

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

DISASTER PREP

BY DAVE ROBINSON
 Special to the Siuslaw News

Food supplies

Getting a kit together is a lot like planning for a camping trip. Let's see, we're going to be gone for six days so we'll have to take food for 18 meals, plus snacks, S'mores ingredients and drinks. Then comes the sleeping bags, extra clothes, tent, camping stove and on and on and on. The only difference between packing for a camping trip and preparing for a major disaster is with the latter, we really don't know how long to plan for.

Those living in Hurricane Sandy territory were still without some services up to 60 days following the arrival of the storm. By that time FEMA had arrived and other services, including food were brought in from outside the area.

I have read that grocery stores in the region were sold out within three to four hours. There were similar reports from other stores dealing in camping gear and supplies. Someone recently approached me and asked about food resources locally.

Although there are a few food banks in the area, they really are not set up to serve our entire region in the event an earthquake strikes our region. The food banks receive

supplies either from donated sources, program funding from various agencies that can be affected by the ebb and flow of available money or the generosity of local food drives and private individuals. These food banks routinely provide groceries to families in need in our communities. There is no cache of groceries in our county set aside specifically to be distributed in the event of a disaster.

Back in the Civil Defense days of the 1950s to 1960s, there were some resources on hand to be "activated" in case of enemy attack. There was an entire military field hospital stored in one of the buildings at the North Bend Airport. This unit contained everything, with the exception of medications and staff, needed to set up a Mobile And Surgical Hospital (MASH). That unit was dismantled sometime in the late 1970s. There are currently no government (or private) warehouses full of food in our area to be distributed in case of disaster.

So now we're back to the "YOYO" scene: You're On Your Own! Building a pantry doesn't require a huge extra outlay of funds. Start by watching the sales. Take

advantage of the "buy one, get one" bargains. One lady wrote to me and bragged she had saved \$7,000 in a year's time by using coupons, online bargains and shopping the sales. The side benefit was she had built up a very tidy stockpile of groceries as she did so.

If money is no object, there are literally hundreds (or more) websites selling disaster preparedness food supplies. You can order freeze-dried, dehydrated, canned or a combination of all the above. Some even offer free shipping. A word of caution, all the experts recommend storing food that you are accustomed to eating. During times of emergency, your body is already stressed and introducing an entirely foreign diet could result in some unpleasant gastric distress.

Dave Robinson is the postmaster in Bandon, Ore., and author of "Disaster Prep for the Rest of Us." He may be contacted at disasterprep.dave@gmail.com. Visit his website for more disaster preparedness tips, www.disasterprepdave.blogspot.com.

YESTERDAY'S NEWS

MOMENTS IN TIME The History Channel

- On Sept. 26, 1580, English seaman Francis Drake returns to England, becoming the first British navigator to sail around the world. Drake had set out from England on Dec. 13, 1577, with five ships on a mission to raid Spanish holdings on the Pacific coast of the New World.

- On Sept. 27, 1869, in Kansas, Ellis County sheriff Wild Bill Hickok responds to a bar brawl and kills one man. Weeks later he killed a second man in the name of law enforcement. While his brutal ways were effective, local citizens were less than impressed. At the next election Hickok was voted out.

- On Sept. 22, 1953, the world's first four-level interchange opens in Los Angeles at the intersection of the Harbor, Hollywood, Pasadena and Santa Ana freeways — 32 lanes of traffic weaving in eight directions at once.

- On Sept. 23, 1969, the trial for eight anti-war activists charged with violent demonstrations at the 1968 Democratic National Convention opens in Chicago. The trial turned into a circus as the defendants used the court to attack President Richard Nixon, the war, racism and oppression.

- On Sept. 25, 1978, a Pacific Southwest Airlines 727 jet collides in mid-air with a small plane over San Diego, killing 153 people. The Cessna's student pilot did not comply with air controllers' instruction to keep the plane below 3,500 feet altitude.

- On Sept. 21, 1989, the Senate Armed Forces Committee unanimously confirms President George H. Bush's nomination of Army Gen. Colin Powell as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Powell became the first black American to achieve the nation's highest military post.

- On Sept. 24, 1996, bestselling author Stephen King releases two new novels at once. "Desperation" was released under King's name, while "The Regulators" was published under his pseudonym, Richard Bachman.

LETTERS

Commemorating the Vietnam War

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration was instituted by the U.S. Government under the auspices of the Department of Defense.

The National POW/MIA Recognition Day is observed across the nation on third Friday of September each year, to pause to remember the sacrifices and service of those who were prisoners of war (POWs), as well as those who are missing in action (MIA) and their families.

Presently, there are 7.2 million living Vietnam veterans out of the 9 million who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces from Nov. 1, 1955 through May 17, 1975.

The Vietnam War Commemoration will continue through Veterans Day 2025.

There are 1,741 American personnel listed by the Defense Department's Office as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War, as of April 2009.

According to the National League of Families, about 90 percent of those people still missing were lost in Vietnam or areas of Laos and Cambodia under Vietnam's wartime control.

The POW/MIA flag symbolizes the United

States' resolve to never forget POWs or those who served their country in conflicts and are still missing.

Newt Heisley designed the flag, which features the silhouette of a young man. Heisley based his design on his son, who was medically discharged from the military.

As Heisley looked at his returning son's gaunt features, he imagined what life was like for those behind barbed wire on foreign shores. He sketched his son's profile as the new flag's design was created in his mind.

The flag features a white disc bearing a black silhouette of a man, a watchtower with a guard on patrol and a strand of barbed wire. White letters are typed above the disc, spelling out POW and MIA. A white star separates the words. Below the disc is a black and white wreath with the motto: "You are not forgotten."

Thank you for your service. You are not forgotten.

Tony Cavaro
 Florence

Gun control no joke

Boomer Wright makes an argument for knife control ("Knife Control" Sept. 9, 2015), satirically proposing that all knives be locked away to keep them out of the hands of people who could hurt themselves.

A pretty good joke and not without merit — in an earlier time and different place.

According to tradition, despondent samurai used a knife to commit Seppuku, ritual suicide, as a way out of despair.

Today, however, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) says that for 20,000 depressed Americans a year, Seppuku knives have given way to readily available firearms.

Unlike traditional Seppuku, the very nature of contemporary suicide is impulsive. A staggering 71 percent of people attempting suicide do so within an hour after making the decision.

The Brady Center's "The Truth About Suicide and Guns" tells us that suicide by firearm is two times more successful than hanging and three times more successful than poison. Suicide by drug overdose, the most popular method, succeeds only 2 percent of the time.

But with a gun, injury is instantaneous. No time for reconsideration or medical intervention: Death results 91 percent of the time.

According to the CDC data, Oregon has the second highest suicide rate in the country.

In 2012, twice as many Oregonians killed themselves than died in vehicle crashes.

Oregon's youth suicide rate has been higher than the national rate for decades. It is the second leading cause of death among Oregonians aged 10 to 24.

Department of Health statistics indicate that 16 percent of eighth-graders and 14 percent of eleventh-graders reported seriously considering suicide.

Hundreds of youths a year ages 10 through 17 are treated at hospital emergency rooms for failed suicide attempts.

Nationally, suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth, resulting in approximately 4,600 deaths a year.

A Harvard study shows that 82 percent of teenage suicides by firearms are done with guns found in their homes.

Suicide is a complicated problem. As is gun control. But, the one is exacerbated by the other.

Easy access to guns, a New York Times editorial points out, "presents an irresistible temptation in a critical moment of despair."

Mr. Wright's solution to the "knife problem" may be whimsical, but if applied to firearms, might just lessen the suicide problem. And that's no joke.

Arnold Buchman
 Florence



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor concerning issues affecting the Florence area and Lane County.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters should be limited to about 300 words and must include the writer's full name, address and phone number for verification.

Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Libelous and anonymous letters as well as poetry will not be published.

All submissions become the property of Siuslaw News and will not be returned.

Write to:
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Siuslaw News

Published every Wednesday and Saturday at 148 Maple St. in Florence, Lane County, Oregon. A member of the National Newspaper Association and Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. Periodicals postage paid at Florence, Ore. Postmaster, send address changes to: Siuslaw News, P.O. Box 10, Florence, OR 97439; phone 541-997-3441; fax 541-997-7979. All press releases may be sent to PressReleases@TheSiuslawNews.com.

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Wednesday Issue—General news, Monday noon; Budgets, four days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Monday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Monday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Friday 5 p.m.
Saturday Issue—General news, Thursday noon; Budgets, two days prior to publication; Regular classified ads, Thursday 1 p.m.; Display ads, Thursday noon; Boxed and display classified ads, Wednesday 5 p.m. Soundings, Tuesday 5 p.m.

NEWSPAPER SUBSCRIPTION RATES:

In Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$71; 10-weeks subscription, \$18; Out of Lane County — 1-year subscription, \$94; 10-weeks subscription, \$24; Out of State — 1-year subscription, \$120; Out of United States — 1-year subscription, \$200; E-Edition Online Only (Anywhere) — 1-year subscription, \$65.

Mail subscription includes E-Edition.
 Website and E-Edition: www.TheSiuslawNews.com

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