

# **THE FRUGAL SURVIVALIST**

**Disaster Preparations For Under \$500**

**Being The Last Word On How To Prepare For The Coming Hard Times With A Minimal Outlay Of Financial Resources Whereas Any Person Of Limited Means Can Survive And Thrive In Almost Any Cataclysm Short Of A Direct Nuclear Strike Or An Asteroid Hit Without Learning Much In The Way Of New Skills Or Taxing Themselves In Too Strenuous Of A Manner Carrying Out Said Instructions.**

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## WHY PREPARE?

Beginning around the late 1970's to the early 1980's, a lot of folks got serious about emergency preparations. These were some of our worst years. The Soviet nuclear menace was at its all time perceived high. It didn't look like the stagflation of the seventies was ever going to end and inflation was in the double digits. Gold hit record highs and family tea sets were being melted down as the infamous Hunt brothers almost cornered the silver market shooting costs of that precious metal parallel with other commodities. And we were waiting for yet another Arab oil embargo. Things couldn't get much worse, and folks started to assume the worst. A retreat in the Rockies looked a lot better than facing down the increasing criminal element in the cities that were decaying faster than the American Dollar.

Yet things got better. The media went on a feeding frenzy against the survivalists and Ronald Reagan started to substitute future debt for current taxes. In my view, the Alaskan oil fields and the British North Sea oil fields coming on line made most of the difference ( but more on that later ). The government turning on the credit tap to stimulate the economy was a big help just as the World War had stopped the 1930's Depression. The Media's assault on survivalists just made it seem silly to prepare for Armageddon. Anyone looking around could see there was nothing left to worry about. Our Uncle Sammy could take care of things. Just like they defeated Communism ( the 100,000 soldiers in their graves from Korea and Vietnam were not quite happy the defeat was done economically rather than militarily, I'm sure ).

And yet the nuclear menace never went away until ten years later. The acts of nature never stopped. The meltdown of the family farm to big corporates taking over could have led to inefficiencies of scale rather than being beneficial ( ask a few million Ukrainians dead from famine what farm collectivism can accomplish ). Another Recession could have happened and maybe that time we never saw things improve. There were still a lot of menaces that could have spelled trouble for a quite a few of us. Those easily swayed by mass psychology dropped out of the survivalist movement ( usually for good as the financial demands were severe ). A minority stayed the course. We were quickly rewarded by the financial crises of 1987, the infighting in Russia several years later, the real possibility of Clinton becoming a dictator through the 90's and then Y2K. After all that 9/11 was child's play.

All of those potential disasters, yet nothing ever happened. Why do we continue to worry? Perhaps we shouldn't. The ulcers can't help our health much. And yet, it is hard to stop. I view survivalists as folks that know the world is a big, bad place. By preparing to minimize the effect of negative events on themselves, their family and their neighbors, they are acting in a positive manner to help themselves and others. Are they overly paranoid? Sure! Are they wrong? Right answer, only so far. The answer we all hope for, hopefully forever. All but a few nut jobs want to be wrong about our fears. We don't want the world to end. But we think it might happen so the only prudent course of action is to take steps to see it effects us as little as possible. The man that stocked his pantry for

the winter was prudent a few generations ago. Now he is called a survivalist and depicted as wearing cammo and shooting all his neighbors.

And you really shouldn't worry if you are proved wrong. Properly stockpiled, your supplies will give you many nights of solid sleep and keep fresh enough to be passed on to your children to ensure their security. I realize many never even thought about a stockpile for a rainy day, and indeed ignorance is bliss. But for those that see the storm clouds ahead and do nothing, shame on you. Your kids depend on you to provide for them. With this low price guideline you have no excuse not to.

## INSURANCE POLICY

Compiling a stash of supplies for emergencies is quite simply nothing more than an insurance policy. Just as it would be foolish to spend a half million dollars on a house and not carry homeowners insurance, so is it equally asinine to fail to protect our very life. We may like to think we are charmed, that the Gods keep us in their tender embrace at all times of the day and night. Unfortunately, the reality is that very often bad things happen to good people. Rarely do bad things happen to bad people, as witnessed by the simple fact that my ex-wife who is bound into a iron-clad contract with Satan to make my life difficult is skating through life without many cares and nothing whatsoever bad ever befalling her. I don't know if one needs an evil deity on ones side to escape earthly retribution or if it is a simple matter of the concept of karma being a big damn lie, but it does seem that those most deserving rarely see their just desserts. If you are not a nice person you will plan on pillaging anyway. The rest of us need to plan in advance on surviving through an emergency.

An expensive car carries insurance to protect your investment. A house you paid on for thirty years has insurance. Even a rental warehouse full of worthless crap sometimes has insurance. Paying for insurance is a fact of life. Almost everyone does it. But how many people try to insure their very lives? Carrying "life" insurance is just seeing that your greedy family profit off of your death. Carrying insurance to see that you come out alive after a calamity is almost never done by anyone. The cost is so low and usually a one time event. People pay every month for their entire life on some form or another for conventional insurance, be it auto or home or medical. Yet won't spend less than the cost of one ounce of gold to protect themselves against starvation or crime or polluted water or electrical grid failure or any natural disaster ( of which there is not one spot on this planet that doesn't experience at least one form of ) or economic collapse or any other disaster man or nature will throw against them.

Most folks spend \$250 to \$300 a month for six years to buy a new car. They spend another \$100 a month in gas to run the vehicle. For the same cost of one month of owning a motor vehicle, you can buy disaster insurance. A one time expense. Sure, you can spend a lot more. And you just might. But plenty of folks will be well served by just a minimum survival stockpile. Plenty of people are not worried about nuclear war of Peak Oil. They just want to survive a hurricane when the power is off for two weeks. Or have enough food when winter storms keep food from reaching grocery shelves. Or want something in the pantry when their unemployment insurance runs out and the savings account can only cover the mortgage. This plan will easily cover both types of emergencies. Long term and short. Severe and rarely life threatening. The end of civilization or just the end of normality for a few days or weeks.

Insurance is usually for events that will never happen to us. It is rare to experience a house fire or an automobile accident other than a mere fender-bender. If we have good genes and live right we will almost never see a hospital other than for accidents or births.

But we carry insurance anyway. Just in case. Just in case we are without a home. Just in case we are without a means of transportation. Just in case we get cancer. We carry insurance. You also need to carry emergency insurance. Just in case. Calamity insurance is the cheapest type of insurance, if for no other reason that it is the least likely to happen. Take advantage of this fact and don't delay insuring you and your family against major upheavals. Who could have foreseen Hurricane Katrina and the bizarre Keystone Kop routine of the government afterwards? Sure, it was well known the city of New Orleans was below sea level. But who knew the government would let people die stranded surrounded by polluted water and intense heat just because, for instance, water craft capable of rescuing them didn't have enough life vests and the Feds wouldn't let them out to conduct search and rescue? If those folks had their own insurance they would have survived. The Federal government is not a reliable insurance agency like they used to be. Buy your own.

## TRADITIONAL ADVICE IS EXPENSIVE

The traditional advice to a budding survivalist has always been very expensive. If followed, that advice either put you under a tremendous debt burden or discouraged you from making any preparations at all. In effect, only the wealthy were invited to prepare to survive into the brave new world. To me this was always elitist horse hocky. As reality is quick to remind us, money and brains don't always mix well. Witness Ross Perot and his nemeses the Korean hit squad that forced him to discontinue his Presidential bid. Or any sports figure for the most part. I have witnessed more intelligence around one corner of an auto repair shop than from an entire board room full of educated corporate officers. Stupid is as stupid does, folks. Lack of money might be from institution theft ( taxes and alimony ) or background or even a conscious choice to live a life without the stress of achieving wealth. It doesn't always reflect stupidity when one is poor.

Let's travel back to the wonderful world of yesteryear when cars were five grand, decent housing was under \$100,000 and minimum wage was a smidge over \$3.00 an hour. The typical advice in more than one survivalist publication was that you needed at least one hundred thousand dollars to even get a chance at surviving a calamity. At the time I was bringing home six grand a year. The authors who I'm sure are glad to remain nameless gave these kinds of pearls of wisdom. A separate retreat in the country, complete with a fallout shelter. Enough land for self sufficient food production, as well as a year round water source and enough woods to have your own heat during the winter. An arsenal fit for the most militant gun nut imaginable. Plus four wheel drive vehicles, tractors, generators and the like such as windmills and hydropower. And many years of freeze dried foods. And this was eons before China came along to offer a lower price alternative on anything at all. It was insane.

Look, I would love to stockpile an industrial freezer full of meat that runs off my own independent power generation, have a herd of cows to provide methane, grow several dozen acres of corn for fuel alcohol, have a machine shop to do my own repairs, grow enough wheat to supply my own army, have more semi-automatic assault rifles than windows in my house ( which would be plenty as I would have passive solar gain ), and in general be in possession of the means of total self sufficiency. But I don't, and never will. I would prefer to sit in a concrete bunker caressing an H&K 91 308 battle rifle with detachable scope mount with German optics, warmed by a kerosene stove that is fed from twenty steel drums of fifty five gallons each of fuel, eating an MRE or a freeze dried entree. Instead, I'll be huddled outside in the rain under a lean-to heating wheat gruel over a small fire, counting the remaining .22 shells in my pocket as I whittle a punji stick with my \$18.86 stainless steel made in China imitation Bowie knife. Reality sucks.

But worse than the seemingly impossible task before the prospective survivalist financially speaking is the blaring unmistakable message that you shouldn't even try. I mean, are most people stupid? They can tell right off that their finances do not qualify them to buy

survival insurance. Any one item on the list is beyond their means. The arsenal alone is over a years wages. The land is three years, the food two. The vehicles another two years wages. And then you still need to build that super duper retreat. Forget about it. The only sane voice in that wilderness was Kurt Saxon. He is still in business, still one of the few advocating a sensible cheap way of survival. But he is not cheap. His paper bound books are \$35 each, his CD-ROMS not much less. Everything he ever wrote or published can be bought on a DVD for \$100. Not bad, considering, but beware a lot of padding ( a lot of old reprints from, for instance, Popular Science ).

Remember, at today's prices the traditional advice will cost you about \$200,000. My advice still cost under \$500. It will be a plan where you live as a hobo compared to the wealthy tycoon residing in a mansion. But in reality you will at least be a hobo that is well fed and warm and able to protect himself. In any coming troubles you will be in a minority as 99% of your fellow men will have failed to make any preparations at all. They actually still think nothing can go wrong, or even if it does that their trusting Uncle Sugar will provide for them. What a laugh. The same government that agrees that anyone can take your property as long as they can bribe the local government, those folks that advised you to seal a room in plastic allowing neither air nor biological agents in, the same organization that couldn't assassinate one crazy Cuban on a small island, these people are going to come to your rescue? Yeh, sure.

## GOOD REASONS TO STAY UP AT NIGHT

If you do not have a natural tendency towards paranoia you might by now be asking yourself what all the fuss is about as far as preparing for disaster. After all, we have by and large lived a charmed life as a nation baring a few years such as during the War Of Northern Aggression or the Great Depression. For the greater part of our existence we have only moved one way, upwards. The standard of living in the United States has for the most part continually improved for the two centuries we have been around. You might be justified in questioning just what the heck all the fuss is about as far as preparing for cataclysms. Well, just ask yourself if you have traveled far enough back in time to base your observations on. We may have had a marvelous few centuries, but are they normal? Can they be repeated? I for one think not which is one reason I am writing this guide ( the other reason is so I can take your money and go hide out in the boonies while you stay with the teeming masses getting ready to be wiped out ).

The primary cause of concern, which of course is only my opinion, is the life cycle of petrocarbons. The Industrial Revolution, the cause for most of modern comfort ( outside of the understanding of germs of course ) would not be possible on solar power alone ( at least as currently utilized ). For the entire course of industry has relied on carbon forms, whether they be coal or natural gas or oil. Wood might be said to be a marginal substitute but it is the intense concentration of energy in petrocarbons that made the whole thing happen. Individually, solar cells or windmills or hydropower or wood alcohol just might work if paired with energy efficiency. For industry to substitute human power with machines only coal or oil will do. And they are running out quickly. Granted, we will never really ever run out totally. Even the first oil wells in Pennsylvania can still be seen producing a barrel or so a week if they were not overproduced and the required maintenance is given ( most likely seeing a negative return of profit as the upkeep is most likely more than that kind of volume warrants ). But eventually all oil wells stop giving as much energy as is required to pump their contents and thus however much oil is left will be left in the ground.

Global warming should be a concern. Not because the tree huggers told us, but because there are many reports that point in that direction. When permafrost melts for the first time on record it might be time to contact Houston with the problem. When the Antarctic starts calving off ice sheets bigger than ever before, when glaciers for the first time in over one hundred years disappear from national parks, then it might be cause for concern. Is this man made? I don't think so. Man is pathetic compared to mother nature. We couldn't match the energy release from one good volcano with most of our nuclear weapons. I doubt a few factories changed our climate. But even if that is the case, what should it matter to you? Your house still gets flooded if you live in Florida and the global sea level raises. If global warming never happens you were overly paranoid. If it does you could starve after massive crop failures.

Natural disasters are always a good cause for concern. Every area has one or more. Even

one of the most perfect climates around, Hawaii, has to concern themselves with walls of ocean water and volcanoes. Usually natural disasters are only cause for short term preparation. Of course while before you needed to prepare for mere days now it seems prudent to count on a month. Katrina victims can be excused for failing to see how bad things would get and how long they would last. You have no such excuse. Plan on the National Guard convoy not showing up for awhile ( after all, they are in Iraq ). There are some natural disasters that could be long term. You could even say global warming is one. An asteroid hitting the planet could be another. We could even see an Ice Age ( after global warming screws us over first ). A tsunami on the Eastern seaboard could wipe out so much of our population and industry and government that we would immediately plunge into a Super Great Depression that we might not recover from.

Nuclear war has fallen out of favor after the demise of the Soviet union. We no longer fear it as a credible threat. And yet we should. Today we have more to fear from nuclear bombs than ever before. Before, the two big boys had the bomb. Other lesser powers also had them but the thought of them using them was ludicrous. The US and the USSR would have overwhelmed anyone stupid enough to mess with the current world balance. Either with conventional forces or with nukes. Today, a lot more unstable countries own nukes and they are no longer constrained by a superpower struggle. The Russian arsenal is most likely only defensive in nature anymore. And the US has shown its conventional forces to be a paper tiger. Yet the US is talking crazy with first nuke strike as a deterrent. Not retaliatory, mind you. But as a need to neutralize a threat before it strikes. And crazy Arabs might not care about retaliation if Allah tells them to pull the trigger. In short, things are no longer stable but very much unstable.

Dictatorship is a fear often thrown about without much thought behind it. Either the person naturally assumes it will happen and uses history as a guide ( war time Lincoln, FDR, etc. ) or the person casually refutes the argument using the same examples but drawing the conclusion that we always step back from the abyss. My thought is that we have a Prussian envy complex. Those in power or seeking power worship the German example. Hitler was legally put in power and nary a soul objected when he crowned himself lifelong supreme ruler. The German economy was in such a shape that only a wartime economy kept the poor from either starving in the street or revolting. The masses wanted Hitler. FDR did the same to us, putting us on a wartime economic footing. Each ruler thereafter kept us on a Cold War economy. To this day Fascism keeps our economy running. But we do need more and more as time goes on to have the same effect. In all but name we will one day have a supreme ruler.

The most likely calamity that could effect us is an economic depression or a hyperinflation. I vote for hyperinflation as that is the way things are headed. Not that it is guaranteed, but in the last Depression the government didn't have the option of inflating. Everyone was used to the dollar being backed by gold. Of course, FDR did confiscate all of it and devalue the dollar about 50%, but there was only so much that could be done and still steer clear of a revolution. The Feds had just started getting around to stealing our guns and it was not unknown for Great War veterans to own squad automatic machineguns.

This time around everybody is used to inflation, even expects it. We are in debt perpetually knowing in twenty years we will be paying off our loans with money having only half its value ( we will leave aside the question of interest and wage hikes for now ). The point is that inflation is the path of least resistance to the powers that be, at least on the Federal level ( I'll bet the California legislature wishes they could inflate away their problems ). As the Baby Boomer deluge occurs it will be a natural response for the Federales to turn up the speed on the printing presses.

## PEAK OIL

In the 1950's an oil geologist by the name of Hubbert predicted our future. He stated that following his bell curve of all oil production the United States would hit its natural peak of oil production in 1970. His model states that any oil well or oil producing area will form a bell curve that's length of production could be predicted. The US was due to hit its maximum volume of production at the mathematically calculated date. Everyone scoffed. And then it happened exactly as predicted. In 1971 US oil production hit its all time high and then started to fall slightly. At the time it wasn't possible to see this, but in retrospect it was a spectacular victory of logic over emotionalism. We slightly re-topped our production figures when the Alaskan oil came online but it was a slight blip that didn't last long ( one could argue that we produced the Alaskan field too quickly and thus lost some long term production ). Hubbert was still right, and today we produce only about half of what we did thirty five years ago ( and that is with the Gulf of Mexico figures added in- the continental 48 don't produce spit compared to what they used to ).

Yet we still use 20 million barrels of oil a day in this country. We are as addicted to petroleum as a crack whore is to instant gratification. We even act like a whore, debasing ourselves in any way to keep the black gold flowing. As well we should- our very food is dependant on oil. Not to say there are not suitable substitutes, but the current method of growing food is almost entirely dependant on petroleum inputs. Aside from the obvious such as diesel fuel to run the tractors and combines and to transport the finished product to market, there remains every other step of the process that also needs petroleum inputs. The water in otherwise dry areas needs to be pumped from underground. Almost no area produces a dry crop, they are all dependant on irrigation. The areas naturally wet are overpopulated and long ago replaced agriculture with suburban housing tracts. All land is quickly stripped of its natural nutrients and is replaced by nitrogen fertilizer ( derived from natural gas-in steep decline in North America ). Every calorie of food needs at least ten calories of petroleum to produce it under current practices.

Eventually, yes we will run out of oil. It will take awhile, the world will slowly produce less and less as the years go by. Eventual even though we will still produce small amounts it will not be enough to run our economy. The Industrial Revolution allowed for the first time in history outside the Roman Empire a large leisure class to emerge. Rome did it by putting more conquered land under cultivation with slaves from the newly annexed land. Until they ran out of land to take it worked great. We make the Romans look like industrious worker ants. Large segments of society do not work, retirement is long and wealthy, the welfare state is huge, and even those that work merely supervise the machines that run off of petroleum or coal. When the replacement level of these two fuels falls below a certain point our economy will collapse. Not enter a Recession or even a Depression. Collapse as in entering another Dark Ages. There is no way that without discovering a fuel that is as concentrated as petroleum our way of life can continue. There

is not enough coal that can be liquefied or cars that can be converted to run off of nuclear derived electricity. Coal may be plentiful enough to last 300 years at current use ( one half our electric generation ) but if it is used as a substitute for gasoline it will only last decades, not centuries. Uranium fuel today is relatively cheap but should we suddenly start using more of it the price will skyrocket and we will eventually run out.

The forests of England were stripped of trees for fuel and then coal was used, which gave way to petroleum. What is going to replace oil? The tree hugging environmentalists may not wish to starve in the dark but that is what is going to happen, partially as a result of their opposition to nuclear power. Or even vast arrays of solar energy farms ( the only way to economically convert water to hydrogen IF a plentiful supply of water is available ). Religiously converting every available renewable energy source to feeding the electrical grid or storing as hydrogen undertaken on a national level for decades might have saved us in the end. But instead the opportunity was lost as the Alaskan pipeline opening and the North Sea field going into production led to everyone readily proclaiming any energy emergency ended. We were saved once again by petroleum. Time to throw away the White House solar water heaters, go back to driving gas guzzlers and subsidizing the Seven Sister oil companies.

Not that folks at the time can rationally be blamed. They had just almost had their heads handed to them on a platter. The end of oil, the scarcity of food, the uncontrolled hyperinflation, all the bad things that happened in the seventies was very stressful. Just think what would happen to you if tomorrow all the gas stations closed and there were no jobs available even past walking distance and the government was unable to help. That is what the times were like. So they were quick to once again embrace the Petroleum Age with both arms. What they had no idea of at the time was that the last major oil find had taken place over ten years ago. Since the 1960's there has been nothing but minor oil field discoveries. No monster fields have since been discovered, and not for lack of trying. No more Texas oil fields. No more Saudi Arabia oil finds. Not even anymore Mexican, Russian or Columbian oil finds. Everything since has been minor to middlin size fields. Everything. As India and China moved up economically, the use of oil is increasing. Yet all the large fields are being depleted ( especially the Saudi field ) and only smaller fields are being brought on line. And the rate of discovery has not been keeping up with the rate of use. Not for awhile.

Saudi Arabia has been used as a swing producer since the 1970's oil embargo. Every time someone else made noises about denying the US with its oil crack, Saudi Arabia increased production to make up the difference. We keep the Saudi family in power and they give us cheap oil. Is oil at \$75 a barrel cheap? Actually, yes, if you factor in inflation. You think houses are going to go for a quarter of a million dollars and gas will stay at \$1.50 a gallon? You can't have it both ways. But more importantly than \$3 gasoline is the fact that Saudi Arabia over pumped during those crises times and irreversibly damaged their oil wells. If you pump too fast you get less oil out of a well in the long run. Law of nature, sorry. And now to compound the damage they are using massive sea water injection to keep production up. Again, in the long run damaging to the well. Expect Saudi

production to fall drastically soon. They have been pumping for about the maximum life of most wells, forty years. The major fields producing so much of the countries oil have about run their course. And they are about 10% of global production right now.

Most of the global oil producers have already reached peak production. The Soviet Union has been pumping its fields almost as long as the US. The only reason they were able to continue for so long is that they operated under such inefficiencies for so long that once Communism fell the old wells or fields could be rejuvenated slightly or else better research could open unexplored areas. But no new Super fields. Russia hit their peak awhile back. As did Mexico and Canada and China and over half the oil producing countries. The global peak of oil production is well over and done with. After Saudi Arabia admits the mess they have, it will be official as they are the only country holding up the statistics. But make no mistake, the world is running out of oil. Soon everyone can see that 2004 or 2005 were the last years of maximum production. It is going to be all down hill from here. And it will come as a shock to most as the Age of Oil was the only reality they knew. You can't wish oil into existence. It is either there or it isn't. Natural laws will always trump wishful thinking.

The old grade school observation that "dinosaurs turned to oil" is a bit off. Eons ago in a warmer Earth shallow pools of water were full of plant life. That is what eventually turned to oil under the correct amount of pressure from above. The wrong kind of rock or too deeply buried or too shallow and oil did not form. The oil industry figured this out long ago. Not that they couldn't be wrong. Just as not knowing about germs killed off many folks to disease, incorrectly guessing how oil forms could kill off even more people in an upcoming Energy War. But the best knowledge we have today says there are only so many types of rock formations that can contain oil and if this is accepted as fact than we have already found the oil there is to find, by and large. Any finds from the last few decades were too small to keep the petroleum party going for much longer. We use 80 million barrels of oil a day. Conservation, increased efficiencies, economic slowdowns all together will only put so much relief on us when future supplies are under that amount. In thirty years if we are only pumping 30 million barrels a day plenty of people are not going to be driving or turning on the heater and a lot won't be eating. All things staying equal.

And we don't even have to come close to running out of oil for our society to collapse. If enough is not available our economy will implode. If people can't commute from the suburbs ( where the only affordable and/or safe housing is ) then they lose their jobs, and houses and all possessions. If truckers can't affordably fill up groceries become too expensive. If massive unemployment occurs taxes dry up and the Fed can't pay for enough welfare. If they hyperinflate the economy collapses a bit later but things turn a lot worse. Petroleum in low price at a high volume IS our economy. Iraq is merely the opening salvo in the war for energy. Energy is life. It used to be the sun grew the food that nourished both man and beast and thus labor could be given towards more farming. A small surplus enabled the governments and merchants and armies to thrive, but it was never a big surplus. With petroleum taking the place of muscle labor energy use exploded and life became better than royalty used to have it. But life requires energy, and all comes from

the sun. But are you ready to live off the sun directly rather than through its concentrate petroleum? Nothing in our economy save a few thousand Amish and back-to-land types can survive without oil. And not just a bit of oil but copious amounts at affordable prices. Both the amount available and its price are moving away from this requirement.

As things currently stand, renewables are far from any help, comprising as they do single digits in our national energy use. Who is the largest global producer of solar panels? The Chinese. We are too busy supporting our military that guards the remaining oil for us to invest in a renewable energy program. Despite a heck of a lot of arid sunny land in the public domain. No tidal power despite a lot of coastline. No nuclear power plants are coming online, not that it would help long term as uranium will also one day run out. Even coal is being protected by the tree huggers, not that it is renewable. But the point is that our one and only plan is for the military to steal the oil we want and need. Sure we pay for it, snicker, snicker, with Monopoly money. If your son or daughter is young now, you had better make plans to help them avoid the draft later. You can bet they will be killed in the middle east, choking on a cloud of microscopic particles of depleted uranium from our own munitions. That is how we recycle spent uranium ( the granola crowd should be pleased ). We put it in munitions to increase penetration and when exploded the particles go airborne and are inhaled. Then you die, but the military lies and denies you medical care in the meantime. Iraq is Vietnam all over again and depleted uranium is Agent Orange all over again.

The powerful and rich like petroleum dependence. We are all slaves to our paychecks as none are able to stay self-sufficient. Almost all farms are now corporate owned and operated. Those that are not face low commodity prices and high land taxes. If a family stubbornly refuses to become dependant on any mega-corporation than it is just a matter of time before their farm is surrounded by suburbs and the value of the farm is appraised at a similar level. They will soon go out of business. And now the wealthy have a new weapon in their arsenal. The Supreme Court has ruled that only higher taxes matter, not eminent domain, and anyone may lose their property to forced sale. So much for the concept of private property. What worked so well for overseas colonies now works at home. Property will be stolen by corporations and the peasants have no choice but to work at the company mine for sub-standard wages. Welcome back to the 19th century as corporations have bought off government and are reversing most of the protections for workers ( and to set the record straight, I think governments are even worse ).

So, in the end, we might be "saved". Once big companies perfect the biotech to turn crop waste into methanol ( rather than from corn- we couldn't produce enough on the land we cultivate ) plus whatever oil reserves and coal and nuclear we have left, might, just might be enough to keep out economy going. Or, nobody has a clue and we will end up starving in the dark. Either way, a corporate slave ( and make no mistake about it, a well paid slave living in luxury is still a slave ) one way or another. If you think government will help leash big corporations, just who do you think elects your congressman? Grandma checking the "give one dollar to the election fund" box on her tax return, or the corporation that has millions in campaign contributions to play with? Did California stop

Enron from screwing its utility consumers? The only way you can fight back is by being independent from a mortgage, from the utility grid, even from the corporate farm ( although for now you can buy from them cheaply ), but that is a subject for another day.

## GLOBAL WARMING

I too have my doubts about global warming, if only because the tree huggers and the government liberals like it so much. Anything they embrace is automatically suspect. You can see before and after photos of glaciers in national parks from a space of 100 years and you can see for yourself that ice is gone. So the opponents of global warming say some areas are getting colder, some hotter. Okay. So what? Perhaps a better way of stating it is we are undergoing climate change. Perhaps the end result is global warming, perhaps it will be another ice age. The final result is going to be crop failures. Or political realignment. Will we be a winner or a loser? It doesn't matter who is right, it only matters that you will be affected.

We are in a warm phase. The ice starts melting faster on the poles. The fresh water entering the oceans weakens the Gulf Stream causing Europe to get colder in the winter. As well as the East Coast. But what if enough ice melts and the whole globe gets warmer? Every scientist seems to have a different opinion. Or what if the whole thing is just a cause of El Nino, droughts and floods alternating every so many years. Do you stay away from the coast? Or stay in a wet area? Will the deserts see more rain? Should you dig a well in anticipation of drought or build a greenhouse in anticipation of an Ice Age? It really is anyone's guess.

But if Global Warming is true, we are in for a world of hurt. The slightest deviation from the normal weather means crop failures and you would be silly to assume that other grain producing regions are going to give the US any surplus crops without benefiting beyond the norm. Within weeks of a shutdown of the normal global trade system we will start to see at least local if not widespread starvation. And if you think the federal response to Katrina was bad, wait until the government starts to withhold food for themselves rather than rushing it to affected areas. If the government will force welfare masses to stay in an enclosure not designed to be run without air conditioning and allow crime inside to run unchecked as they man the exits, you can bet the government will direct supplies to some areas rather than others and put a triage system into place. And you can bet Beverly Hills gets their food before Watts does.

Besides the real danger of crop failures you also have to worry about drought and wildfires. Even in the best of times a well equipped fire suppression force can only respond to a limited number of fires. In times to come as the economic situation gets worse and those same forces are under budgeted they will be much less capable of saving your house out in the boonies. And even if you are not in danger of burning down, what about lack of water supplies? Global Warming means that the snow melts too quickly and you get spring floods rather than a slow steady run off the three seasons after winter. Too much water all at once and not enough later on. We take air conditioning and endless water from the tap for granted. A dangerous assumption in the future.

It is not necessary to totally believe every threat out there. Some might happen, others have very little chance. But a minimum level of preparedness will see you through

difficulties no matter what they are. A year supply of food will see you through the initial phase of Global Warming if there are local crop failures. The price is so small it is a gamble that is cheap to make. You might as well err on the side of caution.

## NATURAL DISASTERS

Most of us take the existence of natural disasters in stride. We almost have to otherwise we would worry ourselves into an early grave. Every area has its own potential disasters, we are never free of the danger. I lived in California and didn't give earthquakes a second thought. When I moved out to Oklahoma I convinced myself that the mathematical odds of a tornado hitting me were too high to bother with ( of course the next door neighbors swore up and down we had a small one come through the trailer park as I was blissfully sleeping after a graveyard shift ). In Florida I didn't concern myself with hurricanes as much as I did the looming Y2K crises but then one preparation took care of the other and thus I had no need to sweat a hurricane. Now here in Nevada I don't worry at all as long as a river is nearby. I have enough supplies to make it through a short term emergency. I tried worrying more, but I only have so much room for supplies.

So, if you are prepared you can now move from ignoring natural disasters to just being unconcerned. Ignoring it because you fail to prepare, unconcerned since you ARE prepared. However, that being said, there are some natural disasters you really shouldn't ignore because being in the wrong spot will get you killed now matter how much you prepare. You don't want to be too close to an earthquake fault line, downwind from a nuclear power plant that is on one, or close to a volcano. Northern California and south Oregon might be great agricultural areas away from potential nuclear fallout but the area is lousy with volcanic activity. A small town on the ocean can be self sufficient in animal protein from fishing but the tsunami that wipes you out won't care that you aren't suffering from malnourishment. The East Coast is a potential terrorist target, downwind from nuke power plants, in the way of hurricanes, prone to flooding, sure to experience power outages due to antiquated infrastructure and a bad place to experience a tsunami.

Yellowstone Park is a great site for a potential Super Volcano. It has happened before and it could wipe out a lot of the surrounding area. Wyoming is a great place to escape congestion but I might have second thoughts because of the potential to be melted by super heated gas. If you live below Mount Rainier and it blows you get buried under a huge wall of mud as the snow and dirt mix and descend on you after she erupts. Florida is not the place to be if the oceans rise. The whole place is barely above water. If a big enough asteroid hits we all die, but if it is smaller we can stay out of harms way by avoiding the coastlines. It might hit land, but most of our planet is water so the odds are against it. Identify the most likely target areas and stay away from them, even after you get your emergency supplies. The top of my list would be Washington DC. Huge crime rate, no ability to arm yourself, every terrorist group in the world gunning for the city, etc. Same with New York. A bad place to live in the best of times. L.A. has no natural water supply and almost 5 million people. If I were a terrorist I would blow the water pipe into the city and sit back and watch the fun.

Much smaller and less severe natural disasters will happen every day. By having a preparedness kit you can laugh at them dismissively. An ice storm takes down the

electrical grid? No problem, you have food and water and protection. And an old wood burner standing by in case of need. Invite the neighbors over for brownie points. Same with hurricanes, minus the wood stove. You'll be mighty popular as the only one with a water filter. When a fire barbeques the Yuppie homes you can take off and live out of your cab over camper, having food, sanitation, shelter and water. They used to laugh at your used mobile home and the beat to crap truck with a camper, but it makes sense now, don't it? And nothing has to cost you much at all. Mostly it is the discipline just to hunker down and apply yourself to preparing. If you were rich enough to buy the solution to problems you wouldn't be reading this.

## NUCLEAR WAR

At the end of World War Two the United States was in a position of global military dominance. By being the only power with nuclear weapons and about the only economy that was helped rather than hurt by the war we pretty much were able to mold the world as we wished. Then in a few short years the Soviet Union was also indoctrinated into the exclusive club and for almost the next fifty years the world was held hostage to the very real threat of nuclear annihilation. Between the two superpowers there was enough mega tonnages to wipe out humanity and bring in the reign of the cockroach ( curious they could survive radiation, one weird theory had it that mankind had done the whole technological procession up through nuclear war before ). Was it any wonder we abandoned long term social values when there seemed to be no future?

Many factors can be said to be responsible for the collapse of the Soviet Union. After the Age of Industry had long passed the Soviets still relied on command and control economies. Or Reagan bankrupted them through the arms race. Or Afghanistan put too much stress on their economy. My personal favorite is the theory than Reagan and Thatcher were in cahoots and used US credit expansion and the North Sea oil to drop the price of oil down to the point where Russia went bankrupt due to the drop in oil revenue. You even have the super-paranoid theory that the old powers in the USSR orchestrated the illusion of the demise of the Soviet Union so as to one day defeat us once our guard was down. They do still retain plenty of their nuclear arsenal ( a favorite old Soviet trick was to agree to disarmament talks and then destroy the old obsolete weapons- it could still be doing the same thing ).

Assuming that the USSR is in fact gone for good, one has to wonder why we aren't more worried about all of the weapons unaccounted for. Russian gold stocks being dumped for operating capital go partway towards explaining the metals low price in the nineties. But I'm sure portable nuclear weapons brought in much more from Muslim groups funded by Saudi Arabia than any precious metal sales. And I'm sure the sales were approved by the Mafia who were run by the old KGB. Not only was the old crap cleared out at good prices but at the same time Americas enemies were being armed with the good stuff. Perhaps this is overly paranoid. Perhaps the Generals in charge of nuclear magazines were not being paid and so they acted on their own. Perhaps the nukes never were there and the discrepancy in numbers before and after were the result of faulty CIA intelligence. Or perhaps one day we will go to turn on The Price Is Right and discover a news flash that shows Washington DC under a mushroom cloud.

But lets forget the old Soviet Union for now. How about Pakistan? They have nukes. Why wouldn't they arm Muslim terrorists? The US essentially put that country on notice after 9/11 to either tow the line or be attacked. Despite what ever personal gain the countries leader is receiving from the US there should still be resentment on his part for being strong-armed. If not than from other government factions or the general populace. And Saudi Arabia has plenty of money to throw around. They might feel they need an ace

in the hole if the US ever invades them. Or there just might be plenty of them that just don't like the US for forcing the sale of oil. And China? If North Korea does have some nukes you can bet they got them from either Russia or China. Who else has China armed? They know we are still a major threat to them, especially later when the oil starts drying up. Who will they use as a patsy to nuke us so as to benefit themselves? Who will Israel nuke in desperation leading us to their defense and to our being attacked?

There are way too many nuclear weapons out there in too many different hands. The more players there are in this game the more likely the odds of them being used. Once used the chance of escalation increases. Once escalated the chances are that you will get nuked, receive fallout by one, or suffer the effects in other ways ( think Red Dawn, perhaps ) or at least our economy collapsing because of mass panic. If one of our cities were nuked I would guess that other metropolitan areas would have a high percentage of the population moving out in panic, grocery shelves being stripped bare everywhere, as well as all guns and camping supplies. Even a nuclear exchange between foreign powers might have the same effect. You would need to have your supplies secured well before hand.

## DICTATORSHIP

When did the government first start wiping its big flabby pasty white dimpled butt with the Constitution? Was it Lincoln killing anyone who opted out of a voluntary association, suspending civil rights as was convenient? Was it at the founding of the Federal Reserve Bank where the control of our money was handed over to private interests? Was it when FDR devalued our gold and tried to take any weapons that would pose a threat to the military? Does it really matter? The fact of the matter is that this country has not followed the Constitution for some time. I mean, is it really so hard to fathom the words written, right to arms not be infringed or money being only gold or silver? Of course not, unless you are someone like Clinton who has no idea of the definition of "is". To a lawyer the phrase "under no circumstances" must really mean that certainly there does exist a circumstance as long as they can redefine the English language. And how many citizens really want to argue about the whole Republic versus a Democracy when there is free money in it for them?

America is headed down the same path as Rome or Berlin. We started out following a set of laws until it was economically expedient for us to elect those that were allowed to ignore the rules in exchange for a few pieces of silver ( or paper equivalent- we won't even sell our souls for real money anymore ). We allowed Congress to create the Federal Reserve, which set about creating too much credit- first to fight WWI and then to offset falling commodity prices afterwards. Then, when the artificial creation of credit ruined the economy we set about instituting Socialist programs to create employment and otherwise keep the unemployed from rebelling. The Fed created the Great Depression and then was rewarded for it by consolidating control of the independent banks as they failed and to benefit from another war and afterwards to profit off government debt as a Cold War was fought. The Fed has profited from destroying the value of the dollar and from being paid interest on the national debt. We have mortgaged our future to them ( and of course the FedGov benefits from it all as well- a cozy relationship ).

Now we are at a point where the economy is so screwed up after we hollowed out our Industrial sector and started to teach our youngsters everything but job skills, the biggest sector of the economy is government, both directly and indirectly. At one time the press had a grand old time poking fun at European countries and their socialist economies, giving such examples as a city zoo that had three workers at the entrance. One to sell you a ticket, one to tear the ticket and one to make sure you had a ticket stub. We are not too far from that point. If we ever have a terrorist attack in a zoo you can be sure that the Federal government will quickly Federalize the work force and turn even the guy that cleans up monkey crap into a security guard. And as the economy is slowly but surely taken over by the government ( if most of the revenue for a hospital comes from Medicare, the hospital is practicing socialized medicine in all but name ) less and less people will oppose any draconian measures the government implements for its own profit or survival.

Almost every unconstitutional law that stays on the books for good is introduced in a slow and deliberate fashion. The process is so slow only a minority complain. And even those that do eventually come to except the new law. And every seemingly innocent law is sooner or later perverted to fit someone's evil plan. It is inevitable that even the best law is eventually perverted by someone seeking more power. Or more money. It is not that the Federal government is diabolically plotting to enslave us in a world that makes 1984 look moderate, there is no huge conspiracy. It is just the way things work under those that are given power. There is always a need for more to solve problem the people themselves want handled. Then they act puzzled when the politicians refuse to abandon the new power given them. And then of course the people grow tired of the fight and give in to the inevitable and over so many generations accept it all as normal and then one day you wake up to the pleasant buzzing of your Mickey Mouse alarm clock and see a squad of soldiers goose-stepping down your street ( this assuming that you didn't get a three A.M. courtesy call from the police due to a minor disagreement over your bad attitude over not caring to be told what to do and how to do it and when to do so ).

Unchecked, government always degenerates into a totalitarian state. Dictatorship is not a question of if but of when. So when you have the means of feeding yourself they can't starve you into submission. When you can supply your own water supply they can't force you to enter a camp for supplies. When you can fight back at least you have some odds against being thrown into a political prison. To be dependant on the government means you are at their mercy. They can force you to dig your own grave and then have you passively line up at the edge, on your knees, eyes closed just waiting for the bullet to the back of your skull. Perhaps at that point you can congratulate yourself on not wasting \$500 on securing a basic survival stockpile.

## ECONOMIC COLLAPSE AND/OR HYPERINFLATION

The powers that be want you to believe that inflation is the result of rising prices. Which is like saying that when things get warm it causes the sun to rise. Prices rise because of inflation, that is merely a result of inflation not the cause. The one and only reason that inflation happens is that the money supply is increased. Economics can be simplified by supply and demand. Everything else is just details. If the supply of a currency is increased, the demand for it will drop. If the supply is decreased the demand is higher. In other worlds less money in circulation means each bill is worth more, things cost less. If the supply of currency is increased then each bill is worth less and it takes more of them to buy something. Electronic bookkeeping and credit creation are the same but different versions. If the physical bills in circulation are small but the banks create a lot of credit you still see inflation. Which is why governments control banks, to create inflation.

When governments create inflation they raise money for themselves without raising taxes. If the government doubles the money supply it in effect just got a wad of free money. It can build jails to hold political prisoners, invade other countries and buy votes for reelection. Without any cost to itself. However, your cash sitting in the bank ( or under the mattress or buried in the back yard in a coffee can ) just lost half of its purchasing power since prices doubled. Oh, not right away of course. Inflation is not immediate. The marketplace takes time to learn the money supply has increased. But the government spent its new loot immediately so it got extra cash to buy at the old low prices. As you can see this is a super duper bargain of the millennium for any government so you can imagine why it is so popular and why everyone is doing it. And it wouldn't be a big deal except that there have to be losers in the deal. If inflation was 5% and you got a five percent raise it would be no big deal. However, you get no such luck.

Your raise if indexed to inflation is figured in at the end of the year. No one guesses what inflation will be and gives you a raise in advance. So that means that a year of inflation just diminished your buying power before you will get a raise to combat inflation. Everyone slowly but surely loses more and more a few percentage points at a time. And that is if you get a raise. I've gone before without raises long enough for inflation to eat away 15-20% of my buying power. And if you are still stuck with minimum wage since it was last raised you have lost about half your purchasing power. And even if you get a cost of living increase it is based on the official inflation rate, the one that doesn't include the energy or food cost increases. If inflation is said to be 3% you can bet the actual rate is 5% ( and that was before fuel costs exploded ). Lately the real inflation rate has been closer to double digits.

Hyperinflation happens when the government gets too greedy and prints too much too fast. Or has no choice if that becomes its sole source of income due to its economy imploding ( such as was the case in 1920's Germany, the Confederacy or today's Zimbabwe ). Many times the government has no choice. If there is no economy to speak of, bills still must be paid. The army needs pay, the police and fire department also. If

there is no employment the government must create jobs for at least some people. Items must still be purchased from other countries. It must be tough being in charge of a gang of extortionists and not being able to get your victims to pay due to lack of jobs.

And don't think it can't happen to us. It already has. The previously mentioned Confederate States of America and before that the new American government after the Revolutionary War. In fact Benjamin Franklin, everybody's hero and much nicer ladies man than Clinton, was all in favor of the government discharging its debts through hyperinflation. I guess if Ben Franklin says its okay than so can any other statesman. Even if we never have another period of hyperinflation, normal inflation can kick your butt over the long haul. If a newborn was given enough cash to buy a house at his birth in the same year the Federal Reserve was created and he foolishly waited until he retired those Greenbacks wouldn't be but about two months wages at minimum wage, or about 2% of the cost for a new house. That's what normal inflation does. Imagine being paid hourly because prices were rising so fast. Wouldn't you be glad you had a years food supply put back?

## NO REASON TO GET FANCY

One consequence of living in an economy that is devoted towards nothing more than governmental redistribution or consumer spending is that we all work meaningless make-work jobs during the day and then rush out on the weekends to spend all of our ill gotten gains. Don't get me wrong, living in a post-Industrial Petroleum Age does have its advantages. For the most part there is little real need to work hard for a living. But one consequence of having meaningless work is that you seek to fill a spiritual void, and often times that is worthless consumer spending. We spend to solve that basic problem of self worth and after that we have the expectation that money can buy anything. We all say money can't buy love and then act like it can, with males working hard to rent a trophy wife and females thinking money equals security. Money is a tool, it is true. But a very misused and misunderstood tool. Use money to start on the path of self-sufficiency and security, just don't confuse money itself for that security.

So, as with true love or honest life fulfillment, money itself is only part of what you need for success. The issue of want and need must be solved honestly, without self lies. What you want is infinite, what you need is very basic. You need food, water, shelter and protection. What most people want is a years worth of freeze dried food and a greenhouse, a deep well with a reverse osmosis filter, a concrete bunker and a Third World country arsenal. But that is getting way too fancy. You are letting your wants interfere with your needs. Simplify down to the basics. Down to the least amount you need to accomplish the job. It is understandable that we all will always have unfulfilled needs. It is hardwired into humans. If we didn't always want more we wouldn't get out of our caves every morning and try to invent the wheel so we wouldn't have to drag the bison back to the village. It is a survival trait of a species that only has their brain to survive with. The trick is to know when to shut down this trait for a short time.

Mankind has progressed far during his reign. We used to eat with our fingers, drag in any passing female to pleasure us and would waste food because it was easier to run a herd off a cliff than to kill them one at a time. Now we settle down with one mate so as to provide better development to our offspring's brain, we use utensils and we use every part of an animals carcass to make sausages with. We even managed not to kill off the species with a global thermonuclear war. But sometimes we need to bypass our primitive hardwired conditioning. It might have been a nifty species survival trait for victorious military fighters to impregnate enemy females and thus pass on superior genes, but happily that practice doesn't get the widespread practice it once did. We can advance the species brain power now rather than his muscle power by economically rewarding intelligence rather than brawn ( well, so far- if we don't run out of enough fuel to keep the economy running ).

So while always unfulfilled desires are a needed species survival trait they can also work against us. If you utilize your energy just making and spending money you have failed the species. If you do something, even if minor, to advance the betterment of mankind then

you are on the right track. Now, don't get me wrong. Making money and the free market are useful. A capitalist free market where human needs are met as cheaply as possible through competition while wages pay well for the talented. Not our current system of Mercantilist Capitalism where big corporations use government to screw people over. Or Fascism where government uses regulatory control over corporations to screw people over. Under our present system usually the profit motive hurts rather than helps. In and of itself it is useful, until it is perverted. And useless consumerism to keep a sick economy afloat is stupid. Sure, we HAVE to buy tangible goods with our earnings rather than see inflation whittle it away. But you have to be smart about your buying. The same amount of cash will buy one year's worth of food if it is freeze dried. Ten times as much if just buying whole grain. Or you can just spend one tenth the cash to accomplish the same thing.

You can apply this principle all through your life. By not trying to get fancy, by seeking a solution that is bare bones. You need transportation to your job, not necessarily do you need a car. You need shelter, not necessarily a house. You need clothing, not necessarily fabric that costs five times what is necessary just because it has a brand name label. There is nothing wrong with spoiling yourself. You are the most deserving person you know. But when you confuse a luxury with a necessity you are just complicating your life. Be honest with yourself, at least. By all means spend all your money to make yourself happy. But do it smart. A \$100 pair of jeans covers your legs no better than a \$15 pair and with the difference you can buy a lot of emergency supplies. And if you are smart about what kind of supplies you buy you won't need to buy cheap jeans for very long.

## THE BASIC NECESSITIES

One of the ways to tell a stable functioning society from an unstable one is if the bulk of society has the basic necessities assured it. Obviously you will never see 100%. People with mental handicaps will still starve in a sea of plenty. And even competent honest well funded police forces can't stop all crime. And even well run public water departments will on occasion have an outbreak in the water supply. But the point is that except for bad luck or freak accidents most people will go through their lives with the basic necessities assured them. People accept a certain amount of taxes and loss of freedom in exchange for this basic level of comfort. Don't get me wrong, I don't really believe the US is one of those countries anymore. Which is why I am writing this now. But people certainly seem to think otherwise which is why they fail to prepare for emergencies. And, since they take this level of security for granted, they are confused as to how basic they are. A rich man in a mansion and a peasant in the jungle can each with certainty describe two different concepts of basic necessities.

Again, life's basic necessities are simple. Food, water, shelter and protection. That is what keeps you alive. Mental stimulation might be argued for long term sanity but that is only splitting hairs. A luxury, in other words. The first four is all you need to concern yourself with. So, does a power generator fit into your plans? Everyone seems to think they need one in an emergency, yet they are not a necessity. If your whole survival food store is in the freezer than you are a bloomen idiot. A freezer is to save money by buying in bulk in good times. Not to assure food when the electrical grid fails. And you don't need a TV on to hear the news of the disaster. That is what battery powered radios are for. And you don't need to run your air conditioner off the generator, either. Man survived thousands of years in the jungle without AC. Open your windows or sit in your screened porch ( a screened porch might fall under a necessity if disease carrying mosquitoes are a factor ). Wants are being confused with needs.

Water is absolutely vital. Food can wait a bit. You can go awhile without too many problems which might be acceptable in a minor emergency. But water you need daily. If your area is naturally wet you need plenty of filters or other ways of purifying your water. If you are in a naturally dry area you need to store plenty of water. Remember, a water supply is pretty easy to disrupt. Whether natural disaster or terrorist attack or economic stagnation leading to quality control problems, your water supply can be interrupted. Don't let your emergency plan be like everyone else's- going down to the 7-11 for a gallon jug that's been sitting there gathering dust since the Carter administration since it is priced higher than the equivalent amount of plasma. We all take water for granted, since we are never without. Food we tend to focus on since we have all experienced hunger before ( not life threatening of course, but the affluent know no better ). See to your water needs first.

Food storage for most people consists of a half eaten jar of peanut butter and twenty three

packages of Top Ramen. No problem, Top Ramen will keep you alive for awhile. And its shelf life just might be at least half that of a Twinkie, but who knows for sure. The way to approach food storage is price and nutrition, not convenience. This is where most folks spend way too much money. Freeze dried and air dried and nitrogen packed foods just need a little hot water added to them to be ready to eat. MRE's, military rations, can be eaten right out of the package. Even canned foods can fill the convenience role. But by calorie consumed these are all way too expensive to accumulate any kind of meaningful food storage. Stick with the basics, beans and grains. Boring, labor intensive but nutritious and dirt cheap.

Shelter shouldn't even be in your survival budget per se. Your everyday shelter should be sufficient. In other words, if you live in a cold climate several more cords of wood than you use during the winter should always be on hand as a back-up. If you live in a hot climate you should already have an alternate means of cooling besides the power hungry AC. If your area is prone to floods you should have a means of escape that doubles as storage and shelter as a matter of course. And it doesn't even have to cost much. If residents of New Orleans had gotten on a bicycle with a backpack full of water bottles and granola bars and pedaled out of the city, then used a tarp or cheap Wal-Mart tent for shelter there would have been less fatalities. In the desert a back porch used as shade is better than a generator for the AC. In winter having one well insulated room could stretch out the use of your fuel. If you set up a room within a room of insulation sheets or reflective blankets you might be able to stay warm enough just on a few candles or a kerosene lamp ( if ventilation is available ). Use your imagination for shelter rather than your perceived need to keep 2,000 square feet at Shopping Mall temperature.

And of course protection. There is no other warm and snuggly feeling quite as nice as a firearm by your side to keep the bogymen away so you can sleep soundly. But again, this is where most of us spend way too much money. Guns, at least to guys, are like computers. They are toys. We want the biggest and baddest. And then when we buy one we want the next one out that is better. Hey, its not our fault women think they are more practical ( practical meaning whatever emotional feeling they are having at the time ). Guys like our toys. If not, the guy grew up way too fast and has no life. We don't want to grow up. Growing up sucks. We keep our toys so we can still enjoy life, even after a soul draining job, a hen-pecking wife and spoiled children all converge in a perfect storm to ruin any chance we have of enjoying life. The point to keep in mind is that toys can be cheap. My laptop computer is one quarter the power of a new one but only cost one fifth the price of a new one. My rifles are not state of the art semi-automatic death spewing machines. But it cost one tenth the price and it still fires a full size man killing round, just a bit slower. No need to give up your toys, just downscale the price allotment.

## FOOD

There are many types of food that can be stored. And as with anything in life there are trade offs for all of them. The more expensive they are the tastier ( at least as compared to the traditional American diet ). The cheaper they are the more you need to prepare them. And almost all have them have a definite shelf life. So, since in this instance we are focused on low price, we can rule out a lot of them right off the bat. Others are cheap and have a long shelf life but are not very nutritious ( usually only supplying simple carbohydrates ). You can mix and match any and all of them, but with a food budget of only about \$150 for a years supply of food it is going to be most of certain kinds of food and very little of others. As an example, one meal from an MRE cost as much as a months food supply eating only wheat. No one may wish to eat a steady diet of MRE's ( ask anyone in the military ) or wheat or canned goods but again we are dealing with a necessity and not much in the way of luxury.

The most expensive food plan is that based on freeze dried meat and produce with a supply of wheat thrown in for the bulk. And these plans start at a thousand bucks for one person for one year. And that is with a lot of the calories from whole wheat kernels. This is what almost every author recommends, and what everyone panicking about upcoming disasters buys ( increasing the price and waiting time ). While there is much to be said about familiar foods and the ease of preparation, the expense is extreme. Even only buying meat entrees adds a lot of cost. If you have money coming out of the wazoo ( remember that commercial?-hilarious! ), by all means buy a freeze dried plan. Otherwise, pass this one up and let the Yuppie Survivalists ( those that automatically go into debt for the most expensive solution thinking it equates with quality ) sit on the waiting list to receive their allotted share of freeze dried mystery meat surprise, their blood pressure boiling as they realize Armageddon is going to beat the UPS driver to the front door.

Dried foods are really cheap to prepare at home and should take a place in your survival food plans. But only after you have the basic years worth of food put away. Drying food can then be a hobby. The most popular dish of course is beef jerky, but that is expensive as lean meat must be used ( fat will go rancid ) and unless you dry it without any moisture it will go bad soon anyway. And then you lose your teeth on it unless you soak it first. Some meats do seem a natural for this such as turkey. Very lean and you can buy on sale and then dry. But remember, this method leaves a lot to be desired as far as cost, as well as longevity. Dried foods are good year to year and that is about it. Great if you don't have a freezer. Wonderful if you don't want to use fuel to prepare it ( ol' Sol does it all ). Again, a great way to preserve, but not in your initial cheap stockpile.

Canned goods are a good way to stock up for short emergencies. You go to the grocery store and buy an extra can every time you purchase a food item. Instead of a can of tuna, buy two. Eat one put the other away in the emergency stash. Or chili. Or hash. Or pineapple. Or whatever. You get the idea. This is not part of a normal cheap survival stash. Just like the dried foods, it is a supplement for later. But don't think you can afford this for a years supply of food. If all you ate was tuna, one can a day, the cost would be

\$175 for a year. Now add in a can of fruit a day, a veggie, a potato. You would not be filled up and the cost would be close to freeze dried. Also, attempt to can your own meats if possible. The selection at the store for tinned meat is limited and they are full of nitrates. During one lean time I ate dinner every night for six months with processed meats ( very cheap at the discount store ). I could feel the negative health effects. Trust me, you don't want to live off commercial tinned meat. One last item on canned food. Any vitamins will leach out in time. All proteins and carbs are good to go. A can has a shelf life of almost forever. Just don't expect much from fruits or vegetables nutrition wise.

A "white" diet is rather unhealthy and should be only used as a supplement. White rice, white flour, white flour pasta, peeled and dried potatoes. I call them glue food, and not because they stick to your ribs. They have the nutrition value of glue. Not that they will kill you, by removing the bran you just get constipated and remove some vitamins. If you get those two items from other foods than there really is nothing wrong with glue food. A simple carbohydrate rather than a complex carb. The problem is when you only eat that type of food. After awhile it is going to be unhealthy. Again, nothing wrong with using them as a supplement, something to combat taste fatigue. Just don't make them your only food. Lets say the prospect of eating whole wheat products dries out your taste buds and causes your bowels to constrict. You only want to store and eat glue food. At the very least to supplement that you had better drink lots of water and take a fiber supplement for constipation and have a small supply of whole grain on hand to produce sprouts for the vitamins you might be missing. Of course, some foods are really only tasty being white. I hate brown rice, whole wheat spaghetti taste like musty cardboard and Cup O Noodles use white flour.

Whole grains and legumes. This is the only dirt cheap way of preparing for survival, food wise. A diet of just wheat would require at least a pound a day and cost you \$60 for the year ( not including the containers or grinder ). You can't beat that on price. Of course, you must include a legume ( bean ) to that to get a complete protein. Wheat itself, while having a high protein content compared to other grains, is an incomplete source of protein. Amino acids are the building blocks of protein and grains are strong in some of those while beans are stronger in others. By combining the two you create a complete protein, comparable to that of meat or dairy products. Of course beans are much more expensive than grains for the most part. Those severely financially strapped are going to have to buy their supply of wheat first and hope they beat the balloon going up by saving up some more cash to lay in a stockpile of beans. Wheat might be an incomplete protein but it is better than starving because you waited to buy both grain and bean to achieve the ideal diet.

## WATER

Man has the great fortune to be able to build up a certain level of immunity against harmful germs. Going to a Third World country and drinking the same water the locals do will get you a nice case of the screaming trots. This is something built up over generations or from birth. When the municipal water supply breaks down is not the time to start trying to build up a tolerance to strange germs. Therefore, in an emergency situation, consider all water suspect and treat every drop you drink, wash with or bathe with. That is a tall order, even using a minimum of two or three gallons a day per person. Even the best filter will only last a few years for a large family that way. Water purification is going to have to be from more than one source. Luckily, we can once again rely on that great big free energy source up in the sky to deliver us enough free energy to accomplish this task. Anyone on a budget should eagerly embrace the free energy of the sun ( okay, the energy is free, not the collector ). It will purify water, cook food, heat your house in winter, as well as the old standby, keeping humanity alive.

You can use chemicals to purify your water, but that is not very healthy long term. A good companion to filters, but not something you really ought to do for years. Drinking bleach is not something your body is fond of. You could try hydrogen peroxide, a bit healthier and what many folks recommend as an anti-cancer therapy, but the food grade stuff is very expensive and the cheap stuff from the drug store can't be all that healthy for you with the stabilizers they add to it. And there is iodine, again not for long term use but supposedly healthier than bleach. But again, with those darn trade-offs. Do you want to die from cholera in a week or in twenty years from drinking bleach water? There are not really any "safe" chemical water treatments, not long term.

Filters are the best long term bet for purification if you don't get enough sunny days in your location. But most cost \$100 to \$150 for the good ones ( filtering thousands rather than hundreds of gallons ). Actually it is quite easy to make your own drip unit ( no pumping required ) for only \$50 and the best part is you use their filter unit so you get the same performance. If you are dirt poor the solar purifier is the way to go. Buy one for \$20 or build your own for a few dollars worth of plastic sheet. More on all that in the water section.

Water storage is not all that complicated. Depending on your budget, that is how much water you can store. The cheapest is to use discarded 2 liter soda bottles, cleaned with about three drops of bleach ( use an eye dropper from the health or baby section at Wal-Mart ) in tap water and kept out of the sun you should have good water for at least a year. If you live near a soda bottling plant 55 gallon drums might be gotten cheap ( since they contained corn syrup they are food grade plastic ). If you love manual labor you could even dig a cistern and line with cement. The main point is to keep out of the sun to greatly diminish any growth in the water.

You can always haul water. It might be a little primitive but hauling water saves you from

paying ten grand to dig a well, and another ten grand in solar panels and a generator to power it. But being a bit primitive does save a lot of money. You can even haul water with a bicycle, eliminating the need for a motor vehicle ( the same trailer that hauls water can haul groceries ).

## PROTECTION

And of course by protection I mean guns. Firearms. Thunder sticks. The fun stuff. What makes it all worth while to be a survivalist. How many hours can you actually just sit and stare at your food pantry? Sure, you can some beets ( cause you just know that slop is going to keep you alive after the balloon goes up ) or dry some deer guts for homemade dog food, but even that grows old after awhile. And what about that software program they have floating around the Internet listing the calories of each type of storage food and how much of each you need for each family member, blah, blah, blah. Okay, sure, at first it would be marginally amusing. You could delude yourself into thinking Junior won't die of starvation because the only thing you are doing is canning beets. But it has to get boring after awhile. That is where firearms come into play. They never get old. Playing with guns is like abusing yourself. You might have to change positions to get any accuracy but it never gets old. You can play all day, everyday. Now, in fairness to the poor schmucks that live overseas and haven't gotten around to bombing their government until they are allowed to own firearms, I will talk briefly about a non-firearm protection plan. I mean, once the whole Western civilization thing is gone and the fifth generation welfare recipients are milling around in confusion and bleating like sheep even a guy with a crossbow can come in and take over, proclaiming himself Lord Protectorate Of All Serfs. It's just not as fun as with guns, that's all.

My "big thing" is of course war surplus bolt action rifles. I will get into more detail later, but in a nutshell they are very cheap, very robust and will serve you much better than an anemic carbine such as a SKS or an AR15. Wartime bolt actions fire a full size round, one designed to take down the horses of attacking cavalry ( although one imagines that a volley of such hits would be required ). Can you imagine a horse being brought down with an M16? Of course not!! An M16 can't even take down a skinny Somalian weighing all of 85 pounds without multiply hits. But a thirty caliber, now that is a round! It was designed for equestrian wounding and will work just dandy against its rider. And, better still, they accept bayonets. I will demonstrate why you would be foolish to ignore the bayonet in your survival plans. And bolt actions, while not nearly as sexy as semi-automatics, are great for conserving ammunition. After you get down spraying down the killer zombie biker hoards, where are you going to go for replacement ammunition? Big Five sporting goods is a pile of radioactive ash. You are going to have to rely on what you stashed ahead of time.

I'm also going to cover rimfires and shotguns. A .22 arsenal definitely has its place in your plans, depending on your disposition and your thoughts on tactics. A shotgun has a proven tract record in the "if you only have one gun" department. Of course, because I am NOT a Yuppie Survivalist and refuse to allow you to take a third mortgage on your house to accommodate your survival planning, you only get to choose one firearm. You are only allotted \$250 maximum for all your defense needs and that includes all your ammunition and any reloading supplies you may wish for. Sorry, but you are the silly

bastard that bought the book. You are stuck with the concept. I will even cover the darling of the white trash survival set, the Russian war surplus bolt action that is currently retailing for under \$90 with mail order ammo that is about the same dollar amount for over one thousand rounds of surplus non-reloadable Berden primed. Right there you could shave off \$100 from your \$500 budget, but as you will see it is not for everyone.

## SHELTER

There is really no need to budget shelter past a tent or tarp and some space blankets ( the metalized plastic, the reflector type ). Steal a blanket or sheet from the old ladies linen closet to keep the space blanket from getting ripped. I would stick with a tarp unless there are no trees or telephone poles around. Then you'll need to spend a few bucks on a tent if you want shelter. I think they are a poor security blanket myself however. I can always find a better use for \$30. But they can be useful in keeping bugs out if you want one. I would be more concerned with the clothes on your back, they are what will keep you alive. And you should have them anyway, no need to budget for them out of your survival stash money. You will need to buy space blankets, useful as duct tape. But you already should have cold weather gear. I prefer long john underwear and outer wool garments rather than bulky synthetic gear. And don't overlook your car as a shelter. Most folks own one and this way you can get double use out of it. A few cheap \$10 sleeping bags in the car trunk along with water jugs and a case of Top Ramen might be like gold one day.

Most people already have shelter. Think how to adopt it to survival living. Also have a back-up plan if you lose your primary shelter. Unless you own a small four banger that burns rice your car should provide minimal protection. At almost no expense. Those without a car could put your supplies in a bike trailer and at night use the bike as a tent pole, using a tarp and some rope to provide shelter. A bike trailer is \$80 at Wal-Mart and can be paid off quickly if you use one for grocery shopping rather than renting a cab to pick up you and your shopping bags.

A set of thermal underwear costs about ten bucks. Wool sweaters are easy to find at the thrift store for \$2. Wool socks are about \$5 a pair, gloves about \$4. Wool takes special care when cleaning, but nothing beats it in the winter, especially if it is cold and wet.

## WHEAT

Wheat is the staff of life. This is a fact most Americans have lost sight of, as most of our wheat is feed to McDonalds hamburgers on the hoof. Civilization would not have started without a primitive form of wheat being domesticated and grown in the Fertile Crescent region. We would still be running after rabbits with sharp sticks. Where there was suitable plants and animals to domesticate, mankind increased and prospered as his cousins in less fortunate regions stayed small and impoverished due to climate change ( and his own over-hunting ) causing the large wild herds to diminish. Now, civilization is a trade off. There are a lot more of us, but now we are dependant on each other. Wheat symbolizes civilization, good and bad, and for thousands of years has provided us with a basic foodstuff that has sustained us. It is the most widely grown and most nutritious of grains ( others might be higher in certain nutrients but can't be grown as widely ).

Wheat taken recently from the Egyptian pyramids was successfully sprouted. You can't point to any other food with that kind of proven shelf life. Also, wheat is pretty darn cheap. Due to corporations substituting oil for soil nutrients and labor, vast amounts of wheat are grown in this country. At least for now as long as petroleum is affordable. And \$80 a barrel is affordable. Despite my strong belief that Peak Oil is a reality I do have to admit that the recent price hikes are certainly due to supply going down and demand increasing but mostly because the dollar is being devalued through credit expansion. You can't have your cake and it too. If you are making more an hour in your job and your house doubles in value, basic commodities will increase in price. Which is really all a shame since it waters down the feedback mechanism warning of real shortages, rather than shortages caused by artificial demand.

So, wheat, by being very cheap and able to be stored literally forever, is the perfect survival food. It is not a complete diet. Its protein is an incomplete plant protein and needs to be supplemented with beans to form a complete protein. However, as it is the highest protein among grains you will want to stockpile wheat for your survival food stash. I would strongly recommend beans with it but realistically it is doubtful most of you will stockpile the wheat, let along the far more expensive beans. In the case of severe financial hardship, a wheat only diet is better than nothing. Yes, it leaves something to be desired. It is far from perfect. But it will keep you alive. That is the important thing. It will keep you from starving. If it is a choice between a less than perfect food for a year or the perfectly nutritious food for six months, I'll take the year thank you very much.

Wheat is also sproutable, something you can't get from freeze dried foods. Sprouts are the most nutritious vegetables there are. Personally I think they taste like wet mold, but if it is a choice between scurvy or mold I'll go ahead and eat mold. So you take a small portion of wheat and sprout it and you have your vegetable needs taken care of. No need to stockpile cans of veggies that will lose their nutrients quickly. Cans should just be used for comfort food. Listen, Armageddon just happened. Mutant Zombie Biker Gangs are

roaming the highways and could lay siege to your farm. Radioactive clouds are headed your way. The dollars under your mattress are great for fire starters only. And because you actually listened to my crappy advice you only have one year supply of food on hand instead of the two decades worth you are going to need as the globe heads into nuclear winter. Wouldn't it be nice to have a few treats put aside in the pantry to take your mind off all that? Twinkies and chips and roasted peanuts, instead of canned kale or zucchini you had to stock because you wouldn't sprout wheat.

You are going to need one pound of wheat per person per day for your survival stash. I advise 400 pounds a year to give you that extra for sprouting. A pound a day might not fill you up or give you enough energy to dance the Nutcracker, but it will keep you alive and relatively healthy. Currently if you purchase cheap wheat you will pay \$75 for four hundred pounds of wheat. This does not include the cost of a grinder or storage containers but does give you an idea how cheap wheat kernels are. Buy them now while they are so cheap. Do not wait for crop failures or a sharp run up in oil prices or any other disruption to jack up the price. Buy now. At least four hundred pounds per person.

## WHOLE KERNAL WHEAT

The wheat you want to buy is not what you are familiar with. It is the whole wheat kernel. The seed from the wheat stalk. Then, you will need to make plans to grind the kernels with a grinder. You can store the whole wheat kernels forever, as long as the temperature is stable and no insects or rodents disturb it. But you can't store flour much more than six months. You can store white flour for a long time as it has had the outer shell removed that contained the oil. No oil to get rancid and spoil the flour as in the case of whole wheat flour. So, you must store the wheat in kernel form. You can store whole wheat flour in the freezer for awhile, a good practice as you learn how to cook with whole wheat. You can't plan on eating a storage food you are unfamiliar with. During times of stress you won't eat unfamiliar foods. Your body won't allow it. You will lose your appetite.

Go to the nearest feed and grain store. You know, the places ranchers shop for animal feed. Almost all will carry wheat kernels. Expect to pay about \$8 a fifty pound bag. Specify untreated wheat ( some wheat comes with veterinarian medicine on it ). You can leave the unopened bags around for awhile, they are designed to keep out insects for the most part. I would not really recommend leaving them in the original bag for a long period of time unless you have no choice such as when you bought out all the feed stores in town as some major catastrophe was approaching. Have cash on hand to do that however. Not the greatest time to expect someone to honor your check.

I would recommend also that you store enough white flour to supplement your cooking with whole wheat. It makes the texture better instead of using 100% whole wheat. You can also buy whole wheat breads if you want to slowly introduce whole wheat into your diet. A product labeled wheat can be all white flour with brown coloring. A product labeled whole wheat can contain a large amount of white flour. A product claiming to be "7 grain" ( or however many ) can be mostly white flour with whole grain flours thrown in but in small proportions. It must say 100% whole wheat to actual be from the entire wheat kernel ground into flour. Don't just expect to stop eating white flour and start in on whole wheat. They are totally different, as different as white rice is from brown. So slowly introduce them into your diet. For one thing all that fiber at once will give you the screaming trots ( severe diarrhea ).

And there is a reason that you need to introduce yourself to whole wheat. You must eat what you store and store what you eat. You can't have ten years worth of steak and potatoes stored up cheaply, but you can wheat. So get used to wheat by eating it now. If you try to introduce a foreign food into your diet so quickly after there is already a lot of stress in your life, your body will refuse it by losing its appetite. Remember the lack of eating that went along with something as simple as a move? Or worse, a divorce? Stress can mean loss of appetite, so don't make matter worse by killing your appetite with unfamiliar food. You will need your strength to survive.

## GRAIN GRINDER

If you are going to rely mostly on whole grains for your emergency diet you are going to need a grain grinder. Happily, as in most other aspects of your preparations, the cheapest grinder is almost the best. You could, if you were a Yuppie Survivalist, buy a very expensive grain grinder. I have seen some being advertised for between three and four hundred dollars, believe it or not. Pure insanity. The second cheapest grinder you can buy is the best. Its generic version is half the price, and almost as good. There is no need to spend good money on grinders that are only marginally better at best or at worse actually lesser quality. I'll explain in a moment.

There are people that will tell you that you need the grinder wheels to be made of stone. Supposedly to decrease the amount of heat generated during grinding. There are too problems with this theory. One, you can't possibly grind fast enough to duplicate the heat generated by commercial metal plates. And two, even if you could why would you even be concerned? You are going to put the flour in a hot oven anyway. Friction from grinding will generate heat and kill nutrients and that is bad, but putting the bread dough into a 350 degree oven won't do the same thing? Give me a break. Don't fall for the myth you need stone plates, they are much more expensive. You also don't need a motorized grinder. Sure, it would be nice. I would much rather drive a Cadillac than pedal my bike, especially in the middle of winter or summer. But I can't afford one, so that is that. If you have a large family or group just buy more than one grinder and have several people grinding at the same time.

The best grinder you can buy is a Corona brand. These are made in Mexico or Columbia and are big, heavy and as ugly as original sin. They also only cost \$50 after shipping. Just do a Google search to find out who sells them. They are the best you can buy because they will never break ( well, they could, but chances are they never will ). They are good at one thing and that is grinding corn. A poor peasant family in Latin America can buy one of these and it will last a lifetime of use helping to prepare the evening meal. They are not really designed to grind wheat, and that is where they get a bum rap. You just have to grind the same batch of wheat several times, starting on a rough grind and then each time turning the setting a little finer. Yes, that does suck. But not as bad as spending \$300 for a "better" grinder.

The generic version of the Corona is, of course, made in China. It is half the price after shipping. The one place I can consistently find one is Surplus N Survival. They cost about \$17, plus shipping. At that price you can buy more than one as it would be a bit embarrassing if you stockpiled three tons of wheat and only had one grinder that could break. They look a bit rougher than the Corona but should be just as rugged. The grinder is only a few pieces and is cast iron with a finish. Surely there is little that can go wrong with it. No guarantees of course. But far better to buy two generics and have one break than buy one "quality" one and have it malfunction.

Beware another \$50 grinder being offered for sale. It is very small and light weight,

almost square in appearance. It also grinds wheat effortlessly. In that regard it is a perfect grinder as there is almost no effort involved in grinding flour. Anyone weak or crippled could use one of these. The problem is that they use small plastic washers. And you can actually see the tiny shavings of plastic fall as you work this grinder. And then they will need to be replaced. Not a problem now, but what about after the End Of The World? Where do you order the replacements from. You had better have a bunch of spare washers ( and they ain't cheap ).

Don't let manual labor to save money freak you out. If you bought a motorized grinder you would need the alternate energy infrastructure to run it. Thus the cost is even higher than you realize. Get used to substituting manual devices for electrical ones. It will save you headaches in the end. And don't let the old saw about you get what you pay for influence you. Yes, to some extent it is true. But much overused by greedy bastards trying to sell you overpriced crap. There is more profit in a \$300 grinder than a \$50 one. But they would never steer you wrong, would they?

## STORAGE CONTAINERS

It would be wonderful if we could buy our wheat and grinder and be done with the expense, but unfortunately this is not the case. You need to provide a safe place to store your wheat. Both insects and rodents want a free lunch. So you are going to have to buy containers to place your wheat in. This can range from the free to the expensive so I will try to provide a middle ground. The free method takes up a lot more space and is labor intensive. The expensive method is obviously not our concern here. Throughout we will be practicing the poor boys method of "better than nothing".

The standard method for storing grain long term is five gallon poly buckets. The white round plastic bucket you see everywhere. The companies that sell these place the grain in a Mylar bag, flush out the oxygen and heat seal the bag closed. The poly bucket keeps the bag from being ripped. You could buy from companies for about \$300 for the years supply of wheat prepared in this manner, do it yourself for about \$200, or choose another method of killing insects besides a nitrogen flush. There are cheaper ways. However, be aware that even the factory products are not fool proof. Rodents are discouraged from chewing through the plastic, but not 100% deterred. To do that you need a metal container. A do-it-yourself Mylar bag and nitrogen flush in metal will run you about \$200 to \$250 for three hundred pounds. For someone of limited financial means it is almost better to just forget buying a factory product or being 100% protected against pests and just accept less-than-perfect ( but better-than-nothing ) middle ground I will describe to you.

If you already own a vacuum packer it might be within your reach financially to flush the oxygen and seal the bags and store then in a metal enclosure. A discarded refrigerator will work rather well in this capacity as long as the wheat is inside in insect proof bags. The bags are not cheap, running about \$7 per hundred pounds of wheat, but poly buckets aren't that cheap anymore either. If bought new they will cost you \$15 per hundred pounds of wheat. If you can find a free fridge and the vacuum pack bags cost a total of \$28 for the four hundred pounds than you can afford it within this budget. If you already own the vacuum machine. The cheapest starts at \$50. If you plan on vacuum packing other items such as powder/primers/ammo or small metal items in a humid location then this might be a good investment. Otherwise it is a lot to spend to set aside a few hundred pounds of wheat. Unless you have a big family and they each get their own years supply.

If worse comes to worse and you find yourself facing an unfolding emergency such as a flu pandemic that keeps spreading or if a global war develops and you face the likely prospect of a NBC terrorist attack here you can always forgo containers altogether. Unprotected brown paper bags of wheat are marginally effective of keeping pests out ( if you combine that with a pet cat to chase the rodents ) and better than no food supply at all. Stack the wheat sacks on shelves so that the cat can access around it and hope for the best. If you have the time and money you can buy \$4 twenty gallon plastic totes from Wal-Mart and store 100 pounds of wheat in each one. You could leave the bags unopened or even pour

the wheat into garbage bags and tie them up. The tote provides a bit more protection against rodents and \$4 per hundred pounds is pretty darn cheap.

And if you are just too darn poor for anything ( the \$100 for the grain and grinder wiped you out, let's say ) you can always put the grain in anything. Old cleaned pickle or mayonnaise jars, 2 liter soda bottles, plastic juice bottles, etc. The problem with this method is that you need a lot of bottles and they will take up a lot of space. It would take one hundred and twenty 2 liter soda bottles to store 400 pounds of wheat. I would prefer to use those bottles for water storage. But, again, better than nothing. I guess the point here is that you can go as expensive or as cheap as you care to. One method or the other, just do it.

## PLASTIC BUCKETS

Five gallon poly buckets are what you normally see wheat kernels stored in. There is a reason for that. They will last forever, they are available everywhere and all things considered the price is reasonable. And they are an icon of late 20th century America. Everything possible is made from plastic. Not that it necessarily is a bad thing, it makes little sense to construct throw away containers for some items. A five gallon container of cake frosting made from metal is not cost effective. Made with plastic it is. And this is to our advantage. A bakery has little use for used poly buckets and will gladly sell the container and lid for one dollar ( as there is such a demand for the used containers- new cost is \$5- that would be foolish not to charge something ). Even if the lid is cut away too much to be reused you can still buy the used bucket and a new lid for \$2 total. A hundred pounds of wheat takes three five gallon buckets, so your cost per four hundred pounds is \$12 to \$24 for the used containers.

As the wheat cost \$75 and the buckets \$25, along with a grinder your cost per person per year of food is \$125 for the first person, \$100 per person thereafter. This is not the perfect storage container, granted. There can still be rodent damage. The plastic will slow down and deter but it is not guaranteed to stop them. Unless you can't possibly stand cats I would have a few to be your rodent police. Personally, I love cats. They treat you like you are their slave but they will over a long period of time come to loving you as close as a cat can. At the very least they are good companions as they amuse themselves. If wives were more like cats I would still be on my first marriage instead of my fourth. Dogs are good for outside animals. They serve as sentries and we need them. But they are pretty stupid as a rule and want constant attention. I grant you they will serve you well, but as workers not as pets. Plus, a pet defines an owner. Dog owners wish to rule, cat owners allow other beings to rule themselves. Robert Heinlein said it best- cats are the perfect anarchists.

If your area does not have bakeries or BBQ joints or donut places that carry the poly buckets, you will have to buy new ones. And the new ones at Wal-Mart, Lowes and Home Depot are for mixing paint or what not. They are not food grade plastic. Toxins will leach into your stored food. Personally, I feel this is less of a concern than not having any food storage at all. But you decide. You can always try another kind of storage container, or get them through mail order, or put for wheat in Mylar bags to avoid the toxic leeching. Or go with a 55 gallon plastic drum you can buy used from a cola bottling plant that corn syrup came in. Just wash it good first and be careful if you ever have to move it as the wheat alone is going to be 370 pounds. I imagine your area will differ but I've heard prices for those from \$30 to \$50.

Another method of using non-food grade buckets is to line the bucket with a couple of trash bags. Again, not the perfect plan. The trash bags themselves could have toxic leaching and for sure they will have insecticides in them. Not that you don't eat insecticides every meal, but you should be aware. And if the container had chemicals a trash bag won't stop that from leeching into your food. The best bet is still the cheapest.

## VACUUM PACKED

Normally I would not recommend this method, but if you can spare another expense ( for instance if you already own a firearm ) or if you just have no other choice than you can vacuum pack your wheat. The plastic you buy for these machines is very thick and is really not a bad investment, just not the cheapest way to store wheat. The cheapest machine is available at ( where else? ) Wal-Mart for about \$50. Each two pack roll of bags cost about \$13. One roll will store about 100 pounds as long as you don't make the bags too small- the sealed ends take several inches worth of the bag. So, \$26-28 per years worth of wheat in the bags. Round it down to about \$75 for your initial investment. Again, there are much cheaper ways to store your wheat. However, if you already have the machine it makes sense. Or, if you have no other choice. If for instance you live in an RV you only have narrow spaces to store your food, the narrow compartments underneath the floor or under seats. You can actually store a years worth of wheat or more in even a small RV, it just can't be in five gallon plastic totes as they are too wide.

If you used galvanized trash cans or old refrigerators to keep out rodents you could place your vacuum packed plastic bags inside and then not have to worry about insects. If kept in a constant temperature ( i.e., not the garage ) your wheat should last forever. But again, you don't necessarily have to go through this much trouble and expense. I have thrown grain in plastic poly buckets and sealed them with no precautions against bugs and have had no problems. Other times I put wheat in poly buckets at the start of winter and stored in an outside vehicle where the freezing killed anything growing. In hot and humid climates I only bought factory wheat to avoid any chance of insect infestation ( but I was extra paranoid right before Y2K ). In other humid climates I just stored in poly buckets and kept them in the climate controlled house with no problems. It all depends on how much money you want to spend and how much risk you want to take. If I didn't already own a vacuum packing machine and if I didn't live in humidity I wouldn't buy the machine unless you do live in an RV and have no other storage space.

Vacuum packing can be for more than just wheat storage. You can store anything you don't want oxygen around. Dried meat or fruit will last a lot longer in them. If you dried your beef jerky hard enough to snap apart or break teeth and then vacuum packed it I'm sure that the meat would last for years. Primers are a good candidate as is most other reloading supplies. Even small consumable items such as matches or sewing pins ( again, especially in humid climates ) might be better off vacuum packed. And, if you can get cheap or free Mason jars there is an attachment you can buy for the machine that will draw the air out of the jars ( with a lid needed of course ) and that would save you from needing to buy the expensive plastic bag rolls. I am not saying you need a vacuum packing machine in most instances. Just that it might pay for itself in other ways if you so choose to invest in one.

## RUBBERMAID/STERILITE BRAND PLASTIC TOTES

In a controlled environment such as a home where the risk of rodent or insect infestation is reduced, or in a situation where you need to store as much grain as you can quickly, large plastic totes can make sense. They stop casual inspection by people, pets or vermin ( nothing will stop the determined ). Their redeeming virtue is the extreme cheapness, \$16 will store your years worth of wheat. Used poly buckets are cheaper but you can't always find them. In an emergency you can always get at least a few from Wal-Mart. Of course it would be best to store whatever you need before hand. Say you already had your years worth of wheat stored but you anticipated family members suddenly moving in if an emergency developed. You only have enough money for the containers. You assume that under most circumstances the emergency will freeze your ability to pay bills so you will have a bit of cash to buy the wheat if needed ( for instance, under a flu pandemic you most likely will not concern yourself with paying rent for a month or two ). Store the containers you plan on using beforehand.

Or, if you can't find any used poly buckets you could buy four twenty gallon totes and just throw the unopened fifty pound bags of wheat in them, place them on the bottom of your closet and place shoes and other items on top of them. If you have reasonable expectations that insects and rodents and humidity will not disturb them you have just easily solved your emergency food problem. So, as with the vacuum packed bags, this is not the perfect storage solution. This is presented mostly as something that can supplement your other storage at a later date. But it can also work if it has to and your circumstances don't conspire against it. I used the tote storage method for my "white" food. White flour, white rice, noodles, etc. I didn't even open the store packaging, I just put them in the totes. After three years I deemed their life span about over so I donated all of them to a charity kitchen. I did open one bag of flour to determine if there was any infestation and there was not. I'm saying your results would be so favorable, but they very well could be.

Packaging food is a bit like firing an old rifle with an enlarged bore. You aren't guaranteed to hit every time, but more than not you hit the target close enough. I am not selling any guarantee at these low prices, but I am saying everything will be close enough to work more often than not. I have moved many times and thrown away a lot of food storage. 95% of the time there is no damage. Store your food in different containers in different places and the odds will be that you will get unspoiled food ( one reason why you may not want to have all your food in one container such as the 55 gallon soda syrup barrel- small packages increase your odds of escaping infestation ). Don't just wrap a few pounds of wheat in a trash bag and set it out in a shed in Florida and be surprised you get bugs. Do try to apply a bit of common sense here please.

## TWO LITER BOTTLES

Let me start right out stating that I really hate the metric system. I mean, it does come from the French after all ( well, OK so did pasteurization, but I'm sure somehow my point still is valid ). The metric system takes the soul out of measurements. All of the English measurements were based on actual events and items rather than dry boring science. A foot is based on a foot, some darn thing is based on how much land an ox could plow in a day, etc. Okay, my history of trivia in word origins is a bit hazy here but the plain fact is that American measurements are intuitive and the metric system is used by a bunch of damn Communists. So I was a bit peeved when they started using the liter system in soda. I don't want a friggin two liter bottle of soda, I want a half gallon. From the same people that brought us New Coke, I'm sure. But one good thing about the bottles is they are great plastic. They will almost outlive a Twinkie.

Cleaned and dried two liter bottles will hold your wheat quite nicely. About three pounds of wheat or almost a weeks worth on a starvation diet. Of course you will need a lot of these for a years worth of wheat but they are free. Just dig in the trash a bit ( or even more easy raid the recycle bins on the sidewalk on trash day ). Of course you can use anything for your grain storage. I would save and clean my plastic jugs from the cat food I give my bosses and each jug was about two weeks worth of wheat. Most of my wheat is in poly buckets but the cat food jugs were free. Of course it was slow going. Their highnesses went through a jug a month so at the end of the year hoarding the containers I was only able to save less than a hundred pounds that way ( I could have spent three bucks to buy the used buckets to save the same amount, but I'm the kind of guy that will clutter up my RV for a year to save three bucks even as I make hundreds more a month than my bills- I also save my soap scraps for my shaving mug and only buy day old bread ).

Becoming a trash picker ( or, as the professionals call themselves, dumpster divers ) will help you accumulate food grade containers quickly. I would clean all jugs with strong soap and rinse with a strong bleach water just to make sure it is clean in case the jug got a little too close to a disposable diaper or some bloody bandages or whatever. And wear good leather gloves when rooting through the trash. Sometimes you can be too cheap. Like buying used underwear from the thrift store or using a chemical jug to store food it. Sometimes cheap can get you killed. I am all for used containers, but only the right ones. For instance, gallon or five gallon jugs of vegetable oil are great containers. It just takes a bit of soap to cut the oil. A bleach bottle no matter how many times it was washed, I would never use for food ( although water is another matter ). See what I mean? That most elusive of skills, common sense.

## TREATING YOUR GRAIN

As if figuring out what kind of container you need for your grain wasn't bad enough, now you need to decide how to treat your wheat for any possible infestation. Your containers keep out rodents and any future insect access, but you must still treat the grain to make sure there is no insect larva already in there. I'm sure at this point you are rolling your eyes and making comic gagging faces, wishing you had just taken out a second mortgage and bought 400 MRE's for a mere \$2,000. Well, this really isn't all that bad. Honest. I'm trying to save you \$1900 and it doesn't take all that much effort on your part. Besides, you don't want to eat just MRE's. A steady diet of them and you will wonder if it is ever possible that you will unclog your biological plumbing. Eat a weeks worth of MRE's and to call it constipation would be too nice. You are plugged up for good.

Treating your grain for possible infestation is of course not necessary. You can just open the sack of grain, pour it into buckets and seal them up. I have done this plenty of times with no ill effects. However, you are gambling here. Possibly with your life. That's okay with your mother in law, but not for yourself. You are worth more than that. The good news of course is that there is an absolutely free way to treat your wheat. Another traditional way that is a lot faster is to use dry ice. If you have the money ( it is expensive unless you can buy it in bulk ) use diatomaceous earth. It is a mineral that is harmless to pets or people but will tear up the insects. Each way has its good and bad points which I will cover.

I am also going to cover a process of treating your wheat that is recommended by one expert but plenty of folks contacted me warning against its use. It does have its advantages but I will leave it to you to decide if the possible dangers are worth it. This particular method is a good way to quickly treat large quantities of grain if you can't lay your hands on a cheap source of diatomaceous earth. Frankly I don't think the possible dangers are worth it but if you are knowledgeable with chemicals/gases you might want to play around with it. It is the only method that doesn't introduce moisture into the grain or leave a residue ( and is pretty quick ).

But again, you can always skip the treatment. In a dry climate in a feed and grain store with good turnover the odds are very good you will escape any infestation. This extra step is for those that want to make absolutely sure their food is safe. It is better to be a little extra paranoid after all. Why else are you reading this and thinking about spending \$500 on something that will sit in the corner forever gathering dust instead of buying a lifetime subscription to Extra Big And Saggy Jugs magazine? Because you know that in fact they are out to get you and you wish to be prepared.

## FREEZING

The free way to treat your wheat is to freeze it. What could be more simple? Take your wheat and place it in your freezer for four or five days and nothing is going to survive the ordeal. The only problem could be the condensation formed when you take the cold grain out of the freezer and introduce it to a warmer climate. Then, possibly, mold or other water damage. Perhaps not, perhaps I am too paranoid. But I still remain leery of possible mold. So, even if this method is financially free, it still might extract a cost in the form of spoilage. No free lunch after all.

One way to minimize any condensation would be to keep the wheat in a separate bag in the freezer and leave the container in a temperature stable area. A root cellar would be ideal if anyone had them anymore. Then when the freezing period is over dump the grain in the container that has been sitting in your cool as possible spot. A basement that stayed 55 degrees should also work well. However, going from a freezer to a 80 degree closet improves the chance that the two extreme temperature differences will produce the condensation. Try to avoid that.

I have never used this method, per se. I have left buckets of wheat to freeze in the winter in a spare trailer parked outside. I had no problems. I believe because the temperature differences were slow and gradual rather than sudden. However, that storage method also left the wheat to stay hot all summer, so it was far from ideal. Remember, long term wheat storage works best in stable environments. Get it underground if at all possible. If you do choose to freeze like I did ( let Mother Nature do all the work ) don't leave it to swelter out in the warmer seasons. That might be a good way to freeze a large quantity of wheat. Just throw it in your containers and don't worry about it until winter. Then let the big natural freezer do its job. That might beat only treating thirty or so pounds at a time.

To use your attached freezer on the refrigerator you are only going to be able to freeze a small bag at a time. I would be leery of less than three days freezing ( it will take a day just to get it down in temperature ) and of course four or five is better. That is a long time to keep your freezer out of commission. And you have to do it twelve times for a years supply of wheat. Far better to have a separate chest freezer. Those things do pay for themselves rather quickly.

A small chest freezer only uses about \$3 to \$5 of electricity a month and you can buy the family packs of meat at a good discount. The cost of the freezer at \$150 should pay for itself quickly. Or buy a quarter of a cow at even cheaper prices. Or bag some game. If you have a reliable source of electricity ( which leaves out everyone on the west or east coast, sorry ) by all means get a freezer. If you are a meat eater they are a great investment. And then if you decide to freeze some grain to ensure against infestation you already have the proper sized tool.

## DIATAMACOUS EARTH

Diatomaceous earth are skeletal remains of ancient sea life. There are certain spots where they are mined and processed, the spots where the right kind of geological conditions deposited them. Once such was in the small town of Lompoc in central California where I grew up from sixth grade on. I never thought anything of it at the time, it just looked like a factory to me. Now whenever I use the stuff I can look fondly back to my childhood when I took its presence for granted.

DE is a natural mineral that is harmless to pets and humans. But it is not too much fun for most insects, as the microscopic edges of the grains mess them all up. Some grain silos use DE for stored grains. You can too. If you put one cup of DE in each five gallon bucket of wheat and then roll the sealed bucket around to distribute the powder on most of the grain you should have no insect problems. You can wash it off before consuming the grain if you so wish. This is a great way of treating your grain as it is natural and introduces no moisture into the grain such as if you froze or dry ice treated it. Of course there is always a drawback.

In small quantities DE is not cheap. I searched the Internet for companies selling it and I found one five pound bag for ten bucks. But the shipping was another \$10. So my five pound sack cost twenty damn dollars. Outrageous!! Of course that was more than enough for a years supply of wheat. The problem is that you need to buy food grade DE. You can't use the stuff they sell for swimming pools ( it would kind of be like using road salt for your dining ), you need to use only the food grade. I read that feed stores sometimes carry them but my local feed and seed did not so I can't imagine what the bulk price would be. Or what sizes they consider bulk. If you plan on treating a good amount of wheat you might want to research that possibility. This really is the preferred way of treating wheat ( the least negative factors other than price ).

Not that \$20 should stop you. If you are going to spend \$75 on wheat kernels you might as well spend another \$20 to make sure the insects don't destroy it. Granted, insects are free protein. But I think most would pass on grinding them up for bread. If your four hundred pounds of wheat is \$75, your grinder \$25, your buckets \$25 and the DE was \$20 you are still spending under the \$150 we have arbitrarily set as the amount you are allowed to spend on food under this budget. If you already own a gun and enough ammunition and you just need to add a water filter to your survival stash then you still only spend a total of \$200. And that is with the DE. When it is a difference of \$20 it is hard to see the problem spending it to increase the odds of your food remaining unspoiled. However, should your evil spouse begrudge your spending even that amount of money to keep her sorry butt alive after the Muslims try to nuke her fat dimply white ass, well then you can always just freeze it at no cost. Problem solved.

## NITROGEN GAS TREATMENT FROM DRY ICE

I really don't like this method. If you put a chunk of dry ice on the bottom of a bucket full of grain and then set the lid on loosely and then wait for the dry ice to dissolve, the gas displacing all the air in the bucket, well, the intense cold is going to cause some condensation and your grain gets wet. This method goes way back and once started seems to be everyone's favorite way of treating wheat. Kind of like the US Army and the police starting to use 9mm pistols and now every militia redneck or survivalist wacko thinks they are a good idea. No!! A bad idea once started still remains a bad idea even after several generations use it. The only reason I am not so down on the other method of freezing is because, 1) it is free so you are not spending money to ruin your wheat and, 2) the dry ice introduces more dramatic swings of temperatures in theory. If you are still sold on the dry ice theory, at least do the following to alleviate its more negative effects.

Place the chunk of dry ice on the lid, not at the bottom of the bucket as is advised. Fill your bucket full of wheat. Place a piece of wax paper or a small plastic container over the dry ice chunk. Holding the container with both thumbs and the other fingers holding the lid, flip the lid over and place it on top of the bucket but don't seal it. Now, holding the lid in place flip over the entire bucket and lid. You are trying to keep the lid in place without sealing it and placing the lid on the surface as the bucket is upside down. Now, in case the weight of the wheat and bucket is too much for the gas to vent, leave the room for awhile in case the buildup of the gas causes a violent explosion. That is why you aren't supposed to seal the lid until the dry ice is done evaporating. The gas would swell the bucket until the lid exploded off with a spray of high velocity wheat shrapnel ( I assume this is what happens as they warn against it- I have yet to test it ).

By placing the ice on the top and then flipping the whole thing you allow the gas to displace the air in the container. Then, when you flip it back over you can scoop out the wheat surrounding the container holding the dry ice in case it got wet. Then seal the lid on the bucket. In theory, this is a way to do away with the problem of wet grain at the bottom of the bucket. But this is only a theory. I have yet to try it. Obviously you could lose some of the grain each time flipping. And the thing might "explode" just enough that the whole thing tips over or whatever. I just include the idea to try to perfect the dry ice method. I know a lot of us like to play around with new ideas. This might be a fun Sunday project. Of course you may not experience any problems with freezing or using dry ice. You could get no moisture on the wheat. I am trying to relay the worse case scenario just to prepare you. My method of using the outside temperature to freeze my wheat in the winter could backfire by drastically reducing the storage lifespan of the wheat. I don't know. I could try the dry ice method one day and have no problems. But if you know of the potential problems you can look for them and take steps to correct them.

## GAS TREATMENT OF WHEAT

Way back when workers down in the mine needed to see what they were doing they would use carbide lamps. When you take calcium carbide and add water to it you get a flammable gas. The lamps operated on this principle. A container for the lumps of calcium carbide and a way to introduce water to it produced a gas that was lit for illumination. One enterprising writer suggested using the unlit gas as a way to fumigate your wheat supply. I thought this was a great idea and passed it on to my readers. No moisture to worry about, more any worries about eating minerals. Well, you would have thought I advised everyone to use gasoline fumes to treat their wheat. So I dutifully pass on their warnings since I have tried to sleep through any science class and have no knowledge how dangerous the practice actually is. Heck, I almost burnt down the ranch as a child trying to play with gasoline soaked flaming arrows and at other times tried to substitute gasoline for kerosene to get a stubborn fire going. I'm not the brightest around flammable materials.

To my way of thinking, anyone who would put this combusting mixture on top of their head surely would have no problem putting some in a barrel and leaving it for awhile. But more than one person wrote and warned me this was a dangerous practice. I guess mostly due to static electricity rather than open flames. They seemed quite knowledgeable. So I am certainly not going to use this method any time soon and you are advised to only do so if you know exactly what you are doing. Fair warning, I don't want any jerks with melted faces trying to sue me. I could tell you gasoline fumes are flammable and that doesn't give you the right to sue me when you throw a match in a pail of the stuff. Theoretically if the fumes didn't ignite the gasoline itself would extinguish the match, but you would be an idiot to try standing too close. So, my teaching you fumes are flammable doesn't mean I take responsibility when you play around trying to prove it. I could go on, but I'm sure you want to sue me anyway. Go right ahead, my ex-wife gets what Uncle Sam leaves. I might own the pot I piss in but it is cheap and made in China. You can have it if you want it bad enough.

Go to your handy dandy Internet connection and do a search for "calcium carbide for sale". Several companies sell it, mostly to cave explorers who, I guess, don't like regular flashlights. Expect to pay a lot due to restricted shipping regulations. About \$12 for a small amount. No need to buy a barrel of the stuff until you try it. Once you get it, take a small cup or film canister and place three or four "rocks" of the calcium carbide in the container, add a bit of water and place it at the top of your wheat container and loosely place the lid on, as if you were using the dry ice method. Leave it alone until the rocks are dissolved and no more gas is being produced. Seal up your container after taking out the cup or film canister. You may want to experiment with one rock beforehand. If it sputters and spits you need to cover your rock container to avoid most contamination such as putting the lid on the film canister and punching a few holes in it ( or using a topless container that is deeper such as a 20 once soda bottle ). Remember, I haven't done this myself.

If this method works for you without the danger I warned about it might be advantageous to stockpile more calcium carbide in case of future need, along with the wheat containers. Then as you can afford them buy more wheat and treat it. It is always a great idea to have more than the recommended four hundred pounds of wheat per person. But then I am highly paranoid. But at the very least if you do use this treatment buy the CC in advance in bulk to save you money and hassle. You never know when shipping costs will increase or the restrictions will tighten up. After Mohammed nukes Washington is not the time to send off for your supplies.

## OTHER FOODS- GRAINS AND BEANS

As we have discussed, a wheat only diet is not ideal. Wheat is the ideal survival food but it is not the ideal diet. If wheat is all you can afford, it is far better than most other foods if you are on a strict budget. If you wish you can substitute some wheat for a bean and thus create a much better diet as it now contains a complete protein, as opposed to an incomplete protein diet. Certain foods contain less than ideal amounts of certain amino acids. This causes the body to have an incomplete protein. Meat is a complete protein, as are eggs. Grains and beans are an incomplete protein. But by combining the two you now have a protein similar to meat. It is far cheaper and healthier to combine grains and beans to form a complete protein than it is to buy tinned meats which are outrageously expensive and have too many preservatives. If you can incorporate an animal protein into your survival plans ( such as chickens in the back yard ), great. If you have to store all your food and are on a budget, go with the bean and grain combo.

If your budget is too restricted, a wheat only diet is far from ideal but it will keep you alive. If you are really worried about incomplete protein but still face financial limitations than your only choice is to slightly reduce the amount of food you can store. Since beans are usually at least twice the price of wheat you are going to have to store a bit less than four hundred pounds. If you are stuck on the maximum amount of \$75 for your food, consider the following. One hundred pounds of beans are about \$35. For \$40 you can buy about 250 pounds of wheat. You are now only fifty pounds shy of the original 400 pounds of wheat, and you get almost a pound a day of a combination of beans and grain. Unfortunately that amount must be slightly reduced again for your sprouts, but this should be a healthier diet than a wheat only one. If you added fifty pounds of additional beans it would only cost \$20 more and greatly improve your protein and slightly boost your caloric intake per day.

I for one have a real need for additional protein in my diet. My metabolism is fast enough that I seem to really lose energy without enough protein. In my case I really should "beef" up my storage of beans. I usually don't as I am concerned with feeding a lot of others besides myself and the old ball and chain, so I go for quantity rather than quality. This will most likely bite me in the butt come time to actually eat my stored food, but as in everything else in life this is a tradeoff. You can only do what you can do. Is there really a right choice? Only hindsight will tell. But it is food for thought.

## OTHER FOODS- "WHITE" FOODS

White foods are those that contain no outer shell. White flour, white rice. The outer layer did contain most of the nutrients, and the white part mainly just simple carbohydrates. Complex carbohydrates just mean the entire kernel, whole wheat, brown rice. While many a "scientific" mind will debate the health of eating white foods, just keep this in mind. You are not eating poison as many claim. You are just eating the less nutritious part. I would not recommend only eating the white foods as you are then not getting the needed fiber or nutrients. I would instead stipulate that they be used as a supplement. Yet, even a diet only consisting of these foods, if supplemented with sprouts, will at least keep you alive. In what kind of health is open to debate, but it does beat starving to death. Some people won't touch whole wheat flour or brown rice if their life depended on it, literally.

So, you might be one of those that will only eat white food. Fair enough, at least you are storing food even if it is the wrong kind. But please, store enough whole wheat kernels to sprout with to get your vitamins. You can eat three thousand calories a day but if they are all empty without nutrition than in a short while you will suffer from malnutrition. I would think an eighth of a pound a day would be plenty for sprouts. About fifty pounds of whole wheat should be more than enough. Under \$10. The white food does have the benefit that you now don't need a grain grinder ( you sprout from the whole kernel ). Four hundred pounds of white flour is \$80. Now you don't have to grind your flour, it is all ready for you. Perhaps you are old with lousy teeth and terrible digestion and don't have the strength to work a grinder anyway. The white diet might just be what you need. Again, not ideal. Again, a trade off.

What this diet does have going for it is one, you are eating familiar food. Two, you get a big variety without any extra work. With whole wheat you have to be practiced and talented to get the flour to taste good. With white flour you get the more familiar light and fluffy bread. You can eat pasta and rice, not just heavy dense wheat flour. Again, I am only recommending white foods as a supplement but if you absolutely refuse to eat whole grains then it is better than no food storage at all. And you do get a variety. Flavored rice, Noodle Roni, pasta in many variations, macaroni and cheese, Top Ramen, Cup O Noodle soup, etc. Even if you only bought one 25lb bag of white flour for five bucks as a back up food for short term emergencies you would possess two months of food in an emergency diet if combined with the rest of your pantry foods. One half pound of flour a day added to other foods from your cupboard. If you were not too concerned with long term survival but just wanted an emergency stash you could buy two large sacks of flour and a cheap shotgun with a box of shells and your total investment would be \$125. So, sometimes white foods do make sense. Mostly as a supplement to whole grains and/or beans, but sometimes as your main source of calories.

## COOKING

Obviously you are going to need to cook your food. Luckily you can improvise different methods that are nearly free or at least really cheap. First off, avoid petrochemicals for long term cooking plans. If you are planning for a short time only than one five gallon tank of propane and a single burner stove will cook all your meals for several months ( it doesn't last that long on a BBQer because there you are heating the whole grill whereas on a stove you have one concentrated area ). I have used a single disposable propane canister for almost a month when I was using the stove twice a day. Once to boil several cups of water for coffee and once to heat several cups to shave with. Buying a single five gallon tank full of propane cost about \$25 and is cheap insurance against power failure ( obviously more will be needed if water must be boiled, but here we focus on cooking ). However, long term plans must utilize renewable energy or you are going to be in trouble. I would imagine you could soak a bowl of wheat kernels overnight in cold water and be able to somehow eat it as a crunchy gruel but I would prefer to have a grinder and a solar oven to cook the flour/dough with.

Your best method is of course solar, but unless you live in the desert you can't always get a sunny day. You will need to use various methods. Solar, wood and a technique with the wood method using slow cooking in an insulated pot to cut back on the needed fuel. Depending on your location of course. If you are in the low desert you can use solar 9/10th of the time. High elevation forest would almost always be wood. Have the equipment to use either one, they are both cheap enough. The slow cooker is the most beneficial but you really need wood to start the cooking process unless your solar potential is good enough to boil water ( plus you have the equipment to do it ). The inconvenience and relative high expense ( initial expense, not fuel cost ) does make the renewable a pain, at least opposed to propane, but the long term benefits are obvious.

It is easy to buy a \$15 propane cook stove and a few bottles of propane. We are all familiar with them. And they are great for short term emergencies. However, it is almost impossible to store enough propane for long term use. Lets say you have more money than sense. You spend several hundred bucks buying a large propane tank. And then several hundred more to fill it up. In a few years of use it runs out. What do you do? Pay someone on the black market a bribe in your scarce silver coins to fill it up? Have no way to cook, more likely. Any serious disruption means no supplies are available to you, even if there are actually some out there. Remember, we are overly spoiled as far as availability for almost everything. Ask someone how easy it was to get clean water during Katrina. The times of national abundance are over, time to get used to possible shortages ( from many sources, such as inflation or pipeline damage or oil cutoff or economic downturn ). Use renewables for as much as possible. Food, water purification, fuel for cooking and heating, etc.

## SOLAR COOKING

An insulated black box and a sheet of glass is really all you need for solar cooking. Why more households don't have one is beyond me. Oh, wait, I know why. Because nobody builds with solar gain in mind. Do you know how simple passive solar is? A south facing wall with a sliding glass door and a stone or concrete heat sink as a floor could cut your heating cost significantly. If it was a cabin that could all of your heat right there. A small cast iron stove could provide supplemental heat for those stormy cloudy weeks but it wouldn't be unrealistic to assume that you could get by with only a cord or so of wood for the winter using this set up. Passive solar will make a comeback after gas rising past inflation ( that hasn't happened yet as of mid 2006- proved by lots of whining but no significant reduction in consumption ) has forced people to somehow force it into their building which was never designed with anything other than a natural gas heater in mind. If you wait until everyone else does it material cost will be sky high and shortages might happen. Beat the rush. Heck, I'll even throw in a passive solar window box heater design at the end of this page to pay for the cost of this book.

To make a solar oven, get a box. Sure, you can go get a cardboard box, but why? Get one that will last a few years. One good idea is to take an old refrigerator and take out the plastic interior and the motor/condenser, etc. You will be left with a metal box open on one side. You could also use the cardboard box the refrigerator came in if you must use cardboard. Try your local "rent an appliance at 545% annual interest rate center". I'm sure they would love for you to cart off their trash. Paint the inside of your box flat black. This is why you shouldn't use cardboard. The paper will suck up the paint as well as absorbing condensation during cooking. Insulate the outside walls and bottom of your box. Cover insulation with a material to make it waterproof and protect the insulation. Put a piece of glass over the top of the box. Try not to use regular glass. Try to get safety glass. Sliding glass doors made of this are perfect, for the big oven as well as for the window heater discussed below. Go to a glass place in town and ask about imperfect or irregular glass at a discount. Much cheaper than buying a sliding glass door from Lowes or Home Depot.

After your oven is done you can try reflectors. Again, drop that cardboard. Try to get a piece of aluminum sheet or something similar that can be used permanently. Your reflectors are three pieces of reflecting material that focus the sun into the oven. Almost a U shape at the head of the oven adjusted throughout the day to capture the moving sun. Of course the U prongs are spread out a bit more. I'm sure there is a name for it but as my mind closed down at any advanced mathematics I couldn't tell you. You might not even need the reflector in the summer. You'll just have to experiment. One thing you shouldn't have to worry about is burning food. The temperatures will get plenty hot for cooking but leaving the food in fifteen minutes while you check up on your soap opera characters will not be the catastrophe it would be in the electric oven.

To make a heater for any room in the house ( well, at least south facing ), use the same design but not as wide or as deep. More of a shallow trough shape. Then you can crack a window and put the open end into the house. The warm air rises into your room. It should be possible to replace the conventional heater at least in that one room for the day. Then have a damper to close it off after the sun goes down or you'll have to disconnect it outside and close the window again. And of course the open part of the window not holding the end of the trough will need to be sealed off somehow. Kind of like when people open a window, stick in an air conditioner and put a piece of plywood in the other part of the window. If that is too difficult, keep your window closed and do this. If you have a U shape curtain rod that holds the blinds/curtain a few inches away from the wall put a sheet of black plastic against the inside of the curtain, facing the window but not touching it. The sun will hit the black plastic and the heat will rise up the plastic and up in the room. So leave the top open to allow the heat in. Works much better than just opening the drapes and letting the sun in. Also, reflectors outside should help things a bit ( with both types of window heater ). A cheap way to help heat the house.

Remember, south facing is your friend in the northern hemisphere. Face as best as you can toward the south for winter heating. Also, curtain off your windows at night to reduce heat loss. You need mass to capture the heat during the day and to release it at night. A concrete slab works good, as would a mess of rocks. Or metal water tanks painted black. If you could get free or cheap 55 gallon drums and paint them black ( adding something to keep the metal from rusting ) and place them by the window you could get radiant heat from them at night. I would even suggest if you want to get fancy, put one by your wood stove. Free heat later after the fire dies down. A window facing properly and a concrete slab ( along with a smaller house perhaps ) and you would never have to sweat the heating bill again. A bargain at today's prices and a double bargain in the future.

## NON-ELECTRIC SLOW COOKER

You have to love your slow cooker, or Crock-Pot. Dump some water in with your food ingredients and turn it on. After you get home from work dinner is waiting for you. The electricity cost about seven cents. And it is a healthy meal, something most fast food or convenience foods can't claim. Besides being cheap ingredient wise. You can use the toughest least expensive meats there are and they turn out wonderful. The problem arises when you don't have the 110 volt plug in. Either you are in the boonies without a grid hookup or you are in an emergency where the grid has gone down. The answer actually costs less than a traditional electric Crock-Pot.

Get yourself a stainless steel stock pot with lid and two side handles.. They are cheap enough new but you can always buy a used one. Now get a box bigger than the pot with good clearance on the sides and the bottom. You can use cardboard which can later be covered with wallpaper or sticky plastic to keep the cardboard dry and in good shape. A great box is a copy paper box with a lid on it. You will need a lid. You can close the box top and cut one out then duct tape the top closed. In other words, if the box is twenty inches tall then close the top and cut down all around at say, the fifteen inch mark. Now you have a lid. If you are really rich and can afford a second larger pot go right ahead. If the larger one is aluminum ( and thus cheaper ) it doesn't matter. The big box is to form a mold for your insulation. You can use many things for insulation. Mail styrofoam peanuts, newspaper, even fiberglass. I would recommend spending a few bucks and buying a can or two ( depends on your pot size ) of spray can expanding foam, the stuff you use to seal cracks.

Take your pot and put a good coat of car wax on it or wrap it in plastic. The idea is to be able to extract the pot from the insulation after it dries, so the insulation doesn't adhere to the pot. Now take your box and spray a bottom layer of insulation in it. Place the pot in the middle with the lid on. Spray all around the pot and over the top. Allow to dry. Now you can cut at the top where the lid meets the pot. The idea is to be able to have two pieces, one the pot and one the lid. When you set one down on the other the lid closes on the pot. You might have to shave a bit of insulation away to do that if your cut was off. At this point you might want to shave away on the sides of the pot insulation just a bit to allow the pot to slide up and down effortlessly. So you don't have to wrestle with it. Same with the lid part. You need to be able to wash it. Shave around the handles to allow easy extraction to pour the food out and not have the insulated part get in the way. Your pot and lid should be completely enclosed by insulation to allow the best cooking.

The best method to use your slow cooker is to pour a bit of hot water in the pot to pre-heat it. Then start your main dish water boiling. Dump out the pre-heat water and dump in all the ingredients other than the water into the pot. After your water is fiercely boiling then dump it in and immediately cover the pot. Now leave it the heck alone for its cooking time. Do not open the lid. And make sure the water is boiling like mad before

you throw it in. The hot water is the only thing cooking your other ingredients. The insulation keeps the heat in. If you fail to get the water hot enough or open the lid to peak you won't get good enough results. I have not yet used this method, I would not hazard a guess as to how long it will take to cook certain foods or how long the heat will last to keep cooking. You can always experiment and if the food is undercooked just throw it in your regular Crock-Pot to finish it up. Write down the info in case it is years before you use the non-electric or you have a bad memory ( and remember to pre-soak beans overnight or they won't cook properly ).

This cooker is a great idea no matter what. If nothing ever happens you save money on the electric bill ( even if it isn't much now it could be a lot more in the future ). In a future with regular brownouts such as they have in Third World countries ( which we will become one day ) you only need to boil water to cook the whole meal. In an apocalypse you won't need much wood to cook with and thus have less smoke to announce yourself to marauders. This method cooks a lot more food than the compatible "thermos cooker" where you use an expensive stainless steel thermos doing the same thing ( although the thermos method does suit one person well and you can transport the cooking meal to work- just make sure to pre-heat and keep it on its side throughout cooking or it cooks unevenly ). In a pinch you can use a pot and just wrap it in a lot of material such as a heavy blanket. It will probably work close to the same ( experiment before an emergency happens so you know this will work). Or a big box full of shipping peanuts. Start your food and cram the whole pot down in the peanuts. Again, experiment before a crisis.

## WOOD COOKING

Cooking with wood is both easy and pretty much free. As long as you don't have to worry about security being compromised by the smoke. If you do have to worry about that the only answer would be to have a sheltered fire and only have it going at night. That way the only telltale sign is the smell ( as long as the light emitted is hidden ). So, aside from security concerns you just need to have an abundant supply of wood. My plan in the high desert is to use solar cooking and save the sage brush wood for when I need it as it will be in somewhat limited supply. But other areas should have much more wood available other than the plains area. And I don't know if I would want to live there. Little above ground water, lots of wind and tornados, natural terrain for whatever motor vehicles are still fueled ( and their noise will matter little if they can outrun your mule ) and of course little wood. Of course there are worse areas such as cities or suburbs with no crop potential and the need for ever expensive cars for economic survival.

To cook with wood you can always just use a cast iron pan over a cook fire. If your wood supply is not unlimited you can just construct a coffee can stove that uses a lot less wood. And remember, the non electric slow cooker is a natural with wood use. Take a coffee can, the two pound size. Open it and use it up or transfer to another container. Find a suitable surface such as a flat rock, a bit of concrete, even a heavy ceramic plate. Flip the coffee can upside down on that surface. Cut a door out of the bottom. Big enough for you to feed sticks into it as fuel, small enough all the heat doesn't go out the side but instead heats the top of the can ( what used to be the bottom, now your top flat cooking surface ). At the top of the can but in the back ( opposite the door ) punch a few holes for the smoke to escape. This can be made with almost anything on hand. Triangle holes made by a can opener, round holes made by nails, etc. The smaller the holes the more you want of them, i.e. three from a can opener but seven or eight nail holes.

If you need to make a pipe for the smoke to be directed to the outside you are going to have to find a suitable length of pipe. Perhaps at the dump you can find some discarded pipe, perhaps some old water heater pipe. Or take a bunch of 12 ounce coffee cans and cut open both ends and attach them end to end somehow and make your own pipe. These should be cleaned on a regular basis to combat the soot buildup that might combust. These stoves can also be used to heat a small dwelling. They may not be as efficient but the cost is \$3.50 ( with coffee thrown in for free ) verses several hundred dollars for a cast iron stove from the store. They also will not last forever since they are very thin metal and will corrode after the surface is burnt off. However, if you take a quarter cup scoop and use one a day for a pot of coffee you will get a new can roughly every month. Save these up during normal times ( in humid climates dip in wax to protect the metal or at least oil lightly ) and you will have a great cooking and heating source when you need it.

## WATER

Short term water is far more important than food. You can go three or four days without food with only minor discomfort. Try that without water and you are dead. Everyone should have a case of six gallons of water minimum for whatever reason. Pipes freezing, contaminated water, terrorist attack, etc. Only buy the kind of plastic they use in soda, not the kind they have milk in. The clear type lasts years longer. That is just for casual disruptions. For long term use outside the municipal supply lines you need to purify water yourself. You can use a solar purifier, a filter, chemicals, store bought you have stored ( or treated tap water ), or hook up your roof to a rain catchments system. Each of course has their good and bad points.

The solar still has an almost indefinite lifespan but is dependant on the weather. It is relatively cheap but not free. But you can also build a makeshift one out of some plastic sheets. The good thing about the solar still is that unless you break the glass you can purify water pretty much forever more. There is nothing to wear out. Cheaper ones with plastic will not last forever, but that is not a huge problem if you stockpile the plastic. Still, it probably is best if you just make a permanent one with glass, wood and metal. Although the plastic ones are great if you are going to be on the move. Better than most filters unless you can't stop at all as you rapidly flee from the burning cities.

A water filter is a great thing to have as long as it lasts. Then if you don't have a replacement you are in trouble. But if you want to be mobile they are handy, take up less room than chemicals and are on the whole a healthy safe easy way to purify water. The cheapest way which I will show you can filter up to 13,000 gallons which even if you treat all your water ( drinking, bathing, dish washing ) will last a long time. A family of four each using three gallons a day can make one filter last almost three years. For \$50 that is a heck of a cheap way to filter your water. Solar can last a lot longer but with a filter you don't have to worry about cloudy days.

Chemicals are not very healthy for you long term, but for short term emergencies they are great. You can buy a bottle of tablets to purify your water a quart at a time for a few bucks. Or you can buy a small bottle of bleach and an eye dropper for about \$2 and purify hundreds of gallons. A bleach treatment of water is really cheap if you use the powder form rather than store bought bottles, and combined with a filter treatment you are assured of great quality water. You can do both or just one, the cost will not be to bad either way. So, even if chemicals are not beneficial for long term use they do have a place in your storage plans. If your filter breaks you will be glad you have another means of purification.

You can of course use your conventional water storage areas. A hot water heater, the toilet tank. Water beds are supposed to contain an algae suppressant that poisons the water so beware of that source. It is far better to just store some water. The almost free way is to take discarded two liter soda bottles, put in five drops of bleach and add tap water. Change once a year. Or you can buy the clear plastic water jugs for about \$1.20 a

gallon from Wal-Mart. The benefit is that you can reuse the water jugs after you use them. In the future plastic might be unavailable and only the non-biodegradable artifacts from the present will be able to be used. Think about the price of good plastic water jugs in such a future. Talk about a barter item. Have at least a few weeks supply per person if possible ( at least a gallon a day for drinking ).

And there is the rain catchments system. Built from scratch it is too expensive for us here but if your roof already has rain gutters and drain spouts you would be foolish not to reuse your roofs rain water. Even a plastic or galvanized trash can underneath the drain would be emergency drinking water or enough to keep your garden going. Just something to keep in mind if you envision your city water supply going dry after the electricity fails. It can take a lot less than Y2K for that to happen. Just corporate and consumer greed can see that an electrical grid doesn't get the proper maintenance and fails after being forced to serve too many customers. Watch the northeast coast soon for a preview.

## SOLAR PURIFIER

Solar is the way to go as far as low cost. Construct a solar puddle. Idea presented by Dr. Dale Andreatta, If you want the original article on the solar puddle, get it at [www.SolarCookers.org](http://www.SolarCookers.org). Dig a shallow pit about four inches deep and about 3x3 feet. Use two inches of 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. 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 fourth 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.

The above site also sells 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 ). Of course the plastic will degrade over time.

If you have an old door, some 2x4's and a sheet of glass, you have a more permanent 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.

## FILTERS FOR PURIFICATION

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](http://www.BePrepared.com) , one of my favorite survival supply companies, Emergency Essentials. From Major Surplus & Survival, [www.MajorSurplusNSurvival.com](http://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 ( this is also where you get your cheap grain grinder ).

If you want the Berkeley you can go to [www.Lehmans.com](http://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 Berkeley. \$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. Perhaps silicon caulking. In any event the cost savings make it worth a bit of experimenting to find a way to make this work. It might even be the correct size hole will perform a tight enough fit that nothing else needs to be done.

## CHEMICALS TO PURIFY

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. But as far as chemicals, 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% stuff 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% HP per gallon of water 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.

## WATER CONTAINERS

Unlike wheat containers which do not exist "naturally" in the marketplace, water containers are everywhere and easier to get. Of course there is always the easily available and totally free two liter soda bottles you can rely on for both types of storage. Two liter soda bottles are really the answer to most survival preparation problems. They keep insects out of wheat, contamination out of water and even provide water proof storage of many items such as ammunition. The fact that modern society lavishes us with this wonderful waste product must be taken advantage of immediately, if not sooner. The problems of course remain the same, waste of space and the need for secondary storage boxes if stacking is desired. Again, nothing is truly free. All things have a price ( try getting married for "free" sex and see how quick that puts you in the poor house- there is usually an eighteen year delayed college education to pay for at the very least ). But on a small scale this doesn't matter and no one should have an excuse for not at least having a few gallons of water stored in free soda bottles.

Right now there is an advertisement in the free ad paper for a local Army surplus store selling 55 gallon steel water barrels with top and ring for only \$12.50, more than making it worth the sixty mile round trip to procure. Last week they were selling food grade plastic barrels for about a buck a gallon ( i.e., \$30 for a thirty gallon barrel, etc ). Or you can just buy single gallon jugs with water for about a buck each and as a bonus this includes the cardboard box holding six gallons making for easy stacking. And the water is usually good for two or three years if stored out of sunlight. Even a financially strapped individual should be able to afford several weeks water this way. A gallon a day will keep you alive nicely although unresolved would be cooking and washing water. But in an emergency you won't care if you smell bad or have a beard.

So, either free in two liter soda bottles or a buck a gallon several weeks of water supply is achievable by anyone. But think beyond the short term emergency. Think of the value of these plastic containers after civilization has collapsed. They can't be duplicated, so they will be invaluable. Beyond pottery the only primitive water jugs will be gourds or wooden barrels and its been awhile since I noticed a cooper anywhere around. So, while 55 gallon steel drums are cheap, would a few bucks spent on plastic be better due to its longer lasting qualities? Would two liter soda bottles last longer than gallon jugs ( remember, the clear plastic type, not the milk jug type ) as their walls seem thicker or at least the screw tops will be of better lasting material. Think worse case scenario and plan around that. For instance, I have several six gallon "jerry can" type water jugs from Wal-Mart at about six bucks each to tote water, but reports are that they break down over the years ( seams leaking ). I would not want to rely on that type of plastic decades from now.

## \$1 CANTEENS

I'm sorry, but I just have to comment here. I see too many military surplus canteens or cheap copies in Wal-Mart, along with the old fashion "saddle" type for sale. I keep asking myself, why would anyone spend money on these? Why would you spend \$5 on a kerosene lamp and \$3 on a half gallon of lamp oil when you could buy an LED lantern for \$10 that gets 400 hours per set of four "D" batteries? If there is any disruption of society kerosene will disappear as fast as batteries will. So why put up with the smell, the carbon dioxide hazard and the fragile glass lamp when the same amount of money gets you an electric lamp? Why buy an assault rifle carbine copy that shoots an anemic round when you can buy a real gun for a fourth of the price? And why buy a \$300,000 house that is poorly built with inferior supplies when you can buy the same shoddy house for \$5,000 by buying a used mobile home? Hell, at least that has metal siding to make it more fire resistant. The problem is that we are trained by advertising. You may not buy "brand X" because of advertising but you will buy a similar item to solve a need because of advertising. The standard advice is to buy a stick built home so folks get into debt for thirty years that need both people working. You think only cars can provide transportation ( and the big auto makers don't even care if you buy used, it allows the seller to get a down payment to buy a new one ).

And you can only envision a canteen to have water while hiking or camping. Buy a friggin soda on sale for a buck a one liter, drink its carbonated sugar water goodness and then save the bottle for a canteen. Every once in awhile wash the thing out with bleach to avoid any growth. You got a canteen for a buck, with soda added in to "sweeten" the deal. Hell, kids in Columbia would throw a rock at your head and steal that bottle it is such a good deal. I don't think a plastic military style canteen made in China and smelling like a new car ( yum, formaldehyde ) would elicit the same response. Now, I'm not trying to act smart here. This is not an original idea of mine. I'm merely trying to get you to buy more with less. Think outside the box. Not to spend money on consumer crap if possible. You can even pick up a free soda bottle if you don't drink soda. You get the idea.

Before you buy anything, stop and rethink. Not, do I need it. Need is too subjective. Rather, ask yourself, is this the cheapest way to fulfill this need. I have taught myself to do this as a matter of routine and while I can sometimes be very slow and it takes me awhile to come up with a cheaper alternative, eventually it usually comes to me if I don't buy on impulse. Try it yourself, you should enjoy the creative outlet.

## PROTECTION

As strange as it is to believe there are actually a fair number of people out there who have no clue that their fellow men given half the chance will harm them under the slightest provocation. Of course the biggest concentration of them are on Liberal collage campuses, at Greenpeace rallies and at Dead Head concerts. While I agree with the concept that we should all get along, I'm not so much of an idiot that I believe we ever will. Our fellow humans are mean, petty, stingy, greedy, vindictive, dishonest and several other unlovable characteristics I would need a thesaurus to list. Despite long hair hippie Commies wanting peace on Earth, the odds are that green alien guests will actually arrive at Roswell once again and share the secret of room temperature fusion using seawater with us long before we ever stop being absolute shits to one another. Your next door neighbor will not only call the 888 hotline and report you to the authorities for unpatriotic thoughts but he will lose no sleep whatsoever over it. Do you think the scumbag that shot a mother holding an infant in Idaho at a location called Ruby Ridge actually loses sleep over his actions? No. He has a newspaper article framed in his den to show off to his Jack Booted Thug Buddies what a great shot he is. Remember the game, Extra Points? Extra Points if you can run over the bicyclist without hurting the bike. Extra Points if you can shoot the mother without getting the baby.

Do you think such things as the Aztec mass murders, Stalin's purge of thirty million of his own countrymen or Hitler's gas ovens were an abnormality of human nature? They are the norm. Man has no natural enemies so he became his own. Think of the population numbers without wars. Or the diseases caused by living in cities. We are our own self regulating feedback loop. Throughout recorded history we overpopulate the carrying capacity of an area, with the inevitable result that we starve off the surplus population. You would almost think someone would learn from the same process occurring over and over, but it never fails we continue the same self destructive pattern. Our reptilian brain has no problem overproducing to ensure its continued DNA survival and then culling the excess weak members. Only a hardwired behavioral pattern could account for our same behavior over the millennium. So, you will become a victim of the inevitable purge if you do not protect yourself.

Protection can be accomplished in a number of ways, but the firearm has proven to be the most effective. It takes years of practice to learn a martial art. Primitive weapons also take a lot of practice. In some areas you are going to be forced to learn how to protect yourself without guns due to the hyper-Socialist Politically Correct Nanny state or nation in which you unfortunately reside, but here I mainly focus on modern smokeless firearms and wish the rest of you poor suckers the best of luck. If I was living in England and I couldn't immigrate to the US ( granted, our only advantage is personal firearm ownership ) I would at least be heavily investing in learning and building flintlock rifle manufacture or at least crossbows. In most Commonwealth nations non-semi automatic rifles are still allowed but there is little guarantee you will be able to keep them long. Not that moving to the US is necessarily the answer as we are pretty well totally screwed up, but at least we can still fight as the ship goes down. Just watch "28 Days Later" to get a good idea of

how hard it is going to be to survive the zombie hoards ( and the military for that matter )  
without guns.

## FIREARMS

There is very few things more entertaining with your clothes on than going to the firing range and killing paper targets. In fact if it was up to me and I were Supreme Dictator For Life I would make it compulsory to go to the shooting range at least once a month for all citizens over ten years old and under ninety. I don't know how I would survive as Supreme Dictator if everyone was armed and could hit a target but perhaps in my short administration I could actually do some good before I was assassinated. Also, anyone who didn't like guns could agree to be hunted and if they survived they could immigrate to a socialist country. I have a thousand good ideas like that.

Firearms and the love of shooting are in most likelihood how the vast majority of non-Mormon survivalists got hooked on the whole hobby ( and, yes, it is a hobby if nothing bad ever happens so you might as well enjoy it ). Stockpiling food and water filters is rather boring and is not enough of an activity to hold your interest. Firearms however are a whole different matter. Heck, you can just sit on the porch in your rocking chair and lovingly caress the thing for hours at a time, whispering sweet nothings and hoping you can hurry up and kill something soon or at least get some bayonet time in to hone your skills. Or waiting until your wife goes to see the mother in law and then running around the house in your boxer shorts throwing down on shadows or the cat imagining yourself as a modern day Ninja with an AK47. The fun literally never stops.

I am going under the assumption here that none of you own a firearm. I know that is just crazy talk, but I take that stance with the knowledge that out there a few people that would like to prepare for survival are not as yet armed. The total budget here accounts for your not owning a rifle already. If you already own a rifle, more than likely it will suit you just fine for defensive purposes. To survive the coming hungry hoards of murderous Welfare mobs. Almost any firearm you already own other than a muzzle loading black powder rifle is going to be suitable. Even a single shot break open rifle is good enough. If you already own the gun just get good with it rather than buying another unfamiliar one ( especially just because I recommended it ). There is always another gun out there that is better than the one you already have so think long and hard about buying one I recommend if you have another. Usually it is better just to buy more ammo for the one you already own instead of buying a whole new arsenal.

You can pick from brand new guns out of the discount super store or you can buy surplus. Each type of course has its good and bad points. New weapons are pretty and shiny and the odds are it shoots pretty darn accurate. Although you are limited to what kinds you can get, usually just a rimfire or a single shot shotgun ( in our price range ). Surplus is usually not very accurate or nice to look at but they are very cheap and very robust, plus they shoot a powerful round. It all really depends on your point of view as to where our society is headed. If you think a global nuclear war or an asteroid crash is a high likelihood you would want a rimfire with as much ammo as you could buy. A civil

insurrection would more likely call for a surplus bolt action you could accuritize for sniper work. And a Mega Economic Depression would best be served by a shotgun to deter theft and use for small game hunting. So there is not really a best choice. I personally have my opinion which you must suffer through but that doesn't make it the best choice for you in your perception and circumstances.

## SURPLUS FIREARMS

World War Two was a unique event most likely impossible to duplicate. At the height of the Industrial Revolution all the major powers of the day went to war for global domination. Japan wanted to control Asia, Germany wanted Europe, Italy coveted the Mediterranean, Britain wanted to keep its global Empire and the United States wanted to take over as the worlds policeman from the United Kingdom. So in one surge of idiocy all of the Industrial powers of the day used up most of their resources to win everyone else's. In a mad gamble everything was wagered. Economic savings, oil supply, steel reserves, the young generation of the time. The United States came out the winner, but it was a hollow victory. Before the war was over we went from the global provider of petroleum to having to import from other countries. Our steel industry persevered for a time afterwards but a lot of our mineral wealth was sacrificed to the war effort. Our economy appeared to be a beneficiary of ruling the globe, but as the generation that fought the war was promised a lavish reward our geriatric welfare state is now on the brink of collapsing ( which between that and the cost of keeping our ruling role by waging the Cold War brought us to financial ruin where we are today but refuse to accept ).

One benefit to the conflict was a huge reserve of surplus weapons. To this day you can cheaply purchase surplus rifles from nearly every country ( except our own of course- it is nearly impossible to buy good surplus Garands anymore ). British Enfields go for a bit over \$100 wholesale. Mausers from various countries a bit less. Russian guns retail for under \$100. The Japanese rifles were pretty much already sold at absurdly low prices decades ago. When I started paying attention to such things in the early Eighties the Jap rifles were going for about \$29 ( about ten hours of working minimum wage- now it takes twelve to fifteen hours of slave wages to buy cheap surplus ). I haven't seen them advertised lately so I'm sure they are no longer cheap. Also it is getting a lot harder to buy any "no paperwork" rifles. Before a certain date ( 1898, 1896? ) of manufacture a rifle is classified as a weapon not needing federal paperwork. You can buy through the mail. Twenty five years ago those were going for slightly more than the Jap gun with the ammunition thrown in as a bonus. Now you will start at \$300 and it goes up from there. Most likely as a result of The Bastards trying to implement total gun control. If this is a concern of yours just buy a black powder revolver and when the time comes "liberate" a modern weapon. They are still selling for under \$200.

I am going to focus on the readily available surplus rifles. The ones all under \$150 retail. So you won't hear about French or Italian or whatnot. The choice is going to be an Enfield, a Mauser or a Mosin Nagant ( Russian ). The Swiss rifle of the period is the best military bolt action ever produced but the ammunition is scarce ( a buck a round almost for surplus if you can find it ) so even if Big 5 sporting goods was selling them for \$99 retail it isn't a feasible weapon to own. The same with a lot of the Mausers, they used weird ammunition. The rifle becomes an expensive club if you can't buy ammo for it. And even reloading will only last as long as the brass cases do. I'll go over both good and bad points for all the realistic surplus guns out there.

## LEE-ENFIELD S.M.L.E. No.4 SURPLUS RIFLE

Lee-Enfield rifles had been around before the turn of the century. The No.1 was used in World War I. They were the type that the barrel ended at the stock without sticking out from it and had a really cool long bayonet. The No. 4 was the type used in World War II and had the metal barrel sticking out past the wood furniture. It had also been vastly improved from its cousin, being of better metal quality and being easier to manufacture as it used less hand crafting. The biggest difference in my opinion is that the later manufactured rifle has a peep site while the original model was the leaf and post that really sucks. Leaf and post is the U of the back site and the I of the front site. The two when lined up form essentially a solid square of metal. Yes, one site blurs and the post goes on target. But unless you use that site a lot it sucks. The peep site is a large O for the rear site and an I for the front. Under this system the rear site naturally blurs and target acquisition is better, faster and more natural. For this reason alone I love the No.4 over any other rifle. Other types of Enfields, other Mausers or the Russian bolt guns. True, you could buy a peep site for these other guns. But the cost is the same ( installed by a smith ) as the rifle. And keep in mind that the peep site is much easier to use as your eyes weaken with age.

Another advantage that the Enfield has over other surplus guns is that you can buy cheap scope mounts that require NO gunsmithing. The Mausers and the Mosin-Nigant both do. This feature alone saves you a lot of money. I do not necessarily think scopes are all that great an idea for the survivalist ( no replacement scopes after the end of the world if you drop it in the field and bust it up ). But if you want to shoot past 250-300 yards you need one. The naked eye has a hard time seeing a target the size of a man past that. If you suck at long distance shooting you can just use the peep site. If a scope will improve your accuracy it might be something nice in the future you wish to do cheaply. Only the Enfield has easy scope mounts ( even the No.1 which might make more sense as they replace bad metal sites ). So no matter what you want, superior metal sites or the cheapest way to mount a scope, the Enfield is the best choice.

The Enfield was designed to be used in really nasty terrain. It laughs at dirt. When you are in the field off the target range concrete pad your rifle can get a lot of crap in it. If your life depends on your rifle working you want an action that stands up to fouling. The Enfield does. The Mauser does not, it is very easy to stop due to dirt and crud. If you want a design that will work in the mud, go with the Enfield. This is my major beef with the M16 rifle. At the first hint of a speck of dust it refuses to work ( the round is also underpowered, but I won't go into that yet ). When I went out into the field with a rifle cleaned and inspected by unpleasable drill sergeants, so clean you could eat off of it, the damn thing still jammed up. Enough times that I was very pleased I never saw combat. The M16 is great for accuracy and being as controllable as a .22 rifle. No recoil, sites always on target, able to be carried all day effortlessly. But the thing is too temperamental about dirt. So much so I won't risk my life on it.

As a result of its design, the Enfield is also very fast to reload. Twice as fast as a Mauser

you can work the bolt to reload. It also contained twice the rounds in the magazine as a Mauser or an M-N. Just what you want as you are already handicapped with a bolt action, a slow turning one. With half the rounds. Now, in fairness, the Mauser fit German tactics which was slow controlled aimed fire. The Enfield was designed to be volley fired in mass. This brings us to the major defect of the Enfield. To make sure the bolt was easy to work and that fouling was not a problem, the rifle has loose tolerances. So it is not very accurate. The price you pay for reliable service under messy conditions is a rifle that is far from a tack driver. It is sloppy. It doesn't measure MOA, it measures "pie plate of accuracy" ( PPA ). In other words, at one hundred yards you don't get within an inch of your target as is conventionally measured, you have a good rifle if it hits within the confines of a pie plate. But at least you can hit that pie plate as far as you can see it to about five hundred yards. At least the sloppy accuracy is the same within the cartridges limits. The other defect is that rounds are chewed up and not always easy to reload.

The Enfield uses the 303 British round. Slightly less than the power of a 308 ( I call it close enough ). 308 lovers pooh-pooh the round ( not available in any corner store, too expensive ) but many companies make the round as the surplus rifles have been numerous and widely used for sixty years. It passes the Wal-Mart test ( if Wal-Mart carries the ammo you can find it almost anywhere else ). It is as almost as cheap as the 308 commercial ammo and both are hard to find as surplus cheaply so that is not a factor. Getting a rifle just because it is in 308 is not a criteria with me as it is with some survival writers. The power, price and availability difference is not great enough between the 303B and the 308. But if that concerns you, the only Enfield you can use is the Indian version which was turned into 308 ( hard to find, about a \$50-\$100 difference retail, and uses the leaf and post site ).

Overall, the Enfield has a lot more pluses than minuses compared to our other surplus guns. I highly recommend it over the others. But your criteria might be different than mine, so read on.

## THE MAUSER FAMILY OF SURPLUS RIFLES

The Mauser was licensed to be built in a wide variety of countries. You can find rifles built from Mexico to China. Most rifles today use the Mauser system. For accuracy they are great ( only the Swiss bolt gun is better ). They are also built in a wide variety of calibers so you can pick whichever is to your liking. But the system will jam if it gets dirty. And it is a pain to mount a scope, plus usually expensive. The cartridges are reloadable more times than the Enfield since the action doesn't mutilate the case as badly. So, as you will be forced to reload after your factory ammo runs out you will get more loads from a Mauser. Important if you face a post-Industrial future ( or militia type war against the FedGov after they implement total gun control ).

The choice between a Mauser or an Enfield is essentially the same choice as we face today. Do you pick the M16 for its remarkable accuracy but suffer from easy fouling and parts failure or do you choose the AK47 with its extreme ruggedness in the field with its problem of not being at all accurate? The Enfield will not fail you in the field but you can't hit much with it. The Mauser is a great target rifle but will stop working around dirt. Only you can determine which characteristic is the most important to you. Get a Mauser if you want accuracy. Of course you want to avoid certain types of Mauser. Recently the Turkish Mausers were wholesaling for about \$39. They had head space problems. Always ask around or enter a chat room to get advice of the unfamiliar items for sale.

A good source for cheaper guns is to go to the Shotgun News newspaper web site and go to the dealer section. Here you will find a FFL holder in your area that will sell to you below retail. Usually cost plus 15-20%. Many times they operate out of their homes. You can also buy a Shotgun News from Wal-Mart to get ideas of prices but anymore they are only a shadow of their former greatness. Almost a waste of money. You can search online for companies selling guns ( although you have to go through a dealer ) and some will advertise their prices. Others do not. But it will give you a general idea of prices. As of mid 2006 wholesale prices were in general \$100 for Enfields, \$100 for Mausers and \$75 for the M-N Russian. You can add in about \$15 shipping and another \$20 for profit for the dealer. Of course you always have to pay the darn background check fee that the Feds require, \$25. It does pay to buy more than one firearm at a time if possible to avoid paying that fee more than once. And of course check your local retail store. In some cases you pay about the same as a private dealer, especially for the junk rifles they know they won't make much on.

\$150 is not a bad price to pay for a battle rifle ( as opposed to an assault carbine ) firing a full size cartridge. Buy another \$100 worth of ammo for it ( generally 500 rounds if corrosive surplus ) and you are all set for the Apocalypse. Don't worry about reloading for now, it is beyond your budget.

## THE INCREDIBLE CHEAP RUSSIAN RIFLE

The Russian Mosin-Nagant had been used for fifty years with adequate results. Its round the 7.62X54R ( comparable to the 30-06 ) is still in use in the Russian semi-automatic sniper rifle modeled on the AK action but with better accuracy and a very ergonomic scope. It was a rugged design, holding up in the harsh Arctic conditions. Of course the only real good point the rifle has going for it is that they are incredibly cheap as is the ammo. The sites suck, it is expensive to scope and they can be unsafe. But if you want to only spend \$200 ( instead of \$250 ) on your arsenal and get twice the ammo for that reduced amount, then this is the gun for you.

It is not unusual to find an M-N selling retail for \$79 or \$89. Just make sure to buy the rifle ( the designation is the 91/30 ) and NOT the carbine ( the M 44 ). It was WWII Communist trash and a carbine with a full size round is always a poor design. And the surplus ammo is something like seven and a half cents per round in lots of 1000. So you can understand why the multitudes of poor survivalists/militiamen and hunters flock to this rifle. And Russia is still producing new ammo, as well as a lot of commercial companies. If you are too poor to pay attention this is the gun for you. But a word of caution.

The rifle has no gas bleed. If a case ruptures you will get hot gases eject at high velocity towards your face. If the primer ruptures it is not so bad. The gas goes to the bolt head and bolt connection sleeve. But if the case ruptures the gases vent to the ejector groove back into your face. Granted, cases rarely rupture. But it does happen. There is a reason the Mauser and the Enfield have a gas bleed feature. To protect their soldiers from the occasional danger of defective rounds. The Russians evidently thought this feature was not warranted as the Czarist troops were ill trained peasants and the Communist troops were always glad to give their lives for the Revolution ( or at least they did according to their rulers ). It must have sucked to be a Russian infantryman. If your own rifle didn't explode in your face you got to participate in human wave assault tactics ( motivated by the political officer in the back willing to gently persuade you with a pistol round to the brain ).

So, the risk is up to you. Personally I would only get the rifle if I was dirt poor. Even a slightly dangerous rifle is better than none at all. And you do get twice the rounds for the same price, no small consideration after the ammunition factories are boarded up and growing weeds in the parking lot.

## NEW FIREARMS

Perhaps you are not interested in a surplus rifle. You prefer semi-automatic or at least a firearm that doesn't kick so hard. Perhaps you are in a densely wooded area and don't need the range of a thirty caliber rifle. Perhaps you want better accuracy than a surplus bolt gun can give you ( even the Mauser surplus sometimes is not as accurate as you desire ). There are plenty of reasons why you don't want a surplus bolt gun. So you turn your attention to the new guns available on a budget. There aren't that many. You can buy a .22 rimfire, a single shot shotgun or even an SKS. Each have problems and each have their good points.

A .22 is the best post-Apocalypse, post-Industrial, living in the caves in rags and wearing tire sandals during the next Ice Age weapon there is. You can buy 5500 rounds of brand name ammunition in Wal-Mart for under \$100 which includes sales tax. You can even comfortably carry most of that ammo with you as you live a nomadic existence. In short, you will have a hard time running out of ammunition if you don't waste any. Plus, you can practice every weekend for about \$3 and get good enough to hit a silver dollar sized target at 100 yards. You can easily carry it all day long as it is light weight. Of course the down side is that you can't hit much over 100 yards and the wounds it causes to humans can be minor.

A single shot shotgun has a lot going for it. It is simple as can be and will almost never break. There is a wide variety of ammunition made for it and you can reload primitively without a press. You can improvise devious types of rounds for it. You can take birds and squirrels or men with it. It is cheap, and will last your lifetime. It is intimidating to bad guys. Alas, it only has a range of twenty-five to fifty yards. But if you are in enclosed terrain this shouldn't matter ( a great East Coast weapon due to both terrain and political gun restrictions ).

You can even buy an SKS assault rifle if you just can't live without a semi-auto carbine. You will spend about \$175 retail for it and so limit yourself to less ammunition for it, but it does have a lot going for it which is why so many of us bought the darn things when Wee Willie was in office. It is one third the price of an AK47 or a Mini-14. It is actually more accurate and more robust than the AK47, plus doesn't need magazines. Out to 200 yards it will kill what you want it to. If you have a hard time hitting anything long distance then it might be better to avoid the bolt actions and just stick with the SKS. Just beware the need to practice fire discipline if you want those ten rounds to last beyond the first burst. Of course sometimes the use of semi-auto fire is needed, packs of rabid dogs or armed biker zombies for instance. Then it doesn't matter that the rounds are not full power.

## THE RIMFIRE ARSENAL

For Y2K I had bought the year before a .22 rimfire combo comprising of an old beat up nickel peeling obscure brand revolver and a single shot .22 rifle for \$100 retail. At the time I lived down the block from a retired guy that converted his porch to his gun store and sold at cost plus 10%. He didn't have to pay rent so this was just a Golden Years project. The great thing was that he carried a selection on hand you could put on layaway. So I did order some items but mostly I kept one firearm after another on a payment plan. I loved that old guy but he passed away pretty quick after I got to Florida. I don't know the value of those firearms but I felt that it was a heck of a deal. I sold the single shot along with most of my arsenal to move to Nevada but I did keep the revolver. And three years later I replaced the rifle with a new one, a Marlin semi auto tube fed magazine. Now I have a rimfire arsenal. On your budget you most likely will only be able to buy the rifle, but with it you can do many things.

It is true that with a .22 you are restricted in range and lethal impact. But the round is also no pussy cartridge. Just ask Reagan or Brady. I would rather use a .22 than a .32 or a .380 as the velocity somewhat compensates for its small size. The role of the .22 is for harassment and evasion and for game hunting. With a .22 you can shoot the guy and run away. The theory is that it hurts just enough so he stops chasing you. A bonus is when he later can't dig out the bullet, gets an infection and dies. And you can even take deer with it if you can track it all day long or else are a real good shot. The .22 is not a man stopper by any means. It is a man harasser only. As long as you don't think you can perform miracles with it you should be served well by it.

The .22 is the only economical weapons system out there. Only with a .22 can you practice every weekend to become proficient. And only with practice will you hit your target. Under stress training takes over. Without proper training you don't perform under stress. And you can't train if you can't afford the ammunition. So a .22 might be your most practiced most accurate weapon come crunch time. I am not saying that a .22 is adequate against Jack Booted Thugs or Rabid Dog Packs, and especially not against Zombie Biker Gangs. But in a situation where the balloon goes up and society collapses you will be glad you have a .22 with thousands of rounds of ammo rather than a powerful bolt action with just hundreds of rounds.

You can easily carry five hundred to one thousand rounds of .22s and the rifle all day long without breaking a sweat. You can practice almost every day until doomsday to become very good at hitting targets. You can fire all day without suffering from recoil. You can keep your eye on the target during multiple hits as the gun doesn't move enough for you to lose your target, unlike all other types of guns ( other than, almost, the M16 or bolted down types ). Just beware the wounding and range limitations. A great gun to harass and scamper away, a terrible gun for a showdown at noon.

## THE SHOTGUN

The West might have been won with a Colt revolver and the lever action carbine but the weapon most homesteaders had was the single shot or double barrel shotgun. They were a lot cheaper than the other more famous shooters, by some accounts about one quarter the cost of an ounce of gold versus slightly over an ounce ( shotguns \$6, revolvers \$25 or so with gold at about \$20 an ounce ). Today the shotgun is even cheaper at one sixth of an ounce of gold with revolvers about 7/8th of an ounce although the cost of handguns would be as much as half if litigation and insurance costs could be subtracted. A shotgun is only more expensive compared to the M-N Russian rifle. Even the .22 rifle cost more than a shotgun.

At Wal-Mart a single shot shotgun is about \$95. That is not bad at all. Add in a few boxes of shotgun shells and you will only spend about \$150. I would think you could do wonders with just several hundred rounds of ammo rather than the 500 you need for a bolt gun or the 5000 you need for the rimfire. It is a single shot and game hunting and defense are not going to require all that many rounds. If you envision the collapse of civilization ahead by all means get more ammo, but the casual survivalist shouldn't need but a few hundred. So if cost is your primary concern stay with the shotgun or Russian gun at only \$150 after ammunition instead of the regular \$250 for the others ( I advise needing 5000 rounds for the rimfire since you will most likely need to practice multiple hits for every casualty ).

Another nifty feature the shotgun has is that you can, with a little ingenuity, reload your rounds without the proper tools. The primer is larger so you can poke it out easily and with minimal dexterity pry open the cap and place improvised primer material inside. You can safely push the primer back in with a dowel and a hydraulic jack or bench vise. You can use a razor blade and slice off the extra length in the plastic from the used shell and seal the opening with wax after reloading it. You can use black powder if you have to since there is no action to foul up. You can load anything from rocks to glass chunks instead of lead if it is scarce. In short, the shotgun shell is the perfect post-Industrial ammunition.

You can also make cool rounds for the shotgun like the fishing weights on a fishing line that will upon being fired whip around and around and act like a flying chainsaw on impact. Or full of fletchetes with poison on them ( for poison, look no further than a can of snuff for concentrated nicotine ). And don't forget slugs pointed for increased armor piercing. Heck, I'm not even using my imagination here, there have got to be 101 ways of modifying the shot. The shotgun might have a limited range, but it is the most versatile gun out there and usually if you hit the target it stays down the first time ( unlike 95 pound Somalians that need to be hit three times with the 5.56 before they stop firing back ).

## THE SKS CARBINE

The SKS is the most expensive of your cheap firearms. It fires a weakened round compared to the thirty caliber bolt guns. And it isn't very accurate. But within its limitations it is a great firearm. Coming before the AK47, the SKS was quickly replaced by it but was used for quite a time on the fringes of the Communist world or by the lesser militant group such as local constables. It is almost a shame it was ever replaced. The AK47 was designed primarily as a fully automatic carbine, and the tactics made sense as the thing was not very accurate. The SKS is not only more accurate but it also will not break as easily. And you can fire prone with it. Plus, at least for the survivalist, the fact that it doesn't use magazines is a plus ( unlike for the Soviet military which needed more firepower ). Even with ten dollar magazines you need to spend as much on mags as you do on the rifle. With the SKS you eliminate this cost, plus the superior weapon costs only half the cost of the AK47. Just another example how survivalists should not emulate the military.

For those needing a semi automatic weapon, the SKS is perfect. It costs a lot less than any other carbine. Plus is more reliable than the more expensive ones. Unless you are in wide open terrain such as the desert it might have all the range ( useful range maxes at about 200 yards ) you need. And even then it depends on what kind of desert it is. Here in Northern Nevada outside of valleys you have very hilly terrain which cuts down on your needed reach. Unless you live on the salt flats of Utah or some flat prairie the SKS just might work well for you even with its short range. I personally think the round, the 7.62X39, is superior to the M16 round in stopping power. The rounds are darn cheap ( the imported stuff anyway ) as they are steel cases with an enamel coating rather than brass.

Normally I advise survivalists to only use bolt actions outside of .22's. The need to conserve ammunition after civilization collapses is imperative. Also, the full size ammunition ( 7mm, 308, 30-06, 303British, 7.62X54R, etc. ) is usually preferable for knock down power. However, if you can maintain fire discipline under stress so as not to waste ammunition and if your terrain doesn't require firing much past 50-100 yards, and if you fear gang attacks and feral dog packs more than the admittedly small odds of Industry collapsing leaving you with no more ammunition, then the SKS might be perfect for you. It is not necessarily the perfect survivalist gun but it is a darn good militia gun, which might be all you need. Circumstances vary for each individual. My perfect gun might not be yours. Hopefully out of all those presented one will meet your needs perfectly.

## BAYONETS

One of the reasons I especially like surplus bolt action rifles is that they are designed with bayonets in mind. Today's assault rifles or battle rifles add the bayonet as a second thought, as if to say "our mighty industry will never run out of ammunition, but we'll put this silly thing on just to pay lip service to military tradition". Bayonets came along for a very good reason. The single shot black powder muskets of the day were slow to reload. Often it was faster to fix bayonets and charge the enemy. Or perhaps it was more of the traditionalist thinking of the long history of edged weapons in warfare. The muskets were needed to kill from a distance and closer in the little sword was used. And industry was still on par with cottage industry. Little machinery and no standardized parts. Firearms and shot and powder were precious and expensive. When your rifle used up its ammunition at least the bayonet was left for fighting. And then there was the old machismo involved. Much more manly to charge with cold steel than to shoot from a distance ( at least for the commanding general anyway ).

In today's military the bayonet has very little application. About as much as marching ( which was introduced, it must be remembered, to teach musket mass volley tactics- not discipline to troops for its own sake ). It is often a joke, such as a bayonet on a plastic carbine ( the M16 ) or flimsy and useless such as on the SKS. But for the survivalist the bayonet is very useful and desirable. Just as the survivalist needs a different gun than the military does, the survivalist sees a need for the bayonet where the military sees none. The military needs a close in, short range mass fire large volume low weight assault rifle. The survivalist needs a high powered long range weapon to keep him out of harms way. The bayonet, while not perfect, compensates for what is lacking in his arsenal.

A bolt action saves on precious irreplaceable ammunition. Its high caliber round allows for distance shots keeping the operator out of range of returning fire. But at short distance the bolt action can't dispel rabid dog packs or guard prisoners or help much in riot control. But with a bayonet he can excel at all these. During a dog pack attack I would love to have an AK47 with 90 round drum magazine. But since I have a bolt action I need a bayonet to fight off more dogs than five rounds of ammunition in a slow loading weapon allow. In prisoner situations a bayonet will gain cooperation and there is no need to shoot anyone. So there is no ammunition wasted. Same with a riot. Shooting just causes panic and might invite overreaction by the bloodshed. The bayonet is more of a weapon of intimidation and even if you take lives you can also choose to wound with more control than with bullets.

Try to get a bayonet or two for your rifle.

## KNIVES

Knives are far from the perfect defensive weapon but they are an indispensable backup to ones firearm. As well as needed for chores out in the field. They are useful when firearms are not allowed to be carried ( such as in the workplace ). And in areas that allow no firearm ownership at all they are better than nothing. And it is hard to prohibit ownership of blades as anyone can make them, even prisoners in jail taking a spoon and grinding away on concrete until an edge is manufactured. Plus, if one stays away from handmade crafted blades and just stays with mass manufactured knives they are dirt cheap.

When one is mobile after the Apocalypse one needs a knife. To gut fish or game, to sharpen sticks, to cut up firewood or shelter pieces. If a fight ever gets too close for guns he will always have an edged weapon handy. Do as the old timers did and have a knife attached to your pants belt, not your gun belt or utility belt. That way if you lose the one you still have your knife. Also have several in case of breakage. One \$100 knife is a risky strategy if it breaks. Better to have three \$30 knives stashed in different places. I would actually advise against getting a gun before you have a good supply of knives with a good sharpener or three. There are a lot of things you need a knife for. It is a needed tool. I recommend the cheap sharpeners, the \$4 at Wal-Mart type that uses a plastic yellow holder that has a V shape you run the blade through and it contains a material stronger than the blade metal ( you can see little metal shavings from the blade after you run it through a few times ). They work great, no skill is needed such as on a whetstone, and they are cheap enough you can buy several.

Just buy the cheapos made in Pakistan and China. You can buy a folding knife with pocket clip for 98 cents. A mini Bowie for under ten bucks new. Go to garage sales and flea markets for plenty of cheap knives. Stock up on them, hide them throughout the house and your car and your gear to always have a weapon near. It is a very comforting feeling. If you live in a location such as New York City that won't even allow knife carrying, move out immediately. You are living in a society that punishes self defense. You are a victim of government that holds your life in contempt. I can see having to stay in the city for a job. But I can't see living in a big city turned to cesspool such as NYC, LA, Chicago, etc ( and their suburbs also ). Do you really need to put yourself in that kind of situation? Come the first sign of trouble the cities will explode in an orgy of self-destruction. Move to a small city while you can. Even if we don't run out of oil, or Yellowstone fails to erupt or the government doesn't go broke buying the senior vote, something bad will happen and your odds of harm are greater in the big city.

## NON-FIREARM DEFENSE

As already mentioned, knives are a great defense weapon where there is little else you are allowed to carry. Anyone can be armed for 98 cents. Without skill it is of little use but still better than nothing. I would hate to get into a knife duel with a mugger as his skill is superior but that is still far better than being defenseless. In an end-of-the-world scenario you will need to be armed to stop the natural predators from devouring you ( the government ones included ). I realize a knife is a pitiful defense against armed rouge cops or soldiers or illegally armed criminal gangs, but a knife is mainly for present day security. After a civilization collapse you can further arm yourself. A crossbow comes to mind. Anyone with an aptitude for metal working can turn a neighborhood into a defensive squad with a few springs from a car. Even if you are alone and inept at crafts you can lash a knife on a pole for a handy spear.

With our modern society overflowing with metal, from appliances to cars to buildings, it would be hard to be unable to fashion many primitive weapons. Even if your imagination fails to inspire you just go to the library and look up in illustrated books on the subject of medieval weapons. Or ask a nerd that plays Dungeon & Dragons ( I didn't know that it was still played until my son requested the instruction books- I told him "like father like son" but he insists he is not a geek since he plays football and skateboards ). You should even be able to build black powder breech loading shotguns out of old pipe ( I would only use as disposable weapons ) if you want to avoid getting closer than fifty yards to an opponent. Unless you are living in the boonies you will most likely have neighbors trying to survive with you. A natural act might be starting a militia for local defense. Think about what kind of weapons you would prefer to have. Edged weapons or firearms. In this situation I would love to own instructions on how to build even primitive black powder guns using either flintlock or corrosive primitive primers. Remember, the Colt revolver was built at the beginning of the American Industrial revolution. His factory would be considered primitive today, something you could surely duplicate. Even stiffened paper for cartridges using black powder and old fashioned primer material using crude breech loaders should be attainable by anyone even on a hobby scale.

One might consider a bow. But actually getting those darn arrows anywhere close to your target at any distance takes a lot of skill. Crossbows are easier for the layman to use. As are even primitive black powder rifles. Keep in mind you need weapons that can be easily manufactured and easily used by untrained militia members. How long before your town is visited by Zombie Biker Gangs? Sooner than it will take you to become proficient with bow and arrow. Sooner than it will take to perfect smokeless powder manufacture. Sooner than you want it to be. Better to crank out primitive weapons quickly and get some rudimentary skill before you need to use it.

## SHELTER

One aspect of survivalism I usually don't focus on is nuclear war. Frankly, I am just rolling the dice and betting that it doesn't happen. It very well could. The odds are good that it will. But the cost of adequately protecting against it are just not in my budget. Any makeshift expedient shelter will not protect against heavy fallout and having enough dirt overhead will cost a bit of cash. Not to mention the cost of an air filter, etc. Don't get me wrong, fallout protection is a nice goal to have. I just have a limited budget and so my preparations tend to stay with loss of services. In good time I might have an underground shelter to be energy independent and be able to turn it into a fallout shelter. So, here we just focus on shelter from the elements mainly.

Shelter can be anything from a tarp overhead to an RV or an underground shelter. The basic thing is you will need to plan around what you have. Unless an asteroid wipes out the East Coast or Yellowstone blows or the Chinese atomic sneak attack us, nothing sudden should happen to silence the note holder on your house. We might experience a Super Duper Greatest Depression Ever but before we all starve in the streets the bank will send out the sheriff to repo your house after the Corporation XYZ lays off you, your wife and half your kids. Where are you going to live? Is your car paid off or will they repo that also? Do you plan on camping in the woods? So does half the city and some idiot will run a generator in the weeds and start a fire that will roast you all like bargain brand hamburgers loaded with fat from the slaughterhouse floor as emergency services are overwhelmed and unable to respond as they fight the fires that threaten the houses the banks own.

Do you plan on ripping up abandoned houses for scrap lumber and building modern day hobo camps? Remember, there are a lot more law enforcement personnel than there was in the last Depression. Even the Forest Service Rangers can now call in Ninja SWAT air strikes after they get done firing at you with a pitiful 9mm sidearm. You might not be allowed to peacefully inhabit unoccupied areas unless you hide well. Not that its too hard to do, as everyone is a fat lazy bastard that won't step more than one hundred yards from their SUV into the wilderness. But it will take some planning ahead.

You can always stay with family if you bring some supplies, or have a cheap place in the boonies bought and paid for that the bank can't touch. Or a camper shell on an old beater truck. Or even a bicycle with trailer with a tent and other camping supplies. Shelter really is easy outside of preparing for nuclear war. You just need to plan around what is available.

## VEHICLE SHELTER

Should you need to abandon your home for whatever reason such as foul weather or riots or fires or mass unemployment and bank foreclosure, the most likely shelter is going to be your vehicle. Obviously it is going to be a little difficult to use your Geo to sleep in, but if you are poor most likely you had to buy a big gas guzzler since it was the only thing you could afford. Gas sipping vehicles are for people with too much money or too much credit. The poor folks usually end up buying old rejected rusting Ford F150's that get ten miles to the gallon. But of course you get the last laugh in the end. Not at the gas pump, but since you paid a grand for your vehicle and got a 100,000 miles out of it you spent \$31,000 to drive it. The guy that bought a brand new hybrid for thirty grand and gets forty miles per gallon spent \$47,000 to drive the same distance after he got done financing the car ( even at low interest rates ). Plus, when you are made homeless you can set a \$50 used camper on the back of the pickup and have a place to sleep. Good luck even being able to curl up and sleep in a Toyota. And if gas goes up to six bucks a gallon to make the new car worth it ( assuming other prices stay steady ) than the economy is in the toilet anyway and the guy doesn't have a job to make the car payments.

Smaller cars can always just be used with the trunk and back seat for storage and the front seats folded down to sleep on but its not going to be very comfortable. The point is that in all but the smallest cars you can camp out in a pinch. A Better Than Nothing situation. And it costs you no more than what you were going to spend anyway. If you had the extra money and bought a \$500 old pickup truck with a fifty dollar camper shell and put some insulation on the interior of it you could get by even in the winter ( assuming some sort of heat such as a coffee can stove ). Just make sure to crack the back window for ventilation so the lawyers won't see this book on your laptop computer next to your stiffened body and blame me for killing you with bad advice. Then you would have a second vehicle to get to work with if your primary one failed plus you would have a bugout vehicle in time of need.

There is no need to buy expensive freeze dried food to save space in your vehicle. Dry jerky until all the moisture is gone to allow it to last longer. Top Ramen noodles are tasty and filling even uncooked. Peanut butter and oatmeal mixed together with Tang drink powder will give you protein and carbs and vitamin C with no cooking required ( store unopened separately until use to keep from spoiling ). Instant soup powder. The grocery store has plenty of cheap camping foods, don't waste it buying a \$7 pack of freeze dried Beef & Noodles.

## TENT SHELTER

You can buy a really cheap tent, as low as thirty bucks for a decent sized one. Another ten bucks gets you a tarp to hang over that to keep off the really bad rain or too bright sun. But really all you are doing is buying partial bug protection. And snake protection of course. Nothing like sharing your sleeping bag with a messenger from Satan. But hungry grizzlies or mountain lions will not be impressed with your shelter. And cloth is not known to slow down bullets much. That being said of course, it is better than no shelter at all. Especially if you have a tiny car, a tent would be really handy to have in the shoebox size trunk. Or, if you have to escape on bicycle ( no fair discriminating against the car-less ). The light weight really helps out there. Just what you need until you can construct your Super Duper tree house or cave dwelling. So tents can come in handy for survival planning. The one drawback to this mobile retreating is lack of supplies you can take with you. If you already have your goods stashed at Grandmas house in the country, then it is fine. Or even perfect for a shelter if you are planning for short term emergencies only so there is no need for a lot of food storage.

I'm sure there are a few dead residents of New Orleans that wish they had a tent instead of walking into the Death Bowl for shelter. The next time some idiot tells you we don't have concentration camps in this country, slap him aside his head. Remember Indian Reservations, Japanese Internment Camps and Hurricane Katrina when shelter residents were not allowed to leave a sealed stadium without air conditioning, water, food or flushing toilets and sharing the space with criminals ( both the guards and the civilians ). And even more troublesome is the countries lack of concern this was allowed to happen. When your area faces a natural disaster and the Guardsmen they could spare from Iraq fire on civilians that refused to give up their lawful weapons used only for self defense you can be sure the rest of the nation won't care at all. Have a tent if nothing else, and no matter what refuse to allow the government to "help" you during an emergency. A forty dollar investment in shelter and twenty in dried non perishable foods can save your life.

I can't see that much sense in buying an expensive tent. Sure, if you go camping a lot. But if this is just an emergency stash go to Wal-Mart and buy a cheapy with some fabric mending materials such as duct tape. I would advise also getting the tarp. If you are using your car it can act as the higher area to secure the one end of the tarp if you have no trees near. Have a steep enough slant that the rain doesn't pool in it. And keep it high enough overhead that the sun stays off you. A good short term shelter until you can build something better with local materials.

## LOCAL MATERIAL SHELTER

If we ever face a cataclysmic long term emergency you are going to have to construct shelter from local materials. It would rather suck to have to live out of your car through every winter the rest of your short miserable life. As mentioned you can always salvage material from abandoned houses or office buildings. Some of the stuff will really be useful such as steel beams and insulation. But of course by that time there will be no more vehicles around unless they are running on alcohol, and only then if enough people have died off to free up the farmland. So it might be tough to salvage outside your immediate area. You will most likely be focusing on items such as trees and rock and mud.

When planning or attempting to build, keep in mind that you are no longer in the modern age. there is no more petroleum or coal or nuclear power. You will only be able to heat by solar and wood and only be able to cool with shade and insulation. Modern buildings are totally useless without cheap abundant petroleum products to heat and cool them. And before you rush to Texas or Florida for mild winters keep in mind that without a fleet of trucks spraying chemicals manufactured thousands of miles away malaria will experience a return. With a population already starving without semi-trucks delivering food from corporate farms tropical diseases will again be a concern in the South. As will the threat of fleas carrying bubonic plague. You might actually appreciate flea killing frosts.

Build into the ground for insulation. If you are down several feet you will maintain a 50 degree temperature through winter even without heat. Your wool garments and insulated underwear will keep you comfortable. If you build aboveground you will need a south facing glass wall and thermal mass to absorb the solar heat for nighttime warming ( without it you get too hot in the day and freeze at night ). Concrete, masonry, even rocks work. Or black metal water filled jugs or barrels. Personally I would go underground to decrease fire risk and provide camouflage and also act as a good bullet shield.

Go to the library and copy the plans on how the local Indians constructed shelters. You might have to copy them. Do it now before you need to, not after rival gangs are shooting it out for the last of the unburned instructional books. After the collapse, someone is going to figure out how valuable they are going to be.

## RV'S AS SHELTER

This could have been grouped under cars as shelter, but RV's aren't for everyone due to the cost. I do not advocate buying one for survival purposes. Even if I did it would not fit into our budget. But if you choose an RV lifestyle beforehand to save money ( not as crazy as it sounds ) you will find yourself living in it come crunch time. If things go downhill economically first you might find yourself buying one for a few ounces of silver or a few pounds of food. But otherwise lets concentrate on finding yourself this way after it all falls apart. First, I hope you are living in a mild climate because the insulation in RV's is laughable. I have spent winters in them and unless you own stock in a propane company they never get warm enough.

Back in the eighties when times were tough it was easy to buy a used travel trailer for twice your minimum wage monthly wages. And any trailer park was happy to rent you a space for less than one quarter of your take home pay on minimum wage. However, times got better and the retiring seniors grew in numbers and wealth and now nobody is interested in renting to poor people. Used trailers are hard to find, they start at three times the minimum monthly wage, no one wants to rent to you if you don't have a newer fancy one and if they do it now costs half your take home pay on minimum wage. At least in areas where there are any jobs to be had. If you're not living in a tourist area that only rents by the day at outrageous rents. It is a lot tougher than it used to be finding shelter if you are poor.

The only way you are going to pull it off is to buy your own land where RV's are allowed by zoning. Almost all of Texas outside the city limits has no zoning and since there is a lot of land there it is usually cheap. If you can find a job there and if you can stand to live in Texas. God love em, but they are a breed apart and I don't know if I could live there long term just because they are their own country. But wherever you choose, just do a continual search under land on E-Bay on the Internet. You can find land dirt cheap. Of course the land has problems otherwise it would not be cheap. You can find lots for as low as \$500. Then buy an old used travel trailer for under a grand and live rent free forever more with taxes under \$20 a year as long as you live on axles rather than a foundation. While not for everyone it sure beats living with roommates or out of your vehicle because the housing bubble forced the cost of shelter to be unaffordable in many areas. People want minimum wage drones to serve them Whoppers but don't want to see the run down areas they can afford to live in. Yuppie bastards.

You can live comfortably in a trailer in cold areas. Just install a fireplace. Reinforce under your floor, place stone or bricks as a firewall under a window or under a ceiling vent and put in a wood stove ( in an area where wood is available cheap and nearby or future supply problems will be unpleasant ). You will run yourself out into a storm it will get so hot in there ( at least in smaller trailers ). A dirt cheap way to live, and with a solar panel you might not even know the electrical grid went down. Just food for thought, not part of your emergency preparedness budget here.

## LIGHTING

A final word on supplies. You will need a source of lighting. Cooking has been discussed as well as heating. But how will you provide illumination. If you said candles, put on your dunce cap. While fine for short term emergencies if a fire danger doesn't exist, they are really only good for long term post-Apocalypse lighting. And only then because there are no other "high" technology alternatives. Kerosene is a short term answer because of fuel supplies. Conventional lanterns, even with florescent bulbs don't last long at all. A marine battery using a solar panel and powering bulbs will only last as long as the battery, about five years. Although there might be the possibility to salvage car batteries. The only really feasible way to cheaply power lights for long periods of time are L.E.D. lights. Their illumination is inferior but the battery lifespan is anywhere from ten to one hundred times as long as conventional bulbs.

Candles made from petroleum should be avoided long term. For short term uses they are cheap and handy. For long term it is going to be difficult coming up with supplies of paraffin. Beeswax is the only substitute. And candles are fire hazards. But when they are the only low tech way of providing illumination you just need to go with it. Perhaps in our dismal post-Industrial future we will all be using candles by the second generation and a brisk business will supply glass holders for them to act as a safeguard to falling over. At first salvage could be used, old mayo jars and cracked unusable Mason jars. Until a glass industry started ( which it should for greenhouses and such ). There will of course be fat lanterns. Animal fat with a wick to provide light. Or heat such as in igloos. But essentially the same thing here.

Kerosene is great as long as Standard Oil is distilling it and sending it by rail to your town. Otherwise it is a poor survival tool. The fuel is not renewable. The glass lanterns can break and the non-smelly type of fuel is very expensive. Not all that is old fashion is a better choice. Such as horses leaving manure on the streets, typewriters or kerosene lamps. For less than the cost of a kerosene lamp and a jug of fuel you can buy an LED lamp with batteries good for at least 25 hours of light. It won't smell or produce carbon monoxide or start fires.

A solar panel charging a car or marine battery with some florescent lights is an expensive way to provide light. About \$200 to provide the light. For under \$30 you can have an LED lantern, a AA battery solar charger and rechargeable batteries. The car battery supplies superior light, it is true. But here again we are faced with sacrificing performance to save money. No one wants an all wheat diet, but it is cheap. Not many prefer old surplus bolt guns to new, bright and shiny semi-automatic battle rifles. But they are so much cheaper. And LED white light sucks compared to conventional bulbs but the cost saving demand it. One sixth the cost for less pleasing illumination. Just be pleased you saved \$170. If you believe getting replacement car batteries for a solar panel setup will work, fine. The marine batteries are superior, but are not as easy to find. So as far as scavenged batteries the car type will have to do. You will probably find yourself paying a

lot in barter to get used batteries of dubious quality. Just stay with LED's.

You can buy an LED flashlight at Wal-Mart for \$6. It takes a single AA battery. If you bought a four pack of disposable AA's from the dollar store, a buck would buy you at least 100 hours of light. The flashlight even has a ring on the end to hang it up for hands free operation. You could keep up a supply of disposables and rotate them for freshness if you didn't want to spend much more than ten bucks. Myself, I bought several flashlights for back up in case one breaks and keep a supply of disposables. I also bought a few solar rechargers and some rechargeable batteries ( two chargers, \$30: 16 AA batteries, 8 D batteries, \$50 ). But that was being extravagant. Beyond our budget here. You could do about \$25 worth, one charger, one flashlight, four AA batteries. Or just spend \$10, the flashlight and four packs of disposables. Keep rotating. Your choice, depending on your budget.

Another Wal-Mart option is to buy a mini-lantern. \$10 and it uses three AA batteries for a much brighter light. Less than twice the price but needing three times the batteries. For the richer amongst us. On last item, the rechargeables get at least 500 charges, but make sure to totally draw down a battery before charging. Despite what they claim the new batteries do develop a memory and hold less of a charge. The new ones are memory resistant, not memory proof.

## BUGGING OUT OR STAYING PUT

"Bugging Out" is having an evacuation plan to escape the city or a ground zero target where you are at and moving to a safer location, a retreat. This has always been the preferred method of rich survivalists as they lived in the city, made lots of money and had a safe retreat all set for their arrival. Of course the better way would be to actually live at your retreat safe and sound, but there are usually very few jobs out in the boonies. The worst plan is wanting to leave at the appropriate time but having nowhere to go. Or a dubious plan centering around friends or relatives you are sure will take you in. I would say unless they are immediate family you had better be a highly trained specialist such as a doctor or chemist. Otherwise what good are you to them?

Even if you are rich enough to have a separate secure stockpiled retreat, you place yourself in great danger by trying to reach it unless you can leave before anyone else is aware an emergency is going to happen. Look what happened in south Texas after Katrina. A good portion of the population, wary after Katrina of the new hurricane coming, started to evacuate the coast. Both sides of the highways were opened to fleeing traffic yet no one moved faster than about ten miles an hour and gas stations all along the way ran out of fuel. Bugging out got a lot of ink during the Cold War as we discussed how to flee the cities if the Soviet Union decided to nuke us. All very fine in theory, but now we have a real life practice test under less dangerous circumstances and it failed miserably. A retreat is great if you can get there without fighting traffic or needing fuel or if you live on it full time. Otherwise it might be wisest to plan on staying put.

Staying in place poses its own problems. Crime, fire, unsanitary conditions. But you will at least be alive to deal with them. Being on the road retreating means crime fueled by road rage and the possibility of either becoming gridlocked or walking the rest of the way without supplies when fuel runs out. Even having a secondary means of transportation such as a bicycle is dangerous traveling and you had better be well stocked at your retreat since no new supplies are arriving with you. And this also assumes the retreat site is secure and no one broke in to steal your stuff. I would not rely on a retreat unless you can overcome all these obstacles ( I've read of one guy who planes on flying his plane there across the state- hey, it could work ).

My plan would be to do this. Quit your great job, declare bankruptcy and let them repo everything. Move to a small town remote enough to satisfy your paranoid nature and buy a trailer, rent a space and work a low wage job. If the wife complains get rid of her too. Step out of the rat race and live life again. While being safe. Just a thought.

## FINANCES

Because most folks are gross income rich and spendable cash poor, I felt this booklet was needed. Too many people might actually think preparedness is a good idea but as conventional wisdom calls for too much of an investment they never even start. Hence the low amount of only \$500. And yet, perhaps even that amount is too much. Without any leeway in their budgets something as simple as two new tires for the car at only \$100 usually means the credit card needs to be pried from the wallet. It is much easier to spend the extra \$2 charge on the plastic every month for the rest of your life than come up with the extra hundred in the first place. At present the main reason is doubling fuel costs but it could be other reasons at other times. Inflation or more taxes or declining wages. Too many things out of our control continually shrink the household budget to where there is no cushion. It is not that there is no financial discipline, although that is many times the case, but that we have no choice but to abandon sound finances as our buying power is being continually cut.

Inflation, caused by the government and the Fed, even at the lowest amount of 3% will erode your buying power over time. In just twenty years at this low rate your dollar will only buy half as much as it used to. This is a pretty nifty tax from the powers that bleed us as most never pay it any mind. Since the Federal Reserve System was bribed out of Congress 90 years ago a dollar saved then is now worth roughly three to five cents. Quite a tax on savings. And the way most of us live there is little we can do to fight against this. If we could divorce ourselves away from the money economy it wouldn't matter, but by making everything taxable and taxes only allowed to be paid by currency, we are all stuck in their web. We all must keep working to continue to earn more and more money to pay higher and higher prices. And it wouldn't even be so bad if inflation was the only sin. But we are also forced to pay indirectly through our purchases the increased cost associated with government taxes and regulations and the cost of litigation. Lawyers and the government add to the cost of every item we buy. In a society without government it would be possible to live on half the income and to buy twice the goods.

One could always get the extra cash through debt. Not advised of course but perhaps the small monthly payments were less troubling than the insecurity of not being prepared at all. You could get a part time job for a short time, or sell some unneeded toys. There are ways around getting the \$500. Anyone can do it. I'll outline some ideas. And of course if the \$500 wasn't a sweat you could always spend more than that. Just be careful because as I can attest once you start buying for specialty disasters you never seem to stop buying. And I'll tell you how to spend less. Even up to half, only needing to spend \$250 to \$300 ( which includes a firearm ). Anyone can afford to prepare for disaster. Even a Senior citizen or a live at home student.

## SPENDING LESS

It is possible to spend less than the \$500. If you buy the cheapest rifle at \$90 and 400 rounds of ammunition at \$35 your defense budget goes from up to \$250 down to \$125. If you buy the cheapest grain grinder, trash bags and plastic totes with three hundred pounds of wheat your food budget goes from \$125 to \$80. Instead of buying a filter for your water get a solar still. Your cost is \$20 instead of \$55. Your total budget including a flea market knife and ten bucks for light costs you a total of \$250. Half what is recommended. Still much better than what you have now, which is nothing. If you can't scrimp and save and come up with \$250 you are in trouble. You don't even need to come up with more than \$50 to \$100 at a time, one item at a time.

If you already owned a rifle or other suitable weapon the cost would drop to \$125. If you stocked rice instead of wheat you wouldn't need a grinder and \$100 would do the trick ( although you would need to replace rice at least every other year as it spoils and it is nutritiously deficient ). If you still wanted wheat you could just stock up on white flour for \$50 for 250 pounds ( good up to about five years shelf life but also not healthy as a main food- all the nutrients are in the outer shell removed to make white flour which is just empty carbs ) and spend \$5 on plastic to make a homemade solar purifier. Total cost \$55.

If you don't own a gun, don't plan on it and can't come up with \$55-\$125 please send this disc back and I'll promptly refund your money. You need it for crack to kill yourself quick before a disaster befalls your area. You are hopeless. You can come up with \$25 to see the Lord Of The Rings and buy popcorn and bon bons but can't stockpile a bit of extra food in case the world decides to stop coddling the non-producers. I've got news for you friend, that means most of us. Not just the lawyers and politicians but the waitresses at Outback Steak House, the convenience store clerks, the video game designers. Most of our economy is geared towards a consumer economy. It can't last forever and most of us have limited survival skills outside of its cuddly embrace. Prepare now with the surplus we all have ( and just don't realize ).

To control the market in commodities and prevent competition from family farmers, corporations sell at or below cost ( the Federal government and its subsidies pay the profit ). Since you the tax payer paid the difference you might as well take advantage of the low price and buy whole wheat now. While the price is cheap. \$6 to eat for a month. An MRE of one meal costs that much. They're both starvation diets, but at least it is a diet. Spend the pitifully small amount already. When your neighbors look like untanned Somalians and you don't you will be glad you did.

## GETTING THE EXTRA MONEY TO FINANCE YOUR PREPARATIONS

I am not going to argue that it is easy to save this needed money if you set your mind to it. That is true to a point, but you still need to actually save or earn the extra. If it was that easy to pull the extra money out of the piggy bank we would never have any financial difficulties. That being said, it is easier than the inevitable cost increases you must deal with every year because it is only a one time deal. You only have to go through the pain one time. Perhaps you have a large family and it will take more cash and more time. This plan is about one person after all. But having a spouse means two incomes are coming in and having kids means you can send out the little tikes to gather spare change from aluminum can collecting or holding a car wash or some such. So it will not be much harder than if you were a single guy living alone, eating TV dinners every night and wiping those pesky boogers on the underside of the couch as you watch reruns of Melrose Place on cable.

If you are single you should be motivated to save as you love yourself. If you have a family it should help motivate you to think of the poor dears starving to death in an unheated house because you were too much of a pussy to stand up to your shoe buying SUV driving Yuppie wife and not insisting these needed steps be taken. Of course we can almost assume you are motivated just because you are reading this. You have several options. Get in debt. Save the money. Sell something to earn it. Get a temporary second job to finance the purchases.

I would advise against going into debt. However, if you are already beholden to the bank for a few dozen grand on a mortgage, are paying on two cars and have fifteen thousand dollars in personal credit card debt it really isn't going to make much of a dent in your budget to assume another \$700 in debt ( I'm assuming you arm and feed the spouse, so the added \$200 ). You're going to pay, what? Another \$20 a month? But only if you are already really buried in debt. If you only owe \$5k on a trailer and your car is paid for and your credit card only has \$300 on it from the last time you had to fix the car, why assume so much more debt. Debt is something we can all live without. It is an evil presence, warping every decision you make and giving you no wiggle room if financial troubles ever happen to you.

"Saving" the money sounds harder than it is. Remember, you don't need to save the whole \$500 all at once. You can save \$50 to \$100 at a time and then buy a portion of your supplies. A bag of wheat here, a bucket there. A few boxes of ammo. Then the grain grinder. Next the water filter. The rifle costs the most, \$90-\$150. Then the ammo from \$50 to \$100. The water filter is \$50. After that everything is under \$25. Then it becomes easy. Anyone can afford \$25, just by temporarily cutting back on luxuries. Rent a movie instead of buying one or rent a DVD instead of going to the movies. Brown bag it for lunch rather than eating out. Bike to work a few times or carpool to save on gas. Save

on dry cleaning by using Woolite in the sink and ironing it yourself. Take the bus instead of a taxi. Buy survival supplies instead of the newest Sony Playstation game. Wait for paperback instead of buying hard cover, or just get it from the library ( and only buy from Amazon.com ). You get the idea. Bite the bullet. It's just for awhile.

Sell something you love to finance your supplies. This will hurt and the buyer will most likely screw you over. But it is quick if not painless. We all have crap we don't need. Get rid of it. Sell your oak furniture and buy thrift store replacements. Do this on the weekend when the wife goes to visit the monster-in-law. And don't start whining about how you respect her too much to pull a fast one. She should have let you buy this survival insurance. Talk about no respect. She doesn't value your life enough to let you have \$500 out of an annual gross budget of \$50k. Grow some testicles and stand up to her for once. Act contrite enough and you might get away with it. Ladies, if your beer swilling husband places you in the same predicament just sell some of his tools. When he raises a fuss threaten to cut him off. You got it easy.

Getting a second job for a time is not as bad as you think. Number one, you can quite whenever they hack you off too bad since you won't starve without it. That takes a lot of pressure off. Number two, it will over with quickly. In one month of working your weekends at a \$6 an hour entry level job you will bring home \$300 after taxes are savagely pried out. You can quite before two months are up. It's going to suck as the weeks on end without a day off will tire you out. But this too shall pass. Tough it out, it beats starving in the future.

Now, after saying all this, let me add in my own experience. I used to be in the "whipped" husband category. I couldn't get any spare change for myself. When I first started writing a newsletter I had less than a dozen subscribers to start and I had to fight to get enough money to send out sample letters with postage only costing 22 cents. The evil one ruled the budget with an iron fist. Luckily ( on many levels ) she divorced me. Since then I don't allow anyone to control the money I earn. True, the ex gets a third of my income. Uncle Sugar another 20%. But each new wife ( I collect them ) gets none of my money. No matter how little I earn I adjust my lifestyle to always have money to invest in a worse future. And to keep trying to start my own business ( I know, my writing should sell itself but I suck at the business side of this ). This is a personal choice. Most guys choose to stay with one mate and suck up the abuse. After a time I chose not to. So now my preparations are easy. It just takes the will, one way or another. Good luck.

## TOTAL COST

Rifle	average price	\$125
Ammunition	various amts.	\$125
Wheat, 400lb		\$60
Buckets, used		\$12
Lids, new		\$18
Insecticide		\$20
Grain Grinder, generic		\$25
Water Filter		\$50
Knife		\$20
Knife Sharpener, several		\$10
LED Lantern		\$10
Solar Batt. Charger		\$15
Rechargeable Batt. AA's		\$10
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Total Cost		\$500

## TOTAL COST, CHEAPEST OPTIONS

Rifle, Russian		\$90
Ammunition, 700 rounds		\$75
Wheat, 400lb		\$60
Totes & plastic bags		\$15
Insecticide ( freezing )		0
Grain Grinder		\$25
Water Purifier ( plastic sheets )		\$5
Knife ( used, flea market )		\$5
Knife Sharpener, one		\$5
LED Flashlight		\$6
Batteries, disposable		\$4
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Total Cost		\$290

**END**