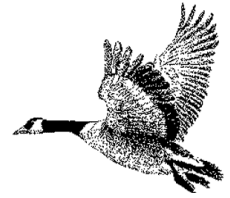


Ticom's Newsletter
(For Modern Survivors)
Prudens es erudio quod paratus



This is where it begins anew...

I have seen the future.

It doesn't lie in small bands of well-armed survivalists living in the wilderness.

The future is urban and industrial.

It is techie LMIs running countermeasure labs in converted 10pht spaces.

It is titanium ferrets: small, fast and vicious, operating in the post-industrial landscape of cast-off and re-purposed technology.

It is Gibson's Dog Solitude coming to life.

The future is hiding in plain sight, buried in the noise floor with the modern flotsam and jetsam.

It is a place where line of sight is restricted, range is danger close, but you can still see infinity.

It is where you feel the shape.

The aleph.

Odin's own Beowulf cluster.

When I began, I started this journey with a certain objective in mind. The system of the world had a technological underside, hiding behind a curtain that most people never even get the urge to look behind. Back in the early 1980s, or maybe it was the late 1970s, a gentleman whose name I never found out, showed me a neat trick you could do with a payphone. That was my first peek behind the curtain, and the start of a very long, strange, interesting, and enjoyable trip.

Phone phreaking, besides being a fun hobby, can also be an educational and philosophical metaphor for the system of the world. At some moment in time, I realized that in order to function as a free individual in this

world, one had to understand its systems, how they work, and how they can be worked. Being a phone phreak was good training towards that end.

After a couple years of stumbling around by myself, I found other individuals who shared the same interests. Personal computers were also coming en vogue, as well as phreaking's sister field, computer hacking. Now they call what we did "cracking." Modern "hackers" can argue the differences between hacking, cracking, and phreaking. I was there while it was going down, and to most of us there was little distinction between them all. It was the same path.

Growing up in New York's Southern tier, I was happy to discover that Gotham City, about an eighty minute train ride away, was home to TAP magazine, which was the bible of hackers and phone phreaks. Unfortunately, I discovered this just after TAP ceased publication in 1984. Fortunately, this guy Eric who lived in Long Island had just started up a new publication for hackers and phone phreaks. This publication was called 2600, and is now in its seventeenth year.

While all of this was going on, I also maintained an earlier interest in survivalism. Whereas hackers were very high-tech and cutting-edge, survivalists were usually low-tech and could have even been considered retro. It was mostly wilderness and rural in nature, but the best survivalists I ever had the opportunity to learn from operated in suburban and urban environments. This cross-training served me well when operating away from the keyboard.

After being in it for a while, I became comfortable enough with my skill level to help others out, as more experienced hobbyists did for me when I was starting out. I also observed that while TAP occasionally went into the

low-tech survivalist side of things, 2600 remained high-tech comparatively speaking. In talking with fellow travelers, I learned that there was a need for an "underground" periodical that covered both ends of the spectrum. Thus Cybertek: The Cyberpunk Technical Journal was born.

Cybertek had a good run, but all good things eventually come to an end. The Internet and its ready, freely available information (regardless of how correct or incorrect) dealt a death blow to many small periodicals. After twenty years of doing Cybertek, I decided to "retire." One of the reasons was that I had the perception that there was almost no interest in the path that Cybertek represented, its role as a guide for those wishing to travel that path was at an end. After my announcement, I quickly discovered that the interest was much greater than I thought.

So here in your hands is the first issue of Ticom's Newsletter (For Modern Survivors). It will be picking up where Cybertek left off, providing useful information for individuals who wish to function as free individuals in today's slowly declining and increasingly dystopian society. This could include high-tech technological stuff about computers, electronics, phones, or radios. It could also include low-tech stuff that's more survivalist-related, or stuff that really doesn't fit in any distinctive tech level, but is still useful for navigating the dystopia. Whatever information lies in these pages, it's going to be original stuff that was researched and tried in the real-world by its author.

My direct observations over the past few decades have left me with little faith in my country's political process, and in the possibility to any reform being done via the system. The status quo will maintain the current slow decline resulting in an eventual demise. Our hope for the future lies in educated and prepared individuals who maintain their self-sufficiency and self-determination, and is the basis for

the newsletter's motto, "***Prudens es erudio quod paratus***" or "***Wise are the educated and prepared.***" After the long hard reset, there will need to be a rebuilding process. It will be fellow travelers such as yourself that will have the skills and tools to be at the forefront of it, and not repeat the mistakes of the past.

And if by chance the slow decline does not result in a demise during your lifetime, you can at least be secure and enhance your lifestyle by learning and practicing the skills of preparedness, technology, and self-determination. This, actually, is the most important aspect of the path.

- Ticom

Ψ

Precious Metals Stuff

Many survival experts recommend investing in precious metals as a means of preparing for what most of us recognize as a complex, somewhat pointed transformation of America sometime in the future, and the resulting chaos that is expected to ensue. Typically, they recommend gold and silver. Their rationale is that gold and silver are good investments and that they can be used as currency during hard times. Others say that since "you can't eat gold" it will be of limited or no value after a societal collapse. While it is true that you can't eat gold or silver, their intrinsic value, as well as the intrinsic value of other metals, makes them useful in various technical processes for builders with the right expertise. These builders will probably accept them as barter for other goods and services.

I recommend investing in useful materials that you may need for your particular trade. ***If you don't have a viable profession that will withstand the upcoming reset and transformation, then that should become one of your biggest priorities.*** If that happens to

include “precious metals” that are useful in various industrial processes pertaining to your trade, then so be it. For many of us techies, that would include copper, silver, lead, and possibly gold. Maybe even potential semiconductor materials such as Galena.

“Galena?! What's so important about Galena?” I hear some of you say. With a small hunk of Galena and some assorted scrap parts, you can make something like this:



That is the heart of a crystal radio setup, made from a copper pipe cap, a piece of Galena, and some other assorted parts. The cats-whisker was made from the spring of a discarded Bic lighter. Add a tuning coil made from copper wire and some more scrap parts like this:



...and you can now listen to various AM and shortwave radio stations. Are you beginning to understand where I'm going here? At the time of this writing, you can pick up small pieces of Galena, suitable for crystal radio sets, for about \$5-\$7 each. After the reset, how

much do you think a crystal radio set, or at the very least its primary component, would be worth? What about in a possible future dystopia where radios are outlawed?

Galena is a mineral commonly found in many parts of the US, including the Northeast. Pull the right rock out of the ground, scrounge some other common parts, and you have a radio receiver that runs without electricity.

As Currency

There is nothing wrong with purchasing some junk silver coins from a local dealer. Allocate maybe 10% of your preparation budget after your necessities have been taken care of. You may also want to put aside nickels and pre-1982 pennies that are currently worth more in copper than their face value. Why? Because you will need something to buy stuff with.

Barter is OK for small scale stuff, but it soon reaches a point where it becomes unworkable. For barter to work, both parties must not only have and be willing to part with something the other needs, but also be able to come to a mutually agreed-upon value in order to conduct the trade.

This is where currency comes in. In using the word “currency”, I am actually referring to species currency, that is currency with an intrinsic value such as gold, silver, and copper. Currency using precious metals minted into recognizable coins has been a hallmark of civilization for thousands of years. I am not interested in devolving my standard of living after the reset. That would be very stupid. The coming transformation is an opportunity for us to do better.

The precious metal coinage for our purposes is going to be silver, as opposed to gold. Copper might also be used in certain situations. Gold is expensive, at around \$1200 an ounce. Imagine what \$1200 buys, and that is what you would be able to buy with a one-ounce gold coin. Silver and Copper

are less expensive. Silver is presently at \$20 an ounce. That makes a one-ounce coin more usable for day-to-day business. Silver coins are available in various weights up to one ounce, and are available in a familiar form as pre-1964 US Currency. That makes it recognizable to all but the most uninitiated.

I remember when the Liberty Dollar first came out. They were marketed as an alternative currency, and were minted as a one ounce coin of .999 silver with a stated face value of \$10. That face value was almost double spot price for silver at the time. As silver increased in price above \$10/ounce, Liberty Dollar requested everyone turn in their \$10 marked silver rounds to be replaced with one bearing a \$20 face value. Having to turn in your money so the issuing authority can reissue you "new" money is exactly what they do in third-world dictatorships. That however, was not the only problem with the Liberty Dollar.

Liberty Dollar's marketing was aimed at Sovereign Citizen/Common Law species currency advocates. While this enabled them to sell lots of silver at well above spot price, it had unintended consequences of the undesirable sort. The more dedicated disciples of the Liberty Dollar proceeded to advocate their alternative currency with the zeal and intelligence of a typical religious fanatic proselytizing to non-believers. Somewhere along the way, it was perceived by an unconverted individual that a Liberty Dollar was actually legal tender, which it definitely was not. Perhaps someone tried to deposit a Liberty Dollar at a bank. These things happen when you deal with mundanes.

The end result was Liberty Dollar being raided by the Federal Government under the auspices of a counterfeiting investigation. Based upon common knowledge of human behavior, I'm sure one of the Liberty Dollar disciples tried to "explain" things to an investigator whose primary aim was to hear that one thing that would justify a case.

Recently, other collector coin producers operating under the **American Open Currency Standard** have been producing various designs with some nominal denomination on them. Some of these collector coins are quite nice, but their price is well above spot compared to other sources of silver.

If you like the design of the John Galt or Lakota Nation AOCs one-ounce silver round, and want to buy one as a curiosity or because you like to collect coins, by all means feel free. If you are looking for a source of silver to put aside for the future, you are better off going to your local coin shop and buying pre-1964 junk-silver quarters, dimes, half-dollars, and dollar coins.

I have often found various collector coins in mint condition for a reasonable price at local coin dealers. What happens is that someone buys these collector coins, and then runs into a situation where they have to unload them to raise some cash. The dealer buys them at his standard purchase price which is somewhere below spot. That happens because unless a collector coin becomes somehow desirable it's really just worth its weight in silver. He puts them in his junk-silver bin where bargain-hunting silver purchasers find them and buy them for slightly above spot.

Precious metals are a long-term investment, and perhaps a hedge against economic decline or collapse. They generally increase in value at a faster rate than inflation, especially in uncertain times. Chances are you'll probably wind up giving your coin collection to your (grand)children, or decide to cash it out when you feel the value has gone up enough. You might even die before doing anything with them.

In the next installment, I will discuss using precious metals as a form of currency in both the present day and after the collapse and reset.

Ψ

Radio Communications Stuff

When I was first licensed, CW proficiency was a requirement for getting the ham ticket. I struggled through the 5WPM Novice requirement, and even tried a little CW as a Novice class operator. Back then it held little interest, and a few months later I got my Technician class. I had access to the VHF bands and the much more interesting packet radio mode. For a couple decades CW pretty much faded into the background.

Survival communications shares a lot with many genres of ham radio such as Adventure Radio, SOTA, HF-Pack, and GORC. These genres are almost exclusively QRP operations, and often CW. Why? Because when running QRP, CW offers the best bang for the buck, so to speak. Why run QRP? Because you can throw a battery-operated QRP rig in a MOLLE SAW pouch that will give you operations capability on all ham bands. Like this one here:

Yaesu FT-817 with
LDG auto-tuner in
milsurp MOLLE
radio pouch.



I now find myself dusting off rusty CW skills so I can play outside with QRP and CW. I came across this website:
<http://www.gsl.net/kf4kvg/cw.html>

It has a Java app for CW practice.



These days you don't need CW to get a ham ticket, but for less than \$100 you can buy and build a CW QRP rig set-up that will fit in a field jacket pocket. A fellow ham

in Maine sells QRP kits, including the famous "Tuna Tin Transmitter", at
<http://www.qrpme.com/>.

Are you beginning to see how this fits in with survival communications and survivalism in general? In a serious disaster, the local repeaters might go down, you might not be in a good location for low VHF/UHF simplex operations, and maybe running on emergency power. One solution: QRP HF rig with a NVIS antenna for "local" (out to 300 miles or so) communications.

So even though you don't need to know CW for a ham ticket, it is a useful survival skill and it enables you to get access to long-distance communications on the HF bands for less money than a new 2-meter HT. It also gives you another excuse to go hiking and camping.

Here are a couple websites for more information:

<http://www.hfpack.com/>

Portable operation on HF. Sometimes with military radios!

<http://www.sota.org.uk/>

Summits On The Air (SOTA)

<http://wa3wsj.org/GORC.html>

Great Outdoors Radio Club

<http://adventure-radio.org/>

Adventure Radio Society

<http://newenglandqrp.org/>

New England QRP Club

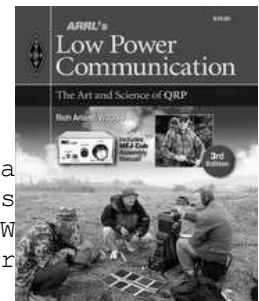
Further Reading:

ARRL's Low Power Communication
by Rich Arland, W3OSS
ISBN 0-87259-104-2

\$19.95 from

<http://www.arrl.org/>

The ARRL also offers a package deal of this book along with a QRP CW transceiver kit for \$100.



Ψ

Spook Territory

A lot of interesting things were talked about over the years in previous issues of both Cybertek and Technical Intelligence Communications zines. Powerful information to be sure, but there is the issue of integration. Getting it all to work together, and the mindset for doing so is what I refer to as "**Spook Territory**"; the place off the edge of the map where there be (the proverbial) dragons.

Like any other place, there are some ground rules will help you to navigate your way around:

1. **Keep your own council.** Be quiet about what you're doing. Too many individuals have dug themselves deep holes by telling of their exploits. You may come across fellow denizens, and share tips and tricks if they are deemed trustworthy enough. However, your best stuff you keep to yourself. That brings us to the second rule:
2. **Keep learning.** You need to be a jack of all trades, and a master of more than a few of them. Technology and techniques continue to evolve. You will need to keep current and find out if the new is better than the old. If you ever think that you know it all, then it's time to leave the realm. With all this knowledge, you come to the final rule:
3. **Practice.** Idle time is bad. If you are not actively engaged in a project, then go find one. There is always some new technique to try or gadget to evaluate.

The most important step for any beginner is to develop the **mindset**. You can read historical accounts or how-to manuals, but remember rule number one: The authors aren't going to tell you the good stuff. That's for you to figure out on your own.

The best way to develop the

mindset is whenever you see something ask yourself, "How can this help me survive and function as a free individual in an increasingly dystopian society?" and "How can this help me acquire information that will help me achieve the aims of my previously asked question?" At first your performance will likely to be sub-par, but that is when rule #3 comes in. As you continue to practice, you'll get better at doing this.

So now let's put all this in practical context, using articles in this issue, combined with a few other ideas that occurred to me as I was putting the final touches on this issue...

We talked a lot about "precious metals", including how one common mineral, Galena, can be combined with some other junk parts to make a simple, yet effective radio receiver. We also talked about the low-power "QRP" amateur radio subset, and how QRP radio gear can be physically small. All of this has definite relevance for functioning and navigating in a dystopia. By the way, I refer to the act of doing this as "**dystonautics**".

Now in most cases, this stuff is built in a plastic or metal enclosure and looks the part of a homebrew piece of electronics. A little uncommon in this day and age of manufactured throw-away stuff, but as of yet not something that would get you a one-way railway ride to Stalag 13 (unless you brought it into an airport). So despite the geeky perception you'll get, you at present don't have to worry about your crystal radio or Tuna-Tin transmitter on 7040 KHz. (That is, if you live in the United States or any other semi-civilized country that hasn't yet taken the road all the way to totalitarian collectivist hell). Of course, all our country needs are a couple of incidents, accidental or otherwise, to get enough of the legislative monkeys to vote for sending us there.

That's when you start thinking

about **Spook Territory**. In this case, we're going to go way out into the fringe and talk about something as innocuous as woodworking. Yep, making stuff, usually furniture and cute widgets, out of dead trees.

In most homes the furniture (and many accent-type stuff) is made of dead trees. You can even go to various craft stores and buy cute knickknacks made of dead tree stuff for you to decorate and make pretty. If you were looking for an electronics enclosure that blended in with your home decor, so the future Gestapo has a hard time finding the crystal radio you use to listen to the BBC, what could be a good material to use?

One a different note, keeping in line with keeping stuff spread out, what about building some wooden knickknacks that contain a secret compartment in which to hide some of those pre-1964 silver coins you're keeping as a long-term investment?

Taking this one step further, there is a geek cultural genre known **Steampunk**, in which they kit-bash stuff to make it look as if it's from the Victorian-era (alternate history). Research it.

Getting any ideas yet? Can you think of any advantages to having something functional look like a Steampunk cos-player's toy? (What's a cos-player, you ask? Research it. While you're at it, do an Internet search for "Steampunk's Guide to the Apocalypse").

For those of you who want to prepare for any eventuality, the tools you need to invest in are those of math, science, and technology. Being able to make, fix, and improvise stuff is the hallmark of the modern survivalist.

In ending, there is a book that I recommend all of my subscribers read. It's called Starving the Monkeys, by Tom Baugh. His website is at <http://www.starvingthemonkeys.com/>. Many people are calling it a 21st. Century version of Atlas Shrugged, another book

you should read.

Ψ

Chemistry Stuff

When I was shopping for first-aid supplies at my local Wal-Mart, I noticed that the chemical composition of the instant cold packs they sell had been changed. The traditional ingredients for instant cold packs were Ammonium Nitrate (AN) and water. When you crush the package, the inner pouch of water breaks and creates an endothermic reaction with the AN. The new composition replaces the AN with a mixture of Urea and Ammonium Chloride. This new composition is supposedly more effective at generating cold than the old composition. At present, instant cold packs being sold at other locations, particularly at the less-expensive odd lot/job lot stores, still have the old composition.

Urea is an interesting chemical: It is a component of urine, although these days it is synthesized instead of extracted. Still, knowing the old ways can be useful in a dystopian society. For those of you who are wondering, do some research on "Urea Nitrate", and don't be stupid with the knowledge you find. This is an example of the type of potentially useful information you will need to help rebuild things after the reset, or maybe defend yourself against aggression if another Hitler or Stalin comes to power. Until then, don't do anything that might jeopardize your ability to function freely and effectively in the future, and don't do anything that helps the monkeys maintain their status quo.

Ψ

Epilogue

So where would you like to go tomorrow? What questions do you have? What articles would you like to see in future issues? Please let me know. I can be reached via email or via the more traditional route of sending me

a letter via the U.S. Mail. Both addresses are listed in the masthead in the next column.

As you have seen, **Ticom's Newsletter (For Modern Survivors)** is different from any other survivalist publication you have seen. You won't hear about bugging out and you won't hear about stockpiling ammunition and freeze-dried food. You won't hear about how great the Tea Party is, how they are the hope for America, and how everything will be just fine if only we can get Sarah Palin or Ron Paul into the White House.

YOU and **YOU** alone are responsible for your continued survival and general overall well-being in these interesting and dynamic times. No charismatic leader is going to do it for you. Despite the assurances of media pundits that "we surround them", the truth of the matter is that they surround Us. We are the blacks on the back of the bus in 1950s Birmingham, and most of our fellow citizens will smile and cheer approvingly when our heads get busted for being too uppity.

However there is hope. Eventually the monkey collective will have their entire house of cards collapse. It's only a matter of time. For those who see it coming and act accordingly, it will be a much needed reset and time to rebuild America, not back into its former greatness, but into something even better and greater. And in doing so, we can hopefully avoid the mistakes of the past.

In the next issue:

- Setting up a workshop in a limited space.
- Using precious metals as currency.
- The fallacy of "bugging out".
- And more!

Until next time...



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