

Stocking Up Against Terror

Many LDS Church members already have a head start on stockpiling food and water, but the movement is catching on

By GAMIN SUMMERS

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One of Tom Callister's first priorities after marrying Cami was to begin collecting food to store. Times were tight then, so the Callisters would pick up extra items when they went to the grocery store. If tomato soup or oriental noodles were on sale, they would buy a case. They saved plastic bottles from soda, rinsed them and filled them with water.

Tom estimates that over their first year of marriage, the Callisters spent \$200 on emergency preparation.

Five years later, Tom, 30, says his family (which now includes two boys, ages 2 years and 1 month) has "about \$2,000" invested in emergency supplies, which are stored in their garage and in their shed at their Kachina Village home.

His mother in Phoenix has joined with them in this project, and in the event of an emergency, they will share what they have amassed. They have developed a plan and a meeting place, should communications fail and transportation become difficult.

Most experts and emergency officials agree that it is always a good idea to be prepared for an emergency. In recent weeks, these precautions are taking on a new light.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Americans should generally be prepared for several contingencies, including natural disasters and hazardous materials spills, the latter of which could require instant evacuation.

FEMA recommends that people store the six basics — water, food, first aid supplies, clothing and bedding, tools and emergency supplies, and special items — in an easy-to-carry container, in case evacuation is necessary. Possible containers are a large covered trash container, a camping backpack, or a duffel bag.

According to FEMA, "a normally active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water per day." Water should be stored in plastic containers such as soft drink bottles — up to one gallon of water per person per day. FEMA advises to also keep in the home at least a three-day supply of water for each person, aside from the emergency portable container.

"Children, nursing mothers and ill people will need more," the guidelines say.

Tom Callister has five 55-gallon barrels of water stored for his family. He says that beyond the one gallon per day during the first three days, five gallons are needed afterward, including clothes washing.

YOUR 401(K) WON'T SAVE YOU

Why is this so important to Callister? It isn't just the uncertainty brought on by Sept. 11.

The Callisters are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and for them food storage and emergency preparation have always been a priority. Tom says he wanted his family to be prepared "because of admonishments from church leaders, but also because I want my family to be prepared for local or national disasters."

Added Callister: "Some people think that their \$1 million 401(k) will save them, but it won't."

When asked about resources, Callister says he has used publications from his church as well as "pantry" stores that had sprung up in preparation for Y2K.

"Things were expensive before Y2K, when everyone was panicking, and now a lot of people want to sell their stuff," since they think the danger is over. He said that even in recent weeks he has purchased storage items from people who wanted to get rid of some of their Y2K supply.

Karne Snickers, a manager at Peace Surplus, states that there has been an increase in sales of water filters, purification tablets, dehydrated foods, camp stoves and batteries in recent weeks.

"People have even asked for gas masks," she says, "which we do not carry."

Peace Surplus used to be an Army surplus store until about 17 years ago, she says, but now the only surplus items it carries are camouflage clothing and ammo cans, the latter of which are water sealable and used by river rafters to carry water and food.

Some folks are just starting to think about surviving on their own for a few days.

Paul Rizzo of Doney Park met with several of his neighbors recently. After a couple of power outages that lasted several hours, the neighbors decided it would be a good time to meet and discuss ways to deal with severe snow storms, major power outages, or any other natural or man-made disaster that would affect their area. They wanted to know how they could help each other in such a time, and they exchanged phone numbers and ideas.

Gus and Ruth Palmer, Flagstaff residents since 1944 and members of the LDS church, have been practicing emergency preparedness since 1939, the year they were married. Gus says they would put "a little of this away and a little of that." If there was "a chance for a bargain somewhere, we'd take advantage of it and store it."

They have bottled and canned fresh fruits and vegetables, stored wheat and beans, and recently Gus was bottling honey from his own hives, something he's done for 40 years.

The Palmers have four children, 34 grandchildren and 57 great-grandchildren, all of whom have learned the tradition of emergency preparedness.

When the Palmers' Mountain Dell home burned in 1986, two rooms were spared, one containing their food storage and one containing important family history documents. They consider it a "blessing that these rooms were spared."

When Gus found his honey, though it was covered in black tar, "the honey was still crystallized and not burned — we were able to save it all."

30-YEAR-OLD BEANS

Recently, Ruth cooked a pot of beans that had been stored for 30 years. She soaked them for 14 hours, and they "cooked right up and tasted great."

Gus tries to encourage Ruth to use the old items in their storage first, but she has a tendency to use the fresh ones. He teased that this is a "small item of contention between us."

The Palmers have one 35-gallon and three 55-gallon water barrels, which they refill with water every two to three years. They also have chlorine tablets on hand, a comprehensive first-aid kit, and three-day emergency kits that they store in their cars.

"We've had to use them a couple times," Gus states, referring to the three-day kits.

Gus and Ruth, who were raised in Taylor and Joseph City, respectively, say their parents "practiced food storage all their lives. They raised food during the depression and canned and stored it. They raised animals and used them for food." Gus and Ruth learned from their examples.

The Palmers also have a plan that allows the entire family to stay in touch in case of emergency. The Palmers' oldest son was abroad when he heard about the attacks on the United States, and Gus immediately e-mailed his oldest son and asked him to e-mail his other siblings to find out their whereabouts and status. Within an hour, he knew how his family fared, which was a comfort to him in a distant land.

The elder Palmers stress the importance of "rotating food storage, especially canned items and many freezer items, at least twice a year." They say, especially in this dry climate, beans and wheat will "last forever."

Or at least they make for a good supper after 30 years.

— *Gamin Summers*