

I'd like to make a Withdrawal

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Chapter 1

People might call me many things if they knew me better — things like doomer, prepper, survivalist, or just plain crazy. But people don't know me very well and I hide my prepper tendencies, so everyone just thinks I am a regular guy. Obviously my wife knows and though she doesn't share my feelings of doom, she lets me do most everything I want as long as it isn't too much off-the-wall. So my wife helps tremendously just by keeping me grounded in reality.

She is fine with me storing a lot of food because she knows that we will eat it up at some point anyway. And with food going up in price it makes economic sense to buy extra, especially if we can buy items on sale that we like to eat. So that part is fine.

And when I said I wanted to withdraw a bunch of money as cash just to have at home in case of emergencies (or bank closures) she really did not see the need but she also saw little harm in doing so because we basically earned zero interest on the savings anyway, so she went along with it.

When I bought a generator in case of power outages, she was all for it. We live well out in the country and loss of power happens here sometimes. And she said it would certainly be nice to have a generator. Plus all the neighbors have them too.

She questioned me when I bought a metal fifty-five-gallon drum at a yard sale but I told her that the generator would do little good if we had no fuel for it when we needed it. She understood that right away and the only question was where I was going to put the thing so it would not

make the place look trashy with more junk around. I told her I had a plan so no one would see it.

After I got the drum home, I rinsed it out with just a small amount of gas so the fuel I would put in would not get contaminated. I bought some black roofing tar and coated the outside of the drum with it while also making a mess of the old clothes I was wearing at the time. Next, I dug a hole in the ground to set the drum in so it only sat about three inches above ground. High enough so rainwater would not pool on top but not high enough to be noticeable above the grass.

Once buried I filled the drum with gas and added some fuel stabilizer to it. Between the stabilizer and having the drum in the ground to stop wild temperature swings, the gas should have a long life. I added a simple hand pump to the drum and made a somewhat decorative pile of rocks around it to mostly hide the pump and that project was done (it was behind the shed anyway). When completed it was wife approved so I was totally in the clear and I now had fifty-five gallons of spare fuel on hand, plus whatever I happened to have in gas cans which got used for all the gas machines we owned, like the lawn mower.

The main reason I wanted the generator and extra fuel was so we would have the ability to run our well pump for clean water if the power ever went out for a longer length of time. I never mentioned that to my wife. I guess I just forgot.

So we now had both food and water taken care of in case of serious problems. And with the cash on hand, we had the means to buy items if stores were ever open but the banks were not. Even before we were married, I was something of a gun collector and a hunter and my wife thought nothing about how many or what guns I owned. She even spent some afternoons shooting with me on occasion which she seemed to enjoy. So I also had the means for defense covered if it ever came down to that,

plus I could hunt from home to add to our food supply if ever required.

It gets fairly cold here in the winters, cold enough so you would certainly want heat in your house. We heated with a propane furnace, which required electric to run but we did have two small non-electric gas heaters and also a wood stove in the main room. The wood stove came with the house and we very seldom used it. My wife did not like the mess involved with burning wood. But that wood stove would still work just fine if ever needed it. Off and on in the winter, I would start a fire in it just for fun. It had glass doors so you could watch the fire inside and my wife liked to use it occasionally.

I also had a plain wood stove in my shop, so that explained the huge pile of firewood I had built up. My wife never said much about the large woodpile. I kept it neat and inside the open front lean-to, I had built on one side of my shop/garage building. So I had heat covered in case things ever went bad too. Plus the house wood stove had a flat top that could be used for cooking though we did have a gas kitchen range and we had two fair sized propane tanks that made sure were always full or close to it. One tank came with the place and I had bought another that I found online from a local person.

Yes, I was happy because emergency wise we were sitting pretty well prepared. My wife liked to garden and grew a lot of vegetables every year. She did this just because she liked doing it and never thought about what a great preparedness item that big garden really was for us. I made sure she had plenty of jars and lids for canning the stuff from her garden.

I had often thought about installing solar power but financially it just made no sense at all for us. Solar's only appeal was strictly for its preparedness value and it would be a huge expense that I could not justify, even to myself let alone my wife. I did have the solar setup on the roof of

our RV and that was big enough to run the standard refrigerator in there. I could install that compact refrigerator in our house and use the solar panels to run it if times ever required it.

So I was quite happy with how well we were prepared for troubled times if they ever did happen here. I did not really think we would ever need everything I had done because we lived in the middle of nowhere with no large cities even remotely close to us and obviously nothing ever did happen like what I had prepared for anyway.

Chapter 2

The clerk must have seen the shocked look on my face at the grocery store when my credit card was denied because she spoke up right away.

“Those bank cards are not working today for anyone.”

“Oh. I can pay with cash, so it is not a problem.”

We always use our credit card for everything we buy just to get the one and a half percent cash back. Plus it is handier to use anyway. I had never had the card denied before and I can only imagine the look that must have been on my face when it wouldn't work. I always carry quite a bit of cash on me (just in case) so it was not even an inconvenience for us when the card did not work. I do know that some people carry no cash and rely totally on their debit or credit cards. It would be a very big problem for those people if their card did not work.

Tonight on the news they had a short one or two-minute story about our bank having technical problems and said they should have it fixed shortly. Besides the cards not working it sounded like all their online banking transactions were not working too. A very big deal but apparently it was only that one big bank having the problems.

Everything was fine the next week when we used our credit card. But in the store, we happened to see one of our neighbors and she said she could not use her debit card from the credit union today. Again it was not a big deal for her but it did make me think. To me, it seemed very odd that first, one very large national bank would be unable to do any credit transactions one week and then a credit union would have what appeared to be the same problem a week later. On the way home I stopped at our

bank and withdrew several hundred dollars cash just to boost what we had stored at home.

Time went past and I heard of no more bank problems and I admit I completely forgot all about it. There were always fresh new things to be concerned about anyway. Then we had to drive to the closest small city for a doctor's appointment. It was just a yearly check-up and that went smooth. After that was done, we stopped at the Walmart there like we always did if we were in the city. We shopped at the local stores most of the time but prices were way cheaper in even this small city at the Walmart so if we had to come here anyway we always shopped and bought a lot of stuff before going home.

So we stopped at Walmart and right way we saw something was going on. There was almost a fight going on at the checkout. There was yelling and we saw a security guard heading quickly for the checkout area. My wife nor I even knew they had security guards here. Then I walked back to the entrance door. I had noticed a white piece of paper taped to all the doors but I never looked at it when we entered. I looked now. It said cash only.

Now I remembered the bank problems of a couple of weeks back.

"Should we just leave?" My wife asked.

"No. We will shop and this time each of us will have a cart. I think this a bad thing. We're here and if it gets very bad, the police will show up. Likely they have already been called. Let's shop, buy a bunch of stuff we can use and then get home."

So we each grabbed a cart and started our semi-regular shopping. Instead of just buying one or two of something on our list we bought extra. We bought way more than we usually ever would have on a regular trip. The checkout girl seemed surprised at the two full carts when we finally got to the checkout.

"It's cash only!"

“Yes. I saw the signs. I have some cash.”

I actually still had all that last withdrawal from the bank plus what I usually carried on me. I had forgotten to put that extra cash in safe when I got home that day. Now we would put it to use.

I had plenty of cash and we paid and left the store with no issues. On the way home I stopped in the little town closest to our place and filled the truck’s gas tank so it would be full too. It seemed strange to have to go in and give the clerk cash before I could start pumping gas but I guess some people always did it that way.

I was anxious to watch the news that evening at home. This time the bank cards not working was the lead story along with some violent clashes at some stores because of the bank card snafu. The news station did not seem to have any hard news about what caused the banking problem or exactly when the problem would be fixed. They did say that this was a real problem for those on the food stamp program because that money was all on bank cards for those folks. I had forgotten that fact. That is why there were some violent clashes.

This was a big deal. A very big deal if it didn’t get fixed right away. If all the cards were still down tomorrow, then I expected a whole lot more violence in the big cities mainly because of the EBT cards for the people on the food stamp program.

This could be it. This could end up being the event that I had been preparing for but that I really thought would never happen.

Three days later and there was still no change in the bank situation. On the fourth day, we went into the small town closest to our place. My wife, Jennie, wanted a few things at the grocery store, mostly stuff that they had on sale. I took the two empty gas cans we had and thought I would fill them with gas while in town.

We stopped at the hardware store for a just a couple small things I wanted and from there we went to the grocery store. Both places had cash only signs. We bought a few things at the grocery store and walked out to the pickup.

There was a guy in the box of my pickup!

“Get out of my truck!”

“I need this gas. Sorry old man.”

I drew the little automatic pistol that I always carried and pointed it at him. He was trying to get the ratchet strap off the gas cans.

“Two empty gas cans are hardly worth getting shot over.”

That made him look at me. I decided right then that if he moved towards me at all he was getting a couple of bullets in his gut. My pistol was not shaking and I had taken up the slack in the trigger. He looked at me and must have seen something because he hopped out of the pickup box on the off-side from us and walked away pretty quick.

I glanced at my wife and she was as white as a ghost.

“It’s okay. Nothing happened.”

She said nothing for a whole minute. She did not move and I’m not even sure she was even breathing.

“Would, would you have shot him?”

“If he moved towards me or you he would have died. But he didn’t and he is gone. Everything is fine now.”

“We have to call the police!”

“No, we don’t because he’s gone and nothing happened. I’m sure they are busy anyway. Let’s just go home.”

I helped her into the pickup but I also kept an eye open for if that guy came back. I drove into our bank’s parking lot but I saw the closed sign on the doors and drove out again without stopping. I did stop and fill the gas

cans and the little bit the truck tank took too. Then it was a quiet ride home. We did both notice that even for a weekday our little town seemed to have fewer people around compared to normal.

Chapter 3

I found it hard to believe that I had to pull my gun in our little town. I have always carried everywhere and even my wife thought nothing about it anymore because I have been doing so for such a long time. This was the first time I ever drew my pistol except for once I shot an elk that had been hit by a car and was still barely alive. I had put it out of its misery.

By mutual decision, we would be staying home and going no place for some time. Jennie had calmed down by the time we got home. She was the one who suggested we just stay home and I quickly agreed with her.

The news on the television was awful in the big cities. By this time at the request of the mayors in larger cities, the Governors of many states had deployed the State National Guard units to try and uphold the peace. Curfews were in effect in many cities.

It wasn't just that people could not use their credit or debit cards because the banks themselves were closed so you could not even get to your own money held there. So there were no runs on any banks.

The next night there was a special television announcement from our President. We watched it and it was quite short. He said the banks obviously are having serious problems and this is negatively affecting the whole country. Because of that, he had ordered all banks to re-open tomorrow and remain open for their normal business hours.

He was quick to point out that the bank problems were not yet resolved but they would at least re-open for regular business. There would be capital controls in place to limit withdrawals to a maximum of three hundred dollars for all personal accounts. Credit card and bank card use

was a different matter. But he had ordered the banks to cover all existing EBT cards for up to fifty dollars. This would allow all food stamp recipients a chance to get at some food items. Also, all citizens with money in the bank could at least access some of their money.

He also said that the Treasury Department was working closely with the banks in an effort to get this whole mess cleared up. With that, he signed off.

He never really said what was wrong with the banks. Nothing was said about why it was happening only that he mandated some relief for American citizens. Was this all caused by some kind of hacking attack? Or was it caused by banks having major liquidity issues? Were all the big banks now bankrupt? Eventually, all us peons would be told some kind of story about why this happened and why it was still not fixed. I had figured that it was some kind of hack attack but at this point, I was not so sure anymore.

I did admit that at least what the President had done should ease things quite a bit. I briefly thought about driving to town and taking out as much money in cash that they would allow us but changed my mind. I would wait at least a couple of days and see if there were further developments. I was in no hurry to back to town after that episode in the grocery store parking lot the last time we were there. I would wait a bit.

The next day was Friday and on the evening news, they showed that there were still protests in the streets of several cities. But they did not report any further violence. The news never mentioned anything about all the National Guard units in the cities. I assumed they were all still in place.

Then it was the weekend and other than more protests not much was reported. There was no mention of what was being done to fix the bank situation. There were no interviews from "experts" about the problem. That made zero sense to me. The news shows always interviewed

some so-called experts on every problem. And it should be very easy to find many people in different positions that would have ideas about this national emergency. So why no talking about it? It would not just go away if we ignored it. Was this some kind of media blackout?

Monday came and on the evening news, they said the President would again address the nation shortly. It was about nine o'clock our time when he came on finally to hopefully tell what was going on with the banks.

"People of the United States I come to you tonight to address the problem we are having with all the national banks. The cause of this mess is hacking attacks simultaneously on all these banks. Some banks had suffered hack attacks before but this time it was much more serious.

The hackers were able to gain complete access to all bank accounts. While they had this access, they did an amazing amount of damage in a relatively very short time span. They were able to move funds around, to and from, every account. At this point, we still do not really know if any money was actually taken. It is possible they just jumbled everything up. It is also possible that some money was removed.

All or at least most accounts were affected. This would be an easy fix if the banks could just look at the date on the transfers but the hackers were smart enough to show many different transfer dates that we now know were fictitious. Some of these dates were almost a month back. Let me make this clear. Any money you have in any US bank is secure. You will not lose any of your money. But you will not have full access to your money right away.

The best minds in the nation are working day and night to fix this problem. We will prevail. If money was removed from the banks, it would not affect your balance. All bank deposits are insured by this government through

the FDIC, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Again your money is safe.

I have increased the amount you can withdraw to five hundred dollars. Hopefully, this restriction should be removed totally by next week at the latest. Rest assured this problem will be fixed and things will return to normal very soon.

Thank you for your patience. Good night and may God bless America.

Well, that was interesting. I wonder if there was any truth in it. At least he was brave enough to make the speech himself and directly address the problem. Of course, that does mean everything or even anything he said was the truth. Only time would answer that question.

Then on Thursday night on the evening news, the broadcaster announced that all or at least most banks would resume normal operations very soon. Some would be up tomorrow with more up over the weekend and the final banks should be fully operational by Monday. Also on Monday, the capital controls would be dropped and any withdrawals could be made as normal. He did warn bank customers that even with the withdrawal limits removed the banks might not have enough cash on hand to cover very large cash withdrawals.

He also gave some insight into why it was taking so long. All accounts at all banks had to be compared to archived records that the banks made every single day. To make sure of no mistakes all the accounts were compared to two separate archived records. Then separate bank card and credit card transactions were also compared to separate archived records and compared to business records where the actual transactions supposedly took place. This was millions of transactions in total.

But now things were all sorted out and all business would go back to normal on Monday at the latest. He then urged everyone to take some cash out of the banks if they

needed it but said the problem had been fixed and new safeguards were now in place so this would never happen again. With the banks shut down they took advantage of that time to upgrade all their safety measures while adding new ones to every system. Specific additions were added for things exactly like what had occurred and for other possible combinations that might previously have been possible. Your money is now safer than ever before.

We'll see, I thought.

Chapter 4

While we had no reason to go back to town to check for ourselves, the news reported everything was normal on Monday evening and for several days after that too until the huge banking fiasco became old news and dropped off the radar. Basically it was situation normal, nothing to see here, move along.

And so it was across our nation. National Guard units quietly left the cities and there were no further protests. There was a small run on the banks but apparently that had been expected and banks had extra cash funds available and everyone that demanded their money was given their money. The news reported burglaries and armed robberies spiked because so many people drew out cash and the bad guys all realized this was an excellent opportunity for them to take advantage of people.

At our place, it was situation normal. But I was especially uneasy. I could feel trouble in the air every day and I just could not shake that feeling. Jennie noticed how edgy I was and asked what was wrong. I could not lie to her because she would see right through me like she always has since we were married so many years ago.

“I feel things are going to get real bad. Much worse than that little ten-day fiasco we went through. And I mean much worse.”

“But they fixed the banks and everything is going smooth everywhere. Plus I bet many other people now keep some cash at home as we do so it should not be as bad if it happens again.”

“You’re partially right, but I don’t think it will be the same thing as last time.”

“So what do you think will happen?”

“I don’t have any idea but I feel the dread every day. Something is coming.”

“I know you haven’t been sleeping and you are on edge all day long. What do you want us to do? Aren’t we set up pretty good right now for anything?”

“Yes we are way better off than almost everyone but we could do more. Let’s make another trip to the city and just buy a few more things.”

“If it will make you feel better, I’m okay with doing whatever you want to do.”

So the next day we made a special trip to the small city just to go shopping. We did not buy Walmart out but we gave it a try. We shopped part of the store, paid, and brought those two carts out to the pickup and put them in the back seat area. Then we went back inside and bought even more which almost all of had to be put in the box of the truck. I had expected that and brought a tarp with so that nothing would blow out on the drive home. We had a late lunch at a little fancier restaurant than we normally ate at when in town. We then stopped at the branch of our bank and closed our savings account, taking all the money out in cash.

On the way home I stopped at a gun shop and bought some ammunition that Walmart did not carry even though I had bought plenty of other ammo while we were in Walmart. I also bought an inexpensive scope and mounts because at my age the iron sights just did not work as well as they used to for me. I needed no more guns because I had more than the two of us could use now anyway.

My mind was more at ease as we drove home. After putting everything away and finding new spots for all the extra stuff, I slept like a baby all night for the first time in a while. Maybe I was just plain tired, or maybe it was because I was finally at ease knowing we had done what we could to be prepared.

And then nothing happened. The days and then the weeks went by with everything being normal. We shopped in our little town every week or two and everything was smooth as could be.

The season changed and Jennie had put in her garden the same as always. One of the things I had bought plenty of was a few more canning jars but mostly a large supply of canning lids (on top of what we already had at home). When Jennie had picked out the garden seeds, she wanted I looked at what she took and added three times as many to the cart. In theory, we had enough for at least four years. The total price was small and we would always use them in the future anyway.

I have installed the new scope on one of my rifles and I was again a dead shot with that gun. I now had three rifles with scopes on them.

The Walmart we went to had a section of large cans of long term storage food and I had completely filled a cart, including the bottom rack with them. Previously we had bought some, so this batch just increased what we already had in storage. I only bought one of the big cans of freeze-dried eggs because we got all our eggs from one of the close neighbors and I figured no matter what happened those chickens would keep laying eggs. And they had a couple of roosters so they could and did raise additional chicks every year.

We were now sitting pretty you might say. More time passed and Jennie was busy in the garden and had started canning. I did supply what help I could to her even though she did most of it herself by her own choice. And still, everything was smooth sailing in the nation and mostly across the whole world.

Of course, that did not last.

We did not have the internet or even a computer but the news made a big deal one night because the internet was down. I just did not think it was that big of a deal. So

what if people could not update their Facebook page or play some online game. No big deal.

But I was one hundred percent wrong. You see it was a big deal. No credit or debit cards worked again. You see those all go through the internet for every transaction. Countless every day things used the internet to function and now the internet was down across not just the nation but apparently across the whole world. And it caused as many problems in other countries as it did here.

The next day it was the only thing on the news. It was almost identical to the bank situation we had a few months back. Only the news said this was much, much worse. I did not understand everything that was impacted by this simple internet outage but thanks to the news I was learning. It was bad.

It was summer and I always had the propane tanks filled in the summer when propane was the cheapest, so I called and ordered a fill. When I called the girl said sorry but we are taking cash only at this point. I assured her that I would pay the driver when he delivered. So that was a done deal.

I did learn that not only plastic cards used the internet for every transaction but most businesses also ran checks through a machine just like they did for credit cards. Those businesses now mostly did not accept checks either, so it was cash only. Everyone understood what the cash only situation was like and exactly what it would lead to because of the situation just a few months ago.

Apparently many mayors did not wait and asked their state's Governors to bring back the National Guard before their cities were on fire again. The news showed Guard units being deployed in many cities. Apparently no one thought this problem would be fixed very soon. And on the news, they were not very upbeat about the situation at all. There were no statements like "the 'net will back tomorrow" or "things are looking good for a prompt return of

internet services.” At best they said people were working on the problem.

And people were going berserk, so it was a good thing there were National Guard troopers spread out in many cities. It was worse than the banking thing. This really made people mad. Their smartphones were now all dumb phones. And people were having a fit about it. Everyone from soccer moms to nerds were upset at the least and violent at the worst. Many businesses closed down until such time as the internet was up again.

And then there was the money angle for everyone and the fact that the food stamp EBT cards were non-functional for the countless millions on that program. And without the internet, there were no money transfers of any kind. Checks could be written out and mailed to suppliers with written orders for merchandise. But that was incredibly slow. Phones worked and orders could be phoned in but the money to pay for those orders had to be in check form or in cash. That meant face-to-face or through the mail system.

And with every business using just-in-time delivery systems meant that it only took a day or two to see empty shelves in stores. But the problems were everywhere. Many water treatment systems were internet dependent for constant feedback from countless sensors and though many could be done manually, that took a big change and required engineers on site.

With the internet down everyone switched to phone calls and that quickly swamped all the phone systems, both cell and landlines. The first-day travel was fine but it was discovered that air travel logistics was impossible without internet service. And so it was for countless things seemingly not even connected to the internet across the globe. Except for Russia.

Russia had had the foresight to design their system to be able to isolate itself completely from the rest of the

world. Not a simple task and it had required considerable work and funding. But they had done so and now they were operating much closer to normal while the rest of the world was in turmoil. They had made a choice some time back and were now reaping the benefit of that decision made years ago.

Chapter 5

The news had a phone interview with the head of some organization called ICANN that was like an overseer or something for the internet. Apparently the spokesman for them had warned the world that this outage was not only possible but likely. It seemed his warnings had fallen on deaf ears. He ended the short phone interview with a simple statement. "It gives me no pleasure to be proven correct."

It was different now because most news interviews were phone-in interviews where in the past there would have been internet interviews that had a good picture along with excellent voice transmission. Apparently satellite transmission systems were still operational so much of the news was much the same as in times past.

At our house, we did not have anything that ever hooked up to the internet, so we did not miss it. Not so for the four billion people who used the internet. Many people were literally lost because they could not use the smartphone mapping apps to get directions and for most people, a paper map was worthless to them because they had no idea how to use one. The GPS satellite systems were still fully functional and those that had separate GPS systems in their cars still had that function available to them.

So many of the nation's infrastructure systems depended on the internet to work right and some would not work at all without the internet. The electric grid was still up and working but it relied heavily on the internet for normal operations. Some expressed concerns of spotty or loss of electric service at any time.

We were fine with the only problem being the phone not always working because we would get the “all circuits are busy” message when we tried to call sometimes. Not a big deal for us. The news made it seem like the world was ending every night and maybe it was for many people and businesses. It seemed countless businesses relied totally on the internet. Like the largest business in the world, Amazon. Without the internet, it could do nothing. You would think that would make its stock price fall but the stock markets were all closed because they could not operate without the internet.

With the markets closed down no one could buy or sell any stocks which apparently many had tried to do. With banks again closed down for this second time many people feared the worst and wanted the money from their IRA's, 401k's, and other retirement accounts. But with banks closed and the markets closed they could do nothing. Everyone on Social Security would not get any money transferred to their bank accounts and it would be the same as every pension payment whether from a government entity or a private company.

Everyone had the cash money they had on hand and for now, that was all they had to live on until the internet was back again. The only thing that would be worse than the loss of the internet would be the complete loss of the electric grid and it sounded like that could happen at any time because of the internet being down. With that in mind, we drove to town where I was able to buy another drum to store additional gas for our generator. Determined to get it filled as soon as possible I made two more trips to shuttle fuel until I had it full so we now had over one hundred gallons of stabilized fuel at our place in the two buried drums. Only one had a transfer pump on it.

Neither of us could think of any more things we might need. When we had bought the second metal drum, we had stopped at a few of the stores in town and had

walked the aisles picking up things we thought we might need that we had not thought of until we saw them. Like more lamp oil and another oil lamp from the hardware store. N Two more full propane tanks to fit our gas grill, even though we already had two at home.

It was on Tuesday when the national power grid collapse started. Later we learned what they say started it. It was quite warm in the southwest and with the monsoon about to begin it was also rather muggy, at least for that area of the country. Draw on the power grid was not at an all-time peak but it was very high. Then some clouds blew in and shaded two larger solar generating arrays in different areas at about the same time.

The power output from each of these arrays went from close to maximum output to less than half in a few seconds. This happens with solar all the time but this time it was slightly different. The main difference was with no internet; the shift in power could not be controlled fast enough. A large block of California started to brown out. This caused an automatic shutdown of that area. The shutdown of that huge draw of power meant that the now huge excess of power had to go someplace.

The surge blew out a switching station. This started a ripple effect and took out more switching stations. At that point, a large chunk of the power grid was down and would not be coming back online until physical repairs were done in widely scattered areas. Unfortunately, when the power went out, everyone decided to call everyone else to see what was happening. The phone lines were completely jammed across the whole nation. With phones basically out repair crews could not be called for immediate deployment. Not that it mattered all that much anyway. The damage was considerable and the damage was done at that point.

Some parts of the country had power but we were not included in that group. Being the person that I am and

not trusting the power all that much I had started storing water. Not a huge amount because we still had our generator with plenty of fuel but I did have some water stored when the power went out.

It just made it handier for us. For us other than some inconvenience it was not a big deal. We had been using up much of our frozen food and at this point, the freezer was mostly full of frozen filled bottles of water.

It was not until Wednesday in the later afternoon before I started the generator. We wanted to see if the evening news could give us any information. We had tried a battery radio but had found no stations broadcasting in our area.

There was news on two stations and we heard what we needed to hear. The power was out over a fairly large section of the country and it would be out for a yet undetermined time. To us, it sounded like it would many days at best and maybe weeks instead.

We each filled containers that we had ready with water. When done we had water sitting all over the place. Some for drinking and some for washing and flushing. I let the generator run for an hour before shutting it down. That had allowed the refrigerator-freezer to get cold again. We used more of the food that needed to be kept cold and I had also started the refrigerator in the RV where we put some of our stuff, especially in the tiny freezer compartment.

We missed having the microwave but our propane gas range worked just fine and I always used the gas grill for grilling meats anyway. My wife said the oil lamps made the place romantic but I thought the light was just dim.

The power stayed off. We ran the generator twice a week. When we had power running, we both took showers and did a load of laundry. And filled water containers. We would always run the genny in time, so we could watch the evening news. We could not get any over-the-air television

broadcasts here so we had a minimum satellite package. I wondered why we still had the service if the banks were not open.

The large area with total power was huge at first but slowly the power companies were getting power restored with more people getting power all the time. In many areas, the government was giving free transportation to relief centers scattered around where there was still electric power.

There was trouble along our southern border where many thousands were pouring through to take advantage of our crippled states. For the first time ever our government used our military and spilled a lot of foreign blood to stop the invasion. Of course, because of the widespread power loss, many Americans died in those areas despite herculean rescue efforts.

Then they finally got the internet working, though that did not affect us. Then one day when I checked we finally had grid electric power. I had to manually check because we did not have an automatic transfer switch for our generator. We were without grid power for about six weeks. During that time we never left our place.

While we got along fine without the grid, I admit it sure was nice having it back again. We gave it a week and then we drove into our little town to see if we could buy a few groceries. I hated the powdered milk that we had been using. It even made the scrambled eggs taste funny. At least I thought so anyway.

Things were far from normal in town and the grocery store was not yet open. Nothing was open. No way I wanted to drive to the city, so we just went home. It had looked like things had gotten pretty bad in our small town and I guessed it would have been many times worse in the city.

The phones started working a few days later and after another week I called the number for the local grocery

store. The person who answered said they were open but had very limited supplies. We decided to wait another week and then go back to town. They had milk and I was happy. We actually bought several items at the grocery and I was able to buy gas which included the empty gas cans I had brought with us.

Everything was messed up for quite some time across the nation. Slowly everything got back to normal, at least to the new normal. Many, many people had died and many companies had gone out of business. Things were different. Power was up everywhere and the national power grid was being hardened, whatever that meant. I guess they wanted to make sure this never happened again. Also now instead of three very large sections of the national grid, it was being split up into much smaller sections.

And now like Russia, the USA could shut internet ties with the rest of the world and still have full internet inside our own country. I'm not sure if that included Alaska and Hawaii or not. There were many changes happening now and most of those I considered good changes. People were waking up some to realize that they had to always be able to take care of themselves and not always rely on others or their government to take care of them.

I had thought the prices of everything to skyrocket but that was not totally the case. One thing different was the lack of most imported items. Trade had really been disrupted because of the loss of the internet and the loss of power. Congress passed some measures to do incentives to companies to manufacture most things inside the USA instead of us importing everything. I hope that works out.

Most people in the nation (that are still alive) are pretty mad at our government because all this happened. This is an election year and I doubt any incumbents will get re-elected. That is likely a good thing.

At our place things are normal. As more items become available, we are buying up stuff to replace what we used of our stored items. We are also adding items that we realized after the fact that we should have stocked to make our lives easier. I am waiting for now but I am really considering going off-grid with our own solar system. Right now there is a huge back-log because many people are doing just that. I will wait for the rush to be over and then maybe prices will drop. That is when I will make the change. Jennie is all for it. She is really a prepper now and wants to do all kind of new things to get us even better prepared. What a change. Now I am the voice of reason instead of her.

The End

