

Siuslaw News
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Opinion

DISASTER PREP

BY DAVE ROBINSON
 Special to the Siuslaw News

Kit building: Weeks 1 & 2

Let's revisit the motto: Get a kit, make a plan, be informed. I get comments nearly every day about this column. Most everyone is positive and say they enjoy the information. When I ask whether or not they're actually doing the stuff, quite often they admit that they know they should, but just haven't gotten started yet.

Both FEMA and the Red Cross recommend having a 72-hour emergency kit. That is having enough supplies and equipment to get you through three days without electricity, water or trips to the store. Just for the record, I think 72 hours is a good start, but a 14-day kit is even better. Maybe we should ask the folks back east that survived Hurricane/Superstorm Sandy if they think 72 hours is enough.

One of the concerns I often hear is, "I'm just not sure where to begin." So beginning today, I will be posting a step-by-step kit-building plan. At the end of this seven-part series, if you follow the steps, you will have a kit that will get you through the first 72 hours of most disasters. Not only will you have a kit, but you will have a plan in place that will increase your family's chances of survival.

Keep in mind it is my experience that kits naturally grow because once you begin you keep finding essentials that you just can't live without. So let's get started.

Week 1 shopping list:

1. A battery-powered radio, one with a NOAA weather channel and extra batteries.
2. Flashlights or battery powered lanterns, with extra batteries. Avoid using candles because of the fire hazard.
3. Water to last three days. At least one gallon per person per day. Start with one gallon this week.

Tips for Week 1:

1. Start with these items that emergency responders consider the most critical to get-

ting you through the first 72 hours until basic services may be restored.

2. Don't be overwhelmed by a huge list of items. I've identified the most important things. Just buy a few items each week and you will be prepared for the most likely emergencies in our area.

3. Commercially bottled water is recommended to ensure safety. Replace before "use by" date expires.

I suggest you keep your kit in one general location. That way, when the power is out, you won't be running around in the dark searching for your stuff. Every household is different and each house has a "best," if not ideal spot for your emergency kit. If you have a container in which to store your gear, all the better. One friend of mine uses an old ice chest for certain essentials. But most any good quality "tote" will suffice.

Our winter storms are, hopefully, a bygone memory for this season. Some of us experienced power outages, some were inconvenienced for a day or two due to flooding and a landslide here and there caused us some travel frustration a few times. All things considered, our winter was pretty mild and we breezed through in fine style. Even though our winter wasn't as harsh as some places across the country, the need to prepare is still valid.

"How do I get started building my kit?" Truly some folks are simply overwhelmed by the task. "What do I buy? How much do I need? Where do I store my kit?" are all questions commonly asked. My recommendation is that you keep building on your own until you have a minimum of 14 days' supplies, but this is a great start.

Week 2 shopping list:

1. Manual can opener.
2. First aid kit. Should start with gauze

and bandages, tweezers, scissors and antiseptic ointment. Add some hydrogen peroxide, alcohol, suture kit, the list is endless.

3. Airtight bags, storage containers and a permanent marker. I find that both two gallon and five gallon buckets with lids are ideal for storage. Use the marker to list the contents and the date.

4. Extra prescription medications, eye-glasses and contact lens solutions.

Collaborate with your doctor on this one. He (or she) will probably be sympathetic once you explain why you need extras. Your insurance provider may not be as sympathetic, but you might work with your pharmacy on this one.

5. Bring home another gallon of water.

6. Non-perishable food. Start with a few cans of meat, fruits, some peanut butter and crackers. Try to stick with food that you are accustomed to eating.

7. Plastic sheeting, tarp and duct tape.

Tips for Week 2:

1. Collect your supplies in one place. When the lights are out and confusion reigns, it is just simpler when your kit is together.

2. Consider having two kits. One at home and one in your car. Not everyone is at home when disaster strikes. There is a multitude of kits on the market, but it is still best to build your own.

3. Rotate your stock of food, water, medicines and batteries every six months to ensure freshness.

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 April 13, 1742, Handel's "Messiah," one of the world's most beloved musical works, premieres in Ireland. Although now associated with Christmas, "Messiah" made its world premiere during the Christian season of Lent.

- On April 12, 1861, Confederate Gen. P.G.T. Beauregard opens fire on Union-held Fort Sumter in South Carolina, launching more than 4,000 rounds. Two days later, President Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation calling for 75,000 volunteer soldiers to quell the Southern "insurrection."

- On April 17, 1882, several copies of Sheriff Pat Garrett's wildly inauthentic, fictionalized biography, "An Authentic Life of Billy the Kid," arrive at the Library of Congress. The first full, realistic biography of William Bonney (the Kid's principle alias) was not published until 1989.

- On April 14, 1818, Noah Webster, a Yale-educated lawyer with an avid interest in language and education, publishes his American Dictionary of the English Language. The dictionary, which took him more than two decades to complete, introduced more than 10,000 "Americanisms."

- On April 15, 1912, the ocean liner Titanic sinks into the North Atlantic about 400 miles south of Newfoundland. It was later discovered that the liner Californian had been less than 20 miles away but had failed to hear the Titanic's distress signals because its radio operator was off duty.

- On April 16, 1947, a giant explosion occurs during the loading of ammonium nitrate fertilizer onto the freighter Grandcamp at a pier in Texas City, Texas. Nearly 600 people were killed and thousands injured when the ship was literally blown to bits. Its 3,000 pound anchor was found 2 miles away.

- On April 11, 1988, actress and singer Cher collects the Academy Award for Best Actress for her performance in "Moonstruck." Cherilyn Sarkasian first became famous as the taller, female half of the 1960s singing duo Sonny and Cher.

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LETTERS

Living in Oregon

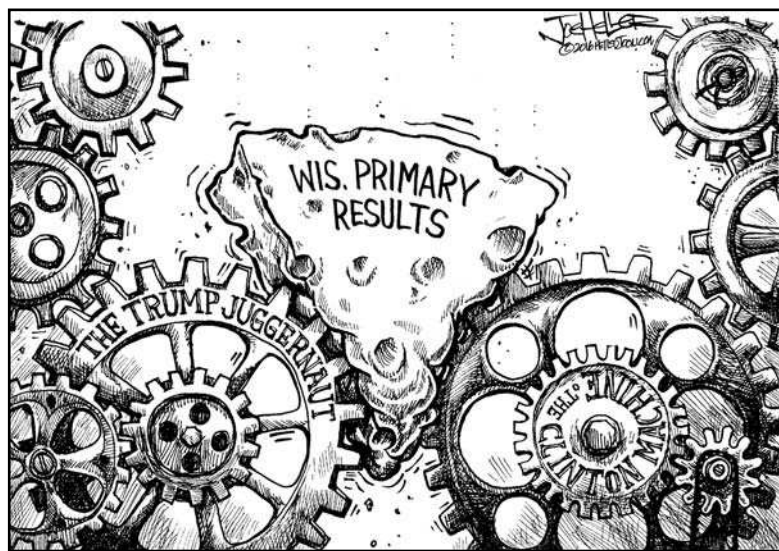
If there are any real native Oregonians still living in the state, they will probably take what I am about to say for granted. For those of us who hail from elsewhere, specifically California, doing business in this state is easier, by a substantial order of magnitude.

Over the past eight years we have dealt with several state and county agencies. When we owned our restaurant in Old Town there was the Oregon Health Authority, the OLCC, the Department of Corporations, the State Employment Department and the list goes on. Now, in Jane's law practice she deals on a daily basis with the Lane County Clerk and County Court offices as well as various other county agencies.

In all of this we have found all of these agencies to be consistent in their professionalism and their attitude toward the public. When you call people they often answer the phone. And, if not, you leave a message and they will actually call you back.

Even more amazing is that in almost every case, the person you are talking to will actually know what they are talking about. If, as we did, you came from California, then you can understand how refreshingly unusual this is.

It seems to me that here is some-



thing the State of Oregon ought to be selling. It might help to offset those other things the state does so successfully discourage business development.

Jimmie Zinn
 Florence

Safe travel

My wife and I are going to Europe in June, which includes three days in Paris, a cruise on the Mosel and Rhine rivers and a personal guide on the Romantic and Castle roads of Germany. We have had a number of friends questioning our decision due to the possibility of a "terrorist" attack.

My response is that we are more likely to be killed at home by an elderly driver. Around the country

in the past few years elderly drivers have killed people in Santa Monica, Calif., and driven into places of businesses because "they thought they were hitting the brake and not the gas pedal." Driving in Florence is an experience much more dangerous than driving on the streets of San Francisco or Los Angeles.

What we need to do is to have elderly individuals (like myself) take yearly driving tests. The test, like in some states, requires a person to take a written exam or to answer true or false questions followed by a visual exam requiring one to have the ability to identify images like a stop sign, do not enter, one way and speed limit signs.

What should be required is to have a reaction test. If looking at a

computer screen and a red light comes on, if one is unable to clap their hands together in two seconds they should not be driving.

Win Jolley
 Florence

Feeling the Bern

Are you "Feeling the Bern?" If so, please note that you must be registered as Democratic by April 26 in order to vote for Bernie Sanders in the closed Oregon Primary Election on May 17.

If you are registered to vote and Unaffiliated, you may vote in the General Election in November, but you are not eligible to vote in the Primary Election to choose your presidential candidate.

It is easy to change your voting status from Unaffiliated to the Democratic Party. You can go online at oregonvotes.org or to any Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) office and fill out an Oregon voter card.

This must be done by April 26 in order to choose Bernie Sanders as your choice to be the Democratic nominee for President. If you are not registered to vote at all, the same thing applies.

Join the revolution at #FeelTheBern. Tell all your friends and register Democratic.

Susan LeClaire
 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.

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