



# The Pine Tree Journal

The New England periodical of self-reliance and preparedness.

*Live free or die; death is not the worst of evils.*

- General John Stark, 1728-1822



The editor during a hiking trip at Black Rock State Park in Connecticut.


## Greetings and Salutations

As you can see, Cybertech is still alive and kicking, albeit under a new name. After almost fourteen years of publishing the newsletter, I decided it was time for a new name and a somewhat new look. Welcome to the premiere issue of The Pine Tree Journal, the New England-based and focused periodical of self-reliance and preparedness. For the purpose of this periodical, the

"New England" region is considered to be the states of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and the "upstate" region of New York State. The PTJ hopes to bring a different approach to survivalism focusing on a region of the United States that has not received the appropriate attention in survivalist circles. Most preparedness periodicals are from out West, and generally focus on that region. Internet newsgroup discussions abound with the incorrect assumption that the Northeast is not suitable for individuals who wish to practice a self-reliant lifestyle. We self-reliance hobbyists who live up here (and there are more than a few of us) have a good laugh over that. The truth is

that any area has its share of advantages and disadvantages, and New England is no different in this regard.

The Free State Project <<http://www.freestateproject.org/>>, a group whose focus is to recruit 20,000 people to move to a more favorable state in order to work within the system to preserve civil liberties, determined a number of these factors. In the early stage of this project, ten states were picked based on their suitability for relocation. The criteria included an existing pro-freedom and self-reliance attitude in the state, small population, minimal government, economic potential, friendliness towards small business, and minimal dependence on Federal Government aid. This would be a similar criterion that a self-reliance hobbyist would be interested in. Of the ten states picked, three were from New England. They were New Hampshire, Maine, and Vermont. New Hampshire was tied for first place in suitability with Wyoming, one of the western candidates. When the FSP sent out ballots for members to choose the winning state, New Hampshire won over the states of Alaska, Delaware, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Wyoming. Clearly, certain areas of New England compare favorably to the western survivalist havens. The New England area was the home of numerous Native American tribes before the mass arrival of the European settlers in the 17th Century. It is thought by some that the Vikings first came here in the 11th Century. They found the area hospitable enough to live in, as did the European immigrants (with a little help from the natives). Obviously, New England was considered a good place to live, as they



wouldn't have stayed otherwise. Of interesting note, the New England tribes were stationary throughout the seasons, while the midwestern tribes remained migratory due to weather extremes in that region.


I live in the Litchfield Hills of Northwestern Connecticut. While Connecticut was one of the New England states that did not make the FSP list, it is still a decent-enough place. You can still purchase a house on a decent piece of property in one of the state's rural areas for an affordable price, and live reasonably well off the average wages received here. I know of a couple self-reliance hobbyists who are on limited incomes, but still manage to take care of their bills and have enough left over to pursue their preparations. The only gun-control problem in this state is an asinine "assault weapons" ban that makes a handful of specific models of military look-alikes illegal. Most of the guns on the list are legally sold as another model (i.e. Colt AR-15s are illegal, but Bushmaster AR-15 clones aren't). Pistol permits in this state are "shall issue", and have to be granted (assuming the applicant is eligible) within a couple months. While not as nice as Vermont or New Hampshire, it's tolerable. The Atlantic coast (Long Island Sound) is within easy driving distance for fishing, and there are numerous inland bodies of water for those who prefer freshwater fishing. Likewise, there is plenty of land available for hunting (a state hunting area is ten minutes away). Deer, squirrel, and the occasional bear wander through my backyard. The area is full of family farms, and come harvest season you can readily get lots of "home grown" produce at reasonable prices. Within a five-minute drive of my residence, I can purchase locally produced blueberries, apples, tomatoes, peppers, peaches, squash, honey, and maple syrup. My property came with blackberries and concord grapes growing on it. The local ham radio stores (two of them), and electronics shop (not a Radio Shack) are about a half hour away. There is a local Agway about 10 minutes away, as well as other farm supply/feed stores. Connecticut has a lot of hydroelectric generation capability that could be easily brought online if the need arose. Within short driving distance are several "odd lot"-type stores where one can discretely purchase a variety of supplies at very reasonable prices, enabling someone on a budget to stock a nice larder. I mention all of this as it helps illustrate what is available to the self-reliance hobbyist in this particular

part of New England.

### Of Fools and Fuel Prices

The prices for gasoline have come back down as expected, but remember this past summer? It was a Sunday morning at a gas station & convenience store in Westchester County, NY. The prices of gas grades were 87 octane: \$1.95/gallon, 89 octane: \$2.07/gallon, and 93 octane: \$2.16/gallon. The week before they were 10 to 17 cents/gallon less. It costs about 30 cents/gallon for individuals to produce their own bio-diesel in small quantities. The prices in neighboring Connecticut were up too. They are what New York was the week before; again 10 to 17 cents/gallon more. According to the service station attendant, approximately 5% of the customers have said something about the gas price increase. I suspect many more were thinking the same thing. They still however, continue to take out their wallets and fill up their SUVs and luxury sedans, and pay maybe \$2 more per fill-up. I cannot have any sympathy for someone who makes more in a week than I do in a month, drives a >\$40,000 vehicle that (still) has a Gore/Lieberman bumper sticker on it, and complains that they have to pay an extra amount for fuel equal to the cost of a McDonalds Big Mac. Filling up an old diesel sedan or pick-up truck on bio-diesel would cost about \$5.00, plus a little time and effort that a "normal person" would spend watching TV during the evening. A guerrilla capitalist could sell it for \$1/gallon and make a pretty decent profit; assuming some human piece of trash masquerading as a customer didn't turn him in for violating whatever regulations.

While I was down there, a geriatric subhuman with Christian bumper stickers on her fairly new Volkswagen Golf came in, bought \$6 worth of gas, and told everyone there that she was buying the rest of her gas in Connecticut where "it is \$1.50 a gallon". I asked her where it's bring sold for that amount, as at the time I paid \$1.81/gallon for 87 octane gas in Connecticut. She wasn't too sure, but she knew for certain, she "wouldn't be buying gas here again". What makes this even more interesting is that there were two gas stations right down the road where gas is a few cents/gallon less, giving her a viable option if she were really as thrifty as she claimed to be.



Alternative and renewable energy is one field that every survivalist should learn about and implement on whatever scale they're able to. When it comes to self-sufficiency, getting "off the grid" is one of the most important matters to tackle. Grid-dependent families and individuals in California have been experiencing the effects for some time now, and I expect the Northeast is going to get a taste of the same soon. The "Blackout of 2003" is just the first step down a long, rough road. There are several staff members of PTJ who are learning about and experimenting with alternative energy, so you can expect to see articles about our efforts in the near future. Those of our readers who really want to get into the whole alternative power thing should go get a subscription to Home Power magazine.

#### Thoughts On the Infrastructure and Contingencies

The government had promised they will conduct an investigation on The Blackout of 2003, but everyone with a functional brain knows where that'll go (nowhere). I was at work (in SE NY this time) when the power went out. We sold out of ice (approx 100 5 lb. bags) in about 30 minutes. Likewise, larger sizes (1 gal and 24 oz) of bottled water and D-size batteries went within a couple hours. The station would have sold out of gas, but the lack of electricity or generator kept them from being able to provide that product. The one station down the road that did have a generator had a half-mile long line of cars going to it. We did have the contingency kit in the trunk of the car, and adequate gas to take the "long way" home if needed. What we DIDN'T have this time around was communications gear. (**That** deficiency has since been corrected.) We did hear details about the blackout from customers who came in, and had a portable 12V power pack that was able to operate the store's police scanner (More on that later.), as well as a 120V 225 Watt inverter that would have provided limited electricity if needed. Upon determining that a quick bug-out wasn't needed, we proceeded to call home to find out that our residential locale was one that was not affected by the blackout, and that my wife was already implementing some last-minute preparations in the event we did lose power. On the telecommunications side, the store's phone system was electronic and therefore died when the power went out. Fortunately, we have a payphone on premises that worked just fine, and a lineman's "butt-set" in the

contingency kit that we could have clipped into one of the store's phone lines if need be. Those of you who have cordless, or other electronic phones at home should take note of this, and keep an inexpensive basic one-piece phone or old K500/2500 desk set handy for when the power goes out so you can still use the phone line. The phone system was designed to survive a nationwide nuclear attack, and you will usually still get dial tone when the power is out. The problem is when the inter-office phone trunks get overloaded from too many people placing calls to an area. The store's police scanner was an excellent source of information about local conditions. During that evening's commute, we listened (as usual) to a few AM radio stations, but these started getting repetitious after a while.

#### Lessons Learned:

1. Most preparedness experts say to keep at least a half-tank of gas in your car. I say keep at least enough gas in your car for at least one round trip to and from your location to your home, safe house, retreat, or whatever destination. This will ensure you can get home if you have to take the long way. In my case, I had a half tank, which was more than enough to get home, BUT there were many people who were running on empty (or pretty close to it). Most gas stations only have enough gas for no more than a day or two of regular business. (This store usually gets a full tank of product delivered every evening, and our tanks are pretty low when it comes.) The few gas stations that have generators going WILL run out of gas in short order.
2. A Grundig FR-200 emergency radio, Radio Shack HTX-202 2-meter handheld, Icom R-10, and extra batteries are now permanent parts of the contingency kit. This ensures that adequate communications capability will be available if needed. These radios were chosen mainly because they all operate on AA batteries. (The Grundig also has an internal rechargeable battery pack that is charged by the crank-handle.)
3. I'm staying the hell out of New York City! Imagine how it would be to evacuate out of there if there were a real problem instead of

- a short-term blackout during the summer.
- Every survivalist should have some form of alternative energy available; even if only a few 12 volt gel-cells and some small solar panels to charge them. I suspect that this outage is only the beginning, and that as things continue to degenerate we will see more of the same. There is an excellent magazine out there called **Home Power** that everyone should subscribe to. Their website URL is at <http://www.homepower.com/> and contains lots of useful information.
  - Don't forget your contingency kit - all of it!



Contingency kit radios. From L to R: Radio Shack HTX-202 2-meter ham HT, Icom R-10 communications receiver, Grundig FR-200 emergency radio.

The Blackout of 2003 made one very important point for the new millennium. If you love your life, stay out of large cities, especially ones that are built on an island. There is an old saying that "If you can survive in New York City, you can survive anywhere." I feel that if you can survive anywhere, why would you pick New York City? When it comes to SHTF scenarios, you have to love NYC for its worst-case ranking. Take Manhattan for instance. It has a population greater than that of the state of New Hampshire (1.5 million vs. 1.2 million) in an area that is less than 1% the size. (22 square miles vs. 9,200). The population of NYC is generally not oriented towards self-reliance and preparedness, and would rather think "the government" will take care of them, or taker a fatalistic approach towards a potential disaster. I have a friend, a fellow old-school hacker from the 1980s, who runs his own business in Manhattan within walking distance of Grand Central Terminal. When asked after 9/11 about future attacks, he

replied, "I've got life insurance. That's what it's for." Insanity and a general lack of common sense prevail down there, and the best words of advice one could give any survivalist who lives in, or close to NYC are "Get out now." The area doesn't deserve you, and there are better places to live that would welcome you with open arms. That is not to say that a workable contingency plan could not be formulated and successfully implemented in the event of a problem. Tom Brown in his book The Way of the Scout showed that it is possible for a survivalist to operate in NYC. Not easy by any stretch, but possible. Consider however, that one of the main entry/exit points for Manhattan Island is Grand Central Terminal at 42<sup>nd</sup> St. & Lexington Ave. It is within the blast radius of a suitcase nuke detonated at UN Headquarters, which is also 42<sup>nd</sup> St. on the East River. If you can't make the train, it's a long walk and a swim if bridges are not accessible. The bridges are in North Manhattan and South Bronx, which are not pleasant neighborhoods in normal times. Firearms are virtually illegal in New York City. You'll have several hundred thousand other people trying to do the same thing. I hope you get the point.

### Bugging-Out

When my wife and I were first married, we lived in an apartment in a small New England city. The "bug out plan" involved staying at the family's "summer residence" in rural upstate New York, about 200 miles away. There were two major obstacles in the way: The Hudson River and the Albany, NY metropolitan area. This would have worked for some problems, but was less than adequate for others. I was traveling out to work (a job site in north central Connecticut this time) one day, and a tractor-trailer jackknifed on Interstate 84 going into Hartford; basically shutting down the interstate. The location was just past the Exit for Connecticut Route 72; which is also a "limited access highway". The reaction was interesting to say the least. From a traffic standpoint, one could simply take CT-72 to CT-9 (all six lane highways like I-84) and get back on I-84 eastbound a few miles past the accident. In spite of this, every secondary road was jammed with traffic doing about 10 miles an hour at most. No hazardous materials were involved, and this traffic jam was just morning commuters going into Hartford. It makes one think.





Take that 200-mile distance to the old retreat. In a car going 60+ MPH, you can do it in 3 1/2 hours. What happens if you hit traffic, need to take an alternate (longer) route, or have to abandon your vehicle? How fast can you go on a bicycle? About 20-30 MPH. How about walking? 3-5 MPH. How long does it take now? Let's say you can walk 20 miles a day. Can you carry enough supplies and equipment on your back for 10+ days of hiking through potentially hostile territory after a societal breakdown? What would you carry? In [Lucifer's Hammer](#), Tim Hamner bugged out to his "retreat" (the observatory) to find it already occupied. The same could happen in real life. Now do you have adequate resources on hand to retake your property, and keep it afterwards? We have since moved to a more viable semi-rural area, and plan on sticking it out here should "something" happen. My current work situation now involves a job in the local area instead of traveling all over the region. "Bugging out" now entails traveling about 20 minutes from work to home should something happen. There are plenty of alternate routes from A to B that can be taken, and the distance to travel is short.

In talking with a lot of survivalists, I find that they are planning on "bugging out"; leaving their homes in the event of a disaster. If you live in an apartment or condo this might be a good idea, but many I have talked to have only vague plans/ideas of where they are going to go. This makes them refugees. One such individual had made up a nice "second stage" bug-out vehicle consisting of a two-wheel scooter and a bike trailer. That was good, but he had not given any thought as to where he'd bug-out to when TSHTF other than to walk up out of the blue to some Vermont or New Hampshire farm and ask to stay for a while. I told him that with a plan like that I doubted that even the AR-10 he selected for his survival firearm would keep him from being fertilizer for very long. Hopefully he has since modified his survival plans, as he is an excellent welder and should be able to keep himself in groceries during a period of severe sociopolitical stress if he went about it in a more intelligent manner.

One hot topic among survivalists is that of the "survival kit" or "bug-out bag". These two terms refer to a collection of items that is kept near one's person in the event of an "unforeseen circum-

stance". I dislike both terms and instead prefer to use "contingency kit", as it is more descriptive of what I feel is a suitable kit for unforeseen circumstances. A survival kit implies last-ditch supplies for when you encounter a problem in a remote wilderness area, like a plane crash or "geographical confusion" (a fancy way of saying you're lost). You break out the survival kit because Mother Nature and her consort Mr. Murphy are about to throw you a beating, if they haven't already started. In this situation, you expect to get rescued sometime shortly after your mishap, or become unconfused and get pointed back in the right direction. A bug-out bag has a specific purpose, to enable you to relocate from a bad area to one that is safer, such as your retreat. It too implies solving a problem of a short term nature; getting to a destination safely. As such, it is often light on "support equipment". This is understandable because the general design-philosophy of bug-out bags is that the contents should be able to be carried in a rucksack in case you're reduced to using shank's mare for transportation. A contingency kit is different in that its purpose is to solve a variety of problems regarding the safety and well being of its user in extraordinary circumstances. The kit would provide equipment and supplies to enable the user to accomplish the following tasks:

- Communications
- Self-Defense
- First Aid
- Food & Water
- Heat and Light
- Intelligence Gathering
- Shelter
- Repair
- Transportation & Navigation

A contingency kit would be capable of fitting in a vehicle, and consist of two parts. The first part would cover "essentials" and be capable of being carried comfortably by the individual in the event their means of transportation were rendered ineffective. Such a situation assumes that it would be safer to evacuate the current location on foot instead of staying. The second part of the kit would consist of supplemental items that would make matters easier if the individual continued to have their primary mode of transportation, or if they decided to stay put and ride a contingency out instead of trying to evacuate to another location. Included in the secondary kit would be the means of effecting emergency repairs



on their mode of transportation, items that would enable them to (more or less) temporarily set-up a retreat, and equipment to help them cache their secondary kit and vehicle (if practical) should they need to evacuate on foot.

When you start putting everything together, you need to decide how you will lug it all around. I have used various items depending on the environment, equipment in the kit, and potential contingencies. Starting on the small side are modern-day versions of the possibles bag carried by mountain men and longhunters of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Traditional possibles bags were made out of buckskin or leather. Many living history buffs make their own bags. My friend and co-conspirator Injun' Jessie used to make possibles bags out of old blue jeans, much like the gentleman on the Frugal Outdoorsman website. Anyone who can handle a needle and thread without sewing his or her fingers together should be able to do one of these whether you decide to go with the traditional animal skin route, or use more modern materials.

For those of you looking for a manufactured solution, there are a myriad of military surplus shoulder bags from as many different countries that can be bought for under \$10. You simply go visit your local army/navy store that deals in military surplus (some of them around here are yuppie sports stores) and see what you like. I found a Dutch army gas mask shoulder bag at a local surplus dealer for \$5. It is Khaki canvas with brass hardware, and measures 12" x 5" x 5". There is a clip on the shoulder strap that was perfect for hanging a Coleman zipper thermometer/compass from, and a D-Ring on the side of the bag that the handle of my tomahawk fit though nicely. A U.S. Army individual first aid kit is attached to the shoulder strap. The 300 cubic inch inside space provided plenty of room to cover all sorts of contingencies. On the civilian side of things, I picked up a nice green hip bag (or fanny pack) from a luggage vendor at the Big-E one year. This would enable one to discretely carry in public a decent amount of contingency equipment, including a small pistol. There are even fanny packs available from Bianchi and Uncle Mikes that feature built-in holsters.

Duffle bags (usually with a shoulder strap) are a very

convenient way to store the contents of a contingency kit, especially if you have a number of smaller bags that comprise your kit. They are very discrete looking, and don't attract attention. I have used the medium-size LL Bean Adventure Duffle (Catalog #TA19938) for a couple years now. (It was a gift from my wife.) It has proven to be a rugged piece of luggage. The medium bag is big enough to hold a change of clothing, the Dutch gas mask bag, a U.S. Army medics bag, knife, tomahawk, and Grundig FR-200 emergency radio. The military-style cargo (or parachute) bags can be had in sizes large enough to hold a medium rucksack (without frame) and set of web gear (LBE).

For larger contingency kits, there is the ubiquitous backpack or rucksack. There is a wide variety of them available, ranging from Jansport and LL Bean daypacks, to the large rucksacks used by the world's militaries. In addition to the US military surplus and new manufacture gear, there has been a lot of high quality foreign military surplus imported into the country over the past few years, It is offered at very reasonable prices. The German, Austrian, Australian, and Swiss gear is probably among the best in quality when it comes to the foreign stuff. A quick trip to your local military surplus store will find a plethora of items for you to examine and decide upon. Depending on mission requirements, I use either the US military enhanced LBE vest with a buttpack, a medium US ALICE pack, or the Australian military rucksack.

Over the next few issues, we will talk more about contingency kits and their contents. If you have some insight about this topic that you would like to share, please send us an email.

#### **What I Need From You, the Reader**

If you are into self-reliance, preparedness, alternative energy, hunting, fishing, firearm, camping, or any other survivalist-type hobby in the New England region that reads this newsletter, I'd like to hear from you. I'm sure you are doing something cool that other people would like to hear about and possibly learn from. You don't have to be a professional writer! If there is something you'd like to see written about in PTJ, please let us know and we will do our

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## WILDFLOWER'S WINTER NOTES

Today the oil heat died, leaving a very chilly house to move about in. Called up the emergency service and while waiting for the help to arrive started up three electric heaters to keep the place warm. After a few hours waiting, decided to activate the kerosene heaters kept in the storage room, but behold, the help arrived and in ten minutes replaced a faulty ignition coil, restarting the oil heater. Thanks to having emergency heaters stashed for such needs, had avoided where a freezing home.

What is incredible to note, many others don't have even a basic kerosene lantern for emergency use, let alone emergency heat or lights of any sort in their homes. Even some sort of basics like a working flashlight or candles and matches, are the rarest items found in today's household?

And yet despite all the warnings, many suffer or die because they strongly believed in "it can't happen here"; part of the same crowd whom won't use an auto seatbelt, or wear a life jacket on stormy seas. It is damn disgusting to read about such "smart people" dead because of simple stupidity!

Here is my emergency heat kit:

- Two kerosene stoves
- Two kerosene lanterns
- Four five gallon jugs of kerosene fuel
- Four various flashlights with spare batteries
- Several boxes of matches
- Several surplus wool blankets
- Three different electric heaters
- Two propane camping heaters
- GI multi-fuel stove
- Two hair dryers
- Several large candles
- Two dozen chemical heat pads

"THE COLD" can be fatal to ill, young to old, unprepared to rough it out until the central source is restored, which can be a long time especially in severe weather where repair crews may be delayed for several days, even what is a twenty minute trip

during normal conditions. And if there be a black-out, unless one has emergency power, nothing will be restored at all! Staying warm in frigid conditions is important to your personal health and survival, even if you had to share one common room, to conserve fuel, with several others, is damn better than to survive with frostbite damage to parts of your body! Oh, just wait for a good old fashion blizzard isolating yourself, killing the local power net, and several feet of snow blocking the roads, to find out the hard way!

And if so isolated, power off can mean no water pressure or frozen pipes, rendering your bathroom useless. In one of my other articles on drought survival, here again a portable toilet along with a few packages of baby wipes will be damn handy to have here. You are not going to waste even cooking fuel to thaw ice and snow just for flush and bathing water! And are certain such items as thermal retention "thermos bottles" is used to keep what hot water about for hot drinks.

Note: jugs or pails of water can be set outside to freeze, then retrieved to keep the refrigerator or freezer cold while the power is off. For long-term survival, consider an well-insulated icehouse to store winter ice for use during the warmer months.

If you couldn't stand your other fellows sharing such tight quarters beforehand, you may not survive long to make it to better times! And if it is occurring while civilization is falling apart, those whom were prepared for the worst of times will rebuild with well insulated "ugly looking" buildings, but comfortable in the hottest to coldest weather extremes, using the most minimal energy for cooling to heating needs. Here in the northeast, may live in well earth insulated, deliberately "buried" buildings to live on minimum resources as a "long term survival strategy"; wouldn't you?

Last week, discovered a bunch of nails spilled for several feet along the road curbside. Two strong microwave salvaged magnets placed inside an old sock allowed me to recover "ten dollars worth" of various nails, screws, and more for a few minutes effort. I find a lot of discarded hardware along the curbside, sometimes still in packaging. Tire weights,

tool-bits, and coins be found too. I try to be alert to my surroundings as when either afoot or by van traveling for nothing changes to the area, or what salvage may be about. A good survivor must be aware of what is about, otherwise may miss salvageable foods, firewood, or the marks left by others in the area.

Do check your auto engine levels for anti-freeze, motor oil, and other fluids every few weeks. Being stranded because of engine trouble is no fun below 32 F! Do keep the fuel tank over half full, and if traveling far, refill in the early evening. A full tank of gas is better than finding no open gas stations about mid-night when running on fumes! Adding gas anti-freeze to the tank periodically will keep the ice from blocking the carburetor fuel line. Do check tire pressure monthly, soft tires can create interesting, even fatal trouble on ice and snow. And remember, a warmed up engine performs better than a "start and go" in wet or cold weather.

Note: for driving in wet, cold weather, take extra care and time "getting there", especially at "rush hour", and even more so at night. Too many discover the hard way with damages, injuries, and death that a one ton car brakes lousy on icy roads, especially at high speeds! I often had wondered at the amazing way the most sophisticated autos are driven by the self-made village idiots at the driver's seat! The old saying, "speed kills" still well alive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, unfortunately so said

Note: every month of winter, I add a quart of "mystery oil" to the engine crankcase for easier startups on very cold mornings. Have changed the filter without changing the oil, leaving that oil change for the spring.

If have no "mystery oil", can substitute a pint of kerosene, or home diesel fuel oil. Do check air filter, hoses, and the belts too. A noisy alternator means a loose or bad belt, means either tighten or replace time! Most spitfire or knocking noises means replacement of distributor cap and rotor. I do carry spare filters, hoses, ignition parts, and lubercaints as "do it yourself" saves on paying others for such simple work!

**ZIPPO LIGHTERS:** Good to have a spare in your stash, along with extra flints, wicks, and cans of fuel.

All stores well for years in a cool, dry area. Not only carry extra flints and spare wick in the bottom; but wound about the case are 1/2 inch strips of duct tape in case lighter was picked up in below zero weather (prevents freeze burns with bare flesh on metal case), but at least "got tape" for one mending job or another. Pick a light color tape to find lighter faster on ground especially at night. A cold Zippo will light faster than a cold butane lighter, and will burn better in windy wet weather too!

BRINKMAN "long life led light" sells for about twelve dollars at WAL\* MARTS (sporting goods). This is a long lasting white led flashlight that can work off two "AA" alkaline batteries, or even two rechargeable "AA" cells too. Has a "push on/ push off" end switch, or can be also after "pushed on", "twist on/ twist off". With its lens, can project a good bright beam over ten yards or more in the dark night, yet last hours "on" while conventional flashlights won't! Worth buying two or more for your survival stash.

Note: with a portable solar charger for "AA" ni-cads, a few extra re-chargeable cells, one could have a "forever light" lasting for years of use versus all the candles or kerosene consumed just "to light up the dark"! Especially for those whom may travel "light" wherever they are going.

ISUN: ICP GLOBAL 6/12volt solar charger panel. At RADIO SHACK for about \$75 (plus tax). A foldout sun charger that puts out 290 ma at 7.6 V or 145 ma at 15.2 V, that can be linked to more panels for increased current output. Have run portable radios with it under a 40 W light bulb! Folds to the size of a large paperback novel and is very rugged in design. A good item for the pack, anywhere you go. Well worth looking at.

One may have to travel afar and fast, but if prepared with the right stuff packed in one's kit, one can do well for many years ahead; wherever that may be. It is sad to note, that if war starts in IRAQ, it may slowly become a global WWIV, anywhere and everywhere. May I be wrong!





## EAST AMERICAN SURVIVAL TRAINING

Promoting self-reliance through training, preparation, and networking with others of similar interests. Because in a disaster, be it natural or man-made, the government can't always be there to protect you!

### E.A.S.T. History by Gary Larzazs

I want to thank all who have expressed an interest in E.A.S.T. Over the years, I have used E.A.S.T. as a means to develop my interest in survivalism and network with others. I started E.A.S.T. in the early 1980's with 3 other friends that enjoyed 4X4 off-roading. After a few "close-calls" of being stranded, we decided to do some pre-planning should we get stuck in the woods under less than ideal circumstances. One thing led to another and we were pre-planning and practicing survival in other situations.

In the late 1980's, we discovered a magazine called "American Survival Guide" which had a directory which allowed people with similar interests to contact each other. We answered ads and eventually put in our own ads in, met many fine people and welcomed them to train and have fun with us.

In the 1990's, we became more aware of computers, which helped to send out our own newsletters, and also went "on-line". The late '90's the awareness of technology might create difficulties at the turn of the millennium. Leading up to Y2K, we started special plans for possible disasters that could be related to a computer failure. Many people joined us with their similar concerns and others also formed similar groups, which we advised and interacted with.

Y2K turned out to be a non-event and many of the people who joined lost interest or otherwise went separate ways and we've lost contact. I've made good friends that we have stayed in contact. We continued to stay in touch and informed on the issues. There are still plenty of lesser disasters, power failures, major storms,

etc. that could disrupt our normal lives. Then, Sept. 11, 2001 happened, some of our old friends contacted me and we thought about becoming more of an active group again. But getting together for activities, matching each other's schedules, seemed a difficult task. Now with international tensions on the increase, I feel the desire to try to again offer a forum for people interested in survivalism a chance to interact.

### E.A.S.T. Fall 2003 Meeting

The Fall 2003 meeting was held in Brimfield, MA Sat. 18 Oct. as scheduled. The training was to plan how members might deal with a regional outbreak of a respiratory disease with similarities to SARS. The simulated disease was to be transmitted by person-to-person contact of respiratory secretions such as being sneezed or coughed on and it was given a surface life that varied by temperature, which would live no longer than 24 hrs. at 90 to 140 degrees. Members could choose to come to a retreat area and would remain healthy as long as there were no exposures to infected persons (or had contact with an item that had gotten secretions on it).

An in-take area was assembled using a "portable garage" (see pic) that was used as the primary staging area. Security persons would direct incoming persons for a health screening of pulse, blood pressure, respiration (and breath sounds), and temperature taken. For those

52 cards, 5 shots at 50 ft. sounds easy ?  
Try a poker shoot.



untrained in taking vital signs, opportunity to take several were done. Gary L., who is an EMT, as well as a CPR and 1st Aid instructor, provided a "teaching stethoscope". (see pic) his type of stethoscope has 2 sets of hearing pieces so 2 people can hear the same thing at the same time. Gary was able to point out what to listen for as it happened.



The person in charge of in-take would take body substance isolation precautions of a HEPA rated surgical mask and gloves. Members who showed symptoms or had been in a high-risk area would have to take "reverse isolation" precautions. This would be wearing of a surgical mask when interacting with others, restricted from food prep duties, separate bathroom, eating with disposable plates and utensils, and in general higher standard of sanitary practices.

pretty handy, green or camo tarps may be looked into in the future.

#### First Aid and Related supplies For Sale

It was also discussed if there were others that wanted to join us should they be allowed. It was pretty much decided that they would have to be isolated from the main group until proven healthy through the "incubation period" of the disease. After that time should the person(s) have skills and be equipped to be an asset to the group, they would be allowed to join.

As a 1st. Aid and C.P.R. Instructor, many times students would ask where to get items, as it might not readily be available at a local store. Many medical equipment suppliers wouldn't sell to individuals or had high minimum orders. I will try to stock many common items, otherwise, have a source to order. If an item is not listed e-mail and I will try to locate and provide a quote: Surviveast@msn.com . Shipping costs are \$.01 to \$25.00 -\$3.00 \$25.01 to 50.00 - \$4.00 \$50.01 to \$100.00 - \$5.00 \$100.00 to \$250.00 - \$6.00 over \$250 free unless otherwise noted. If planning to attend an EAST meeting, try to order ahead of time and I can plan to deliver to meeting there will be no shipping. Mass. residents or sales made in Mass. 5% sales tax to be added. Payment should be by check or M.O. send to:



Gary Larzazs  
P.O. Box 253  
Three Rivers, MA 01080

Please allow 4- 6 weeks for shipping.

The portable garage proved to be easily assembled. Roof and side panels were installed but the front and back were not just for ease of the exercise. The garage is 10 X 20 ft. and could easily be adapted for many uses. The color is white so it really sticks out but as it appears

Maglite brand flashlights are some of the best flashlight made. Lately, many professional Police, Fire, and Rescue personnel have gone to various "tactical lights" which are compact and very bright, but these usually use very expensive lithium batteries. Great if your Department is



paying for them but for standard use with common batteries a Maglite is hard to beat. For more details on the product go to their co. website: [www.maglite.com/productline.asp](http://www.maglite.com/productline.asp) AA Mini MagFlashlight avail. in Black, Red, or Blue with 2 AA batteries and nylon holster \$11.99  
 Spare bulbs for Mini Mag 2 bulbs per pack \$2.99  
 Standard Maglite flashlight, black aircraft aluminum, adjustable beam:  
 2 C battery 8,200 C.P. \$18.99, 2 D battery 9,000 CP \$20.99  
 3 C battery 13,500 C.P. \$19.99, 3 D battery 14,000 C.P. \$21.99  
 4 C battery 14,000 C.P. \$20.99, 4 D battery 15,700 C.P. \$22.99  
 5 C Battery 16,800 C.P. \$21.99, 5 D battery 17,000 C.P. \$23.99  
 6 D battery 20,500 C.P. \$25.99  
 Mag Charger flashlight is a rechargeable light that uses a halogen bulb and puts out 30,000 C.P.! Charger can be plugged into 110 V AC or through 12 V DC \$109.99

Buck brand knives have been making quality knives for over 100 yrs. Although, some of their knives are being made overseas, most are still made in U.S.A. For details on Buck Knives on line go to: [www.buckknives.com](http://www.buckknives.com)  
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 Folding Hunter Finger Grooved #BU-110FG \$51.75  
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 Approach #BU-751BLK ( Black), 751BLX (Blue), 751PLX (Purple) \$36.75  
 Strider Solution #BU-888 \$165.00  
 Woodsman #BU-102 \$42.00, Brass w/ wood handles #BU-102BR \$54.75  
 Skinner #BU-103 \$50.25  
 Pathfinder #BU-105 \$44.25  
 Special #BU-119 \$51.75, Brass w/ wood handles \$80.25  
 Ulti-Mate Stream #BU-224 \$12.75  
 Ulti-Mate Lake #BU-226 \$14.25  
 Ulti-Mate Ocean #BU-229 \$16.50

## License-Free Radio Communications For Survivalists

by Ticom <[ticom@hd-works.com](mailto:ticom@hd-works.com)>

Having good communications (commo) capability is very important for your group to have. On the active side, commo is used to keep in touch with members of your group, and to seek assistance when encountering a situation where it is required. On the passive side, monitoring other people's commo is often a way to find out conditions in your area and surrounding regions. If you feel particularly drawn to specialize in commo you can set up whole systems and help out others with their commo issues. Commo is a topic that gets pretty complicated as you get into the more advanced aspects, so I'll start with basic group commo. There are three license-free bands available for survivalists: CB, FRS, and MURS. CB has 40 channels in the 27 Mhz. region, on the top end of the HF/"shortwave" band of 3-30 Mhz. FRS radios are small handheld units that use 14 very low power channels in the 450-470 Mhz "UHF land mobile" band. MURS is a recent service that uses 5 channels in the 150-174 Mhz. "VHF-high land mobile" band. All of these services are covered under Part 95 of the FCC Regulations. The three services operate on different frequency ranges with different power levels, and offer different capabilities for the survivalist.

Left Kershaw Leek, Middle Camillus C.U.D.A., and Right SOG Flash.





I can recall a time when the only option for legal license-free communications was Citizen's Band. Those of us who were seriously into communications went the extra mile and acquired our ham licenses, but even after getting my ticket I still used CB for its de-facto "jungle telegraph" capability. On the highway, it was unlikely that you would ever get a speed-trap report on 146.52 MHz, but all you needed to do was listen on Channel 19 and the information would usually come to you unsolicited. In 1991, I took a summer job at a Boy Scout camp in New York's Adirondack Mountains. My traveling companion during frequent weekend trips back downstate was a Radio Shack CB installed in my Ford Escort with a magnet-mount whip antenna on the roof. This provided adequate communications intelligence on my forays up and down I-87 to avoid getting any fast driving awards over the course of that summer.



Maxon Handheld CB Transceiver

Mobile and base CBs provided some decent communications capability. While hardly in a prime transmitting location, I routinely achieved a 20-mile range communicating between my base station and mobiles. This was with a stock CB and a quarter-wave ground-plane antenna on my roof, up about 25 feet. Using CB in portable mode was a different story. A quarter wavelength antenna on CB is about 8 1/2 feet long, and even the bulky telescoping whips on handheld CBs offered almost no range compared to a good mobile installation. Power was another issue. Most handheld CBs required 8 or 9 AA batteries that were depleted in a couple hours of transmitting. There was another option. At the time Radio Shack, Maxon, and others

sold hands-free headset radios that operated on FCC Part 15 49 MHz. frequencies shared with cordless phones and baby monitors. They offered about a 1/2 mile range tops, and usually a 1/4 mile range. Those of us with ham tickets used our two-meter band HTs for portable ops. You could access a local repeater and talk to another portable within the repeater's range; usually about 20-50 miles from the repeater's location. Then in 1996, the FCC authorized FRS (Family Radio Service).

Looking at the FCC's Part 95 regulations, there is very little difference in the description between FRS and CB. CB is "a private, two-way, short-distance voice communications service for personal or business activities of the general public." FRS is "a private, two-way, very short-distance voice communications service for facilitating family and group activities." In practice and in the technical aspects of the FCC regulations however, there is a significant difference between the two. CB uses forty channels around 27 MHz. in AM or SSB mode with power limits of 4 watts carrier power on AM, or 12 watts peak envelope power on SSB. You may also connect external antennas to CB equipment. FRS uses 14 channels around 460 MHz. in narrowband FM mode with a power limit of .500 milliwatts (1/2 watt) effective radiated power into a permanently-attached antenna. You cannot use an external antenna with a FRS radio. Twelve watts on sideband at 27 MHz. will consistently achieve a 20-mile range if you have a good antenna. Although it is illegal to communicate with stations more than 155.3 miles away on CB, any ham who has worked the Ten-meter band will tell you that 12 watts is more than enough to achieve world-wide communications in the high 20 MHz. range when the band is open. On the other side of the spectrum a half-watt FM on UHF will give you about a two-mile range tops unless you're talking between two mountaintops.

These technical differences are apparent when monitoring the traffic on FRS and CB. FRS radios are intended to be purchased, have batteries put in them, and be ready to go with a simple channel and maybe CTCSS tone ("privacy code") selection. They seem to be primarily used by



non-techie types. Except for a few bells and whistles, FRS radios are pretty much all the same. CBs on the other hand generally require a more technical know-how in that they have to be wired into a vehicle or to a power supply, and an antenna installed someplace. CBs can be either AM-only or have SSB capability, and there is a plethora of antennas and radio types to choose from. Some CB enthusiasts have hacked their units for additional frequency coverage above and below Channel 40 to achieve coverage of 25-30 MHz., and increase output power. Some operate CB with modified ham rigs. There are a number of books out there on the subject. The technical ability of some of the hardcore CBers equals that of ham operators. Some may actually be ham operators who still do CB. In talking on FRS radios I have never heard the equivalent of a ham's "CQ", and have never had a response from a general call-out for anyone who was monitoring the channel. I have heard individuals on FRS tell me that I was "using their channel" when attempting to communicate with my wife at the mall via this band. Now CB is hardly the pinnacle of communications, and people can be as obnoxious on CB as they are on FRS. In CB's defense however, I've never had problems getting a "radio check" from some local enthusiast with his "ears on", and often had a good rag-chew session for a bit. SSB CB in many instances sounds no worse than some individuals (hams) on the 20 or 75-meter ham bands.

Both FRS and CB radios have a place in the survivalist's commo equipment inventory.



A pair of Motorola FRS radios

For an individual who has yet to get their ham ticket or is operating on a limited budget CB and FRS radios offer a workable

communications solution. FRS is adequate for communications within a group, and could even be used for short-range inter-group communications. CB is good for when you need a little more range than FRS provides, and makes an excellent community communications network. Most groups I have talked with install a CB unit in their base locations, and in each mobile unit. Additionally, each individual also possesses two FRS handheld units.

When it came to FRS radios, groups have taken an "all or nothing" proposition. Except for bells and whistles, there is little difference between the \$15 FRS radio and the \$50 FRS radio from a communications standpoint. The "privacy code" is a gimmick to sell radios. All the "38 privacy codes" are is the standard PL/CTCSS sub-audible tones that have been in the ham and commercial land mobile radio rigs for years. All they do is keep from hearing other parties on the same frequency who might be running without a tone, or with a different tone. They will not keep others from eavesdropping, or interfering with communications. The one feature that is somewhat useful is the "voice scrambling" found on the high-end radios. While this is a simple single-frequency inversion system it will provide a modicum of privacy simply because it's not common. Radios with voice scrambling are among the more expensive units, so groups decide whether the little bit of security is worth the significantly higher cost. For the cost of a single high-end radio, one can buy five basic radios.

If your group is in need of short-range tactical intra-group commo, you can pick up FRS radios for \$10 each at Wal-Mart and outfit a whole squad for \$100. FRS radios are advertised as having a range of "up to 2 miles". Realistically the range is about a half mile to mile. For a group needing an inexpensive way to keep in touch over short distances while in the field, they are very useful. FRS radios are plug and play. You insert batteries, select a channel, and start talking. There are also 22 channel FRS/GMRS radios that you may see. The extra 8 channels belong to the General Mobile Radio Service, and require a license from the FCC to legally operate

on. Some of the FRS channels (1-7) are shared with GMRS. A GMRS license allows one to run higher power than FRS for longer-range comms. I will discuss GMRS in a future article. Some of the more expensive FRS radios advertise that they have "38 privacy codes" for a total of "532 channels of communications". This is a misleading gimmick, and those radios still only have the same 14 frequencies as any other FRS radio. The "privacy codes" are simply a subaudible audio tone (a/k/a "CTCSS" or "PL") that is transmitted under your audio. When used, it keeps you from hearing communications on your frequency not using the same tone as you. It's mostly used as a courtesy and a means of filtering out other parties who are using the same frequency from breaking your squelch. They don't offer any communications security. People with police scanners, and FRS radios that aren't using a "privacy code" can still hear you.

Since they maintain a tertiary status in my comms equipment collection, and there isn't much potential for radio mods with FRS as there is with CB, I stick to the least-expensive FRS radios. CBs I give a slightly higher regard to since they serve a very useful function while on the highway, and older high-end rigs are often capable of being modified to operate on the 10 Meter ham band. It should be noted that in an emergency situation, certain ham rigs could operate on CB and FRS frequencies. Many a CB "free band" hobbyist run a Uniden or Ranger 10 meter rig modified to go down to 11 meters. Inexpensive FRS radios can be had for \$10 on clearance at most discount department stores. Such a unit is the Bellsouth Model 2231, which regularly sells for \$10 at Wal-Mart. This is a combination FRS/GMRS unit that has 14 FRS and 8 GMRS simplex channels. While not equipped with "privacy codes", this unit does have a channel scan function.

If you are a "lone wolf" survivalist, CB will probably be your primary comms system. If your group wants comms over a longer range than FRS then you should favor CB. CB is not as plug and play as FRS, but can be a more powerful means of comms. CB operates on forty channels as opposed to FRS's 14. CB is also much

lower in frequency, which means you can go a lot further than a mile or two, although by FCC regs you can't communicate more than 155 miles. (A rule that is commonly ignored by many CB hobbyists.) Back in the mid-1970s, my parents installed a base station at home and mobiles in their cars. We consistently achieved a 20-mile range with our set-up, and would hear stations all up and down the East Coast when "skip" conditions were right. Even after getting my ham license, I still kept a CB rig in the car for getting info on road conditions. CBs are not as portable as FRS. Handheld CBs are about 4 times bigger, use twice as many batteries, and require larger and more cumbersome antennas. You can still however, put together a portable station that will fit in the radio pouch of a rucksack and out-perform any FRS radio. You can purchase a basic CB rig for about \$35 new; either a mobile unit or a handheld. Here is where things get interesting. If your group was going to rely on CB and had some extra money to spend on comms, you could upgrade to single sideband (SSB) models. Most CBs use standard Amplitude Modulation (AM). A higher end CB also has SSB. SSB is a form of AM that has a narrower signal than standard AM. AM has three parts: a carrier and two sidebands. SSB removes the carrier and one of the sidebands enabling you to talk further with the same amount of power. SSB also adds a little bit of "security through obscurity" since most CBs are AM only. AM CBers will hear this faint garbled voice-like noise if they tune into a SSB signal with an AM rig. Similarly, police scanners that cover the CB frequency ranges only receive AM. This is of course offers no security against someone listening in with a SSB CB or a good shortwave receiver (one with a BFO). CB is still more of a jungle telegraph than FRS, especially when traveling. In spite of

A classic top-of-the-line mobile CB unit:  
The SSB-capable Cobra 148GTL



the increased popularity of FRS, it still has no equivalent of channel 19.

For the most part though, FRS is more popular than CB with the general populace. Ideally, you should have both. In spite of its higher popularity, people are more "private" on FRS than on CB. Where CBers never thought of their band as "private", many FRS users erroneously believe their comms is secure because they used one of the 32 "privacy codes" on "their" channel. At the very least, every member of your group should take \$10 and buy an FRS radio. Now you can all keep in touch while in the field or traveling. Just don't expect much from an FRS radio going from inside one car to inside another car. You'll get about a quarter of a mile. The next step up is to put CBs in your vehicles. If you use decent antennas you'll get at least a few miles car-to-car, and they'll work much better than FRS radios. The factor that makes or breaks a mobile CB installation is the antenna. The ideal length is a quarter wavelength. For CB that is 104" or 8'8". Now you know why that little 2 foot antenna doesn't work very well. If you can't go with a full 1/4 wave whip antenna, then get a reputable 40-50" whip antenna such as a K-40 or Wilson 1000. They offer good performance in a manageable size.

MURS is an interesting animal with a lot of potential. MURS operates in the VHF-high band on 5 frequencies: 151.82, 151.88, 151.94, 154.57, and 154.60 Mhz. The last two were once low-power business band frequencies that were part of a group known as "color" or "dot" frequencies. The freq of 154.57 was "blue dot", and 154.60 was "green dot". This scheme is from manufacturers placing little circle-shaped stickers on the radio to indicate common low-power frequencies. The 154 Mhz channels see regular traffic from previously licensed users, and others. The 151 Mhz. channels are fairly quiet now, but I expect that to change. MURS handhelds are beginning to come onto the market at about \$100-\$200 each. I expect this price to come down in the future, like FRS radios. In spite of it having only 5 frequencies instead of CB's 40 and FRS's 14, there are some things you can do with it. MURS is allowed 2 watts output, which is

really about the same as CB, and much more than FRS. You can run external antennas like CB, and a 1/4-wave antenna is only 18" long instead of 104". This makes nice high-gain antennas on MURS much more manageable than on CB. That 45" whip antenna that only performed moderately on CB is now a 5/8 wave on MURS that gives you 3 decibels of gain; doubling your radiated power output. MURS uses FM (Frequency Modulation) and is higher in frequency than AM CB. This makes it less susceptible to electromagnetic noise. This makes it more reliable for local and regional communications in many areas. You can also adopt some of the tricks hams use on their two-meter band (144-148 Mhz.) to squeeze extra range out of those two watts of RF. All this may prompt you to go to the extra effort to get MURS equipment for your groups communications.

For the survivalist who does not possess a ham ticket, CB, FRS, and MURS radios offer an adequate alternative for short and medium range communications. FRS handhelds are handy for distances of up to a mile, maybe two. CB and MURS communications offer longer communications ranges for base and mobile stations. CB is an excellent means of collecting local intelligence information, especially on the highway. Who knows? After playing with the license-free stuff, you might decide to upgrade and get your ham ticket. Whether or not you do however, you'll still have two-way communications capability in the event of an "unforeseen circumstance".

*(Continued from page 6)*

best to get it in print. If you own, or know of a local (New England-based) business that has a product or service of interest to self-reliance and preparedness hobbyists, we are particularly interested in hearing from you. One of the future projects of PTJ is a New England sources directory for self-reliance and preparedness hobbyists. At the very least, please let us know how we are doing! Our email address is [ptj@hd-works.com](mailto:ptj@hd-works.com).



## PRODUCT REVIEW

The Independent American:  
The Magazine For A Free Life  
Review by Samuel "Omega Man" Freeman

Up until quite recently, there was no good hardcore-survivalist magazine on the market. Back in the 1970s, Kurt Saxon published The Poor Man's Armorer (partially reprinted in Volume II of The Poor Man's James Bond). The 1970s was also when the technological survivalists split off from the Yippies and the Youth International Party Line (YIPL) became TAP Magazine. Unfortunately, TAP (Technology Assistance Program) went under in 1984. The 1980s saw the existence of Omega Group's (publishers of Soldier of Fortune) magazine Survive. It was an excellent periodical, but way too short-lived. American Survival Guide, although not the equal of TAP or Survive, served as an adequate survivalist magazine during the 1990s. They later changed their name to Self-Reliance Journal, and then went under very shortly afterwards.

There are some very good periodicals out there for self-reliance and preparedness hobbyists. You have Home Power for the alternative energy types. Charlie Richie publishes the exceptional Backwoodsman; "The Magazine for the Twenty-First Century Frontiersman", although Charlie is quite up front about Backwoodsman not really being a survivalist magazine. There is also Dave Duffy's Backwoods Home, which discusses self-reliant lifestyles and contains a broad-spectrum of articles on various aspects of the hobby. Now I subscribe to, and recommend all three of these magazines to readers of PTJ. They are excellent periodicals lest anyone infer otherwise from this article. They do lack however, the sheer totally politically incorrect, hardcore survivalist whimsy that makes political liberals and other totalitarian statist types have cold sweats, nightmares, and increased urgings to repeal The Bill of Rights.

I always liked the down-and-dirty content of the old magazines like TAP and The Poor Man's Armorer. Some of the stuff you'd read would leave you with a mind-blowing experience that's better than any recreational chemical; kind of

like watching the movie Fight Club, but with the added awareness of the simple fact that what was just put in your brain will not go away and when it comes down to the wire you've got this knowledge that'll help you come out intact, if not on top. Recently, a couple of old-school survivalist writers got together and decided to put out an online survivalist magazine in the tradition of some of the old hardcore rags I knew and loved. Doug Bell (a Cybertech writer), Corceigh Green started The Independent American: The Magazine For a Free Life. So far, each issue has been no less than 70 pages in length. The first four issues were made available free of charge, and total more than 280 pages of survival information. That makes them for all practical purposes a free book on survivalism. They have assembled a number of high-quality writers, including our editor, to produce original material for the magazine. It's released online in "PDF" format, readable with the free Adobe Acrobat Reader software.

One thing that stands out about The Independent American is that all the material is original, no re-hashes and almost-plagiarized stuff you often see elsewhere on the net. The material content is balanced and well written. There are articles on everything from nuclear survival and firearms, to "Uses For Plants" and "Projects For Home and Life". Reading the magazine, I get the impression that this one will come very close to, if not reach the point of being like those old-school hardcore survival rags I used to read and love back in the day. At over 70 pages per issue, it's also a pretty substantial periodical. It also happens to be one of the least expensive periodicals on the market. A one-year subscription is only \$15, and it is published bi-monthly. This is definitely one you should subscribe to. They have a website up at <http://theindependentamerican.freeyellow.com/>, and will be setting up a Paypal account to handle online subscriptions. For the moment, you can send payment to:

The Independent American  
P.O. Box 1894  
Iowa City, IA 52244