



Preparedness Takes A Neighborhood



As I worked through all the information in last month's [Every Needful Thing](#), I realized that there was way more than one month's time and effort needed to digest all the information available at the linked sites. In addition, I received emails from readers that included suggestions for additional topics for preparation.

Preparedness is more than just an individual or family project. We will never be able to survive a grid down situation alone. Whether it is having enough guards to protect your place while you sleep or needing medical help, we must expand our vision of preparedness to include others in our neighborhood and community. This month, we will include some of these topics.

Communities are encouraged to organize their preparedness efforts before an emergency. Creating a plan will safeguard everyone as well as building unity in your neighborhood. How many neighbors do you know? FEMA has provided a [Neighborhood Emergency Plan](#) which can be used to organize your community. The packet includes sheets for each family to provide survey information on skills, equipment, vehicles and updates on each family's preparedness progress. In addition, it includes a space for your neighborhood map, a breakdown of the neighborhood into blocks, including each family's contact information and block captains assigned to each area.

The second step is to plan an actual drill in your neighborhood. Plan your drill around a specific scenario that could potentially impact your neighborhood. Define conditions, give that information to block captains to distribute. Involve as many people as possible and have a review meeting afterwards. Update your plan and distribute to everyone.

The benefits of a community drill include creating awareness of the resources in your neighborhood; identifying risks - both visible and unexpected; encouraging community members to prepare; and providing practice so everyone knows what to do in a real emergency.

Ask Billie

Q. In hurricane or flood situations, can the Sun Oven® be used to boil water?

A. Yes. You can boil water in a Sun Oven®. Boiling kills the biological contaminants in water. Pasteurizing water will also kill the biological contaminants in less than half the time. Water pasteurizes reaches 150°F for 6 minutes. A Water Pasteurization Indicator (WAPI) is a simple thermometer that indicates when water has reached pasteurization temperature. The WAPI floats on the top of a pot or mason jar and has a wax filled tube. The wax inside will melt when the temperature reaches 150°F for 6 minutes letting you know the water is pasteurized. A WAPI can be reused hundreds of times. WAPIs can be ordered [HERE](#).

What is your Most Burning Question about Food Storage or Emergency Preparedness?



Send your questions to
editor@sunoven.com

Billie Nicholson



Order Your [Sun Oven](#)® Today

Map Your Neighborhood

Washington State Emergency Preparedness
Management Division

- Remember -

**In a disaster your most immediate source of help
are the neighbors living around you.**



Neighborhoods that are prepared for emergencies and disaster situations save lives, reduce the severity of injuries and trauma, and reduce property damage. In addition, contributing as an individual and working together as a team helps develop stronger communities and improve the quality of life in the community.

A disaster is any event that overwhelm the capacity of 9-1-1 emergency responders (fire, medical, police and utility personnel). Often rational thought goes out the window during a disaster. Here are 9 steps to do that are necessary and effective in caring first for our individual homes and then our neighborhoods.

1. **Take care of home** - Our first response should be in caring for our own homes. The better prepared we are at home the sooner we will be able to help with the needs of our neighborhood.
2. **Protect your head, hands & feet** - Dress yourself for safety. Protect your head with a hard hat or bicycle helmet to protect against falling debris. Protect your feet with sturdy shoes to avoid cut feet. Protect your hands by leather gloves to minimize cuts from broken glass and contaminants that may cause sickness later. Keep these items under your bed so you will always know where they are. Wear long pants and long sleeve shirts when going to help others. Goggles, a dust mask and a small first aid kit are also helpful.
3. **Shut off natural gas to your home** - shutting off natural gas and propane gas eliminates the most common fuel sources for residential fires following disasters. To shut off natural gas - turn the valve 1/4 turn in either direction so that the valve crosses the pipe. Keep a crescent wrench right by your meter. To shut off propane, turn the shut-off valve to the right until it closes completely. Be sure to shut off the gas if you smell an odor like rotten eggs or hear it hissing as it escapes from broken pipes. Remember, once the gas is shut off, only someone from the gas company should turn it back on. They are the only ones qualified to relight your pilot lights and inspect pipes for leaks.
4. **Shut off water at the house main** - shutting off the water at the house will help keep water in the water heater available for drinking, food preparation and hygiene. With broken pipes, gravity may drain water out of the water heater and toilet tanks. Cracked pipes may allow contaminants into the water supply. Shutting off the water at the meter outside your house requires a special tool and is very difficult to do.
5. **Post OK/Help cards** - keep three sheets of [colored card stock](#) with your 72 hour kit. Immediately following a disaster, each household should evaluate their injuries and medical needs. Using the following descriptions of each color, place one of them on the front of your house where it can be easily seen from the street. Red - immediate need of attention; Yellow - delayed need of attention; Green - no need for medical attention or other immediate assistance. Every home should be checked.
6. **Put fire extinguishers on sidewalk or street edge** - fires can be a big problem during times of disaster because fire departments may not be available. Placing fire extinguishers outside makes them visible and available for use in the neighborhood. Only place them outside following the disaster. If fire is too large, do not attempt to put it out. Evacuate quickly. When using an extinguisher, remember PASS: Pull the pin, aim at base of fire, squeeze handle, sweep side to side.

[READ MORE](#)

Materia Medica - Chickweed



Photo by [Sheldon Navie](#)

Botanical Name: *Stellaria media* (translated as star)

Common Name: Chickweed

Family: Carophyllaceae (carnation)

Ayurvedic/TCM Name: Cha qi fan lu

Parts Used: Herb

Native Region: Native to Europe, found throughout temperate regions of North America

Geographic Distribution: It has been said that there is no part

of the world where the Chickweed is not to be found. It is a common hardy plant that easily grows in cropland and fallow fields, lawns and gardens, areas adjacent to buildings, and in waste areas.

Botanical Description: The stem is procumbent and weak, much branched, often reaching a considerable length, trailing on the ground, juicy, pale green and slightly swollen at the joints. Chickweed is readily distinguished from the plants of the same genus by the line of hairs that runs up the stem on one side only, which when it reaches a pair of leaves is continued on the opposite side. The leaves are succulent, egg-shaped, about 1/2 inch long and 1/4 inch broad, with a short point, pale green and quite smooth, with flat stalks below, but stalkless above. They are placed on the stem in pairs. The small white star-like flowers are situated singly in the axils of the upper leaves. Their 5 petals are narrow and deeply cleft, not longer than the sepals. They open about nine o'clock in the morning and are said to remain open just twelve hours in bright weather, but rain keeps them from expanding. The seeds are contained in a little capsule fitted with teeth which close up in wet weather, but when ripe are open and the seeds are shaken out by each movement of the plant in the breeze. Every night the leaves approach each other, so that their upper surfaces fold over the tender buds of the new shoots. [1] When the stem is broken it has no milky sap unlike its relatives where the stems are completely covered with hair and has milky sap. The roots are shallow and fibrous.[2]

Harvesting Guidelines: The whole herb, collected between May and July, when it is in the best condition. Can be used fresh or dried.

Constituents: The benefits of chickweed may in part be due to its high nutritional value. It is particularly high in ascorbic acid (vitamin C), gamma-linolenic acid (GLA, the omega-6 fatty acid derivative), saponins, niacin, riboflavin (B2) thiamine (B1), beta carotene (A), magnesium, iron, calcium, potassium, zinc, phosphorus, manganese, sodium, selenium and silica. [3]

Medicinal Uses: Chickweed is best known for its soothing and healing quality. The high saponin content of this herb is thought to be the reason for its effectiveness in relieving skin problems such as erysipelatos and other forms of ulceration, as well as many forms of cutaneous diseases. Chickweed has been used traditionally as an external remedy for cuts, wounds, [minor burns](#), abscesses and skin irritations, especially such as itching, dryness and irritation due to [dermatitis](#), [eczema](#) or [psoriasis](#).

CONTINUED

[A Note About Online Privacy and Security](#)



Glen Meder

I don't claim to be an expert in this regard, but I have studied this subject like a fanatic lately and I have learned a lot of things. I want to tell you what I have learned, some tools that I have found, and give you resources for learning more about this issue.

FIRST, let's talk about why you need to care about internet privacy and security. Basically, the internet is broken. It's full of holes, and

your information is out there. I just learned that my information was compromised by the recent Equifax hack, and your information was probably stolen too (you can check [here](#)). I never gave my information to Equifax. I've never worked with them, but they had all of my information, including my social security number. Now someone else has my information. Also, just today Yahoo.com revealed that they were hacked and the thieves got away with information from over 3 BILLION accounts.

This happens all the time, and in my opinion it will happen more frequently from now on. There are some things you can do to protect yourself. I will start with the basics...

COVER YOUR CAMERA. This seems pretty basic but I think it's probably the first thing you should do, and it only costs \$5. See it [here](#).

INTERNET SEARCH: You probably use Google to search the internet right? Well, they keep track of everything you search and everywhere you go online. If you use www.StartPage.com however, you are still getting Google's search results, but StartPage hides your identity. I never use Google anymore, only StartPage.

USE A VPN: Our fantastic (sarcasm) Congressmen are enacting a [new law](#) that gives your Internet Service Provider (Verizon, ATT, Spectrum, Cox, etc) full legal rights to watch everywhere you go online and they can sell this information! Legalized invasion of privacy! But there is a way you can protect yourself and make your computer more secure from hackers; a VPN. A VPN is software that makes your online activities invisible to ISPs and hackers, and it makes your WIFI much more secure. All you have to do is install it, and it works in the background. This is the [VPN software](#) that I use.

PASSWORD KEEPER: DO NOT USE THE SAME PASSWORD ON DIFFERENT SITES! The only way to properly manage your passwords is a password management tool. Basically it creates long complicated passwords for each site you need to log into, and then it remembers them for you. All you have to do is remember a single password for your password manager. Another benefit these programs provide is protection from phishing attacks. [This page](#) explains the different options.

TWO-FACTOR AUTHENTICATION. Most good online services (such as PayPal) offer two-factor authentication. When you login and enter your password, PayPal will then text you a 6-digit code to your phone that you will also have to enter. If an online service gives you the option for two factor authentication, you should do it.

[SYNC.COM](#) INSTEAD OF DROPBOX. I have recently changed from Dropbox to [Sync.com](#) for online storage of my files for privacy and security reasons. [READ MORE](#)

4 Secrets to Off-Grid Solar Living

from presentation by [Nick Meissner](#)



[Off Grid Living Boot Camp](#)

Much to most listeners' surprise, when Nick and Lisa Meissner presented an online lesson last month about off-grid living, they didn't create an image of oil lamps and fireplace cooking. Instead, they revealed four secrets to off grid living that you can start working on right now.

Secret # 1: Off Grid Efficiency - using electricity more efficiently. What can you do to cut the cost of your power system? The more electricity you use, the larger a solar system will be required. Your budget, i.e., how much can you afford to spend to set one up and maintain it will be the determining factor. To become energy efficient, Nick recommends several things. First, choose more efficient light bulbs like compact florescent or LED bulbs. Next, are you familiar with how much phantom power your home consumes? Many appliances continue to consume power even when they are turned off as long as they are plugged into the wall. Look for those small red, green or blue lights glowing in your rooms after you turn off the lights. To solve this problem, simply electrical power strips with an on/off switch. Do make sure you have had your cell phone plugged in long enough to recharge it. Another thing to consider is having more energy efficient models of key appliances, like refrigerator, freezer, clothes washer, etc. Look for the yellow Energy Guide posted on major appliances. Choose the one that uses less electricity daily. To reduce your electrical footprint, you can also consider installing propane or wood burning appliances, too.

Secret # 2 Step-by-Step Transition - rather than going all the way all at once. You can make a step by step transition by acquiring the parts gradually. First get a back up generator. Then to use it in your home, you will need a qualified electrician to install a transfer switch. Once the switch and an outlet for the generator are installed, you now have back up for short term use during a power outage. You will need to keep a supply of fuel for it and run it monthly to keep the starter battery charged. Second add a battery bank & inverter. This will allow you to store the energy generated and not used immediately. You will install a number of large heavy-duty deep cycle batteries and wire them together to form one large bank of batteries. Once this is installed, you will only need to run the generator long enough to recharge the batteries. The inverter, connected to the generator will convert the energy generated to charge the battery bank as well as changing the DC power of the batteries to regular AC household current to power your home. The third step is to add solar panels and charge controller. Then you will be able to use solar energy to charge your battery bank and eliminate the need to run your generator (except for back up). When you get to this point, you will be able to flip that transfer switch whenever you want to.

Secret # 3 Accurate System Design - where the kilowatt math begins. You must know how much power you will need to generate to run your home. There are a lot of variables involved in the design system. Things like your power usage, your location's solar climate, your property's shade situation, positioning the solar array in relation to the power room, and the temperature of your location. You do need to determine an accurate daily power usage first. Get a meter to check these. Nick has created a calculator that takes your raw data, runs the complex calculations and tells you what you will need.

Secret # 4 An Experienced Guide - a teacher to help you along the way. Nick has developed a very thorough [course](#) to guide you in your migration toward energy independent off-grid living.

MENTAL & EMOTIONAL SECURITY



John Adams, PhD.
Emeritus Professor and Retired Program Chair
Saybrook University

Significant changes to the established ways of living that we learned during the 20th century, and today think of as normal, will challenge people's thinking and emotions. Most of us have learned to take our "modern" way of life for granted, and as a result, we no longer hold the knowledge nor maintain the skills that our grandparents and great grandparents relied upon in their everyday lives. If we were to be thrust into a late 19th century mode of living, most people alive today would be unable to cope. A large part of that coping, which indeed may be required again before too long, will depend on our abilities to be able to adjust our thinking and to manage our emotions.

Most people most of the time these days, at least in the western countries, operate with "autopilot" (i.e. we seldom think about "how we think") thinking systems that support and reinforce a consumerist society that is fueled by cheap abundant energy, and the ability to quickly buy new things and replace old things. We are for the most part comfortable with having our goods and our food shipped to our local markets (or Internet supplier warehouses) over great distances. Most of the time, we are unaware that on any given day there are never more than nine meals worth of food in our local supermarkets!

Where major calamities have happened, for example in Argentina in 2001, and during a larger than expected snowstorm in Washington DC a few years ago, hoarders cleared the supermarket shelves in a matter of minutes.

The Internet has helped to reinforce our collective "need" for instant gratification and easy access to whatever we want. Although we are generally unaware of it, we have taken the internet for granted and assume quick and easy access will always be there.

PART A: ESTABLISHING MENTAL RESILIENCE

So what are the frames or memes that tend to dominate our "autopilot" thinking? Many of these are suggested in the preceding paragraph. I've done some research on our key autopilot thinking dimensions, and I am happy to share the six dimensions of "autopilot" thinking that I have identified.

1. Most of us usually prefer to think in a **short-term**, immediacy-based manner. Quick results, fast service, and instant gratification are "key" to our happiness.
2. We generally also **react** to the external world rather than building the "reality" we would really like. In fact, many people are made quite anxious by questions like "What do you really want?" or "What would you create with a magic wand?"
3. It is apparently a part of the human condition that **for every "us" there is a "them."** The question to be answered is "where do you place the boundary around **"us"**? These days, there is a great deal of divisiveness in our society, and our "us" boundaries are drawn ever tighter.
4. As a hold over from the mechanical age, we are good at breaking things down into basic parts. Unfortunately this manner of thinking reinforces a focus on "single issues" and therefore, we

[Continued](#)

Surprise Squash



Stuffed squash is one of my favorite lunches. I really don't follow a recipe when I make it. I just go with whatever leftovers I have in my fridge. It comes out different ever time. Today's combo was surprisingly good.

Ingredients

1 tablespoon olive oil
salt
1 medium Kabocha squash
1/2 can (14-ounce) vegetarian chili
1/2 can (14-ounce) diced tomatoes with green chiles with juices
1/2 packet (3-ounce) tempeh, crumbled
1/4 cup frozen corn kernels
2 cloves garlic, minced
5 tablespoons orzo shaped pasta
1/4 cup water

Directions

Set Sun Oven out to preheat.

Cut off the top of the squash to make a lid. Scrape out and discard the seeds. Rub the inside of the squash with the olive oil, season with salt. Place the squash in a pot, set aside. In a large bowl combine the chili, diced tomatoes, tempeh, corn, garlic, and pasta. Spoon the mixture into the prepared squash. Pour in the water. Cover with the top part of the squash. Cook in the Sun Oven until tender, 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Use a large spoon to scoop filling and squash onto plates.

Makes 4 servings.

Volunteerism - We Can All Serve

“You make a living by what you get, but you make a life by what you give.”
Winston Churchill



Photo by RustyBuggy.com

Volunteerism is defined as the policy or practice of giving one's time or talents for charitable, educational, or otherwise worthwhile activities, especially in one's own community. The focus of this type of activity is for the benefit and welfare of others with no financial gain and often involves personal monetary contributions.

Historically, volunteerism has been in the life blood of all Americans. Who dumped tea into Boston harbor?

Who fought for freedom during the American Revolution? Who ran the Underground Railroad? Who opened the first libraries of the western prairies? Who fought to achieve the vote for women? They were all volunteers!

Are you a volunteer? Are you a blood donor, involved in your Parent Teacher Association, helping others register to vote, leading a 4-H club or Scout troop, coaching a youth sport team, collecting, making, or distributing clothes or other household items to be donated, collecting, preparing, distributing, or serving food to those in need? Then you are a volunteer!

There are many venues for volunteering around the world, especially recently with all the hurricanes, earthquakes, fires and floods. Have you had an opportunity to serve?

There are many positive benefits to both the volunteer and the recipient. It is important to your health. Serving others improves your psychological and physical health. The volunteer feels a personal sense of accomplishment while building physical strength through activity. You gain new experiences and insights that can influence your decisions on a career path and the confidence to accept challenges. These opportunities create connections with people, building relationships that are crucial in a social network. Volunteers feel more loved and happier. You develop compassion and kindness toward others. Character traits like integrity, flexibility, reliability, and willingness to work for the benefit of others will be enhanced. Humility, self-restraint, and gratitude will swell within you. Your willingness to give back and to help others will create better environments for others and create healthier environments and brighter lives for everyone.

In the wake of disasters, Americans always come together to ask how they can help. Today there are lots of needs. Where can you find opportunities? Start with [VOAD](#), the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster. On the local level, organizations like [Volunteer Match](#), [Create the Good](#), [All Hands Volunteers](#) and [Just Serve](#) are initiatives that bring organizations and volunteers together to do good things for their community.

How can you help? There are three ways you can help. First is to **donate money** to organizations that are handling relief efforts. [Pay attention](#) to their business plans for handling those donations. Second, **donate goods**. Be sure to check with collecting groups to know what items are needed. Organizations need a secure storage facility and volunteers to help organize and package items. Third, **volunteering**. The greatest gift you can give is your time. Ask yourself, am I committed, am I cheerful and enthusiastic, am I self confident and self assured? Or do you want to be? Then volunteering can be a great benefit to you and the community you serve.