

SELF-LIBERATION NOTES

LIBERTY UNDER ATTACK
PUBLICATIONS

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TRANSCRIBER'S FOREWORD

Strategies for self-liberation are the main focus of my work in the alternative media. For libertarians/anarchists, this has been the ultimate question: how can I find freedom now, despite the existence of the State?

Some ideas likely seem insane to folks today, such as inhabiting an Antarctic iceberg, but others are more practical—so much so, that non-libertarians/anarchists are pursuing the lifestyle—examples could be van nomadism (more commonly known as “van dwelling” today) and even minimalist sailboating (i.e. “living aboard a boat”). A quick YouTube search of either of those terms will amass a bunch of examples.

In addition to potential tactics, I’m also deeply interested in what previous libertarians/anarchists did or suggested and frequently scour the Internet for any rare issues of these publications.

That said, the newest batch I obtained included one issue titled ***Self-Liberation Notes***, put together and edited by Jim Stumm, an individual who managed at least a handful of libertarian publications from the 1970s-1990s.

The publication you are about to read includes articles on many fascinating subjects, such as: self-liberation through household autonomy, tips and tricks in identifying and weeding out snitches and infiltrators, strategies for keeping communications private by using low-technology encryption, pirate radio, and much more.

A couple technical notes before turning you over to Mr. Stumm and the other contributors: for the first few publications in this batch, I left the majority of original spelling and grammatical errors and denoted any corrections in [brackets]. There are a few instances of that below, but I decided to correct more errors than usual, for ease of reading. It does remove a little bit of authenticity, sure, but that was a recommendation I received from those who have read previous digitized publications—apparently it made it a little awkward to read.

Any other errors in spelling or grammar are solely those of your humble transcriptionist.

It is my hope that ***Self-Liberation Notes*** provides you with even more tools to add to your self-liberation tool belt. It's time to start construction on a freer future, and that begins with you, the individual.

Shane Radliff

September 2017

Liberty Under Attack & The Vonu Podcast

SELF LIBERATION THROUGH HOUSEHOLD AUTONOMY

I believe that developing an autonomous household is one of several feasible ways to become largely free of govt, starting now, without changing society. This is not the only way to go & won't appeal to everyone. I don't mean to say that household autonomy is better than other self-liberation techniques such as living in a camper in the woods, or on a yacht on the ocean, or becoming internationally mobile, etc. Different persons will find different options most suitable or appealing for themselves. Household autonomy is the one I like best for myself, & describes, in a general way, what I am working on.

Definitions:

A "household" is one or more people who live together under one roof. It can consist of just one individual, or a typical nuclear family, or any kind of group up to what is called a 10-group or a primary group, that is, about 15 people maximum.

"Household Autonomy" means an approach toward economic self-sufficiency within the household through home production of most necessities consumed in the household, & long term storage of those necessities not produced. The most important necessities for home production are: food, pure water, shelter, energy, & protection. The objection may be made that no individual or small group can be self-sufficient except at a very low standard of living. But that prejudices the case. We don't know what we can do until we try. Existing eco houses, spacecraft, underwater habitats, & other examples show that at least a large measure of partial self-sufficiency is possible.

The ultimate goal of this approach is the fully closed, fully recycling ecosystem. We have no guarantee that that can be built. We don't yet know how to do it on a large scale & it will surely be harder to do on the smaller scale of a household-sized unit. But if it can be done, it will make possible an enormous increase in personal freedom.

Why Do It?

Why would anyone want to develop an autonomous household? The main reason is: if outside forces can cut off a person's necessities, they can exert control over that person. If one internalizes production of necessities within his household, he will be much freer to ignore & resist outside pressures.

The outside force that does the most to restricts a person's freedom, is, of course, the govt. Most social freedoms (sex, dope, etc.) can be obtained despite govt restrictions thru deception & concealment. The individual who would be free in this respect must avoid surveillance by snoop neighbors, & especially he must avoid self-policing, that is, restricting himself because he assumes govt has far more enforcement power than it really has.

The kind of activity that the govt actually has the most power to control is economic activity that takes place outside the home. This is because one must become visible to get customers, or to find an employer or employees, & this visibility also alerts govt. So most business activity takes place under a govt spotlight, which makes it vulnerable to taxes & regulations. But economic activity within the household is not visible to govt. It isn't taxed or regulated. Much of it can be easily hidden even in the unlikely case of govt coming to look for it. Putting products made at home on the market exposes the producers to some risk of govt interference. But if these products are also consumed at home, govt need not ever know. So one strategy for avoiding govt interference is to minimize one's economic activity outside the home & maximize home production.

As a household approaches more nearly complete economic autonomy, another benefit that arises is this: it can be located in environments not now inhabitable. Many of these environments (eg underwater, outer space) are not even claimed by any govt. Others, although claimed, are beyond the effective control of any govt. The kind of places I have in mind are: barren deserts like the Arabian empty quarter & the Egyptian western desert, on or under the Arctic icecap, Antarctica, Arctic & sub-Antarctic islands, icecaps such as Greenland, within submerged ocean reefs & on some seamounts, on submerged continental slopes, in vessels on or under the ocean's surface, on the peaks or slopes of some mountains, & in underground caverns or mines. About the only terrestrial environment that can't be opened to human settlement is the abyssal depths of the oceans, due to extremely high pressure. And if a household-sized, fully closed ecosystem can be developed, it can be built, or taken, off the Earth, thus opening up many space environments to settlement. But those of us who yearn for the anarchic freedom of the frontier should realize that there are plenty of frontiers left on Earth.

How To Do It:

They physical components of an autonomous household may be thought of as an expanded house. One may hope that some day such a habitat will be available for purchase off the shelf, like a house or a camper, at various price levels, with wide choice of options. In that day anyone will be able to buy as much freedom as he wants or can afford.

But we are now at the 1st generation level in the development of autonomous habitats. To get one today, a buyer has to design his own package. Some suitable components are available, though many were designed for other uses. Others are not available off-the-shelf & will have to be specially built, perhaps even invented. The way to proceed at this time is to develop one subsystem at a time, & not worry too much about how well they fit together or overall efficiency. First you build a device that works, then think about refining it & improving its efficiency.

The highest level of development of an autonomous habitat, the completely closed ecosystem, would be fully independent of its environment, which implies that it could be located anywhere on, or even off, Earth. But at this early stage of development we have to design habitats that somewhat depend on, & derive resources from, particular environments. At this time we see how we might get free of day-to-day & week-to-week dependence on the market economy, but independence from the local environment will have to wait until somewhat later.

THE P.E.I. Ark:

Perhaps the nearest approach to an autonomous household that presently exists is the “Ark” that has been built by New Alchemy Institute on Prince Edward Island (in the Gulf of St. Lawrence in Atlantic Canada).



The PEI Ark looks like a large house with an attached greenhouse along the entire south side. It is heated primarily by the sun & powered by the wind. Electricity is provided by a 25 KW wind generator. The Ark doesn't use batteries to store electricity. Instead power is provided by the Island Utility when the wind isn't blowing & surplus electricity is sold to the Utility when the wind blows strongly. The Ark includes a living area, laboratory, aquaculture system, & greenhouse under one roof. It will trap, store, & transform its own energy, recycle its own wastes & water, & provide a livable climate for the household within as well as much of the food for its inhabitants.

The 2 main shortcomings of the PEI Ark as an example of an autonomous house is its link to the Island Utility in place of internal battery storage of electricity, & the fact that virtually no attention has been paid to protection and security.

TRENCHCOAT SECRETS

By: Adam Reed

The Russians, who have lived for many years under the eye of the secret police, have invented a large number of idiomatic expressions dealing with their predicament. One such expression is “trenchcoat secret.” The “trenchcoat” refers to the unofficial non-uniform favored by members of a certain pervasive institution (KGB). A “trenchcoat secret” is something you think is your secret, but the bludg know isn’t. The greater the naiveté of a would-be underground, the greater the number of trenchcoats secrets in its possession. And, with most Americans being utterly inexperienced in dealing with the agents of an unprincipled state most American undergrounds are naïve indeed. (The only exceptions, thus far, have been far-left groups trained by commie agents abroad.) It is not surprising that libertarians have more than their fair share of trenchcoat secrets. What is surprising is that even technologically sophisticated people, who could be expected to analyze the problem conceptually, have never bothered to do so. The result is that you can collar any of us in the street, puff a few tokes with him, & he will tell you all his secrets & all the secrets of his friends. I am not exaggerating.

I know of at least one case where a group of libertarians spent a considerable amount of effort to find a fairly secure location for an emergency hideout. A few days after deciding on a location, one member of the group divulged this location to his girlfriend of several weeks – w/o consulting the other members of the group whose plans now hinged on the security of the chosen location. Fortunately, an after-the-fact security check eliminated the possibility of her being a plan. Incidentally, the person who related the story to me also told me what that location was, even though I had no need to know & no clearance from other members of the group. I told her to change the location to one I didn't know about – I have no illusions about heroism under torture. I feel free to tell the story here (with some changes) because her group has now had ample time to do so.

Before going on, I would like to explain my own attitude toward secrecy. I believe that anything worth doing is worth doing well – & in addition, nothing makes me feel more insecure than half-assed attempts at security by people who have never put their minds to the problem. Moreover, security takes time & effort, & I have better uses for those. Personally, therefore, I do everything out in the open. I have used an alias – Lee Eisenstark – only to keep people looking for my scientific papers from blundering into the poetry pages. Until recently, I had no idea any LC contributors used aliases for security reasons. After all, didn't they send their fees & stencils in through the mail?

Security rule number one: Nothing that has gone through the mails is ever going to be a secret. I have no doubt that all contributions to LC, other than those coming from easily identifiable contributors, are opened & checked for fingerprints before being forwarded to the Dawn Enterprises mailbox. Sure, it's illegal to open first class mail – but have you ever met a bludg, such as a postal inspector, who was about to enforce a law against himself? And please, I know the tubes are sealed when they arrive. Still, if you don't have a criminology lab at your disposal, you have no way of finding out how many times your mail has been opened & read.

Security rule #2: No fact is secret when known to even one person who is willing to divulge it. I was doubly amused when Mick's scandal stencil was censored. Weren't you?

Security rule #3: Never divulge a secret unless you know it is in your interest to do so (the famous need-to-know principle).

Security rule #4: If the secret is shared with others, do not divulge it to any person w/o first clearing the person with every other member of the group whose secret it is.

Security rule #5: Never divulge a secret w/o instructing the recipient to keep it that way. I once had once came close to divulging a secret because no one had told me to keep the information under my hat.

I could go on with many more such rules, but they all come down to the same thing: engage brain before putting mouth in motion.

(Reprinted from LIBERTARIAN CONNECTION #43, 8 March 1974)

EDITOR'S COMMENTS on Trenchcoat Secrets:

I would add one more "security rule": Remember that the vast majority of Americans don't share our attitude toward govt. They consider us paranoid on the subject. They believe that the good citizen who is doing nothing wrong should have nothing to hide. Consequently, they will make no effort to keep our secrets secure, & will, on the contrary, go out of their way to spill the beans to any govt agent who asks. Therefore, take special care to keep your mouth shut around non-libertarian friends and relatives, if you want to keep your secret secret.

But I must disagree with Reed's comments above to this extent: I don't believe mail to LC/TC (or to LF) is now being opened & read by govt agents. People who believe it is being opened are suffering from excessive paranoia & delusions of grandeur. It's not that govt has any inhibitions on doing such a thing, laws against it notwithstanding. But rather, we're not important enough; we're no threat to them. There are some tens of 1000s of little periodicals being published in America today. It would take an army of govt agents to read all this stuff & why would they invest the resources to do that unless they mean to prosecute, or persecute, us for what we say here? We have no evidence that any such general persecution is underway. There are particular exceptions such as tax rebels, or "terrorists." Such general repression of dissidents may happen in the future, but isn't, I don't think, happening yet.

One exception is at the border. There's ample evidence that US Customs does open mail, both packages & 1st class, looking for drugs, pornography, or whatever they want to keep out of the country. Even there they don't open everything (some items, a high % apparently, get through). They pull suspicious-looking items out of the mail stream, & only spot-check the rest.

Play safe, if you like, & assume all mail is being read. Only you know how much risk you're willing to accept.

RETREATISM & THE FREEDOM THAT MATTERS

By: Adam Reed

(Editor's Note: Retreatism is much like survivalism except its purpose is: increased freedom now, rather than survival in the future.)

Before one can sensibly discuss the issue of retreatism, certain facts about the nature of freedom must be made explicit. One of these is the fact that the freedom that matters is the freedom to do the things that you want to do. Restrictions which do not affect one's own lifestyle are not really relevant when personal decisions – such as the decision on whether to live in the woods or in the city – are being made. Thus, for example, to one who does not use hallucinogens, the govt's proscription of LSD is hardly a matter of personal concern. (To be sure, a govt which has the power to ban LSD also has a greater potential for interference in the things one considers important; but potential interference is not personal interference, & this issue of potential power is not relevant outside the polling booth.) It is only when the goons find a way to keep me from something I really want that I begin to chafe. Even then the regulation is not necessarily enough to get me trekking into the wilderness. Before one can rationally decide on a course of action, one must consider all the consequences of that course. How much would I lose? Are the advantages of removing myself from govt regulation enough to compensate me for that loss?

The freedom to do the things one wishes to do depends not only on the absence of govt interference, but also on the size & the technological level of one's society. Thus, one cannot go to a Wagnerian opera if the govt prohibits Wagner – but one cannot go to the opera at all if one moves to a society too small to support an opera company. A scientist cannot do the research of his choice if it interferes with research in his field – but if technologically sophisticated equipment is needed for such research, then in a primitive society he cannot do his research at all. Even in a society far more authoritarian than our own, a research scientist who loved the opera would think long & hard on whether to withdraw. Similar considerations are equally relevant to the more “ordinary” person. Suppose one is considering retreat as a way to escape the burden of taxes. Suppose further that retreat conditions do not permit the use of an electric dishwasher. Would my gain from not paying taxes be enough to compensate me for the loss of time spent washing dishes by hand? I suspect that a rigorous cost-benefit analysis would lead one to conclude that retreatism, at the present stage of the game, is not a rational solution except in a very few individual cases.

I say at the present stage of the game, because I think one's decision in this matter should be periodically re-examined. If life in the polis gets bad enough, retreatism will become the rational course of action for almost everybody. Any retreat, no matter how primitive, is preferable to a concentration camp. Moreover, as more people move off, social & technological growth of retreat communities will make them an increasingly attractive alternative. However, the exact point at which it becomes rational to move to the forest will be different for every individual. The Important Thing [sic] is to have the skills & equipment to do it, when & if you ever make that choice. It is possible that when things get bad enough for you, you will have to move fast. And, in case the world begins to improve instead of deteriorating, the preparations will have given you plenty of healthful exercise.

(Reprinted from LIBERTARIAN CONNECTION #42, p. 12, January 1974)

OUTLINE OF AN AUTONOMOUS HOME

In "Self-Liberation Thru Household Autonomy" (in ODD MAN OUT #2) I explained how household economic self sufficiency, that is the production of most necessities at home, can enhance one's own freedom. In "Closed Ecosystem Habitats" (in OMO #1) I briefly described a number of existing ecohouses which approach this self-sufficient ideal. Here I want to outline what an ideal autonomous household might look like by considering which subsystems are feasible & fit together into a coherent plan.

First, I should note that no one design is going to be optimum for every situation. This is true enough for a conventional house, & even more true [sic] for an ecohouse because self-sufficiency will almost always require a close linkage between the house itself & the surrounding environment. Inhabitants of an ecohouse would be likely to use solar or wind energy, rain or groundwater for drinking, gardens for food, woods for food & fuel, etc. So each house must be designed to interface most efficiently with the particular environment in which it is located. In a wet climate, rainwater might be used for drinking, but this would not be feasible in a desert, & so on similarly for other subsystems.

In what follows I will be thinking primarily of my own location in NE US, with some mention of variations suitable to other places. I won't go into autonomous living in exotic places such as underwater, although the same approach would probably also work in that case, with changes appropriate to the different problems found there.

The ideal autonomous home would provide the necessities of shelter, food, water, waste processing, energy, security, & clothing:

1) Shelter: The structure of the house itself would be designed with energy conservation in mind. It would be thoroughly insulated. It would have an attached greenhouse to provide food, solar energy, & a pleasant living space in bad weather. The house might be entirely or partially underground which offers advantages in respect to energy consumption & security.

2) Food: The greenhouse would supply a considerable part of the food consumed by the residents. But most of the food needed would be grown in gardens outside, or perhaps on food producing trees. Berry bushes & other perennials would contribute, & rooftop gardens might play a role. Small animals would be raised for meat. They might include rabbits, chickens, pigeons, ducks, & geese. An aquaculture system might also be included. This could be a backyard fish pond. Or it might consist of tanks inside the greenhouse which would enable fish to be raised in cold weather. Such tanks would also do double duty by providing thermal mass which would reduce high & low temperature extremes thus enabling the greenhouse to function more efficiently as a food producing & solar heating unit.

3) Water: An independent water supply would come from one's own well, if that's feasible, or from the capture of rainwater. Any drinking water should be at least filtered. If there is not a sufficient water supply from any source at the site, total recycling of a fixed water supply within a household is already possible, but still very expensive. Water conserving practices & devices such as water conserving faucets & showerheads & waterless toilets should be used to cut costs. A solar water heating unit would provide hot water, with perhaps a woodburning water heater as a backup. To provide water pressure, a wind powered water pump would lift water up to an elevated tank. Grey waste water from sinks & showers both would be mixed with urine & used to irrigate the gardens.

4) Waste Processing: Waste materials would be kept separate at the source & used in the way appropriate to each fraction. Kitchen, yard, & animal wastes would be composted to make garden fertilizer. Paper, wood scraps, & plastic would be burned for heat in a wood-burning stove. For human wastes, a composting toilet would be used, such as the commercial clivus multrum, or a similar homebuilt unit. Compost from such a toilet would be removed once a year & used to fertilize food trees.

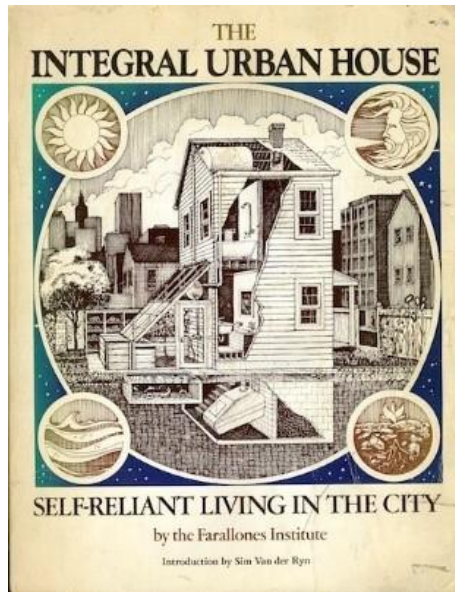
5) Energy: Most space heating would come from solar energy collected mainly in the attached greenhouse with help from other passive heating devices like south facing windows with insulated shutters or a trombe wall. Backup heating would be provided by a wood-burning stove or furnace. Wood for fuel would be harvested from 5 acres or more of woodlot owned by the homeowner, which might be at a separate location but should not be too far away from the autonomous house. For cooking, a wood-burning cookstove would be used, except in summer when a solar stove & oven would be substituted. Electricity would be provided most likely by a wind electric system with battery storage. Or a hydroelectric system might be used instead, if waterpower is available. Another possibility is a wood-burning steam engine, powering a generator with all the waste heat recycled & used for space heating during the heating season. A snowbox or another kind of icehouse would provide natural refrigeration by storing winter cold for summer use. Vehicles & other engines would be powered by fuel alcohol, made from homegrown sugar beets or another crop (perhaps a treecrop: honey locust, carob, or how about dates), fermented, & distilled in a solar still under the summer sun.

6) Security: Physical protection would be provided by both active & passive measures. Active measures include stockpiling a variety of weapons & ammunition, & acquiring skill in their use. Unarmed combat training would also be useful. Passive measure include detection devices & alarms as well as locks, strong walls, doors, windows, & perhaps steel shutters for windows. Small valuables might be protected by providing hidden storage places or by underground burial in unmarked spots. The house might also contain a strongly fortified position to retreat to & hidden escape routes. In this modern age it's impossible to construct a "castle" that can withstand all assaults, but a household can be effectively defended against low level assaults, including almost anything a non govt intruder or gang might hurl against it.

7) Clothing: Clothing differs from the other 6 categories in that home production of textiles is probably not feasible. Sylvan Hart ("The Last of the Mountain Men") is of the opinion that "a woman could spin & knit all day w/o keeping her family in socks." But if clothing is selected for durability rather than faddish style, & especially if it is purchased used, it is cheap enough that a lifetime supply could be purchased & stockpiled. Tools & materials to make home repairs should also be acquired.

However, leather clothing is so durable that home production of it may be a reasonable option. Hart estimates that it may take a couple weeks to make a suit of buckskin. But he was still wearing his 1st buckskin jacket 30 years after he made it, & it was still good as new.

This is only a summary outline & each of these concepts should be developed at greater length another time. Substitutions & variations are possible in each of these areas, but some alternatives are not as feasible as those suggested here. Of course, this is only a 1st draft of an overall plan. A wiser head might come up with a more elegant schematic. And new inventions are being made all the time & should be fitted in where appropriate. For example, if we ever do see that long promised breakthrough in the price of photo voltaic cells, that will surely be the best source of homebrew electricity wherever solar is adequate.



Almost all of these ideas are actually in use somewhere, but there is no one place yet where all are in use. The closest approaches that I know of so far are New Alchemy Institute's Prince Edward Island Ark, & Farallones Institute's Integral Urban House in Berkeley.

References:

- 1) "The Internal Urban House," by Julie Reynolds, THE MOTHER EARTH NEWS #42, Nov. 1976, p. 125.
- 2) "Ouroboros South & Ouroboros East," by Wilson Clark, TMEN #36, Nov. 1975, p. 93.
- 3) "Integrated Solar Dwelling," by John Shore & Frances Pulling, ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY #22, Sep. 1976, p. 8.
- 4) "Tomorrow Is Our Permanent Address," by John Todd, THE JOURNAL OF THE NEW ALCHEMISTS #4, 1977, p. 85, describes their Prince Edward Island Canada Ark.
- 5) "A Natural House For Northern Maine," by Steven Travis, ASE #26, June 1977, p. 15.
- 6) "The Eco-House," by F.P. Hughes, TMEN #20, March 1973, p. 62. This is a student's dissertation about a house that was never built. It should be taken as a worst case example of what not to do. Note all the editor's criticisms; all valid & I could add a couple more. The house is too gimmicky, does everything the most complex way.

7) "The Dan Taylor Family," TMEN #45, June q1977, p. 85. Not a house, but a lifestyle that uses many of the concepts here.

8) "Storing Winter Cold," by Jim Stumm, ASE #22, Sept. 1976, p. 22. My article about natural refrigeration.

9) "Plowboy Interview: Lance Crombie, Energy Self-Sufficiency Now," TMEN #55, Feb. 1979, p. 17. Interview with the Minn. farmer who is pioneering solar distilled fuel alcohol for use in engines.

10) "The Last of the Mountain Men," by Harold Peterson. Book about Sylvan Hart who lives a self sufficient lifestyle in Idaho back woods.

SECURE COMMUNICATION NETWORK

I've been thinking about the problem of how to set up a secure network of people throughout the country who want to communicate with each other about a proscribed common interest. Police spies are the problem. Any network member who you haven't known just about forever may be a spy. And even your old, trustworthy "friend" may have been "turned" (as they say in the spy business); that is, arrested, then promised light treatment if he informs on others.

One approach is to find the spies & reveal them. This would be hard to do, & odds are you won't find all of them. Better in theory is a system so structured that no person can possibly harm another. Then you can let the spies come in, especially if they pay dues. They only benefit, not harm. So what's that optimum secure structure? I don't have it totally figured out, but here are some ideas:

I've been reading a series of articles in old LIBERTARIAN CONNECTIONSs: "The Underground Organizer's Handbook" by Sam Hall in LC 3, 4, 5, & 9. In LC3 p. 54, Hall describes a cell system in which each member has anonymous contact with only the one man above him who recruited him, & he knows those immediately below, who he has recruited. So this forms a hierarchical chain & at the top is a Supreme Leader who knows everything. This isn't a very useful model for the more egalitarian network I have in mind. Also, it provides security only in the upward direction, but not at all downward. If a high-up person is seized, everyone downward from him can be traced.

In LC4 p. 29 Hall gives some vague ideas about communications: anonymous letters (no return address), anonymous phone call, note left in a drop. Eg the higher-up man could leave a note telling low man to be at a certain phone, maybe a pay phone, at a certain time, & he, the high man, will call. This preserves the anonymity of the caller, but not of low man. High man could phone from anywhere, & he would be safe as long as the call isn't traced. (Does any reader know how long it takes to trace a phone call? Would a 5 minute phone call be secure? One minute?) If you know only a phone number, a layman can't immediately match it to a physical location, except to narrow it down to the region covered by the area code. But the info must be on file in the phone company. Child's play for a govt agent to get it, so that isn't secure.

The ideal system I have in mind would allow A to send messages to B, messages that could be frequent & lengthy & could ideally include absolutely anything w/o danger; & B could similarly send messages to A, yet A could not possibly locate B & B could not possibly locate A, thru the message system. And no other persons are put at risk either. Tough specs to meet:

I see a way it could be done, provided the message doesn't have to be kept private, & that is to broadcast the message. This is "inefficient" in that the message must be sent to 1000s of millions in order to reach the one addressee. Some particular examples:

1) A & B both have secret radio transmitters. A broadcasts his message to B; B broadcasts his reply. Security problem: radio broadcast can be traced with direction-finding receivers, though there are ways to minimize that risk. Practical problems: requires expensive equipment & technical expertise, transmission may be poor quality.

2) A commercial radio or TV station is “persuaded” to broadcast your message. The message can be delivered to the station anonymously, say by mailing a tape with no return address, or by phoning the station to say tape has been left at a certain place. So the sender of the message is secure. Recipient is secure because he is lost in the millions of radio/TV listeners. Security seems as near perfect as one could wish. The practical problem lies in “persuading” the commercial broadcaster to transmit your message. Seems like that could only be done in case of a coercive act, kidnapping, terrorist threat, etc. Not useful to non-coercive networkers.

3) For written messages, the same thing is possible through a mass newspaper like NY Times. But same problems apply. But we may be approaching a partial solution:

4) Suppose there is a publisher who is willing to publish your message. Why would he? Well you pay him, of course. And besides that he is a dedicated defender of free press/free speech (& his own profits), & your right to say it. To protect the sender, publisher must be willing to accept anonymously-sent messages (ads) accompanied by payment in cash. To protect receiver of the message, the publication should have a large-as-possible readership who almost all do not share the proscribed interest. It would be useful, furthermore, if the publication were available on newsstands where a buyer needn’t reveal his name & address (as a subscriber must).

A security limitation is that the publisher would have to refuse any message likely to get him prosecuted. A partial solution would be for networkers to develop a secret code/jargon/language, so that ideas can be transmitted that publisher can credibly disavow knowledge of.

On a realistic small scale, this can be done through a TC-type open forum publication. A security problem for message-sender with existing TC is that the publisher accepts submissions only from subscribers, so he needs to know your name & address. You can use a “pen-name” & a mail-forwarding service address, but that’s an added expense & still not totally secure. This can be finessed within the existing rules (though the TC-publisher may refuse to allow it), by obtaining what you consider to be a writer-only subscription (& you get a 2nd subscription to read it, or read someone else’s copy). The writer-only subscription would be in a phony name & address, which the TC-publisher will have to know about. He’ll find out anyways if your copy of an issue bounces as undeliverable. The address may be entirely bogus, or it may be real – public library, county morgue, whatever – just not your address. The sole purpose of a writer-only subscription is so you can send in submissions under that name & they will be published as your 2-free-pages-per-issue contract. And yet, in even the worst case, if TC-publisher is raided & his mailing list seized, you would still be secure, because he has no record or knowledge of who you are. It would be simpler if the TC-publisher would add a new rule to allow non-subscriber submissions, no free pages of course, full cash payment sent anonymously with each such submission.

The limitation is that the publisher must still be careful not to print anything likely to get him prosecuted. We need a publisher who is bold/daring, not paranoid, discrete of course, & yet not wildly foolhardy either. A small publication is more likely to be harassed/raided/prosecuted because it lacks the high social status of mass media (eg NY Times), but on the other hand, a small publication may be more likely to go unnoticed, lost among 1000s of other marginal underground rags. For the subscriber, the small press offers less security because he is one of, 1000s or millions of subscribers, but only of 100s. It would not be possible for govt agents to investigate every one of a small publication's subscribers, if they decide to spend the resources to do so. The reader would remain safe if he bought the publication at a bookstore/newsstand, but it's unlikely that a micro circulation publication will be available from many such outlets. Another possibility is decentralized circulation: subscribers Xerox the publication & send it on to people unknown to the publisher. That could get complicated. The weakest link in the system is the publisher. Anything we can do to make him more secure, will make the whole system more invulnerable. Ideal would be a truly totally underground publisher, who can't be found, who can yet somehow still receive mail.

That's as far as I have gone so far in my thinking on this problem. Feedback, & further ideas, big or small, from readers is most welcome. Write anonymously if you like.

HOW TO BEAT THE JURY DUTY DRAFT

In an item in *INSTEAD OF A MAGAZINE*, Fall 88, (POB 433, Willimantic, CT 06226) Terry Epton says:

“Last year when I was called for jury duty, I wrote back on ‘ANARCHY’ emblazoned stationary, obediently reporting that I would be happy to serve, but unable to deliver any guilty verdicts. That’s the last I’ve heard from them.”

Sounds good to me. If they call you for jury duty & you want to get out of it, & you don’t belong to one of the privileged classes, like doctors, who can get a special dispensation, then this approach seems like your best bet. You probably wouldn’t have to tell them you’re an anarchist, if you don’t want to say that, whether it’s true or not. The key point seems to be insisting that you will have to render a verdict of “not guilty” in every case regardless of the evidence. You could give them any sort of philosophical, religious, or ethical arguments you like as your reason why. Carry on about how you cannot be a party to the inhumanity of locking people up in cages, & like that. Pile on the BS with a shovel. That’s the way to do it.

I can’t believe any prosecutor will let you sit on a jury if you keep insisting that you must & will find everyone “not guilty.”

On the other hand, if you want to serve on a jury, that’s fine with me. Do what you please. That’s freedom. In most places you can sign up at the county courthouse to volunteer for jury duty, & that will increase your chance of being called.

LEVELS OF DEPENDENCY IN CONVENTIONAL LIFESTYLES

Here I will outline 3 fairly conventional lifestyles whose features add up to a person being:

I – completely dependent,

II – semi-independent, or

III – independent

of control by outside forces. By “conventional” lifestyle I mean as compared to someone living in a really strange way as e.g.: on a boat, or underwater, or as a nomad, or in Antarctica.

Level I: Completely Dependent

The dependent lifestyle is characterized by the custom of buying in all necessities just before consumption, often on a day-to-day basis. This is highly dependent because one is vulnerable to outside control through the simple measure of interrupting the flow of any of these necessities. One who lives this way has no reserves & no ready alternative supply so any break in the flow causes an immediate crisis which will probably quickly lead to his submission to any outrageous demands of govt, monopoly utility, or other outside force that controls his necessities. Since this course of events can be foreseen, the mere threat of a cut-off would suffice to control the dependent person.

In detail, the completely dependent lifestyle would look like this:

Income: Buys everything he needs, so he depends on a continuing high cash income. Has little or no savings, so no reserves to carry him through a period reduced or no income. Buys many items on credit, so requires consistent money to meet payments. If he misses payments, his goods could be repossessed. Gets all his income from one source, working for someone else, so the decision of one entity to fire him can leave him with no income.

Shelter: Lives in apartment paying high rent, or in a house with high mortgage payments, so depends on continuing income for a place to live. Most vulnerable is the apartment dweller w/o a lease who can be evicted on 30 days notice.

Food: Buys all his food as he needs it from nearby stores. Doesn't stock up or grow his own, so any interruption in the food distribution system would leave him beginning to starve in a few days. Depends on his continuing cash income for food.

Water: Gets his drinking water as he needs it out of govt water mains. Keeps no reserve supply, so any interruption leaves him scrambling for some alternative supply in one day.

Waste Processing: Depends on govt or franchised private garbage haulers to take away trash, & flushes human waste down the toilet into a govt sewage system. Any breakdown in these systems leaves him with garbage & shit piling up all around him.

Energy: Uses conventional purchased fuels for his needs. In the most dependent case, he uses mainly electricity & natural gas which he acquires as needed with no possibility of building up a reserve. Purchased oil, coal, or firewood at least could be stockpiled. Buys gasoline as he needs it for his car; price & availability are outside his control. All energy purchases require his continuing high cash income.

Security: Depends entirely on govt police to keep property & person secure. Takes no defensive measures on his own. This may not prevent losses from burglary, etc. even if police do their best to protect him. And if police go on strike, or otherwise withdraw their protection, he would be left defenseless.

Clothing: Buys clothing on whim, keeping up with latest fashions, buying for style rather than function or durability. Lacks desire, skills, or supplies & equipment to mend & repair clothing. If supplies of new clothing are cut off, he would be reduced to wearing tattered rags sooner than one who selects for durability & can make repairs. (Still, clothing is a minor problem compared to other categories.)

Level II: Semi-Independent, Mainly Through Storage

Income: Has considerable savings (in inflation resistant forms, e.g. gold, silver, swiss francs) to provide a cushion for a time of reduced or no income. Gets income from several separate sources (jobs), so is not likely to lose all at one time. Doesn't buy necessities on credit. Develops multiple skills so he can do several kinds of work to earn money. Doesn't consider himself "married" to one profession. May be self-employed as a sideline or as main income.

Shelter: Lives in a paid-for house, with sufficient insurance on it. If possible, owns a 2nd country home, retreat. (Still, he would not be entirely independent because govt can always seize a home under eminent domain. There's no way to defend against that w/o going into an unconventional lifestyle.)

Food: Maintains a food stash, a stockpile of perhaps a year's supply of food.

Water: Keeps a water stash on hand, a couple weeks supply of drinking water, & has equipment to purify polluted water.

Waste: Sets up a household waste processing system (see reference 1) & a composting toilet & and a grey water system (see reference 2).

Energy: Practices energy conservation to reduce amount of energy needed. Installs a multi-fuel furnace, or a solid fuel burning stove, & stockpiles firewood or coal. Gets a reserve electric generator, preferably one that burns a storable fuel such as propane. Has substitutes for all essential electrical devices such as fuel burning lanterns, battery operated radios, etc. Automotive fuel is the most difficult problem. Small amounts of gasoline can be stored, but it deteriorates in storage & is highly dangerous to store. One argument for diesel-power is that diesel fuel is much safer to stockpile. Use of a motorcycle or moped will reduce need for fuel. Reliance on bicycle or walking will eliminate it. One can rearrange his lifestyle to reduce need for transport by living near work, shops, school, etc.

Security: Depends less on police & provides for his own (see reference 2).

Clothing: Stockpiles a lifetime supply & the supplies to make repairs (see reference 2).

Level III: Independent Through Home Production of Necessities

Since the details of this strategy have been covered in reference 2, I won't repeat here, but just indicate the general drift:

Income: Produces goods for his own consumption & stays out of the marketplace to large degree.

Shelter: Besides owning his home, he also sets it up as an autonomous eco-house, as nearly as possible independent of outside supplies.

Food: Grows his own in gardens, greenhouses, on food trees, & by raising animals.

Water: Has his own supply from a well or rainwater.

Waste: Same as level II.

Energy: Develops his own sources such as solar heating, wind electric, his own firewood supply, solar-distilled fuel alcohol for engines, etc.

Security: Same as level II.

Clothing: Same as level II.

References:

- 1) "Ecological Household Waste Management," p. 8, LIVING FREE #1.
- 2) "Outline of an Autonomous Home," p.2, LF #1.

HARD TIMES INVESTMENTS

“Economic Outlook” in TMEN [The Mother Earth News] 56 quotes from the booklet “Inflation Is Coming” written by Dr. Ralph Borsodi in 1943 in which he sets out this investment program for inflationary times:

“A family should invest all its surplus cash in tangible & productive property. By this I mean it should invest in such things as:

1) Productive land that can be cultivated by the members of the family with their own labor. This land should include garden land, woods, & pasturage.

2) Investments in improvements on land – in fencing, drainage, fruit trees, reforestation, roadways, fish ponds, prevention of erosion, & building up the topsoil.

3) A home & other buildings to increase the productivity of the homestead.

4) Productive home equipment such as major appliances, sewing machines, flour mills, & furniture, including supplies of linen, bedding, clothing, & fabrics of all kinds & any other household equipment which stores well for a long period of time, also tools & machinery for working wood & metal, & books, musical instruments & hobby equipment & supplies. In short, a family should stockpile anything tangible which can be used, sooner or later, for producing food, clothing, shelter or entertainment.

5) Agricultural equipment & vehicles.

6) Animals: horses, mules, cows, oxen, sheep, goats, pigs, chickens, ducks, turkeys, etc.

7) Commodities that can be stored on the homestead including lumber, wheat, corn, coal, or anything else that will not deteriorate & can be stored at acceptable cost.

8) If the family runs a business, investments should be made in the buildings, equipment, machinery & staples used in the operation.

9) Education including the acquisition of new technical skills which can be used on the homestead or used to make money.

10) If the family is wealthy & has more money than the above program will absorb, it might buy real estate, preferably farm property, or it might invest in spot commodities traded on exchanges or, last of all, it could invest in carefully selected stocks, but under no circumstances should it invest in bonds.

Comments on this list:

Other desirable acquisitions that I would add are garden tools, & spare parts for equipment & vehicles the family owns to replace parts that are likely to break or wear out. Also worth considering among property improvements are independent energy devices such as windmills, water power installations, solar cells, & wood burning steam engines. Among animals, I would add rabbits. If you want to store a fuel in large amounts for a long time, coal is probably best. You can dump it on the ground by the ton, cover with plastic, spread topsoil over it, & plant on it. It will remain hidden & secure until you need it. Of course, then you should have already acquired coal stoves or furnaces. Technical skills & services will remain valuable even if the currency gets so flaky that it is no longer wise to sell your products for money. You can always go back to bartering for other items of real value to you.

The major weakness I see in this plan of Borsodi's is that it says nothing about defense. A well-equipped homestead would make a tempting target for looters, & real estate can't be defended against high taxation or confiscation by govt. At least a reasonable arsenal of firearms should be added to this list. Useful skills are the most secure acquisition because it isn't possible to steal them. An advantage of small, valuable, durable items like gold & silver coins is that they can be hidden, e.g. by burying in unmarked places, & thus kept safe from looters in or out of the govt. A disadvantage is that coins are not useful in themselves, so who knows what their value will be under survival conditions? On the other hand, precious metals have retained their value (although exact prices fluctuate) throughout history, & it's reasonable to think the future will resemble the past. My judgement is that it's prudent to put part of one's assets into fully paid for gold & silver "bullion" coins (not rare coins), which are kept in a place known only to the owner.

Another investment I would consider if I were wealthy is forest land. This should be well managed to maximize tree growth. One could do that himself, or hire a forest manager. The growth of the trees would provide a real 5% to 8% increase annually, while the principle value of the standing trees would increase along with lumber & firewood prices, & the underlying land should increase in value. One problem is the extensive forest is hard to defend against poachers.

In my case, if there ever is a time when I have extra capital to invest, I will seriously consider investing in tools. Tools are durable & can be used, or sold, or bartered. Tools wear out which insures a continuing demand. Basic tools are survival necessities, so their value doesn't depend on frills or fads. I could use tools to make items for my own use, or to provide goods or services for sale or barter. Good quality tools should hold their value & increase in price along with inflation.

LETTER FROM ROGER KENMORE (Dec. 85)

Dear Jim,

This letter is a reply to your response to me in LIVING FREE #32 (page 6).

Most basic drivers' manuals for automobile licenses emphasize that driving is a privilege, not a right. Similarly, the tribute you pay to the state for owning your land is an acknowledgment of its power to permit or not permit land-owning. Thus, the "freedoms" you speak about in referring to the things you can do on your land are really the privileges the state has allowed you. I don't mean to discount these privileges, however. They can be very real and precious when one thinks in terms of the US being a "freer" country than the USSR (though I have thought that there cannot be free "countries" – only free people...a catchy phrase, anyway). I recommend that you try to locate a copy of THE LAST FRONTIERS ON EARTH by Dr. Jon Fisher. In it, he makes the statement, "...the government exerts much control over people by taking advantage of their permanent residence on their real estate. They always know where to find you. If you own real estate, government can control you by threatening to seize it, and there is no way you can effectively defend it." I mentioned the \$1,000 per year because it seemed to me that you were implying that a small tribute is close to being no tribute...freedom...

You can also obtain "freedom" to operate a business if you buy a business license, pay taxes, handle employee deductions, comply with regulations, etc. In contrast to a black market operation, you can conduct business openly from a store located on a street, are "free" to advertise in the newspaper, etc. – and not have to be "sneaking around" as much when you do business. Is the cost of taxes and business license your criterion for deciding how "free" you are?

When I talked to Rayo in 1967 he was expecting an economic collapse within 5 years. That prospect seems remote now, despite the staggering national debt, the weakly secured fiat currencies of the world, and the unnerving possibility of major defaults on huge loans by foreign governments owing money to US banks. An economic collapse could be quickly followed by a totalitarian government, in his view. He wanted a “lifeway” that would be independent of “that society” and its political/economic catastrophes.

My reference to the state using your land to draft you into the army was intended to be a scenario within a possible political circumstance, rather than the current one. To Rayo, being seen by one’s neighbors was exposure to political vulnerability rather than “freedom”. Perhaps he was a paranoid, but it is undoubtedly true that one’s neighbors can be dangerous finks under certain conditions.

A nuclear war (without “nuclear winter”) was also a looming prospect for Rayo. Having mastered the skills of remaining invisible in the woods and being economically self-sufficient he would be as well-prepared as anyone could be against the frantic hysteria of nuclear war. When neighbors come to take your food you begin to regret the “freedom” of having them see you. Moreover, Rayo’s survival skills were designed to be highly “portable” – with a minimum of invested clearing and landscape changes in any particular location.

What Rayo was doing was vitally important to me at that time. I had serious doubts that I could sustain a job or have any kind of ongoing contact with people at all – I feared a “critical mass” of emotional catastrophe. There were times, too, when I found all human contact to be intolerable. I wanted “freedom” from human beings and their destruction of my happiness. I also feared totalitarian and perhaps nuclear catastrophe. I desired to be as absolutely out of the hands of the state as was humanly possible. Your defense of land-owning as against wilderness-vonu, however, seems to boil down to your belief that wilderness-vonu is not even possible – that one must come to terms with the state and accept the privileges it offers – or nothing.

I must admit that I am not the paranoid I once was (still a paranoid, nonetheless). Perhaps you too have outgrown the antiauthoritarian hysteria and horrifying expectations of your youth – to become conservative in your middle years. Still, even if the state is truly benign, I think it is worthwhile to be able to recognize the difference between the freedoms you take for yourself and the privilege (called “freedoms”) granted by the state.

Sincerely,
Roger Kenmore

COMMENTS FOR KENMORE

I hear in your letter, especially your last sentence, the implication that freedom to you means always doing the opposite of what the State wants you to do. It's not so for me. For me, freedom means doing what I want to do, regardless of whether the State approves or not. It follows logically that one who is driven by his own desires will probably sometimes do what the State wants him to do. But he won't be doing it because the State wants him to, & he will often also do other things that the State opposes. By contrast, the person who always automatically refuses to do what the State wants, w/o considering his own desires, is as much driven by the State as the person who always complies with State demands. The truly free person will live as much as he can as if the State didn't exist, & will not concern himself (beyond pragmatic necessity) with whether the State does or doesn't approve of his actions.

You say the property tax I pay is an acknowledgement of the State's power. Yes it is. Of its power, but not of its right to tax me. Any realist must acknowledge the State's power.

As for \$100/year in taxes vs. \$1000/year in taxes, yes I was “implying that a small tribute is closer to being no tribute...freedom.” And I answer in the affirmative of your question: “Is the cost of taxes & business licenses your criterion for deciding how ‘free’ you are?” Indeed, it is, along with freedom of speech & other such rights. It seems obvious to me that one who is faced with only trivially small taxes & regulations is freer than one who must cope with huge, crushing taxes & paralyzing regulations. This isn’t obvious to you? Perhaps the symbolism is important to you. You think paying any tax means accepting the authority of the State. Rayo might agree with you. But I’m too pragmatic to give a damn about symbolic gestures. I pay taxes with the same attitude I would hand over my wallet to an armed robber. I submit to superior power out of pragmatic necessity when I must. No acceptance of State authority implied. So of course, I avoid paying taxes whenever possible w/o the slightest sense of guilt over such “cheating,” because it’s 100% my money, & I owe the State zilch.

You refer to “a possible political circumstance, rather than the current one.” I think it’s foolish to choose your lifestyle based on possible political developments. Instead, I choose how to live based on current, actual conditions. If conditions change, then I would change what I do appropriately.

You mention expectations of economic collapse or nuke war. For 20 years we’ve been hearing the predictions of a collapse next year, or the year after that for sure. It hasn’t happened. Those prophets were wrong. And those who chose otherwise undesirable ways to live on the basis of those predictions (Rayo?) made the wrong choice. Now we see bad signs for the future, national debt, nuke arsenals, etc. But these indications are no worse than we have been seeing for 20 years. So I believe today’s future is not likely to be any worse than yesterday’s future turned out to be. In particular, I believe chances of nuke war between the superpowers is vanishingly remote. As I read it, superpowers are quite content with the status quo where nukes serve them both well as boogeymen, & they will strive to maintain it. Shared world hegemony suits them just fine. So I take my cue from Rayo who says (in another context): “It is not efficient to prepare for, or even to consider, the very-low-probability possibilities” (see page 3 in this issue).

You say: “When neighbors come to take your food, you begin to regret the ‘freedom’ of having them see you.” Since I don’t expect that will ever happen, why should I worry about it?

You say Rayo's survival skills are highly portable with a minimum invested in any particular location. That describes his early years, living in a camper & under plastic in the woods. But his strategy evolved, & last we heard of him, he was digging underground dens, highly committed to a particular location.

Of course wilderness-vonu is possible; Rayo proved that by living it. I say it isn't advisable, compared to landowning, if your main goal is to maximize freedom. But if you just happen to like to live that way, fine, go for it.

PEDESTRIAN NOMADISM

By: Adam

The pedestrian nomad [PN] in a semi-remote area might use his truck, motorbike or burros to stock underground shelter/living quarters. Then he could backpack between these established points plus other points such as good sources of wild foods, hunting & fishing spots, stream & springs, etc. He wouldn't risk being seen too often around one area of the mountains.

What parts of the US have the requirements for a PN existence? Some good choices would be 1) mountains on the Northwest Coast (Cascades), 2) Rocky Mountains from Montana & Idaho down into Wyoming & Northern Utah, 3) Appalachian Mountains from Pennsylvania south to Kentucky & Tennessee, 4) Ozarks & some of the smaller mountains in that area (Arkansas, Missouri, & Oklahoma).

Now let's break some of those areas out for closer inspection. The dry, hot mountain areas of So. California, Arizona, & New Mexico would be better for winter, & the higher, cooler areas in the Rockies would be ideal for summer, if the PN was highway mobile. If not, he would probably just migrate to different elevations or stay put & deal with the heat or cold by "holing up" during extremes & traveling and foraging when practical. However, climactic hots & colds are only relative terms since the Rockies have some fairly warm areas in winter & the southwest has some cool areas during summer. Let's just consider that the PN can't readily base his selection of a range on JUST comfort – remoteness from towns & human habitation is essential.

The Appalachians & Ozarks are old eroded mountains with deep, rich soil & a real abundance of wild plant foods, small animals, & in some areas, good dinner items for non-vegetarians, i.e. turtles, crawdads, woodchucks, & fish. There are plenty of nut & acorn trees. Good springs & small streams are plentiful. For the year-round PN, the bitter cold spells would come in mid-winter but normally last only for a few days at a time. From about early December thru February would be cold weather living time. An underground room would be easier to warm than a cabin or other house.

I don't believe there are as many Bludgies in these mountains as there are out west. Except for the Parks & National Forests (these are not too widespread) the mountains are owned by large timber or coal companies, or other private concerns. These private companies typically do not hire watchmen or rangers & even if they did it would be largely futile. The companies & individuals having "ownership" of these mountains practically never hassle anyone for using "their" forests because they are afraid of being burned out. So if the PN stays away from areas where there is a house with someone living on the land, he will be unmolested. The mountain natives don't pry into other people's business. Leave the mountaineer's stills, women, political ideas, & hound dogs alone & he will leave you alone. He is suspicious of strangers – true, but will steer clear of them if given a chance. Also, some of the "ridge-runners" are themselves living marginal-subsistence lives & might tend to identify with a PN after they got to know him.

The Rocky Mountains are more hostile in climate, sterile & physically challenging than the Appalachians. A PN trained & self-educated in survival & subsistence living could live here, easily through late spring until late fall. Winter would be harder, but I believe the right man, or gal, could do it. The Rockies are thought to be sort of sterile but if you go up into the watered canyons or high elevation you'll find lush vegetation, much of it edible, even algae grows in some of the more sluggish spring branches. Also at high elevation, up around 9000 feet, there is about 50 inches of precipitation per year (usually comes as snow during winter). Up there among the aspen the lush forbs grow waist high & in some places it takes on the appearance of a jungle. Along the rocky faces of cliffs you can find "dribble" springs that are safe for drinking. Many canyons have small streams for cooking & washing water. Of course this general area is tops for big game & there are squirrels & marmots that can be taken with deadfall or snare. There is an acceptably wide variety of greens, roots, berries & shoots that are edible.

I have no 1st-hand knowledge of the Cascades but imagine they are a lusher, wetter version of the interior Rockies.

I see the relatively dry mountains of southern California, Arizona, & New Mexico as suitable wintering grounds except for the fact that parts of these areas, like Colorado, Nevada, & Utah, are much too near the "target & killer zones" that contain nuclear factories, C-B warfare dumps, & possible targets in an all-out war. Since, by the very nature of his life, a PN can live about as well as one place as another, he might as well figure "catastrophe survival" into his plans & live as far away as possible from such places. Of course, the southwest does have some areas somewhat removed from such risks. And these "dry areas" are not as sterile as one might think. While archery deer hunting in the foothills & mountains of southern California I have come upon small springs tucked in at the head of a canyon. Also, there is a richer plant & small animal life than one would gather from a 1st glance.

The back country areas of the US are freer of people (permanent residents) than at any time in the past 150 years. Back then all kinds of hoss-wranglers, gold-seeking varmints, & settlers were cluttering up the mountains. Today, the forest ranger & tourists invade some of the more accessible areas, but the back country is more or less free of people, if you stay clear of hot spots such as recreation lakes & streams accessible by road.

Reply to Adam (by Tom [Rayo]):

Interesting how similar our thoughts are in many ways. We, too, have noted the depopulation of the back country. Some of our squat spots are old farms/homesteads, abandoned 10 to 60 years ago. However I partly disagree with you on location.

For liberators remaining in N. America (north of the horse latitudes) I recommend only regions with a few 100 miles of the Pacific coast. Advantages include: west & generally upwind of nuclear fallout from targets elsewhere; much wilderness with great diversity of terrain, climate & vegetation (more diversity than in the Rockies areas); better access to large cities than comparable wilderness areas elsewhere; proximity to the largest centers of liberational activity (Los Angeles & Frisco-Berkeley).

I presently recommend 2 regions, which I define as:

SISKIYOU region, of S. Oregon & N. Calif; approximately bounded by Pacific Ocean. Coos Bay, Roseberg, Bend, Lakeville, Susanville, Redding, Eureka; about 40,000 square miles; includes not only the Siskiyou Mountains, but portions of the Cascades & Coast Ranges.

CHILCOTIN region, of Central British Columbia; approximately bounded by Pacific Ocean, Prince Rupert, Hazelton, Prince George, Williams Lake, Lilloeet, Powell River; about 70,000 square miles; includes Chilcotin Valley, most of Frazier Plateau, much of the Coast Range including the higher peaks, & many coastal islands.

(Reprinted from PREFORM #10, Aug. 1970, p. 4)

“PIRATE” BROADCASTING ON THE RISE

In the US & countries around the world, 100s of people are operating unlicensed radio stations. Although this phenomena has been occurring for 30 years, it has recently become an enforcement nightmare for the Federal Communications Commission. Faced with severe budget cuts, the FCC would rather pretend these stations do not exist than deal with them. Their strategy lately has been to focus on widely heard “pirate” radio stations & then publicize their actions against them.

The increase in such broadcasting might be attributed to activities of the Association of Clandestine Radio Enthusiasts, or ACE. This 3 year old organization reports on the activities of underground broadcasters & shortwave spy transmissions. ACE takes no position for or against illegal broadcasting, & thus encourages discussion on the subject. But their policy of providing information on these stations & letting people decide for themselves if pirates are a good or bad thing, may have contributed to the increase in underground broadcasting activity.

According to Darren Leno, president of ACE:

“Most underground radio stations feel they are providing an alternative to the corporate-controlled airwaves. People need to be aware that these stations exist. If someone agrees with the pirates that commercial radio in this country stinks, they’ve just found an alternative media & a lot of new friends.”

Most pirate stations operate weekend evenings. In larger cities, especially on the East Coast, pirates can be heard by tuning your AM radio receiver past the very top of the dial, from 1600 to 1630 kHz. FM pirates can also be found operating in the NYC area. Perhaps the easiest stations to hear are the shortwave pirates. They operate anywhere from 7:00pm to 12:00pm Eastern Time between 7400 kHz and 7500 kHz, with a preferred frequency of 7425 kHz. A shortwave receiver is needed to hear these pirates. Shortwave frequencies allow these stations to be heard around the country & often around the world.

ACE published information on when, where, & why these pirates broadcast each month. For more information about this organization & the pirates, send a long self-addressed & stamped envelope to ACE, P.O. Box 452, Moorhead, MN 56560.

ACE also operates a computer message system that can be accessed by anyone with a personal computer & a telephone modem. It is available 24 hours a day at 913-677-1288. Messages can be exchanged with other members & pirate information obtained immediately.

(Adapted from a press release dated Aug. 1985 from ACE)

CLOSET LIBERATION

In *THE CONNECTION*, #106, p. 72, George Kysor challenges me as follows:

“Others (e.g. Jim Stumm) have expressed the opinion that individual freedom can be found within the interstices of government control, i.e., by keeping a low profile, one can get away with lots of illegal actions. I’m sure this ‘closet lib’ tactic has its adherents even in totalitarian societies. Sure, little by little one’s freedoms are lost, but one can always obtain a little more than is currently being officially granted – right on down to complete slavery!”

In reply, I would say that it’s not inevitable that “little by little one’s freedoms are lost.” Rather, as one learns better tactics & gets more systems in place, one’s area of freedom can expand, regardless of what the govt is up to. Also, as increasingly more people engage in “closet lib,” the economic opportunities in the free sub-culture expand (more products offered for sale, more jobs available), & the risk of getting caught declines due to ever increasing safety in numbers.

Apparently this strategy does have its adherents even in totalitarian societies, as Kysor says. E.g. one reads of whole factories being hidden in the boondocks in the Soviet Union. People under totalitarian regimes adopt this strategy because, even there, it works!

We need to remember that govt “works” only because most people voluntarily comply with its edicts most of the time. If govt actually had to use force against most of the population, it could do very little. Carl Watner says (in a review of “The Politics of Nonviolent Action” by Gene Sharp, in THE VOLUNTARYIST, V1, N1, p. 6):

“Since physical compulsion without the cooperation or sanction of the victim is very limited in what I can achieve, state power must come to a standstill as soon as sufficient numbers of people no longer view it as a legitimate institution.”

And Watner quotes these words from Sharp:

“When people refuse their cooperation, withhold their help & persist in their disobedience & defiance, they are denying their opponent the basic human assistance & cooperation which any government or hierarchical system requires. If they do this in sufficient numbers for long enough, that government or hierarchical system will no longer have power.”

Looking at the situation for a more individualistic perspective, Rayo suggested that it might be better if there was a somewhat nasty govt in place, because then freedom-seekers would have to keep up their defenses, practice defiance, stay lean & alert. If, on the other hand, coercion were to fall off to an insignificant level, people would get lazy and complacent. They would lose the habit of resistance. And then, like dodos, they would fall easy victim to the 1st coercer who came crashing & smashing into their dreamy lotus-land.

The conclusion for me is that “closet lib” is the freedom strategy that is most effective right now. If I become aware of something better that really works, I will eagerly jump aboard. But I’m not going to sit around doing nothing to enhance my present freedom, while waiting for some utopian never-never land to come into existence, which may never happen, or not in my lifetime anyway.

from BUFFALO NEWS, March 27, 1991

35-year burial ends for tractor

BUCHAREST, Romania (AP) — A peasant kept a big secret buried in his garden through 35 years of Communist collective agriculture.

Convinced that Communist rule was gone for good, Calin Florea recently unearthed his prized German-made Lanz tractor. He told the daily *Curierul National* newspaper that the engine still ran and that the tractor would be tilling his land in two weeks. He could not find the hood and some other pieces that he entombed separately.

Florea, of the village of Scrioastea, told Communist officials who tried to confiscate the tractor in 1955 that it had been destroyed. He gave them spare parts instead.

HOW TO BURY YOUR GOODS

The Complete Manual of Long-Term Underground Storage

by Eddle the Wire

This is a hardcore book for hardcore individualists who don't trust banks, or anybody else, for that matter.

It tells you in step-by-step detail how to bury any valuables or contraband you might wish to store and conceal, and how to defeat searchers who might try to find your caches.



Contents include:

- What do you have to hide?
- When to bury it so you won't be seen
- Where to bury it so it can't be found
- How to bury it without leaving telltale traces
- How to pack burial containers — and where to get them
- How to beat metal detectors
- How to outfox search teams
- How to retrieve your burial containers
- Protecting against moisture
- Burial containers: Built and bought
- Above-ground caches
- Information security
- And more, including source listings for Cosmoline and other hard-to-find items.

How To Bury Your Goods is the single finest book ever written on methods of long-term underground storage. ***Bury it now and dig it deep!***

1987, 5 1/4 x 8 1/4, 72 pp, Illustrated, soft cover.

HOW TO BURY YOUR GOODS: \$6.95
(ORDER NUMBER 10049)

Order from Loompanics Unltd, POB 1197,
Port Townsend, WA 98368. Add \$3 per order
for postage & handling.

COMMENTS ON “HOW TO BURY YOUR GOODS”

This booklet is generally good & thorough, but I'd like to add a couple comments based on my own experience. On p. 19 Eddie briefly discusses when to bury, day or night. I don't like night burial.

It's too hard to see, & if someone happens to spot you wandering around with a flashlight (which can be seen a long way off), it looks very suspicious. The day & time I prefer for burying & digging up my stash is Sunday morning at dawn. This is when you are less likely to find anyone else around. And I always like to have a cover story ready, just in case. Here are 2 good ones: you could say you are foraging for wild foods, or you could say you are a birdwatcher (wear binoculars around your neck). You should try to have a harmless reason for being where you are. Of course, this will only be useful if someone comes upon you while you are walking; it won't help if he finds you digging.

On p. 16 Eddie tells how to triangulate the burial point from 2 fixed landmarks. I know of 2 other ways to do it, one worse, the other one better. I've buried gold & silver coins in unmarked places for a number of years. I triangulated my 1st cache by taking tape measurements of distances & compass readings for angles from 4 permanent features (concrete bridge abutments). Only 2 landmarks are really needed; 3 & 4 were added for redundancy.

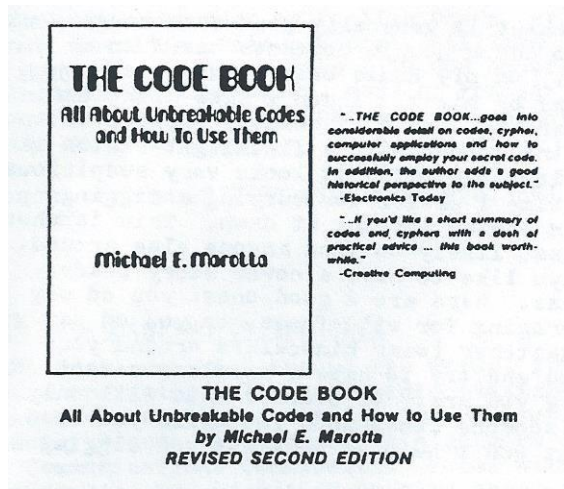
When I want to dig up, I found that I could close the 4 measurements to only within 2 feet. So I picked a spot in the middle of that 2 foot circle & dug there, but I didn't hit my can of coins, so I started enlarging the hole in a circular search pattern. I did find the can quite near, but it was slow, messy, & made me nervous.

For my next cache I devised a different method which is quick, easy, & very accurate. This is the method I recommend: Pick 4 permanent landmarks roughly at the corners of an irregular rectangle. In this method you do need 4. Stretch 2 ropes or strings tightly between the opposite corners so they cross like diagonals.

This will determine a unique spot in the center where the ropes cross, & that's where you bury your cache. There are no measurements to write down or remember. Just remember your 4 landmarks, & dig where they cross. When I dig up a cache using this method, it only takes a minute to stretch the ropes & locate the spot. And I hit it dead-on 1st try.

HIDE YOUR MESSAGE

If you have information you'd like to keep hidden, you should look into the use of codes & ciphers. You can find plenty of books about code making & breaking, but I know of only one book that's a real how-to-do-it manual. It's "The Code Book" by Michael E. Marotta, sold by Loompanics Unlimited.



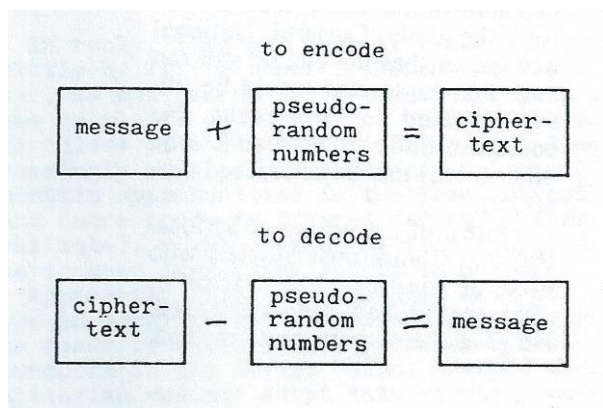
This book has all kinds of interesting information about codes & ciphers, but the part I found most useful to me was the short computer programs on pages 39 to 43. Starting with these programs, & using a tiny home computer (Timex Sinclair ZX81), I developed a program to encipher & decipher messages using pseudo-random numbers. (And if it can be done with this tiny computer, I should think it can be done with any computer.) Marotta doesn't provide a complete enciphering program for a home computer, & I'm not going to reveal all details of mine either. Any such publication would compromise its usefulness. But most people who can do a little programming should be able to put together a workable program. No doubt yours will differ somewhat from mine, & that's all the better. I'll give you some clues for starters.

The external mechanics of my program go like this: I enter the encoding program, put in any password I choose in a suitable format, then enter my message. Hit RUN & the computer prints out the ciphertext (the "coded" message). Decoding a message goes the same way in reverse: I enter the decoding program which is just a little different from the encoding program, enter the same message, enter the ciphertext, hit RUN, & the computer prints out the decoded message so it can be read directly.

With a more powerful computer than this one (bigger memory, & more input/output accessories) all this could be reduced to just a few keystrokes, & enciphered messages could be transmitted over the phone, or could be physically transported on tape or disk from sender to receiver. Someday, if I can ever afford the equipment, I'd like to put my mailing list on a disk in enciphered form. Then, to run off mailing labels, I'd decipher the addresses & print them out directly. But if some unauthorized person got hold of my mailing list disk, he'd only be able to read gibberish out of it. It would be necessary to prevent anyone from bringing together the 3 pieces of the puzzle, i.e. the ciphertext (encoded mailing list), the program, & the password. This would be a bit difficult, but it should be do-able. The hard part is to make my system easy for me to use, but difficult (ideally impossible) for anyone else to break into

I'll mention just this hint to how my program works: The program generates a particular list of pseudo-random numbers, a different list for each password. To encode, the message is "added" to these pseudo-random numbers, 1st symbol to 1st number, 2nd symbol 2nd number, etc. & that yields the ciphertext. This "adding" can be any mathematical function you want to use, as long as it has an inverse function that takes you back uniquely to the original symbol.

Decoding runs the same way in reverse: Generate the same list of pseudo-random numbers using the same password. Then "subtract" each pseudo-random number from the corresponding ciphertext symbol to get the original message. "Subtract" means: apply the inverse of the encoding function.



This program encodes letters, numbers, & punctuation marks. Here's a sample coded message to show you what the ciphertext looks like:

Rznmv vmchz bdkvt beffe mmcnvk ztsft jmusb zlqen psksq lcjin pdizc mim

LETTER FROM ROGER KENMORE (SEPT. 1985)

Dear Jim,

I am writing in response to your comment in LIVING FREE #31:

“I think I’m a lot freer on my rural acreage than Rayo was in his hideout. Sure I pay \$100/year in taxes, but after that I can do as I please. That costs me less than all this sneaking around costs Rayo.”

You could also say that you spent two years in the US Army, but after that you can do as much as you please. Modern statism, with its claim of preserving a “free society”, will allow you to “do as you please” after you have complied with its regulations and paid its taxes. But as you yourself make clear (in “Is Self-Liberation Impossible?”, RANDOM WRITINGS #2), “sneaking around” is the best means of achieving more freedom in a society dominated by a State. You fault Rayo for bearing too high a cost for too little a benefit. But you forget that his values are not necessarily your values. Perhaps his valuation of freedom was higher and his disvaluation of “sneaking around” was lower than yours.

What sort of “freedom” do you get on your rural acreage for your \$100 per year taxes? How free would you be at \$1,000 per year? How free would you be if the state took over your land to build a road or used your deed as a means to find you to send you into the Army? If by “freedom” you really mean “solitude”, why not say so (it is a legitimate enough desire)?

I have often thought that the notion of “freedom” is closely connected to “pride”. To that extent, the power of another (including the state) can be opposed by either self-liberation or power. Rayo sought to live without needing a driver’s license or vehicle registration. You have given up this “freedom” and consider it a benefit worth the costs to be able to drive on government roads with little fear of harassment, even though you know the government has you by the balls. It is hard to rationalize the benefits of not having a vehicle, owning land or collecting a taxable income aside from the pride of knowing one is not at the mercy and bidding of the state.

Unless, of course, one is running from the law because of a specific crime...or one has nightmares of a totalitarian future...or one sees oneself as pioneering a new life-style. How do you rationalize your own long-term efforts and discomforts to minimize your taxable income so as to give as little money as possible to the government? As if, in this society of millions, your income tax could make any palpable difference to the state.

Sincerely,
Roger Kenmore

RETURN COMMENTS FOR ROGER KENMORE FROM JIM STUMM (1985)

Here are some of the things I’m free to do on my rural acreage that a wilderness vonuan is not free to do: Of greatest importance, I can be seen on my land by neighbors, or even by govt officials, w/o the fear of bad consequences, whereas a vonuan must avoid being seen by anyone, as Rayo makes quite clear. Then, I can openly plant gardens, trees, bushes, while the vonuan can only attempt “crypto-culture” trying to hide all signs of cultivation. I can cut down any trees I want, while the vonuan must select trees to cut at wide intervals far from his building site. I can cut trails & clearings & make any changes in the landscape that I please while the vonuan must spend his time wiping out signs of trails, etc.

Of course, I wdnt [wouldn't] be any freer if I paid \$1000/yr in property taxes rather than \$100/yr. It's not a question of buying freedom in proportion to tax \$ spent, but rather a yes/no situation, to be in legal possession of the property or not.

You ask how free I wd [would] be if the state took over my land for a road. The probability of that happening to any given landowner is lo, about like being struck by lightning. But the same question cd [could] be put to a troglodyte vonuan. How free wd [would] Rayo be if he spent a couple years building an underground home on public land & then the state cut a road thru nearby? Actually, a landowner has the advantage becuz if the new road bypassed his property by only a few yards, he cd [could] still remain, but if a new road was cut thru even a mile away from Rayo's remote den, he wd [would] probably feel compelled to abandon it.

You ask what if the state used my deed to find me to send me into the army. I hvnt [haven't] heard of draft boards searching property deeds to find draft evaders. Anyway, I'm not at risk from the draft. If I were, I wd [would] probably use an alias & lease some acreage from a farmer rather than buy it. Still, there are ways to buy land & still keep your name off the records. You cd [could] create false ID in your new name. Then again, I don't recall being asked to prove my identity when I bought my land. I suppose I cd [could] have used any name I wanted, as long as I cd [could] receive mail in that name.

Other ways are to set up a corporation, perhaps offshore, & buy land in the name of the corp. Or you might make a deal with an organization that you have no connection with, eg for-profit corp., or a non-profit, or a church, by which they buy land you select, with \$ you "loan" to them, then they lease it back to you for as long as you live. At your death it reverts to them; that's their pay-off. (A non-profit or church may be exempt from paying property taxes, but playing that game may be pushing your luck.)

As for really meaning "solitude" when I say "freedom," that charge applies to Rayo more than to me. I have had visitors at my land & I didn't blindfold them or swear them to secrecy. It's no concern to me if they tell others about my property. Rayo, on the other hand, is notoriously secretive about his homesite. So which of us is really pursuing solitude?

Lowering my income taxes isn't the only reason for my lo [low] income lifestyle. I also want to be employed only about 20 hours a week so I have time for other things. And I found I didn't like the pressures to conform imposed on me by employers when I was in management (as manager of a checking account department in a bank). Now, as a janitor, I find that mostly nobody pays attention to me. The main thing is, I pursue my own values, which are somewhat different from yours or Rayo's. I mention quite often that we all have different subjective values. Rayo, however, seems to have never realized that. He often says or implies that people who don't adopt his wilderness vonuan lifestyle must be not truly committed to freedom, not realizing that other people may want to be free to different things which cannot easily be done in the woods, or not easily w/o owning one's on land.

Sure you can scrupulously obey all laws & pay all taxes & govt wd [would] then probably not harass you. But LIVING FREE is edited for people for whom that "solution" to the freedom-problem is intolerable. My argument for landowning is not just advocacy of that solution. Rather, I see landowning as a special case where costs can be so lo & benefits so hi that avoiding it makes no sense. Eg, I get 2 tax bills a year in the mail totaling about \$100. I pay them by mail. That's all the contact I have ever had with govt as a landowner since I bought my land. The county knows nothing about me except name & address, & they have no reason to inquire. I also paid one time \$2500 for 6 acres, which I wd [would] recover more or less if I sell the land. That's all my costs for which I get all the benefits alluded to above.

You can make a stronger case against legally driving a motor vehicle on govt roads becuz [because] that costs much more than owning land costs me. My (mandatory) car insurance alone costs more than my property taxes. And a driver is at risk of being stopped & harassed by cops every moment that he is driving, whereas the landowners is at much less risk of being harassed while he is at home on his land. On the contrary, it is the vonuan hiding out in the national forest who is constantly at risk of being harassed by forest bludg. So who is really freer?

NOTE FROM ROGUE ABOUT VONU (March 87)

I read “Vonuu” and “How To Start Your Own Country” & neither sounded plausible. Vonuu was a bit of a disappointment. The articles weren’t very well developed. What would you do about medical problems if you are living in the woods for example? Even if you could get to a hospital, you couldn’t afford it. Why take such drastic measures to get away from the state? (You could buy land & do the same thing, as long as you kept a low profile.) You still have to pay taxes on your paychecks, keep your vehicle registration & license up to date. The benefits of sitting out in the woods by yourself (or even with a freemate) seem minimal, unless you don’t like people. I think Rayo may have simply been justifying his need to live alone. The book was more a tribute to the man than a real guide to vonuu. Why don’t you write something better Jim? It seems that you are the most qualified & maybe you would be in a better position to address some of the more obvious problems due to planning it out as a book instead of a collection of articles.

“How To Start Your Own Country” was much better. Filthy [Erwin S. Strauss] explored far more possibilities for freedom & took more of the hazards into account. I wouldn’t want to go for it though, seems that the cost is too high. I asked Filthy about starting your own state. Seems feasible, though not nearly as much as a Freetown. Freetown sounds wonderful! I have heard only 2 real arguments against Freetown. One is that it would attract criminals, & the other is that the diverse interests would undermine any cohesiveness. It would probably be a real lively place.

-Rogue

COMMENTS FOR ROGUE FROM JIM STUMM

I agree with a lot of what you say about vonu. I’ve expressed similar criticisms myself. But let me say a few words here in defense. Remember that Rayo did live a wilderness vonu lifestyle from 1968 to 74 (& beyond?), so he’s not just some impractical dreamer.

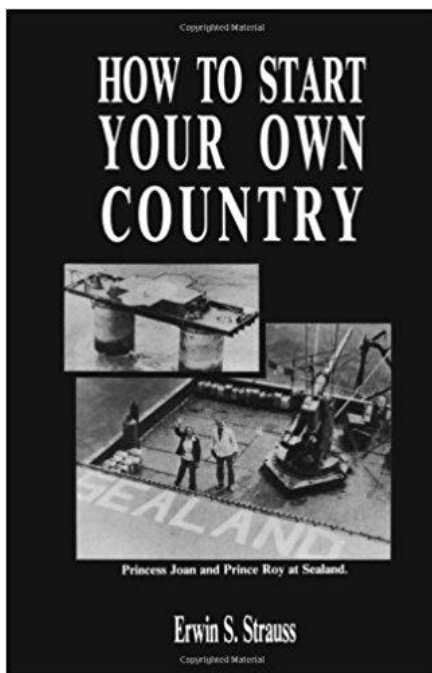
As for medical care, some people who are young & healthy, see this as being of little importance. Maybe they get first-aid books like “How To Be Your Own Wilderness Doctor” by Bradford Angier & rely on self-medication. Actually, someone living in the woods in USA, if he has a vehicle, may be as close to medical care as any rural resident. It’s not like he’s in a log cabin in the high arctic, or on a small sailboat in mid-ocean, tho there are people in such places too. Is there lifestyle implausible? Cutting oneself off from medical care is a calculated risk some people are willing to take.

A vonuan need not necessarily be impoverished. He might have money from savings, or income from investment, or from some location-independent occupation (eg writing) that he works on at his wilderness home. (Tristan Jones mentions writing some stories to sell while crossing the ocean in a one-man sailboat.) The vonuan might even carry medical insurance if he can afford it, why not? On the other hand, just becuz someone lives in a city doesn’t guarantee that he can afford medical care.

I wd [would] say that Rayo was mostly describing, not justifying, the lifestyle that appealed to him. His main error was to assume that some one way of life was best for everyone. You seem to make the same mistake, suggesting that buying a remote homestead is the one best way. By contrast, the point that I always stress is that people differ. There is no one best way for everyone. Find the one that suits you best & do that & never mind if other people prefer to live differently.

Why don't I write a better book? I've written some books & I find that I don't much like doing it. It takes too long. The writing changes from pleasure into chain-gang drudgery before I finish. My mind flits from one thing to another & my attention span is better suited to short articles & replies. Besides, I don't have all the answers either, hardly any answers really. I publish what few hints I can come up with & hope they are of some use. That's about all I can do.

"Start Your Own Country:" The book accurately reports on all these projects, but it's not really a "how-to-do-it" blueprint. That's a commercial title meant to attract sales. Remember that all these New Countries have failed, except Sealand, which exists at the sufferance of the British Govt. The unsolved problem for a new country is: how can you defend your country against an existing govt that tries to shut you down? If you find a solution, the same strategy or technology would probably work to defend a person or a family against oppressive govt, so that you won't need a new country.



Freetown will certainly appeal to victimless “criminals” who want to live their lives from govt interference. That’s who Freetown is for. But real criminals (coercers) will be making a big mistake if they come to Freetown, where there would be no gun control & intense support for self-defense & private property. Freetowners would be armed & dangerous to coercers. Freetown juries would be hanging juries to coercers. I believe the life of a coercer in Freetown would be brutal, nasty, & short. Better for them to head for some place like NYC, populated with disarmed, submissive whimps, & the jackals they attract to prey on them.

Cohesiveness is of no value to me. I value tolerant diversity. If you want to live where all your neighbors are just like you, find yourself some ticky-tacky suburban subdivision. Freetown is not for you. Freetown is for real freedom-lovers, not for bullshit freedom-talkers.

(Freetown has been discussed at length in RANDOM WRITINGS. Request free list of contents of back issues. Write to: Box 29, Hiler Branch, Buffalo, NY 14223.)

SECURE COMMUNICATION COMMENTS

Here are further thoughts on the subject introduced in LF39, p. 1, with reference to the letter from W.J. Tarplee in Australia, published in LF40 p. 6.

As the Schuytens tell us in their n/1 [no idea?] FAMILIES – NATURALLY, the 1st page of which is reprinted in this issue, in USA Govt entrapment, publishing fake n/1's, placing phony ads, etc. is being done. This is an ominous new tactic. One can easily imagine Govt agents expanding their horizons & seeking to entrap other groups such as anarchists, survivalists, or others slightly outside the mainstream. We once had a President who was called Tricky Dick. Now the entire Govt is getting increasingly tricky, quite a change from the limited constitutional republic we once had. This poisoning of the well of personal trust with official treacherous deceit can only add to the widespread sense of alienation which lies at the bottom of so much violent behavior.

At the moment, computer bulletin boards do offer a lot of freedom, but we are already hearing the kind of grumbling from politicians & bureaucrats that usually precedes regulation & repression. The pretext is that they suspect, or maybe only luridly imagine (the sexually repressed do have such a vivid fantasy life), that some people are sending sexy messages to others via computer. CBB's are vulnerable because the operator has to publish his phone number & that allows Govt agents to trace his physical location. We can probably expect legislation that holds the CBB operator responsible for what appears on his system. He'll be deemed "illegal" (the 7 dirty words?) or risk some penalties, probably fines & confiscation of equipment. The CBB operator is as vulnerable as a n/1 publisher, so CBB's don't provide the desired invulnerable solution to the communications problem.

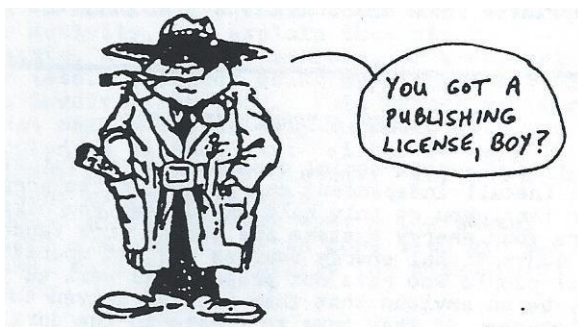
Since writing in LF39 that I believed one's physical location could be traced from a phone number alone, I've seen that confirmed by a story that appeared in the newspaper. A local man, accused of a felony, flit out for parts unknown (he went to Texas). Cops had no idea where he was, until the fugitive tried to contact a friend in this area. He wrote this friend a letter, no return address on it, & he had it forwarded from Michigan, so the postmark was misleading. But he included in it his local Texas phone number & asked his friend to call. The police got the letter & used the phone number to go right to this guy's house in Texas. When the police showed up at his door, the fugitive killed himself.

So, if govt agents are looking for you, publishing your phone number is as revealing as publishing your home address. If you must contact someone, you should phone him; don't ask him to phone you. You might risk a brief phone call, not from your home phone. Even that might be traced. I still don't know how long it takes to trace a long distance phone call.

Here are a few more related ideas & details: If security is a concern, don't put a return address on letters you mail. If the time comes when the post office refuses to deliver mail w/o return addresses, put a phony return address on it that won't lead to you. If your correspondent knows you, don't put your address inside the letter either. They can' find it if it ain't there. In USA Govt agents do a kind of surveillance they call "mail cover." That means they look at all the mail going to the person they are investigating (with complete cooperation of the post office), & write down all return addresses, & check out everyone whose name they gather that way. They claim they don't open the letters, but CIA has ways to open & reseal letters so you'll never know it was done. Loompanics sells books that explain how they do it. If your letters have obviously been opened, they want you to know about it. They're probably trying to intimidate you.

If you're sending a message that can be turned against you, you should be aware that fingerprints can be lifted off of letters that have been sent thru the sheet of paper from the middle of the stack. Handwriting on a letter, of course, can be matched with a sample known to be yours. A typewritten message, too, can be matched with a particular typewriter, if the machine can be found & linked to you, because every machine produces print with unique differences. That's why ransom notes are often constructed from letters cut from the newspaper. I wonder if there's a way to produce a totally untraceable message using a public-access photocopy machine?

A couple notes for a n/1 publisher: If the police raid your home/office, they'll be most eager to find your mailing list. I wonder what they would do if the only names & addresses they find have been put into code on a personal computer? (See LF24 p. 2.) I suppose they'd try to "persuade" you to decode it for them. And if you steadfastly refuse? Would they turn it over to the NSA, or whatever spook agency it is that breaks codes?



Another idea is that, in anticipation of a possible raid, a n/1 publisher could confine his entire operation to a secret room whose very existence is unknown to any other person. The hope would be that if the bludg break in, they won't find the room & won't find any evidence of publishing at all. An aboveground room would be hard to conceal because someone with a sharp eye walking thru the other rooms might notice there is an unaccountably missing room-sized volume of space.

The easiest room to conceal, though hardest to construct, would be a secret cellar, whose existence might never even be suspected. Such a room has other uses too, e.g. as a storage place for valuables secure from burglars. Once chapter of my book “Last Frontiers...” goes into this subject in more detail.

I must add in conclusion that we here at LF (that’s me & all the muses) don’t do any of this. We run an operation that’s open for anyone to see. We don’t give out names & addresses normally, but I can’t promise that I’ll endure much suffering (if it comes to that) to protect your anonymity, so act accordingly. (Mail forwarding services may be of some use.) Of course, I have no reason to think govt agents have any particular interest in LF – not yet anyway. But tomorrow...?

VOICE MAIL

By: Brick Pillow

If you’re urban vonuing, here’s what you should be doing: Open the yellow pages to “voice mail,” or “answering services, automatic.” For between \$10 & \$15 per month, these companies will rent you a private phone number, where people can call & leave messages with the company’s machine.



You can open a voice mailbox by phone. Call the company & say you're John Smith. You're new in town, & you don't have a permanent address yet. Pay the year in advance, so they won't need your address anyway. Some companies charge you for every message received; avoid them & call their competitors. For a higher price, some companies will rent you a pager that beeps whenever you get a message (perfect for drug dealers, but I don't need it).

At your convenience, & from any touch-tone phone, you can call your voice mail number, key in your code, & hear your messages. It's exactly like an answering machine, without the machine.

It's cheap, it's secure, it works, & it's much more difficult to trace than your home phone. No paranoiac should be without it.

(Reprinted from THE CONNECTION 177, p. 11, Oct. 91)

SECURE ALTERNATIVE ENERGY

If you expect social disorder in the future & you install independent energy devices to prepare for that, you go only half way unless you make sure your energy systems are secure from vandalism. If conventional energy sources are not operating, some people who have not prepared as well as you may be so envious that they will be driven to sabotage. If they have to freeze in the dark, they may say, then they'll see to it that you will too. A prudent person should be prepared to defend his property, of course, but besides that you can avoid a lot of problems by designing your alternative energy devices so that they are relatively invulnerable to vandalism. Here are some suggestions:

Solar – Stones easily break glass. That's one good reason for using fiberglass for your glazing instead: Ultraviolet-resistant fiberglass made for greenhouses is supposed to have a 20 year life. Solar collectors at ground level are more at-risk than collectors high up on a roof. Concrete is good stuff to use in solar energy devices. It provides thermal mass, lets heat flow thru rather easily, & is hard to break. Burying pipes or tubing in concrete makes an almost indestructible solar collector. Also, concrete or stones or masonry make the least vulnerable heat storage devices. Vandals can put holes in tanks of water, but they can't do much to stones. Generally, passive solar devices are less easily disabled than active because there are no pumps & control mechanisms to put out of commission.

Wind energy – Of greatest concern is the tower. Towers assembled from girders & those made from utility poles are easy to climb. A guyed tower held up by cables is especially in danger. Cut 1 or 2 cables with a bolt cutter & down it comes. My preference in towers is a single large diameter pipe (e.g. 3 foot diameter): hard to climb, hard to damage. A free standing tower made from girders can be made less easily climbable by enclosing the bottom 30 feet or so with smooth walls. This space could be used as a storage shed. Vandals would at least have to get a ladder before they could get up into the tower.

Wind energy systems will usually be highly visible (therefore vulnerable) because the tower stands high above all obstructions. Photovoltaic (solar cell) panels are much more secure if mounted on a roof or other high place. They are also long lasting (50 years life maybe), but are still expensive, though prices are coming down.

A small hydroelectric system can also be made very secure because the whole thing can be put underground. Your stream can be made to disappear underground among some rocks (actually it flows into a buried pipe). Later it would reappear lower down as a “spring.” In between it would run through your hydropower system & you’d carry off the juice to where you use it through underground cables.

Be security minded.

LETTER FROM VON HENRY (Jan. 88)

Ann Bardsley's article (LF #41) reminded me of Robert A. Heinlein's statement: "An armed society is a polite society."

The comments on secure communications (LFs 39 & 42) make me laugh. Face it, if the bludgs want you, they'll get you. The only way to avoid getting got is to keep quiet, communicate with no one, or crawl into a hole & pull the hole in after you.

The most a person who wishes to speak his mind or communicate with like-minded others can do is to speak in generalities & make no offensive or controversial statements until you know & trust the person or persons you're talking to (& that's a risk, considering the use of deep-cover agents, informants, or "public-minded good citizens" who'll "do their civic duty" by turning you in.)

We have 2 alternatives: We can keep our thoughts to ourselves & live in isolation, or take a chance & communicate with others. There are ways to lessen the risks (write or talk in generalities & avoid controversy, the use of pseudonyms, mail drops or mail forwarding services, meeting in fairly crowded public places such as malls or fast-food restaurants, the use of public phones from places with multiple phones in the same place, the use of rented typewriters, etc.), but there will always be a degree of risk. Given the alternative of isolation & loneliness, I'll take the risk.

COMMENTS ON COMMUNICATIONS FOR VON HENRY

There's a difference between one-way & 2-way communication. If one-way communication is all you want, if you only want to broadcast your extreme opinions or your manifesto & you don't need a reply, that can be done with very little risk, no matter how much the Authorities may object to what you say. One way to do it is to Xerox many copies of your broadside & post it on trees, telephone poles, & walls. The only risk is if you're caught in the act of putting them up. Once that's done, assuming you haven't put your name & address on it, you're home free & quite safe.

Another way is through the mail. Mail out copies of your manifesto with no name & address on it, or none that can be traced to you at any rate. Drop addressed, stamped, & sealed envelopes anonymously into any mailbox in a big city. The only ID on it will be the postmark, which won't narrow it down enough to lead to you. That seems completely safe; no risk at all that I can see.

The problems comes when you want 2-way communication, so your readers can reply or send you money. That requires that you open some kind of channel communication leading back to you. In principle, if a bludg stumbles across your message, he can follow that channel back to you. You can make the channel complicated by using mail drops, phony names & such. That reduces the risk, but will never eliminate it entirely. (If someone at the mail drop knows your real name & address, or the next stop of your message route, don't expect him to go to jail, or to endure torture if it comes to that, w/o revealing all that he knows.)

What can you realistically hope to do is to increase the cost to the bludg of tracing back through your communication channel to find you. Perhaps you can make the cost higher than the bludg will want to pay, if you don't seem to be a very big threat to him. But the cost to you is increased complexity, difficult with your mail, & cost to you, & even then I don't see any way you can make 2-way communication really risk-free.

BYE SPY: TIPS FOR STAYING FREE AND EFFECTIVE

By: Frieda Linkbetter, 1991

The U.S. is now the leading police state, imprisoning a larger fraction of its population than does any other nation. As more and more activities are targeted, many people feel their only choices are slavish conformity or paralyzing paranoia. However, my compatriots and I accomplish most of what we want, in relative safety. We do so by applying three rules:

Seem small and unimportant.

Trust only those closely involved with you.

Minimize time in dangerous situations. These rules derive from the economics of espionage and apply to any society, regardless of the political system. The various police agencies might like you to believe that their agents watch every move, listen to every conversation, and study every letter. But they can't. Though their resources may be large, the world is much larger. They can pay close attention to relatively few. They must choose. They will choose you only if you are an easy target or if they consider you or your group especially important. Which brings me back to rule 1: seem small and unimportant.

Keeping groups small and numerous, or thoroughly decentralized, not only increases your safety, but by “cluttering the field” reduces everyone’s risks.

Who are important in the eyes of inquisitors? That will vary from agency to agency and year to year. I have no inside knowledge, and if I did, it would soon be out of date. But in general, any activity or group will be considered important if it seems to threaten the established order or any powerful special-interest bloc, and if it is sizable and growing. Such a group will be infiltrated, and either redirected until no longer a threat, or sabotaged or suppressed. Whether or not an activity is explicitly illegal does not matter very much, because thousands of vague laws grant police broad powers.

The announced reason for suppression may not be the chief reason. Thus marijuana is outlawed, not so much to safeguard health or temperament (most medical researchers believe, as do I, that marijuana is no more harmful than tobacco, alcohol and many prescription drugs), but to prevent a plant easily grown in backyards from competing with established substances. Not surprisingly, the legal-drug industry lobbies strongly for suppression of marijuana and other illegal drugs.

In the coming decade, the activities targeted will probably include low-cost ways of living. Requiring less income, they reduce tax collections and threaten all who have grown dependent on Uncle Sapsucker. Back in the 70’s, there was more redirection (or co-option) than prosecution: the mass media publicized a few fashionable “alternatives” (such as \$100,000 “homesteads”) and some self-reliance trivia (such as marking your own handkerchiefs), while largely ignoring options offering big savings. But in the 90’s, with fewer people affluent, redirection may not suffice. If it doesn’t, expect overt attacks.

What size groups will be targeted? Looking at the affordable number of spies, versus the likely number of targets, I would guess that any disliked group which has more than 20 full-time members or more than 2000 fans, will probably be infiltrated.

Individuals will be watched closely if they lead targeted organizations or otherwise stand out. Lesser groups and individuals will be monitored if they can be easily; otherwise ignored.

Distinguishing between infiltration and monitoring: An “infiltrator” is someone who devotes much time to penetrating one specific group or activity. A “monitor” is someone who attempts to track a number of groups or individuals without devoting much time to anyone. (There are other types of agents, such as provocateurs and saboteurs but they are easier to spot.)

A large part of monitoring is collecting and correlating information publicly available. But making sense of the data and weeding out disinformation usually requires reports from persons on the scene. (During World War II, I read the English and allies kept the Germans guessing where on the coast they would land, by using radio transmissions to simulate non-existing forces. The Germans did not have enough reliable spies within England to determine which forces were real.)

On-the-scene monitors are recruited mostly from: (1) former police and military officers; (2) law violators who become spies to gain police tolerance or suspended sentences. Most monitors are single men, or, if they have families, do not involve them. Most are “good mixers” able to fraternize with a variety of people. But a monitor could be of any sex, age, family, personality, etc.

The one trait all monitors possess (as long as they remain monitors rather than infiltrators) is an unwillingness to devote much time to one target. A monitor may claim to be very interested in your activity, but explain that other commitments, a lack of resources, or a craving for variety (etc.) preclude doing much right now or staying involved for long. This brings me to rule 2: Trust only those closely involved with you.

Looked at another way: either be very close to someone, or else very distant. Try not to mess with mister or ms in-between.

Looked at yet another way: a few steady companions are usually worth more than are many occasional friends, especially for disapproved activities.

Rule 2 weeds out monitors, because monitors cannot devote much time to you, provided you seem small and unimportant (rule 1 again). Rule 2 also weeds out dilitants [sic] and spectators who are usually a waste of time and who themselves may be targets for monitoring, especially if they are gossipy.

“Involved” ‘or “close” means, we work together much of the time or share a large part of our lives. We may not be in love or be very similar, but we respect each other and are able to tolerate differences. The bottom line is: we are very useful to each other. Examples include not only broadly-compatible spouses and living companions, but also exceptionally close (by Anglo-American standards) sisters and brothers, other relatives, comrades and business associates.

Those with close friendships forged and tested since childhood, enjoy a head start. Ethnic groups which foster close friendships, have dominated many illicit activities, from medieval money-lending, to prohibition-era bootlegging and present-day drug dealing. But lacking such a background also has advantages because it forces you to think, rather than just relying on custom and habit.

Comfortably distant (for me) are: the readers of this article; a clerk at a specialty store where I shop once a year; a fellow airline passenger with whom I can chat about the weather.

Uncomfortable, in-between relationships would include a dependent child who lives with me but attends public school or otherwise spends much time with outsiders; a “friend” who wants to meet and talk occasionally but not do much else together.

Without limiting myself to existing companions, I cannot avoid in-between relationships entirely. But I minimize them by developing new relationships rapidly and by ending unproductive ones promptly and completely. I.e.: Either come in or go out. Don’t loiter in the doorway.

Rather than take systematic precautions, some persons rely just on their feelings about others. For me, that is not adequate. Consider: Women in general and sex workers in particular are noted for intuition. Yet vice cops fool many sex workers.

In my experience most monitors can be spotted, partly because they are spread thin and cannot devote much time to one target. (E.g., one acquaintance professed great interest in my work, yet showed a poor understanding of information about it readily available to him.) However, trying to deduce motive is usually unproductive because you can’t be sure. Better to simply stay away from those not actively participating.

Unlike monitors, infiltrators may be impossible to spot. A top-notch one may be hired and trained to penetrate one specific group or activity, and may devote years to gaining trust (I have read; I have no first-hand experience because I avoid groups likely to be infiltrated). Infiltration is stressful because the spy must act convincingly, day after day, month after month, yet remain loyal to his employer. A few spies turn; more edit their reports to protect their new friends; some develop psychological problems. Some spies are found out and expelled, suffer fatal “accidents”, or are supplied by the group with misinformation to feed to the spy’s employer. But intelligence agencies expect losses and lapses. Against an important target, they may send several agents unaware of each other, and cross-check reports. No way can a targeted group prevent infiltration and still function well. But, because deep-cover agents are costly, relatively few groups can be infiltrated.

This brings me once again to rule 1: Seem small and unimportant. I say “seem” because, what matters is not how much impact your work actually has, but what your enemies believe.

Putting rule 1 another way: be decentralized. A movement consisting of many small, autonomous groups, may often duplicate effort or work at cross purposes, but even so, will usually be more durable and effective than one large organization, especially in a hostile environment.

A group’s optimum size will depend on the activity, but seldom will exceed a dozen near-full-time members. If larger, advantages of scale and specialization may be lost in higher overhead, even if the group should escape infiltration.

Finally I come to rule 3: Minimize time in dangerous situations. With police, you are in danger anywhere you can be easily watched or bugged or where frequent or prolonged visits might arouse anyone’s suspicion. Though any place within sight or sound of outsiders is risky, some situations are worse than others. You are the best judge of which are the riskiest for you.

Advice to dress and act inconspicuously, is well and good. But no matter how careful you are – accidents happen! I’ve had very few encounters with police, which I attribute, not to great ability at blending in, but to my spending little time where police are common.

Most places frequented by police are dangerous in other ways as well, the prime example being highways. (One survivalist seriously injured himself in a wreck while driving hundreds of miles to attend a survival workshop.)

In summary, you are most likely to remain free and effective if you: seem small and unimportant; trust only those closely involved with you; minimize time in dangerous situations.

MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS

NOTE FROM J.M. ON SECURE MAIL

Manila envelopes should not be relied on to protect your correspondence from postal inspection. If you spray Freon (available in small cans for use in electronics repair from any Radio Shack or similar store) on them, they temporarily turn as clear as glass! Believe me, I've tested this. That's why I use the security envelopes with the pattern back printed on them. If they Freon those, all they see is the pretty pattern. I've tested that too.

COMMENTS FOR J.M.

Interesting. But then I don't consider anything that I mail to be secure. I figure, if the govt wants to open it & read it & perhaps photocopy it, they will. They probably have ways of opening letters & then resealing them that are completely invisible, if they don't want you to know about it. If you see that your mail has been tampered with, perhaps they want you to know, to intimidate you. Or maybe they just don't care. Private carriers like UPS are not much better since they cooperate very readily with govt.

For greater security, one could send a message in code. There are many ways this can be done. Rearranging letters is one way, which could be done easily using computers to encode & decode. Mail a coded message on a floppy disk perhaps, or better yet, send it over the phone, & avoid mail altogether. Written messages & diagrams & photos could be faxed, the fax could be decoded too, so it would be a meaningless jumble if intercepted. I suppose you could get a publication into a country with strict censorship that way: get it past the customs/border guards by sending an encoded fax by phone.

(See LF24, p. 2 for discussion of personal computer encoding. Send \$1.25 for LF24.)

LETTER FROM SOMEONE

Have you ever wondered why I staple letters through the envelope? It's my own anti-letter-opening system. It's impossible to open the letter & then re-staple it through the same holes. The thickness of the staples also prevents the use of a fluoroscopic machine which requires that the pages be pressed absolutely flat in order to read the letter without opening it.

They also use a fluid that wets & renders the paper temporarily transparent, so it can be read without opening. But this works only with one page letters as a rule.

Foolproof protection – short of tearing the letter open & reading it, of course – is to wrap the folded pages in aluminum foil, & then staple the envelope.

Additional Resources

- **The Vonu Podcast:** If you want to learn more about anything covered in this book, I'd highly recommend you check out the podcast Kyle Rearden and I do. In season 1, we covered the philosophy of vonu, season 2 was the practice of vonu, and the current season, 3, is where we develop and update vonu to the modern day.
 - www.vonupodcast.com

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- **Vonu: The Search for Personal Freedom, Number 2 – Letters from Rayo**
 - www.vonupodcast.com/vonu2
 - **Vonulife, March 1973 (Special Edition)**
 - www.vonupodcast.com/vl
 - **Ocean Freedom Notes**
 - www.vonupodcast.com/ofn
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 - **Liberty Under Attack:** If you're seeking out paths to personal freedom, then you need to check out The Freedom Umbrella of Direct Action and the Direct Action Series.
 - www.libertyunderattack.com/FUDA
 - www.libertyunderattack.com/DAS
 - **The Last Bastille Blog:** This is Kyle's blog and it's chockful of incredible, highly valuable information. He has written over 150 book reviews, a couple books pertinent to vonu, and much more.
 - www.thelastbastille.com
 - **YouTube:** If you're pursuing any of the lifestyle changes or strategies I covered above, then YouTube will be your best friend. Recommended search terms: "van dwelling," "living aboard a boat," "minimalist sailboating," etc.



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