

American Preppers

When England attempted to maintain control of the colonial monetary system by providing the colonies with money at an interest rate, a sharp conflict arose. The colonies saw no reason for England to collect interest on currency when it could be produced in the colonies *without* interest. This and a growing number of other forms of taxation became intolerable when the colonists began to realize that the taxation rate would rise to meet whatever level of prosperity they were capable of achieving.

This left the colonists with the choice of either remaining as money cows whose productivity would be milked at will by a foreign master, or breaking free of this control. This was but one of many causes for The American Revolution.

Six decades later a revolution took place internally, but since it did not succeed it was relegated to the status of a civil war, even though the conflict was far more widespread and costly to both sides.

Revolution mentality has continued to ferment at less overt levels since then. The populous has generally despaired of overcoming by means of armed conflict. It has settled more upon a lack of confidence that the government has their best interests at heart, and can remain in control – whether as a defender of the people or as an oppressive ruler.

For many, this mentality has expressed itself as a move to prepare for individualized survival in the event that our complex economy should collapse. Although benign on the surface, at its heart it is a form of preparation for revolution that could otherwise be easily quelled by governmental control of the resources essential to survival.

Doomsayers

In the fifties when it became known that the Russians were now capable of producing atomic bombs, public school children were drilled in how to respond to a sudden brilliant flash – or to the command “Drop!” Concrete buildings with basements were labeled “Shelter,” accompanied by an atomic energy logo. People were building bomb shelters, and mountainous recreational areas became honeycombed with tunnels stocked with survival foods and military hardware. Many in America were getting ready for World War III. Those who began to make such preparations eventually became known as “preppers.”

As people became tired of holding their breath and as some international balance of power, and diplomacy began to arise, “The Cold War” became a name for this waiting game as global powers began to jockey for political and military advantages. Many began to feel that all these doomsday preparations had been overreactions. Those who had been less reactive began to express amusement towards those who had reacted, and gallows humor arose among some within the culture. In 1958 a song by Tom Lehrer reflected the “whistling in the dark” attitude of the day.

They're rioting in Africa
They're starving in Spain
There's hurricanes in Florida
and Texas needs rain
The whole world is festering
with unhappy souls
The French hate the Germans
The Germans hate the Poles
Italians hate Yugoslavs
South Africans hate Dutch
And I don't like any of them
very much
But we must be tranquil

and thankful and proud
that man's been endowed
with a mushroom-shaped cloud
And we may be sure that
on some happy day
Someone will set the spark
and we will all be blown away
They're rioting in Africa
There's strife in Iran
What nature doesn't do to us
will be done by our fellow man

Then along came Viet Nam

The Soviet Union was not confident enough to take on America militarily, and at least at the time they didn't consider the rewards to be worth the sacrifice. Besides, in World War II America had proven to be a nation capable of achieving just about anything. By this time we had already helped save the Soviet Union from the Germans, and even provided them with food to compensate for the economic failures of their socialistic farming experiments.

Still, Russia had an advantage over America during the cold war. The Soviet Union was a totalitarian society that could control their press, and brutally repress any other voice that dared to protest. America on the other hand at least professed to allow the free and open expression of everybody. She was by far the wealthiest nation in the world, and even her culture was envied and copied by everyone. Beyond this, many of her citizens had this archaic morality that had galvanized her to stand up for the rights and the protection of all oppressed.

Declassified documents later revealed that the Soviet Union had spent literally hundreds of millions of dollars in efforts to destabilize and demoralize the American culture. Colleges were heavily targeted in a bid to win the minds and hearts of America's future leaders.

The Judeo-Christian ethic and traditional values were ridiculed, and every loophole in the political and judicial systems were exploited to expunge the educational systems of Christian influence. Meanwhile other philosophies were freely taught. In some cases transcendental meditation was taught and practiced in grade schools – in blatant defiance of the anti-religious suits being used to wage war against Christianity. [Author: I personally knew a child who was required to practice transcendental meditation in a public school classroom.]

Newspaper and TV news editors became high-priority targets of either lucrative or career-threatening persuasion. The entertainment industries were also choice targets, and soon what has since been called “the golden age of television” was infused with sexual humor and geopolitical propaganda.

Songs were written to demean traditional values and relationships. In the early sixties songs like “Walk Right In,” and Gale Garnett's song titled “We'll Sing in the Sunshine” are examples.

I will never love you
The cost of loves too dear
...but I'll stay with you one year...
We'll sing in the sunshine
We'll laugh every day
We'll sing in the sunshine
Then I'll be on my way...
My daddy he once told me,
"Hey, don't you love you any man.
Just take what they may give you,

And give but what you can...."

Later this decade-dance continued with Glen Campbell's song "Gentle On My Mind," which continued to glorify the concept of uncommitted relationships.

Polarization was cultivated by providing selective historical facts and fictitious rumors to different factions. Conservatives were warned of the "domino effect" in which losing Viet Nam to the Communists would result in a series of other nations following suit. Liberals on the other hand were being instructed upon the corruption of the colonial France-backed government that was struggling to retain control and suppress the people of Viet Nam.

There was truth in both of these, but so much fiction and conflict were mixed in that the factions refused to speak to each other with anything but insults. The remnants of the colonial government were the ones who invited the U.S. to intervene and protect them from the communists. But communism – which had proven absolutely brutal and repressive when it took over China – was promoted locally by many as a positive alternative to colonial rule.

Peaceful protests were planned and implemented, but behind the scenes in the planning that conned sincere and peace-loving students into participating, special teams were planted in their midst. These carried hidden arsenals of rocks and bottles. As they led the students up to the line of defending police they would suddenly unleash their weaponry and retreat into the crowd, leaving innocent students to be unjustly brutalized by the reactions of the police. The flames of hatred seethed in this fulminating environment of escalating action and reaction. America was being torn apart from within. [Author: I know. I was there. I could see what was happening and had no option but to become numb to grievous situations that I was helpless to affect.]

Sometimes people posing as Christians or conservatives were interviewed so they could spout irrational and inflammatory rhetoric that misrepresented Christian and conservative views, into widely published venues. Rational responses were of no interest to a corrupted media.

Within all this, another generation of doomsayers was born. In 1964 a song titled Eve of Destruction was published, and was popularized by Barry McGuire the following year. Hallucinogenic drugs became popular for awhile, until it became clear that some who used them suffered permanent brain damage. Bands of runaways roamed the parks and lived together in crowded dwellings. Many of these practiced unbridled sex – sometimes even in public places.

In the midst all this political and cultural ferment a revolutionary culture was born. Mantras like "Down with the establishment," "If it feels good do it," and "Tune in, turn on, and drop out" became popular. Experimental communities shared resources and developed prepper lifestyles that would posture them well for a societal collapse. These often withdrew to idyllic rural settings and left the rest of the world to their own problems.

Meanwhile in parallel subcultures the cold war was waged more openly. Soldiers returning from Viet Nam were assassinated before a horrified public as they stepped off an airplane. An ROTC center was bombed by a culture that was clamoring for peace in Viet Nam.

One subversive group was exposed when a bomb they were building exploded and killed some of their own number. During the trial of the survivors it was revealed that a member who happened to have been absent that day was in fact a government agent who had infiltrated their group and given them instructions on how to make bombs. It was a monumental insult added to injury to the defendants in that he was given immunity as a condition of being states evidence. Still, it was claimed by the defendants that it was this infiltrator's instructions that had resulted in the explosion that had killed some of their number and exposed the survivors as terrorists. [Author: I personally saw fake instructions for making an explosive. Based upon my own knowledge of chemistry and some experience with explosives, this procedure would certainly have produced a premature explosion of at least a similar scale.]

As the sixties wound down the prepper mentality again became regarded with quaint amusement, the world continued on. Many who had dropped out returned to pursue productive lives – albeit with continuing threads of their counter culture and its brand of politics. Making money within the system wasn't all that evil after all. The justification for this betrayal was that they would “change the system from within.” Beyond all this, this once-mighty nation was soon to be disgraced by the loss of a war to a small and poorly developed nation – albeit backed by the massive support and propaganda machines of Russia and China.

Still, subversive funding finally landed a harpoon that would mortally wound the American conscience. It has been a slow, painful, and divisive death under which America continues to writhe in anguish and conflict.

A subculture that had vehemently opposed killing in a questionable foreign war was now forced to redefine killing – simply for their own convenience. It helped that by now the definition of morality had been freed from absolutes, so it could be molded to fit preference and circumstance.

In a historic coup of judicial chicanery a case was prepared in which the supreme court agreed to not prosecute abortions. They had tried to enlist the scientific community to define human life as beginning at birth, but no amount of bribe or threat could alter the fact that a unique, pristine and viable human life begins as soon as the chromosomes of a sperm and egg unite.

Once a mother or father justify the intentional in-utero killing of their own child, there remains no level of moral decadence beneath them. The desperate need for this redefinition of morality had been brought on by moral standards that proliferated unwanted pregnancies in the first place. Traditionally sex was only sanctioned in marriage, but now it was just as likely to occur between mere acquaintances in a coat room or the back seat of a car. Well over a million American children a year have since been killed in this manner.

America who started out as a refuge for people seeking religious freedom, was established as a God fearing nation, promoted generosity and justice on a global scale, now became the holocaust capital of the world.

With the fall of the Berlin wall and the fragmentation of the Soviet Union, state-mandated communism was exposed as history's most consistently proven economic failure. (“Communist” China's economic boom is a flagrant expression of state-supported capitalism – ironic.)

In spite of all this, the prepper mentality lurked within as a primal instinct awaiting another threat to bring it forth. This summons began to stir with the approach of the new millennium.

By then computer technology had become essential to life in the modern world, but was not prepared for the new millennium. As personal computers developed in the 70s, every byte of data came at a premium, so only two digits were used to define the year. This myopic practice had remained as a standard in personal computers as they grew in importance, and eventually became essential to most commerce. But now, with the approach of a new millennium, countless programs and computer operating systems would need to be rewritten to accommodate a *four*-digit year designation.

In anticipation of the potential chaos from computers that had heretofore been loyal servants, many began to hoard life's essentials. Some even began to purchase guns. Even many who had enjoyed lives of apathy in the past now became engaged.

Happily, the advent of the new millennium once again disappointed the preppers. Even so, another event in the early 90's awakened yet another motivation for prepper mentality.

In Rio de Janeiro on June 13, 1992, 178 governments (including the U.S.A.) voted to adopt a program called “Agenda 21.” This is a non-binding action plan of the United Nations that was born out of the UN Conference on Environment and Development held there. Among other things, it advocates the elimination of most of the world's population, and consolidating that which remains into small high-density areas. There is no reason to be concerned about conspiracy theories here, since the entire three hundred plus pages of this conspiracy is freely available for download as a .pdf file. In addition,

there are countless videos posted by people who are happy enough to explain it all to you.

In spite of the many ominous flavors within Agenda 21, the fact remains, that without long-term sustainability, mankind is doomed.

In more recent years the renown scientist Stephen Hawking of Cambridge University expressed urgency in the need to colonize extraterrestrial planets as soon as possible – extending prepper concerns to the interplanetary arena. He doesn't believe that humanity on Earth can last much longer. A few years before, his concerns had been based upon the eventual probability of collision with a massive asteroid wiping out humanity. But more recently, it had become the behavior of humanity itself that pushed him to a greater level of alarm.

So how are we to live between a world facing extinction, and enjoying the present? We could do a far better balancing act than we generally do. On the one hand it has historically proven to be a poor practice to sacrifice everything in preparation for an event that may or may not happen within the expected time frame. On the other hand being content with an older home that has plenty of potential garden space, and getting out of debt can posture you to better handle a world with nasty surprises.

A few hundred dollars invested in a small-scale solar electric system and a few critical tools could make the difference between a level of empowerment and total helplessness – should anything truly serious transpire. You might justify such relatively minor expenses as cheap survival insurance with a one-time premium. In the absence of room to store anything, there is no better investment than knowledge. It's very cheap to obtain information, and it could guide you into knowing how to behave in this uncertain world. Along those lines it would be a good practice to obtain text files and hard copy, rather than to depend upon an internet that may become censored or disappear altogether in your hour of need.

As the current generation of young people seek their way, they are burdened by a legacy of calculated chaos and the improbability of survival. They don't really mind it though, the innocence of childhood is very adaptable as long as it is warm and fed.

The challenges they will face will be accepted as the way things are, and though a previous generation may attempt to impose their own hatred of individuals and institutions that corrupted their own world, it will be passed off as boring history of no interest to them – as did their parents to those before them.

In the absence of a world that offers hope, the vicarious lives found in computer games and endless entertainment offers a soothing distraction. These are provided by other hollow people whom they are trained to adore. The advice of a medieval Persian hedonist becomes natural to them: “Ah take the cash and leave the credit go; nor heed the distant rumbling of the drum” (The Rubaiyat). Still, some of them have a problem: They are not afraid think for themselves.

And then there's this spark. From somewhere, in spite of the overwhelming decadence, morality would arise from unexpected quarters. Somebody would get saved and betray a lifetime of the programming and corrupting bias that had swamped the American culture. They would rise above the vile effluence of the societal norm and say: “This ain't right.”

A Letter To Preppers

Purpose

The elephant in the living room of traditional preppers is the big “now what?” when their stash of goodies runs out. A more practical solution is to become as locally sustainable as possible. This may be hard to visualize for urban Americans, but this concept of “war gardens” was widely practiced during World War II. It alleviated wide-spread shortages and empowered people to improve their quality of life through their own efforts.

As an aid to visualizing and deploying useful technologies, open and save technosmith.com/contents. Clicking any of the eighty-plus links on this file will take you to information related to their descriptive titles. These files may be simply read, or downloaded and saved. I would recommend accumulating a library of these writings (plus projects from other sources) for your personal library of sustainability techniques.

Biosphere 2

In 1987 construction began on the world's largest terrarium, consisting of 3.14 acres of greenhouse. They called it "Biosphere 2," (since Earth itself was considered to be Biosphere 1). It cost of over \$150 million, and contained seven different ecosystems with their respective plants and a few animals. Before sealing, it was also populated by eight humans who had agreed to remain in it for two years – plus a few chickens, goats, and pigs who signed no such agreement.

An unanticipated problem with oxygen consumption forced them to admit outside air long before the two years was up, so at least in this respect their experiment failed. But with the exception of the moisture in this outside air, the water conservation was total. The water was recycled for gardening and domestic use on an endless basis. The electrical power however, was provided by a fossil-fueled energy source outside, so the project was never truly sustainable.

The gardens that fed them during this time produced up to five times as much per square foot as typical gardens elsewhere, and the fruits and vegetables selected provided an extremely healthy diet. All of this was done without further deteriorating the surrounding desert environment. For whatever practical value the above experiment may offer, adding locally produced energy to this type of project might have made a sustainable existence possible.

The value of this project to us, is to help us visualize needing little from beyond a few miles of wherever we happen to be. This could reduce reasons to worry about economics, politics, environment, and material shortages. On the other hand, we would be free to engage (or not), on our own terms.

Such dreams can at least provide direction. If the steps we take now remain compatible with a sustainable future, they can at improve our security and reduce our damage to the world around us.

Meanwhile, in our own backyards:

So at this point we need only to focus upon our next few steps, and for these we would be wise to return to the "now what?" question raised at the beginning of this article. Here are a few of these actions that could relieve some of the pressures today, while progressing towards a more desirable future:

- * Optimize household level sustainability. A food garden may seem the most obvious, but what if the existing water crisis is compounded by everybody trying to do this at once? The garden itself must include all possible means of water conservation.

- * Minimize competition for decreasing natural resources, to free us from the effects of shortages. A generator isn't going to keep running on best wishes, but a modest 12 volt solar electric system could support LED lighting, charge cell phones, and intermittently power a laptop. As for transportation, reduce your need to travel.

- * Protect and enhance the environment. This would be a byproduct of increasingly depending upon our local environments, and of no longer depending upon things from far away places.

- * To the degree possible, expand these benefits to the neighborhood or barrio levels. This would provide a greater level of security to everyone.

Water

Water is the most critical commodity upon which all else depends. Biosphere 2 had a bottom under it that prevented its water supply from disappearing into the desert sand. Item #03040 on the above

contents list describes an experiment in which I buried a membrane under a garden area for conserving water. A sump in the bottom of this membrane is fitted with drain pipe buried in sand or gravel. A riser on one end of this provides access to monitor and adjust the water. The photos provided in this entry brag upon its results.

In lieu of building a greenhouse over it, you can place pavers on the surface to prevent much of the water from evaporating – and cut back on the amount of weeds as well. Item #03070 describes a method of using cement stepping stones that are staggered slightly to allow spaces for planting things.

With these on the surface and a membrane beneath, we have an extreme level of water conservation. Being able to monitor and pump out the water through the riser will also be important if rainwater catchment should bring the level up to where plants could be endangered.

From here, the possibilities expand in many directions – consider:

- * If you had one or more similarly equipped gardens on the property, you could perform some level of hydroponics by raising the water level to near the surface, and then pumping it all into another garden.
- * You could monitor the nutrients in the water, and amend them as necessary.
- * The rainwater catchment, combined with the subterranean storage, could be a major source in itself.
- * This might be combined with an aqua feature to improve the nutrients, and possibly raise tilapia or some other fish for food.
- * It might be possible to purify and recycle some components of domestic water to contribute to the system.
- * If an adequate cistern were added to the central part of this system, it would be possible to see the garden through periods of severe summer water restrictions. This would also make it possible to haul in and store water from any other regional source that might be available.
- * With a suitable distillation and filtering system, this cistern could serve as emergency water backup for domestic use.