin, prepare your soil. Find scrap and junk for a greenhouse (you need one anyway, attached to the house to help heat it after the natural gas runs out). And for a few, it might make sense to be a nomadic herder rather than a farmer. If your area is arid, a few sheep might make more sense than trying to import water for crops. Stay in valleys and walk the sheep to water. It goes without saying you need a few breeders to start and you definitely can't do it alone. But a possibility in about half the area of this country which is so arid (and not full of people). Here in Northern Nevada (south is mostly just military bases other

than Vegas) you don't find many towns or settlements not on a water way. The question is, can you grow crops there, or is there even enough water for the current population through farming? Sheep herding should make a strong comeback here.

So what should you do to improve your home for survival. I will assume you have it figured out as far as being safe from the bank and that you have moved out of a bad area too large to safely survive such as NYC, LA, Chicago, etc. Your first consideration should be tearing up the lawns and preparing the soil for gardening. Then putting a rain catchment system on your roofs. Make your structure as fire proof as possible. If you have a basement, can you wall off a small section of it for hiding all your supplies? Attach a greenhouse to the south side of your home (or at least stockpile trashed widows you scavenge if zoning prohibits you from putting them up now). Have someway of surviving off the grid, as the electric always goes out in the worse weather. You need to heat without electric (everything else is just a luxury including A/C). Can you use a bicycle in your area, or is it too far to anywhere (then get a moped). I assume it goes without saying to burglar-proof everything. In the city, you can get away with short range weapons. But I still don't recommend a semi-auto in anything other than a .22 just because of very real possibilities of ammo shortages. A shotgun in 12 gauge would be best, as well as pistols. Try to have more ammo than you need. And nothing here needs to cost that much. Gardening is nearly free. Fireproofing might be costly, but perhaps your insurance saving will pay for it quickly. And it is cheaper than having the house burn down when the fire engines can't get there in time do to a nearby natural disaster or the water supply being disrupted, etc. Rain catchment barrels can be used and cleaned cola syrup barrels from a local bottling plant sold cheap and placed under your down spout. Hiding your supplies takes a few pieces of lumber and the room might double as a fallout shelter. The greenhouse can consist of sliding glass doors with manufacturing defects you can buy cheap at your local glass shop. You don't necessarily need a generator to be safe from grid failure. Heat without juice. Have most of your emergency meat supplies canned or dried, not frozen. Have your windows covered with bars and in the summer you can leave the windows open at night for a natural cooling effect. A bike might one day be a necessity, store several per family member along with spare tires, tubes and chains. They are cheap enough at Wal-Mart (right now they have adult beach cruisers on sale at half price, $30!!!). Guns, well, you are going to buy a bunch anyway no matter where you live. Just try to be overstocked in one caliber before you buy another gun. More ammo before more guns.

Energy needs can easily be met by a solar battery charger for $20 and a few rechargeable batteries along with some LED lights. My lantern using four D batteries (if true to advertising of similar brands) should get hundreds of hours of use per battery set. It takes at most two to four days to recharge the set. Using LED's requiring only AA or AAA it takes only a day to recharge a set of batteries, and the small flashlights giving out bright light gives literally dozens of hours of use per new battery. The $6 flashlight at Wal-Mart uses one AA battery and has a hook at the back end so you can have a flashlight and a hanging lamp to spotlight any work you are doing after dark. I just bought a set of LED flashlights at our local discount store for $8. One was a Maglight size using three D

batteries and the other was a penlight type using two AA. Aluminum, not plastic. That was my replacement set for the last conventional flashlights in my home. I threw out the worthless bastards. Only LED's from now on. When the grid goes down, LED's are the way to go. The bulb will never burn out with normal use and batteries last dozens to hundreds of times longer than conventional portable lights. If you have other more energy intensive appliances such as a laptop computer to read all the books you saved on CD's, you will need a solar panel, but even a few solar trickle chargers hooked up to a marine battery can work in a pinch. After your battery is charged hook up a couple of solar trickle chargers to keep it full. After you have used some juice they will only provide about two watts each (so the initial cost is about $10 per watt, more than a fifty watt panel would cost at $5 a watt, but less expensive to start with) so on a sunny day two of them give you about twenty watts which equals about twenty minutes of computer time on a 50 watt laptop computer. But after you buy the panel, the juice is free and more importantly you are free of the electrical grid or carbon fuels to feed a generator. And you can add panels as your budget allows. And if one fails or is damaged you have others unlike just having the one expensive panel (all your eggs in one basket).

Your sanitary needs can be cheaply and easily met with a composting sawdust toilet. No need to worry if your sewer stops working. Basic water needs can be met with about five gallons of water per person per day (drinking, sponge bathing, shaving, dish washing) assuming no long term emergency requiring less. A used 55 gallon barrel per person in the basement would be cheaper than buying gallons at the market at a buck each (but better than nothing if you are on a tight budget). Have a stockpile of paper plates and cups and utensils to save on dish washing (for regular emergencies such as a week of the grid being down). If you can't see massive stockpiles of everything, at least set aside a hall linen closet and stock a bit of everything. A few weeks worth of toilet paper, spare batteries, bleach, etc. Your kitchen should hold a good supply of non-perishable foods, above and beyond your survival stockpile. Nothing fancy, nothing expensive. Just stockpile up a bit at a time. I kept buying two extra cans of tuna every week for a total of a dollar (cheaper than a snack food) until I had so much friggin tuna I couldn't handle buying anymore (and I don't know the meaning of enough for survival supplies). It was a painless process. You can do a lot of preparedness shopping at your dollar store. Four D batteries for a $1, fifty cloths pins for a $1, bleach gallons, hundreds of safety pins, sewing kits, large cans of baked beans, coffee, etc., all for a buck each. You can prepare darn cheap between your dollar store, the Wal-Mart and the discount/damaged/discontinued store. Mail order and the Internet offer enough cheap selections to round out the process (and go to the Shotgun News website to find a cost +20% gun dealer in your area). Any everyday need you have can be had with very little preparation or cost. A washboard and a cloths line cost under $30. A composting sawdust toilet with lid and bucket cost about twenty bucks. Water storage is $1 a gallon with long lasting plastic and a two-three year shelf life. Light is as cheap as some LED's most under ten bucks. Transportation is under $100 for a Wal-Mart bicycle and spare parts. Heat can be a used cast iron stove with a large pile of free salvaged wood.

Plan on being where you are now when an emergency hits. It is only realistic. And

cheaper than that illusive dream of moving to the country. More realistic to move to a smaller city with a bigger lot to grow a garden. Then you keep a job. Or live in genteel poverty out in the country (but that means not having a mortgage). Learn to be realistic about what you can provide. Dreams are only worth pursuing if they don't endanger you or your family. Selling the house in the burbs and moving the family to the country without having an income already established is perhaps doing more harm than good. Staying in the (hopefully small) city with a job and the financial means to stockpile food supplies with no debt to enable the bank to take your home is a much wiser choice as long as you take some precautions to avoid the urban dangers of increased crime and the extra risk of fire. The country is peace and quiet, but the city is where the experts are that can help you survive. The city is where most of us live, so make plans accordingly.
END

WOOL
The choice for warm clothing
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I was born and raised in south and central coastal California. With the exception of a few times moving to odd areas such as Fort Bragg (CA) and Lake Tahoe, I was always warm. Always. A sweater or a light jacket was all I ever needed in winter, such as they were. My first duty station in the military was Hawaii. After that I moved to northern California on the coast to very mild winters. I was insulated from cold for over twenty five years. Even then when I re-upped in the Army for another tour and was stationed in Korea, the clothing was so good I rarely experienced discomfort except when the idiots threw me on top of a Hummer behind the M-60 for a night time tour and expected me to pay attention for "combatants" instead of turning into a popsicle. But that was just a few hours. With their wool socks and heavy sweater that was worn under a BDU top I could go out riding shotgun in an open jeep with my regular fatigues and hat with just a pair of gloves and be comfortable in five and ten degrees in January. Without a wind-chill. On top of the Hummer was a different matter. A few years in Oklahoma saw me safe and warm indoors as the first half of the nineties was the lowest end cost wise of carbon fuels for decades. It cost next to nothing to stay comfortable and I took advantage of that (and with gas at $1.10 a gallon I could drive an old '75 Ford 100 PU that got 7 miles to the gallon without a problem). Then I spent five years in Florida and while the humidity was foul electricity was only 7 cents a kilowatt hour and it was only fifty bucks a month to cool a mobile home. I had to pedal everywhere in that heat but I was only cold a few times when some cold air got down our way from the North every once in awhile. Then I moved to my present location in Northern Nevada. And even though we have mild winters, gas isn't cheap anymore. And wood is so scarce it cost $300 a cord for soft wood. And electricity is not cheap here (I think mostly as a result of Enron and screwing over the local utilities). So the old drafty travel trailer stays a bit on the cold side. And commutes to work are for a quarter of the year very uncomfortable. Piling on cotton and synthetic blend clothing is okay in the trailer, but outside called for some real warm clothing.

Now, I understand that Yankeeland gets really cold. Wet and cold. And the border with Canada in Montana, Idaho, North Dakota is better described as a lower level of Dante's Hell in the winter. Most folks not raised in California or the South know how to get through the winter. I assume. Or are you like me when I was in Oklahoma, largely living in a warm house, running out to a warm car and going to a warm building to work? If you are, then pay attention to this article. Even if you have lived your whole life in the path of the winds from the Arctic and work out of doors for a living, at least read the section on cleaning wool without the help of a dry cleaners. I am preaching nothing new here, just trying to get you to think about what you are going to need in winters to come

when you no longer have the luxury of working in a toasty office or driving to work in a heated car or even live in a house with central air and affordable heating fuel. Synthetic fabric really sucks when compared to wool, wool is natural and low tech to make and if you learn how to take care of it you will never want to go back to synthetics. As we have become almost 100% reliant on a cheap and abundant oil lifestyle we think nothing of cranking up the thermostat to a "sitting around in a short sleeve shirt watching TV" comfort level. We go outside literally only to play and we wear synthetics such as GoreTex to keep us warm because it is easy to clean. God forbid we actually work at anything such as cleaning clothes or research anything such as staying warm from layers. You see people living in cities in harsh climates wearing tennis shoes and a huge bulky jacket. They can do that due to living in controlled atmospheres. The old warm house to warm car to warm work. When oil gets a lot more expensive, and it will since if nothing else we will continue to inflate the dollar to buy all the goodies the government wants such as make work to keep us employed and not rioting, you will need to conserve fuels. You will need to warm yourself rather than the house. You may find yourself riding a bike in winter, like it or not. And it may be a cold walk to the unemployment office in the middle of winter as Ford and GM go bankrupt and the last factories in America go overseas to China

I easily get cold. Or maybe I just spend a lot of time out of doors in the winter compared to your average person (as far as actual indoor workers go). But I think that if whatever I do gets me warm, it should get almost anyone warm. And the only thing that works 100% for me is wool. Over freezing, I just layer in cotton and synthetics. Under freezing and I need to resort to an additional layer of wool. The old boots I bought from Payless Shoes for $25 a pair and the second pair at half price, they are now my snow boots. Since they are a synthetic material and don't breath I never wear them as they are not comfortable. However, since they act the same as rubber, they are perfect snow boots. One pair of cotton socks are good enough most days to keep my feet warm. Really cold days and I add a pair of wool socks over the cotton. This allows me to wear the wool socks longer between washings as coming up you will see what a pain it is to wash them. My legs rarely get cold as I bicycle and the blood flow warms them up nicely. I do have long johns I can wear if needed. If you are outside and not mobile, such as hunting, wool pants might be needed. The torso needs multiple layers. I can get away with just a shirt, sweater, jacket liner and jacket (I use an old Army jacket). If things get really cold I have plenty of wool sweaters. Cost, free to two bucks each from thrift stores. This is where you can take advantage of wools difficulty to clean. Most people won't bother with wool garments and donate to the thrift stores or sell at garage sales (in my opinion the only good things that come out of living in town is access to thrift stores and Super Wal-Mart). I have bought 100% wool sweaters for a $1.50 and that was without even looking through the whole rack, at the thrift store in town that didn't even carry that much clothing. If you really put your mind to it you could collect them cheap for post collapse sales (fall and winter are a good time to sell them at very dear prices). And sweaters are a heck of a lot cheaper than wool coats. I would still buy a coat, but a sweater under a synthetic can work in a pinch. A wool cap is excellent in keeping your melon toasty warm. I use one cap and nothing else such as the hood of a sweatshirt and in ten to fifteen

degrees with a wind I feel no cold at all. In contrast, a synthetic cap, my sweatshirt hood and even a scarf all in above freezing temps still can leave me cold if there is no sun and a wind. But that wool cap does wonders. For gloves I use wool as a glove liner if under freezing. Above with sun I can just wear the wool glove. Under freezing I need to put a shell over the wool gloves, but mainly this is due to my riding a bike and making my own wind chill. My hands are right out in front and get extra cold. I put a pair of GoreTex gloves over my wool gloves (leather would be better but that is what I had) and that works to about 15-20 degrees. Under that I need to switch to mittens, but the same set up of materials. Mittens keep your hands a bit warmer. Under 10-15 degrees, my hands are going to get cold riding a bike. I will try a double pair of wool under the shell next time it gets that cold. Perhaps that will do the trick. I did try the waterproof gloves (wet suit type material) and they work great with wool underneath, but expect lack of dexterity then. However, those gloves alone without the wool underneath are only good for above freezing wear.

Cleaning wool is where the real fun begins. Now, don't get me wrong. Wool is great for the survivalist. It stays oh so warm. It stays warm even when wet, a very desirable characteristic. And it is quit. No noise when it rubs up against something. And, important also, it is relatively cheap to buy. It might be two to four times as expensive as cotton, but it is cheaper than synthetic winter clothing. And you can even make it yourself low tech style if the need ever arises. But the drawbacks are that in hot weather it really is uncomfortable and it is difficult to clean compared to modern fabrics. We really are spoiled and used to convenience. Myself included. I only work forty hours a week. I have drastically cut back on TV watching. I have no social life. Yet, I find myself begrudging spending any time on life's little chores such as cooking or cleaning clothes. I eat a lot of convenience foods. My whole wheat bread now comes from the Wal-Mart bakery (it's a buck twenty a one pound loaf on the day old rack-tell me you wouldn't be tempted). So my wool cloths go to the dry cleaner for washing. It is painless and needs doing once a year. However, one day I'll be too poor for the dry cleaner or they won't be around due to the economy getting a round of buckshot from Cheney and his Halliburton butt buddies. Or you might need to clean weekly, say if you wear double wool socks everyday outside. So, to cleaning. First, the hottest you want your water is lukewarm. Cold is just fine, but no more than lukewarm. If you want your clothing to shrink to Barbie doll size, introduce heat in either washing or drying. No hot water. No hot air drying. Simple, and cheap as an added bonus. Use a very mild soap. Dish washing soap is good. You can get a 38 ounce bottle at the dollar store, so stock up now both for dishes and wool cleaning after the stores are burned down in a former Welfare recipient orgy of self destructiveness. Then you hand wash. Do not wring or twist. Very gentle. This is not your wife's booby. It will take grotesque and awful permanent shapes if you mistreat while washing or drying. For such a great fabric it is very sensitive during washing. Almost like Hunk Hoagan only using a loofa to wash with (and only oatmeal soap). After hand washing and rinsing without wringing or twisting, set on a towel flat without wrinkles (you guessed it, wrinkles will produce permanent reshaping). Myself, I would use two towels. The first to get out all the water, by blotting. The second to lay on while drying. Remember, no wrinkles, lying flat. Half way through the drying, turn

over the garment or the side not exposed to air will be a bit musty. I would also turn over the towel or replace it to give a dryer surface. Do not place next to the fireplace or heater and do not place directly in the sun to dry while wet. I would place it in the sun after it is dry to make it smell good and disinfect it, but only when dry. Always place the item flat. Hanging it up "burns in" the shape of what it is hanging from and the garment will stretch out longer and stay that way. Blocking has been suggested, where you fill the item with a replica of your body part such as a cardboard outline of your hand. Don't do that as the edges of the cardboard will permanently crease the fabric. I would only do it if you had a mannequin in your size, and who has one of those around? Just lie flat with no wrinkles. Smooth out by hand to assure this, a flat raking motion. Boy, don't you wish you could take the darn thing to the dry cleaner?

Now that you can't wait to run out and buy a bunch of cloths that require special treatment on wash day, to the details on purchasing. Really though, try wool for the first time and you will realize how much better it is for winter wear. The extra effort is worth it. As I said, sweaters are readily available at the thrift store. Almost all other items you are going to have to buy through mail order. Retail stores might carry them. I don't know, I don't shop them. Even Wal-Mart only gets my clothing business for socks and underwear and slacks for work. Everything else comes from thrift stores. And I hate clothes shopping anyway. Mail order is much more fun shopping, as in "oh what a bargain" fun and "oh how easy" fun. I really like the part about being so smart and getting better bargains than anyone else. You paid HOW much from Mervyns? Hah, hah. The company I have really had good luck with is Sportsman’s Guide. Really good prices. Now, once, they did screw up my order. I ordered 800 rounds of 303 surplus (I believe for $140) and by buying that double amount you were supposed to get a free wooden box for storage with it. Instead, I got two cardboard boxes of 400 rounds each. And they shorted me ten rounds (yes, I counted them). However, their previous service and prices were so favorable that I forgave them and continue to patronize them. I bring this up to let you know that while they are not perfect, they are darn close. Plus, almost any other company and I would not be as forgiving. That is how good they are. And the web site is really easy to use (fast with pictures even for dial-up). How good are their bargains? Just yesterday a pair of Doc Martins were going for fifty bucks!! I am going from memory so give me a little leeway, but the wool caps were three for $12, the mittens were five for $12 (same with gloves), socks were three pairs for $14. Not wool, but a great bargain were three pairs of thermal underwear pants for about $12. I'm sure I have ordered more than those clothes and the ammo but that is what comes to mind. I didn't buy one but they had 100% wool jackets for $20!! They offer a sporting catalog but they also have a military surplus catalog were all the really good stuff is. Try to get that. I don't think you will be disappointed, go to their web site.
END

THE COMING IRANIAN OIL BOURSE

A challenge to the dollar hegemony

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This weeks article was going to address the best weapons to stockpile for after a total collapse of civilization. And I even have about a quarter of it written. However, I am going to send that to you next week as I thought this matter was a little more topical. I normally will ignore current events to avoid talking about the subject of the week, something chat rooms handle quite well, as does Survival Blog. This week however I want to talk about an event that will be taking place in about three weeks and thought that while it won't instantly start Armageddon it might effect your day to day life and should be addressed. Nothing like the pumps running dry to challenge your livelihood and lifestyle. Which is one of the reasons I always harp on Peak Oil. This coming event just poses a threat to short term supply, a repeat of the 70's oil supply shock. Every aspect of the economy crippled by lack of fuel. All prices for petroleum products quadrupling. No big deal, keep driving that SUV, no need to panic. Seriously, this is really just a repeat of Katrina. Short term supply disruptions might happen. I am only warning you to keep the tank filled and have a few cans of gas in the garage, plus order any bulky items through the mail now to lock in delivery prices now just in case. This could be the start of something major, or just another non-crisis. But it wouldn't hurt to have a small stockpile of gasoline stored by, just in case. You would spend the money on gas anyway so the cans are your only cost. At Wal-Mart gas cans are about $5 for a five gallon can. If your road hog gets fifteen miles per gallon, the cost of three or four cans will double your range from 250 miles to 500. Cost of cans, $20. Option to avoid the gas station lines, priceless. If you are lazy but still read my weekly blather for some reason, you can stop reading now as the following is mostly politics and economics. Just stockpile some extra gas now, before the rush gets underway. And order any bulky heavy items mail order now to get cheaper prices. If nothing happens you have some extra gas cans. If gasoline supply disruptions occur then you have an edge over the clueless masses. For better preps long term you'll have to read the whole article.

On March 20th Iran is going to open a marketplace to sell oil for Euros. They are not just going to price their own oil in that currency, they want a market mechanism that will encourage other producers and buyers to exchange for something other than dollars. When oil is no longer priced in dollars the US is in a position where it may not be able to borrow the money it needs from foreigners. And it needs to borrow money, something along the lines of a quarter of our operating budget for the bloated Federal government. But can it go to war to discourage Iran from this course of action? Iraq has all the soldiers we can spare and we are still losing the fight over there. We could just pull them all out and hop them over to Iran, but that would be going from the frying pan into the fire. And what if China or Russia agree to help Iran? It would most likely take the form

of non-military help, but in the end we can't totally disregard those two nuclear armed powers and the threat they could be. Russia could still fight us, or supply a country that did. And China is an economic threat to us as well as armed with nukes. Will China stand by as we threaten their energy supply? Will Russia stay calm as we encircle their southern flank by conquering and occupying one country after another? Will Iran attack a few oil carriers entering the Straight of Hormuz and block further traffic? Will we attack at all or just accept the lesser of evils (dollar collapse verses nuclear war)? Do we have a surprise economic defense? Do we engage in a limited non-nuclear strike? Wipe out all the suspected nuclear sites and amongst them the computer building for the new Oil Euro Bourse (OEB). The Feds have given us very little to go on here. They constantly harp on the supposed dangers of Iran getting nuclear weapons so that could be cover for an attack. But they also plan on ceasing the publication of M3 data on March 23, 2006. Three days after the OEB opens, we stop telling the world how big our money supply is, leading one to believe mega-inflation will take the place of foreign borrowing to pay the bills (hyper-inflation could still be down the road a bit).

And for all we know OEB could be nothing but bluff. Perhaps the rest of the world is not interested in getting rid of their dollars and getting Euros. Not that they want a currency depreciating at about 7-10% a year in real terms, issued by the worlds largest debtor nation. But just the fact that they hold so many Greenbacks means they already have an accepted means of trade for oil and may just prefer business as usual. A nation can't just pump all the oil it needs in to big holding tanks. Most do have a strategic reserve, a few days or weeks use worth of oil stored to even out disruptions in supply. Ours came in helpful after Katrina, and Europe sold us some of theirs after the price went to $70 a barrel to cash in on the high prices. Without reserves the price at the pump would have been a lot higher. But countries can't store all the oil they need in the future so they store the currency they need to buy the oil. In this case it is dollars as both the New York and the London exchange price in dollars and facilitate the trade in dollars. Both parties in the oil trade use dollars on the worlds two oil exchanges. Iran wants to open its own exchange, but using Euros. If used, the two parties trading would need Euros. The buyer would most likely hoard Euros for future buying. And when you hoard a currency for future use, you hold the paper that gives you some return. So instead of holding the actual currency, you hold debt that pays interest. From the US this is our Treasury Bonds. In effect, the world holds our debt so they can buy oil in the future. They care that we are financed so we continue to buy all the goods they produce, sure, but I think it mostly has to do with being able to buy oil in the future. Oil is not just the economy and heat in the winter, oil is life itself as it grows our crops. To political leaders, oil keeps the population content and the leaders stay in power. I don't think they give two figs if the oil runs out, it only means they must find another opiate for the masses. In China it is employment, in the US it is cheap abundant food and entertainment.

My current pet theory is that oil is our new gold that backs the dollar. After we went off the gold standard and lost Vietnam right after that, our economy went into the toilet. Ten years later our economy was on the way to recovery. How? My theory, soon to be replaced by anything making any kind of sense, would answer that by pointing to our new

oil supplies. After Alaska and from our new buddies in the UK the North Sea, we had oil again, OPEC lost their hold over us and we were able to buy cheaply world wide as the rush at exploration in the seventies began to flood the market with supply. Just for the record, there won't be that kind of supply again. We have been lagging in discovery far too long, decades. After the Saudi field starts dropping in yield we are on the down side of global production (I feel that was winter '05, but then I am really paranoid). But what else would explain why the dollar never sank, why our economy ever recovered? Sure, Reagan started to slow down the printing presses and borrowing against our grandchildren to pay our bills, but can that explain our economic recovery? The national lifeblood, our factories, were closing or going overseas. We were in terminal decline. The dollar in some years saw 20% inflation. Going from the global leading lender to its debtor explains a lot. But I think our new oil infusion explains it better. We once again secured a reliable source of oil and it replaced the job gold used to have, backing the dollar. In itself, all currencies are almost totally worthless. They must be backed by something. Ours is backed by our oil, our allies oil, and the oil we either protect with our military (Saudi in particular) or steal with our military (Iraq). We don't even own most of the oil, we just control it through our vast and bloated military. Our military is bigger than the rest of the worlds armed might combined. We don't need that for defense. We need it to secure the backing of our currency. The two thousand poor bastards in Iraq that lost their lives and the fifteen thousand that were maimed did so not because a soccer mom wanted to cruise in her SUV, but so our entire nation isn't living in the Stone Age (which we will be soon enough when we run out of oil). So I guess in one way our troops really are defending our lives. Without oil and the economy it provides most of us would be dead from rioting and starvation.

So you can see the concern over losing control of the oil marketplace. Our dollar would go into terminal decline. I mean, it will anyway. We all know our empire is doomed. It started down the road to ruin in 1971 when our currency became worthless. It had a final nail put in its coffin in 1975 when we left Vietnam with our tail between our legs. The only problem is that no one got around to burying the sucker and it is stinking up the joint. Look at our military performance since Vietnam. Grenada, Panama, a few air strikes here and there. The Gulf War was an international rush to secure the oil. Everyone ponied up and paid us to go kick the butt of the evil invader threatening the oil supply. The only reason we won using WWII tactics was because Iraq used WWI tactics. If we fight anyone using tactics not involving trenches we would lose. Britain ruled the world by using machine guns against flintlock rifles. They lost control of it by fighting other Industrial nations using machine guns. They won the war but lost their economy by going broke fighting. We entered into the superpower race by our economic might enabling us to produce more machineguns than anybody else. We lost when we drained our treasury to fight a long colonial war far away, after we tried to win an arms race against the Soviet Union. We beat the Soviets because their economy was sicker than ours. We can't beat an unorganized mob because they don't need a lot of machineguns to defeat us. They just keep up the fight and wait for us to drain the treasury again. It cost an insurgent an AK47 and some explosives plus some bread to tie up a company of US fighters equipped with high tech toys costing millions, supported by other soldiers, all flown or shipped overseas.

Even if Uncle Sam is getting a bulk rate discount, at a million rounds expended to kill one insurgent it is quite costly to kill the enemy in ammunition costs alone. Heck, every time we turn around Bush wants another $150 Billion to keep the war going. On top of our usual half a trillion a year to keep our military. We need to maintain the status quo at all costs and it is starting to show in ever higher cost and less effect.

It seems to me we will do whatever is necessary to stop the threat to our dollar no longer being the global currency. We have to. It is the only way for our economy to survive. We have gone past the point where much else is going to work. We already sent all of our manufacturing over to China. The Unions are being destroyed because of that. Our wages are being driven down in real buying power. Even outsourcing served as a wake up call to the service industry to accept stagnant wages. We still are at the point of twenty years ago where Hollywood movies and farm products are our only exports. We have no economy to speak of globally other than that of consumers. We need to buy with degraded dollars since we have little in the way of exports to buy anything. If Iran or anyone else for that matter threatens the standing of the dollar they threaten the economy of our country. Without that dominance we lose oil. Without being able to import 75% of our oil we freeze in the dark. More importantly, those in power are dethroned. We need a military to secure the oil that backs the dollar that buys the military that secures the oil. The dollar must remain dominant or all else fails in the system. So, March 20th is an important date. You might want to circle it in red on the calendar. It could all fizzle out to be nothing. Or it could be the start of a huge conflict. So what can you do in a mere three weeks to prepare for the demise of the dollar other than securing a bit more gasoline?

I would first take care of the basics. Beans and bullets. Get some more grains and beans stocked up if you don't have enough. Buy all the ammo you can spare or at least some reloading supplies. Then try to drain your bank account down to the lowest amount you are comfortable with. If the banks declare a holiday your cash in pocket is a much bigger help than being in the bank. If you have too much cash but enough grain and guns, buy some precious metals. Gold if you can but at least some silver. Precious metals might never gain in dollar amount but they never lose buying power (although truer for gold which is almost all monetary value versus silver which has a lot of industrial uses). This is all stuff you are going to buy anyway, sometime in the future. I am just saying to accelerate your timetable a bit. Nothing might happen. Or something could. So go ahead and just turn your extra cash into prep supplies now rather than later. If you are dirt poor just go ahead and get those cans of gas. Get a few more cans of beans at the market. And prepare a BOB bag or two. It can't hurt to plan on going on a camping trip the first of spring if need be. No one at work will suspect a thing (unlike at Y2K). Nothing happens you took a vacation and have a stockpile of gas for future supply disruptions. If you don't get fuel stabilizer for the gas only store it for about a month, then use it up and replace it. Remember, this could be very important, but it could also be nothing. Don't do anything hasty such as quit your job and sandbag your house. Just keep a close eye on things, try to accelerate your prep buying and stock up on some gasoline (a good idea anyway since Katrina). I hope I am merely over paranoid this time and it all comes to naught. I want

that long slow decline of civilization, not a sudden jolt such as a depression when the dollar falls off the cliff. But we shall see.
END

POST-APOCALYPSE ARSENAL
Best weapons for after we return to the Stone Age
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Civilization is a rather delicate flower. Technology is a helpful by-product of it (well, the two are chicken-and-egg as one helps the other and they thrive together). And many things can disrupt them. A too quick decline in our petroleum supply and we won't have time to re-teach ourselves how to live by solar power again. Today more than ever there are more nuclear weapons in more unstable hands (don't tell me Israel is stable-they are too paranoid being surrounded by enemies, and the US will soon be very unstable economically). However remote the possibility, an asteroid large enough to seriously damage humans is always a threat. As is a Super Volcano (one conveniently located in survivalist country in Wyoming). An earthquake serious enough could damage enough expensive real estate in Los Angeles to start a chain reaction in the downward spiral of the housing bubble. A serious earthquake in Japan in Tokyo could disrupt the Japanese economy enough that they needed to liquidate all their paper to rebuild and so almost a trillion dollars in US debt would be returned to us for payment, seriously hurting our economy. One major landslide from an Atlantic island (a mild one happened before) could send enough water to wipe out most of the East Coast and while I would appreciate Washington DC being swept away I don't look forward to the end of our country or economy. Now, most of these events are not likely to happen. But they could. I mean, frankly, I can't see how we haven't already had a nuclear exchange. No one could have told me beforehand that the Soviet Union would peacefully give up its Muslim Republics and East European Bloc. I would have thought a war was in the making. And after that happened, now everyone and his brother has nuclear weapons. It would not surprise me if Iran gets/got nukes clandestinely from either China or Russia to put a brake on Uncle Sugars middle east real estate power grab. Russia could "allow" a arms dealer to black market purchase a batch of weapons that were already reported missing fifteen years ago after the Soviet breakdown. They could even "discover" evidence later on supporting the theory they were part of long ago missing batch (kind of like we "discover" an electric short on board an airline after witnesses see a missile attack or when we "discover" one guy detonated a fertilizer bomb outside a building that only could have collapsed through internal structural blast charges). I don't blame Russia one bit either. We are out of control over there. And if things get bad enough nuclear weapons could be used. And if things escalate...

Civilizations can and have collapsed before. The Roman Empire took three hundred years to collapse, but when it did it took another thousand years to get things right again. The Mayan civilization took about one hundred fifty years to collapse but today a bunch of poor Indigenous' scrape a pitiful living from the top of the jungle covering the old

pyramids, a serious collapse if ever there was one. If our present civilization was built on petroleum and coal and fissionable materials then in the absence of those substances it stands to reason that the whole structure will collapse. We are at peak oil, past peak natural gas, and in a few short years of desperate use might see peak coal and uranium. As there is far more population to support on the downside, the curve on the right will fall a lot quicker than the one on the left went up. We will use what is left a lot quicker than we used the first half (the easy stuff to get). Right now everything looks peaches and cream, just ducky, all rosy. We are at the maximum use of petroleum at the top of our supply curve. The world is awash in the black gold, SUV's crowd the streets that lay over farm land. 4,000 square foot houses are warmed to a toasty level with natural gas. Our military is in almost every country around the globe. But we are borrowing all the money we need to pay for it all. Either from foreign banks or our future generations. And we are powering it all from oil sold to us at the point of a gun. And daily our potential enemies get stronger as we get weaker. Lack of oil and arsenals of nuclear weapons and fiat money economies all make for a very dangerous toxic brew. It can only end badly. So is it preposterous to think perhaps civilization just might collapse? However bad the odds does not mean it won't happen. I think civilization could very well collapse. If it doesn't I will happily go back to working forty hours a week at a meaningless job to pay all the worthless parasites in my life. But if it does I think I should have a minimum of preparedness supplies on hand to deal with the possibility. So I would like to address the best arsenal to have when the stores close down and never reopen. When the factories shut down and the machinery rusts. When the Industrial Age fails to provide our basic necessities anymore. When the only economy left is cottage industry, when the only metal left is our fleet of fuel-less cars. When we are back in the Stone Age.

I have written before on the desirability of the .22 rimfire as a post-apocalypse weapon. The only problem it had was it was too small of a round to take down dangerous game such as bears, cats and man. But the rounds were so cheap one could stockpile a thousand at a time for a mere $20 plus more importantly afford to practice every weekend for just a few bucks. And with practice you could hit vital areas. But I think the biggest plus for a rimfire was the low ammo cost. In a post-apocalyptic environment, there are going to be no other ammo supplies. Just what you have stockpiled. You might have a thousand rounds of 308 stockpiled, but when they are gone, that is it. Finished. No more firepower. For the same amount of money as the thousand rounds of 308 you could buy ten thousand rounds of .22. Now don't get me wrong, I am not saying that a rimfire is a great survivalist gun. I am saying that after all your other ammo is gone you need a fall back plan. If it was a choice between a .22 rifle and a flintlock rifle I would pick the .22 due to its lack of smoke and noise, its ease of reloading and its ability to fire in inclement weather. Even with its lack of knockdown power. A round to the enemies face or neck or crotch might not kill him but it will preoccupy him for a time and then I can escape. I realize this is not the greatest solution so the rimfire arsenal does have problems. However, if you add another weapon to the equation you somewhat counterbalance the weak points of the rimfire. You can use the .22 to get game, harass the enemy so you can escape and in general use as your primary weapon. However, for closer encounters with larger more dangerous mammals you may want a larger round. You can use almost

anything to outperform a rimfire but lets keep it cheap, under a hundred bucks. A war surplus bolt action or a single shot shotgun. A reader wrote offering the idea that the shotgun was the ideal survivalist weapon. He listed several reasons I will share with you later. It was sound logic. It was not the perfect solution, obviously. Everything is a compromise. There is no perfect weapons system that will survive generations past a civilization melt down. There are only better compromises. One might be a rimfire and shotgun combination.

Of course you can use what you already have. If you already have a 357 revolver that is a decent enough stopping round and as important you can carry it comfortably with you as well as the 22 rifle. A revolver can also use rounds with black powder. That might be a consideration. Auto pistols are going to be too picky in their powder requirements, but not revolvers. The same with bolt action rather than semi-auto in rifles. However, for the combo we are talking about here, the rimfire with a man stopper, keep weight in mind. Having a war surplus rifle and a 22 rifle both plus their ammunition would be bulky, cumbersome and heavy. Having the 22 rifle, a 357 revolver and even a 22 pistol thrown in there would not be. Nor would the rimfire rifle and a shortened single barrel shotgun. If you don't already have a small light weight man stopper, consider the single shot shotgun. Sold at Wal-Mart for about $95, it can be shortened by cutting down the barrel (if desired) or at least by turning the stock into just a pistol grip. With your shotgun now much shorter and easier to handle you can throw it over your shoulder on a sling or have it in a holster on the side of your backpack. Of course, I prefer the single shot for its cheapness and simplicity in parts. You may wish to go with a pump. Just remember the weight gain. It may not be too important standing in front of the gun shop display, beer belly hitting the counter, beads of sweat on your forehead from the Tabasco and jalapeno hot dog you just ate from the sidewalk vender out front, SUV waiting outside with your overweight wife waiting impatiently since you didn't have the common decency to buy her one of the friggin hot dogs and if you don't feed her soon she is going to embarrass you both by going to the McDonalds drive through and order way too many Big Macs which everybody knows is just for her big lumpy ass and not like they are for a party like on the commercials where young hipsters eat the road kill fast food slop for snacks so you hurry up and buy the biggest shotgun they have because it holds eight rounds and has a cool attachment for a flashlight and a laser sight and even a little mirror on it so you can admire your studdly Rambo like appearance carrying it but then when you are stuck up to your flabby ass in mud trying to escape the jack booted Fed thugs carrying everything you own and as many weapons as you can carry, the wife stuck back at the suburban castle since she couldn't run fast enough but it ain't much of a problem since frankly none of the FedGoons are going to molest her and they sure as heck don't want to take her to the reeducation camp in fear she will eat way too much and then the camp caloric allotment is going to get screwed and the boss will not get his appointment to Homeland Security but be stuck in the Education Department forever and really be unpleasant to work with and you can only crush so many kittens at the Constitutionalists homes you are raiding to compensate for your small penis and unpleasant work situation, well, then you are going to realize you should have been a little more worried about how much that shotgun weighed.

But even a single shot shotgun can be a very versatile weapon. You can use different size shot or slugs, thus being able to hunt just about everything. As long as you grab a double aught shell instead of a birdshot shell you can kill your two legged threats. You can easily substitute shot if you are out by loading with scrap metal. Black powder can be used if you run out of regular powder. You might even be able to substitute primers by inserting a bulletless rimfire round into a modified shotgun round if you have to. The shell is large enough to play with for modification if need be. You should even be able to substitute the plastic with heavy paper if it ever gets down to it. Clearly, these things can't be done with most other ammunition by your average survivalist without specialized tools or knowledge. I'm sure some of you out there could home bake your own cases for any gun if needed, your own smokeless powder or primers. But your average Joe doesn't have the inclination to get that far into the learning curve. Total civilization melt down is a remote possibility after all. If it were a little more of a sure thing we would all have taken out a third mortgage to finance our own tool and die shop on that remote mountain top in our concrete bunker. However, things most likely being more of the same (slow decline) it behooves most of us to just take minimal preparation steps and buy a rimfire rifle and a simple shotgun for $200 total and worry about the other stuff later. The point of buying the shotgun is possible ammunition substitution down the road for the mechanically challenged. It is the ammunition easiest to use modified components with for those not very skilled. Anyone can cut the top off a 12 gauge round with a razor blade, dump the birdshot and fill with fishing weights held together in a string by fishing line to get that cool whipping chain effect, then close with a seal of wax if a shotshell reloader is not available. Or substituting the plastic wad with a bit of cardboard and dumping in bits of nails and screws. Try doing that with another type of ammunition.

Everyone already has their primary survival gun. Those well heeled financially might have an M14 or HK91. Others will outfit themselves with war surplus guns at less cost than the aforementioned spend just on magazines. A few misguided souls will still cling superstitiously to their AR15 for no other rational reason than it is the military issued weapon. Yeh, the FedGov has the welfare of our troops in mind and so issues them only the best equipment. Sure, maybe back in WWII. Not even close now. The M16 is a vile piece of crap. The sidearm 9mm is a pea shooter. The M60 would have been an embarrassment to the Italian or French government. And what is this I hear about the BDU (themselves worthless) being replaced with a uniform having Velcro pockets? Is it me or are our troops being issued crap in all forms from weapons to uniforms to training? And we pay half a trillion dollars a year for all of it. Insane. So, just because our military has it is no reason for you to own it. The Soviet Union was if anything less concerned with its troops welfare than we are and at least they got a decent assault rifle. I would carry an SKS before I ever thought about an AR15. And you can buy five of them for the price of one AR. Anyway, we all have our favorite gun all sitting there and looking pretty and waiting for the balloon to go up. We clean and caress it and pose with it. It is an extension of our lost and buried reptilian nature. Nothing wrong with it and everything right even if it is expensive to use but you should have your back up weapons. Get yourself that rimfire rifle (tube fed means no magazine costs and a loading tube can be

some PVC pipe) and have a backup weapon easy to load with improvised shot and powder. You can take the 22 out on the weekend for some cheap and fun practice and it will always be there for you if things go seriously wrong. Just make sure you have the ammo already at hand. Buy a box a week for ten bucks. In a year you will have almost thirty thousand rounds at very little financial pain. That should last you and your descendants quite a few years after civilization ends.

Another companion to the rimfire might be a black powder revolver. After you purchased it and several replacement cylinders the only cost would be a bullet mold and the primers. Not the cheapest solution. You are better off with the shotgun for that. But it does give you a multiple shot weapon you can brew your own powder for. The replacement cylinders are going to run you more than the gun most likely, but silly not to have as reloading will not be easy or fast. The cheapest I have seen was about two hundred bucks from Dixie but I am unaware if that model had replaceable cylinders. If the darn thing costs five hundred bucks I see no point in considering it as you could buy a lot of better modern weapons for that amount. But $200 and $60 cylinders seem doable on a budget. The disadvantages of black powder (smoke giving away your position and long range inaccuracy) do not apply to pistols. While more technological than flintlock (anyone can brew their own powder AND ignition) the duplication of primitive primers should not be that hard. After all, the first primers were made in the first half of the 19th century. We are in the 21st. Anyone with a little study should have the ability to replace black powder primers. Modern primers that do not hurt brass cases are of course another matter. So in theory your black powder revolver should be able to stay firing long after the last computer dies and the last cup of refined petroleum is burned. Those that are totally paranoid and crapping bricks at the thought of immediate nuclear winter wiping out all life forms on the planet should of course just stick with flintlocks, both pistol and rifle, and plan on living in their dugout amongst the fifty year supply of wheat they have (not that that is such a bad idea at roughly only $3k for the wheat before container and pesticide cost). But just like the 22, BP pistols are a long term, last ditch weapon. You have them for when the ammunition for the good stuff runs out. For when there are no more reloading supplies. If a post-apocalypse gun industry never starts up. But even if you never have to rely on those, a 22 is always handy to have around for pest control and plinking. And a shotgun or 357 or BP revolver can be handed down to your kids or grandchildren. Nothing is going to go to waste here other than perhaps some 22 rounds and that only if you stock way too many. I plan on getting an immediate 5,000 and then buying a box every two weeks until I have 15-20k. I inventoried my ammo last month and found I only had 500 rounds of rimfire for my pistol. Shameful. But as my tax return cash is burning a hole in my pocket I shall upgrade my neglected arsenal (not much added since Y2K). Right now Wal-Mart has the cheaper rimfires as clip fed only. The tube fed start at $125. You can special order, or go shop around at pawn shops. I just paid the extra and didn't sweat it too much. But of course that difference was 1,000 rounds. I know, I know. Sometimes Wal-Mart isn't the best place to shop, as hard as it is to believe.

I would hope most of you already have a weapon you can use to supplement a rimfire. I

have a 357 myself. When that runs out it is down to a 22 revolver. But I just can't see adding a shotgun to that. If I didn't already have the 357, sure. But as it is, I spent an additional $250 for my post-apocalypse arsenal. $150 (after FedGoon check) for a Marlin 22 and $100 for 5k+ of ammo. I can't remember what I spent for the two revolvers as it was seven years ago. But yesterday I spent that extra. I could have shopped around and spent half that for a used rimfire and half the ammo if I hadn't had the spare cash. I know the March 20th dead line for the Iranian Oil Bourse is nowhere near as sexy as the Y2K deadline but its the next best thing I have and so am reenacting my shopping spree to a smaller degree. I have my gas cans ready to fill. Today I go to the gun store for primers and powder. I got another 100 pounds of rice, 50 of flour. Hey, its better than leaving the cash sitting around waiting for Uncle Sam to kill it with inflation. Some years you can count on up to 10% lost buying power, other years it is at least twice the official rate. I go on the assumption that the yearly minimum is 7%. How else do you think we pay to occupy the middle east? Taxes?? Stop it, you're slaying me!! You only get slaughtered at tax time if you buy high dollar items or earn too much (enough to be middle class, but under the amount where you can afford a CPA). How many of us have that problem? Maybe the readers of SurvivalBlog. Not the skinflints that read this rag. I earn $20k a year, live on $5k (Uncle Sam, ex-wife, court ordered medical insurance for my kids who live across the country and so can't even use it get the other three quarters) and got back all my Fed tax and some of my SS too (so, with the return I get $7k a year income to spend on optional items like food). If it wasn't for gratuities at work I couldn't buy these extras like the rimfire rifle. I'm making hay while the sun shines. You should too.
END

DIRT CHEAP CLOTHS WASHING
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I love cheap alternatives. My cheap alternative to a thirty year mortgage is a travel trailer, used. It cost me just over a grand after repairs. The trick is to buy one without the self-containment features which everyone wants. My beautiful old 18' trailer with an immaculate interior won't sell because it has no fresh water tank and the water line to the toilet was capped off. I can't get half what its worth. But by using the same logic against the seller I bought a twenty year old 35 foot trailer for $700. My cheap alternative to a five year note on a car is a bike from Wal-Mart. When I do buy a car it is in good shape but cheap. I have an old 1960's bread van (looks like a UPS truck) that was already converted to an "RV". It has a fold out bed and a counter with sink. The refrigerator is a bolted down metal ice chest. No one would touch the thing, it was advertised over a month. I loved it. An old Chevy (hate Fords), stick shift (auto tranny too expensive) and a newer engine. $750, double that after a brake job. I can live anywhere a notch above tent camping if I have to. And I just bought a 20 year old Oldsmobile. I don't need it, I still bike to work and everywhere else. But I take it out once a week to pick up bulky items and shop at Costco for bulk meat when needed. I pick up items such as poly buckets and bags of wheat. The Chevy would have done it, but the Olds gets much better gas mileage and easier to drive. Cost, $500 and another $75 at the DMV for registration and plates. And an additional $20 a month insurance. Cheaper than renting a car, at least until it needs major repairs. I was in no hurry to buy, the deals always happen after a time. I also bought land real cheap. $400 each for three lots (trailer lots, 1/8 acres each). One in Arizona, one in Texas, one in Arkansas. I just kept looking on E-Bay until I found the bargains. My one acre in Elko, NV was of course much more, $3k. But it is close to my folks and darn cheap for Nevada. Only three miles from the river and ten miles from town with an existing road. I have employment, water without a well, and far enough away from the general population. I can even just use a bike if need be in the future to get into town. So for what it does for me it was darn cheap. I still haven't moved on to it yet, but it awaits me for when I need it.

A cheap alternative exists for everything. Rather than buy semi-autos in 308, buy older war surplus bolt actions in odd calibers so much cheaper the ammo cost is not a factor. Instead of a self sufficient farm in the country you pay on monthly, stockpile a lot of grain and live on a junk piece of land you bought for cash. Instead of buying $1,000 worth of solar panels, generators and batteries to light your trailer by 12 volt with, buy an LED lantern for $30, a battery solar charger for $25 and some D size rechargeables for another $30. A few more small LED flashlights that use one AA battery and have a hook to hang them from will act as smaller lights and cost $6 each from Wal-Mart. Now you have light with no kerosene to buy. Buying canned meat, or better yet drying your own each

summer, makes much more economic sense than buying air or freeze dried meat from a mail order company. If you want it to last five years (the home dried) get a $60 vacuum sealer. I would of course dry them completely, not like the moist crap from the store where chemicals keep the mold down. Even buying an electric dryer rather than building your own solar dryer, and the vacuum packer, still cheaper than buying freeze dried mystery meat. Cheap cloths are at any thrift store. Not torn jeans but slacks. Plenty of T-shirts but also a lot of dress shirts. Generally not a great shoe selection but between Wal-Mart and Payless Shoes you can buy them cheap enough new. Underwear new is $1.50 and socks $1, so I wouldn't even think about getting those used. Some things are too nasty to share. Even bulletproofing your home can be cheap. Get used tires for free (they usually need to pay to get them hauled away) and fill them with dirt as you are stacking them like bricks. If you want them to look nice, plaster. You can even get roofing material out of it if you want water proofing rather than fire proofing. You just need to substitute the criteria of labor saving with that of money saving. So, would you like to spend just $60 and have a cloths washer and dryer, great for use off the grid and totally solar powered?

Of course the cloths dryer is easy. A cloths line in the summer and when overcast a rack in front of the fire in the winter. Line and some pins are a few bucks. If you want a free standing line, a few bucks worth of cement will anchor a pole. Use some left over or free lumber. I rank machine cloths dryers right up with SUV's as grotesque energy wasters, being needed for no other reason than pure damn laziness and our total disconnect from our environment (being a wack job tree hugger environmentalist is not the same thing as being aware of our need to live with Mother Nature- the former is a clueless politically correct communist and the later is just using common sense to see our species survives). I am not saying anyone is evil for using a mechanical dryer. Some of us have no other choice due mostly to zoning and poor housing design. I'm just saying it is just another symptom of our cluelessness as a nation over energy and its proper role. We look at it as a means to luxury when we should be viewing it as how we eat and work and how our grandchildren will do the same. But that would ask our wonderful leaders to both think and to think long term, and I can lay money on the table that ain't going to happen. We used natures bounty to conquer the world rather than remaking it into something a whole lot better. Of course in all fairness we did have to worry about those satanic bastards the Soviets. If we didn't actually give them the knowledge of the Bomb. Or course we also could have listened to Patton and gone in there and wiped out the Soviet Union after we were done with Germany. Although even better would have been to not get involved in the war and let the Fascist bastards kill off the Commie bastards and profited off both sides and then moved in and taken over the whole place. We could have had secret diplomatic talks with Hitler the day of Pearl Harbor. Leave us alone, sue for peace with England, we sell you petrol to fight the Russians. Or something along those lines. There was no need to get into war both in Europe (of course we also did force Japan to attack us) and afterwards with the Cold War. We could have stayed isolationist. In that we can also blame Wilson, the little sanctimonious bastard may he burn in Hell. Our involvement in World War I was so unneeded one can only guess our newly crowned national bank wanted money a lot faster than inflating a gold backed currency allowed. Oh, well. The

ruling class have been screwing us over almost a hundred years and we are all a bunch of happy frogs swimming in our pots of boiling water (you know, the old tale of warming the water up slowly so the frog doesn't jump out). Instead of being depressed, however, learn the best revenge-independence from the bastards. Unhooking from the grid one appliance at a time is sweet indeed. One or two less ill gotten dollars for the utility conglomerate and less power to the State that "regulates" them (read, gets campaign contributions to allow the utility to raise rates at will). As a bonus each dollar held back means it will be that much harder for the sons and daughters of the elite to get an ivory tower degree and further the cycle of economic dominance. Perhaps they might even have to get a real job such as flipping hamburgers (I could point out the irony of McDonalds being one of the better paying jobs around now, but I digress enough).

The cloths washer is of course not as easy. For the longest time I was aware of only two methods one could use to wash by hand. One was a washboard, cheap but really labor intense and if cold water was used, really uncomfortable. The other way was the James Washer, an enclosed tub you rocked back and forth to agitate the cloths. But it was really friggin expensive. Then there came along the vacuum washer, a small (one pair of pants at a time) unit that took hot water to create a vacuum to force water through fabric. Alas, the small size of the unit and the need for hot water were drawbacks. Not liking any of these methods, I did a little research and even bought a book from Amazon along the lines of cleaning cloths like Grandma did. When I received the book it appeared obvious that it was originally an attempt to profit off Y2K as it was just a fluffed up piece for a company that sells non-electric items (a mom and pop, not Lehmans). And guess what. The only cloths washers you could use, in their expert profit mongering opinion (the profit motive is good and needed, I'm only against ripping off your customers) was either a way over priced washboard or a sell-your-first-born-to-afford-it James Washer. With an optional ringer it was around $500!!! I was not only aghast and appalled, if I had been much older I would have had a heart attack. Here I bought this book which is more a pamphlet than a book, huge margins and large print. The advice was sparse, the pictures unneeded filler. Luckily I only spent about $6 or so on the crap. But what really chapped my butt was that they only told you to use the methods they sold equipment for. They didn't mention the vacuum washer. And they certainly didn't say anything at all about the Rapid Washer. Evidently the Rapid Washer has been around for a long time, I suppose as an original replacement to the wash board. I saw it by accident in the Lehmans catalog. I don't recall them selling it years back but I could be mistaken. I even mentioned it to a guy at work and he said he had seen it on one of those "family going to live like settlers" shows on cable. Well, it was the first I had been introduced to the tool, and I was really excited. I just had to order it and find out what it was like.

The Rapid Washer looks like a big toilet plunger in metal. The base almost looks the same on the outside and on the inside has a fancy design of channels and flumes and whatnot. It was an engineering marvel to design the template for the thing I'm sure. When you grab the wooden handle and plunge up and down the water in your tub goes crazy. Your cloths definitely get agitated. I just used a gentle up and down motion. I of course had to switch arms often, but there was little strain. I didn't have to violently jerk the handle up

and down, just a gentle motion continuously. My arms got tired after ten minutes. I did go to fifteen minutes, but I'm sure ten is adequate if you pre-soak your cloths. I didn't and after fifteen minutes my cloths came out nice and clean. I would recommend ten after a pre-soak. My arms were a bit on the soar side the next day. I am skinny and not at all muscular, so my ability to use the washer should to able to be duplicated by most. I can't imagine it being any harder than the James washer as in that you are moving the container of cloths and water for some amount of weight. And it has to be easier than a wash board. It is much better than a vacuum washer as it will do more cloths at one time and using cold water. Lehmans has a testimonial from one user saying they use much less soap and it is so easy they are using the Rapid washer from now on. I agree with the testimonial. You even get free exercise. I bike for transportation and walk all day at work, so I only get a workout in my legs. Using the Rapid Washer would give me a bit of upper body muscle usage which would not be a bad thing as I don't want what little meat I have on my bones to start to sag from middle age and easy indoor work. The metal is a (zinc?) coating and you are warned to dry the washer after each use to avoid rusting. I can't envision that as a problem as you can set it in the sun in good weather and next to the stove in bad after you towel it off as good as you can. But the best part of all this is the price.

The Rapid Washer cost a measly $12. For less than the cost of a DVD you can have a cloths washer. Not the fifty a vacuum washer costs. Not the thirty a wash board costs. Certainly not the five friggin hundred the James Washer costs. Twelve lousy bucks gets you a cloths washer. My nipples almost get hard just thinking about it. Where else can you get such a bargain?? I mean, toilet paper in Wal-Mart just went up 12%. Not the good stuff either, the sand paper kind. The increased cost of transport I would imagine. But still, a $1.12 for asswipe now. Inflation on one hand and Peak Oil on the other means I have to wipe my bung with coarse sand paper like TP and now I have to pay 12% more to do it. Insult to injury. And gas just went up again. Not that I care too much as I ride my bike all over creation. But when I do go charging down to Super Wal-Mart in the family sedan to overpay to wipe my ass it doesn't do me any good to have to pay more for gas. My ass is soar enough without the screwing I'm about to get from the remaining Sisters. It used to be the Seven Sisters that controlled the global petroleum market but since everyone is buying everyone else (a sign of lack of profit- they make record profits now but look at the exploration end as they spend a fortune to find replacement oil that just isn't close to usage) I imagine it is down to the Four Sisters now. My rent goes up every year and I feel grateful when the increase is only 5% rather than ten. So not only does it warm my heart when others need for instant cash means I get great deals on used items, but when I see a new product that works better at such a low price I am overjoyed to say the least. $12!!! Okay, to be fair it is $20 after shipping (light, but bulky) but almost everything is expensive to ship now. I paid that much to get a few pairs of gloves and some thermal underwear shipped and the tag said packed by some Puerto Rican or Mexican gal so I'm sure the labor there ain't the real cost to the company. Most likely just the actually shipping company paying 50% more in fuel from several years ago. I keep telling you to ship heavy items now. It can only get worse. But even after costing half again as much from shipping, a heck of a bargain for a cloths washer.

Next up we come to a cloths wringer. You can pay $150 for an old fashion rolling wringer or you can do as I mentioned before (thanks for the idea hurricane victim lady from Florida!!) and pay $30 at Wal-Mart for a mop ringer and use that. A plastic mop bucket with mop ringer is about $30, $33, something along that line. You of course need the bucket to stabilize the ringer and it is big and bulky and will be a pain to store. But much better than spending big bucks for a conventional cloths ringer which is just really two rolling pins and a handle in a frame. But lets not be too harsh. They could be made in America where the Union members get paid $20 an hour to start so really you are just putting a bunch of high school drop outs through retirement so go ahead and spend the extra money on the worthless bastards since your money is wasted and soon the factory will close after upper management loots the pension fund and some fat bald guy who bought his way through college goes and skips town with all the obscene profits with a new mistress who has fake boobs which most have nowadays which is kind of like a rip off since we no longer get a Rachel Welch once in awhile but instead just have a bunch of forgettable inflate-a-chests that look as fake as they are which when you really get down to it goes back to the whole eat-steak-every-day-and-it-ain't-special-anymore theory which is true so now everybody makes a big deal out of any actress that is different such as having big lips or a nasal accent but otherwise are a bit on the woof side if you know what I mean and in general it is just hard to lust after any silver screen bimbo although I still have a thing for Linda Hamilton from Terminator which doesn't mean I want to be dominated per say but I wouldn't mind her alongside in a fire fight cause she can kick ass and still be sexy.

So there we have it. $20 for a washer, $30 for a ringer. A buck for the cloths pins (buy several packages and store as they will be hard to replace through whittling), a buck or two for the cloths line. Under $60 for a cloths washer and a cloths dryer. You could use a clean toilet plunger to agitate the cloths and then hand wring them so you end up only spending $5 after line and pins, but it won't work nearly as well. If you only want a substitute for after the grid goes down that might work as a better-than-nothing set of tools but try to get the tools that will make the work less and the results better. If you are dirt poor but concerned with grid-down clean cloths, spend the five bucks. If you have twenty five get the line, pins and Rapid Washer. Then hand ring. But for maximum results get the whole thing for $60. The plunger will agitate the water but you will have to work harder at it. And hand wringing is miserable after only a few pieces of fabric. But you work with what you got. And clean cloths are not just "nice" or "civilized". They keep vermin away. Vermin that carry disease. After the grid goes down you will need to provide your own sanitation. Sewer, clean water, clean cloths, clean dishes, short hair and (for the men) a shaven face. A $5 investment now in a straight razor (get the stainless steel and sharpen it more often- the real steel ones cost a fortune literally) will keep you clean shaven and that much cleaner when you are surrounded by filth. I liked my beard and long hair after the service but it was high maintenance. I don't like shaving five times a week but that and a crew cut keeps me looking and feeling clean. I would not recommend going back to being a Hippy. You need all the help you can get staying clean after the Apocalypse. Get the Washer, the ringer, some line and pins. The razor I'll leave

for another issue.
END

SURVIVAL SUPPLY SHORTAGES
Present and future supply disruption as more prepare
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There are a lot more serious survivalists out there. How do I know? My subscriber list. I can understand the SurvivalBlog's astronomical numbers as they are the new Mother Earth News. Lots of folks are starting to kick the tires and admire the handling on the bright shiny new Survivor car. They won't buy, it is too expensive. But just having a look means a lot more want to buy. SurvivalBlog is a good source of information, don't get me wrong. It is just the wrong kind of information if you are poor. Now, the fact that so many folks read my drivel to me means a lot more folks are serious enough to do something about preparations. I know my writing is too long. I don't fancy myself a Steven King, but I realize I could blabber a lot less and just get to the point. But I won't. I pay for each issue that goes out and I only want those people that are serious to read it. If you want to wade through five pages of my rants, my political thoughts and my sometimes lame humor just to learn about wool clothing or hand washing clothes or cheap rifles, well then I want to spend money on you because I know you are serious about learning frugal survival preparations. Now, to be fair a lot of great folks have recently given extra as they bought my CD of Bison back issues, and that helps a lot with my costs. I can buy ahead several months of mailing now and maintain the web site without continuing to dip into my own pocket. And that is great, believe me. Very helpful. One of these days I might make enough of a profit writing to quit my job, but for now I am pleased as punch to just be able to not pay out of pocket for others to read me. By the time you read this issue I should be at about 800 subscribers. Not bad as I started out with 100 I had cultivated from before with the first sixty issues. The following 700 took a bit over a year and a half to add (almost 150 right after Katrina). So I am holding steady at about one new subscriber a day. Well, about one and a quarter. And I'm not advertising any more. That was all over with about six months ago. My Google add was even canceled after I got down to two or three clicks per month. So keep those word of mouth referrals coming in please.

So you, my loyal and suffering readers, are serious about survival. Serious enough to read pages of my slop to get a few nuggets of information. I am in effect catering to an elite. I will serve only those rich in dedication. SurvivalBlog can have those cash swilling Yuppie Survivalists that only buy the expensive toys. I don't want them. I am cheap (I mean frugal) and proud of it. No expensive four wheel drive SUV drivers wanted here. Unless you bought a used one cheap and converted it to bio-diesel and left the rust on the body so no one would steal it and installed a false floor to stash one hundred pounds of wheat berries and have a Russian bolt gun in your gun rack and not some expensive made by Unions crap, or worse a semi-auto, and you didn't jack the body up or wear a WWW ball cap unless it is camouflage to fit in locally or have a girlfriend that wears hip huggers if she

has ANY fat at all that hangs over the fabric unless of coarse she has big cha-chas and then it is ok, nor do you practice any Yuppie Survivalist ways such as reading military manuals unless you are learning how THEY fight rather how YOU fight because seriously folks military manuals really just teach you how to get killed as the whole object of the military is how to win with casualties and as a survivalist you should only be concerned by how to stay alive, or something as insane as going into debt to buy a retreat as the whole point of a retreat is to survive a collapse and during a collapse you lose your job and the bank repo's your land and you are evicted to go live under a highway overpass and so the perfect survival retreat with pastures and ponds and a cabin are totally useless to you and you really should have listened to me and bought that worthless lot of land from E-Bay for only $500 and yes they are still selling that cheap even if they are as hard to find as they ever were so for goodness sake go buy one today. So my point from almost a whole page ago is that so many folks are reading my crap and it can only mean that there are a lot more potential survivalists out there. A lot more see trouble coming and want to prepare. And that is a good thing as the more neighbors you have that are already prepared, the less folks you need to feed or fight. But it also means survival supplies are drying up.

I have heard rumors (and they are only that, just rumors, not confirmed facts, just some e-mails and a few postings on chat rooms, don't quote me on this unless you say it is a rumor, if I had a lawyer he would tell me not to even write this nonsense but instead write a nice long piece on how nice lawyers are and not the scum sucking bottom feeding jackals they really are and remember Lincoln was a lawyer) on shortages of solar panels, freeze dried foods and especially ammunition. Now, I almost discount rumors on ammunition shortages due to military use. Yeh, I can see 223, 308 and 9mm, but the military is not going to be buying up 7.62x39 (the AK47 round) unless they are stockpiling the locals in Iraq. I assumed they had plenty of their own left since its not like they really use much of it fighting. But I could be wrong. If indeed Uncle Sugar is as incompetent as we all imagine and failed to properly stockpile up on ammo before the war (hey, they only had $400 BILLION to run the military so you can see how they might of run short on cash) than I imagine he could be buying up the civilian supply. But be that as it may, whether it is your fellow survivalist or the Feds buying up the supply, or both, ammo is running out in the bulk orders. Another source says solar panels are on back order (I imagine they were never a great seller in the States so it would only take a small surge in sales to see scarcity) and yet another says freeze dried foods are starting to be harder to order without a wait. So why am I doing an article on rumors? I always do. Just a few weeks ago I wrote on the possible Iranian Oil Bourse. If you are aware of possible rumors and give them a serious change of happening then you can avoid certain unpleasantries by planning ahead. So lets assume these rumors are pretty much true. Lets assume you won't be able to buy the popular ammo sizes or order freeze dried foods and that you are SOL on the popular sizes of solar panels. What do you do?

As far as freeze dried food goes, just don't buy any of that slop. You can make your own if weight and convenience is a concern. Beef jerky, hardtack, and various supermarket instant foods should take care of your bug out food. You can make your own jerky. Even doing without the seasoning, as it adds considerably to the cost, you will still enjoy

jerky as it is sticks of protein goodness. Hardtack is just backed flour without any moisture. Add just enough water to work the flour into dough, roll flat and then bake long and low to drive all the moisture out (the grooves and holes in it made sure the whole thing baked through, just poke the hell out of the whole thing with a fork). Use whole wheat flour if you want any nutrition and make sure to soak before eating unless you want to lose teeth. I might do an article in the future on making your own trail food, but for now just do a Google search on "how to make hardtack" to get more details if needed. And there is always the supermarket for those too busy to make your own. Jerky of course. Top Ramen noodles or Cup of Noodles, instant soups, granola bars, dried fruits, etc. You don't need no stinkin freeze dried foods for a bug out kit. As far as a year supply of food, again, you don't need no stinkin freeze dried foods. I of course preach about whole wheat. $65 will feed one person for a year if you only eat wheat. Yes, you need a legume (bean) to provide a complete protein. But if you are dirt poor and running out of time to stockpile, wheat alone is the best choice because of its higher plant protein content than most other grains (at least commonly available grains). It is an incomplete protein, granted, which is why you need the beans to supplement. But worse comes to worse, a stockpile of wheat is better than no food at all. And I would not recommend you wait until you can afford both grain and bean. Buy wheat now. The price is up almost double since I bought for Y2K (steady price, smoothing out the commodity fluctuations) and will only go up as petroleum based agriculture only gets more expensive. After you have at least one year per person (and the $65 is only the wheat, you still need to store it in containers), better two or three years per person, then you can add in canned meats and beans to get your proteins. I know, protein deficiency is deadly long term. But if your choice is having no food, or an imperfect food, what would you pick? I looked in Wal-Mart the other day to find a galvanized trash can but they only carried plastic. Since plastic prices are going up I though one might consider using metal to store wheat. It cost about $70 in plastic buckets to store a year of wheat, bought new. If you buy used poly buckets (check restaurants and bakeries) and new lids your cost is about $2.50 each instead of $6 new. A year would cost $30 for the buckets. Unless you can't find used buckets or are concerned with rodents. Then you want metal. A used food safe 55 gallon drum is about a buck a gallon and will hold 330 pounds of wheat. You could get by on one person for a year if you had a little more food in other forms. If you bought a galvanized trash can it would most likely be about the same cost per gallon. Get food grade Diatomaceous Earth (a mineral that kills insects but safe for humans and pets, unless you have a pet cockroach named Alfred) from your feed store and use one cup per thirty pounds of wheat to treat. Not perfect, but close enough. If rodents are not an issue you could always just store in plastic trash cans. $5 for twenty five gallons. Stores about 150 pounds of wheat. $15 for a years worth. Wrap in trash bags, add your mineral. Put on the lid and duct tape closed. Again, not perfect. But perfect is Mylar sealed and nitrogen flushed. Even do-it-yourself with a rented gas tank your cost is $9 a bucket, $15 after you add the wheat. You need 12 buckets. Double the cost of near perfect.

As far as solar panels go, why do you need them? Living out in the boonies, sure. You want to be civilized. You need to run your computer. TV once in awhile is nice. A radio. A small water pump for your shower and sink if you have an RV. Illumination sure helps if

you don't want to be camping in primitive form the rest of your life. But you don't really need solar panels big enough to power car batteries. You want a few solar battery chargers, a solar radio and perhaps a solar trickle charger for your car if you only go out into town once a week and want the car battery to stay topped off. Or just use a marine battery for occasional AC use through an inverter (I plan on using once a week to buzz my hair besides the usual computer use, if I'm out in the sticks pre-TEOTWAWKI). You can get by without a large solar panel if you have to in an emergency situation. Just use the small ones which are built into devices already and have a much bigger market and thus are in less of a shortage. Battery chargers cost $25. They may only charge two of one size at a time, but an AA will only need several hours of good sun to fully recharge. Just remember, even with the newer rechargeables, fully discharge first to get the best life out of them. If you want several hundred recharges at full strength, fully discharge each time. And have twice the number of batteries you need as it might take longer than expected to recharge. If the charger takes two D's at a time and I need four to run a LED lantern then it might take as long as four days to charge up all the batteries so I can charge one set as I use the other. Put in the fresh ones and put the old ones in a high drain device to discharge quickly (with D's, perhaps a conventional flashlight). LED's are the way to go for light. You can use a wind up radio for information. A hand pump will lift your water to where you can then gravity feed it (a container by the sink, a solar shower bag hanging in your tub). Or, if you really just must have a conventional solar panel and car battery set up, look for lower watt units. I heard that the 50 watt and up were the ones on back order, so how about a bunch of smaller units such as 15 watt? Sure, they cost more. But think about it. Why do you want all your eggs in one basket? One fancy panel gets a stray bullet and you are screwed. With multiply panels of lesser power, you might not lose them all in one accident. Or theft. If you have a few spares locked up while the others sit in the sun, you will still have power. I saw one ad for 15 watts for $99 each (I think at SportsmansGuide.com) which is a bit more for clearance 50 watts at $250-$275, but not by much and you do get to have your back-ups. So, basically, if you want car batteries for now, set up that second battery in your car. Buy small solar power units now (built in) rather than panels. Once society crashes, just get by without huge power needs other than light and radio (I assume there will be no Internet at that time, so the computer can be done without).

As for ammunition in bulk, well, you might be screwed. For years the conventional wisdom has been that you need standard, common calibers in your survival weapons. Yes, it did make sense. 9mm or 45 is much easier to find than .30 Tokarev. And 308 is certainly easier to find and cheaper than 303 British. But now those chickens are coming home to roost. Now anything military is tough to find. We must be blowing through a million rounds plus per insurgent casualty if the civilian market is being drained by the Feds to keep ammo in the pouches. So 9mm, 45, 223,308, and 7.62x39 are going to be tough to find in bulk. Now, I could dance around and do a victory jig, shake my butt and bounce at the knee, proclaiming I knew all along, but not only would I look stupid, I would be lying. I had no idea bulk ammo would be in short supply. I just happened to go against conventional wisdom because I love my No.4 Lee-Enfield SMLE which uses 303 British and I use a 357 only because that was the only pistol I didn't sell in Florida to move

out here (two 45's paid the gas and hotels, with meals). I didn't even want the damn revolver as I love my 1911's, but have since seen the sense in keeping it for a survival gun. If I had been a Yuppie Survivalist then I would be screwed as they only seem to stock the above military calibers. And they always have more guns than ammo so you know they would be scrambling right now to outfit themselves to survive the coming oil shock as we nuke Iran to shut down the oil/Euro bourse. Okay, number one, I don't recommend semi auto since they eat up expensive ammo and damage the brass. And two, it is great to buy surplus ammo cheap, but you also need to reload. All it takes is a Lee Loader (LeePrecision.com) and a bullet mold in equipment. Powder is $25 a pound, as are a thousand primers. That might be your only option. Also, if you are just now buying a gun, check the ammo supply first and then order with the gun. Either be prepared to buy it one box at a time for twice the bulk or mail order price (example 303 British from Wal-Mart, Federal brand $18/ Cheaper Than Dirt S&B brand $9), or buy a gun that shoots a different caliber. The Russian 7.62x54R might not always be cheap for surplus but you can buy a whole lot now cheap and reload latter. And you should have that instead of an SKS. Unless you are in an area where you don't need a large caliber. Then you will just have to buy it a box at a time in different locations. And that might not be so bad as it keeps you from leaving a paper trail. Which brings us to buying through the mail. Use a credit card, even a pre-paid debit card. You won't have a money order or check cashed and then your order put on back order. Plastic is great protecting the consumer with far away companies.

It really is not impossible to work around shortages, at least for now. While only the more intelligent make preparations. Once the mass herd gets into the act you had better be squared away already. Sure, if you do things the frugal way your supplies will be the last to go. No one will think to buy wheat grain or trickle charge panels. How do I make bread with this crap? It only puts out 5 watts? And ammo. I want a Mini-14, it is cool and is semi auto and uses 223, a military round. Don't tell them that the rifle is junk or the round is impotent. Just buy your 30-06 and smile. Less competition for your supplies. Now, once the competition gets serious, you will see powder and primers, wheat and grinders, all ammo calibers, most canned meat, all will be in short supply. That is when you will be screwed if you had failed to prepare sooner. But for now you can sail around the shortages, if you go against conventional wisdom.
END see more below

At one time I seriously entertained the thought of buying a DVD for complete disassembly for the Lee-Enfield rifle. But they cost $45, so I hemmed and hawed and didn't do anything. Thank goodness. SurplusRifle.com sells CD's for $5 that tell you the same thing with still pictures. And you get more than one rifle per disc. And a lot of great articles. And right now if you buy one CD (first three years of articles) you get one free so that pays for the shipping cost. I paid $12 and got almost all their past articles and the dis/assembly instructions for a lot of different surplus arms. Invaluable and dirt cheap. A winner.
END

STRAIGHT RAZORS FOR SHAVING
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I for one have never missed the passing of the straight razor into history. I don't use a chain saw on logs or a table saw on lumber, and I certainly don't want to use a razor sharp knife on my face to shave. Yes, you can safely use instruments of death as tools. But no, I don't really want to. I can use an axe or a hand saw to cut firewood. I can use a manual saw to cut wood. But when it comes to long term shaving, once all your safety razors run out, well then your only alternative is the straight razor for shaving. And I do want to shave after the Apocalypse. Even washing everyday and keeping it trimmed, a beard is a scratchy nuisance. And if you can't wash everyday a beard is unsanitary. As is long hair. I don't want to open a bug hotel on my person. So I bought myself a few straight razors and hope I never have to use them. But for $25 I have enough straight razors for the rest of my life plus a few for trade. I imagine one day after TSHTF they will be worth quite a bit as few will have the foresight to stock up on them. Kind of like sewing needles. You can buy dozens for a dollar right now. You should buy a few packages for trade. Almost no one sews anymore. It is cheaper to buy from the thrift store almost new clothing as few families practice hand-me-down anymore with cheap Wal-Mart clothing. I know it used to be cheaper to buy new than to buy fabric and patterns, but I never priced them at Wal-Mart. As soon as the wife headed for the craft section I veered off to the electronics situated right next door. But even if it is cheaper to do it yourself the cost savings have to be minuscule after you factor in the cost of the sewing machine. Clothes are just not the expensive item they used to be now that they are made overseas. I remember having to wear some really ugly looking clothes as my mom made our clothing or bought used clothes for us to wear. And the shoes! Mom always bought at least one size larger if not two to make them last longer. Not that I grew up poor, but we were still a one income family and the 70's were tough on everyone. Now we use foreign labor to make cloths a lot cheaper. Thank goodness. But what happens when the foreign goods start drying up due to expensive oil or global Depression? Best to buy a cheap sewing machine now. But just keep those needles stashed away for when the economy collapses and we are back in a new Dark Age.

Back to the standard argument on quality versus quantity. Most people will tell you to buy the best tool. Take care of it and it will last your life time. I won't argue with that. Who hasn't taken a cheap screwdriver and found out the screw has better metal than that tool does as you withdraw a twisted and ruined once flat and level item? Who hasn't used a dollar store item once and it breaks? Wasted money to buy junk. Sometimes. Not always. Sometimes the quality is not as bad as you feared. Sometimes you do need to spend a little bit more to buy a middle grade item rather than a lowest quality item. But there is no need to always buy top grade. You run out of money too quick and if an item breaks or more likely you lose it, then you have no tool. However, if you buy several low to middle grade of that tool, if one breaks or you lose it you have a replacement and still spent less money. For the price of one hunting rifle I can buy three or four war surplus

rifles. The accuracy won't be as good, but the old guns won't break as easily and were a lot cheaper. Even if I only bought two old guns instead of one modern one I just doubled my chances of survival on half the price. What if you were as careful as could be with your rifle but tripped on an exposed root and tumbled down a steep hill. Your barrel is now no longer straight. Send it back to the factory which burned down several years ago? I'm sure a competent gunsmith could fix it, but that is not the point. You need a rifle at all times, not just when a gunsmith gets done fixing yours. Have multiples of everything. So, can you afford more than one expensive rifle? Can you afford more than one expensive knife? Or car? Or dwelling? Or pair of shoes? No. You buy cheaper, and more than one. You can't afford a $75 carbon steel straight razor. But you can get a $2 stainless steel one. So it needs sharpening more often. Big deal. And you can buy more than one. Several more. You will damage or lose just one, and you will wear one out quicker by needing to sharpen it more often. But at two bucks each it is criminal not to stock up on straight razors. Perhaps an item you will never use. But so are all those buckets of wheat. It is still cheap insurance.

www.EKnifeWorks.com

After I bought a knife with an attached straight razor for too much money from Amazon I got a catalog through the mail from the company that drop shipped it to me, I believe Smokey Mountain Knife Works. Their web site is listed above. They had cheap stainless steel straight razors advertised for a paltry two bucks each. Shipping was $7 for the first $25 so you can buy up to a dozen razors before the shipping cost goes up. It seems kind of silly to buy just one razor and spend three times that cost on shipping. You might as well buy more than one. Sad how a new pack of disposable razors now cost more than a razor that last you years does. I mean, come on, five friggin blades on a disposable that cost three or four bucks per replacement blade. I do believe a double blade is much better than a single. Less cuts, better shave. But I pay a luxury price just for that, fifteen cents a blade instead of ten. And it only lasts a week. I used to get a month out of each razor but I had a job I didn't need to shave clean everyday. I shaved every other day and then only with the grain. A ten cent razor lasted me all month. Now I have to be clean shaven every day so the blade only lasts me a week, used five times. Almost a buck a month just in blades. It used to be ten cents each just a few years ago but plastics are going up in price due to petroleum price increases. I bought several years worth of disposable blades when our local discount store had a pack of ten for 80 cents each so I stocked up every time I went in there until they were gone. So I have several dozen packs. Double bladed, lubricating strip even. Now I might just save those for barter. But a straight razor will cost you $2.50 after shipping costs. You most likely already have a sharpener (fine only, not course) and the razor strop can be any leather belt in a pinch. One reader must have ESP because in the middle of me writing this (I write an hour a day for several days each article) he mentioned out of the blue that he remembered my previous advice on cheap shaving and found a cheap way for a shaving brush. Rather than spend over ten bucks to buy a fancy shaving brush with oh so fine hair and a ceramic cup with perfectly shaped soap, just get a one inch paint brush and cut down the handle. Throw some soap into an old coffee cup that has a crack in it or no handle and you now have a complete shaving kit. I thought the paint brush idea was classic. I wish I had thought of it years ago before

I paid good money for my store bought shaving brush. I think it was almost five bucks. Sure it was soft, but to save four bucks, 25 pounds of wheat, almost a half of a box of ammo or half an once of silver, go with its substitute.

I had problems with my razor sharpening it. I realize stainless steel is a bitch to sharpen. With all my knifes I use the hand held sharpener that has a V shape of two pieces of carbide. You draw the knife through a few times and you can see little steel shavings as the knife is sharpened. It sharpens just fine, but a razor sharp edge it ain't. I'll actually have to get a fine stone to get the razor sharpened. So, I have no experience how easy or difficult it is going to be to use a stainless steel razor. It could be no problem, once I get a fine stone and then a leather strop. Or it could be near impossible to get a good edge. I don't want you to spend the money and then curse my name. Only buy if you want to gamble. I still think at two bucks each it is a heck of a barter tool. But you may have a hard time using it yourself. My attitude with knife sharpening has always been, buy a reasonably priced tool that does the job for you and don't mess around with stones. In this instance it doesn't help. Another ongoing quest to find the perfect cheap tool. It took awhile to arrive at the best way to cheaply clean clothes. Before I found the Rapid Washer my only advice was to buy the $50 vacuum washer. If you waited you saved $30. If you hold off on buying the stainless steel straight razor I'll eventually get around to properly sharpening mine or not. But if you plan on forging ahead, the company mentioned above is a great deal. Anybody that has tried this before, please let me know. Those with at least $60-75 to burn might want to buy a carbon steel straight razor and be done with the difficult sharpening problem. But that also is a lot of money to gamble. Best to wait a few weeks while I test. I should have waited before I wrote this article, but even if I focus primarily on stainless steel because of the huge cost savings this is about the cheapest long term shaving solution. Even if you spend $100 for a quality razor if it lasts a lifetime it is worth it. I am just saying, wait, wouldn't it be great if you could do the same thing for $3 instead.

If you want the finer points on straight razor shaving you can Google several sites on how to do so. I put in "how to shave with a straight razor" and got several articles. Google is great but sometimes if you don't put in exactly the right word or phrase to get nothing useful. The main thing to remember is that you put the ball of your thumb on the bottom of the tang. As you look at your razor at the back you have the thick metal piece that goes to the attached handle. Right after the blade put your thumb on the bottom of that piece. Your middle and index will be on the top and your pinkie on the little loop part with the handle in between sticking up forming an L of the whole razor. Once you place your thumb the rest is natural. Hold the blade at an angle and cut up against the grain. And for goodness sake be careful. This is a friggin non-safety razor you are using. Be careful and concentrate. Make sure you softened up the hair with warm water and soap first. I plan on learning the sharpening skill and then packing up and storing the razor. I don't want to save a buck a month on disposables that bad. But it is a tool and a skill that you will one day more than likely want to have. And don't forget the leather strop. It doesn't sharpen the blade itself but it does restore the blade to its sharpened state after you used it, if I'm reading things correctly. Remember, I'm pointing out the usefulness of a

tool here, I'm not an expert. I'm almost as much in the dark here as anybody under the age of 105. But even you ladies out there will need to know this stuff unless you want hairy legs after the last disposable runs out. And in an Apocalyptic environment with plenty of pretty young things running around hungry you might want to look your best. Suddenly a fat bald man with a larder might look sexy. Just throwing it out there, something to think about, don't send me email protesting you have a strong marriage, blah, blah, blah. I know half the folks out there, if not more, are greedy immoral bastards and the temptation will be there if it ain't now. Humans can rationalize anything. Why do you think a husband commits an infidelity or a wife leaves and collects alimony? They talk themselves into believing it is justified. Okay, don't get me started on that.
END

MORE ON L.E.D. LIGHTS
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Hear the sound of that dead horse being beat? That's me talking about the same damn thing again. Sort of like when I talk about wheat or bolt action guns or thirty caliber versus assault rifle rounds. I keep repeating myself. Eventually you are going to listen. Or not. But it won't be from my lack of trying. And, in my defense, there has been a lot of improvements in LED lights in the several years it's been since I last wrote about them. They are cheaper, available from more sources and are more varied. Of course you want to hear about that since you have been in a coma the last three years and couldn't see for yourself the selection in Wal-Mart in the flashlight section. Yes, I am here to help. And for some reason I feel you are not on the bandwagon here. You have not seen the wisdom of my views. And of course that alone would lead me to write more on the subject. Most of you scoff. Just a better flashlight, you snarl as you delete my e-mail and go to HornyGirlOnGoat.com. Ah, grasshopper, you fail to seek enlightenment with the universe. LED's are not just a better form of mobile illumination, but a better form of illumination independence. One step closer towards energy independence, a step farther from the monopoly power of the electrical grid. And a dependable source of light when that same grid goes down from lack of maintenance due to corporate greed or incompetence. In the companies defense, voters were reluctant to pay for the increases when petroleum costs went up. And in the rate payers defense, our bill never went down when petroleum prices tanked. As with most modern institutions, someone is always getting screwed because the system is so dysfunctional. In the case of the power grid, petroleum prices are not going to come down due to exploding global demand (funny how we exported all of our manufacturing to China and didn't expect their oil use to increase) and to avoid passing on the costs immediately the power companies will cut back on preventive maintenance. Kind of like you never take the car into service because you can't afford it since the damn mortgage with its adjustable rate is too high so you just wait until it breaks down before you get it fixed. Plus of course the increase in suburb construction taking crews off preventive maintenance and putting them to work wiring up new McMansions. Our wonderful economy with its borrowing money to produce the illusion of wealth with a huge military and unsustainable suburbs due to soon to be unaffordable commuting distances. So lets borrow the money from foreigners to keep it all going at the same time we piss off our foreign bankers by stopping them from buying up our few remaining profit producing companies so they are stuck with piles of increasingly inflated cash and Boy Howdy doesn't that just make them want to loan us even more money. As a society we are screwed.

But as the grid goes crashing down every time it gets too hot or too cold because as the bears discovered it is hard to find anything that is jusssst right, you at least will have light

from your super duper collection of LED lights. If you have a solar panel and two marine batteries and a pellet stove with several years supply of pellets in the garage (if you are in a wood scarce area or zoning prohibits wood burners) or if you have a cast iron wood stove and several years worth of firewood covered from the elements out in the back yard (a tip from SurvivalBlog-store rounds rather than split wood to discourage theft) then you won't freeze when the grid goes down. And a source of water that doesn't freeze would be nice so you can flush the toilet and such. Insulation pays for itself quick in all seasons. Do it ASAP. Energy prices will only go up. This is not like the 1970's when supplies were abundant but our enemies denied us oil. This time around the demand is higher than the supply. And will get worse. Other countries are surpassing us economically yet we hoard most of the global oil supply and use our military to do so. As we are crippled economically our military will suffer and our grasp on oil supplies will slip and our energy dependant life style will suffer. Cut your commuting distance now, get rid of the gas guzzler now, insulate now, turn to solar and wood for heat now. Wait too long and you won't be able to afford it. It will be the seventies all over again, just worse. Prepare now or suffer later. No skin off my butt if you don't. You are the one freezing in the dark fighting off looters. Me, I'll be out in the desert away from humanity snug in my earth house heated by solar (okay, so I'll bury my van with the glass exposed and facing south- almost the same thing). Cost, one pick and shovel. Even trailer dwellers should be able to insulate nicely. Spray the whole thing with insulation and cover with a concrete shell. Too expensive? Cover with straw bales and cover that with chicken wire and concrete. There is always a cheap solution to any problem.

The conventional ways on lighting in the boonies suck. Back when propane was dirt cheap that even a redneck earning a casual income could afford it it made sense to plumb the entire house to the gas. Lights, stove, fridge. Heat with wood. Now, propane is almost as pricey as gasoline. It makes no sense to light with it. As I said, other than short term temporary dips, petroleum products are not coming down in price. Kerosene is a better fuel in that it is easier to store (a 55 gallon drum versus the metal tanks for propane) it stores a long time without preservatives unlike gasoline and it can be used just like propane. Light, heat, cooking. Just like propane, Wal-Mart carries the items that use it such as the heaters, spare wicks, lanterns. For a stove you would need to mail order. I haven't priced Kerosene since Y2K when it was about the same cost as gasoline in small quantities. I can't imagine you would pay much less than $2 a gallon right now. That would go a long way in a cooker or lantern, not too far with a heater which uses at least two gallons a day. Then there are white gas lanterns, butane lanterns, etc. All a pain in the ass due to lack of wide spread use and limited availability. It is not that petroleum products are going to disappear any time soon. The US is still pumping five million barrels a day out of the twenty we use. Thirty five years ago we pumped nine million a day and that was our peak production. So in another thirty years we should still produce a trickle at least one or two million barrels a day. The world isn't running out of oil, just cheap abundant oil which is what our whole economy is based on. So if you base your household needs on petroleum products it is not like you won't be able to buy any. It is just that the price will be much higher than what you want to pay. So go with solar for your lighting needs, some winter heating needs, summer cooking, etc. It is the only

sensible choice long term. Heat with wood. Go with solar for your small electrical needs.

At first glance it appears solar panels and marine batteries are a natural for lighting. I disagree for the following reasons, theft, damage and cost. A permanent mounted panel can be stolen. As it can be damaged by vandalism or the weather. But mostly because you are using up your battery life span for lighting. Using motor vehicle bulbs that don't last long and suck up a lot of juice. Your batteries are better used to power small appliances such as a compressor to freeze ice for your ice box, or power tools or even our beloved computers. When you can use LED's for lighting with bulbs that can literally last your lifetime it makes no sense to use conventional 12 volt lighting. Used sparingly my 12v car bulbs on a half dozen "lamps" in my trailer take about a dozen bulbs a year. From an auto parts store that is about ten bucks. The cost right now is not a factor. Out in the boonies off the grid I would go through twice that amount since I would no longer have any 110v powered lamps to supplement the 12v. Any kind of supply disruption would mean I had better have at least two dozen bulbs per year of use stocked up before hand. That is stupid. I'll stick to LED lights, need never replace the bulbs, and only need half the solar panels since none is wasted on lighting. That is some serious bucks you can save. For regular 12v lighting you need a solar panel, a marine battery (I assume you already have another of each for other uses so you assume no cost saving by using those) and lets be stingy and only assume a two year supply of bulbs. I think a conservative cost is $500. With LED's you need two solar powered battery chargers, rechargeable batteries and the LED's themselves. Being generous and buying the most costly LED's you would have to try really hard to spend even $200. Solar chargers are $25 each. I bought eight D's, four C's, and a dozen each both AA's and AAA's of rechargeable batteries and after shipping paid about $75. You can buy a lot less. I went a little wild, assuming I would never have the cash again for that kind of purchase. I bought two solar rechargers in case one breaks. For the LED's you can again go wild, or only buy a bare minimum. I went wild and bought a bunch. Four lanterns, a half a dozen one battery flashlights, several MagLite style flashlights. Several red bike flasher types (in case I had any low light/night vision worries situations to worry about). I might have gone over the $200 mark. You could easily do it on half. You could just buy a wind up light and need no batteries but I think those are too bulky for overhead lighting which is what I wanted, plus I'm concerned the metal spring inside (or whatever it is that powers the thing) wouldn't last all that long. Certainly not as long as the LED bulb.

It used to be that you didn't have much choice in LED lights other than bicycle lamps or small flashlights. Now you can get lanterns. An LED lantern is where they really shine. Now, remember a ways back, some time last year. I told everybody that Rite-Aid drug stores were having a sale on LED lanterns for $10 each. I'm sure nobody listened, or at least you didn't have a Rite-Aid nearby. Now I see them for sale through the mail for $40 and although that is metal rather than plastic, still a hefty difference. If I were you I would do a Google search on "LED lantern for sale" and see if anything cheaper comes along. But even at that price and for two of them you would have most of your off grid lighting needs taken care of. Even with a lanyard loop to hang from the ceiling, the flashlights themselves won't give out the light like a lantern will. You would like the whole room

light rather than a spotlight in one area, right? Use both. The lantern gives room light, the flashlight pin point light. And the lantern should give you hundreds of hours of use off four D batteries. If you used the lantern three hours a day you could go three months between battery changes. And at least for right now disposables are still available at the dollar store, $1 for four D's. I would only expect about 100 hours use from them, being a low quality, but if all you spent per month for lighting was $2 ($1 D's, one for several AA's) you are doing great. Pre-collapse of course. After the stores close you are going to want to have your recharger ready to go. You could use them now, but I would save them for when you need them. Even if batteries triple in price it is still cheap enough to use disposables for as long as they last in LED's. The new rechargeables are rated for between 500-1000 recharge cycles but that is under laboratory conditions I am sure. Even with fully discharging the batteries every time I wouldn't expect them to last past several hundred times charging. So conserve them now for later use. Or buy some now to use, some to store away.

There is a school of thought which says to rely on skill, not on tools. This is valid. But rather simplistic. In the long run system collapse it will serve you well. In the short term it may very well get you killed. There will be plenty of others out there initially that are very well equipped. They have semi-auto assault rifles and good boots and MRE meals. If you instantly turn Native American and have a home made bow and run around in moccasins and look for wild herbs to eat, they can set up camp and leisurely eat lunch as their party takes turns sniping at your dumb ass. Back in the day, Indians had no problem adapting the white mans weapons as their own for survival. They also thought horses were a great idea but then of course those didn't depend on a factory back east. So, in the long run your LED lights will burn out and your batteries will die and your solar chargers will cease to function. So for light you will also want to learn how to make candles. And teach others the same. Eventually you will need them if you haven't figured out how to make methane. Or even if you do have methane gas, as a better use for that would be cooking to save on wood. Used carefully your LED's and batteries should last several generations. Just make sure you are also making candles for supplemental use. I see no reason to rely on any petroleum based fuels other than for immediate off-grid use as you ease over to total solar. And LED's are part of that solar use. Even only getting several hundred uses out of your rechargeable batteries and needing to buy more, this is a very cheap way to get lighting in your off-grid home. OK, sure, you can't walk into a room and flick a switch. You need to bring the light with you. Surely you are not so lazy you can't accomplish that. It is just like heating water. You can have an expensive roof top system that does all the work for you or you can set out a bucket to heat and then take it to your shower and hang it up for a hot shower. One way is automatic. The other is labor intensive. Cost difference? $1,000. Cost savings on LED's over 12v? 90%. Your choice.
END scroll down for more.

www.NorthernTool.com
usually has cast iron grain grinders for about $15. They are out of stock right now. But if you want to keep an eye out for it, order #168670

www.SurplusNSurvival.com
does have them in stock. We are talking about a generic Corona here. Rough, but functional. I have bought several from them (need a spare or two stashed elsewhere). $17 plus shipping. About $25. Order #165365.
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Several readers swear by these. The disposable razor sharpener from
www.Lehmans.com
order #36-731
Use your regular disposable razor, up to three blades, and resharpen for up to 35 times the regular use. I see no problem getting at least a months use out of one blade, shaving almost everyday and with a heavy beard. Less use would last even longer. A great alternative to the straight razor. If one pack of razors could last a year, your post-collapse razor stockpile would cost $20 for ten years worth of shaving. And that is using the more costly disposables. Figure a buck a year for the dollar store version. The sharpener is only ten bucks plus shipping and is said to last a lifetime.
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Another trick by a reader. Put a small amount of vegetable oil in a glass. Dunk a disposable razor in it, blot off excess. Shave. Put razor back in oil and leave until next shave. Repeat. Your razor should last at least a month. I have not tried this personally, you might want to if you don't want to buy the sharpener.
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FRUGAL SURVIVAL BARTER
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After any severe disruption we are going to see two things happen. One, very few people have the skills needed to survive. Two, no one can make anything they need. As you most likely also fall into this category, consider barter goods. By setting aside barter goods now you provide yourself with a future career. Of course it is highly advisable to also learn a skill, but no plan survives its execution and barter is a good fall back position. If the collapse of civilization never quite gets around to happening on your watch you can always pass along all your crap to your kids. If nothing else they will have a great hedge against inflation. It is hard to wrap ones mind around the possibility of hyper-inflation as our entire economy is basically just every segment of society promising to pay everyone else sometime in the future. Our economy is based on Visa card spending and too much inflation would seriously damage that. So one would think the powers that be would try mightily to avoid that possibility. Of course, we have had periods of hyper-inflation in this country before. We could have it again. No guarantees the Fed will restrain themselves. Actually the only guarantee is that the Federalees and their butt buddies at the central bank will in time utterly ruin the dollar. The question is how long will it take and how badly will we be effected. Ben Franklin, a really cool dude if there ever was one, actually advocated the elimination of central government debt through inflation. Okay, sure, two hundred plus years ago that really was the only way to eliminate the war debt. As it is today. The level of taxes then had no hope of ever paying the massive government debt, just as it doesn't now either. But of all people! Ben Franklin saying "screw the holders of our currency, it is the only way we can pay our debt". My point is that if he could hold that view, one of the smartest guys around, inventor of a stove that reduced firewood usage down to as much as twenty percent of less efficient models, and I believe also of bifocal glasses, well then you can be sure that two limp peckerwoods like Bush and Beneke will have no problem turning the printing presses up to Super Duper High Speed and flood the economy with cash. Put together they can't equal the intelligence of Franklin so you can guess how badly this is going to turn out. Victims two hundred years ago had their own farms to fall back on as their cash lost all value. Today we need money just to get a drink of water. We need steady currency more than ever.

Hyper-inflations can happen fast. In less than five years your cash on hand goes from one buck per bag of flour to one billion per one once stamp. If things don't get too crazy. Otherwise you need to add a few zeros. A few years back the Turkish currency was shown in the currency tables as .000000000001 dollars to the local currency (or something real close to this). Then it went back to only several hundred to the dollar. I'm sure holders of the cash ended up with nothing or at best pennies on the dollar after they reissued another currency. And post WW1 Germany is a favorite example. At the end a postage stamp was worth more than what was in savings accounts so they went unclaimed as people saw no need to send in a claim. And we were not immune. At the

end of the Revolutionary War (we didn't mind the taxes, we just wanted to keep them ourselves wasn't much of an army recruitment slogan so they used liberty or death instead) we hyper-inflated the Continental, that currency you don't hear much about in public school history class, and the dollar took its place. The dollar turned into the Greenback as the worthless currency to finance the War Of Northern Aggression, but it never achieved the hyper-inflation point. That was left for the Confederacy currency. So at least twice before in our history hyper-inflation reared its ugly head. Other times it came real close. In the 1970's we lost between one third to half our purchasing power at a minimum as we lost an Imperial war, lost our oil producing capacity, started sending our factories overseas and free floated our dollar as we untied gold from our currency. And you wonder why the 70's were so bad. The end of cheap abundant oil, the end of our military might, the end of our economy and the end of gold backing to our currency. The only reason we survived this long was because Alaskan oil took pressure off middle eastern supplies and we turned from the worlds bank into the worlds largest debtor. We owe more money to everyone else than anyone else does. We scoff at the African nation dictator as he puts 75% of all foreign aid into his personal Swiss bank account, but who do you think is getting rich off our downward spiral economically? Our home grown petty dictators in the defense and bank industry. We pay a half a trillion a year in interest to our national debt (hello!, anyone wondering why interest rates keep going up?), another half a trillion to the defense industry, one out of five workers are employed by the government. We can't keep that up, but in the meantime those in power are getting stinking rich off the implosion of our economy. And they will stay rich as they diversify away from dollars. Immoral spawns of Satan they might be, but stupid they ain't.

So the more household items you buy now the less impact inflation will have on you, as per The Alpha Strategy book, and the more barter items you will have if TSHTF. So you can't lose here. Even if the economy never sinks to the point where barter is necessary you have a hedge against inflation. And even if we don't cause a global Depression by putting a tariff of 25% on any Chinese imports and goods still stay cheap despite the rest of the economy (services and commodities) advancing in price at 10-15% a year, then you can cheaply buy the barter goods you need. So, in the current economy you can cheaply buy trade goods. In a hyper-inflation economy you will have a store of consumer goods. In an economic depression you may lose your job but you may not need to buy consumables, thus freeing up scarce cash. In an economic Armageddon you have trade goods. You can't go wrong here under any scenario. Even under the economic depression scenario where the goods you bought already get cheaper in the future you still haven't lost anything as cash to buy any of it will be too scarce so you couldn't take advantage of the good deals anyway. I have written in the past on mini-stockpiles to beat inflation (from the ideas in The Alpha Strategy), and you could always use your barter items for that if needed, but this article is mainly focused on barter. So while you could never personally use 5000 safety pins in your anti-inflation stockpile, it makes sense to stockpile that much for future barter use. Here I am merely saying that should you never need your barter stockpile it will never go to waste as there are other uses for it.

1)Barter items must be something everyone wants. In a barter economy it seems far

fetched to assume there will be any electricity and thus a store of light bulbs will do you little good. But chances are good coffee won't be coming from Brazil on a regular basis. 2)It should be cheap to buy now, self explanatory as this is only a gamble on your part. 3)It should be almost impossible to make at home. Thus while soap and booze are much better store bought the fact that inferior substitutes can be made mean those kinds of goods in your stockpile decrease in value. But try making a sewing needle or a pencil. 4)The item should be non-perishable, lasting decades while sitting in the back of your closet. Thus ink pens would be a poor choice as they eventually dry out whereas the pencil is going to be a sure winner. 5) The items should be able to be offered in small quantities as it is affordable to all and easily stocked by you. Needles, thread, fish hooks are good examples. Cases of soda are not. Some items will be bulky but their high value will counteract that. Yes soda will be wanted, but not at too high of a price. You waste too much space with it. 6)Any barter item should be recognized for what it is. People should instantly know it by sight and thus know its value. As an example, a bottle of Jack Daniels as opposed to a jug of moonshine. Both are whiskey, but only one is more valuable due to its recognition (leaving aside the issue of whether to even store booze for barter). And lastly, 7)all those items should be something you can use yourself. If nothing bad ever happens, our stockpile of wheat was cheap enough that the financial investment was a cheap form of insurance. But higher dollar items should not be so casually purchased. If you are not a smoker don't buy three hundred bucks worth of cigarettes for future barter unless something bad is already going down. What could you possibly do with them otherwise? Again, no one needs 5,000 safety pins in their lifetime, but the low cost makes that an easy gamble. But don't buy 5,000 condoms unless you are really popular with the swinging single scene. 500 would be okay if you never used them. We are gambling here to some degree. But like all gambling you need to know up front how much you want to potentially lose. As I said a few weeks ago I bought $25 worth of straight razors. Ten of them at $2 bucks each. They fit all the criteria. Cheap. Most folks will grow beards but there always will be some who prefer to shave. A knife smith could duplicate them but not many of those will be around. They are stainless steel and will last quite a long time. I can sell them dear and they take up very little space. No one will mistake them for a home made model. If all else fails I can use them myself.

My number one barter item would be wheat. Not that I may ever trade it. I might give it away to friends and family. Or use it all myself. But I want a heck of a lot more than just a one year supply. Barter is just one item down the list it is good for. But say it is a few years after a collapse. I ate nothing but wheat since then. I still have a two year supply on hand in case of another emergency. The excess from that I am going to be happy to trade as I am sick to death of eating it and the local economy is providing plenty of potato's or corn or whatever. And the plastic bucket it comes in should give a healthy price itself. Or not. Those things should be like gold come a total collapse- hell, they almost cost their weight in silver now.

Two guidelines for purchasing your trade goods. Only buy in bulk or at the dollar store. That is the only way you are going to get good deals. Well, that and cherry picking at sales anywhere else. Buying a sack of wheat at the feed and grain store is bulk purchasing

as is 25 pound sacks of white flour at Wal-Mart. Buying anything at Albertsons or any other old fashion grocery store or dry goods store is wasting your money. Say you wanted to stockpile socks. Would you go to JC Penney's? Of course not. They only exist to cater to the Yuppies, those with more cash then brains. You go to Wal-Mart. And why buy ammo from the local gun store when Cheaper Than Dirt is always, well, cheaper than dirt. Except perhaps 22 ammo from Wal-Mart at $9 for 550 rounds. But don't buy 50 or 100 rounds of 22 because of the small, cute box and thinking it will make a great barter item. Get zip-lock bags and buy in bulk and make your own small packages. Right now an once of silver will buy over a box of 22's, a sack of wheat slightly less. After a time when 22's are no longer made, what will a fraction of that box bring? Maybe less, maybe more, or maybe you'll just be glad you have them for your own personal use. But you can't go wrong having them. But only buy in bulk, as cheap as possible. You have a lot of goods to buy.

After wheat and 22 ammo I would get coffee. Cheap now, only twice the cost of commodity price at the retail end ($1.10 per pound wholesale, $4 for 32 once can retail-only $3.50 at Wal-Mart). Priceless in the future if trade is interrupted with South America. Home made substitutes are no where near as close in taste. I would only trade in unopened cans to avoid charges of cheating by adding (or "cutting") cheaper ingredients. A two pound can is a large unit to sell and store, but you should get big bucks for it. If you don't drink coffee (which mostly is just those Commies out there) I would be leery of stockpiling it, at least in any amount. A few cans would be okay. The ingredients should last forever. Literally. I have my stash piled on top of my fridge. Ugly, but I have plenty for myself. I can always trade if the price is right. And I only buy when the price is $3 a can. Tobacco I store strictly for the wife's use. She has to roll her own (not that she loves me greatly for it) since the cost savings are wonderful. Ten bucks to roll your own carton, $20 at the Indian (feather not dot Indian) store for generics. I usually have about two or three months worth of tobacco and tubes stored for her. I wouldn't trade it as she is going to be a real bitch when she has to quit after supply disruptions. Even rationing will only make then last six months. But it is the way to go if you want to stockpile for trade or even to switch to if you smoke. Any tobacco store will sell you a sack of the weed for about $8, the 200 paper tubes with filters for $2, and the plastic machine for about $5. Beware buying through the mail if their shipping and handling prices added to their sale price exceed that. Have plenty of extra machines, they are plastic and only last a few months of regular usage. I remember $2 cartons of generics at the Army PX. Now we are happy with ten bucks and we provide our own labor. Bastard inflating Fed. My wages have only doubled since cigarettes tripled and that is with a good paying job. Of course tobacco prices are all hidden taxes, mostly to lawyers, but I won't get started on that.

Fuel isn't going to be the greatest barter item. It is bulky, perishable, dangerous to store, expensive and until you use it the customer can't know how good it is. That being said, a few gallons in storage and treated with preservative might be worthwhile to you. Propane would be better than gasoline, especially in those little cylinders (used to be $2 each at Wal-Mart, now about $2.50 each). They are relatively safe and should last forever in

storage. Then, if you have a bigger tank and one of those couplers you can refill them for a much better profit margin. Other gun gear besides ammo great for barter would be reloading components. Powder by the pound and primers by the thousand are about $25. It wouldn't hurt to have an extra supply for yourself that could also be used for trade. So your primer cost is now two cents. Guess what it could be post-collapse. You could be like the computer printer companies, charging almost as much for the ink as the printer cost. Right now some ammo cost almost as much as a buck a round. Without resupply you could get about that in trade just for the primer. All for two cents now. This is the kind of profit making I envision here. Buy for pennies, sell for dollars. Is this immoral? Are you cheating people? How? You bought and stockpile beforehand. They could have also. You are charging them for an investment. You took cash now that was dear, immediate consumption lost, and poured it into investments that had a very high chance of failure. They need to pay for your risk. You are only going to be charging what the market will bear, no one is twisting their arm to buy. Is anyone twisting your arm now to buy a gum and glue, pressed board and green lumber, overpriced from Union labor and taxes and regulations stick built house for a quarter of a friggin dollars? It's what the market will bear, no one is forcing you to buy, and you need to compensate the builder and banker for their risks. Later, after the housing bubble loses air (the speed is the question, not if it will happen since it has already started and I did warn you already) then the buyers will own the market and the builders and bankers will lose money because all is fair in love and war and in the market place and that is what the market will bear. You could lose your ass in a barter situation, or you could get rich. Life is a gamble.

Now on to less expensive items, those you can pick up at the dollar store. If you go every week and just put aside a few bucks buying them it should add up quickly. And be harmless to your checkbook. Or just buy all the junk at once, put it in a plastic tote at the back of a closet and forget the whole thing for awhile. And then wait for my next stupid scheme on how to spend money. And of course some of these items won't come from the dollar store, or they might be a bit more than a buck (although not much). If you were too dogmatic and only shopped in one place you would lose out on some great deals. One item that is great is aspirin. Try getting a replacement for it. And only one half to one cent per tablet. Get several big bottles if possible, but smaller ones are probably better for storage and barter. And can openers are going to be in demand as long as cans are around to be found. Just don't buy too many. Once the can supply expires so does the need for openers. Motor oil is under a buck a can and hard to replace. Sure, you can use castor bean oil, but petroleum based oil is going to be preferred at first. Also can be used as a substitute for gun oil. And from SurvivalBlog.com we learn that not only is twenty weight a great lubricant, but automatic transmission fluid acts as a great substitute for gun cleaner. Stock plenty for cars and guns. Aluminum foil is going to be priceless as folks start making their own solar ovens. I would buy plenty. Yes, a bit bulky, but worth it. Only buy the thick stuff, not the easily torn crap that will be a waste of money and storage space. And while fishing line might be substituted with string it should still be in demand anywhere fish live. And also string anywhere at all. Dollar store reading glasses might be a needed item to those folks needing a bit of help with seeing up close. Sewing needles and thread are going to be needed as clothing is no longer for sale at the store. Folks will

need to reuse the old clothing they have. The one dollar kits that have a bunch of needles and miniature thread spools should be quite popular. Anyone with a manual sewing machine should have a great business as long as they stockpiled the thread. More realistically it would be an electric machine powered by a solar panel/battery/inverter rather than a manual one as they are hard to find and not cheap. Lehmans has an affordable machine but when buying the cabinet/treadle combo you almost triple your cost. If hubby was handle and made that part for you your cost for a manual machine would be just $440 (see order #73-932, cabinet and treadle #73-920, total together for less cost is #73-990, all at www.lehmans.com)

Some tools are cheap enough to stockpile. Wal-Mart has flat and phillips head screwdrivers for 88 cents each. The dollar store has saws and tape measures and allen wrench sets and levels and small hammers for a buck each. Sure, they are junk. But they will be better than nothing and those forcing to rebuild actual sustainable shelters after the petroleum is no longer cheap enough to casually heat a two thousand square foot house will need some tools. Crowbars should be in demand as the old suburb developments can be torn down for materials. And don't forget duct tape. What civilization isn't going to need duct tape to survive and rebuild? Have plenty of the stuff. For personal items you can look into condoms (perhaps free at the health clinic- why should all the welfare pukes get all the care free sex). Tooth brushes are hard to replace, get bunches of them. You can buy three for a buck at the dollar store, but consider going to a local dentist and asking for the name of the company that supplies him. If you buy by the thousand you should be able to get each one for a lot less. Say you are forty years old. At most, baring an amazing life extension technology I can't see being offered because if nothing else it would bankrupt Social Security and Medicare even faster, you live to be one hundred. You have sixty years to live. If you bought decent tooth brushes for a buck each for the rest of your life you would spend $60. If you could buy one thousand brushes for $100 you could set aside your own supply and sell the rest for a good profit and you didn't spend that much more. If you got 2000 for $150 think of the profits. Okay, a little insane to spend that kind of cash on a gamble. I see folks, middle class folks, not rich, drop that in a few hours at the slot machines and get nothing. But something to think about. We have already covered shaving in a previous issue. Instead of toothpaste, stock up on baking soda as a substitute. For your own personal use you can buy tubes of paste at 78 cents at Wal-Mart. Being stingy, a tube should last at least six months. At the current price our middle aged man would need to spend over one hundred bucks in toothpaste just for personal consumption for the rest of his life. You'd better stock some baking soda for yourself as a cheaper substitute. And dental floss. What can substitute? See that same dental supply guy for cheaper bulk buying, or at least spend a few bucks stocking up at the dollar store. You can reuse floss until it falls apart, but you will need a minimal supple or you will be finding yourself at the tender mercies of a post collapse dentist armed with a pair of pliers and a jug of moonshine for pain killer. And don't forget toilet paper. Remember, bulk buying saves money. Try a janitor supply store to see if they offer bulk purchases.

Eventually someone will restock the dwindling bee supply, or plant a beet crop to extract

sugar from, or even import cane sugar from the deep south. But until then, sugar should sell well. Buy only the huge sacks. A 25 pound sack is still available at Wal-Mart for under $10. If you can store it safely, stock up. Salt is not going to be a hot item on the coastal areas, but inland it should sell for a good profit. Instead of buying three pounds for a buck at the market see about bulk purchasing. Perhaps the feed and grain store? If you go that route do a little research. Someone should offer it in bulk cheaply. Pencils we have already mentioned. Don't buy the cheap ones, twenty for a buck. They are crap. Get the name brand for $1.50 for twenty. The cheap ones fall apart when sharpening, the ones half again as costly do not. Have several packs of razor blade sharpeners for them. Writing paper is a good buy after the little tykes are back in school and everyone sells their left over spiral bound notebooks. The once dollar items go for fifty cents or even a quarter each. Stock up once a year. Another good item is matches. The strike anywhere matches are not really any good anymore as the manufactures have really cut back on their effectiveness for whatever reason. Just get the strike on box type, leave in their plastic wrap and put in a zip lock bag to keep moisture out. There is always going to be some dumbass that let the fireplace burn down and some supply of matches will always be needed. Nails are always a good item to stockpile. Old ones can and will be salvaged but new ones will still be needed and I can't see them being made cheap without machinery. Paper clips might be needed. As we go back to paper after most computers sputter out and die, office supplies will be needed for administrative tasks and some will be hard to duplicate such as paper clips. I'm sure I've missed quite a few items. You can fill in the blanks. Happy stockpiling.
END

PURIFYING WATER
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You need pure water. It is as simple as that. There is no dancing around the issue, no half-ass ways around it. You need pure water to drink, to wash dishes with and even to bathe with as steam and droplets from contaminated water can potentially harm you as they are breathed in. The only thing contaminated water is any good for is flushing the toilet, and come a system breakdown most likely that will fail and you are back to an outhouse anyway. So just factor in that any household water needs to be treated. That being the case, you can figure on needing a minimum of four gallons of water a day per person. And that is with extreme conservative methods of water use such as one gallon of water to bathe with (a sponge bath) as well as shaving with that same water. One to drink, one to share in the cleaning chores and one to cook with. You might even squeeze by on three and a half if dishes are washed in a shallow sink and a pressure mist spray (such as from a weed sprayer used just for that purpose) is used to wash them. And that is going to be bad enough, hauling a seven gallon jug from the river for each couple. I suppose one pulls the little Red Wagon and another guards. On wash day you need to haul double to get the clothes clean. Now, granted, not all of us are going to be in such bad shape. Plenty of areas get sufficient rainfall. With a roof cistern you cut down dramatically on the water you need to purify. With a cistern I would purify the drinking water and leave the rest alone, or even just drink it straight. Rainfall is pure, distilled water only having pollution as an additive. No one wants do drink pollution, of course, it just may not be a factor in your region. With a well you get the safest water, fit to drink as it was filtered through several hundred feet of dirt and rock. But not all of us will have a well. A lot of us will be in camps, away from the cities. Or on our own land in temporary shelters as we hadn't gotten around to investing in much there. Or living on our land and never having a well as they were too expensive and you just haul water as you commute to work. And then of course you could live on part of the half of this country that doesn't get enough rainfall. A river is the only source of water. So you need to purify the water. Every Tom, Harry and Bambi is going to be relieving themselves in that river up stream from you. Consider it contaminated.

So how does one go about purifying water? You can use chemicals, solar or a mechanical device. Chemicals are those wonderfully dangerous substances we choose to ingest as they are far more pleasant that dysentery. The most familiar one is bleach. Solar is the best long term way to purify water as ol' Sol is giving us a free energy ride. It does take immobile equipment however if you build a long term unit. Mechanical devices can include far more complex devices but here I just mean filters. The familiar ones are the Katadyn or the Berkey. I would suggest using all three as they all have strengths and

weaknesses. Alas, it can never be easy. For Y2K I had a pocket Katadyn and a replacement filter. I think the cost was some obscene amount, like $250. And it was only good for a bit over 4000 gallons. Thankfully prices have dropped since then. Before that I had a supply of ten gallons of bleach in my really poor financial prep days which only coincidentally was when I was married to wife number two. May her evil soul rot for all eternity in the lower bowels of Hades. Wife number four knows better than to try to forbid my investments, and also coincidentally she has been with me longer than any other, seven years now. Odd how that works out. But even with a filter and bleach you are still limited to how many gallons of water you can purify. You also need a solar still to pick up the slack. Even if you have a Berkey filter that purifies forty thousand gallons you will eventually run out of filters. Have one to act as a back up rather than your only source. If it is only running through two gallons a day then it should last twenty years on one set of filters. Only using it when the sun isn't out and it could even last the rest of your life on just that one set of filters. Now that's how you get your monies worth. Chemicals will also run out but in the mean time will be used to treat that water you aren't drinking such as wash water, dish water, bath water. This will allow you to just drink the solar water, especially if you are starting with a small still and have yet to make another for all your needs.

Lets start with chemicals since most books on preparations mainly just focus on these. Their attitude seems to be that us poor unworthy souls must kill ourselves through chemicals while the elite sip from filtered water, chuckling softly to themselves as they pat their semi-auto thirty caliber battle rifles that are priced out of the market to the financially challenged through import restrictions and cosmetic rules putting us in the same category as the ghetto dwellers unable to buy a Saturday Night Special to protect themselves against Tyrone the Pimp who has several enforcers armed with fully automatic Mac-10's and thus clearly have the scratch needed to arm themselves. In other words, if you are poor and white you are no better than a jobless Black or Puerto Rican in the eyes of politicians who are now quite unconcerned with outright firearms bans outside of the northeast corridor but will just make sure few people can afford to arm themselves with any quality weapon, not only by legislating prices higher but by letting loose the dogs of litigation on us and strangling us with inflation and exporting most of our jobs. Foul bastards. And you wonder why I don't vote, giving my consent to the slaughter. Anyway getting back to chemicals in your water, try not to drink the crap. Treating wash water is one thing, even washing the dishes with it is okay, but try not to drink it. Short term it is fine, but a steady diet of bleach or iodine water is not good for you. Those with a thyroid problem can't take iodine anyway. Iodine tablets are great for camping, but I would try to avoid them and try to find yourself some food grade hydrogen peroxide at 35% strength. It is important to get food grade as the 3% from the store has chemicals in it to help stabilize it. Bad for you to ingest type chemicals. If worse comes to worse I suppose you might have to use the standard store stuff, not that I recommend it. Get your food grade HP (health food store or online) and dilute it down to 3% (the straight 35% will actually kill you if you ingest it). About a 12 to 1 ratio. Use one tablespoon of 3% per gallon and let sit for thirty to sixty minutes. However, please note that I had a heck of a time finding any resources on HP for purifying water. Everything had to do with oxygenating blood to

fight cancer. I only had one source for the above figures. Proceed at your own risk.

Common household iodine found in the medicine section of the market can be used rather than the expensive tablets in the camping section. Use twenty drops per gallon and let sit for thirty minutes. You can use any household liquid bleach (without any scents added) to purify your water, about ten drops per gallon. Liquid bleach does not store well, only about a year before chemical separation. Rotate your stock. To have a shelf stable product, use calcium hypochlorite (poor cleaner). Use one heaping teaspoon added to two gallons of water to use as your bleach stock. Then take that stock and use one fluid ounce per gallon of water to purify (two tablespoons). With any bleach use you should make sure you have a slight chemical taste to make sure it is working properly. The waiting period between treatment and use is about fifteen minutes. With a bag or two of calcium hypochlorite stored away you should be able to treat plenty of water. I suppose here is as good a place as any to mention boiling water to purify it. A great method, sustainable if your area is heavily wooded, and essentially free. If you have a plentiful supply of wood, and if that wood smoke is not going to draw unwanted attention to your home. And as good a method as any in the winter when we are heating the house anyway. You need to have the water reach 149 degrees and stay there for at least six minutes to kill all the viruses and germs. Boiling for six minutes should achieve that if you don't have a method of reading the temperature, adding another six minutes per five thousand feet of elevation. But solar stills can achieve that without boiling, more on that below.

Filters are great if you can afford them. It used to be that you needed between two and three hundred dollars just for a filter, with even more money for replacement cartridges. I won't recommend too many models as most hiking/camping brands give very little in the way of life span, i.e. it might only cost $30 but it only filters forty to fifty gallons. Great for camping, sucks for survival. If you want that, stick with the Katadyn models. The Micro cost $30, replacements $20 for twenty five gallons. The Hiker model is $60, replacements are $35 for two hundred gallons. Both filter to 0.3 microns. The gold medal of the bunch is the Pocket Filter, filters to 0.2 microns and is $200, replacements $140 and filters an incredible 13,000 gallons. Those not needing portability can use the Gravity Drip Filter that also has a 0.2 micron filter(s) and is $170, replacements for all three filters is $150 or $50 for one of the three. Will last up to almost 40,000 gallons. Or just use one element instead of three to get 13,000 gallons. The unit comes with the original three elements so for that $170 you get the first 40k gallons. Its the replacement elements that add to your cost. All prices are from www.BePrepared.com , one of my favorite survival supply companies, Emergency Essentials. From Major Surplus & Survival, www.MajorSurplusNSurvival.com you can get the Pocket models replacement filter for ten bucks cheaper, or the Mini model which is $90 with replacements at $60 for about 2,000 gallons. If you want the Berky you can go to www.Lehmans.com and buy one for $250. This is the stainless steel countertop model that is similar to the Katadyn but the claim is that you can get more use from the filters depending on water quality, up to 60,000 per element (there are four). Replacements are $43, or $38 each if you buy four at a time. Now for the good news for those poor handyman types. You can make your own countertop model by taking two plastic buckets, one over the other, putting one

filter element in the top one. Just drill the correct size hole and stick in a replacement filter from one of the above Katadyn or Berky. $50 gets you a filter that will purify 13,000 gallons of water. The one question I have on that is how to seal the hole. I think the filters have a rubber base you put Vaseline on. But I'm not sure. If anyone does construct one of these do-it-yourselfers let me know the details and I can pass them on.

Solar is the way to go as far as low cost. If you have an old door, some 2x4's and a sheet of glass, you have a solar water heater. The difference between a solar water heater and a solar water purifier is several dozen degrees of heat. The heater gets your water to one hundred, one hundred twenty degrees and you are good to go. But to get it purified you need better heat from better construction. Insulate the back (the floor), and double pane the glass (sliding glass doors work great and they are safety glass) and put up a reflector. The water needs to reach 149 degrees and hold for 6 minutes to kill all nasties in it. Take a sheet of wood and place a border of two by fours all around it and cover it all with a sheet of black plastic. Or paint the wood black and use clear plastic. Cover with glass. Your solar water heater. If you place insulation over the door, under the plastic you will gain efficiency. Place an aluminum foil covered cardboard reflector around one side and you should be able to reach purifying temperatures even in winter. You should get a meter to gauge the temperature if you plan on using for purification. Have plenty of extra plastic as it will degrade, and don't leave out dry to melt. If you want to do away with plastic that needs to be replaced, you need to water proof the bottom. Perhaps with a metal sheet or fiberglass with silicone to seal the edges. If even this was too much work, construct a solar puddle. Idea presented by Dr. Dale Andreatta, reprinted in "Sunshine To Dollars". Dig a shallow pit about four inches deep and about 3x3 feet. Use two inches if insulation- paper, straw, grass. One end should have a small trench. Place a bottom layer of clear plastic, then a layer of black plastic, both overlapping the top of the pit. Put in a half inch of water, flatten the insulation to get an even depth except for the trench which is one inch deeper than the rest. A pasteurization indicator should go into the trench as that is the coolest water { it says contact Solar Cookers International at 916-455-4499 for the indicator }. Fill the water up to a total of an inch or two, more if sunny, less if not. Place another layer of clear plastic over the water, overlapping the edges of the pit. Put in spacers to allow a two inch gap between that third layer of plastic and a forth layer you place on top of the spacers. Cover all of the plastic edges with dirt or rock to hold them down. Place a siphon hose down into the trench part of the pit. Another hose can be used to add new water the next day or just lift up a corner of plastic sheets. The only expensive part is the indicator at a few bucks. You can get up to a dozen gallons of water from this if you had two inches in the pit. You can of course increase the size. The inexpensive polyethylene plastic seems to last several months, then needs replacement. You can't get much cheaper than this for pure water.

If you want the original article on the solar puddle, get it at www.SolarCookers.org. They also sell the pasteurization indicators for $6. They are reusable. And pretty cool. A small tube with a globe of wax inside. When the wax gets hot enough it melts to indicate the correct temperature. The site also sells some solar ovens. And even a small portable solar water purifier for only $20! You can purify up to four gallons in it. Pretty good deal (to

give you an idea it looks like a solar shower but with bubble wrap on the clear part). You could spend $50 for a drip filter and $20 for a water purifier if you wanted all store bought. Of course the plastic will degrade over time. The only long term solution is of course a solar still of wood/metal/glass (and you should have more than one in case of breakage), but the $20 purifier is great if you want mobility and longer term than a cheap filter. If your location gets enough sun it would be better and cheaper than a filter. I hope this article gave you something you can use for planning and pure water, those of you without the means of having a well. And as a bonus without a well you need less alternate energy sources, saving you even more money.
END, scroll down for more

A note from a reader on storing duct tape long term. Be careful, the adhesive will eventually degrade and you no longer have usable tape. Treat it as a perishable item and rotate your stock (he has had experience with this)
END

NON-ELECTRIC SLOW COOKER
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I originally came across two articles on this, one in Backwoodsman magazine (issue #60 from the year ten anthology), the other I can't remember, and it was just such a wonderful idea I had to share this. I guess the original idea goes back to a Scandinavian "hay box" where hay is used as insulation. Today we have much better insulation that also lasts a lot longer. The general idea is that you put a boiling item into a box, throw insulation around it and it continues to cook itself. You can throw in food in the morning and by dinner time you have a cooked meal, all with very little fuel. And this caught my interest as I can see that in the future we are going to be faced with fuel shortages, first as our petroleum is bought up by China's much healthier economy and then as globally we start to run out of even the hard to extract oil. And secondly as every Tom, Dick and Harry chop up all the wood to heat their inefficient suburban McMansions, run their steam engines to continue to drive their autos rather than perching their fat asses on a bicycle, heat water to sanitize it since the upstream neighbor doesn't have enough sense to put his outhouse more than twenty feet away from the stream and even clear forests in a last ditch effort to feed themselves as they fight over the last of the hybrid beet seeds left in the nursery inventory. These are your neighbors that couldn't stockpile wheat at $5.35 per person per month for an emergency supply of food, can't place any windows facing south to catch even a glimmer of solar heat, can't figure out that to heat air or water only takes some glass and black paint, and will continue to drive their SUV ten extra miles while getting seven miles per gallon to the next gas station to save three cents a gallon (thus spending $4 to save sixty cents) and complain the whole time that gas prices are not too high because we are running out of it or that inflation forces the price higher, but that the oil companies are mysteriously being allowed to run the countries economy into the ground for record profits. I overheard two older gentlemen of obvious middle class wealth just the other day observing that the Bush administration has seen double gas prices. Left out of the discussion was the Feds ramping up of inflation begun long before Bush took office or any mention of supply shortages from over half the globes oil producers to soon if not already include Saudi Arabia. And I don't even like Bush. But these guys who most likely went to college can't scratch below the surface of problems to find underlying causes and that disturbs me. I hope these guys don't have access to firearms as most likely they will eventually be part of the mob trying to take supplies from those of us who are preparing now to weather the fuel shortages to come.

Now, for those that are dirt poor and not wishing to spend much more than a buck or two on a slow cooker, any cooking pot, a cardboard box and some Styrofoam packing peanuts will suffice. For those able to spend a little on this you can get as fancy as a wooden box, a stainless steel cooking pot and some spray insulation. If you are going to be using this for any length of time I would urge you to spend a bit of cash on this in order to get a lasting and quality product. A ten dollar stainless steel pot, up to five bucks in spray

insulation and maybe five bucks in lumber (used to protect the insulation from chipping and wear, very little needed). $20 gets you a long lasting cooker that uses very little fuel. It might even be a lot less if you already own the pot or get it at a thrift store. Although good luck on that as most used pots are the junky aluminum that will slowly poison you although at this point with angry mobs of starving looters, wild and feral packs of attack dogs, radioactive clouds of fallout turning your once enjoyable summer into a lethal winter wonderland you could really care less if your cooking pot is aluminum or stainless steel but you are just filled with super happy joy that your ass can eat a handful of gruel that your cooking pot heated up. Which is why you have to plan ahead for these things back in a happier time when such things matter. Stainless steel is much healthier for you. Try to get that. And I should mention that you need a cooking pot with a lid and handle(s). You need insulation on the top of your pot also and it is going to be a little hard to do this without a lid. The handle part is to pick up your friggin pot which always kind of helps but worse comes to worse no handle equaling a cheaper price should be worth the extra effort involved in carrying the thing. You can always leave the pot in its insulation as you ladle the food out and pry it out latter buy its rim lips for cleaning.

The original article called for an outer box of rigid insulation. You placed the pot in and sprayed the insulation in (the expanding stuff in a can). Then you made a rigid insulation box that you placed the lid in and also sprayed the expand insulation around. The lid can stay attached to its box if desired but the pot must be made to be removed for washing. This was done by putting paste type wax on the outside and polishing it to help it slide free of the dried foam insulation (although I would think you could just wrap a layer of newspaper around it and later pick it off the dried insulation) The foam is then sanded to allow the pot to freely go in and out. I don't know if I care for the outside of this box being rigid Styrofoam insulation. It is bound to sooner or later start chipping off. I would think that a thin wood sheet would be preferable. If you used thin strips of wood as a frame and then glued the sheets on you should have a pretty good protective outer layer for you insulation. Even better would be another larger pot as long as it was cheap enough and gave a large enough space between the two pots for enough insulation. Another defect with the rigid Styrofoam box is that the pot is placed in the box and then the foam is sprayed in. That means that the bottom is hardly insulated at all. But remember, any outer shell is okay. Take a cardboard box, spray in insulation on the bottom, place the waxed pot in and continue to spray around the sides of the pot. Spray in a similar sized but shorter box containing the lid. Then figure out something to cover the outside of the cardboard to give it longevity. Paint, rubber coating spray, aluminum tape, something. If this is going to be your primary cooking appliance three seasons out of the year (solar cooking oven in summer) you are going to want it to last. Now, obviously you are going to need your lid to fit smugly on to your pot so you might want to trim some of the excess dried foam away. The expanding spray foam can be tricky stuff. Sometimes it can really puff up beyond where you want it. But I think the non-expanding is a bit pricey. You need the lid to fit smug or one, the food might not cook correctly and two, steam escapes and water damages your box.

So, as you visualize your slow cooker you see a box. The lid box is the same diameter as

the bottom box. Inside the box your pot has several inches of foam insulation on the bottom and sides of it. The lid has its own insulation surrounding it. The lid and pot fit as well as if they weren't covered at all. Or, you see a cardboard box with Styrofoam packing peanuts on the bottom. Place your pot in it. Your food with boiling water is placed in. You quickly put the lid on and fill the rest of the box with peanuts and close the lid of the box. If you had a plastic garbage bag inside the box with the peanuts in the plastic bag and then closed the plastic after the food went into the top and the rest of the peanuts went over the pot I would think that would help to keep the heat in a little better. Since the packing peanuts are a bit loose and might allow too much air to flow around. I imagine if you already have some spare thin Styrofoam sheets left over from construction you could also make a slow cooker just out of those. Wrap the sheets around the pot several times, several layers glued to that on the bottom. And several layers over the lid. You could even do all this with a cardboard box and some shredded newspaper if you wanted a temporary design. As long as you have plenty of insulation surrounding your cooking pot the principle should hold. You do need to bring your food to a roiling boil. Not a lame bubble or two rising up but a full on boil. You can even put your food in the pot and separately boil the liquid and then throw that in the pot after it comes to a full boil. That might be easier since you don't have as much in the boiling pot and since when you pour you don't get as much splashing. You don't bring the food to a boil in your insulated pot, but another one. Your slow cooker pot stays in the insulation waiting for the food and/or water to be poured in. Full boil, pour in to cooker pot, quickly cover with lid and insulation. Leave it alone to cook at least four hours or so. Obviously cooking times will vary depending on your construction and your food type. But you need several hours at a minimum. Don't be a lookee-loo, you'll let the heat out. This ain't a crockpot where the electric keeps it at a boil and you can keep stirring it or looking at it.

Now, obviously this kind of cooking is going to require water. The boiling water (remember, full boil, rolling boil) provides all the heat for the cooking action. The insulation just keeps all the heat from escaping. You can't take a dry food, heat it up and expect this cooker to finish cooking it. You need water. But that shouldn't exclude most foods. It just makes your choice of dishes a little more constricted. You can cook any meat, it will just need to be boiled. The same with any grain. Beans most likely will not work due to their long cooking requirements unless you soak them overnight first. But you can't just live on stew alone. You will need to experiment. I would imagine that pasta should work, as will rice. Perhaps the cooking time will just need to be shortened. We've all seen the commercial where a long plastic cylinder contains pasta, boiling water is added, however much time later and it is done (I think it is perfectpasta.com). The plastic container keeps in enough heat to continue cooking the pasta. But they want $20 for one container. You can make your own slow cooker for that much , much bigger in size and not as prone to breaking. Or you could try Kurt Saxons idea of thermos cookery where you take an Aladin thermos (the all metal type) and throw your food in there and come back later to a fully cooked meal. The only problem with that is the very small volume you are left with (although perhaps perfect for one person) and you can't use the wide mouth as it lets out the heat too quickly. One solution might be to make a spay insulation case for the thermos to lie in giving it much better insulation than is built into

the thermos itself. I would wrap the thermos itself in a thin layer of paper or plastic otherwise it might be near impossible to remove from the just sprayed insulation since there are so many small protrusions on the thermos for the wet insulation to settle under (not to mention the handle itself). A large shoebox should be a perfect size. Wrap up your thermos, spay the bottom of the box, place the thermos on the bottom layer and continue to spay up and around. After drying you will need to saw the brick of foam in half horizontally to free the thermos. When using after that you have a bottom layer of foam the thermos sits on and one that lays on top of it with the cardboard box lid over that. With the thermos cooking always make sure to pre-heat. Boil a few cups of water and place it in the thermos and cap it. Then proceed to boil your food water. As it is entering a full boil, dump the first water and then pour in your food. Cap and lay it on its side and keep it there (or the food clumps on the bottom and doesn't cook properly).

You could even mimic the thermos idea (for a portable lunch) by using a small pot and thus a smaller overall size insulation block. You will still tote in to work a box about the size of a wrapped up human head causing all kinds of gossip at the workplace but a piping hot lunch at work that cost you almost nothing should get your co-workers so insanely jealous they will start vicious rumors about you with the boss. You might even be able to sell a few of the wonders to them for a good profit. Just think of the yummy lunches you can have at work as your bumbling idiot co-workers get pasty and fat eating greasy take-out or slimy baloney sandwiches. Boston baked beans, beef stew, beef and rice, sausage and pasta. Or just use at home. Take a loaf of bread to work for lunch but come home to the above dishes already hot and ready to eat. Quicker than a microwave dinner and much tastier. And almost no clean up. The night before you got the basic ingredients chopped up and set aside. In the morning you boiled some water and threw it in a pot. How easy was that? And, when the time comes when there is little or no power to cook with you need only use enough fuel to bring some water to a boil. By starting to use this now you already experimented and found plenty of cool recipes you enjoy. Just do a Google search on crock-pot recipes to get you started. Happy frugal cooking.
END

SKILLS OR SUPPLIES?
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Not for the first time it occurred to me the other day that I am collecting way too much junk. It might have been after I brought in another rifle and tried to find a place to store it. And it wasn't even the issue of space but the fact that this was my fifth Lee Enfield No.4 rifle. But it wasn't my fault. I went looking for a Mosin Nagant since the ammo is incredibly cheap. But when I saw an Enfield and its mate just sitting there imploring me to purchase them how could I say no? I distinctly heard it talking to me, "Don't be a fool, put down that potato digger and come to me. Most likely made by a damn commie anyway. And you know it might just blow up in your face using that old ammunition. Stay with a tried and true battle rifle." I just couldn't in all good conscience reject an argument such as that. So while my plan had been to spend $200 on two commie bolt guns I ended up spending $300 on two more of Her Majesty's veterans. Who really needs five of one kind of rifle? Well, I rationalized to myself, one of them has a poor extractor and most likely will be given an adaptor to turn it into a carbine firing 7.62x39 and the other is a model 2 without the wood furniture going all the way to the end of the barrel so in reality you are only really going to have three of one kind of rifle. And it was still cheaper than buying one Mini-14 with three to five magazines. See, I am not getting too much junk. I am investing in a historical icon that is in danger of disappearing without good homes. I can do this all day, finding good reasons why I buy too much crap. For instance, don't get me started on inflation and the seven to ten percent devaluation of the dollars purchasing power every year. Far better to have physical assets on hand than useless Federal Reserve Notes in pocket. But, really, is so much gear necessary? I have a ton of wheat stored and am still concerned it isn't enough. I mean, lets just say everyone I knew showed up after the Apocalypse. Not co-workers but family only. My Mom has a good spread down central California way and could easily feed herself and my step-dad. So that leaves my step-mom and father, my step-daughter and her husband and two kids and my old lady. Seven friggin people to feed. No way one ton of wheat is going to last long at all. 100% justified in food supply paranoia. I need another half ton just to feed us all for one year. My plan was to have a ten year supply just for myself and the ball and chain but it is a bit harder now that plastic prices are so much higher and I need so many more poly buckets.

And what about grain grinders? I have one Corona, two Corona clones and a small cute one for, I don't know, maybe the kids to use to grind with. I bought it for Y2K when that is all the people selling the wheat buckets had for sale. But all told under two hundred for the lot. Cheaper than one fancy Yuppie model. Still, four grinders? Am I insane? Do I need that many friggin grain grinders? Isn't one main one with one back up sufficient for anyone's needs? And 1/8 acre lots of land for my trailer. Four of them? I can only use one at a time. Why do I need so many? Granted, I only spent about $1500 total for three of them, and the most expensive was $3300 (but that was over an acre, and in Nevada). But I don't use any of them. Three are half way across the country and the one three hundred miles away I have yet to even visit. What was I thinking? Now, please, don't

think I am bragging here. I'm not. I am only listing my assets I have gathered over eight years time to bring up the question "why do we need so much stuff, and would it be better to devote our time to learning to use what we have rather than just buying more stuff?" Granted, we can all drive a car, once learned you don't forget. But instead of buying another car, how about learning to fix the old one. Any money spent should be on spare parts for the first one. And guns. I spend more time buying the things than practicing with them. How stupid is that? Do I even use my grain grinders? No, I buy my whole wheat flour at Wal-Mart and most of the time I don't even use that but buy the whole wheat bread already baked by the bakery in Wal-Mart. Well, I tell myself, at least you are eating what food you store. That at least is something. I finely got around to stockpiling my primers and powder to go along with the Lee Loader I've had for several years. Do I reload? No. My time is devoted to other pursuits other than practicing new skills. Hence the whole point of this article.

You need supplies. We don't just buy crap because we like to shop. I would actually be content if the only thing I ever had to buy outside essentials such as food and energy were books. I don't dislike buying preparedness supplies but I could live without it too. If I really felt that the world was a secure place and nothing bad would ever happen I could be content going back to living in a small trailer in town and just going to work, renting movie videos and buying books. I had a simple and satisfying life at one time. Simple being the key. Now, not only do I have to constantly worry over preparedness supplies but also the writing and publishing aspect. I might happen to share my thoughts with others and this in turn might help others out but really I write to solidify my own thoughts and for the enjoyment of a creative act. Still, a simple used $50 computer could be used for just writing. I have to get fancy and burn CD's and print, etc. Now the less used less old computers cost several hundred bucks. It is expensive to share. And really, the longer you are in the preparedness game the worse off you are. The more you learn the more you realize how under prepared you are. I used to be content with a gun and some stored wheat. Then I had to start reading up on Peak Oil and realized I had overlooked the whole energy aspect. Running short on energy long before the end of civilization puts a whole new spin on your preparations. So instead of being able to relax and enjoy life after a certain level of preparations we can find ourselves getting sucked in ever deeper. Bummer. I guess the point here is that there will never be an end of needed supplies. I like to think that my advice enables others to prepare as cheaply as possible. It's a good thing, as the need for supplies never is satisfied. So in the long run you spend far less than you would otherwise. But whether you can ever de-rail yourself from your preparedness shopping spree is another matter.

You buy a rifle. You buy one without the need for magazines so you only need stripper clips. So far so good. You didn't buy a semi-auto so you saved close to a thousand bucks. And you don't need mags so you saved quite a bit there, in some cases mags can cost more than the surplus rifle you bought instead of the battle rifle. But now you need ammo. Even buying a lot of surplus ammo at ten to fifteen cents a round you never seem satisfied. You feel you need to learn how to reload in case your ammo supply ever runs out or they stop selling surplus. Now you can go cheap, and should. A cheap Lee press is

$30. The die is another $20. A bullet mold $20. A bullet sizer $20. Under $100. One thousand reloads should cost you about $50 in powder and primers. Casting your own bullets is nearly free with salvaged wheel weights for the lead. So, five cents a reload as long as your brass holds together. So your cheap $100 surplus bolt gun is costing you a lot more money. First you buy it. $100. Then you buy two thousand rounds for it. $200. Then you buy reloading equipment for $100. Then reloading supplies for another $200. Your $79 plus tax cheap gun ends up costing you $600. Imagine what that $900 AR-15 would end up costing you in the end. You can do the same thing with any survival gear. Lets simplify food and just say you are going to stockpile wheat only. Yet you are still going to add a lot of equipment and gear to your once simple purchase before it is all done. First you buy a years supply of wheat for one person, $60 (assuming the need to eat nothing but wheat). Then you need to buy the plastic poly buckets to store it in, $25 for used buckets and new lids, $60 for all new. Then you have to buy a grinder, a minimum of $25 up to hundreds (but we will go with the cheap solution as usual). Then you have to buy something to treat the wheat to ensure it is insect free. This can range from free (leave each bucket in the freezer for at least three days) to a few bucks (dry ice for a nitrogen flush) or diatomaceous earth (a mineral harmless to us that shreds insects flesh). Then you need a way to cook it. Even a home made solar oven will cost a few bucks in material. All told, your $60 in wheat will cost you at least $150.

The people who really annoy me are those well meaning but clueless folks who preach skill perfection. Whatever skill they have perfected they think we should also. For instance, the gun nut thinks we should all be marksmen. The mechanic thinks we should all fix our own cars. The ham radio operator thinks we all need to learn ham communication. The primitive camper thinks we should all learn how to identify edible plants. The martial arts guy thinks we all need to learn unarmed combat. Okay, granted, these are all important. But who in the heck has time to learn all this? We are all very busy earning a living and spending time with the family and perhaps if all the Gods smile down on us and all the planets align perfectly we just might have a few spare minutes to ourselves each day to relax and enjoy a few minutes of “me” time. We don’t have time to learn all of the required survival skills. So, yes, perhaps we substitute too much gear for not enough skill. Perhaps we buy a scope and bore sighter instead of practicing with a peep sight. Perhaps we buy freeze dried meat instead of learning how to solar dry our own (after learning how to build the dryer, that is). Maybe we take the car in for an oil change instead of doing it ourselves. Or buy corrosive ammo rather than learn to reload the boxer primed new stuff. Or stockpile beans instead of learning how to grow it ourselves. All true, but in the large scheme of things not very important. What is important is that you just go ahead and prepare. Somehow. Any way that you prepare is better than nothing. If it involves just buying crap, fine. If the only thing you do is learn woodcraft and edible plants and home made snares and navigating by stars, etc., all because you can’t afford to buy any supplies, fine. Whatever you do, just do something. Any advice I give to you, either supplies or skills, is just my take on priorities. It is only gospel to Jim. Perhaps not to you. I’m only sharing my journey with you. I preach on wheat only, bolt action guns rather than semi-auto’s, most things solar rather than carbon fueled, etc. I could be wrong of course.

I'm not saying that a stockpile of wheat is unimportant. I am not saying you shouldn't have a good rifle and a stockpile of ammo. I am not saying you shouldn't strive to learn the skills making you less dependant on others. What I am saying is that no matter what others tell you is the most important thing to do, stop and think for yourself. You want to be self sufficient and/or prepare for emergencies. You have a one of a kind situation. It does not necessarily mirror someone else's. Taylor advice to fit you. I might beg of you to buy wheat and rifles. You might want a couple of sacks of white flour and a shotgun. And you might be content with not learning how to prepare whole grains or target practice. But you are happy with extra food and protection. Your stockpile of foods might all be canned goods rather than whole grains. So what! If that is what works for you. I am just as full of crap as anyone else. You listen to others to learn of options. Don't listen to others to learn The Truth (cause they don't know it either). I know someone that believes in being prepared for emergencies, owns a few guns (and is a good shot) but has no savings or food stash. Yet he is a skilled mechanic. Who is to say my stored food and ammo will better serve me than his skill as a mechanic? He could be earning cash under the table while I remain unemployed in an economic downturn. Then my food stash is only good for so long before it runs out and he can continue to buy his needed food. So who is smarter? If we see a Depression with society still functioning, he is. If the food stops coming to market, I am. How can you tell? You can only prepare for what you think is going to happen.

While small town living is the ideal, most jobs and most of our family is in bigger towns or cities. So most of us live in the city. Don't let advice for the ideal location push you into poor decisions. Certain guns are a lot worse than others. I would rather be armed with a Rugar 10/22 than with that award winning piece of junk the AR15. I only advise war surplus bolt actions, not only for their cheapness, their robustness, their serious bayonets but also for their ammunition saving characteristics (handy in both TEOTWAWKI scenarios and in our gun grabbing political culture). But if you love the M16/AR15 design and are proficient with that rifle and, importantly, can utilize fire discipline, why then you would be an idiot to buy an old war horse just because I said it was better. What is best is what works for you. I only ask that you step back and look at your Big Picture. Do you balance? Or are you madly unbalanced in your preparations? Do you have a garage, retreat, and cache full of supplies yet don't know how to sharpen your knifes or field strip any of the guns you haven't even shot yet? Are you a master gunsmith yet couldn't feed your family past week two after a disaster? Just try to achieve a little balance. It is not all skill, nor is it all supplies. A bit of both. You can have a lot more of one than the other, but try to have both. To some degree. As long as one is not totally neglected for the other. By all means favor one over the other, just don't totally ignore one. Achieve a balance, Grasshopper. Then all will be well in your universe. And speaking of Grasshopper. The dude had Super Karate Powers. But how did he eat? I guess you go to each town and defeat Pure Evil Capitalist Powers and the grateful proletariat feed you. A precarious existence. Don't be like Grasshopper. Even if you are a Super Karate Dude have a ruck full of food and some gold in the heel of your boot (and while you're at it, have a boot- those sands get hot, not to mention stickers). Have all the

Super Karate Dude skills you want but don't go around begging for food. END

BULLETS, BEANS, BULLION AND BOULDERS
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Is anyone out there surprised that inflation is heating up? You did see this coming, right? Federal government spending is out of control and the only way to pay the bills is to create the money out of thin air. Foreigners are slowing down their purchases of our national debt yet the government needs more money than ever. So they increase the supply of currency. You don't even need to print it up, just add some zeros in your computer. Talk about computers increasing productivity! If you hold the legal monopoly on force you can add as much money to the system as you like and people are forced to accept it. A very sweet deal indeed. Inflation is the devaluation of the money supply. As the supply of money increases, the value of each monetary unit goes down. If you start a game of Monopoly with the regular supply of money, prices stay the same. If you add in the currency from another Monopoly set, the prices will double as everyone has twice the cash to bid up prices during auction. Inflation is easy to understand. The government creates more money, and the money in your wallet now buys less. While the government has in the past mostly been content to augment their tax collections with a modest inflation, now they have little choice but to increase the amount of inflation. The private sector economy is in serious trouble (being mostly autos and homes and businesses catering to them-and we all know how those two are doing) and the government must prop up more and more of the economy through stimulus and thus is in dire need of more spending cash. You may not have received an income tax hike but you are paying a yearly inflation tax. Currently at about 10%. Always double the official inflation estimate as normal folks eat and have shelter and use energy to survive, a few things that the government leaves out of the inflation figures. And right now you can triple the figures as oil prices reflect not only the dollars inflation but also increased world demand and decreasing global supply. I won't start another rant on Peak Oil, I'll just say that the cost will continue to go up. You can take that to the bank. Those idiots that forecast increased prices will lower demand never had to commute because the suburbs were the only affordable housing nor did they ever have to heat that house in the winter. People can cut back on needless errands but they still need to get to work. They can turn down the thermostat a few degrees and wear a sweater but you still need to heat the place in the cold. Global warming won't work quick enough for most of us to forgo a heating oil delivery. At best perhaps five to ten percent of our energy needs can be cut back in these ways. Not enough to effect much in the way of prices.

And as much as I admire the writings of a lot of economic commentators, I can't agree that we are in for a deflationary economy. Businesses might need to cut prices to attract customers and unemployment might be soaring, but the government will always be there.

Inflating the money supply to pay its bills. Creating make-work for employment creation. Expanding the welfare roles. The whole government might well crash after hyper-inflation and we could enter a deflationary depression, but by then we would be on a barter economy and the currency would be worthless anyway. Hoarding cash now through an inflationary period in the hopes it might eventually appreciate during a deflationary depression seems rather silly. Savings should not be at the mercy of the governments shenanigans. Any paper asset could be in danger of failure. Any paper "promise to pay" can be reneged. Only trust tangible assets you keep on hand. I would much rather have one gold once coin on hand currently worth almost $700 than the promise of $3,000 worth of stock certificates. One is cold hard cash, untouchable by government, the other a promise to pay and subject to inflation. All promises to pay should be suspect. Stock certificates, bonds, your retirement pension, and especially anything from the government such as Social Security and Medicaid. Oh, I used to tell myself I would never see Social Security. Now I'm not so sure. Now I think I will actually get it in almost thirty years. It just won't buy a heck of a lot. Currently the cost of living allowance on government retirement is tied to the official inflation rate, 3%. Yet inflation is really running at about 9%. In thirty years that difference of 6% is going to take my current promised amount of $700 a month a turn it into about $400 of actual purchasing power (and that is assuming energy costs don't go too much higher as a percentage of ones income or the buying power will be even less). Now, I can live on that amount. Can you? This is what inflation does. Lower your bills for retirement. No debt, house paid for, lessen your need for a car if not eliminate it, garden or at least have a stockpile of food, most of your non-emergency money in precious metals and enough energy efficiency to enable you to drastically cut back on fuel should it become too expensive. Those of use in the present need to also combat inflation.

Fighting inflation is not easy. Uncle Sam and the hoard of parasites clinging to his fat ass can easily beat the ravages of inflation through financial manipulation and insider knowledge. Those of us at the bottom of the economic ladder need to play things a little smarter if we wish to minimize our suffering. My first bit of advice would be to get out of debt. While perhaps you can use inflation to pay off your debts in worthless dollars, it is also true that being in debt doesn't allow you much wiggle room to adjust your spending to meet life's challenges. For instance, if you have a mortgage, a car payment and three credit card payments, what happens when gas prices double? If you are stuck in a house you can't move closer to work so you keep paying on the house and the car because you need to commute but you can't cut back on any of your credit payments so you charge the increased gasoline cost to your credit cards and now are paying twice the gas cost plus 15% a year on it. Sound familiar? Gas prices doubled in the last three years while your income stagnated. I don't even get COLA, my raises don't equal even the official rate of inflation. You have little option but to go deeper in debt. Get out of debt even if you have to declare bankruptcy. You can still do it, it is just harder than it used to be. You just need to be earning less than your states median income to qualify for a total write off. But I think you do need to go to counseling. I don't have all the details, but in general a good strategy would be to repo the house and car, close the bank account before the last credit card payments are made and have a new job that pays a lot less. Liquidate and

move to the area you bought a crappy piece of land and put a crappy piece of trailer to live in and bike to work and work minimum wage. They'll let you declare bankruptcy, I'm sure. It doesn't have to be a life time wage slavery sentence if you give up your middle class lifestyle. Wouldn't it be great to wake up each morning and smell the country air and know that you could go to work and come home with all the money you made less 25% taxes (less 20% if your state doesn't have an income tax). You need to give up your house that needs thirty years to be paid off (and maintenance now and forever more) and your car that is never paid off (keep buying a new one every five years or keep repairing the old crap-box- payments never stop). Is this so much of a sacrifice?

You can see inflation is getting worse. Don't sit around and wait for it to get unmanageable. Cut your expenses, even if you must cut your income to do it. Then, except for a small cash reserve, put your money into hard assets. Beans, bullets, bullion and boulders. Food storage, guns and ammo, if you have a lot of cash gold but most likely for all of us cheapskates stockpile silver, and some kind of land even a piece of dirt out in the middle of nowhere. If you only have a minimum of cash get wheat kernels to store. Wheat is one quarter the price of beans even if the protein content is low. Or, if you wish to forego whole wheat altogether get sacks of white flour and beans. You can have more variety in your diet and there is no need for a grinder. Whole grain is still under $10 a sack at the feed and grain store (but won't be forever, buy soon). If you can afford the grain but the poly buckets are too much for you one method that is better than nothing (as long as rats or mice are not a concern) is to buy the 18 gallon plastic tote at Wal-Mart for $4 and some 39 gallon trash bags. Put the bags(s) in the tote, fill with 100 pounds of wheat, tie off the bag. One third the cost of poly buckets (although you can't stack them). I would only do this if you have diatomaceous earth to put in the grain, but it is a good "11th hour" method if you want one step above having paper sacks full of wheat. Guns and ammo are easy enough, a subject we are all familiar with. If you are dirt poor you are limited to surplus bolt action rifles. The cheapest right now is the Russian Mosin-Nagants. I would favor the older models over the carbine 44 if possible (carbines in full power rounds kick harder and have lots of muzzle flash- plus the 44 was a war time production for lower quality). Just beware that the Russian gun has no gas safety bleed in case of ruptured primers of case. A feature you may wish to chance but I do not. I'll spend the extra $50 and buy a Enfield. Of course, for the cost of an Enfield you can get an SKS. While I think semi-auto's are not what a survivalist should have, if you can practice fire discipline and live in an area where there are few wide open spaces, then go with the SKS. The little guy is much cheaper than an AK, it is more accurate, can be fired prone, doesn't need mags and is under one third the cost of a Rugar. Just beware the bulk ammo shortages right now include the 7.62x39. You can still buy 20 round boxes, but good luck finding the sardine cans of 800 rounds. If we lived in a perfect world we could all afford full size battle rifles such as the H&K91 with spare parts kits, plenty of mags, enough ammo to blaze away in every battle, etc. Instead, as the saying goes, we spend $12 trillion dollars a year and all I got was this lousy T-shirt. We are poor, we will eat wheat gruel and fire old guns and live in a tarp lean to. Poor does not mean you can buy too much gun for your budget.

Bullion, either gold or silver, is great for inflation proofing your savings. But only after you have plenty of supplies put back. You can't eat your silver coins and you can't protect yourself against thieves with them. But after you have all other necessities they are a nice cozy warm and fuzzy feeling. With them you will never have to pay the inflation tax again. They are real money. The only real money there is. But you must have your supplies first. To include land. Even if all you can afford is a piece of dirt twenty miles from town it is still all yours and not subject to repossession by the bank. Sure, the government can always steal it. Hopefully you are buying in such an economically depressed area developers will never bribe the local officials to steal it for them. Even today, you can still buy a $500 piece of land on E-Bay. There are 1/8 acre lots in northwest Utah, some in Arkansas. You can even get an acre in west Texas. All the land have problems. The Utah land is zoned recreational only (no permanent buildings). The Arkansas land is, well, in Arkansas. The Texas land is in the middle of no where, thirty miles from town or water, surrounded by illegals (although that is relative as there are few people at all). You can do a little better with a grand. East Texas has lush green lots right next to town. But there is massive unemployment. And floods and hurricanes and tornadoes and lots of people. But you could garden and fish and live in your paid for shack with no heat needed in the winter. If it wasn't for all those people I would be living there myself. West Texas for twice the money moves you closer to town and water and further away from the border. Check E-Bay everyday, you will find a cheap piece of land you can pay cash for and then own a retreat to move to in troubled times. Or a place to live in at retirement rent free. Owning your own lot is the best thing you can do to cut your cost of living. Owning it, no money owed, not touchable by the bank after you lose your job. Even if all you can afford is a tent on it, it is still home sweet home without the worries of rent or obscene property tax. Twenty bucks a year instead of two thousand. If the only worry you have on your own land is how you can eat, you are miles ahead of the rest of the population. You don't need to worry about a car payment, the mortgage payment, credit card payments, replacing your outsourced job with another high paying job, your wife losing her job, etc. All you have to worry about is keeping a part time minimum wage job (and perhaps how to keep your trailer roof from leaking). Gee, what a choice. You can, if you wish, live simply. There is no need to panic that the economy is about to tank. All you need is a little bit of cash up front. Very little.

I don't know about you, but I worry about the economy almost every day. Of course, my job is really boring and I have a lot of time to ponder. And my Internet visits are all to doom and gloom sites. I read mostly survival related stuff. I even try to get as many disaster movies in my Netflex list as possible. I just rented Panic In The Year Zero which was really cool and despite the happy corny ending really left one pondering (and this was a 60's flick). My worries help me write this newsletter every week (although do nothing for my blood pressure). But if I wasn't such a compulsive I could relax. I have my land paid for as well as my trailer, my stored food, plenty of guns and ammo, plenty of LED lights and a solar battery charger, water filters, etc, etc. I have plenty of inflation hedge. I bought plenty of silver back when it was cheap. If I can do it for $8 an hour with child support payments you can to. I declared bankruptcy and live dirt cheap and put everything into hard assets. It does involve hard choices. I lived without a car for many

years and rode a bike everywhere. I don't have cable (I do have a roof antenna) or broadband (dial-up still). All my stuff is used from the thrift store (except shoes and skivvies). My trailer has no propane, no water heater. I use buckets to collect drips when it rains. I struggle over every dime before it gets spent. I can now relax after several years. I am almost done. I even bought a $500 car, and we went out gambling yesterday (although with a $20 limit). I still worry about inflation (the dollar store mouthwash went from 24 ounces to 17 ounces for the same $1- that really pissed me off) because without paranoia they WILL get you. But it is as simple as scrimping and saving as little as two grand. Spend a little money now, or a lot later.

If you have any questions specific to your situation/income/area, please feel free to write and I'll help if I can. I wish everyone could have a safe stash to fall back on to beat inflation. I really am worried it is going to get worse.
END

HOW TO LIVE ON $5K A YEAR COMFORTABLY
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Everybody and his brother seems to have a book out on living on ten thousand dollars a year. So I had to be original and go with half that amount. It is going to be hard, but nothing worthwhile is supposed to be easy. And besides, ten thousand is full time minimum wage. Plenty of folks are forced to do that. Five grand is only half time minimum wage and I don't know about you but I am tired of having to work full time. Life is a grand and glorious adventure and work is nothing more than a wet blanket some bastard threw over our party. By only having to work twenty hours a week you free up a lot of your time. Time you are pissing away in the pursuit of Mammon. A false God that will destroy your one precious commodity, your life and the time you have to spend living it. In the end money is all gone, frittered away. But your time well spent, that will leave a smile on your face at the end. Very few of us will ever leave a mark on history. No one freed from wage slavery will spend the time creating better mousetraps or writing a great novel (well, published anyway) or curing cancer. But you will be able to lead a full life, satisfying yourself that it was not wasted. You have one friggin life folks. Do you really want to waste it working? A few of us, we can enjoy our jobs. A teacher that actually teaches young minds to embrace knowledge rather than being a State mandated baby sitter, a craftsman that creates original work rather than factory line cookie cutter one size fits all goods. Myself, I have never enjoyed working. I make the best of it and do have enjoyable moments that I create myself but in the end if the job disappeared I would only miss the paycheck. I feel we all need a passion, some direction in life. Some folks need to work to stay productive. Idle hands being the devils something or rather. I think it is "workshop", not sure, but if Lucifer is involved it can't be good. I am not saying work is bad. I am saying some of us shouldn't have to waste our lives doing it if we have other things to occupy ourselves productively. So, without being on Welfare or having a Sugar Daddy or starving on the street the next best thing is going to be working half time. You might make minimum wage, or you might make a bit more, but you should plan on minimum wage anyway. No sense getting your hopes up. And not only is this a tool for enjoying your life, it might be a survival guide as the economy goes into the toilet and you suddenly have no choice but to live this frugal.

Twenty hours a week at five bucks an hour is a bit over five grand a year. Minus twenty percent taxes leaves you $4300 a year which is a whopping $360 a month. Most folks spend more than that each month on a car payment. But just stay with me here. This is not Mission Impossible, just Mission Higher Improbable. If you plan ahead a little, if you invest wisely first, if you plan your frugal lifestyle as if it where a life or death military maneuver, then you can do it. You start out with $5300. The twenty percent tax might

be a bit lower, or perhaps not. Your Social Security tax will not be lowered, so there is 7% right off the top. You can adjust your withholding state and Federal tax to almost no deductions if you are earning this little. Most states that tax your income should have an amount that isn't taxed if you earn under that amount. The same with the Feds. The other taxes such as unemployment and such should be a percentage point or three so figure a minimum of ten percent taxes to a maximum of twenty. If you do get no withholding on each check (by adjusting the dependants figure) and you only surrender ten percent your monthly gross will be $400 a month rather than the $360 after 20% (although most likely you would see a year end tax return of some amount). I am going to go with the $400 a month amount as this figure will account for little taxes or at least a small amount of wages above minimum wage such as twenty five cents an hour or some such. Remember, most workers at this wage are not going to be stationary for long. Turnover at your workplace might approach 100%. If you are not worth an extra two bits an hour to your employer for a good worker that is always on time than you should go on down the street for another job. Just don't ask for too much money or you'll have to start paying serious taxes and that defeats the whole purpose of working less. You can always turn down a raise, as strange as that sounds. The great thing about making this little is that you can live anywhere. Most people worry about where to live because they need a job that pays a lot. So, they live in crowded cities, commute long hours and put up with the prospects of bad crime and pollution. By working minimum wage you can live anywhere. The South for mild winters, the mountains for seclusion, the desert for seclusion and lack of humidity and mild winters (not as warm, but still mostly sunny with little snow), a small town to avoid most of humanity, etc.

Rent and food are going to be your biggest expense, so lets try to eliminate both. Rent is done away with if you own your own land. I do not mean your own house, nor do I mean your own spread in the country. A house takes half your life to pay off and you spend the other half spending time and maintenance money keeping it. Not to mention insurance and those pesky taxes. Except in really poor areas you can expect to spend at least a thousand a year on property taxes. The biggest beneficiaries after the Fed and its banks (and of course the Federal government that has squeezed its tentacles into every transaction in the marketplace) to the real estate bubble has been state governments who have seen the values of real estate artificially boom and a doubling or tripling of property tax revenue. Of course the middle class gets screwed in the process again. To me that is the biggest reason not to own a home, the confiscatory property taxes. You move to a nice area, put your life savings into a home, get lucky and get a real steal of an interest rate like 5% but then see almost half as much of your interest payment go to taxes. The typical tax is one and a half percent. When you bought your home for $150k you paid $2250 a year taxes. An insane amount at $187 a month. But then your property was reevaluated and your assessed value doubled. You now get to pay double. Your police protection didn't double. New schools were not built. The roads are still getting potholes. See my point? No, of course you don't. You "want a good life", you "deserve it". You can't stand the thought of living in a trailer or a small shack. Fine, go for it. I can't decide what is important in others lives. If they wish to remain wage slaves, then can go right ahead. For those of you out there wishing freedom, you need to live frugal.

A house is not frugal unless you live in a poor area. I almost bought a house in rural Oklahoma for under ten thousand, taxes $80 a year (a long tale why I didn't but it was the right choice). That price range is the frugal choice, as long as you avoid debt and have some income. For most of us, we need to buy a cheap lot of land or get nearly free rent. And then live in a trailer or shack. The opportunities are there, you just need the willpower. You can find a lot big enough for a trailer and garden that you can afford. You can find cheap trailer rent in many places. You just need to decide you can give up luxury in exchange for shelter. An apartment is a luxury. A house more so. They are not necessities. You only need shelter. An excess of land is also a luxury. You might think you need a huge garden, a forest for wood, a stream and pasture for livestock. But they also are not necessities. A small shelter and a small bit of land that will grow your own vegetables and some beans and corn are sufficient. It will get the job done. Everything else is a luxury. How do I break this to you gently? Folks, we are in a friggin financial downward spiral. You are going to be living through a Super Depression any time now. Downsize now voluntarily while you are still in control, or lose it all and have nothing later. Your call.

The lazy mans research on cheap areas to live are on E-Bay and City-Data.com. Find your cheap land on E-Bay and go to City-Data.com (ebay doesn't need the hyphen but city-data does) to find out about population, unemployment, weather, etc. Beware the states that don't allow trailers on your own land. Those areas with the Zoning Police should be avoided. When I researched I checked out different land parcels in the same state to find out this feature. For instance, almost all of Texas outside city limits has no zoning hassles (except ritzy areas). Missouri is tough for anything other than modern mobile homes or stick built homes. In Arizona they might mislead you stating RV's are okay, but it is only for short term camping in most areas I checked out. If you find a cheap Arizona lot make sure it is without neighbors and is difficult for bureaucrats to access. Otherwise you get all settled and then they boot you out. If spending $500 to $2000 for a cheap lot is not in your budget, consider non-conventional trailer rent. Most areas prohibit living on a non-zoned lot, but you can get sneaky. If you do without electric and use a sawdust toilet and haul water you can park almost anywhere. A friends backyard. A Wal-Mart parking lot. Off a logging road. A gold mining claim. Free rent for security in a junk yard (metal prices are soaring and scrap theft is up). I still think a thousand bucks for your own lot is cheap insurance to avoid hassles but I know not all of us have that kind of savings. You might just have to be creative for near free rent. Just beware the downside of free rent. They can always kick you out if there is a disagreement. So what do you do if you have no money for either a trailer or a lot? Sell everything you can, move to your cheap area and buy your lot through the sale of your car. Hopefully you can buy both. I have seen cheap lots for sale and beat up old trailers for under $1,000 total. Even today in an era of rising prices. Of course there are drawbacks, there always are. The cheap land is either in the middle of nowhere or if close to town the area has high unemployment or is crowded or both. And the trailer that cheap is usually a cab-over (the kind that go on the back of a pickup truck). These are seriously cramped for living space. But… to have a paid for home. No rent. No mortgage. Taxes under $50 a year. And obviously less maintenance and utility bills. And

less to lose if the government steals your property as they have been known to do. Bastards.

Food is an area where you can cut back drastically, substitute some items and do without others. Not that you can do without some kind of food budget. Even self sufficiency types need to buy white flour, salt, etc. I still maintain that if you a big enough piece of land to be self supporting in food production your property tax bill and your mortgage will outweigh any advantages it gives you (pre-apocalypse anyway). Best to be semi-self sufficient in food production and have a lot less land. With a reserve of wheat in storage a very small garden can easily feed you in an emergency situation with corn and beans and potatoes being grown. Of course that means the garden must already be up and running and successful. Don't wait until it is too late. As the city welfare hoards run screaming from their suburban death traps stripping the surrounding countryside of all edible vegetation and stray dogs is not the time to find out if your soil is too alkaline or if your garden seeds won't sprout. Start this now. You can't grow all of your own food but even the smallest garden can seriously cut back on your shopping bill. Done right you might find yourself only needing dairy and meat and flour/salt at the grocery store. You supply all spuds and beans and corn and veggies. Perhaps even eggs. And fish from a nearby stream. Buy only bulk from Super Wal-Mart and you can easily spend less than $50 a month on food. Perhaps even without a garden. Potatoes can be bought twenty pounds at a time for about three bucks, flour is twenty cents a pound in twenty five pound sacks. Rice about thirty cents a pound in big bags. Beans fifty cents. Meat you can buy for under two bucks a pound in big packages. Even beef is about $1.75 (accounting for waste from fat, actual cost is $1.59 a pound) a pound if bought in 12 pound packages. If you buy everything in bulk and cook everything from scratch with no convenience foods you should live just fine on this cheap amount. Just take your meat and use it as a flavor in your starch rather than as the bulk of your meal. You can eat less than a pound of meat a day and still get plenty of protein. We are used to dinner being a big slab of meat with a side of carbs and a veggie. But if you cook by cutting up your meat into pieces and mixing it with a carb you get more carb and less meat. Sausage chunks in baked beans, meat pieces in rice, cheese and hamburger in potato skins (twice baked potatoes), fried spaghetti with parmesan cheese, meat pieces in corn bread (breakfast sausage in corn bread with syrup on it-yum, even for dinner). You get the idea.

Energy is easy if you are off the grid. Wood for heat, propane for cooking and if you don't have a solar panel LED's for illumination. If you commute to work you can recharge your marine battery in your car with a second battery set up for free. Even if you only go into town once a week this is a nice set up to have. For those electrical items you just have to have. Or, just get a 200 watt inverter that runs off the cars cigarette lighter for about thirty bucks if all your small electrical needs are going to be short runs. Buy a black and white TV that only uses about twenty watts and can run off D batteries if you still need your idiot box. You'll be surprised how little electric you will really need once you only have a 12 volt battery to run things with. And wood can be cut down in usage with more insulation and solar heating. And propane can be partially substituted with the use of a Zip stove (battery runs a fan to burn extra hot, uses any combustible fuel).

Expensive in the short run, priceless when propane is no longer available. I bought one Zip stove and four extra fan motors for $99 delivered. I hope that it will last longer than I do post collapse. Especially if I mostly use solar in the warm half of the year. One nifty item I just noticed from Lehmans was a ceramic butter crock that uses only cold water to keep butter fresh outside of the refrigerator. About ten bucks, holds a half cup of butter. If one was without a reefer you could buy your butter once a week and with a few of these crocks not worry about spoilage. You would need to dry or can all your meat of course. I think you would use less propane running an RV fridge than canning, but long term you will need to can everything (assuming eventual propane unavailability).

You can afford a car even on this low budget, and you may have no choice if you picked a cheap piece of land out in the boonies. You might be able to bike to work, but you will need to commute to town once a week for food, to do laundry and to haul water. So, one, you will need a paid for car to reduce your monthly expenses and your insurance costs. And, two, you need to live in a state that the cost of running a motor vehicle is not overly expensive. The gas mileage should not be your primary consideration. Yes, it is important now that we will never see gas at less than $3 a gallon (a few states have yet to see a steady price over that-just be patient) but a lot of folks are going to be getting rid of their gas guzzlers at fire sale prices you can take advantage of. The important thing is to drive as little as possible. Then it doesn't matter what your mileage is. Normally I do not advocate owning a car. If you need one to get to work, but you only work three days a week, and you get a job as close to your home as possible, then it is a necessary evil. Just be sure to own a bicycle or two for when you can't afford to drive any longer. When that happens most likely you will be laid off from work as the economy dives into the toilet anyway so by that time it won't matter. But just like that garden already cultivated, already be in shape to ride that bike. Force yourself to start riding it. Short distances to start, longer after that. Trust me on this, your car won't be able to be driven after a time. If not Peak Oil, then from massive unemployment in the Super Depression. Odds are good you can't do many repairs yourself, so find a buddy that can and try to find a regular mechanic who won't rip you off. Good luck with that. But mostly don't drive the darn thing too much and you will cut down on the cost of driving to almost nothing. With insurance and gas and modest repairs from time to time you can run your car for under $100 a month. Add to the $100 for food for our couple and $25 for propane (most likely $50 a month factoring in winter use for supplemental heat). We are now up to $250 and have covered shelter, energy, food and transportation.

The cost of a phone line, or the cost of a pre-paid cell phone should both be about $20 a month. If you have a land line, $10 a month for dial up Internet service. Clothes are from the thrift store, as are books. Shoes from Payless when they have their Buy One/Get One Half Off sale. Underwear and socks are a buck each in packs of six from Wal-Mart. $12 a month for washing at the Laundromat (dry for free at home) if you are short of water at your homestead (assumes two loads a week washing only). Your total cost of living should be about $300 a month. Take the other $100 and save a little and put most into survival supplies. If you feel you don't need anymore put the savings into energy efficiency or precious metals. Always work on reducing your need for cash. A Zip stove,

a solar dryer, a greenhouse, a solar PV panel, insulation, a better garden, etc, all take a little cash up front but save your cash at a latter date. No, don't totally electrify with PV panels for $20k. But one panel for $200 will substitute for your vehicle charging at a later date. Don't spend $5k on a greenhouse. Spend $500 to enclose your trailer and have the south side glass to both heat and grow veggies with. Try to work towards the day you don't need a car at all. A trip to town under fifteen miles and a bike trailer several times a week won't take too long and will only cost you a hardy breakfast. You could take your transportation budget down to $10 a month if you just had a bike. If we ever come to a day where there are no jobs and you can't get Food Stamps you will need to be able to limp along on your storage and your garden. It sure won't be easy, but by living cheap now you come much closer.
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