

The Journal

August 2 of the first year of the rest of my life. So here goes. I'm really going to do this journal. Just to prove to myself that I can, and to document, in a practical manner, what I've learned over the years. And how I am going about the plan I came up with when I was in the hospital.

I suppose, though this journal is for me, it might be of interest to my off-spring, if ever I have any, so a few facts prior to today.

I just turned 23 on July 21st. It was the same day I got out of the hospital. Which is a story in and of itself that I don't plan to go into. I don't know too much of it myself, since I was unconscious during much of it. The doctors tell me that I may or may not regain my memory of the event. Suffice it to say that I almost died, but didn't. But my father and mother did. Whatever it was that happened, a big corporation was involved.

They didn't want the legal hassles of a lawsuit and all the media attention, so they offered me a settlement as soon as I regained consciousness. At least that is why I think they offered the settlement. Their rep said it was because it "Was the right thing to do, under the circumstances." I had to sign a non-disclosure statement. They are that worried about bad publicity.

The first portion of the settlement was deposited directly to my bank account today, as I had requested. I know that only because I stopped in at my bank and asked about it this afternoon, just to be sure the corporate rep hadn't lied to me.

So Woo-hoo! I'm almost rich! Not that I was poor before. I was an up and coming young man with a bright future ahead, from an upper middle class family. Which I didn't have any more. Part of the settlement was for the loss of my parents, our cars, and our property.

I'd had enough cash in my pocket, plus a couple of credit cards, so I was able to rent a place to stay and get some clothing. And that's pretty much it for the past. Except.

There was this guy in the hospital after I came to... He and his family were survivalists, though they used the term preppers. I tried not to eavesdrop, but they thought I was still comatose and talked freely among themselves when they visited the old man. All about how their prep plans were coming along and for him not to worry about things. That was one of the things preps were for. Times of medical emergencies.

So I got a free education on preparedness those weeks we shared a room. I even learned a few things when they discovered I was no longer comatose. Not from the family, but from the old man. He was on some pain medication that left him a little loopy at times. I'm sure he wouldn't have told me as much as he did, were it not for being under the influence of the medication.

But the two events changed my life. For the better, I hope. So back to the now.

August 2. I replaced the laptop I lost in the accident. Actually, I got two. Both have Halliburton Zero aluminum protective cases. One is going into storage and the other is for use. And I got lots of high capacity pen drives so I can keep data backed up. The residential hotel where I'm staying has good high-speed internet, so I spent most of the day doing research on survival and preparedness. I think it is my new major hobby and way of life.

August 5. Not a bunch to say about the last few days. I still get tired really quickly, even just working on the computer. But I have the plan that I had in my head in the hospital on the computer now. Word documents and Excel spreadsheets.

Let's see... What else? Oh. Found a real estate brokerage firm willing to go that extra mile for me. I'm looking for a nice piece of property suitable for a self-sufficient estate. I don't care if it is close to public utilities. It will be off-grid, even if utilities are available.

Also went shooting for the first time in my life. Thankfully, the guy at the shooting range was patient with me. He let me try several different firearms. I'm still debating on what to get for protection for the future. Decisions, decisions, decisions.

August 7. Got a call from the real estate agent. She found something she thinks fits the requirements I asked for. I'm anxious, to say the least, to go take a look at it. Tomorrow.

August 8. What a disappointment. It's not that she didn't try. She just really didn't understand. I suppose my list of requirements are somewhat unusual. She said she would keep trying.

August 9. Not too much doing today. Began watching the news as a part of my beginning preps. It's a little depressing. But educational. No wonder people prepare.

August 10. Went back to the shooting range. Wallace had a couple more guns for me to try. He's working up a couple of package deals for me. I haven't told him yet that I will be buying for a group yet. Of course, I'm still working on those plans.

August 15. Not much going the last few days. Feeling kind of poorly. Coming off the medications I've been on. I think it's withdrawal symptoms. The doc said there might be some. No word from Arlene about property, or from Wallace about his personal gun package. Life goes on.

August 20. Been busy the last few days! What a change. Everything happened at once. I guess that's another reason to be prepared. First, Arlene called again. She wasn't as openly

enthusiastic this time, having been so off the mark the first time. But she did a good job, taking my specifications to heart.

From what she told me, she made a bunch of calls all around the areas that I'd specified would be acceptable locations for the self-sufficient farm and ranch I intend to create, being very careful to convey my wants for the property. She gave me the contact information and I picked up a flight to St. Louis, rented an SUV, my first, and headed south on I-55. A couple hours later and I was in Cape Girardeau meeting with Harry Houdini. Yep. Harry Houdini. He made it clear he wasn't related to the famous one.

He took me out to the property in question. "Wow!" was all I could say when I saw it. Not the house and few buildings of the existing farm. It was the sight of all that productive land, covered with crops. Field after field of crops. Of course I wanted the farm for preps, but I didn't realize I had farmer blood in me. The thought of providing food for people, besides myself, suddenly became a major part of the goal.

Harry drove me around, explaining that the owners of the property had no children and wanted the property to go to an individual that would work the land and not just turn it over to a corporate farming operation. I could sympathize already with their wishes. Even though much of the current farm production was commercial crops, and I intend to do truck farming, it was still a rather stirring sight.

We went to the old farmhouse, set up on one of the higher hillocks of the rolling ground and met with the owners. Neither of them looked well. I wondered at the time if they were just holding out until they could sell the property.

Over coffee and home made banana nut bread the three of us discussed things, Harry keeping out of the discussion. I made it clear that I would probably raze the old house and out buildings and build new.

I could tell it disappointed them some. When I mentioned the fact that I planned to set aside two areas of the cropland, one for horse and oxen farming, and one for small tractor farming using all pull type equipment, they perked up.

"You won't make much money that way," the old man said.

I made it clear that I would farm the bulk of the acreage with modern farming principles in mind. That made both of them happy. A bit more dickering and we settled on a price and closure date. I gave them plenty of time to get packed and moved, knowing it would be a slow process for them.

I guess I should record the one bad thing about the deal. Apparently the farmer currently leasing the land from the couple considered it his. He'd made a lowball offer and wasn't going to be happy with me getting the property and farming it on my own. I would be starting out with an enemy in the area.

With the deal done, I came back to my now temporary home and got busy looking for a farm manager to help me with what I would need for the farming operation, since all I would be getting was the property itself. That's what I've been doing the last few days. More later.

September 15. I can see why companies have personnel departments. Trying to acquire employees with specific skills, willing to work a little out of the mainstream way, is hard work. That's all I've been doing the last several days. Looking for a farm manager. It didn't take me long to find out that there were many people willing to do the job, but their own way. Not mine.

I started contacting Ag colleges for lists of recent graduates, thinking they might be more inclined to do it my way, since they probably weren't as set in their ways as some of the more mature people I had interviewed over the telephone.

I've e-mailed several prospects. That's where I am now on that subject. A few other things have come together in the last few days, however. I picked out a small personal armory. Filled out all the paperwork. Just waiting now for the background checks to clear and some of the items Wallace didn't stock to come in.

He delivered the gun safe yesterday. I rented a climate controlled storage room for the purchases I was beginning to make. That's where I had him deliver the gun safe.

About the other things I was ordering, but yet to receive... Prepping is a long, continuous process, any way you look at it, I've learned. Having funds available makes it easier and quicker, though. I had the money coming in from the settlement. I'm using it like there is no tomorrow, since I will be getting the trust fund my Grandfather set up for me before he died when I turn twenty-five. Assuming the balloon doesn't go up before then.

With the money available, and a good place to store items, I put in large orders with Walton Feed and Emergency Essentials, and smaller orders from a few other companies that had what I want that Walton Feed and Emergency Essentials don't. I expect the Walton Feed order in about a month, and the Emergency Essentials and other companies orders in about a week.

I've also talked to one of my doctors about preps and maybe getting some medical equipment and supplies from him. He refused outright. I think I insulted him. Need to find another doctor who is more in tune with the prep mentality.

I guess that's it for now. It's almost midnight and I need to get some sleep. Still recuperating and I can tell it.

September 30. Been a busy two weeks. I received several resumes from Ag school graduates that I had e-mailed. Pared it down to two. I have meetings scheduled with them early next month. See how it goes then.

All the prep orders, except for the Walton Feed order, came in over the previous two weeks. I am totally beat. The small orders were no big deal, but the Emergency Essentials order was half a truckload.

I took a couple days off to rest up after unloading it by myself, even with the hand trucks I bought. My doctors will have a fit if they find out I did that much. For the Walton Feed order I'm going to rent a pallet handler.

But for the moment, I have a ten-year supply of LTS foods. I learned that the LTS acronym I've been seeing in the literature stands for Long Term Storage. The Walton order will supplement that with some LTS packaged niceties, and give me some trade goods and humanitarian aid.

Made bulk purchase deals with some local stores to buy some other items for use and trading. I'm thinking about buying or starting a small business that would give me wholesale purchasing for the items. I need to think on it more, though.

Another late night. That's all I can think of right now.

October 5. Went back down to the property. The harvest is started. Got to admit, the guy currently leasing the land operates in a big way. Five, count them, five combines in one field at a time. Several bob trucks with grain beds pulling grain hoppers, one pulling beside a combine to be filled as one leaves full. Definitely a big operation. Sam, the old man that owns the land said the guy farmed over three-thousand acres. I guess he needs the big stuff.

Met the contractor at the property I hired to salvage and then dismantle the house and outbuildings. Made sure he knew I wanted the equivalent of virgin ground, including pulling the existing well, which Sam said was marginal now. If it is marginal now, I'm going to need a new one, anyway. Sam assured me that the irrigation wells were plentiful and all in good shape. All the land was graded for easy irrigation. That is two things I don't have to worry about.

I couldn't bring myself to watch the destruction of what meant so much to Sam, so I went in to Cape Girardeau to look around in more detail. I found, merely by chance, what I was looking for in the way of a small retail shop so I could buy at wholesale many of the ordinary things that I wanted in my preps, and for trading in the future.

I need an outlet for my truck farm, anyway, when it comes down to it, so the place will do double duty for me. The place is a small mom and pop hardware store going out of business due to the big box store competition in the area. I'm not too concerned about making a huge profit on the non-truck-farm goods. As long as I about break even on the other items I'll be happy. The profit should come from the truck-farm produced goods.

Harry is going to handle the transaction for me. I've started looking for a retail sales manager now, too. Same way. Checking on recent graduates of business schools. No responses yet.

Did talk to a likely candidate for farm manager yesterday. Turns out the T. J. McKinley I was e-mailing back and forth is a woman, but that's okay with me. We're supposed to meet at the farm in two days. I'm flying her in to Cape Girardeau from Columbia, Missouri for the meet.

October 8. Well, I think I found my farm manager. Teresa McKinley is an astute young woman. Knows what she wants in life and is out to get it. Thankfully, she shares some of the same views that I do about the environment and ways to use it and still protect it. She wasn't overwhelmed at the scope of what I had in mind, but did say she would want some experienced help to implement her ideas on farm and ranch management. She knows some animal husbandry, of course, but it wasn't her main thrust in college. I told her that it was her job to start looking for people for the farm.

She was more than a little surprised when I told her that there would be living quarters available on the farm for singles, couples, and small families, though living on the farm was not a perquisite for being hired. She asked for a week to think it over. I think she'll take the job. The pay was much less of an issue to her than being able to incorporate her education into the running of the place. I assured her that modern 'green' processes would be the norm and not the exception.

Met Bob Wade for the first time. He drove up in a big four-wheel-drive Dodge diesel one-ton pickup with a fueling tank in the bed when Teresa and I were walking over the bare spot where the farm buildings used to be.

"You the S. O. B. that robbed me out of this place?" That's not exactly what he said, but I'm not going to write down all the obscenities he used to describe me, my family, and my heritage. I must say I got just a bit belligerent myself when he spoke to Teresa in much the same way. I told him to leave. After a few more expletives, he did so, in something of a huff. He's not going to be a friend, at the least. But I learned that Teresa could handle herself. She was ready to tackle the big lug on her own when he started in on her. I think I annoyed her a little bit when I interceded on her behalf.

Though the deal is done with Sam, the arrangement includes a survey of the property. But it won't be done until after Wade finishes his harvest and moves his equipment off the property. Having walked over the home site area, I've formed a general picture in my mind of what I want built. I'm not quite ready to put it to paper yet, though. I need to think a few things through, first.

October 17. I now have three new wells on the property and a farm manager. Teresa agreed to the arrangement I offered. Though I was afraid she'd decided not to, since it was only this morning that she called me and told me. She already has a line on a couple of other key people. I'm thinking I've made a good decision here, though time will tell.

I just finished making arrangements to get three self-contained travel trailers delivered to the home site this week. We'll use them until the permanent structures are built. Make it easier, not to mention cheaper, than motel rooms and restaurants. Also having two forty-foot ISO

shipping containers delivered for temporary storage. I love it when a plan comes together, as the saying goes.

The wells each have a solar pump system installed, ready to supply the large holding tanks that will be buried when the construction phase starts. Water will be drawn from the tanks by other pumps feeding pressure tanks in each of the planned buildings.

October 23. Well, I am now a resident of the Great State of Missouri. At least I will be tomorrow when I get my driver's license changed over. The travel trailers are not luxurious, but they are nice and come well equipped, just as I'd specified.

Cell phones work fine here so that isn't a problem. The trailers have satellite TV and Internet dishes set up, so that's taken care of. The trailers have a generator as well as PV panels with large batteries and an inverter for electrical power. Heat is propane. When I got here on the twentieth, I went ahead and had a waste tank and a propane tank delivered.

Waste is to be picked up every week until I get the septic systems installed.

Having read several PAW fiction stories on the Internet on some of the prep sites, I investigated some utility equipment that I believe will be useful around the place. They certainly were in the stories. After I talked to the dealers, one in St. Louis, and one in Commerce, Colorado, I came to the conclusion that they would, in fact, be quite useful. So I ordered the first set of vehicles and a tractor-trailer load of implements and attachments for each one.

The first is an ugly-as-sin Utility Truck called a Unimog. It's the U500 version for US sales through Freightliner dealers. It was the only one the Colorado dealer had, and fortunately it was a loaded model. Front and rear PTO's, front lift arms, rear three-point hitch, three-way dump bed, high capacity hydraulics. Just a bunch of stuff. The dealership had a couple of implements, which I got, but the salesman put me in touch with some implement dealers where I could get other equipment. I have to say, ugly as it is, it is some kind of vehicle. Just what a prepper needs on the property.

The other two vehicles are sort of brothers. Both from Bobcat Company. One is an all-wheel-steer/skid steer loader with 3,000 pound lift capacity. Besides the conventional general use bucket and a set of pallet forks, I ordered several additional implements.

And the good thing, most of the implements are useable by the brother machine, also from Bobcat, the Toolcat 5600T Utility Vehicle. It was all-wheel steer or conventional steer, and had lift arms in the front, like the A300 skid steer loader, and a rear dump bed like a pick-up. The bed can haul 2,000 pounds and the arms lift 1,500. The machine will tow a ton, too.

I have to admit, after seeing the equipment a bit of little boy came out in me. They simply are as cool as they are useful. I even decided, after some additional research, to use three of the Unimog U500's to handle the small tractor farming implements I envisioned early on, instead of medium sized tractors.

I'll get six total, and use the other three to do what the minor fleet of vehicles I contemplated getting would do.

I think, also, a second A300 and two more Toolcat 5600T's will round out the Utility equipment. They'll handle barn chores, yard chores, garden chores, construction chores, snow clearing, and on and on and on. The only other things I plan to get in a similar vein are some three-wheeled, hydraulic driven, one-person, orchard cherry pickers, to complement the other units, since I plan on a large fruit and nut tree orchard.

That's pretty much it for today. I need to go relax. It's been a good several days.

November 1. I'm angry as I've been for a long time. Yesterday was Halloween. And we had tricksters without the chance of giving out treats. Two pickup trucks with two men in each cab and two men in each of the pickup beds drove around hollering and throwing beer bottles, rotten eggs, and such at the trailers. There were even half a dozen rolls of toilet paper thrown, but they didn't unroll very well and weren't a problem.

I haven't moved my personal guns here yet, but that is now a priority. I don't know if Wade put the men up to it or not, but I'm sure he is pleased as punch that it happened. Teresa handled herself just fine, jotting down what information she could while I just stood there and shook my fist at the hooligans. We called it in to the county sheriff's office this morning and they said there wasn't much they could do, even with the partial license plate number Teresa managed to read and write down.

I was going to wait and do some defensive landscaping on the property like I'd read about on the Internet and in some of the books I ordered, but I think I'll go ahead and start it now. It won't interfere that much with the other work that will start here pretty soon. But it should give pause to anyone trying the same kind of stunt in the future.

November 8. Got the dirt contractor and fence builder out here today to show them what I wanted. Both rather annoyed me. Want money down on the jobs, since they are large ones. Plus more for the materials they need to order. I mean, I can kind of understand it, the way things are going with the economy right now, but they were rather insulting about it. I found out after I cut them checks that they were pretty buddy-buddy with Wade. I'll be watching what they do pretty closely, to make sure I get exactly what the plans call for.

I need to get a bike or something to get around the property with. Can't justify tying up the Toolcat or the U500 for it, and my Mercedes isn't going to make it.

Too annoyed right now to think about it logically.

November 9. Got my around the farm ride ordered. Just happened to run across a reference to it looking for something else. When I did, I remembered reading about them in one of the same stories on the Internet that mentioned the U500, and the Bobcats. It's a ROKON two-

wheel-drive off-road motorcycle. Since all the other major equipment is going to be diesel, I'm getting a diesel engine conversion for it.

Actually, for all six of the ROKON Ranger models I ordered. Can't beat a good thing. Teresa will need one, plus no telling who else for all the small reasons that can come up on a farm. Even one with the radio system I plan to put in.

Teresa told me she had a lead on a good farm maintenance mechanic. If he's acceptable, he should be able to do the conversions. Be a good test job for him, Teresa said when I told her about them.

I'm beginning to wonder if I didn't get into this just for the toys! I've been looking at the radio equipment, too. Another part of the prep hobby I'm really getting to like. I still need to think some of this through, though. No point in wasting money. I have to say, the research is almost as much fun as the doing. Not quite.

November 12. Elmer got the first ROKON conversion done today. Good deal. The dirt work and fencing operations start tomorrow. Those two guys intentionally delaying the work turned out to be a positive for me. I'll be able to stay right with them as they work. But it may push the work into some bad weather days. I may just offer a bonus for early completion and find out where their real loyalties lie.

Wade completed his harvest and is officially no longer a part of the property. If I never see him or hear from him again, so much the better.

November 23. Money talks. Both Willoughby, the dirt contractor, and Simons, the fence guy, agreed to push for a December 20th completion date. Though they had delayed the start of the work, they had ordered all the materials needed for it. There should be nothing to delay them, except the weather. And maybe Wade. But they both nearly drooled when I mentioned the bonus.

December 1. Been a busy few days. Willoughby and Simons and their double crews only took a few hours off for Thanksgiving Day. It was their choice. I wouldn't have insisted on it. But I sure didn't try to talk them out of it. They've been working ten and eleven hour days and are making real headway.

I have to admit, neither man is shorting the quality of the work. Too much pride, I think, to let Wade talk them into it. If they keep it up, they'll make the deadline. I'm out there most of the time, just watching. As much as I want it done before bad weather, I'd only slow them down if I tried to help. Assuming that wouldn't put me in the hospital. I was really hoping I'd recover more of my abilities than I have so far. Despite it being a good day for the farm, it hasn't been that good of one for me. Oh, well. Things will be better tomorrow.

December 2. Looks like I was kind of down yesterday, from what I wrote. Came out of it okay. Today is a good day. It was warm, the sun was shining, and the work crews were in a groove. I didn't think it possible, but they might actually get done early. I hope so. The long-range forecast is calling for heavy rains beginning December 18th. Perhaps even snow.

More good stuff. Two more of the up-graded Unimog 500's were delivered. Coincidentally, so were most of the implements I ordered for them. One of them, on a separate truck, was the road conditioner from Carolina Smooth Roads.

I couldn't wait to try it out. Teresa and Elmer, too. We got one of the U500's prepped and then read the manual for the road conditioner. I just got back from fixing up my road from one end to the other. It was cool!

With all the heavy traffic there's been on it, the road was a mess. The conditioner took care of it. One pass for each side of the road and it was done. That thing was expensive, but seeing it in action and the result, I bet I can get a lot of work fixing up private roads in the area.

December 21. Well, the contractors didn't make the bonus work date. But they did beat the weather. I gave them half the bonus. They were more than happy. They may be buddies with Wade, but I think they changed their opinion of me and the operation here.

Teresa and Elmer both went home for the holidays. Elmer to Cape and Teresa to Columbia. I'll be here for Christmas, I guess. I wish it would snow.

December 26. Well, Santa didn't show, though it did snow, much to my delight. Not much. Maybe an inch. The place looks beautiful in the snow. I took some pictures. I'd taken a few of the dirt work and fence building. I think I'll keep my camera handy and take more shots of the process of getting the farm set up the way I want. Life is good.

January 1. Well, the New Year has started off just fine. The snow disappeared quickly when it started raining the night of the 26th. The rain was a hard pounding one for a while and I think it probably helped settle the dirt work. It sure shined up the fencing.

Both the concrete and rock fence along the road and around both sides of the homestead area. The rest of the fence is high security pointed rail steel in a desert sand color, set in a continuous foundation of poured concrete, and encloses the forty acres of the basic homestead. Can barely see it if you aren't looking for it. Really dropped a bundle on the fences, but I think they'll add value to the place. Not to mention the security.

I've been working on some of the building plans. At least getting down the details I want for each structure. I'll probably e-mail them to a local building contractor tomorrow. Harry really recommended him. It's going to be a big project and I have some doubts he can do everything on a timely basis.

But I have a back up plan, just like a good prepper should. I made contact with a firm in St. Louis I know can do the work. But it would be considerably more expensive because they would have to move crews down here for the duration. We'll see. Wow! Just yawned like it's hours past my bed time. Well. Looking at the clock down in the corner of the screen, I guess it is.

January 10. Teresa and Elmer are both back. Teresa got here on the third and Elmer the day after. I sent Elmer back home to wait until I called with more work for him. Made sure he understood he was on salary and would still get paid.

Teresa called me over to her trailer on the fourth and we started going over resumes and contact sheets. "I know this applicant personally," she told me, handing me the resume for one Patricia Holland. Teresa was a little worried about it being another woman in the number two spot. But the resume indicated Patricia was a newly licensed vet.

It honestly didn't bother me. She sounded like a real possibility for the animal side of the operation, both production and food animal product. That was the question I had. Will she be able to handle the food product animals as well as the production animals. Teresa said yes. I wanted to hear it from Patricia. Teresa made the travel arrangements.

Patricia was older than I expected. Turned out she'd been a licensed veterinarian technician and had gone back to school to get her vet license. Her specialty is large animals. Just what I wanted. I have to say I wondered if she'd want to do the ordinary duties that really didn't come under a vet's job description, but she insisted she could and would do the work, including the tasks necessary to provide fresh meat to the market.

I hired her on the spot. I've got another trailer coming out for her. She'll be here in two weeks to start consulting on the future animal population I want the farm to have.

The last of the Bobcat utility equipment came in, as did the last of the implements. I'm glad I'd been practicing with the equipment, playing actually, laugh, laugh. The Bobcat and two Toolcats were on an equipment trailer and could be driven off. I had to unload the implements using the A300 equipped with forks during a blowing snow storm. Now I'm waiting for the other three U500's. They are on a ship on the way. Elmer is coming out tomorrow to make racks for the implements to make them easy to attach and detach.

January 15. Went to my first farm auction with Teresa and Patricia a few days ago. I didn't buy anything, but got an idea what was available and what it was going for. Also met some of the other local area farmers and ranchers. Wade was there, but I just ignored him. He just glared at me.

Did get some leads on some of the more antique type equipment I wanted, both horse drawn and tractor implements. Teresa and I'll be doing some buying trips a little later on this spring. When it gets here. I don't know about this global warming stuff. Sure doesn't seem like it's a problem here. What the locals are telling me is this is shaping up to be one of the worst winters in some years. A lot more snow than usual.

January 17. Not much going on the last couple of days. Elmer finished the implement racks and went home. I'm just sitting here sipping tea and watching the snow fall. And, I just now see, Patricia and Teresa out there walking around the property pointing here and there. Making plans, I guess. I hope they are compatible with mine. Ah. They're heading for their trailers. Lovely snow.

January 20. Heat wave! The snow is melting quickly. I'm tempted to take one of the A300's and a tree spade out to the orchard area to start getting ready for the fruit and nut trees I have coming. But it would just mud it up. Sure, I could use the equipment to clean it all up, but no real reason to do it. It would just be make work.

January 29. More snow the last three days. Just when it was drying up enough to start the orchard work. Been working with Teresa and Patricia on the plans for the barns and such. They each have pretty specific needs and wants for their respective areas of concern. Though Teresa is in overall charge of the operation, reporting to me, and Patricia reports to Teresa, Teresa will have direct responsibility for the crop portion of the operation, too.

I had to revise some of my plans for the buildings, based on their input. I could easily see what they were talking about when they laid it out for me. I'm sure not a farmer yet, but I'm learning.

Sent those plans, and the housing plans, off to the architect working with the local contractor to review and give me some final bids. Sent them to the guy in St. Louis, too, just for a competing bid. Should know something in two weeks.

February 12. Been a while I see since I've been in here looks like. Didn't realize that. But I've been busy. That's a pretty good excuse, if not a good reason. A lot accomplished in the last few days. Found out I'm not the only one that likes to use the Utility equipment. While it is certainly work, there is an element of enjoyment in it, too. Being able to almost effortlessly switch from one task to another is nice.

Elmer, Teresa, and Patricia all worked in getting the trees I'd paid a very high premium to get planted using a tree spade on one of the Unimogs and a smaller one on an A300. The tree spades cut the holes and moved the dirt to a stockpile for later use, and the A300 and another Unimog with respective sized forks moved the trees from the truck to the holes.

I'd bought the largest, most mature trees I could find for those fruits and nuts that didn't have dwarf versions available. With even decent luck the trees should be producing within three years, if not sooner. Except for the Black Walnuts. Going to be a few years on those, even at the maximum size I could get.

With a tank I'd bought locally on one of the Unimogs, we transported water from one of the irrigation wells to the orchard to water the trees after we set them and fed them, according to Teresa's instructions.

Took us a week to accomplish the task and the weather cooperated for the most part. The last things we put in were the vines for a small vineyard, and several large berry patches and brambles.

We cut a few ruts in the process, but were able to smooth them out with a grader attachment for one of the A300's when it dried up a bit there at the end.

After discussing it with Teresa, I decided to go ahead and order enough Lombardy Poplars to put in a triple row fence row around every forty acre field. Teresa was rather reluctant, wanting every square foot of space for production, but with global warming in the news the way it is, I convinced her that the fence rows will more than pay for themselves and the slight loss of production by protecting the fields if we have anything approaching another dust bowl.

February 14. Got all the bids back for the construction work. I can't believe it. That ornery William Hollister in Cape is sub contracting the work to the same outfit I contacted in St. Louis. And the Hollister bid is less than the direct bid for the work by the St. Louis outfit. So, naturally, I'll go with William. Best of both worlds. I hope. March 1st is the scheduled start date.

I hope I don't wind up a day late, a dollar short, and a shelter shy. Taiwan just announced a referendum on whether to declare their independence or not. China is already warning the US and the rest of the world to stay out of the situation, no matter which way it goes. They have as much as stated that Taiwan will not be independent. With the US committed to supporting Taiwan, things could get sticky.

China is already mobilizing on their coast and the US is sending a second Carrier Battle Group to the area.

At least I have the equipment to put in an expedient shelter if I need to. I hope it's not necessary. This is why I'm doing what I'm doing. I'm going to be really annoyed if I get this far and the balloon goes up before I'm ready.

The economy is getting worse. I'm glad I had enough sense when the settlement was offered to me to demand, and get an inflation adjustment clause. The payments are adjusted for inflation each month. So, unless the company simply goes out of business or defaults on the payments, I should be okay. I'm spending it as fast as I get it, but it's all going to a secure future. I hope.

February 20. Can't believe it! The referendum failed to pass! Taiwan isn't going to declare independence. At least right now. It was a very close vote. The proponents of independence have vowed to try again. Soon.

The last three Unimog U500's came in yesterday. Got the full complement now. That included a twenty-foot ISO shipping container of spare parts and replacement parts. Unimogs still aren't that common in the US and I want to make sure to be able to keep the six I have running, no matter what.

Since we won't have the animals for the horse and oxen drawn farming before planting season, I've decided to use the Unimogs and pull type farm equipment on the eighty acres I was planning to horse farm.

That's in addition to the one-hundred-sixty acres already planned for that operation. Three-hundred-twenty acres will be farmed with the modern equipment.

Got ten acres for the building complex, another ten acres for gardens and commercial green houses, the ten-acre orchard, and a ten acre lake. The other forty acres is pasture for the animals. That's the full section of six-hundred-forty acres.

I've been working on a deal with the local John Deere dealer for a turn-key equipment and support package. Kind of been holding off, due to Taiwan. But with that resolved for the moment I went in this morning and signed the deal. They'll start delivering the equipment March 1st. Going to be a busy day, that day.

February 22. Hollister came out today, with the project engineer for Weathers Construction, the outfit from St. Louis. I showed the Weathers guy, Brian Johnson, the place and where the equipment and material supplies would be kept during the building phase.

March 1. I knew this was going to be a busy day. It was. Weathers Construction showed up in force with their equipment. So did John Deere, delivering the initial items of farm equipment, including the two four-wheel-drive tractors, and the field prep and planting equipment.

That also included the new pull-type implements for the Unimogs. It was going to be a while before the horse drawn equipment came in. Patricia is working on it, but getting working versions isn't easy. She's been in contact with a couple of Amish enclaves. She assured me that she'd have everything needed by next spring.

March 2. The excavations for the equipment barn and the supply barn were started today. I want those buildings completed as soon as possible so we can have a place to work on the equipment and get the fertilizer and seed I have coming under cover. It's going to be tight, Teresa said, but we should be able to till and plant on time, even if we have to work outside.

March 3. Wow! They excavated, formed, and poured the basements, foundations, and aprons for the equipment barn and supply barn yesterday! Today they started on animal barns.

That was one of the changes that Patricia and Teresa insisted on. Separate barns for the working animals and the market animals.

John Deere delivered more of the equipment today, too. The fuel supplier I cut a contract with delivered a skid mounted one-thousand-gallon diesel fuel tank, and a five-hundred-gallon gasoline tank, and filled both. There was also a small skid mounted portable building for lubricants and such. I plan on a small tank farm on the property, but until the permanent tanks are installed, the skid mounts will do.

March 4. Things are going swimmingly with the construction. By the time they have all the building concrete work done, the first two barns will be ready to go up. All the farm buildings should be ready at the end of June, and the residential buildings by August 31st. There is a certain amount of waiting time involved, since I'm having everything built with reinforced masonry. But with so many individual buildings, the crews always have something to do, working on one building while the first sets up.

March 7. Spent the last several days interviewing farm hands, with Teresa. We signed on the three that we thought would fit in with the operation the best. They start tomorrow, getting familiar with the equipment and the property. I'm getting really excited. It's going to be a real farm here very soon.

March 15. Busy few days. Though I have no real intention of actually operating the farm equipment, I put in my time with the John Deere reps just like the hands, learning about the capabilities of the various equipment and how to use everything effectively.

The Motorola rep was out and we set up a communications plan for the farm. The commercial aspect of it, anyway. I plan to have a comprehensive radio shack, as a hobby and for use in potential disasters. The business band radios will be just a part of it.

Teresa and I met with several chemical and fertilizer reps, in between the classes, and made arrangements for a minimum environmental impact program to maximize yields without using excess chemicals and fertilizer that would just run off into the watershed. We are going to need a couple catchment ponds to intercept drainage from a few of the fields, but we can do those with the equipment we have.

The construction is moving along nicely.

The hands are kept busy when they aren't otherwise occupied planting the Lombardy Poplars for the fence rows. Again the Bobcat equipment is proving its worth.

March 16. Not a good day yesterday. One of the field hands we hired quit. Boiled down to he just didn't like working for a female boss. Especially one younger than him. Teresa took it pretty well, though I think it bothered her more than she let on. I think part of the problem was the idea of farming with trucks instead of tractors. Too unconventional.

March 19. We brought in the fourth man on the list of potential hands. Hopefully he'll work out better than the one he's replacing. Construction still going nicely and the last of the fence rows were planted. It's pretty late. Think I'll call it a day.

March 23. Nothing much to put down. Things going pretty good.

March 30. Ditto the above.

April 4. Woo-hoo! The equipment barn is completed. The supply barn should be ready in a couple more days.

April 9. The supply barn was finished a couple of days ago and the supplies we have had on covered pallets were all moved to it. Man, that Bobcat equipment works great! I did a little of the moving when the others took their lunch.

Some bad news though. The owners of that business I was trying to buy in Cape have been totally uncooperative. I've decided to just build what I want and start a new business. Considering why I want it, it's probably better this way. The building will be much more secure than the place I was trying to buy. In addition, I'll be able to do more than what I would have been able in the other building. I've got Hollister working on plans, in his spare time.

April 17. Didn't realize it had been so long. Busy. Construction going well. Got the Motorola mobile radios installed in all the equipment that needed them, and plenty of handhelds and chargers for everyone, with some to spare for future employees. Put up two antennas at my trailer and installed a mobile on a power supply for the temporary base stations. VHF and HF units. The Unimogs and other vehicles that would be going off the property got both mobile radios. The other big equipment that would stay on the farm just got the VHF mobiles.

April 21. Another pretty good few days. The new hand has turned out to be a good one. He's very familiar with John Deere equipment in particular, and all aspects of farming generally. Teresa didn't say anything, but I think she was worried about him since he is quite a bit older than the other hands.

June 13. Really been a while since I could get to the journal. Went back into the hospital with complications from my surgeries right after the April 21 entry. Caught me all of a sudden and I went down, passed out cold. Teresa got an ambulance out quickly and they took me to the regional hospital and then shipped me back to my original hospital so they could take care of the problem.

Teresa, Patricia, and the hands did great while I was out of commission. Teresa took it upon herself to monitor the building process as well as get the farm up and running. The crops are in and already coming up nicely.

The few little problems with the equipment were quickly resolved by the John Deere support team. Going to change chemical suppliers though. Teresa said they weren't as cooperative as they implied they would be. Other than that, the spring tilling and planting went great.

The construction crews are putting the final touches on the farm buildings. They'll easily meet the June 30th deadline and then will start on the residences. I don't think I wrote it down before, but I scrapped my initial plans for individual houses and a small apartment building. Instead, there will be an apartment building with four three-bedroom apartments and four one-bedroom apartments on one side of the main entrance to the property and another apartment building on the other side of the entrance with eight two-bedroom apartments.

Was really disappointed I wasn't here to see the installation of the electrical power house and equipment. Another change I made was the connection to the power grid. But I still want off-grid capability and that's where the electrical power house comes in.

I hired a consultant early on to design me a system to be completely off-grid. But it didn't take much redesign to incorporate commercial power. He supervised the entire process of installation in my absence, reporting to Teresa.

Again the Bobcats came in handy moving the two-hundred 2.2 volt, 7,000 amp submarine batteries I'd ordered way back when. There are 96 of them in four banks of 24 for 48v DC storage. Another 96 are in dry storage for replacement in thirty to forty years, with 8 set aside to replace any damaged or non-functional batteries in the meantime.

The batteries are fed primarily with a large array of PV panels, the 48v DC converted to 120/240v AC. Though wind power isn't the best option here, I opted to include two 7.5 kw wind turbines, also producing 48v DC, to charge the batteries when the wind was suitable. And, of course, the batteries can be charged with the diesel powered generator system that is part of the overall power system.

Since I'm planning for the worst case scenario I wanted adequate power for the farm. The 18kw or so of solar/wind power will be used on a daily basis, to provide the basic needs of the residences and the farm buildings. Each farm building and apartment building has its own PV, battery bank, and inverter system for emergency power, using more conventional deep cycle batteries.

The generator setup will provide the prime power for the farm buildings if commercial power goes down.

The consultant thought I was going overboard with the generator system when I first discussed it with him. He finally admitted that it was doable, and not such a bad idea for a permanent prime power system.

It was expensive, but I've got the money to spend now, so I'm doing it. There are four identical diesel generator units, 50kw Caterpillar units with synchronizers. One unit will provide basic power for the entire compound and a second can be brought on line automatically when additional power is needed, giving a full 100kw of power.

Though the other two units can be brought on line as well, they are actually back up units. One is put on line when one of the main two are down for service. The fourth is a long term back up for use when one of the other three plants is down for a rebuild when it becomes necessary. Besides the maintenance components stored in volume, there are spare engine components and generator head components for six rebuilds each. More than a lifetime of power.

Even when the commercial power is on, the generators are exercised at least once a month each to make sure they are ready to take up the load.

Less see. Did I mention the spring planting went well? Yep. I did. That's it for this entry.

June 14. Still recuperating from the emergency surgery. Can't do much. I did take a tour of the place on one of the ROKON's and it wore me out. Just going to take it easy for a few days and let the employees do their jobs.

July 4. Feeling a lot better now. Things are going smoothly here on the property. The same can't be said around the country and around the world. There was another terrorist attack today, in New York. But not as bad as 9/11 fortunately. But very symbolic. The Statue of Liberty is no more.

July 5. Put in another big order at Emergency Essentials and Walton Feed, with smaller orders to the other suppliers I use. None of the companies would guarantee any specific delivery date. Seems everybody and their brother that knew about the companies put in emergency orders. It was a knee jerk reaction for me, so I asked them to put me on the bottom of the list. As long as things don't go completely wild, I should get the orders eventually.

Stocks and bonds plummeted today. Gold and silver jumped. Everyone accused everyone else for the attack. As of right now, no one has claimed responsibility for the destruction of the Statue.

I'm tempted to bring all my supplies from storage, but I really want to wait until the apartments are finished.

Everyone is a little up tight about the situation. That includes me.

Oh. One good thing about my medical trouble, I found a doctor in Cape that is interested in preps. I hope to further the relationship, making him my local physician. I have high hopes that he will be cooperative in helping me acquire medical equipment and supplies.

July 10. Things are still tense all over the place. But the construction is continuing, and so is the farm work. I called the greenhouse company I plan to use for the construction of the commercial greenhouses that will be the biggest producer of the truck farm crops I plan on. They can have a guy out here in two days, to finalize the plans.

July 12. Sent a deposit check back with the greenhouse company rep. They'll start construction on the 19th, with completion expected by August 31st.

Went ahead and ordered the portable fencing for the pasture area. We'll only use a limited area at a time, and then move the fences and animals to another section to allow the used area to recover.

July 19. The greenhouse guys showed up with their equipment. I had totally missed the fact that no provisions had been made for the foundations of the greenhouses. Unimog to the rescue. Henry, the farmhand we brought on after one quit, is an old hand on a backhoe. He used the backhoe we have for the Unimog and began digging the footings today. He said he could have all six done in three days.

July 21. Henry was true to his word. The foundations were dug and the local concrete company came out and formed up, and then poured them. The greenhouse frame work can start going up on August 1st. I refused to pay per diem for the greenhouse crews during the wait time. The greenhouse company owner didn't like it, but I was firm. I probably should have realized that the foundations weren't included in the arrangement, but he sure should have said something about it well before sending his crews out.

Patricia has been busy these last few months. Besides doing some general farm work, she's been going to sales regularly, to get a feel for the market and the quality of the animals being sold, as well as looking for animal drawn farming equipment.

Teresa nudged me along on getting the storage silos up before we need them for the harvest. So I made a few calls, confirmed bids, and ordered the construction. It's going to be tight. I really dropped the ball on the silos.

August 1. Used the basement shelters in the buildings yesterday! Had a tornado blow past less than a mile away! Scary. Everything went smoothly, when I got the warning on the NOAA weather radio. Everyone is good now about carrying a handy-talky so it took merely the keying the mike of mine and requesting everyone to get into the nearest basement, for it to be done. I

rounded up the various outside contract workers and ushered them into the farm office building basement.

Like all the basements, under every building, it is actually more of a shelter than just basement. All have overhead fill for radiation protection and insulation. They fulfill traditional basement functions, but are more than adequate emergency shelters.

The only thing I didn't do, and I sure did think about doing it, was to connect all the basements with tunnels. But I talked myself out of it. I hope I don't live to regret the fact.

The housing units are progressing nicely. Everyone intending to live on the farm should be able to move in on the first of September, as promised.

August 2. Spent a bundle on communications gear today. Ordered radios, antennas, towers, accessories... Just a whole bunch of stuff. It'll all be set up in the farm office building. I'd thought about doubling up on everything, to have a set in the apartment, but decided that was bordering on the ridiculous. Maybe even past it. Laugh. Laugh.

August 3. Committed another bundle today. The plans came back for the small retail business I want, and coincidentally, Harry called about a piece of property suitable for what I want. I'll go to town in a couple of days and check it out in person. If the property is okay, I'll give the go ahead and see if Hollister Construction can take on another project.

August 5. The site is fine. Hollister can start on the construction, using his own crew, in a week.

August 6. Keep waiting for the other shoe to drop. Things have seemed to have calmed down politically, all around the world. Doesn't seem natural. The stock market is swinging back up and gold and silver are down since there has been no follow-on to the Statue of Liberty attack. I think I've been remiss about acquiring some gold and silver coins. The trade goods situation will be well in hand in a few weeks, but, according to the prep websites and forums, precious metals will be a big part of the recovery during the aftermath of a major balloon going up scenario. Or won't. There isn't complete agreement. I think I'd rather have, than not have. I'll make a trip in to St. Louis in a few days and see what I can find.

August 10. Been in St. Louis the last couple of days. Kind of like the city. Found a bunch of coin stores and bought every one of them out of the American bullion coins they had, that had any, and would take cash. There's talk of another gold grab by the government I discovered when I was researching PM's the other day, so I wanted no record of the purchases. Probably shouldn't even be putting it down here. I won't mention quantities. There isn't that much. Really.

August 20. Teresa, Patricia, and I have been interviewing more hands for the farm the last few days, with some emphasis on at least two of them having animal handling experience. Always such a pain, since I kind of have my own agenda here, that Teresa and Patricia are unaware of.

August 31. Hired four more hands. The two apartment buildings are finished. The tank farm is in, and the communications gear arrived. The greenhouses are done. Steel framework with polycarbonate glazing. The silos are finished and ready for the fall crops. I went with several smaller silos than just a few big ones. Not as efficient, but more versatile. The fenced in swimming pool and pool house are in. The well equipped play ground for the hands' children is completed. So are the various parking lots. Busy, busy, busy. Going to be busier the next few days. Patricia is ready to start getting the animals in, the working animals first.

September 4. I'm all moved into my apartment. Teresa; Patricia; Elmer, his wife, and two children; Henry and his wife; two hands with wives and children; two of the single hands; all are too. Couple of the guys are still thinking about whether to move out here or not. It means a pay cut, but not as much as I'm sure they are paying now for rent, insurance, and such. But each to their own. I can understand not wanting to live where you work.

September 5. Checked the progress of the retail store on the edge of Cape. It'll be ready in a few days. Started looking for employees and was very surprised when Henry's wife told me she had retail experience. So did the wife of another of the hands. I've got to learn everyone's names. Not too good at that.

But, anyway, I think I'll hire them both to start with. The store won't be in full swing until the food animals are in production. I've decided to offer all the products the farm will be producing in the shop, as well as sell them commercially. That will be in addition to the products I want to have available in large quantities. Some of which need to be rotated.

I just hope to sell enough to keep the items on the shelf fresh, in case the balloon goes up. Need to get a liquor sales license because part of those supplies is drinking alcohol. Don't like contributing to peoples' bad habits, but tobacco will also be in the store.

Let's see, what else the last few days? The apartment is fine. I'll have my stuff shipped here in a few days, but I want to go back there and supervise the packing and loading. The early harvest is starting. John Deere brought out the rest of the equipment I ordered a couple of days ago. We're ready to go full bore now.

Even the new hands have come to appreciate the Unimogs as farm equipment. We've started in on getting the greenhouses running. That has to come in between the regular field harvests. I guess that's about it. I'm beat. Off to bed.

September 14. Flew out and got my stuff headed this way. Should be here tomorrow. While I was in St. Louis I went shopping for a gun shop willing to handle equipping the farm with an arsenal for post apocalyptic world (PAW) use. It would take a while to meet legal requirements and I wanted to get started on the acquisitions, the same way I had the gold and silver.

September 15. Sure enough, the truck arrived with my stuff. Got it all unloaded and put away, the preps going into a locked storeroom in the basement shelter. The gun safe is here in my bedroom in a closet.

September 20. Things going well on the farm. The first of Patricia's horses arrived. I have to admit, she has a good eye. I am pleased with her selections. I have no doubts about the rest of the working stock will be just as good. She'll be spending most of her time now training the animals for the farm work. She got one riding horse, to use herself, when working with the other horses. It's a Moroccan Barb. Never heard of them before, but she swears by them as a riding horse.

The communication gear is all installed and tested. Quite the antenna farm, but not too intrusive. I opted for shorter, self-supporting, telescoping, fold over towers, rather than taller, guyed towers.

Everyone living and working here have settled into their new lives pretty well. Pretty much business as usual in national and world politics. Ditto the weather. It's either going to be a very bad winter, very mild winter, or average winter. The weather forecasters are hedging all their bets.

September 25. The radio licenses finally came in so we can now legally use the radios, and I started an Amateur Radio Operators licensing class in Cape, for the fun of it. The license to make alcohol for fuel use came in, too. We don't have much in the way of gasoline powered items, but all of them can use E85, so I'll buy straight gasoline and we'll blend it ourselves.

I ordered the stills, as well as the biodiesel production equipment I've been planning on getting. The methane generator that is part of the animal barns sanitation systems will provide the gas to power the stills and the biodiesel equipment. I also ordered enough chemicals for biodiesel production to last us years, though I still plan to buy and replace what we use, to keep those stocks at the same level.

September 31. Got permits to cut wood on the Mississippi River bottoms, inside the levees, from the Corp of Engineers. All the buildings have wood heat. I went ahead and had ordered one hundred cords from a local firewood company, because it will be next year before we can really start cutting wood, and a year after that before it is seasoned to burn well.

Decided to order two carloads of good anthracite coal for good measure. All the stoves are coal capable. I'd planned on waiting for a while, but now is as good a time as any.

The first delivery of arms and ammunition showed up yesterday. The dealer and I moved everything from his pickup to the basement vault in the farm office. So far, I'm the only one that knows I'm setting up an arsenal for the farm. There's been no comment about my wearing my pistol, though I do carry it concealed in an in-the-waistband holster in the small of my back. It's usually covered by a light jacket.

October 19. Harvest is almost done. Got in the rest of the horses for the place, plus the swine feeders and breeders, feeder beef cattle, bred heifers, a bull, and milk cows, along with more chickens than I can count. Woo-hoo! It's really a working farm now!

November 19. Been a month, I see. Lot happened the last four weeks. Harvest is complete, just ahead of the rains. All the harvest is in storage, much of it for use on the farm. I plan on waiting till the silos are almost full before I start selling on the market.

The alcohol and biodiesel systems are installed. Should make our first batch of each tomorrow.

November 20. Well, after we worked the kinks out, all three systems worked as they are supposed to. The methane generator had enough waste to start operation. The oil press got us the raw oil from our very own soybeans, and the biodiesel plant converted it into quality biodiesel. According to the alcohol meter the first run batch of product turned out fine. I made sure no one took a sip. Our permit is for fuel alcohol only. Henry has some hidden talents!

December 1. The Thanksgiving Holiday period went smoothly. A few people left to be with families. There were even a few people that came out to be with family that worked here. Everyone left that was supposed to, and everyone got back that was supposed to.

Our main thrust now, until spring planting rolls around, is getting the greenhouses in full production, and seeing to the animals.

Oh. The retail shop is finished. I went in to take a look at it after everything was cleaned up. Like the buildings on the farm, the retail shop is built with reinforced masonry, and has a basement, standby generator, and solar power set up. Going to wait until after the new year to open it, though we are going to get it stocked.

Hollister was a bit curious about the check out counter, but built it the way I wanted. It's a high security enclosure with bullet resistant construction walls and bullet resistant glass. The small office in the shop is built the same way. Hollister just didn't see the need for this kind of security in Cape. I didn't tell him it was for after the balloon goes up, not particularly now.

Though, with the way things are going, such enclosures may become common, even in Cape Girardeau. Even Hollister wasn't surprised about the security shutters on the windows and doors.

My fuel supplier had a similar attitude when I put in the four twenty-thousand gallon tanks, (3 E85 gasoline, 1 diesel) for the single two outlet fuel dispenser we installed. We have an initial delivery, but I plan on slowly filling the tanks, adding more than we sell. Which might or might not be much. The location is actually a pretty good one.

The rest of the weapons and initial order of ammunition are in the vault in the basement of the farm office.

January 2. Christmas came and went, as did New Years, of course. I wasn't too sure about having a Christmas party in the office for everyone, but Teresa convinced me. It turned out just fine. Had a tree and everything. Didn't draw names, but everyone brought a small gift suitable for anyone, and they were handed out.

Opened up the retail store this morning. Had a couple of curiosity customers, but that was it. Slipped up by not getting our ad in the paper to coincide with the opening. It comes out next week.

January 5. Back into full swing now. The greenhouses are in full operation. Have enough hands to handle it now, but Teresa and I were talking things over. We might need some temporary help springs and falls, when we're in the middle of planting and harvesting. Summer and winters the core group we have now should be fine.

Sold our first fuel at the Farm Mart, which is the name I finally gave the retail shop to sell our products. Moved some greenhouse fresh produce. A few other odds and ends. Though the storage room is huge, I stocked the place in quantity, rather than selection. Only one brand of engine oil, for example. Just a few different candy bars and snacks. The same with soda pop and other drinks. Ditto the liquor and tobacco. Not a lot of selection, but a lot of product.

I think it is probably good that we won't have any animal food products until late this spring. Give a chance to build up a clientele for the fresh produce. I'm a little worried about wastage of the meat and dairy when we start selling our own. I'm carrying fresh milk and eggs now, from the dairy that we sell our dairy to.

Already had to bring some of it out to slop the hogs when it went past its freshness date. At least none of the perishables will go to waste. Everything like that, that we don't consume ourselves at the farm, will go to feed the swine or go into the methane generator or compost bins.

That's it for now, I guess. Except, the winter is pretty much normal for this area, they tell me.

January 10. Not really much to record. Things going nominally. Business at the Farm Mart is picking up marginally. I hired a couple more people to help Elizabeth and Kathleen. Elizabeth is pretty much running the place on her own, with just a little input from me. She doesn't understand why I'm stocking the things I am, in the quantities I am, but she goes about doing it enthusiastically. Thankfully she doesn't mind dealing with the regulating agencies, which is something I've come to hate doing.

January 22. Started a semi-formal emergency preparedness training program. It's primarily geared for the standard natural disasters and accidents on the farm. People are a bit more interested than I thought they would be.

January 31. Snow started today. Supposed to be a bad one. We're battening down the hatches. Got two of the Toolcats fitted with snow blowers and an A300 with snow blade. We should see how well my plans for handling snow work out in a few hours, or a day or so.

February 1. Still snowing. The Bobcat equipment is operating as expected. We're piling the snow up over the grates that lead to the Rainstore3 underground runoff water storage system. The rains we've had drained fine into the system. This is the first large snowfall that we've had. It is my hope that the warmth coming from the large pits under the grates will melt the snow from beneath, and let it drain to the Rainstore3 holding tank.

The last time I measured it, there was only about a foot of water in the tank, and it's almost eight feet deep. The tank is one-hundred by two-hundred feet and will hold as much as a million gallons. All the guttering on the buildings leads to it. The open areas are all sloped to drain to one of half a dozen of the large grated pits. Each of the pits has a gravel and sand filter between it and the Rainstore3 tank to keep the water clean.

Don't know if I'll ever need the capacity, but the product was available, and I want to keep as much of the rainfall and snowfall we get on the property as we can. In part to prevent contaminated run off getting into the watershed, and just to have it in an emergency.

Of course, the runoff from the fields goes into their own holding ponds to keep the farm chemicals and fertilizer on the property. We're using minimal amounts of both, and according to our test this past fall, we didn't have anything get into the watershed. Don't want that water mixed with the Rainstore3 water, which, though it will be treated before used as drinking water, is still essentially pure.

February 8. The snow is all moved, and from the looks of the piles, it is melting underneath from the ground warmth in the pits, just as planned. The fresh greenhouse vegetables are really moving at the Farm Mart! Selling some E85 and a little diesel. We are competitive. Don't see how anyone makes money at a service station. I wasn't intending to make a big profit, but it's a little aggravating to know that I wouldn't be making one on fuel sales, even if I had intended to do so. Live and learn, I guess.

The economy isn't doing too good. Inflation is up, and it really looks to me like we're in for a recession. All the markets, commodities, which I watch now because of the farm, stocks, bonds, precious metals... They're all going up and down in no pattern I can see. Though the Financial Channels are trying to explain it, it just confuses me. I'll stick with buying gold and silver bullion coins for cash whenever I go to a big city.

Animals are fine, employees are fine, equipment is fine. Still feel like I'm waiting for the other shoe to fall.

February 11. Got a decision to make right quick. Tom Eldridge just put part of his land on the market. Apparently he's been running at a loss the last couple of years, and it's either sell some land for operating capital, or go bankrupt and loose most of it anyway. I know good and well Bob Wade is going to make an offer. Do I want to get further on his bad side, or just let things go? If he gets the land, part of which is adjacent to me on the east side, with the other part across the road, I know he's not going to be a good neighbor.

In all there is a section and a half of land, all graded and with irrigation wells, just like my current land. It's not just a question of getting the land. I would need to about double the commercial farming equipment. That would give me two full sections, 1,280, acres that I would be farming with the commercial equipment. I'd leave the 160 for the Unimogs, and 80 for the animal drawn equipment, that I have planned now. Decisions, decisions, decisions.

February 15. I did it. Offered Eldridge what I thought was a good price. If Wade beat it, I had decided not to try to out bid him. But Wade low balled again. I don't have a clue why he thinks he can get land of this quality and set up the way it is for a fraction of its worth. But he is furious with me, I'm told by people that know him. Tough. I'm not going to let it worry me.

Already talked to my John Deere rep. There won't be a problem getting the additional equipment. Teresa is going to talk to the fertilizer and chemical company reps and make sure we'll have enough on hand this spring to handle the additional acreage, plus build up a two year additional supply for the total acreage.

I'm glad I made arrangements for the additional employee living space we have. Teresa says we'll need two more full-time hands, and probably four temps each spring and fall.

Since I'm only going to have the income from the settlement for a few more months, and the economy the way it is, I'm going to go ahead and spend it as I get it, before it looses value.

February 28. Contracted Hollister to build an employee bunk house complex for the temporary employees. There is still plenty of building room in the homestead area ten acres. The ranch office locker rooms and showers, and the employee lounge, are plenty large enough for the additional people. It was in the back of my mind from the start. One of the after the balloon goes up things.

Ordered more Lombardy Poplars for the new acreage. It's all open ground, too. And we are now drifting into a serious drought situation in this area, according to the Weather Channel.

Saw Wade in Cape a couple of days ago. I thought he was going to go ballistic and physically attack me. But he just vented at me for about five minutes. I stood there and listened, then just turned around and walked away. I'm told it made him even angrier that I didn't react to him.

March 7. Starting to gear up for spring. Teresa is interviewing more potential hands. At least two of them are women, she told me. I think she was halfway asking my permission. But I don't care if the hands are male or female. As long as they can do the job, just like Teresa herself, and Patricia, I'm happy.

I told her to start looking for a full time greenhouse operations supervisor, too. She's going to have her hands full handling the conventional farming herself, and overseeing the other operations. We already agreed to make Henry supervisor for the Unimog based operations, and general facility operations. He's proven himself more than just a good farm labor hand.

March 9. Can't believe it! Another tornado! This early in the season. Missed us again, this time to our north. Everyone reacted well again, when the NOAA weather radio alarm sounded and we broadcast the news over our radio network.

Everyone shut down what they were doing and hit the shelter under the farm office, or the building they were in, quickly. Just about scared Karen Moore to death. She's part of the new office help. With everything going on, I wanted a little help in the office. A lot of help in the office, actually, so I can be free to do... whatever.

I hired Karen and Toni Mathews after Henry recommended them to me. He knows both girls' families. Both are recent graduates from the college here, having taken basic business courses.

March 11. Things are back to normal, now, after the tornado. The Lombardy Poplar saplings came in today and Teresa had Henry put a crew on getting them planted as quickly as possible.

I made another decision that I hope doesn't come back and haunt me. The Farm Mart is doing decent there on the edge of Cape. I've decided to put a duplicate operation right at the corner of the new property that adjoins my original section. I told Hollister today while he was working on the bunkhouse. He made it clear he thinks I'm some kind of idiot, but as long as he gets paid, he doesn't care if I am or not. Laugh. Laugh.

I'm hoping to pick up business from those living on this side of town, for fuel, at least, and the fresh produce. It's mostly just another excuse to stock up on some items.

I'm really getting concerned about the world situation again. Despite it having been voted down the first time, Taiwan is again going to have a referendum about becoming independent. The vote isn't until this fall, but the rhetoric is already starting. Precious metals are up, especially gold. Stock and bond markets up one day and down the next. More downs than ups.

The recession isn't being talked about much, but it is a fact. So is inflation. The most recent payment from the settlement is a fourth more than the initial one, due to inflation.

March 16. John Deere delivered the additional farm equipment. Patricia has been gone for three days, on the prowl of some leads on the rest of the animal drawn equipment we need. She called today and said she'd be back in two days with everything we need. I love it when a plan comes together, as the saying goes.

March 18. Patricia arrived with the equipment. She has done an excellent job. Some of the equipment is museum quality. Literally. She bought out a small museum that was closing its doors for lack of interest. All the equipment had been refurbished before it went on display, so is in ready-to-run shape.

March 19. Rain, rain, and more rain.

March 21. The rain finally stopped this morning. Shipped out our spring crop of market cattle and swine, along with the culled chickens that are no longer laying. Patricia said we're looking at a good crop of calves and piglets pretty soon. And the broody hens are sitting so we'll have a fresh crop of layers soon, too. The roosters, of course, will go to the processing plant.

The local butcher came out and looked at our operation and we cut an agreement to provide him with a steady supply of beef, pork, and chicken. I'd been trying for some time to get him out here. I'm glad he finally did.

Patricia is going to a sale tomorrow to pick up another batch of feeder pigs and steers to continue our production as we build our breeding program.

March 23. Trucks came in with the stock. Nearly lost my head when one of the steers took to kicking up a storm when he came down the ramp out of the back of the stock truck. I was standing there right by the chute when he bucked and kicked both rear feet against the railing. One of them slipped through the gap between the pipes and just missed my head.

March 27. Bob Wade came out to talk to me today. Swaggered in like he owned the place. Intimidated Karen and Toni, and had Henry just about ready to tackle him when I heard the ruckus and came out of my office. Wade made a ridiculous offer for the former Eldridge

property. I told him to leave and not come back. He out and out threatened me! I called the Sheriff's office. They just said to ignore him. He's known to spout threats like that and hasn't carried through on any of them.

March 28. Not much to say today. Things went fine. Nothing unusual.

April 3. Hollister's finish crew is putting the last touches to the new employee bunkhouse, and the foundation crew started on the new Farm Mart. His crew will extend the fences around the place.

April 7. A few quiet days. Everyone doing their job. The weather has been nice. Been working a bit with the horses and the oxen. I'd never be able to feed myself if I had to do the work myself.

April 8. Finally decided to get rid of my Mercedes two-seater and get a real farm vehicle. Not really part of the reason, but the hands have been giving me a hard time over it since day one. Even little Teri drives a pickup truck. It's a little pickup, but it is four-wheel drive. Of course, several of the hands have vehicles besides a pick-up, but every one of them has at least one in the family.

Don't want to jump into this. I need to think about a new vehicle as a prepper, as well as a farmer. Don't really have to use the truck for farming. I could get one for the farm and use it. I need to do that, anyway. The capabilities of the U500's isn't needed all the time, and the Toolcats aren't road legal.

April 15. Tax day. Of course, I sent in everything in January. I refuse to wait for the last minute. Been looking at new trucks. Still trying to decide on getting one for pure farm use or one for use on the farm that's suitable for preps, or just exactly what.

April 23. Decided to take the easy way out when I watched the financial news this morning. Going to get a new Chevy Suburban, a Chevy extended van, two 3/4-ton extended cab Chevy pickups, and two one-ton crew-cab pickups for farm use. All diesels. It is overkill, but there may never be a better time to get equipment than now. The economy, in my opinion, on this day, is getting ready to tank and a lot of people I think believe the same thing.

I'm getting enough discounts on everything that one of the vehicles is actually free, based on initial prices. The dealership was more than ready to do what was needed to move the vehicles.

Of course, that still doesn't give me a prep vehicle suitable for bugging out. I hate the thought of needing to do that, but there are some very solid reasons to do so. And if China wasn't

such a big threat in my eyes, I wouldn't worry about getting something resistant to EMP. But I am worried about that.

April 30. Vehicles are all prepped and will be delivered tomorrow. I paid for them two days ago. I've been rereading some of the PAW stories from the internet to get ideas for my personal EMP-resistant bug-out vehicle. Found a lot of good ideas, but still can't decide.

May 11. Everyone likes the new vehicles and just looks for reasons to use them. I'm ready to put a stop to it, but I think the urge will fade in a few more days. Still trying to decide on my bug-out vehicle. But I have made the decision to at least get a place to bug-out to. Harry is looking for a piece of property in the Missouri Ozarks for me.

May 12. Contacted Radius Engineering and ordered four CAT-25 shelters and connecting components to shelter up to one hundred people. I've taken a liking to most of the people here on the farm and feel like I should provide for them as I do here. Not sure how to get them there, if it becomes necessary. Or even if they will want to go. But I'm not going to let this settlement money sit in a bank.

Also put in orders to my normal suppliers to equip and supply it with those items that Radius doesn't provide in their package. Don't know where it's going, but I want it ready as soon as possible, for when I do get a place.

May 17. Everything on the farm is going well. The farm's Farm Market is finished and Elizabeth is getting it stocked. Elizabeth is also looking for a couple more clerks for the two stores. Elizabeth has proven herself over the last few months. She'll be over both of them, and directly run the one at the farm.

May 22. Harry's already found a property in the Missouri Ozarks, right on one of the big lakes. I'm driving over tomorrow to check it out.

May 28. Property looks ideal! On a good rise above the lake. While I was in the area I contracted a well driller and a plumber to install a well with solar pump, and a large septic system, respectively. May actually build a vacation home there!

May 31. Threatened rain all day, but didn't get any. Been a while. Otherwise, pretty nominal. The Farm Mart here at the farm is doing a bit of business. Slowly building up fuel reserves at both Farm Marts and the farm tanks. Here on the farm we're making a bit of biodiesel, just as a matter of economy, though the majority of our diesel is commercial. These tanks will be the first ones filled.

June 1. Well, the threatening rain no long threatens. The opportunity passed us by and the forecast is for extended dry period. A lot of places are having droughts and there is talk of taxing rainfall, believe it or not, to come up with the money to try and help those areas needing water by making those with water pay for it. Still trying to come up with a bug-out vehicle. Beginning to think I'm over analyzing it. It's just that so many of the posters on the prep forums have such... should I use the term? Cool vehicles.

June 8. I've decided on a bug-out vehicle. Going to get another Unimog U500 and swap out the electronically controlled engine and put in a compatible non-electronic version. Will still have 98% parts interchangeability with the farm U500's. I have all those spare parts for them that there should be no problem with keeping it going. I do have extra computers and sensors, but I don't want to have to stop and switch things around if I'm needing to bug out.

June 9. Ordered the new personal U500 and am looking on the internet for an outfit to convert it into the kind of bug-out vehicle I want.

June 21. Last of the settlement money deposited in my account today.

June 23. Last of the crops are in and we've already started irrigating the thirstier ones, including the farm use garden. There's three acres of it, reduced by a fourth because I insist on letting ground lay fallow, with a cover crop, to help maintain the life of the land. I do the same with all the crops. A different one-fourth portion of the land gets to rest each year. It's kept irrigated though, when the other fields are, to keep it in good shape.

June 25. Found an outfit to do the U500 conversion for me. It'll basically be a small, austere motorhome with plenty of storage space for equipment and supplies. The unit will be removable just like the other specialty beds for the Unimogs.

There'll be a tandem wheel trailer, which will carry extra fuel, equipment, and other supplies. Flying out tomorrow to get with them on the details.

July 4. Got back today in time for the farm's Independence Day celebration. Teresa knows how to organize a party. This one went over just as well as the Christmas party did. We're developing into a very close knit family here. Feels kind of nice.

July 5. Minor dust storm. A sign of things to come, I'm afraid, if the current climate pattern holds. The Lombardy Poplars in the triple line fence rows aren't quite big enough yet to give great protection, but they did give some, no taller than they are now. Saw Wade out driving

around the area when Teresa and I, in the Suburban, were checking the northern most of the new fields. I don't like the idea of him snooping around the place.

July 21. My birthday. Got the first deposit in my main bank account from the trust fund my paternal Grandfather left me. I would have done things considerably different had I not had this source of income. The farm is making a small profit over operating expenses, but it will be years before there will be a true profit over the actual investment.

With the trust fund payments coming in I can finish out doing what I set out to do, and still have a nice income, no matter what the farm does. Assuming no major disaster. I'm not counting on that. I'm counting on the farm. I honestly think that I will be dependant on it for my very survival at some point in time.

My father's father was a very astute man. The trust he set up is about as bomb proof as it is possible to get, and I expect it to weather the storm that I think is coming. But I don't think that I will always be able to get the money from them if things get really bad. After the fact... Perhaps long after the fact... I think the company will come back into its own, after just about anything.

July 22. A real scorcher today. Went from high eighties to over a hundred over night. Reached 104 today, according to the Davis weather station here at the farm. The broadcast weather reports indicated temps in the area ranging from 101 to 106, so I guess we weren't as bad off as some.

July 29. Real heat wave. Daytime temps staying over 100 with above 90 at nights. Humidity up over 80%. Keeping the stock watered down with a couple of water misters Teresa, Henry, and Elmer came up with.

August 5. Still hotter than Hades.

August 23. Heat wave finally broke. High was only 91 today and the low tonight should be under 85 for the first time in weeks.

August 24. Much nicer out. The two Farm Marts are doing pretty good. The fresh vegetables, and especially the fruit and berries, are a big hit in the area. We're still going through the dairy for dairy items, and the butcher for food animal products in the stores. Just less hassles, though we are equipped here at the farm to do the initial processing, with final processing at the shops, it's not worth it now.

August 30. All the fuel tanks are full. The Farm Mart gasoline tanks with commercial E85, and the farm gasoline tanks with pure gasoline. It's mixed with alcohol from our still to make E85, giving us much more useable gasoline than the tank size would indicate.

September 6. Field harvests are started. Still hotter than normal, but the equipment and animals are doing fine. We're set up so we don't have to push anything too hard. Equipment, animals, and employees. Pool has received a huge amount of use this summer. I'm glad I decided to install it.

September 11. My bug-out Unimog and trailer showed up today. I've been getting progress reports on-line since the start. The shop building it documents everything with digital video cameras and post portions of the video on their website.

I've decided to go to the Ozarks to supervise the installation of the shelter system. Radius called me and said the units are ready for delivery. I asked for turn-key installation and their rep will be coming with a crew to do the work. I made sure the dirt work would be done by an out-of-the-area company. Don't really want all the locals knowing about the shelter.

September 20. Work is coming along. I talk to Teresa almost every day. She says all everything at the harvest is going great. Checked my personal bank account. Going to have to watch things. My balance was under a thousand dollars. Of course, the trust fund deposit should be in tomorrow.

September 21. Checked with the bank again. The deposit was made. Have plenty of money again. That was a scary 24 hours. Not like I was penniless, but it almost felt that way.

The work on the shelter is coming along fine. It is a rather more meticulous process than I thought it would be, with the seismic joints and such. I called the St. Louis construction company. They're going to send a team out to build a support and storage unit underground. It will hold things like the towers and antennas, and some other items that I don't want to install or store in the shelter complex.

I'm going home tomorrow and will come back when the St. Louis crew is ready to do the work.

September 22. Teresa was right. Things are going well here on the farm. Don't really need me to operate. Everyone knows their job and does it. Got the same temp hands back we had last year for the harvest. The bunkhouse was put to use again, more so than last spring when it was first ready. Gasoline prices have skyrocketed and the commute, short as it is for most of them, is a serious drain on the workers finances.

They get quite a bit more in perks when they stay here, too, besides just saving gasoline. We still have a bit of potential wastage of fresh foods from the Farm Marts and it is prepared and served for a nominal fee to the employees. They get to use the pool, and the rec room in the bunkhouse has a big-screen TV, games, a library, and such to keep them occupied when they aren't working.

We're getting inquiries almost every day now about jobs here on the farm. We've becoming known as a good employer. I heard that Wade fired one of his hands that put in an application here when he found out about it. Didn't really need another hand at the moment, but he was a very experienced man and I felt responsible for him losing his job. With the economy still slowing down, it is hard for people to find productive work.

October 2. Got back to the shelter site. The St. Louis crew is scheduled to be here tomorrow. The bug-out Unimog is working just fine for its intended purpose. Haven't really used any of its capabilities, other than driving it here and using the motorhome aspects of it while staying here on the shelter property.

October 23. Been a while, I guess. The work on the shelter support underground room went okay. The orders I'd put in for supplies and other equipment came in and I stayed a few days longer to get everything put away in the shelter and the support room.

The more time I spend here the more I think I'll build a small home. But I'm worried about security. The shelter and underground room have camouflaged armored accesses, so I'm not worried about them. Having a more or less conventional house might be different. I need to think on this some more.

The referendum about the Independence of Taiwan vote has been postponed.

October 28. Back at the farm now. My Unimog is refueled, restocked, and ready to go if needed.

Teresa told me Wade has been snooping around again. Trying to hire away some of our hands, in retaliation to what he thinks I did to him. But he must be a real cheapskate, because he isn't offering as much as I'm paying, and is unpleasant even when he's trying to recruit someone.

November 9. Still haven't had any rain since early this spring. Harvest is finishing up nicely. Patricia's horses and oxen work has been excellent. Her and her two hands have done yeoman service in the fields while still handling the food animals.

November 28. Had a great Thanksgiving feast here on the farm. More of the hands brought their families out to spend the holiday than went in to their families' places. I'm having a hard time figuring out who belongs to whom. Decided to put a solar greenhouse over the pool

with solar heating system to make it useable in the winter. Overheard a couple of the hands saying how much they'd use it if it was protected from the weather.

December 25. Had a Christmas party around the newly enclosed pool. Life is good.

January 1. New Year again. Times Square was hit last night with a radiation bomb. The bomb itself killed over a thousand people and the radioactive materials used are nasty. The experts are saying that many people got radiation doses high enough to make them somewhat sick, though probably not fatal doses. The final determination about how long the Square will be off limits is still up in the air. No claim of responsibility yet.

I am so glad I have done what I have. Had it not been for that old man in the hospital when I was there, there isn't much telling what I'd be doing now, or where. There is a chance I could have been in the Square when that bomb went off. It was one of my teenage goals to do sometime. Like going to Mardi Gras in Rio. May still do that.

Everyone on the farm is really shaken. Several of them have told me how glad they are to be working here. Many of them are well aware that this farm is one of the safest places to be in case of most troubles.

January 2. The US military sank a private yacht two-hundred-fifty miles off shore of New York this morning. The President had a press conference to announce the fact. The evidence the military has is that the yacht was used to bring the radiation bomb into New York. The yacht was registered to one of the royal family of Saudi Arabia. This could get serious. Saudi Arabia is threatening to cut off oil exports to the US, but hasn't done it yet

The futures price of oil went over two-hundred dollars. Current spot price is one-twenty.

January 3. Saudi Arabia cut off diplomatic relations with the US and ordered tankers currently carrying crude to the US to turn back. The President ordered the Navy to board the ships and keep them headed this way.

Venezuela cut off their oil to us. Iran, apparently, attacked several of the Iraqi oil fields, destroying some oil production capability, but losing all the assets they used in the attack, according to official Whitehouse announcements.

Several of the temporary hands called and asked if they could come out and stay at the farm, with their families, if things got worse. I had Nancy and Toni give them the okay, with instructions to start gathering up as much shelf-stable food as they could to bring with them. I certainly have the supplies to support everyone for quite a while, but I'm not going to just do it and let the people think they have no responsibilities.

January 4. Things are still tense, but nothing else major has happened.

January 5. Ditto the last entry.

January 6. A coup has occurred in Saudi Arabia. The reports are coming in that it was orchestrated by Iran. It seems logical to me. Iran just announced the creation of a new Persian Empire and asked all predominately Arab and predominately Moslem countries join them. Some already are.

January 7. Can't really describe the tension here on the farm. People are really scared. With good reason, I guess. Quite surprisingly, both the Soviet Union and China have recognized the new Persian Empire. So did the UN on a marginal vote. India has erupted in civil war between the Moslem and non-Moslem populations.

January 10. Things are calming down, though fuel prices at the pump literally doubled. I'm having Elizabeth arrange weekly deliveries of fuel to the Farm Marts to keep them topped off, and had Teresa order the fuel to top off the farm tanks. May or may not get the fuel on a timely basis, but the orders are in.

We were notified that the prices of most of the chemicals we use, and fertilizers, will probably be double, too.

January 12. Something is going on. There were no voice bites from politicians today at all, unlike the previous few days of heated discussion of fault, and what the US should be doing in response to the Persian Empire situation.

January 18. Got in our fuel and were told we wouldn't be getting any more for the foreseeable future on the farm. The Farm Marts would be allocated a limited amount. Henry is going to fire up the biodiesel equipment again and keep our main working tank topped off. Though we've been treating the fuel with Pri-D and Pri-G as we got deliveries, Teresa was able to order and get quite a bit of both for future use.

January 20. Still very little official word from the Whitehouse on the situation in the Middle East. Fuel at the pumps went up again by half. Over nine dollars a gallon for 87 octane gasoline and almost eleven for on-road diesel. We're sitting pretty here on the farm.

February 1. Things are getting serious! A news conference FEMA put on had a bunch of double speak at first. Then, to my amazement, another spokesman came on... A woman,

actually... not that it makes any difference... But she was giving instructions to the entire US population to start storing food for a minimum of two weeks and for a month if at all possible.

February 5. There are riots all over the country with people trying to stock up on food. The shelves emptied in two days in most places and deliveries are being hijacked for profit and just ambushed and the food taken by small groups.

Even the Farm Marts were denuded of the fresh food, and what shelf-stable I let Elizabeth keep on the display shelves. I had Elizabeth hire a security agency to supply a 24/7 guard on the Cape store. A couple of the hands are ex-military and are keeping an eye on the shop here at the farm.

Part of the reason for the guards is I'm limiting purchases of food to a couple of days worth. We were the first to do that and are getting a regular stream of people in. Though the guards at the Cape store are only letting one person in at a time. I went in to see how things were going and ran into Hollister getting some food. I think I can quote him accurately. "I see why you wanted the security components of the building. The people outside... some of them could get violent. How'd you know this would happen?"

I told him it was just my nature to expect the worst. He thanked me for having the place and keeping it open and stocked, even with just the fresh food. He's keeping his current canned goods in reserve, he said. Trying to add to them, but the other stores in town are out of both fresh and shelf-stable canned and packaged food. His family will live on the fresh food for as long as it lasts.

February 9. Things seem to be calming down. I don't know if it is because the situation is better, or if the President realized what the FEMA announcement had done to the country. Three days ago a different FEMA spokesperson announced that two-weeks supplies were more than adequate and those that couldn't afford more, a three-day supply should be adequate. No mention of the fact that the shelves were still empty.

February 11. The immediate food crisis seems to be in hand now. Food is disappearing pretty quickly when it is delivered, but the deliveries are getting through, and lasting a couple of days. Fuel is still expensive.

February 13. Got a bit of snow. First moisture in months, and it is very little. An inch of snow, if I remember what I've read, is equal to about a tenth of inch of rain. Not very much for a farm. I decided to have Teresa start filling the Rainstore3 tank with the pumps to at least three-quarters full.

February 19. The President announced today that several formerly off-limits oil fields will now be opened to drilling and production. Fuel costs are expected to stay at the levels they are now until those fields come on line in the next few years.

Stock market down, bonds going crazy, gold up. What more is there to say?

February 20. Not much in the way of change. Was told the farm would be allowed to order fuel based on the number of acres we're farming. I almost told them we had enough on our own, but things will get worse in my opinion. I'm going to take what they will allow me.

March 1. Still no measurable precip. Fuel still limited and very expensive. Elizabeth tells me we've developed quite a clientele in both Farm Marts, even with the limited variety we offer.

According to Teresa we have more applicants than ever for the temp jobs, with many of them wanting full time work.

March 15. The Ides of March. The new Persian Empire has declared war on Israel and the United States, though the announcement was not followed up by military action. The Main Stream Media (MSM) talking head consensus is that it is just symbolic. The New Persia is asking the UN to mediate the situation, with the intention of bringing the land that makes up Israel back into the Persian Empire as it once was.

March 16. The President has announced that the US will stand behind Israel and under no circumstances will the country be dissolved and the land come under New Persia rule, UN involvement or not. There has been no official response from the government of Israel. Un-official sources are saying that Israel is readying her nuclear arsenal and will launch an all out attack with them at any move to take the country by UN legal maneuverings or by force of arms.

March 17. Everyone is tense over the Middle East situation.

March 18. A little rain. Still over twenty inches off the mark for the last year and a half. The situation in the Middle East is getting more tense. The US is sending another Carrier Battle Group to the area. The troops still in Iraq are at high alert.

I know good and well the intelligence services must have the same information I'm getting from Amateur Radio Operators in the far east about China's buildup across the strait from Taiwan on talk of the referendum that was postponed being rescheduled for October, but there has been no mention of it in the MSM.

On top of that, Russia is making noises about returning to a communist form of government. Several of the Republics are doing the same thing.

March 27. Everyone is staying close to the farm while the situations overseas are still so volatile. Ground prep is going well. Though we have two years worth of chemicals and fertilizer in stock, I still bought enough for the year at the new prices. Don't know how some of the other farms are managing with the costs of fuel, fertilizers, and chemicals double what they were.

April 10. I just reread the last entry. The comment about some of the other farms not being able to manage is true. Land is coming on to the market, as is quite a bit of farm equipment. I'm debating on getting some more land, and the equipment to farm it.

April 13. Came to my senses. With the price increases of everything, it would be foolish to use all my capital to get the land. None of it is contiguous to my current holdings and would require additional investment, over and above basic farming costs, due to the distance from the farm to the other fields.

I have decided to go ahead and build the vacation home in the Ozarks. I'm having serious thoughts that it might be difficult to get done in the future. I think what triggered it, besides not tying up too much operating capital, was finding a log home site on the internet. I'd never thought about the vacation home in terms of a log home, but seeing what's available I kind of fell in love with the idea, since I don't have to worry about incorporating much in the way of preps in it, because of the shelter.

April 19. The information I ordered on the internet about the log home company came in. They'll build just about anything that is practical. Which, from the illustrations in the packet of information, means lavishness. I don't want that, though I do want some specific features.

I'm working on the plans this evening.

The world situation is bad, but stable. The economy still on the down slide. That's another reason to build now. I don't think house prices will go down much more. The builders won't be able to make a profit. Just like I got the trucks for the farm, I'm going to get the vacation home while I can.

April 25. Still here and still farming. Still running a bit scared. Things aren't better. They just aren't worse. Finalized my design on the house and e-mailed it to the log house company for their architects to turn it into a set of plans and start cutting and building it at their facility. Then they'll dismantle it, deliver it, and set it up. When they send back the final plans, I'll go and get the foundation and other preliminaries done so there will be no delay in getting the house up.

April 30. Teresa told me today that she and her boyfriend are getting married. Scared me at first, but she was quick to assure me that she would be staying with the farm. Her future husband is a commodities trader, believe it or not, and can work at home.

The farm is doing well, as are the two Farm Marts. The greenhouses are real moneymakers. The world situation is stable, I think. The inflation has slowed, and the recession seems to be bottoming out. The weather, on the other hand, is still dry. We are definitely in a period of drought.

May 10. Got the plans back from the log house company. I'm headed out tomorrow to the Ozarks. Called the contractor I intend to use, and he's available immediately. Eager for the business actually.

July 31. Wow! Didn't realize it had been so long. Lot of things happened since May. Been really busy. Teresa is married and her husband all moved in. The vacation house is up, but the interior isn't quite finished. Wound up deciding to add a few things to the property. The house is the same as I intended, with inner and outer log walls, with insulation and fill between them.

The additions are a large greenhouse on the property, a boat ramp and dock on the lake, an enclosed pool with pool house. Planted a bunch of fruit and nut trees, and some berry patches handy to the house site, and planted a guerilla garden like I read about in one of the stories on the internet.

There is another U500 on order for use on the property, as well as a Toolcat, both with several implements, though not quite the selection I have here on the farm. The U500 will be another non-electronic controlled one like my bug-out rig. Elmer is going to convert another ROKON Ranger to a Hatz diesel like the ones here.

Had a thousand gallon diesel tank and a five hundred gallon gasoline tank installed underground for my personal use. They are in addition to the ten-thousand gallon diesel and one-thousand gallon gasoline underground tanks for the shelter.

Plan to get a boat, but don't know what yet. Heading back there tomorrow.

Started to close the journal, but I should record the fact that the Taiwanese referendum vote on Independence is on October 31.

August 31. Got back a couple of days ago. The vacation house is complete, furnished, equipped, and supplied. Every door and window has high-security shutters, closed and locked. The house and property are wired for security and fire alarms with cellular tie in to the security company and the police. It's as safe as it can be without a 24/7 guard presence.

September 10. The internet, still up in most of the world, though not all, has come through for me again. Found the boat I want for the lake. It's a McGreggor 26 motor sailor. That's right. Motor sailor. Trailerable. Fifty horse Mercury outboard, with a Mercury 9.9 backup/trolling motor, and a full sail fit. Prepper's dream on a lake like this. Picking it up in a couple of days. Assuming the world doesn't blow up and I get to.

Decided to get something besides just the Unimog for the vacation house. That ol' internet again. Found a website describing a diesel conversion of a Jeep Wrangler. Non-electric diesel, no less. Should be fine for just tooling around the area. The same shop that did the work on the bug-out U500 will do the engine swap on a new Wrangler.

Things just are not improving. But they aren't getting worse that I can see. People are on edge all the time. They aren't panic buying food and things now, but the numbers of new members of the prep websites is really growing. People are scared. I wonder if this was the way Europeans felt before World War II?

September 16. Took the Sally Sue, my new McGreggor 26, named after my mother, to the lake and took an initial run. Didn't raise the sails. Probably won't do that until I can spend a few days. Went from the Ozarks to check on the conversion of the Wrangler. It'll be done in a few days.

September 24. Took the bug-out Unimog, without the trailer, to get the finished Wrangler. I had drive shaft disconnects installed so I can tow it. It's now equipped and stocked, locked in the big workshop garage with the site U500, Toolcat, and McGreggor. I've not seen any signs of attempted break ins or vandalism.

October 1. Harvest is in full swing. Another good one, thankfully. Sent off the fall crop of animals to market.

I'm really worried about China and Taiwan. The Independence referendum is less than a month away. Reports are coming in that China is building up even more troops on the coast. They've had a very heavy presence there since the initial referendum. I've been wracking my brain trying to figure out what else I can do to be ready for a worse case scenario. Nuclear war with China, if they attack Taiwan and the US intervenes.

The only thing I can think of is to go ahead and get a 'tradesmen's' work building built. I've stocked all kinds of tradesmen's tools, equipment, and supplies. Not for me to use, but for anyone that is interested, after the balloon goes up. Things that I, along with plenty of other people, will need when current manufactured supplies run out. If it ever comes to that.

October 3. Hollister came out to look over my plans for the Tradesmen's Workplace. It'll be built behind the Farm Mart here on the farm. He said he can get it done in six weeks. I told

him to get all the materials delivered as soon as possible, even those he won't need until the finishing touches go on.

October 7. Hollister came out today and started the work on the Tradesmen's Workplace. He assured me that everything needed for the building would be here in about a week.

I'm more restless than I've ever been in my life. I can't shake the feeling that the world is moving toward the brink. But what else can I do? I've prepped away millions of dollars, but I can't do anything to stop what's coming!

October 13. The work on the Tradesmen's Workplace is coming along nicely. The weather is cooperating for the building as well as the harvest, but this drought is getting very serious. If we didn't have the irrigation capability that we do, the commercial crops would have been only half the production that we have.

October 16. China warned the US today not to bring the second Carrier Battle Group any closer than it already was to Taiwan. Russia is silent, with reports coming in that her military is going on high alert.

One of the hands, Alvin, that lives in town, told me that Wade has been talking big. He got a great deal of the land that came on the market and is now back up to the acreage he had before I came on the scene.

I've instituted emergency drills, specifically for use in case of a nuclear attack. Some of the hands are grateful for being where they are relatively safe. Some of the others seem angry. I guess that is their way of dealing with stress. Two or three more have come to me and asked if their extended families could come out. I gave them the same instructions I had before. Immediate family and bring food. As much as they can.

October 17. The US halted the progress of the second carrier group, but it is circling out in the ocean at the line of demarcation that China set. Two weeks before the vote in Taiwan. Will China wait? Do we have two weeks? Less? More? I don't know, and the not knowing is tying me up in knots. Having the preps that I do, I shouldn't be worrying. But, from many of the posts on the prep forums, and the things I'm hearing on the Amateur Bands, I'm not alone among preppers still worrying about the immediate future.

October 20. Eleven more days. Hollister asked me for an advance on the project, in foodstuffs and cash, to try and get his family ready. The small amount of earthwork he needed to do here is long finished and he put one of his boys on the backhoe, he told me, to dig a fallout shelter at his house. Made me think how fortunate we are here at the farm.

October 21. Ten days to go. One of the guys asked to borrow one of the Unimogs with backhoe, to dig a shelter in town for his wife's brother's family. I thought about it and decided we could spare the equipment from the harvest. I sent a Unimog with backhoe and front bucket in, pulling a trailer with one of the Toolcats, also with backhoe, under Elmer's supervision, to dig slit trenches or build up the outside foundations for houses with basements, for any employee's family.

October 23. Getting requests from other locals to dig shelters for them. Told Henry to go in with a couple more people to help Elmer, primarily as moral backup, and an element of security. Elmer had radioed that people were getting insistent that Elmer drop the project he was on to go do theirs.

October 24. Went in myself. Elmer was right. Even with the crew there that I sent in, people are going crazy to get shelters installed. Even the simplest trench with doors overhead to support the dirt roof.

October 25. Thinking about pulling the guys home. It is getting to the point of real danger to them to be there in town.

October 26. Went in and rounded up everyone associated with the farm and brought them out, except for the Farm Mart, which still has a 24/7 guard.

October 30. Still working on the harvest. It is going well. Wish I could say the same about everything else.

October 31. Writing this in the middle of the day, instead of night, like most of the other entries. The Taiwanese Independence Referendum passed last night. Night for us, with the time difference. Just waiting to see what the Mainland Chinese Communist government will do.

November 1. Things are still uncertain. China has not made a move, except to mass more troops on the shore of the Strait. US forces are holding position. The Amateur Bands are quiet. Shortwave news stations are just as bad as our own MSM talking heads. Conjecture and unsubstantiated rumors.

November 2. China has announced that Taiwan will be given a chance to rescind the referendum. Two months. Taiwan must renounce their independence and come into the fold with mainland China. Or else. If they only hadn't added the requirement to rejoin Mainland China I would be a lot more relieved. Don't think I can relax for the two months though. Just don't trust the Chinese.

November 3. More bad news. The UN is seriously considering disenfranchising Israel and recognizing the New Persian Empire's authority over the area. There has been no official response from Israel.

November 5. Hollister is almost finished with the Tradesmen's Workplace. Things still tense the world over.

November 10. Still nothing has happened. At least not publicly. There are rumors that some secret deals have been cut with China and Taiwan to keep the peace.

November 12. The rumors were wrong. China has reiterated their ultimatum for Taiwan to rejoin Mainland China politically or else.

December 4. Hasn't been much to record. The crop harvest is done. The animal feed silos are full. Hay lofts are full, and there are three tarped stacks of bales in the field. The greenhouses are producing well, with the two Farm Marts selling much of it with the rest going to commercial dealers. The food animal went to the sale a couple of days ago and fetched premium prices.

Patricia bought two additional bulls and another boar to give some extra genetic diversity to our herds, just in case. The chicken flocks already have five different strains, so we're pretty good there already.

December 7. Got a bit of snow. An inch or so. First moisture in some time.

December 14. The US officially devalued the dollar this past week and the European Union did the same thing today, with the euro.

China dumped huge amounts of US dollar investments, sending Wall Street into a new panic. Gold prices jumped to over a thousand dollars an ounce, up from eight twenty seven.

December 21. Christmas Party here at the farm today. Another simple gift exchange. Was nice, but I can tell people are nervous about the world situation. Several of the temps have asked to stay here until things settle down, assuming they do. One of them even offered to work for free if she can stay and bring her boyfriend out, too. I said she could.

December 25. Christmas day. Nothing out of the ordinary. Nice Christmas. Quiet. Patricia, Teresa, Henry, and I took care of the animals so the other hands could take the day off completely.

January 1. Another New Year. A couple days until the Chinese deadline for Taiwan. Everyone is staying close to the farm. I had Elizabeth close the Cape Farm Mart. The guard would keep an eye on the shuttered shop.

January 2. Taiwan has made no attempt to rescind the referendum. China put an amphibious force in the Strait. The US Carrier Task Forces are both headed in. China warned the President again. The New Persian Empire is moving on Israel, after secretly staging men and materiel near the border for the last two months.

January 7. This may be a bit hard to read in the future, my hands are shaking so bad. Finally had a minute to catch up my thoughts of the last few days. We're at war with China. Nuclear war.

It started the night of the second, (local time), when US carrier based aircraft joined Taiwanese in an attack on the approaching Mainland Chinese amphibious forces. We still had coverage from the reporters imbedded with the Navy up until late morning. Then nothing.

About six o'clock that evening, the NOAA National Weather Service All Hazards alert radio sounded off with instructions for people to seek shelter. There were inbound missiles. That was the only warning we had.

I herded everyone into the basement shelters, after doing a shut down/lock down according to the plans Teresa and I wrote some time ago. Most are here in the farm office shelter, with three large family groups occupying the two apartment shelters, and the bunkhouse shelter. Patricia and four of her hands took shelter in the animal barns to be able to take care of them.

The barns, like all the other buildings, have thick concrete ceilings, with peaked metal roofs. The roofs have wash down systems so there is very little fallout on the roofs for any length of time, so the animals are protected fairly well from fallout radiation, just not as well as we are.

I stayed in the office, after arming myself with a rifle in addition to the pistol I carry all the time I'm on the farm, to monitor the situation and let in any latecomers. And, if necessary, get rid of any people that wanted in, after we filled up, if we did.

I had my pocket radiation alarm with me, so I could take shelter as soon as fallout arrived. I mostly just walked around, hoping it was all a big mistake. About twenty minutes after the alarm a string of vehicles showed up at the gate. I didn't know everyone, but each one identified themselves as relatives, or acquaintances, of my employees. We had the space. I let them all in.

Commercial power went out shortly after that and the shelters went on battery power. Don't know if it was a HEMP device, or destruction of the grid, or what. Part of the shutdown/lockdown procedure was the isolation of the radios in their faraday cages.

It was a deep black night with the power out. I stayed outside, despite Teresa asking me to come into the shelter repeatedly. I'm glad I stayed out. A group of people showed up on foot about midnight. Said they'd been on their way when their vehicles just quit running. I heard them coming, in the cold night air, the silence they broke just as icy.

I was at the gate to talk to them when they made it that far. I couldn't believe it. It was Wade and his family, demanding entry. Somehow the word had gone around that I had shelter space galore and was welcoming anyone that wanted in.

Employee's families that had arrived earlier had just about filled us up. But I couldn't turn away the children. I might have let Wade in, if we'd had room. I don't know for sure. But we were out of space. I told him I'd let the children in, with their mothers, and any pregnant women, but he and the other men and women would have to seek shelter elsewhere.

He pulled a gun on me! I didn't have the gate open and I don't know what went through his head. I stepped back behind the protection of the gate post and lifted my rifle. I put a round over his head and people started running.

I would have let the women and children in. And I called to them to come back, but Wade was firing in my general direction. I couldn't bring myself to just shoot him where he stood, so I put a couple more rounds over his head and he finally took off running after the others, cursing me loudly and vowing to get me.

Almost hoping some of them would come back, I stayed near the gate and waited and watched. I could hear Wade haranguing them to hurry up.

Fallout started twelve hours after the alarm went off. My pocket alarm started sounding and I went into the farm office shelter after dusting myself off.

I thought we were going to get lucky, since the initial readings were so low, but they rapidly climbed to over three hundred roentgen per hour.

We have a crank-up AM/FM/NWS radio we can connect to a wire antenna outside the shelter. All we get on it is static. We check every half hour or so for news.

Everyone seems to be adjusting to shelter life. Though I didn't put tunnels between the different basements, they are connected with hard-wired, sound-powered telephones. Each shelter checks in with us here in the office shelter every half hour or so.

I think the shelters being so large, with tall ceilings, finished in light colors, the flat-screen TV and DVD player in each shelter, plus board games, and cards and such, is making the stay much easier on everyone.

There is a wide variety of food, with these first few days seeing us use up the fresh foods we brought down with us.

Don't know what the future will bring.

January 14. Been a week in the shelter. Radiation is down under one roentgen per hour. I suited up this morning in protective gear and took a radiation survey meter out to take a look around the property. Patricia and her hands have been going up into the animal barns once a day, but this was the first time I let anyone go outside. When we do leave the shelters, Patricia and her people will be the last ones out, because of their initial exposures.

I climbed one of the antenna towers and took a good look around. I could see several vehicles down where our gravel road met the county road. I assumed they were the vehicles that Wade and his group had been in. I wondered what had happened to them. Not so much Wade, as the women and children.

February 21. Not much to say about the shelter stay. The radiation is down under 0.10 roentgens per hour, and we all came out of the shelters for a while. First Elmer, Henry, and I went out and completely decontaminated the areas around the buildings, plus paths between them.

Everyone was glad to get outside for a while. As far as radiation levels go, it is relatively safe, but I'm insisting that everyone continue to sleep in the shelters for a while longer. We lost quite a bit in the greenhouse, but all the animals came through fine, as far as we can tell.

We started immediately cleaning up the greenhouse and getting things replanted. Several people are anxious to get to their own homes to see what, if any, damage was done. But of all the employee's vehicles, and their families' vehicles, there were only three that would start.

We had extra electronics for the Unimogs, but they weren't needed. The reinforced masonry construction of the equipment barns and garages protected them and the other farm vehicles from what I'm sure was a HEMP. At least one.

When I knew everything was under control, we took out the farm vehicles, rigged each one with a tow strap, and a bunch of us headed out, pulling the inoperable vehicles of the guests. I went with the group that went into Cape.

I had talked to Henry and Elmer, plus a few of the hands that had military experience and asked them if they would agree to go armed. All of them said yes, so I opened up the arsenal in the farm office shelter and handed out rifles, shotguns, and handguns, with some load bearing equipment. Both groups that left had at least three armed people with them.

We didn't need the weapons. There were survivors here and there, out and about, all looking for food. But peaceful. We let them know that the Farm Mart would be open in a couple of days with fresh food.

With everyone that wanted to leave the farm delivered, with their vehicles, we headed back to the farm.

I had Teresa monitoring the airwaves with a broadband receiver while we were gone. She told me all she heard the entire time was static, except for our business band radios, which worked just fine locally.

February 28. Another week post war. It is amazing how resilient people are. We were in good shape here at the farm. The others that survived had very few of our advantages. Several of them were people that we'd dug shelters for, or banked earth against their exposed basement walls for shelter.

Despite the losses we had in the greenhouses for lack of care when we were in the shelter, there was plenty of fresh produce to distribute. Which is what we did at the two Farm Marts. We kept a record, for future accounting, but didn't charge anything for food. There hasn't been much call for things, except food. I think that is going to change, soon.

Still no word from any government authority. Not even the city fathers. I didn't know any of them, but those that did said they hadn't survived, despite the shelter in the city hall. Apparently the air intakes weren't baffled and they drew fallout into the shelter from the very first. They must not have checked inside the shelter with their survey meter, the way we did, just to check.

There are bodies everywhere in the city, many of them in some type of expedient shelter that wasn't adequate. Others were just lying in bed and, the best we could determine, simply gave up, laid down, and let dehydration take them.

Still don't know if any of Wade's group survived, or not.

March 1. We're started decontaminating the fields, starting with the fields for the animal based farming, and then the Unimog farming based acreage. We'll get to the major commercial fields later. I'm not sure I want to plant non-food items, especially that much of it, anyway. It could all go to waste.

March 2. A couple of the hands that are jackleg mechanics found the owner of the auto parts store still alive and took him to his store. They were able to round up electronic parts to get four of the employee vehicles going, for a month's worth of food for the store owner and his family.

March 4. Had our first real trouble today. At the Cape Farm Mart. It was Wade. He went in demanding food and a lot of other things. I'd sent a couple of the guys in to operate the store, worried about the ladies working there alone. The security guard was no where to be found.

Jeremy told me that Wade made a big fuss, and then threatened them with a gun. Jeremy was in the check out booth and Gary in the office. Neither were too worried about the gun Wade had, since they were in protected spaces and were armed themselves with weapons I provided. Both showed their weapons and Wade shot at Jeremy, Jeremy told me. The bullet is lodged in the lexan.

When the bullet didn't penetrate Wade ran out of the store, cursing, again vowing to get me. Jeremy also told me that Wade didn't look good. He looked drawn, weak, and his hair was falling out.

I'm going to have to do something about him. I won't let my people be endangered like that.

March 9. No more problems from Wade. But people are beginning to realize what has happened. There are no more deliveries of food from Texas and California and Florida. Gasoline deliveries from the coastal refineries. Clothes from Penny's. No more Wal-Mart. No more city water and city sewer. No more electricity. Not unless they can make it themselves.

Places like the Wal-Mart and Penny's... The Albertsons and Safeway... Delivery trucks for miles both north and south of Cape. Everything has been looted. I'd read about it in the PAW fiction on the internet, but didn't really think it would be this bad. Because things weren't just looted. Much of what remained was destroyed in some way. Often burned.

I still want to do a systematic search in the area, for everything useable. But I'm leery about being considered a looter myself. We have so much here at the farm that people are already starting to get angry at us for having what they don't. Even a couple of the hands are making noises like I'm not being fair in some way for having what I have.

March 10. I don't know what to do about Ellie and Grover. They were caught loading up one of the Unimogs with food, intending to take it into town and give it away. It's not like I'm not doing the same thing, but in an organized way, one person in the Farm Mart at a time, a limit of a week's worth of fresh food at a time. They said they were just going to give the food to people in the street.

They're both still here, not exactly under guard, but working in the greenhouses with other people that can keep an eye on them.

The guys in town at the Farm Mart are telling me that people coming in aren't satisfied with what they are getting. They want more and want to know why we don't have more manufactured goods and foods, instead of just the fresh foods.

I wanted things to settle down before I started moving meat and dairy through the Farm Marts. The fresh milk we've been producing, that we haven't used at the farm, has been going to the hogs. Same with the eggs. One of the problems is that people will need to bring in their own

containers. As far as the fresh meat, there really isn't any reason not to start butchering and making it available. But unlike the greenhouse fresh produce, I'm not prepared to just give it away.

But how are people going to pay me? No one wants currency, and I'm not going to take it, either. Not too many people have gold or silver to trade. We're keeping track of the fresh food, the idea being for the people to do some labor for the farm. But what about my regular employees? They are more than adequate, especially if I take on their relatives, to run the farm and produce everything we can.

March 20. Started selling dairy and meat at the Farm Marts using barter slips. So many hours of basic labor for the different food items. Fresh produce, too. The guys tell me it's not going over too well. People that have been getting the produce, just giving their name to be listed in a ledger, are objecting to signing a barter slip agreeing to do the specified amount of labor.

March 21. I've decided to take a hard line on the selling of our farm products. Ditto the fuel at the Farm Marts. Labor barter slips, gold, silver, firewood, guns, ammunition, and a whole list of tools, equipment, and certain supplies. I'll take food and fuel in return for other things if people do have them and need other things.

People have offered fancy TVs, inoperable vehicles, jewelry, and other pre-war valuables. I don't want any of that type of merchandise.

March 31. Getting some information from Amateurs around the world as the atmosphere ionization continued to fade. It isn't good. There must have been more to the war than just China and the US exchanging nukes. Besides China getting hammered, many European countries were hit with nukes, as was Russia and some of the republics. Even countries in South America and Africa were hit. The Middle East is apparently one big slab of glass.

Not getting anything from the New England area, Florida, or to our due northwest. The fallout from the missile silos in that direction must have mostly missed us. Canada took a few hits, as did Alaska, but there seem to be a lot of survivors up north.

The Gulf coast was hit hard. So was California. Nearly everywhere has direct effect or fallout in the rest of the country.

April 4. There was an attack on the Farm Mart on the edge of Cape. I'm so mad I could spit! Wade again. But he wasn't alone. He just incited it and made off with a lot of the goods in the open area of the shop. The guys had orders not to fire unless they were fired upon. They had to sit in their protected areas and watch as a working pickup truck pulled the security screen off the front doors and then rammed through the heavy glass. People poured in and took everything in the front of the store, Nick said. But, like the office and check out stand, the access to the rear storeroom is armored. No one got into it.

To top it off, Wade took the pickup and battered the fuel dispenser, trashing it. The pumps were off and there was no spillage. But he effectively put the fuel stored in the tanks out of their reach. I plan to recover it, but for the moment, I'm going to make sure they can't get it, when I go in to clean out the Farm Mart.

April 5. Took two of the Unimogs in to the Farm Mart to clean everything out of the storeroom, as well as the radios and such. One of the U500's had the front bucket attached. The first thing I did was to remove the destroyed fuel dispenser and cap the pipes. Next, I buried the pump island under a five-foot high mound of dirt I dug up nearby.

We loaded up everything in the storeroom, and then stripped the solar panels off the roof. The last thing we loaded up was the backup generator. I left that place stripped of anything anyone would want.

There's still fifty-four-thousand gallons of E85 gasoline and eighteen-thousand gallons of diesel in the underground tanks.

April 6. Had a near mob situation at the Farm Mart here at the farm today. A few people showed up in vehicles, a couple on horses, and over thirty on foot, looking for food. I made sure we did the transactions the same way as we'd been doing in the Cape shop. Most of the people seemed to be okay with promising some labor in return for the food. At least most of those actually wanting goods brought something to put their purchases in. No more 'plastic or paper?'

I made sure there were armed employees both outside the shop and inside. Let only one person or family in at a time to shop. There was a handful of people that left empty handed, unwilling to sign the barter slips. I would have thought they would just sign and ignore it when I called upon them to do the work, whatever it might be.

Still no signs of government anywhere. No commercial radio, even the clear channel stations. Just the Amateurs I've contacted since the war.

Ellie and Grover tried it again today. I sent them packing with a month of food and supplies, a full tank of gasoline in their car, and told them not to come back.

I'm getting fed up with people wanting something for nothing from me! That think they should have control of what I've built up over the last few years. It's not going to happen if I have anything to say about it.

April 10. The word seems to be getting around that you play my game with my rules, or you don't play. I don't like the fact that it came to that point, but people just... believe they are entitled.

April 15. Tax day. Already paid mine back in January. I guess a lot of people got off easy this year. Bad joke. Things seem to be stable. I'm trying to decide what to do with all the labor credits I've accumulated. They aren't going to mean much if I don't see that people use them.

April 17. Wade is at it again. I don't know how he's managed to continue living, or even how he survived in the first place, or what's going on in his head, but he's acquired some food. A couple of grocery delivery trucks I suspect... But he's taking jewelry; luxury cars, running or not; high end electronics... Things like that. Oh. And two of the things I'm taking. Guns and ammunition. One of the things he has, that is apparently a big seller, is toilet paper. People are giving amazing things for a single roll of toilet paper.

I have some in stock for our use, but it will eventually be gone and have made alternate arrangements. Namely stocking several large packages of ordinary red cotton shop rags and foot opened small trash cans. The shop rags will be washed and sanitized and reused.

I got most of the information from one of my hands whose sister went to Wade for supplies that I haven't been selling.

April 23. Wade gathering arms and ammunition worries me. Though I find it very difficult to understand, there are many people angry at me for having what I have. Though I've yet to try to collect on any of the labor debt now owed to me, many people seem to think that it is my responsibility to feed and supply everyone in the area. I'm trying to do that, but I refuse to just give everything away.

April 24. I had good reason to worry. Wade has taken three of my people hostage. Hands that have family in Cape they've been supplying with food, with my blessing. I believe in taking care of the people that work for me.

That means I'm going to have to do something. Deal with Wade. He sent word he wanted a parley to discuss me getting my people freed.

May 3. I now know what it is like to be shot. Just able to write now, after taking a 9mm round in my right bicep during the meeting with Wade. It didn't go well, but I was prepared. Alison, Jenny, and Mark were there with Wade and his people. Six of them. But I'd taken Elmer and Henry in with me, at their request, and we were well armed.

We met on the overpass just outside of Cape. Wade started spouting off rhetoric that he was the natural leader in the area and it was his destiny to take care of 'his' people. I was to turn over the farming operation to him and just walk away.

He was wearing a holstered pistol, but he was waving his hands as he talked and I simply pulled my pistol and told him to shut up, and for Alison, Jenny, and Mark to leave with Elmer

and Henry, who had leveled their guns, (Elmer a Remington 11-87P shotgun, Henry a Armalite AR-10 with a hundred round dual drum in it.), covering Wade's six men.

I was backing toward the Suburban when one of Wade's men fired his rifle. It must have missed, because no one else was wounded. Elmer and Henry opened up at Wade's men, who I think scattered and ran, and I fired at Wade as he was drawing his gun. I hit him, I'm sure, but he got me in the arm with one round, though he was running away, looking back and firing away.

We all got into the Suburban, with Henry driving, and got away from there as quick as we could. When we got back here, and Patricia was tending to my arm, Mark told me that Wade and all his people were wearing soft body armor they'd looted from the police station. He didn't think we had a chance. He laughed then and added, "But those guys were big chickens and ran as soon as our guys started shooting.

I asked Mark what he could tell me about Wade's plans and he said, "Not Much." He, Alison, and Jenny were kept in a locked room from the time they were caught to when they were brought out to go to the exchange. Mark did tell me, "I think he's gone crazy when it comes to you. He had everything his way in this area until you came here. Now, with the radiation sickness keeping him weak as a lamb, he's furious with you. Blames you for everything. Even the war."

I don't know what to do. How do you deal with a man that can't be reasoned with? One thing is for sure, we have to be ready here at the farm for anything he might try.

May 4. Started spring planting in the animal worked fields and the Unimog fields. Going to hold off the commercial fields to see how things go. Though I have two years worth of seeds for the commercial crops, I broke out the non-hybrid seeds. We're going to grow them, for food, and to get more non-hybrid seed. Kept one of the Unimogs busy building up berms between the outer line of the buildings. Sort of a breastworks. Just in case.

In the same vein, I asked that every one at the farm that was comfortable with the idea of using guns against anyone that might attack us come forward. I was surprised at the number. It was more than I expected. I broke out more of the weapons and ammunition I had stored back so long ago and did some basic training for those not familiar with guns.

Two armed people went with every group in the fields, even if the workers had guns. Put a couple of armed people on ROKON's to scout out around the outer edges of the original property. The acreage across the road will just have to defend itself. Laugh. Laugh.

Have two guards in the Farm Mart here at the farm, too. There is a steady trickle of people coming in for food. Even some fuel for those with older vehicles that survived the EMP. Some owners of newer vehicles had found the parts they needed at the auto store to get their vehicles running.

Anyone going into Cape has to go with an armed entourage, despite the extra fuel it takes. There were only a few that wanted to, and that was to convince their families to come out here. We're pretty much full up again now.

May 16. Things have been quiet. Getting a lot of work done. The new defenses around the building complex are done. Couple of the guys, and one woman, with Gulf War experience are leading three small squads of armed people, keeping a continuous watch out for trouble. Besides Wade's vendetta against me, there are reports of bandits working the area. They may or may not be some of Wade's followers. I just know we're a prime target, but we're getting the word out through people coming to the Farm Mart that we are armed and ready for any trouble that might come our way.

May 23. We were attacked in force today. I believe it was Wade and his people, though there was no hard evidence of the fact. There were at least twenty people, according to my combat experts. They were armed with a hodgepodge of weapons, mostly hunting type guns.

None of my people were wounded, due to the quick action of the security teams. They spotted the group coming and had everyone inside the compound and the armed squads on the breastworks, ready for the attack by the time the attackers started firing.

Something that I'd always had second thoughts about having purchased proved their worth today. I'd picked up a pair of Barrett M82A1 .50 BMG semi-auto rifles with very expensive Swarovski scopes. Dave Stubbens, one of the ex-GI's had assigned two of the most experienced hunters sniper duty with the Barretts. They broke the back of the attack before it ever really got started.

We haven't gone to check on their casualties, thinking it would be too dangerous, but the guys are sure they got at least three people and two vehicles. The big .50 Browning Machine Gun bullets do major damage to engines when they connect with one. Kind of hated the idea of putting out of commission working vehicles, but this is apparently a local war now, and tough choices must be made.

May 25. Heard that it was, in fact, Wade's people that had attacked us. From one of the very few people that have come to the Farm Mart in the last two days. Wade is warning people off from coming here. There are a few hardy souls out there that openly defy him. All go armed.

May 27. No rest for the wicked, I suppose. We were attacked again. The night of the 26th. Don't think it was Wade this time. It was a sneak attack. I think they were after the horses, primarily, plus anything else they might run across in the process. Despite our patrols, three men got over the fence into the compound and were in the working animal barn when they were discovered. They tried to fight and the guards killed two of them, again without a scratch. But what do I do with the third one? For the moment, he's locked up, under guard, in the supply barn.

May 29. Took Tim Ferguson, the third would be horse thief into Cape and turned him over to the three person police force that had developed to combat petty crime, that were no

longer petty under the circumstances. The force consists of one of the Deputy Sheriffs that survived, and two Cape Police Officers that also survived. They'd been lying low, taking care of their families, unaware of one another until each was told about the others coming here to the Farm Mart. I guess, with three of them, they decided they could be an effective force, while reducing the risk of being alone in trying to enforce some semblance of law.

I contributed enough food to take care of the prisoner until something was decided about dealing with him, and contributed more food and some fuel to the small police force. They wouldn't take action outside the city limits of Cape, even though one was a Deputy Sheriff. We were still on our own at the farm.

June 3. James Patterson, the former Deputy Sheriff and head of the three man police force in town, sent word that a trial was scheduled for June 11 for Ferguson. Survivors in Cape are banding together for safety. There have been raids on individual houses in town. Don't know if it's Wade, or not. From what I'm hearing, he's denying it and is looking for the perpetrators himself.

June 11. Ferguson was found guilty by a jury of six, the court presided over by the only person found with legal experience willing to do so. His sentence was immediate. Hanging. It would be carried out within a week. As soon as a gallows could be constructed.

June 15. Went in for the hanging. A lot of people turned out. Ferguson went without a struggle. Hangings are not fun. Despite justice being done, it left me with a sick stomach and a sour taste in my mouth.

I guess I should have expected something to happen at the farm today while I was at the hanging. Wade's people again. One of the farm hands made a positive ID on him through a spotting scope. The snipers tried, but Wade was being too careful. They never got a good shot at him, though they did take out another vehicle and at least two of the attackers. I'm hoping people will start leaving Wade, due to their losses.

June 16. I've decided to try to talk to Wade and work some kind of deal that will satisfy him and put an end to this feud. Sent word by way of the couple of hearty souls that came to the Farm Mart today for supplies.

June 18. Word came back from Wade. I either surrender the farm to him, or he will take it, come you know what or high water.

June 19. I've decided to go on the offensive. Take the battle to Wade. But I'm not about to endanger any of my people. It'll be a solo attempt.

June 23. Wade is still alive and I'm lying here in my bed, shot again. This time in the both legs and with a small blunt trauma bruise on my chest where the body armor I was wearing stopped a bullet from one of Wade's people.

Wade is a tricky devil. I found his camp, down on the river, not far from Cape. I saw him sitting near a campfire by himself. I almost just shot him from ambush, but I just couldn't do it. I decided to try to reason with him. So I pulled my pistol, walked into the camp and said his name.

When he looked up and saw me he didn't hesitate. He rolled to one side, pulling his gun and started shooting. People started appearing and I decided retreat was the better part of valor, so I started to turn and run. That's when one of Wade's men got me in the chest. The blow staggered me, but I didn't go down and kept running.

I got to the ROKON and took off on it before they could sort things out. I didn't even know I'd taken a bullet in each leg. Both small caliber pistol bullets, one high in my thigh, just under the skin, and the second just above the right knee. I got really lucky with that one. It was a through and through and didn't hit the bone.

Only after I was away from the camp, with no signs of pursuit did the adrenaline stop pumping and the pain and shock of the bullet wounds and blunt trauma hit me. Instead of going to the farm, I went into town, to Doctor Eugene McMillan's house. He'd become my family doctor after I moved here and had helped me acquire my medical equipment and supplies.

Part of that deal was I paid for a similar setup for him to keep at home. I'm glad I did. He treated me there in his house. Like me, the doc is an Amateur Radio Operator and I gave him the frequency we monitor at the farm all the time. He got ahold of Teresa and she sent a whole squad of our defense force to pick me up and bring me back here to the farm.

So, here I lie, trying to figure out what to do next.

July 4. Good news! There is some authority left! I talked to an Amateur in Jefferson City. Seems the state government is reviving itself. Activated what is left of the National Guard and declared Martial Law in the State.

July 7. We were contacted by five members of the local National Guard that, like the police, had been lying low, taking care of their families, until they heard about the call up. All five have been getting food from the Farm Mart.

They were almost apologetic. They'd been ordered to take over the farm and operate it for the good of the county. I asked how Jefferson City even knew about the farm. After some downcast looks and foot shuffling, one of them told me Wade had contacted the Commander of the Combined Missouri National Guard Forces and told him of the resource here and that it needed to be secured so it could be used.

Wade again! I asked for and got the radio frequency to use to contact National Guard Headquarters in Jefferson City. I didn't get anywhere! No one would talk to me, other than the radio operator.

July 13. The five National Guardsmen and women showed up at the gate, with a grinning Wade, and his group of people. Orders were for me to leave.

The Guard didn't like it when I said it would take me a while to get ready. But there was nothing they could do. All three squads of my defense force were standing ready to do battle. Wade was livid, but I ignored him and walked away from the gate.

I held a meeting with everyone, except those keeping an eye on the very impatient group at the gate. I told them about the shelter in the Ozarks and offered to take along anyone that wanted to go.

I was asked about the area and the facilities and how they would make do. What could I tell them? I have supplies for a while, but it's not like the farm here. It'll be a struggle to start over. I can't blame them, I guess, for opting for the safe choice. No one wanted to go into the unknown with me. It was a near thing with several, especially Teresa, Patricia, Elmer, and Henry, but they all had family to think of.

In the end, after rotating those watching the group outside in and giving them the same speech, I wound up gathering up the important things, getting in my Bug-Out U500, the regular bug-out trailer, plus another large trailer attached, and drove out of the farm gate, making many of the group just outside scramble to get out of the way. I have to say I was angry, disappointed, and hurt.

Time to put this away, turn out the lights in the motorhome and get some sleep. I'll finish the trip to the Ozarks tomorrow, barring major trouble.

August 1. Finally decided to start up the journal again. I'd pretty much decided to abandon the effort, but it's been a good outlet for me.

To update. Took me three more days after July 13 entry to get here, not just a day. Had to make a couple of double-backs to get across a river where the bridge was down in one case, and to avoid a roadblock in another. Don't know who they were, or what they wanted, but, fortunately for me, they weren't too wise in where they set up the roadblock.

It was out in plain sight for a long way down the highway. I stopped as soon as I saw it, turned around, and went back the way I'd come, to find an alternate route.

Didn't see many people on the trip. I stopped down the track a ways from the vacation property and approached on foot, worried that someone might have taken up residence. Someone had tried. The security shutters were scarred up some, but had held. Don't know why whoever had tried hadn't kept at it. They would eventually have gotten in. No security device is immune to a long siege with the right equipment and plenty of time.

But everything was here, undamaged. A couple of the polymer panels in the empty greenhouse had bullet holes in them, and there were some bullet holes in the logs of the house. When I opened up the house all the windows were intact behind their shutters. A high powered rifle would probably penetrate the shutters and hole the glass, but I guess no one thought to try that kind of vandalism.

The shelter entrances were still concealed, and the solar panels to keep the batteries charged, on top of a tall, camouflaged pole were intact, as was the panel for the solar pump, likewise hidden. I really hadn't expect them to be intact, much less operational. I have spares.

The first few days I just got settled in, feeling sorry for myself. I finally got off my duff and took a ROKON tour of the area. There was no one in the forest near me, but I could see lights on the shore of the lake. I'll get the McGreggor 26 out in a few days and see what I can find on the shores of the lake.

August 5. Checked all the vehicles today. All are fine and ready to go. Used the Toolcat to tow the McGreggor down to my boat ramp so I could put it in the water. I'm going to go exploring on the lake tomorrow.

August 6. There is life around the lake. Peaceful as far as I can tell. I wasn't too sure that would be the case, so I went wearing my soft body armor that had saved me before, and carrying two pistols, an AR-10 with hundred round dual drum, and a Remington 11-87P shotgun.

Didn't seem to bother anyone when they saw me. Everyone over the age of 11, I'd say, was armed, too. A couple of the people I ran into were people that had come by, by boat, when the vacation house was going in, after the trees were cut to make a path down to the dock and boat ramp area. So I'm a semi-known entity, not a total stranger.

Found a couple of vacation places similar to mine abandoned and burned. When I asked people about them I was told that there'd been a roving band hitting remote places shortly after the war, but they'd been taken care of pretty quickly, with only a few people killed in the interim.

August 10. Had a visit from the Lake Police today. A group of armed citizens that patrol the lake and keep an eye on things for everyone. The lakeside residents contribute some food in appreciation. They had contributed fuel to run a couple of boats with outboard motors until they ran out, except for a small emergency supply each family kept.

I offered to provide some fuel, but the group refused to use it for patrolling. They were doing okay with a boat just like mine. A McGreggor 26 motor sailor. There were a couple more on the lake, though I hadn't seen them on the short, partial tour of the lake I took on the 6th.

They did take twenty-four gallons of gasoline, in two twelve-gallon portable fuel tanks, to use in case of real need. They had some Pri-G to treat it, though I told them it was already treated.

August 11. Went fishing on the lake. caught a couple of nice fish. No clue what kind they are. Sure tasted good.

August 20. Started planting in the greenhouse after setting up the stored components and seed. Living off the LTS food I stashed behind a false wall in the basement. I'm spoiled having the fresh food from the farm.

September 1. Wondering how the farm is doing under the National Guard's and Wade's control. Henry said he'd try to contact me on the Amateur Radio, but I haven't heard anything on the specified frequency, at the specified times.

September 5. Finally talked to Henry. The reason he hadn't been able to contact me was because he was thrown off the farm, along with most of my other hands, and their families. Wade moved his people in. He finally remembered the doc and doc got a hold of me for Henry.

What can I say? I'm beyond angry. Beyond livid. Beyond incensed. I don't know what I am. I feel hollow. That farm became my life not long into the process of getting it set up and running the way I wanted. And it came through the war with flying colors. Probably saved the lives of hundreds of people by providing the fresh food that it did. And still can. Henry said the greenhouses are only producing a fourth of what they were and Wade is throwing some of that away because it goes bad for lack of customers. Wade isn't taking the barter slip labor like I did.

September 15. Talked to Henry again. He wants me to come back and try to take over the farm from Wade. The National Guard members aren't too happy with the way he's running things. I guess Wade sold them a real bill of goods when he contacted Jeff City.

According to Henry, a lot of people would support me if I came back and took the farm by force. Most of my security force deserted Wade, with their weapons and ammunition. And in some cases, vehicles filled with food or other goods.

But Henry also says that Wade has recruited a few tough guys willing to kill at the drop of a hat to keep watch at the farm, the way our security force did.

I've got to think about this some. I'm not willing to kill haphazardly. Especially the National Guard troops that are only following orders from Jefferson City.

September 28. Finally been in contact with the Governor's task force on recovery and explained the situation. They simply don't believe me. Wade has spun a tale that I'm what he is, actually. A megalomaniac trying to gain power and followers using the necessities of life.

October 3. The Governor's rep told me today that they have received a couple more reports about Wade that support my claim. They're sending someone down to check the situation first hand.

October 31. Been on pins and needles this month, waiting on some word from the investigator sent to the farm. Still nothing. The greenhouse garden is doing fine and I'm getting some produce from the small orchard and the guerrilla garden that has prospered fairly well.

November 9. Henry contacted me again through the doc. Said something is going on at the farm. The National Guard people are up in arms here in town over what Wade has done. Apparently the Governor sent someone to check on Wade and he's found out who it is and taken her hostage.

Henry also said that there aren't enough people willing to go against his goon squad now, even with the five National Guard people.

November 10. I've decided to go back to the farm and do what I can. It was my doing getting someone to check on Wade. And it's a woman. From what Henry's told me, she's probably safe from Wade, but not his men.

November 11. Everything is locked back up at the vacation house and I'm one day on the way back to the farm. Should be there late tomorrow, if the route I took in is still good.

November 13. Got here yesterday and scoped out the farm last night. Slept all day today. I haven't contacted anyone in town. This is my problem and I'm going to handle it. I'm going in there tomorrow night.

November 15. Getting shot is the pits. I got it again. But Wade is dead and his goons are rounded up and in jail in town awaiting trial for various crimes.

I sneaked onto the property through one of the secret gates in the high security pointed rail steel fence near the back of the building complex and crawled over the breastworks in the dark. I was wearing a deep purple jump suit over my regular clothes and body armor for night camouflage. And it was a dark night. I was worried about snow, on which I would stick out like a sore thumb, but the weather cooperated with heavy cloud cover.

I could hear the few guards that were walking the perimeter and managed to avoid them. There was light and activity in the farm office and I eased my way up to it. I am glad I risked what I did when I did.

The investigator, whose name is Linda Kellogg, was tied to a chair in the public part of the farm office. She was half naked and being tormented by three men, watched by Wade. I caught a glimpse of his eyes. I really do think he was insane.

What could I do? I went in with the AR-10 blasting away from a hundred round dual drum magazine. This time I shot Wade point blank in the forehead in case he was wearing body armor. Then I turned the gun on the other three and put them down one at a time as they scrambled for weapons lying here and there around the office, or propped up against the counter and one of the chairs.

I cut Linda loose and killed the lights in the office. She's one spunky lady. She grabbed up a couple of Wade's men's weapons and we shot our way out of there. The goons weren't as eager to get shot at as they were to attack unarmed innocents.

I took Linda to the Unimog motorhome on the ROKON and found her something else to wear, and then we went into Cape and found the National Guard people at the armory. Found out something I didn't know. Wade hadn't just traded for hunting weapons from people. He'd raided the armory early on and taken the few rifles they had. That's part of the reason the Guard didn't try to do anything before they did. All they had were personal arms.

Linda filled them in on what was going on, and then led the Guard personnel and a volunteer posse back to the farm right at first light. It wasn't much of a fight. The worst of Wade's more hard core people grabbed what they could and took off, leaving the rest of Wade's followers and workers behind to fend for themselves. I was surprised they didn't take some of the vehicles, but they didn't

November 26. Had another trial a few days ago and then hung twelve people today for their actions in helping Wade, including five of the six that tried to get away before the attack.

Found out why none of those that tried to get away took any of the vehicles when they took off. Wade was afraid of deserters taking the equipment and a bunch of supplies and going off on their own. He wouldn't let anyone put more than a couple gallons of fuel in any of the vehicles, and then only when the vehicle was going to be used. He had the only key to the pumps.

January 8. Lot of things happened the last five or six weeks. I got the farm back. It was a little the worse for wear from Wade's inept group of cronies that tried to farm it under his supervision.

Since we were in a position to really make a difference in the area, Linda stayed on as official representation in the area. I'm afraid I may be falling for her. She's a couple of years

older than me, and is quite the woman. She held it all together during her imprisonment and the two battles, and is more than fair in her dealing as State Government Rep for the farm operation.

August 25. (77 years later.) Wow! Gramps never would say much about the time just before and after the war when I asked about it when I was little. He always downplayed his role in the aftermath of this area. Even though he doesn't make it sound like a big deal in this journal, the facts speak for themselves. All the stories that have been passed down are just like he wrote in this journal. I'm glad I found it. I think I may start a journal of my own. Nothing exciting happening, but you never know. Gramps insisted we keep up with what he called preps and we do.

End *****

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