pe for the Best, “Prep” for the Rest!

A Ruger Mini 14 in .223, a CETME in .308 and a semi-auto AK-47 in .30 Russian, both these latter from Century International Arms.

A gasoline generator from Honda that is man-portable when needed.

A sampling of emergency medical supplies.

toilet flushing, etc. There are bathtub-sized bladders available which can be filled with clean water at the first hint of an emergency. A water purification system – I use Katadyn – is ideal if the water supply becomes suspect or “suspect” is the best available. Sanitation – and so much of that begins with water – is vital. The dehydration which can occur as a result of diarrhea stemming from contaminated water can literally kill you in a very short period of time. Have “over the counter” medications available that can quash simple diarrhea. Assess what other necessities should be kept on hand, such as toilet paper, women’s hygiene products, etc.

Food supply should be assessed realistically, based on number of individuals to be fed and anticipated number of meals to be consumed. Snacks should also be provided for. High-energy products should be considered as supplements, because your family or group may find itself hungrier than usual. Don’t buy a bunch of stuff you really don’t want to eat, but it’s inexpensive. Try to acquire foodstuffs you can rotate through your household as part of your normal diet, replacing as you consume in order to keep your emergency supply up-to-date. Fresh fruit, always a problem ever since mariners crossed uncharted seas during the Age of Exploration, is still a problem today. Of all foods that can be packaged safely in cans for some duration, fruit is the biggest problem, because fruit is acidic and the acid can interact with the interior of the can and the contents can go bad. Sharon and I discovered an excellent alternative. From Dole, and recommended to be consumed within four months or so, there are five varieties of fruit packed in screw top transparent plastic containers. One can choose pineapple chunks, sliced peaches, mandarin oranges, tropical fruit and mixed fruit. We’ve stored these for approximately the recommended freshness period and found them great tasting. Beware, however, of any kinds of mixed fruits as some – not necessarily these – may contain grapefruit, which unfortunately interacts badly with certain medications. The other solution for fruit in the diet is to use the dehydrated variety.

First aid gear and related supplies should always be with you. Aside from what you keep in the home, such gear should be available in your car, your office, etc. Keep an adequate supply of regularly taken medications available in the event catastrophe strikes when you would only have one day left of your blood pressure medication or whatever. If glasses or contact lenses are needed, keep spares available. Glasses can be expensive. If cost is a serious issue, go to the local pharmacy or Wal-Mart and find the inexpensive reading glasses that are closest to your prescription.

Electricity may be likely disrupted by a variety of both natural and manmade events. But, electricity is vital to maintain certain portions of the food supply and, possibly too, for Internet use and other information gathering. Just a few electric lights against the darkness can be marvelously heartening. Most experts will agree that long-term use generators are better if they are diesel powered. Gasoline-powered generators are less expensive and in other ways more convenient. Whatever you choose, you don’t have to have the capacity for powering the entire house just as if you were still on the grid. By careful planning, needs for refrigeration and freezing can be well balanced with other electrical needs and you’ll come out just fine using a smaller and less expensive generator. Unless you are a licensed electrician, however, get a licensed electrician to do the job of wiring for a wide range of safety reasons.

Other miscellaneous items can be extremely important. A dynamo powered emergency radio – the kind that cranks – can not only alert you to weather emergencies, but also will give you FEMA and Homeland Security bulletins. Some of the radios incorporate emergency lights, sirens and even allow ordinary AM/FM reception.

For communications, there are a variety of short-range options, one of the most practical of which seems to be good old Citizen’s Band. Since everyone else in range can hear what you say over a CB radio, however, establish a few code phrases or words for transmissions you’d just as soon keep secure. This isn’t World War II, of course, so you don’t need more than a few words and phrases that can be easily remembered and you shouldn’t have to worry about code breakers. For long-range communications, get a HAM radio license.

The most important thing to do in a crisis is to keep your head and rely on your pre-planning, yet remain sufficiently flexible that systems and procedures can be readily modified to match unanticipated variations in the scenarios you’ve constructed. It’s almost certainly not going to be “…the end of the world as we know it.” But, there could be another Hurricane Katrina looming just over the horizon.

Be sure to visit Jerry on the web at www.jerryahern.com.